



VICTORIA POLICY OVERVIEW: FIRST PEOPLES AND CLEAN ENERGY

Victoria Policy Overview: First Peoples and Clean Energy

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Thanks also to Daniel McIntyre, *Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations*, for additional input and editorial assistance

Executive Summary

Energy landscape in Victoria

Due to its reliance on emissions-intensive brown coal, Victoria is currently seeking to engineer a transition from one of the dirtiest power systems in the world to 95% renewable energy by 2035.

The Victorian government has set out an ambitious agenda consisting of projects such as establishing Renewable Energy Zones, the development of offshore wind, battery storage targets, and energy efficiency and electrification of households and businesses. The amount of coal-fired power has decreased significantly with the 2017 exit of Hazelwood station and the exit of Anglesea coal power station in 2015.

[As noted](#) by the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC), ‘*electricity generation in Victoria has traditionally been located in the LaTrobe Valley, with large coal-fired power stations and some gas plants supplying the main load centre of Melbourne*’.

The changing nature of Victoria’s electricity generation over time can be viewed [at this resource](#). There are a number of existing and proposed solar and wind farms in Victoria, the location of which can be viewed on the [Renewable Energy Projects Victoria map](#).

The energy transition and First Peoples

The energy transformation in Victoria includes a range of Victorian government First Nations initiatives including retrofits for Aboriginal housing, programs to support Traditional Owners implement their own renewable energy projects and requirements for engagement (although the scope of the engagement is not specified) with Traditional Owners as part of Victorian Renewable Energy and Storage Targets (VRET), and the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework (VTIF) from 2024.

The three key areas covered in this policy overview are:

1. population overview
2. Aboriginal land estate, polities / organisations and governance, and;
3. energy policy.

Information in this document should not be relied upon as legal advice. Each situation will be different and you should obtain and rely on legal advice for your own situation.

This report has been prepared to provide background and context for the Federal Government's Roundtable consultation as the First Nations Clean Energy Strategy is being developed.

Thanks to the team at the University of Technology Sydney (Indigenous Land and Justice Research Group and Institute for Sustainable Futures) for assisting to compile this overview.

Thanks also to Daniel McIntyre at the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations for additional input and editing.

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First Peoples data and information for Victoria

What is the First Peoples population and demographics in Victoria?

In Victoria 66,000 people identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the Australian Bureau of Statistic's [2021 Census of Population and Housing](#). Of this number, 94.2% identified as Aboriginal, 3.2% identified as Torres Strait Islander and 2.6% identified as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented 1.0% of Victoria's population.

In 2021, the Victorian Local Government Area (LGA) with the most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was Greater Geelong, followed by Greater Bendigo and Greater Shepparton. The greatest number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, according to the 2021 census, live in the Greater Geelong Local Government Area at 1.3% of the LGA population and 5.4% of the overall Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

The average size of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in Victoria was 3 people in both 2021 and 2011.

Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households (76.3%) were family households, including 3.4% with more than one family living together. One in six households (16.6%) were made up of people who lived alone while a small proportion were group households (7.0%).

The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in Victoria were renters through a real estate agent (31.3%), owned with a mortgage (29.5%), owned outright (15.4%) or rented through a state or territory housing authority (10.0%).

Aboriginal land estate, politics or organisations and governance

The restitution of land to Aboriginal people in Victoria has been negotiated since 1970. Since this time several mechanisms have been developed that have overseen a small percentage of the state's land returned to Aboriginal communities, in recognition of Aboriginal rights and interests in Country and Traditional Owners.

Commencing in 1970 through to 1992, discrete areas of land were returned to Aboriginal people under the *Aboriginal Lands Act 1970* (Vic), *Aboriginal Lands Act 1991* (Vic), *Aboriginal Land (Manatunga Land) Act 1992* (Vic) and *Aboriginal Land (Lake Condah and Framlingham Forest) Act 1987* (Cth) (at the request of the Victoria Government).

These laws were site-specific rather than a mechanism for hearing further claims for land, except near the specific areas listed in the legislation. Of these six land recovery laws, two relate to the return of land in inner city Melbourne to the [Aboriginal Advancement League](#) for Aboriginal controlled service delivery, and four returned land to Aboriginal community control that had either directly or indirectly been part of the protectorate that developed from 1850.

With the commencement of recognition of Native Title rights and interests in 1993, a different approach commenced that recognised ongoing continuous connection to Country. Considerable work was dedicated to seeking recognition under Native Title with limited outcomes achieved. This included the much-criticised decision by Australian courts in relation to Yorta Yorta people and their country.

By 2010 a more substantial land rights response was developed that offered a viable alternative to the Commonwealth native title process while still operationalising the Native Title Act. Unlike earlier laws that were site specific, the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* (Vic) (TOS Act) emphasised a series of Recognition and Settlement agreements drawn between Aboriginal people and the state relating to land transfer agreement, land use activity agreement, natural resources agreement and funding agreements.

