

KENTISH COUNCIL

Promoting
Tasmania's Outdoor Art Gallery



7 September 2020

Hon Guy Barnett MP
Minister for Energy

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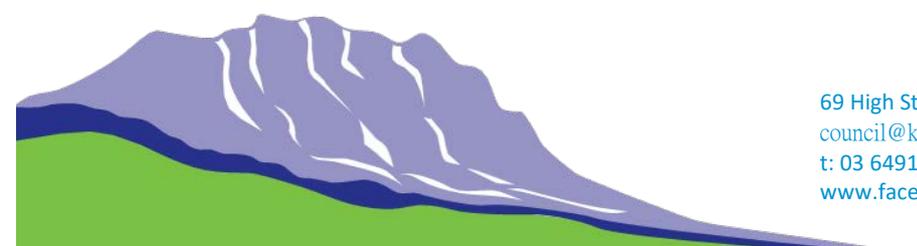
SUBMISSION: DRAFT RENEWABLE ENERGY ACTION PLAN

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Tasmanian Renewable Energy Action Plan 2020. Kentish Council is part of the NW Renewable Energy Zone and is keen to be an active participant in the development of energy resources in this region and in the State.

Kentish Council is fully supportive of the target to be fully self-sufficient in renewable electricity generation, and especially of the target to achieve the lowest electricity prices for consumers in Australia by 2022. During the 2016 energy difficulties the State suffered badly with loss of consumer confidence in the reliability of supply. This Energy Action Plan should go some way to repairing that confidence. Discussions with local community members reveal concerns that the Battery of the Nation impetus will simply drive household electricity bills skyward. Therefore this target should also give some comfort.

Council is also supportive of the proposed energy efficiency programs and believes that there is a significant role for increasing public awareness and knowledge of saving on power usage – some by simple means. The energy efficiency programs should, in our view, include the benefits of changing technologies. We are already seeing a growing trend away from oil to electricity and battery technology for many household items eg lawn mowers and small chain saws. A growing development is the movement towards replacing petrol vehicles with Electric Vehicles, including hybrid vehicles. This trend is quite slow at the moment but as soon as affordable family and business electric vehicles become available the trend will become much greater. The plan to install EV charging stations around the State is a good initiative and will go some way toward preparation for this growth. We see that the State Government has a role to be seen as an owner and user of EV's, setting an example for the wider community. The State should have an increasing and targeted proportion of EV's in State Government and Local Government fleet vehicles. We are encouraged by the Premier's recent statement that in the coming State budget, there will be an increased number of EV and hybrid vehicles moving into the State Government fleet. We cannot forget that Tasmania is particularly vulnerable to an oil shock (see Tasmanian Oil Price Vulnerability Study 2012). There is an underlying need to transition the State away from oil dependency through increasing reliance on renewables.

We also strongly agree with the Action Plan priority to grow the economy in Tasmania, attracting new load and energy intensive industries to Tasmania. While the new renewable energy technologies of solar and wind are intermittent, traditional hydro is an excellent complementary energy source. Together it should be easier to maintain water levels in Hydro Tasmania dams, as desired in the Action Plan, if priority is given to solar and wind



energy being used before hydro generation. With this planning it should yield unsurpassed energy security, where it would be impossible to repeat the 2016 energy 'difficulties'. Tasmania's Hydro-electric system gives Tasmania a massive natural advantage over mainland jurisdictions in that their backup is probably going to be coal or gas, whereas ours is clean, green and renewable hydro.

Council sees opportunities for new technology industries such as Server Farms, especially if they can boast that they use 100% renewable energy. To support this further we strongly recommend data cables being laid alongside the Marinus Link cables. Big ones!

The introduction of a Tasmanian Renewable Energy Target (TRET) is strongly supported by Council. The AEMO Integrated Service Plan, which was released after the Draft Tasmanian Renewable Energy Action Plan 2020, states the introduction of a TRET could "materially alter the optimal development path" of the power system needs in the best interests of consumers. The AEMO ISP lays out the pathway to maintain and improve energy security for almost the whole eastern half of Australia. If Tasmania is an active participant in the ISP, there are multiple benefits for growth and employment in the State. Kentish is looking forward to the possibility of major employment and growth associated with Pumped Hydro at Cethana, should that be the selected site. Within Kentish there is broad support for the Pumped Hydro project. To us it appears Cethana is the ideal location. Kentish residents feel a strong association with the successful hydro development in the Mersey Forth system, and Kentish is also the hub for power interconnection at the Nook Exchange. We believe that Pumped Hydro provides a better level of energy security for Tasmania. While hydrogen production may have a promising future, it is still in its infancy. Pumped Hydro is a tried and well used technology around the world.

The development of pumped hydro in Tasmania depends on Marinus Link Stage 2 (second cable) which in turn is dependent on the TRET. We respectfully suggest that there may be many benefits in bringing Pumped Hydro on more quickly. The simultaneous installation of 2 new 750MW Marinus Link cables for Tasmania would surely be cheaper to install. As well as the obvious opportunities for these interconnectors to be relied upon in the event of early coal fired power station closures or outages, the decision to progress Marinus Link would send strong messages to the rest of the Country that Tasmania is serious about the Battery of the Nation project. We acknowledge that Marinus Link is dependent on funding decisions – who will pay for it? The Tasmanian Government will get the benefit of selling power to mainland but rarely or never would buy from the mainland. In this respect it is different from other planned interconnectors around Australia. However if Tasmania wants to get a fair price for the power we send we have an obligation to pay a fair proportion of the cable costs. The owner will be whoever pays for it. We cannot expect someone else to pay for it then put our hand out for the power we send. Nor do we wish to pay rent for it. This must be sorted as soon as possible. It is our view that the Marinus Link cables must not be privately owned.

We query the need for Renewables Tasmania and Renewable Energy Centre of Excellence to be two distinct bodies. They have overlapping purposes and core aims which we believe would be better served (and less confusing) by merging the two bodies into one.

We expect that Tasmanians will benefit financially from the current and future expansion of wind farms throughout the State and watch with interest how our State will gain financially from foreign owned windfarms on our island.

We thank you for allowing submissions on the Draft Tasmanian Renewable Energy Plan 2020 and we thank you for taking the time to read our submission.

Tim Wilson
MAYOR