



Yarriambiack
SHIRE COUNCIL

YARRIAMBIACK SHIRE COUNCIL'S POSITION ON MINING, RENEWABLE ENERGY AND TRANSMISSION LINES

POSITION SUMMARY

In summary, this document outlines the Council's advocacy position on mining, renewable energy and transmission projects.

As a Council, we recognise the community angst and division that mining, renewable energy, and transmission distribution developments have caused within our Shire and region. We respect landholders' rights to negotiate with companies regarding their land use. We also request that our community acknowledges and respects landholders' decisions.

We acknowledge that the mining, renewable energy, and transmission projects are being driven and supported by the State Government, with the objective of advancing Victoria's clean economy ambitions. These initiatives aim to achieve net zero emissions by 2045 and attain 95% renewable energy by 2035. Furthermore, mineral sands mining is intended to facilitate the energy transition. It is important to note that as a Council, we do not have authority over the transition, nor are we the approving body for mineral sand mining and renewable energy projects, which are causing community concern.

However, we will continue to advocate for legislative reforms to ensure that community members residing close to mining, transmission, and renewable energy infrastructure are considered, and their health, wellbeing, and the social cohesion of our community are taken into account.

If our region is to host renewable energy and mining projects, we ask that:

- It is crucial for community perspectives to be recognised, thoroughly evaluated, and incorporated into decision-making processes throughout transformational change. At present, these viewpoints have yet to be reflected in the region's final State Government plans and vision.
- Legislative reforms are enacted to prevent the displacement of farming families, to protect landowners' intergenerational bond with their land, and to consider the social wellbeing of the community; and
- The Government significantly invests back into our Shire and region the funds that will be generated from the energy transition.
- Both proponents and the Government recognise the significance of Social Licence and are committed to securing acceptance and approval from the community and stakeholders, extending beyond mere compliance with legal obligations.



COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT



Mineral Sands (Large Scale) Mining

- We ask for State legislative reforms that acknowledge the significance of intergenerational ties to the land. These changes should ensure that priority is placed on food production and that farmers are not forced to give up their properties or yield their land for mining purposes.
- We ask for legislative reforms that limit the number of mines that can be approved and operational within an area / zone. Provide clarity for our community and remove uncertainty.
- We ask that royalties generated from mining be invested directly back into the region from which they are generated. Council does not receive royalty payments and mining land is non-rateable.



Renewable Energy, including Wind & Solar

- We ask that Clause 52.32 of the Victorian Planning Provisions be amended to prohibit the location of turbines within one kilometre of a neighbouring property boundary, and to restore the previously removed buffer of two kilometres between the location of a turbine and an existing dwelling on neighbouring properties; and that Clause 35.07 (Farming Zone) removes the requirement for a permit for accommodation within one kilometre of a wind energy facility.
- We ask for a return to the right for individuals to redress through VCAT. Eg. if either the host or wind farm company impact on a neighbour's rights to farm unrestricted, or if it impacts their health and wellbeing.
- We ask that a significant bond to cover the full cost of decommissioning be paid within the first 5 years of a wind or solar project's life.
- Decommissioning must guarantee restoration of the site to a condition suitable for productive agriculture and ensure that local waste services are not burdened by material disposal.



Transmission Distribution Lines

- We do not support compulsory acquisition of farmland or unnecessary destruction of native vegetation to make way for transmission lines.
- Council cannot allow power infrastructure to be installed in road reserves or on Council-owned land unless the applicant holds a license under the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* to connect renewable energy systems to the grid. If Council receives requests from licensed transmitters, these will only be considered with thorough legal advice—at the requester's expense—with community input, and provided there is no negative impact on residents' daily lives or landowners access to their lands and infrastructure.



COUNCIL'S POSITION STATEMENT

Continued...

