



Green Triangle Forest Industries Hub

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via email: VIC2021-26@aer.gov.au

Response to Powercor Revised Proposal 2021-2026: Request to upgrade Tyrendarra, Strathdownie, Cape Bridgewater and Gorae West to three-phase power

I write to provide the Green Triangle Forest Industries Hub's (GTFIH) support to the three-phase power infrastructure upgrade proposal as recommended by the Great South Coast Food and Fibre Council.

An upgrade of power infrastructure from single to three-phase in south west Victoria is critical to support innovation and business growth and an important step towards achieving the region's goals of strengthening its renewable energy assets whilst maintaining and enhancing its position as Victoria's food and fibre powerhouse.

The GTFIH, which represents about 90 per cent of the Green Triangle's forest industries, is funded by the Commonwealth Government with a primary focus on facilitating and stimulating growth in the timber sector to support the national goal of expanding the nation's plantation estate by one billion trees.

Our strategic plan aims to unify the sector, setting a 30-year strategy to achieve new domestic processing opportunities and expanding existing operations, generating sustainable jobs for future generations. This long-term vision includes the expansion of the forest estate and identifying and mitigating barriers and constraints to growth. The urgency of delivering this plan has become more paramount given the impacts of the global pandemic and recent export bans to China, which are the primary market for all hardwood (bluegum) woodchip grown in the region.

Access to reliable, efficient and affordable power supply is critical in attracting and sustaining new manufacturing investment in the region. The Glenelg Shire's proximity to plantation estate, export markets and access to water make it a desirable location for investment with power infrastructure an important tool in unlocking this new business, or supporting existing asset expansion.

The three-phase power investment has been a key priority for our community over the past six years and our industry is pleased it has been recommended in Infrastructure Victoria's Draft 30-year Infrastructure Strategy. Upgrading less than 100kms of single-phase line supplying 1130 Tyrendarra, Strathdownie, Cape Bridgewater and Gorae West customers has been costed at \$8.7 million with a \$2 million annual return in direct economic productivity alone. This investment is essential towards capitalising on the region's competitive advantages for economic growth and to unlock downstream economic and social value.

Mobile

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The 2019-2020 Victorian Food and Fibre Export Performance Report showed that Victoria delivered a record \$14.5 billion in exports and is well on target to reach its goal of \$20 billion food and fibre exports by 2030. A positive milestone for farmers and foresters in Victoria who produce over a quarter of Australia's food and fibre exports, with most of this production generated within the Great South Coast. This includes \$1.5 billion in annual forestry output across the Green Triangle. This result and growth projection demonstrates the strength of our region, however it is contingent on infrastructure being in place to enable investment, diversification and innovation.

It is important that a re-evaluation occur into the role of population density as a deciding factor in determining the value of investments in power infrastructure upgrades. This model appears to place regional Victoria at a considerable disadvantage compared to its metropolitan counterparts. This is disappointing considering regional Victoria has been acknowledged as critical in maintaining Victoria's economic resilience and food supply chain integrity during the pandemic. We therefore encourage the AER work with local stakeholders to review this process to ensure fairness for all Victorian communities.

The GTFIH urge you to empower Victoria's Great South Coast businesses, residents and wider community to invest, build resilience and sustainability, and take advantage of opportunities to strengthen supply chains and local manufacturing by supporting this important infrastructure proposal.

Yours sincerely,



Liz McKinnon
Executive General Manager
GTFIH