By entering into an agreement with the Victorian Government under the TOS Act, Traditional Owners agree to withdraw any native title claims and suspend any future claims. Under the TOS Act, there is no requirement to recognise or extinguish native title. Instead, the TOS Act enables the State's recognition of a group of people as the Traditional Owners for a particular area, together with other negotiated benefits.

A recognition and settlement agreement under the TOS Act is underpinned by the registration of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) on the Register of Indigenous Land Use Agreements.

In addition, native title has been determined to exist in some areas under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) and some areas of land have also been returned through buybacks by the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ISLC).

Aboriginal land rights and interests continue to evolve in Victoria. For example, an [Independent Review](#) of the *Aboriginal Lands Act 1970* (Vic) was completed in August 2023. That review investigated whether the legislation was still the best way to give effect to Aboriginal ownership of the Lake Tyers and Framlingham estates. The Victorian Government has accepted all 42 recommendations with a program of reform being developed.

What about laws for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic) (AH Act) and the related *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018* (Vic) protect Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria.

The AH Act establishes the [Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council](#), consisting of 11 members appointed by the Minister, responsible for: advocating for Traditional Owners and advising the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on cultural heritage matters; [Registered Aboriginal Parties](#) (RAPs) have place-based authority, and provide advice and expertise on cultural heritage in their region; the [Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register](#) records Aboriginal places, objects and knowledge; and [Cultural Heritage Management Plans](#), enforceable through sanctions and penalties, to prevent the destruction of Aboriginal cultural heritage. In practice RAPs perform functions beyond these statutory requirements, for example for programs and initiatives by government and other land managers, such as the grant programs outlined below.

There are currently [11 RAPs covering 75% of Victoria](#) and Traditional Owner Groups await formal recognition in the remaining 25% of the state.

Are First Nations organised around traditional ownership structures or do other institutional arrangements prevail?

First Peoples in Victoria have several institutional arrangements but primarily are organised around traditional ownership structures.

The peak representative body for all First Nations people in Victoria is the [First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria](#).

The Assembly represents Traditional Owners of Victoria as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people resident in Victoria. The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria (the Assembly) is the independent and democratically elected body to represent Traditional Owners of Country and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria. As part of the Victorian government's commitment to implementing the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full, the Assembly was established under the *Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018* (Treaty Act). It is responsible for representing the voice of First Peoples in Treaty negotiations including overseeing the establishment of required institutional structures. The functions of the Assembly can be expected to expand via the Treaty process.

The Assembly consists of two types of members, Reserved Members selected by Traditional Owner Groups, and elected General Members.

Formal recognition of Reserved Member in this context means having a native title Prescribed Body Corporate (also known as Registered Native Title Body Corporates (RNTBC), being a Registered Aboriginal Party under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic), or having a Recognition and Settlement Agreement with the state through the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* (Vic).

General members are elected from an electorate consisting of First Nations residents of Victoria, and Victorian Traditional Owners resident anywhere.

At the most recent elections, 22 General Members were elected from five Regions: Metropolitan (10), South West (3), North West (3), North East (3) and South East (3).

There are currently 11 Traditional Owner Groups formally recognised under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth), the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* (Vic) or the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic):

- [Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Gunaikurnai Land & Waters Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [First People of the Millewa Mallee Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Taungurung Land and Waters Council Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation](#).

Wemba Wemba Aboriginal Corporation has submitted an application for recognition by the Treaty Assembly.

What rights and interests to land and waters do First Nations hold in the jurisdiction? Are there First Nations land / native title claims remaining to be resolved? What opportunities exist to develop projects on the tenure held by First Nations?

The total Aboriginal land estate in Victoria is approximately 18,759 km².

Most land where rights and interests have been acknowledged via Native Title Agreements or Recognition and Settlement Agreements under the TOS Act have pre-existing management