WE UNDERSTAND THAT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND MINING PROJECTS ARE A KEY PART OF THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENTS' PUSH TO REACH RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGETS, THEREFORE, WE BELIEVE IT IS VITAL THAT OUR REGION RECEIVES ITS FAIR SHARE OF FUNDING AND INVESTMENT TO ENSURE THAT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY BENEFITS EQUITABLY.

We want:

- A substantial and sustained financial investment in:
 - Our road networks. Specifically, we request an immediate allocation of \$54 million for the upgrade and widening of Council-owned strategic roads to 6.6 metres; and
 - The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) road networks across Western Victoria. This includes upgrading and widening to 6.6 metres all Priority C Class roads across our Shire, and the upgrade of the Lyle Street Warracknabeal bridge.

Additionally, we seek an ongoing financial commitment to maintain these roads and address both ours and the DTP's renewal gap requirements.

- The Environmental Effects Statement (EES) process to ensure it utilises the Social Cost Benefit Analysis (SCBA) model, to weigh both tangible and intangible costs against the benefits. This limitation is critical in accounting for non-market impacts like environmental degradation and social displacement. The failure to utilise the SCBA model ignores long-term sustainable impacts on regional industries like agriculture.
- Significant and enduring investment into legacy State-owned community assets (e.g. community centres, halls, pools, etc.), and for the State to cover the insurance costs for their own assets, opposed to the community carrying this burden.
- Significant and enduring investment into aged care facilities, health services, schools, childcare facilities, housing and connecting infrastructure such as footpaths and tracks, that enhance the health, well-being, social connection and cohesion of our community.

IF OUR COMMUNITY IS CONTRIBUTING SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE STATE AND NATION'S ECONOMY THROUGH POWER, AGRICULTURE, AND CONSTRUCTION, THEN WE REQUIRE IMPROVED FACILITIES, ROADS, AND A COMMITTED INVESTMENT FOR BOTH THE PRESENT AND FUTURE. THIS SHOULD BE A PRIORITY.



WHO APPROVES MINE AND ENERGY PROJECTS?

COUNCIL IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE APPROVAL OF ENERGY AND MINERAL SANDS (LARGE SCALE) MINING PROJECTS AND IS ONLY A STAKEHOLDER IN THE ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS STATEMENT (EES) PROCESS.



Energy projects

The Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for new planning permit applications for the use and development of land for:

- An energy generation facility with an installed capacity of 1 megawatt or greater.
- Utility installation used to:
 - Transmit or distribute electricity.
 - Store electricity if the installed capacity is 1 megawatt or greater.

If a new or amended project might significantly affect the environment, the proponent or decision-maker must consult the Minister to determine if an assessment is needed. If significant adverse effects are likely, and existing processes aren't comprehensive or transparent enough, an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) will be required.



WHO APPROVES MINE AND ENERGY PROJECTS?

Continued...



Mineral Sands (Large Scale) Mining Projects

The most common mineral tenement types in Victoria are exploration, retention, mining, and prospecting licences. At a high-level, these tenements authorise:

- Exploration licence: An exploration licence gives the licence holder exclusive rights to explore for specific minerals within the specified licence area. No mining activities can be undertaken on an exploration licence;
- Retention licence: A retention licence is suitable where a mineral resource is identified but the resource is not yet commercially viable to mine but may become so in the future. Or the resource is required to support an existing mining operation in the future;
- Mining licence: A mining licence holder is entitled to mine the land (once a work plan is approved) covered by the licence; explore for minerals and construct mining facilities related to the mining operation; and
- Prospecting licence: Prospecting licences allow prospectors and small-scale miners to explore or mine in an area less than 5 hectares.

Council is the responsible authority for mines where a planning permit is required, for example, small scale gypsum mining. Planning permits for mines are not required where an EES is required.

Where an EES is required, Council is only a stakeholder in the process, and does not have an ability to affect the final decision. The EES process concludes with the Minister's assessment which involves consideration of:

- the EES and any supplementary statement;
- public submissions, the proponent's response to submissions, and supporting;
- information from the proponent or submitters;
- the inquiry report; and
- the objectives and principles of ecologically sustainable development, as well as applicable legislation, policy, strategies and guidelines.



