

Australia To Build 232 Megawatt Wind Farm

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The Planning Minister, Rob Hulls, today gave the green light to building Australia's most powerful wind farm at Mt Gellibrand, near Colac, with the capacity to power 133,450 homes a year.

Mr Hulls said issuing the planning permit was another important step towards achieving the Bracks Government's Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET), which commits energy retailers to buying 10 per cent of their electricity from renewable sources by 2016.

"This \$380 million, 232-megawatt project will generate more power than any other wind farm in Victoria, and is proof of the Bracks Government's commitment to renewable energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions," said Mr Hulls.

The 116-turbine farm will be built across 2550 hectares of predominantly cleared grazing land.

Mr Hulls' approval follows advice from an independent planning panel that thoroughly investigated the site and its surrounds to evaluate the proposal and respond to the submissions. The panel also visited properties within about three kilometres of the site.

Mr Hulls said he was particularly pleased with the community consultation undertaken by the proponent.

"Before lodging their planning permit application, the proponent visited neighbouring landowners, held information days, distributed newsletters

and received community feedback on a preliminary layout," he said.

"This level of effort is encouraging to see, regardless of the nature of a significant development."

The project was not only good for the environment but would generate local jobs and income, with a significant proportion of the farm's \$380 million investment expected to be spent in Victoria.

"This project is expected to create 110-120 jobs during construction, and 20-25 full-time positions during the life of the wind farm," Mr Hulls said.

Based on the measure that one balloon represents 50g of greenhouse gas emissions, Mr Hulls said the Mt Gellibrand wind farm would save emissions equivalent to 14.2 million black balloons every year.

"Climate change is the greatest environmental challenge the world faces, and everyone needs to do their bit, whether it is turning off lights, walking rather than using the car, buying Green power or investing in more energy efficient appliances," Mr Hulls said.

"The Bracks Government is also doing its bit by supporting renewable energy projects that will save 27 million tonnes of greenhouse emissions over the life of the VRET program. That's a lot of hot air we will be taking out of our warming planet."

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