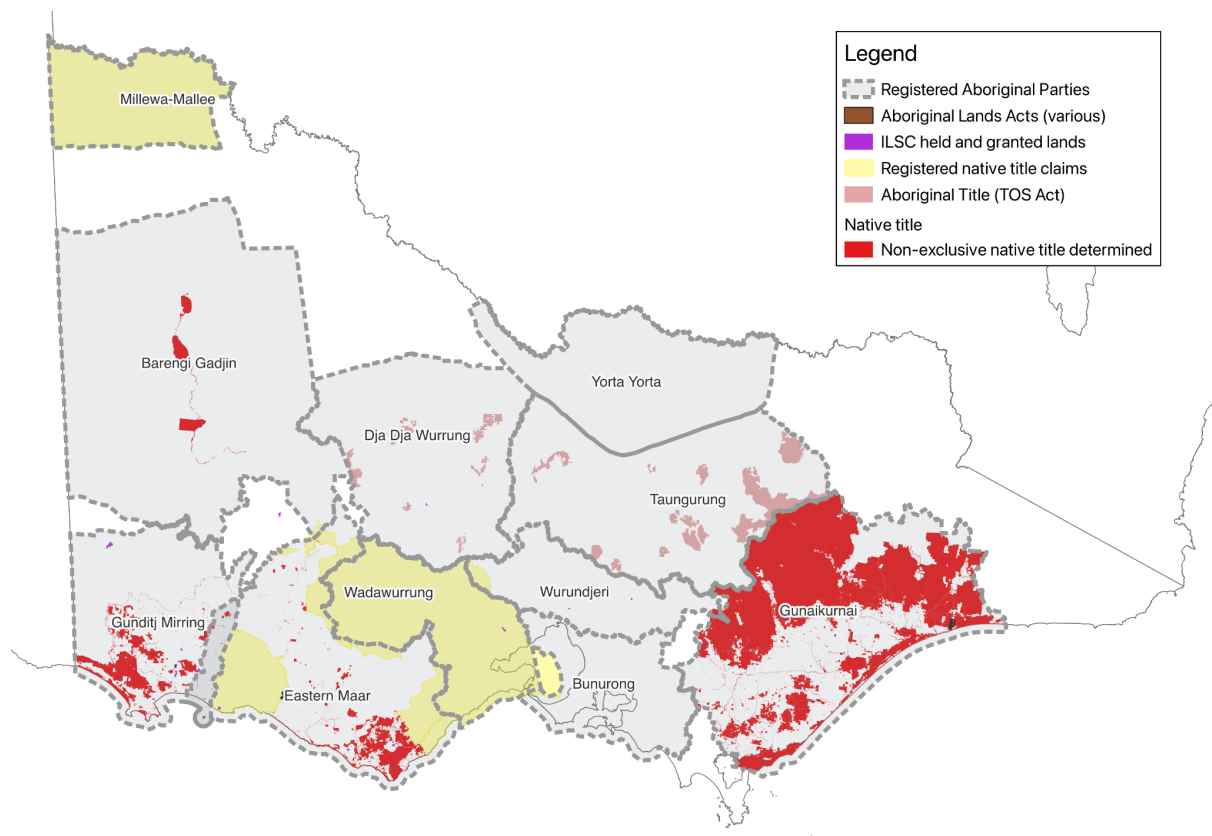
regimes, such as National Parks, State Reserves and/ or land use limited by cultural heritage regulations such as that acquired under the various Aboriginal Land Acts (described above). Subsequently, there is limited land held by First Nations in Victoria that can be developed for commercial purposes.

As negotiation and settlement processes continue, it is likely that recognition of land and sea country rights and interests under Australian and Victorian laws will continue to evolve during the lifetime of the energy transformation.

Summary of Aboriginal land holdings in Victoria

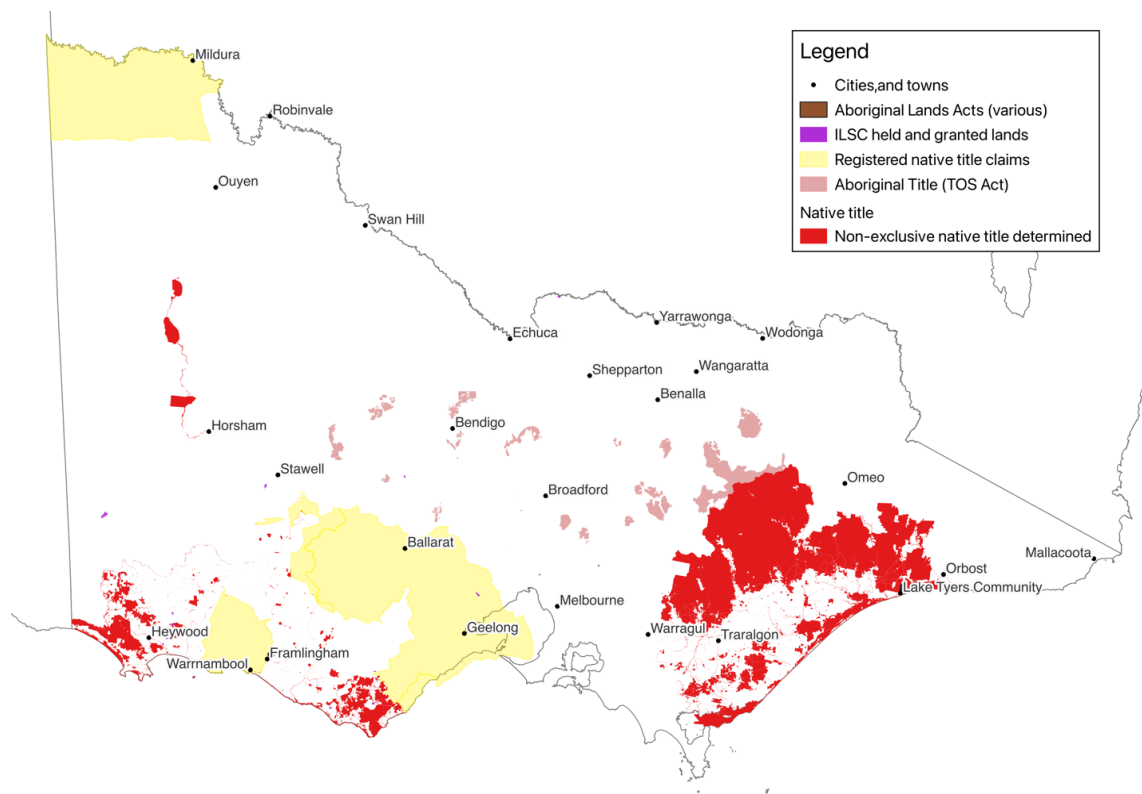
- Aboriginal Lands Acts (five, various): 29.0 km²
- ILSC lands: 53.9 km²
- TOS Act: 5,789.1 km²
- Native Title, less overlap with any of the above: 12,887.0 km²
- Victoria total: 227,496.2 km²