CURRENT COMMUNITY SENTIMENT

While the prospect of mining generates potential benefits for our local areas, it also triggers significant concerns, particularly from the agricultural sector regarding its impacts on vital primary production land, the displacement of long standing residents with significant connection to land, the exacerbation of existing pressures on our already burdened road network, and the 'poaching' of multi-skilled farm, manufacturing and trade workers who are already in short supply.


Negative sentiment towards mining has increased over the past years, driven by our agricultural community's awareness that much of their land is under exploration, retention, or mining licences. This has heightened their anxiety and fears due to limited rights over their own land, as they do not own the minerals beneath it, receive no royalties, and cannot refuse access to permit holders.



WARRACKNABEAL COMMUNITY SCREENING

MINE-FIELD

THE MINING INVASION OF VICTORIA'S RURAL COMMUNITIES



FREE EVENT

ON THURSDAY OCTOBER 3 we are pleased to invite all the community members to a complimentary screening of the film **MINE-FIELD**. This compelling documentary, filmed over three years, explores the experiences of Victorian farming communities affected by local mining activities.

**6.30pm Thursday
3rd October, 2024**
@Anzac Park Community Centre
Warracknabeal

It is essential viewing for everyone in our local community. PLEASE ARRIVE 15 MINUTES PRIOR.

Bar will be open*. Tea & Coffee available

*Alcohol at Bar Prices

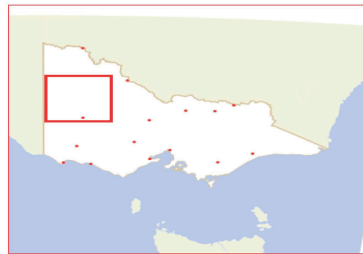
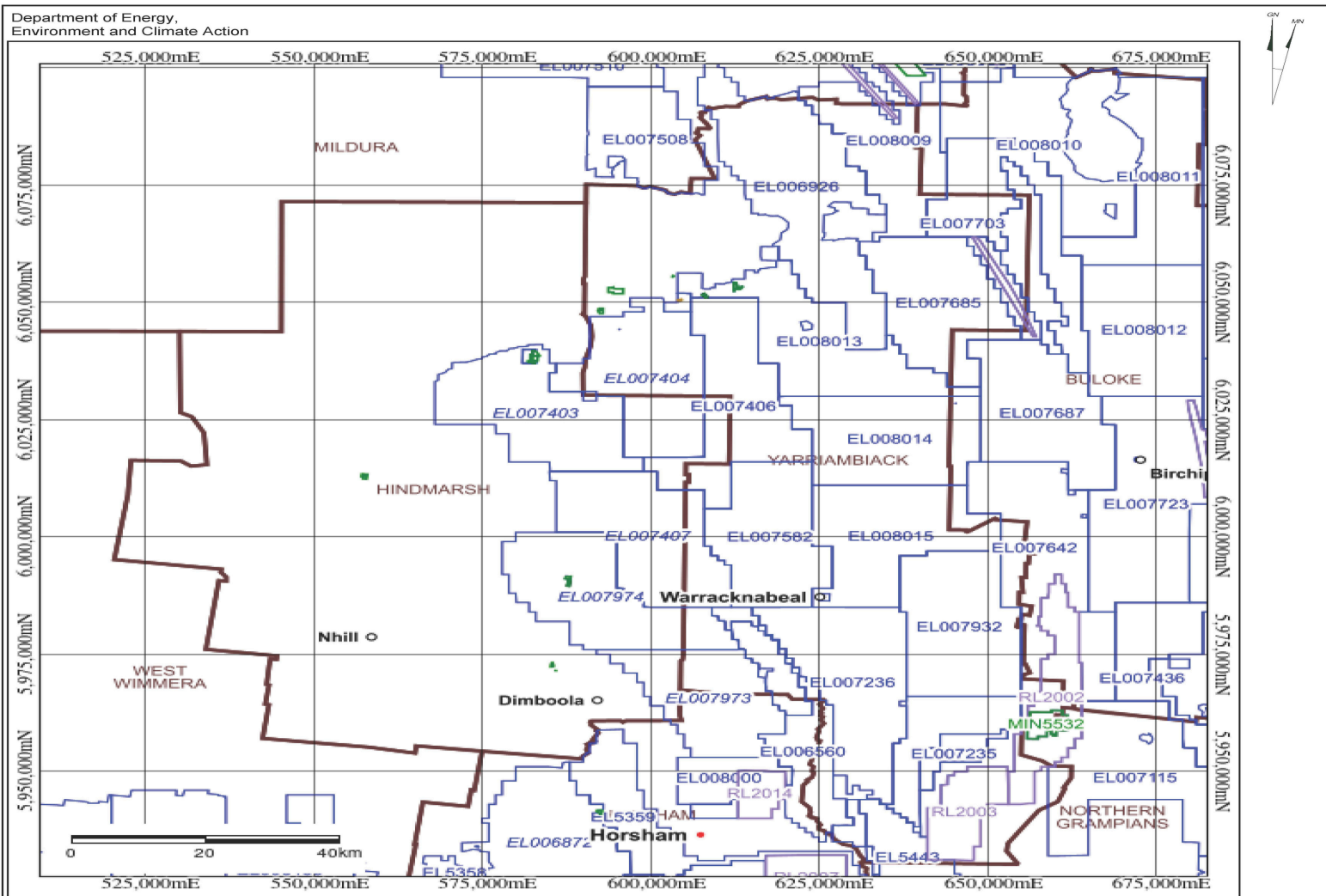
The Mine Field YouTube video, which focuses on the Fingerboards Mine in East Gippsland, Victoria and includes discussion relating to a mine in Kanagulk in Western Victoria, presents a damaging portrayal of mineral sand mining and the regulatory framework governing it. This depiction has resonated within our communities, leading to an increase in anti-mining sentiment and trust in Government and regulators to protect the people and land.



