



Australian Government

Office of the National Wind Farm Commissioner

21 September 2020

Mr Kim Evans
Secretary
Department of State Growth
GPO Box 536
HOBART TAS 7001
Via email: renewableenergy@stategrowth.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Evans

RE: Tasmanian Government Draft Tasmanian Renewable Energy Action Plan 2020

The Office of the National Wind Farm Commissioner welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the Tasmanian Government *Draft Tasmanian Renewable Energy Action Plan 2020*.

The National Wind Farm Commissioner has a national, independent role in Australia's energy sector and responsibilities include:

- facilitating the handling of complaints from concerned community residents about planned and operating wind farms, solar farms (5 MW or more) and energy storage facilities (1 MW or more)
- identifying and promoting best practices for industry, government and related agencies to adopt with regard to the planning, operation and governance of such projects, and
- improving information access and transparency about proposed and operating projects and wind, solar and energy storage industries.

The Commissioner has reviewed the draft action plan and is supportive of the actions and key priorities that will provide the framework for transforming renewable energy in Tasmania in coming years.

In reviewing this document, our Office has included some extracts of the Commissioner's recommendations outlined in the Commissioner's 2019 Annual Report to the Federal Parliament that may be relevant for your consideration in further developing the action plan. The Commissioner's Annual Report is also enclosed for your convenience.

- **Recommendation 8.2.1** – *State/Territory and local governments should consider assessing proposed wind and solar energy projects on a wider range of criteria (including ability for power output to be transmitted and consumed, the suitability of a location from a community impact perspective and the degree of community support) and then prioritising projects for approval or progression accordingly.*
- **Recommendation 8.2.2** – *State and local governments may also consider other criteria in assessing and prioritising wind and solar energy projects, including economic development and the ability to both support regional and industry development through improved local electricity supply and infrastructure in regional communities. Appropriate*

zoning for renewable energy development and overlays for clarifying where it would be appropriate or not appropriate to build and operate projects should also be considered.

- **Recommendation 8.2.4** – *As part of the assessment suggested in Recommendation 8.2.1, the responsible authority should have processes in place to obtain and verify clear evidence of the developer’s consultations with affected landowners and residents and be able to assess the likelihood of strong community support for the project.*
- **Recommendation 8.2.5** – *Once an approved project has materially commenced construction, the responsible authority may need to check other approved projects in the area which are yet to commence construction, to ensure any compounding effects on residents, including noise, shadow flicker and visual amenity, have been properly considered in those applications/permits.*
- **Recommendation 8.2.6** – *State governments should publish and maintain a map of all operating and proposed wind and solar farms, including the location of the project, location of wind turbines or solar arrays, the status of the project (proposed, permitted, in construction or operating) as well as information about the project’s design, including number and size/rating of wind turbines or solar arrays and information about the proponent.*
- **Recommendation 8.2.7** – *State governments, in conjunction with the appropriate Australian Government departments/agencies and the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO), should review current and planned transmission infrastructure to ensure it allows for new large-scale renewable generation facilities to be connected in the most optimal locations for renewable resources.*

Our Office encourages the action plan remain flexible and adaptable to allow for proper assessment of new and emerging technologies, particularly in taking into account the unique circumstances and considerations of each project, including potential impacts to communities and the environment. An adaptable approach is also more likely to contribute to a broader long-term energy plan.

Finally, the approach our Office has taken in proactively addressing and resolving community concerns in the wind energy sector could also be applied in the deployment of new resources and technologies such as renewable hydrogen. Such an approach could also be appropriate for hybrid projects that may involve, say, a large-scale wind farm and hydrogen production facility or the development of the supporting transmission and infrastructure.

I would be pleased to discuss these matters with you in further detail.

If you have any questions about this submission or require any additional information, you may contact us via email at nwfc@environment.gov.au or on 1800 656 395.

Sincerely



Andrew Dyer
National Wind Farm Commissioner