Figure 1: Land Tenure in Victoria



Sources: Data Vic, Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, National Native Title Tribunal, and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System.

NB: this map does not include Aboriginal Title land granted under the Barengi Gadjin Agreement, negotiated under the TOS Act



Sources: Data Vic, Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, National Native Title Tribunal, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System, and Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation.

NB: this map does not include Aboriginal Title land granted under the Barengi Gadjin Agreement, negotiated under the TOS Act

Table 1: Summary of Statutory land recovery and Traditional Ownership recognition Victoria

Statute	Landowner	Form of title	Private sale	Leasing or subleasing
<i>Aboriginal Lands Act 1970</i> (Vic)	Aboriginal trust consisting of residents - gave ownership of the former missions at Framlingham and Lake Tyers to its residents	Perpetual licence to occupy and use land, and estate in fee simple	No	Yes, subject to conditions
<i>Aboriginal Lands (Aborigines' Advancement League (Watt Street, Northcote) Act 1982</i> (Vic) and <i>Aboriginal Land (Northcote Land) Act 1989</i> (Vic)	Aborigines Advancement League, a community-controlled organisation and registered benevolent society under the Hospitals and Charities Act 1958	Temporary reserve for the purpose of an Aboriginal community purposes, for as long as the League is in operation	No	Yes, subject to conditions
<i>Aboriginal Land (Lake Condah and Framlingham Forest) Act 1987</i> (Cth)	Specified Aboriginal corporations	Freehold.	No	Yes, subject to conditions
<i>Aboriginal Lands Act 1991</i> (Vic)	Specified Aboriginal corporations	Freehold.	No	Yes, subject to conditions
<i>Aboriginal Land (Manatunga Land) Act 1992</i> (Vic)	Murray Valley Aboriginal Cooperative, an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation	Freehold.	No	Yes, subject to conditions
<i>Native Title Act 1993</i> (Cth)	Registered Native Title Body Corporates and Prescribed Body Corporates	Native Title (exclusive or non-exclusive)	No	Yes, subject to an Indigenous Land Use Agreement
<i>Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010</i> (Vic)	Traditional owner groups	Inalienable fee simple or ordinary freehold	May include ordinary freehold - If so, yes, subject to conditions	Yes, subject a Recognition and Settlement Agreement
<i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> (Vic)	Registered Aboriginal Parties are recognised as authorities on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage within a particular region	No land ownership rights are conferred	N/A	N/A

What are the prominent First Nations institutions in Victoria?

As well as the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria and the Traditional Owner Corporations described above, there are a number of other First Nations institutions in Victoria.

The work of peak Aboriginal organisations has been formalised over the last few years as part of the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#). Peak organisations explain that the National Agreement was developed in genuine partnership between the [Coalition of Peaks](#) and Australian governments.

There are also many organisations that operate at local and regional levels, some with land holdings, that play an important community role. These are not ‘peaks’ in the formal sense and in relation to Closing the Gap, but operate with accepted authority. The Victorian Closing the Gap Partnership Forum includes a number of Aboriginal peak bodies which work and advise governments on their Victorian commitments under Closing the Gap. There are a number of other relevant forums which bring together Aboriginal peak bodies and sector experts to provide advice to government, such as the Yuma Yirramboi Koori Caucus and the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy Working Group.

Other peak and prominent Aboriginal controlled organisations provide sector advice, leadership and service delivery:

- Aboriginal Community Elders Services Inc (ACES)
- Aboriginal Housing Victoria
- Federation of Victorian Traditional Owners Corporations
- Koorie Youth Council
- Loddon Mallee Aboriginal Reference Group
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
- Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd
- Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages
- Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated
- Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
- Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
- Aboriginal Advancement League.
- Victorian Closing the Gap Partnership Forum.

Does the Victorian government provide funding or support to First Nations representative organisations in any way, and specifically for renewable energy outcomes (e.g. PBCs, Land Councils, Traditional Owner Corporations, etc.)?

The Victorian Government has established three funding programs to enable Traditional Owners to engage with the renewable energy sector.

