

To: renewable.energy@delwp.vic.gov.au

Consultation on the Design of Victorian Renewable Energy Auction Scheme Stakeholder Feedback

Geelong Sustainability (GS) appreciates the opportunity to participate in this consultation. As a representative of Geelong Sustainability's CORE Geelong Task Group, I attended a consultation workshop in Melbourne on 24th August together with Bendigo and Mt Alexander Sustainability Groups and the Community Power Agency.

GS is encouraged that the principles to be used to develop an evaluation criteria for assessing auction bids, focus on a range of quality outcomes, in addition to value for money, and we think this a good way to attract quality bids.

It is our view that the auction process would be enhanced by valuing the contribution that community energy projects can make, not just to community engagement outcomes, but in contributing vital local and regional knowledge and skills. Local environmental groups, trade unions and the aboriginal community also have much to offer.

In relation to weighting of the evaluation criteria, Geelong Sustainability would suggest that sufficient value is given to:

- active partnerships with the local community, including with community energy groups,
- use of local renewable energy expertise in planning, developing and maintaining the renewable energy facilities, and
- pre-determined methods of measuring and reporting on outcomes.

We suggest that an appropriately skilled Victorian organisation/advisory group is engaged to assist bidders to develop meaningful community partnerships as part of their auction bid. We understand that this has led to successful outcomes in Denmark and Germany with less community resistance to renewable energy facilities being situated in their locality. There seems no reason that it could not be equally successful here.

And finally, we support the proposal that the Department includes a Stage 1 'Expression of Interest' approach in the design of the auction process, as this has the potential to create stronger opportunities for smaller businesses and smaller consortiums to make bids that can be of direct benefit to regional communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this long awaited VRET process.

Yours Sincerely

Vicky Grosser
Co-Chair
CORE Geelong Task Group for Geelong Sustainability