

From: [Bruce Knowles](#)
To: [Vic2021-26](#)
Subject: 3PHASE POWER INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT PORTLAND REGION
Date: Wednesday, 3 June 2020 4:45:54 PM
Attachments: [I anticipate it being giving strenght credibility and attachment to out proposal going forward.docx](#)
[Resolution VFF UDV2.docx](#)
[Wbool Standard Powercor announcement 3phase 7.6.19.docx](#)
[PO More power but 15.11.19.docx](#)

To Australian Energy Regulator

The Wannon Branch United Dairy Farmers have been lobbying for a much needed power upgrade in it region for a number years. IF THIS REGION IS TO PROGRESS GROW IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THIS UPGRADED INFRASTRUCTURE IS PUT IN PLACE. It is undeniable that the economic value in doing this will contribute significantly with a multiplying factor 1:4 1:7 \$ value being reported for dairy industry its service and communities. I would suggest this would be a great investment let alone the expand the potential of our region.

Supporting docs attached

Bruce Knowles
President of Wannon Branch UDV

<http://www.standard.net.au/story/6772927/call-for-opinions-on-south-west-three-phase-power-proposal/?cs>

I anticipate it being giving strength credibility and attachment to our proposal going forward

**UNITED DAIRYFARMERS VICTORIA
VICTORIA Federated Farmers**

Resolution UDV Conference 2016

Wannon Branch

That UDV calls on the State Government to take responsibility for the funding of a comprehensive upgrade of SWER and single phase lines supplying dairy farms to 3-phase. In doing so seek structured support of regional communities, businesses and local government.

Passed

Resolution UDV Conference 2016

Wannon Branch

“That the UDV pursue with Government the importance and need for 3-phase electricity transmission to be connected to all dairy farming operations in Victoria.

Passed

Resolution VFF Conference 2016

Wannon Branch

The VFF review the legislation establishing Infrastructure Vic and ensure it prioritises and supports long-term rural infrastructure (20-40 year planning) and the VFF secures bipartisan support from all major political parties for these projects.

Passed

More power expected, but...

CHALPAT SONTI

THE long battle to get three-phase power to farming areas in our region is almost won, but state government support will be needed before it can become a reality, advocates say.

Powercor has announced that it will invest \$8.7 million to upgrade the single-phase electricity network that runs through Tyrendarra, Gorae West and to Cape Bridgewater to three-phase.

The move could see customers in those areas, as well as Strathdownie, with the ability to access a reliable power supply for energy-intensive uses such as dairy farms.

The proposal estimates that the investment could lead to more than \$120 million in benefits for the four areas – \$30.4 million in each – through expansion of dairy operations and new investment through converting lower value grazing land to dairying through the ability to

irrigate.

Powercor plans to carry out the upgrades between 2021 and 2026, with the plan to be submitted to the Australian Energy Regulator in January for approval – the regulator has to approve request by power companies for capital spending and consider the effect they could have on power prices.

The areas identified for the proposed upgrade are:

Tyrendarra – a 37.4km single-phase line between Yambuk and Narrawong supplying 497 customers, many of which are dairy farms and commercial businesses, at a cost of about \$3.2 million;

Cape Bridgewater – a 20km single-phase line supplying 285 single-phase and SWER customers at a cost of about \$1.7 million;

Gorae West – a feeder supplying 128 single-phase and SWER customers at a cost of about

\$1.3 million; and

Strathdownie – a 28.5km line supplying 220 single-phase and SWER customers at cost of about \$2.4 million.

Powercor electricity networks general manager Steven Neave said the upgrade would increase capacity on the network, providing dairy farms the ability to expand their operations and regional communities with greater economic options.

“Our single-phase network provides a low-cost option to supply small loads spread over large areas, however dairy farmers are telling us they need infrastructure that can support greater demand and their future growth,” he said.

While pleased with the decision, those behind the three-phase push pointed out the real cost was to hook properties up to Powercor’s infrastructure.

United Dairyfarmers of Victoria Wannon branch president and Tyrendarra dairy farmer Bruce

Knowles has led the fight, and has previously been quoted \$1.5 million to get three-phase power supplied to his property – like most others it is connected at present via single wire earth return (SWER) line.

While describing Powercor’s decision as a “win-win” and congratulating the company for pursuing the matter, he said the state government had a responsibility “to do the job properly” by taking the power to the doorstep, as was done elsewhere.

“They need to come in and play a part in helping to hook up existing (customers),” he said.

“Even to the point of changing our meters and rewiring workshops and dairies and things.

“We see it in the same light as the government investing in renewables, such as solar panels, and at the end of the day if you haven’t got a good distribution network the potential of renewables is not going to be realised. **Continued PAGE 5**

More power expected, but...

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“It’s actually more important that existing customers are able to hook into three-phase so they can take advantage of the potential of renewables.

“A partnership should be formed between Powercor and the government, it’s very important that the job is done properly right from the outset, otherwise all you do is end up with an ad hoc result and we’ve had enough of that. Hopefully we’ve learned that lesson.”

Mr Knowles said the battle for three-phase power during the past few years had been “bloody hard work” given power networks had been set up many decades ago and had created the problems there were now.

“It’s encouraging Powercor has recognised the potential of our region, it’s also an investment into our future,” he said.

“With the way dairying is going at the moment, the south west is going to be important with regard to the industry, but we also need government to have confidence with regard to helping with this outcome also.”

The upgrade would be a pilot project that could be rolled out across the state.

“We’ve got to get the confidence back into the regions and if we haven’t got the infrastructure it’s also going to be bloody hard work,” Mr Knowles said.

Great South West Food and Fibre Council executive

officer Tony Ford backed the call for the state government to help the idea reach its full potential.