Traditional Owner Renewable Energy Program

In November 2020, the Victorian Government announced the ‘[Traditional Owner Renewable Energy Program](#)’, known as TOREP. As the first renewable energy grant program for Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations, it includes a number of elements and \$1.1 million in grant funding

(equating to \$100,000 grant for each of the RAPs). The Government reports that nine RAPs received funding for a range of renewable energy community projects, that included:

- installation and usage of renewable energy generation and storage
- feasibility studies and business case development
- renewable energy policies and strategies
- community engagement and workshops on renewable energy.

First Peoples Adoption of Renewable Energy Program (FPARE Program)

The FPARE program aims to build renewable energy capacity and capability for Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities through education and awareness raising, information-sharing programs, and the development of renewable energy plans and documents. All Victorian Traditional Owner corporations were eligible for up to \$50000, to date 5 RAPs received the funding.

Traditional Owner Offshore Wind Engagement Program (TOOWE Program)

The objective of the TOOWE Program is to strengthen resources to those TOCs being impacted by the establishment of the OSW industry, to enable them to effectively engage with the OSW industry and government. It was only available to 4 coastal TOCs who will be directly impacted by offshore wind developments. TOCs self-determine the level of resourcing that is needed to participate in the establishment of Offshore Wind in Victoria and effectively engage with the industry and government, with the department assessing this based on the magnitude and complexity of the impact of Offshore Wind for each TOC.

The program will fund positions, resources, services and equipment to support TOCs to engage with the Offshore Wind which could include:

- Developing TOC OSW statements or policies
- Engage with and respond to OSW proponents
- Develop partnership and collaboration agreements with OWEV and VicGrid
- Undertake research in relation to OSW development to gain a factual understanding of the impacts and opportunities of OSW.
- Increase understanding of tangible and intangible cultural values on Land and Sea Country in relation to OSW development

Other funding

Other funds have been provided to TOCs from VicGrid to enable affected Traditional Owners to participate in planning of major grid development projects.

An overview of the capacity and capability to negotiate and conclude complex agreements and undertake strategic commercial activities?

The capacity and capability of TOCs varies greatly based on a range of factors, including the levels of recognition under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) (NTA) and the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* (Vic) (TOS Act), the amount of time since they were first formed, and organisational stability

and leadership. The scale of development represented by the clean energy transformation is unprecedented in Victoria since the TOCs were formed.

Over the time that Traditional Owner representative bodies have existed in Victoria there has been a limited history of negotiating complex agreements with large scale operators as there has been in other parts of Australia. This means there is limited experience negotiating agreements with large scale project proponents and for large commercial operations.

However, there has been significant work dedicated to seeking appropriate forms of recognition through negotiation with government, and many First Nations organisations and TOCs have negotiated and achieved significant outcomes with government and the private sector.

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) have prepared a (draft) discussion paper titled: 'Gunaikurnai and Offshore Energy: Aspirations for a better future'. The document is intended to provide proponents with an outline of the principles, aspirations and expectations GLaWAC have leading into any commercial agreement.

For large projects, a description of potential levers, capacities and capabilities to negotiate an equitable benefit?

Renewable Energy projects can be expected to be largely situated on tenure types for which Traditional Owners currently have limited recognised rights to negotiate agreements under the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth) and Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Vic)- on freehold title and offshore areas. The Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic) and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) provide some leverage points for Traditional Owners to protect cultural heritage impacted by renewable energy projects, including in Commonwealth waters.

There are a number of reform processes which have the potential to establish levers for Traditional Owners to negotiate equitable benefits from renewable energy projects and to protect and manage impacts on cultural heritage and values.

One example are those outlined in the [Victorian Transmission Investment Framework](#) (VTIF), which the Victorian Government is legislating in early 2024. The Victorian Government will introduce legislation in early 2024 to establish the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework (VTIF).

The VTIF includes reference to 'Partnering with Traditional Owners throughout transmission planning and development' (accessed June 2023). The VTIF makes reference to First Nations rights, recognition and self-determination. VicGrid, a body within the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's (DEECA's) [Pupangarli Marnmarnepu 'Owning Our Future' Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy \(2020-2025\)](#) states that it 'is committed to partnering with Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal Victorians to identify key considerations and concerns, and benefits and opportunities of interest to Traditional Owners, Aboriginal communities and other Aboriginal stakeholders'. The VTIF outlines approaches to strategic land use planning and benefit sharing, and therefore will be a key determinant of the outcomes for Traditional Owners from the renewable energy transition.

VTIF states that VicGrid will administer REZ Development Funds for hosting communities of major transmission and REZ infrastructure. The purpose of the REZ Development Funds is to coordinate financial contributions by project proponents towards regional infrastructure and programs in each major transmission development and REZ area, amplifying community benefits from energy development across transmission, storage and generation projects. This includes providing

dedicated benefits to impacted Traditional Owner groups and Aboriginal Victorians. VTIF outlines the Strategic Land Use Assessment process, which includes approaches to ensure Traditional Owner values, priorities and concerns are taken into consideration at the earliest stage of development, earlier than is required under the *Environmental Effects Act 1978* (Vic).