CURRENT COMMUNITY SENTIMENT

Continued...

Snap Shot of exploration, retention and mining licences across Yarriambiack, causing significant concern and community angst.



Legend

Towns (1M)

- City
- Regional Centre
- Major Town
- Large Town

Current Mining Licences and Leases



Current Retention Licences

Map Scale: 1:1,000,000

Projection: MGA94 54

The map contains zonal grid lines that extends beyond their zone boundary.

Disclaimer: This map is a snapshot generated from Victoria Government data. This material may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria does not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for error, loss or damage which may arise from reliance upon it. All persons accessing this information should make appropriate enquiries to assess the currency of the data.

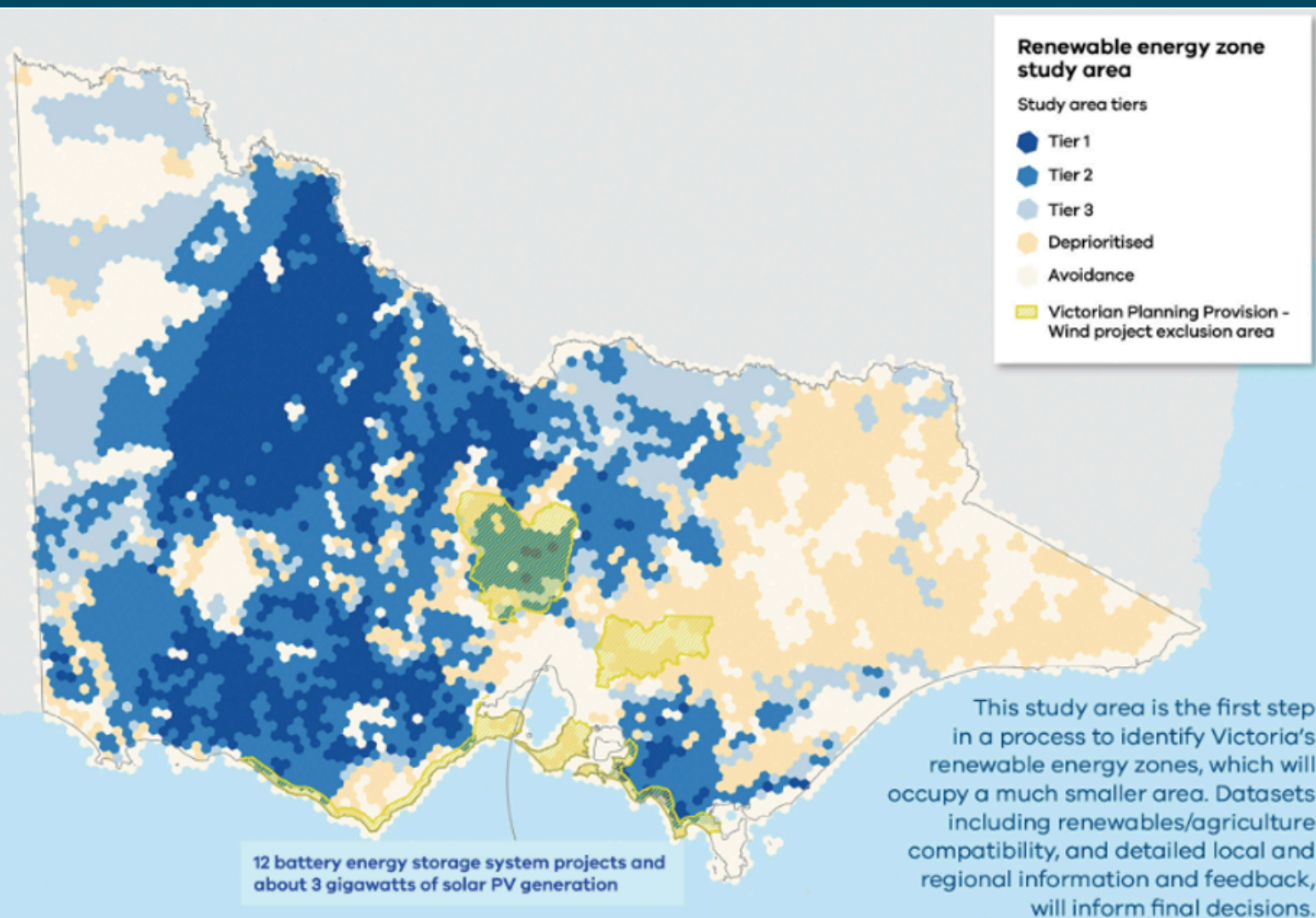


CURRENT COMMUNITY SENTIMENT

Continued...

In addition, Vic Grid has conducted community consultation on the establishment of renewable energy zones; however, the extent of Yarriambiack's REZ has expanded significantly, and concerns have been raised that community feedback was not adequately considered in determining the final boundaries. Further heightening the current tension is the sentiment among agricultural communities that food security is being inadequately considered in the establishment of those zones.

As a Council, we are concerned that the footprint of the renewable energy zone study area map identifies Tier 1 and 2 within our most productive agricultural land areas. This is further compounding our agricultural communities fears, feeling under siege by mining, renewable energy and transmission projects.



The Councillors of Yarriambiack shire have jointly endorsed this document demonstrating unanimous agreement. Our goal is to collaborate with neighbouring Councils that share similar objectives to achieve enhanced outcomes for our respective communities. It is also this Council's hope that our community can navigate these challenges with respect, understanding, and an openness to differing perspectives.

It should be noted that this document is dynamic, as both Government policies and corporate strategies are subject to change.

To read more about Renewable Energy and Mining Projects, and Payment in Lieu of Rates proposed in our Shire, visit www.yarriambiack.vic.gov.au and look for State Projects.



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