The council drafted the original proposal, which was refined by Powercor.

“It’s backbone infrastructure and you’ve still got to run three-phase power to the farms and build an architecture off that main backbone,” he said.

“The state government is really hot on renewables, which is great, but there’s no way a farmer like Bruce Knowles or his neighbours can put a large solar (installation) on their roofs and get the power back to the grid.

“We’re actually prejudicing a rural person compared to someone in town. They want to do renewables but on the other hand they can’t do it.”

Mr Ford said he knew of investors from as far afield as Ireland, Tasmania and Shepparton “wanting to come down here and take advantage of good rainfall, resources and relatively cheap land”.

“There’s an opportunity for large dairy developments, there’s land that could be converted to the same size dairy farm as Bruce has got (more than 700ha). But why would an investor commit to the region if he couldn’t get three-phase power?”

“I think we’ve got a good opportunity here. Now we’ve got to get it over the line. To be frank, \$8 million is not much money.”

November 6 2019 - 5:41PM

Powercor proposes \$8.7 million investment into Tyrendarra regional power infrastructure



[Kyra Gillespie](#)



Calls heard: Shadow Minister for Energy and Resources David Southwick, South West Coast MP Roma Britnell, Tyrendarra dairy farmer and local UDV president Bruce Knowles, and Koroit dairy farmer and local UDV policy councillor Oonagh Kilpatrick pictured in 2016 calling for an upgrade to three phase power on the local electricity grid. Picture: Rob Gunstone

Pleas from dairy farmers wanting an upgrade of the power infrastructure between Tyrendarra and Portland have been heard, with electricity distributor Powercor announcing a proposed \$8.7 million investment to upgrading regional power infrastructure.

If approved by the Australian Energy Regulator, Powercor would upgrade the current single phase electricity network to three phase power in Tyrendarra, Strathdownie, Cape Bridgewater and Gorae West.

It comes after years of campaigning by farmers following a report that found the lack of three phase power in the area between Tyrendarra and Portland was stopping dairy farms from expanding.

READ MORE: [Three-phase power campaign amps up](#)

South-west dairy farmer, United Dairy Victoria Wannon branch president and member of the Australian Dairy Farmers National Council Bruce Knowles welcomed the news.

He has been heading the power upgrade campaign for over six years.

"It has been a long campaign, this is excellent news," he said.

"This is a pilot project and we're hoping it will be a good start to getting it (three phase power) to other areas.

"The upgrades are urgently needed, it's not only a matter of getting power to businesses but dealing with a lot of safety issues. It will have a dramatic effect on peoples' lives, it's a win-win situation."

He said that while it was a considerable investment, the state government needs to step in to help farmers and businesses transition to the new power upgrade.

"The government needs to step in and work with Powercor in making sure this job is done properly and efficiently," he said.

Powercor's General Manager, Electricity Networks Steven Neave said the upgrade would increase capacity on the network providing dairy farms the ability to expand their operations and regional communities with greater economic options.

"Our single phase network provides a low cost option to supply small loads spread over large areas, however dairy farmers are telling us they need infrastructure that can support greater demand and their future growth," Mr Neave said

"Powercor is focused on delivering reliable, safe and affordable power and this proposed upgrade would deliver a stronger network for dairy farmers in Victoria's western region."

Powercor said it consulted more 4,500 customers since 2017 as it prepared its revenue proposal.

Farmers have told Powercor the upgrades would support farmers to increase milk production, reduce their cost of production, increase confidence in the farming sector and assist farming operations stay in business.

South-west dairy farmer, policy councillor for UDV Wannon and campaigner Oonagh Kilpatrick said they want to see the upgrades done sooner rather than later.

"From a dairying perspective it's fantastic but the economic benefit is for the whole region," she said.

"I think every business should have access to three phase, Australia is one of the wealthiest countries in the world and it begs the question as to why it has infrastructure that classes as third world in many places.

"A business cannot rely on single phase power."

The areas identified for the proposed upgrade are:

- Tyrendarra - a 37.4 kilometre single phase line between Yambuk and Narrawong supplying 497 customers, many of which are dairy farms and commercial businesses;
- Strathdownie - a 28.5 kilometre line supplying 220 single phase and SWER customers;
- Cape Bridgewater - a 20 kilometre single phase line supplying 285 single phase and SWER customers; and
- Gorae West - a feeder in Gorae West (near Portland) supplying 128 single phase and SWER customers.

If the proposal is approved, the upgrades would take place between 2021 and 2026.

South West Coast MP Roma Britnell said access to three phase power in the Tyrendarra area has been a continual issue she has been working on in the four years since being elected.

"This is a positive step forward and I am sure the Australian Energy Regulator will see the potential this project has to increase economic activity in the south-west and will approve it," she said.

"There has been a few obstacles to get to this point but I'm determined not to let it fall over at the last hurdle.

"The Tyrendarra region is a three-phase power blackspot, but is home to prime agricultural country. Having reliable and efficient three-phase power, replacing the antiquated single-phase system that services that area now will help businesses grow, employ more people and boost the state economy.

"This is a good news story on all fronts - I'll now advocate to the regulator to ensure three-phase power is delivered so farmers and businesses in the Tyrendarra area can expand their contributions to the regional and state economy."

As part of its consideration of the proposal, the Australian Energy Regulator will release the Powercor submission for public comment during 2020.

Ms Kilpatrick said those supporting the approval should submit their feedback on talkingelectricity.com.au.

"Not only is this for the four regions but Warrnambool, Portland and Heywood will benefit too," she said.

"For this region farmers re-inject \$730 million back into the community according to latest Dairy Australia figures, and that's excluding processors.

"The flow-on effect is considerable, it's not just about the dairy industry but every business in south-west Victoria."

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