The Offshore Wind Implementation Statement 2 outlines that the Victorian Government is looking to introduce a bill in 2024 that will amend land legislation to allow offshore wind developers to obtain tenure over Crown land and amend electricity safety legislation to allow the installation of energy infrastructure on public land in onshore and offshore areas. There is potential for these amendments to provide greater recognition of Traditional Owners rights and interests, including in Sea Country.

Other levers will apply too: both for onshore and offshore clean energy infrastructure proposals (generation, storage and transmission).

An overview of just some of these levers in relation to offshore activities is described in the First Nations Clean Energy Network's [Summary of key legislation applying to offshore renewable development areas](#). These and other levers will exist for onshore areas. It is important that groups seek legal or other professional advice on specific matters and circumstances of interest or issues relevant to developments.

Protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage

First Peoples (in what is now known as Victoria) have an enduring, strong and proud history, which comprises (and continues) complex ownership and land stewardship systems stretching over many thousands of years. During that time physical evidence of activities has been left that now survive as cultural heritage places and objects, along with intangible places, including places of spiritual, economic or ceremonial significance.

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic) is the primary piece of legislation for the management and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible).

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic) establishes the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council (VAHC), which is an expert advisory council comprising Victorian Traditional Owners appointed by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. The VAHC receives applications from Traditional Owner corporations to become Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) for their traditional areas.

RAPs are empowered under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic) to make statutory decisions about their cultural heritage. RAPs are required to be representative of all Traditional Owners within their RAP area, and are required to be a corporation registered under the Commonwealth's *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (Cth).

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic) also requires that where a native title holder applies to the VAHC to become a RAP, the VAHC must appoint it for its native title area.

Depending on the nature of the activity and where it is taking place, proponents / developers may require a [Cultural Heritage Management Plan](#) (CHMP), which is a written report prepared by a Heritage Advisor which includes an assessment of the potential impact of a proposed activity on Aboriginal cultural heritage. The *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018* (Vic) set out when a CHMP will be required. In Victoria's planning scheme, final statutory authority allowing works to commence typically cannot be issued until a CHMP has been approved where one is required.

Commonwealth legislation also provides protections for Aboriginal cultural heritage.

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) for example is focused on areas of national significance. In December 2022, an Independent review highlighted [gaps in EPBC Act](#) and whether it is filling its objectives as they relate to the role of First Peoples in protecting and conserving biodiversity, working partnership with and promoting the respectful use of knowledge). The EPBC Act accordingly provides protection to those places or objects that are listed on the National Heritage List and the Commonwealth Heritage List, and are therefore deemed to be of “national environmental significance”.

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* (Cth) can also be used by any First Nations person, once thresholds of threat and particular significance are met, to request that the Environment Minister use their discretion to protect any area or object where it is under threat of injury or desecration and where state or territory law does not provide for effective protection.

Relevantly for offshore wind projects, there is also the *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018* (Cth).

The Federal Government has released [draft guidelines](#) for working in the near and offshore environment to protect Underwater Cultural Heritage. These guidelines go further than the requirements in the *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018* (Cth). A number of submissions on these guidelines noted that the *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018* (Cth) presently doesn’t ensure that First Nations underwater cultural heritage is properly identified, defined and protected.

What are key and recent issues relating to economic development and First Nations in Victoria?

In Victorian preparations are underway for Treaty negotiations. This will likely see one overarching State-wide Treaty and multiple local Treaties with individual Traditional Owner groups. Local Treaties will likely include political representation, rights and interests in land and water, and economic development. Local Treaties could include rights and interests in relation to the energy transformation.

As part of the Treaty process the [Self-Determination Fund](#) is being established, which will serve two functions:

- To begin with, it will enable Traditional Owners to enter Treaty negotiations with the Government on a more level playing field.
- Further down the track, it will empower Traditional Owner communities to build capacity, wealth and greater prosperity for future generations.

It can be expected that further Recognition and Settlement Agreements will be reached in coming years, which included provisions related to enabling economic development opportunities.

What do we know about existing relationships between First Nations and the renewable energy sector in the jurisdiction?

Like other parts of Australia, renewable energy is being deployed in Victoria at a rapid pace. As well as land based solar and wind projects, off-shore wind projects in particular, are underway in Victoria. Some TOCs have used funds available through the various state government Traditional Owner Renewable Energy funding programs to develop renewable energy strategies for their nation. Some examples are provided below.

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation

The [Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation](#) (GLaWAC), for example, as the Prescribed Body Corporate that represents the Gunaikurnai people Traditional Owners, [explain](#) that their Gunaikurnai Country has been the centre of Victoria's energy economy for more than a century and continues to be as the energy transformation occurs, and 'GLaWAC needs your guidance as we make ourselves a critical partner in this journey'.

GLaWAC outlines seven aspirations that underpin their interest in engaging in the energy transformation:

1. To have a strong, healthy and happy mob
2. To heal our Country
3. To protect and practice our culture
4. To be respected as Traditional Owners of our Country
5. To have the right to use, manage and control our Country
6. To be economically independent
7. A strong focus on learning

Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (Djaara)

In May 2023 [Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation](#) (Djaara) launched the [Dja Dja Wurrung Climate Change Strategy: Turning 'wrong way' climate, 'right way'](#). The Strategy outlines the importance of DJAARA leadership in both mitigating climate change and adapting to the impacts of a changing climate. They explain their approach as 'healing climate' that connects healing climate, healing Country and healing Dja Dja Wurrung People.

The Dja Dja Wurrung Climate Change Strategy brings together work that Djaara is already leading on Country – including around natural resource management, cultural burning, forest gardening and Country based healing. The Strategy follows the publication in 2022 of Djaara's [Renewable Energy](#) and [Forest Gardening](#) strategies. Across these documents they outline Dja Dja Wurrung leadership as necessary to address climate change in central Victoria (see [here](#) for additional Djaara resources).

Djaara are leading participants in the [Greater Bendigo Climate Collaboration](#), a group that brings government, business, community organisations, schools and households together to work collaboratively towards zero emissions in Greater Bendigo by 2030.

Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

[Barengi Gadjin Land Council](#) are also working on their strategy for engaging in renewable energy and climate change mitigation and adaptation, which has included Renewable Energy Country Planning and other activities, including close engagement with developers and their own clean energy projects.

Are there energy security/access/justice issues for First Nations in Victoria. If so, what are they and why do they exist? Which section of the First Nations population is most impacted?

Extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, as a result of climate change are predicted to become more frequent and severe in south-eastern Australia. Lowering emissions by moving to cleaner, more affordable energy and taking action across the economy is part of the solution.

Healthy, energy efficient homes and appliances can help lower household energy bills, lower carbon pollution and keep residents safe from extreme weather events. Often people who most need energy efficiency upgrades can't afford them or because they may be renting.

Many Australians also struggle to pay energy bills, which have increased over the past decade, putting a strain on household budgets - forcing households to ration energy use which can have significant detrimental impacts on the health and wellbeing of households.

At the time of writing, we were not aware of any specific studies that looked at the experiences of First Peoples in Victoria with energy, although as described above the majority of Aboriginal households in Victoria rent their homes via real estate agents or housing authorities which presents barriers to accessing government household solar and energy efficiency programs.

[Other studies have looked at rates of disconnection in Victoria](#), finding that key factors include:

- Low and/or unpredictable household income (including income support)
- The cost of electricity (including the adequacy of alleviating measures such as concessions)
- Consumption levels
 - High consumption needs (due to household size, life cycle stages, illness etc.)
 - Inefficient consumption (due to low quality housing stock, appliances, etc.)

That [study on disconnections](#) also found that the postcodes in Victoria with high disconnection numbers were predominantly located in regional areas.

Since that study was released, Victoria has now implemented the 'Payment Difficulty Framework', which requires energy retailers to take a more proactive and tailored approach to customers struggling to meet their energy costs.

Despite the new framework, and despite disconnection rates dropping, [a report](#) by Victoria's Energy and Water Ombudsman found that many vulnerable customers were missing out on the protections meant to be afforded to them through the new Payment Difficulty Framework.

Programs in Victoria addressing energy efficiency upgrades for households are addressed in this paper further, below.

The Victorian Government has recently released a [gas substitution roadmap](#) as the state takes efforts to reduce emissions. This will require new homes to be all-electric from 1 January 2024.

The transition to all-electric homes (electrification) will impact households differently. For lower-income households, there are a range of specific issues that will need to be addressed, which have been identified in reports, including '[Enabling electrification: addressing the barriers to moving off gas faced by lower-income households](#)', and '[Getting off gas, why, how and who should pay?](#)'.

The issue of residential electrification is also presently subject to an [inquiry by the Senate Economics References Committee](#), which is due to deliver its findings before the last sitting day in 2024.

Is there finance / funding available for First Nations renewable energy projects?

The Traditional Owner Renewable Energy Program (\$100,000) could have been used to build small renewable installations.

Beyond this program there are existing programs aimed at enabling finance or funding that have potential for being used for First Nations energy projects.

Policies or Programs for First Nation Peoples

Policy title	Key Initiatives
<p>Pupangarli Marnmarnepu' Owning Our Future' Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020-2025</p>	<p>This strategy incorporates Aboriginal self-determination into corporate and business planning in the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).</p> <p>Focusing on the four domains of people, systems, accountability and Country, the strategy aims to identify processes within DEECA that create barriers to the self-determination of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians.</p> <p>Partnerships due to this strategy have resulted in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued implementation of Native Title and other Traditional Owner settlements. • Development of a state-wide Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Strategy. • Reintroduction of Aboriginal languages in land and built-environment processes. • Support for the return of cultural burning • The establishment of an Aboriginal water program. • Development of more community-centred partnerships that value Aboriginal perspectives and expertise. • The Budj Bim Lidar Project has used laser imaging to identify ancient aquaculture and land management artefacts across the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.
<p>Traditional Owner Renewable Energy Program (TOREP)</p>	<p>This program supports Traditional Owner Corporations in designing and implementing their own renewable energy projects. The program was announced in November 2020 and grant applications closed in February 2021.</p> <p>A total of \$1.1 million was made available in grant funding, with all Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) eligible to apply for grants of up to \$100,000 each. To date, nine RAPs have received funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation • Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation • First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation • Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation • Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation • Taungurung Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation • Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation • Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation • Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation

The projects are scheduled for completion in June 2023. Some project activities include:

- Installation and usage of renewable energy generation and storage systems.
- Feasibility studies and business case development.
- Formulation of renewable energy policies and strategies.
- Community engagement initiatives and educational workshops centred on renewable energy.

As of March 2022, the first of the nine TOREP projects was completed by the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

As part of the project, solar generation and storage systems are now integrated into two buildings in Ballarat and Ballan.

First People's Adoption of Renewable Energy Program (FPARE)

Similar to the TOREP, the FPARE program encourages Traditional Owner Corporations (TOCs) to identify and pursue renewable energy opportunities in local communities. This program facilitates the development of energy initiatives tailored specifically to TOCs, creates informational resources to share energy knowledge, assists in accessing government programs and builds on projects funded under the TOREP program. A total of \$960,000 was made available for funding.

The program was announced in March 2023 and applications closed in April 2023. In July 2023, it was announced that five applicants succeeded in the program's first round. The successful applicants were:

- Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Djaara (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation)
- First People of Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation
- Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation
- Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation

\$450,000 was allocated in the first round, comprised of \$75,000 and \$100,000 grants. Funded projects include:

- Piloting an energy generation agreement with a host business site
- Supporting the transition to an electric vehicle
- Developing a renewable energy statement
- Providing dedicated staff to lead on renewable energy initiatives.

Victorian Energy Policy

Overview of Victorian energy policy

Victoria is attempting to engineer a transition from one of the dirtiest power systems in the world – due to its reliance on emissions-intensive brown coal – to 95% renewable energy by 2035. Brown coal still accounts for around two-thirds of electricity generation in Victoria.

The Victorian government has set out an ambitious transition agenda consisting of projects such as Renewable Energy Zones, the development of offshore wind, battery storage targets, and energy efficiency and electrification. The Victorian government is also prioritising the development of its offshore wind sector, due to Victoria's windy coastal climate and its limited land for alternate renewable technologies such as solar farms.

Traditionally a highly gas-dependent state, the Victorian Government has positioned itself as a leader in residential electrification. The Victorian government recently [announced](#) a ban on gas connections in new residential buildings from 2024, while implementing additional programs that encourage the uptake of residential electrification.

The public sector is taking a leading role in the transformation. The [Victorian Renewable Energy and Storage Target](#) (VRET) auctions run by the government have provided developers with investment certainty for renewable projects. The two phases (VRET1 and VRET2) are set to deliver projects amounting to 1,423 megawatts (MW) of power generation and 600 megawatt hours (MWh) of battery storage once completed.

The [State Electricity Commission](#) (SEC) has been re-established with a \$1 billion fund to contract 4.5 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy and storage to replace Loy Yang A coal power station scheduled for closure in 2035.

The [SEC's Strategic Plan \(2023-2035\)](#) includes a section "Our partnership with First Peoples", which sets out five guiding principles to guide the SEC's operations, being:

1. Recognising, prioritising and embedding the unique knowledge and wisdom of Traditional Owners, which includes caring for and speaking for Country.
2. Establishing a renewed relationship with First Peoples in Victoria to ensure that First Peoples can share in the benefits of Victoria's renewable energy transformation
3. Empowering Traditional Owners and Victorian Aboriginal communities to identify their evolving aspirations and determine their relationship with the SEC.
4. Embedding governance principles, policies and processes to ensure the collective support and decision-making of First Peoples.
5. Ensuring Victoria's energy transition preserves, restores and strengthens the rights of Traditional Owners and does not diminish the rights that have been secured to date.

Victoria has implemented a number of other First Nations initiatives such as:

- retrofits for Aboriginal housing,
- two programs to support Traditional Owners implement their own renewable energy projects (First People's Adoption of Renewable Energy Program, Traditional Owner Renewable Energy Program) and
- requirements for engagement with Traditional Owners as part of VRET.














Notably, Victoria does *not* include targets for First Nations participation in VRET equivalent to the approach in New South Wales.

Current energy mix

While renewable generation has increased, brown coal remains the dominant source of energy over the last year (see **Figure 2** below):

- Renewable energy sources made up 41% of total consumption.
- Victoria's renewable energy mix consisted of wind (22.8%), solar rooftop (9.1%), hydro (5.9%) and solar farms (3.2%).
- Victoria still relies significantly on brown coal (67.1%), supplemented by 1.5% of gas.
- Over the last year, Victoria imported 5.2% from and exported 15.1% of its energy generation to other Australian states.

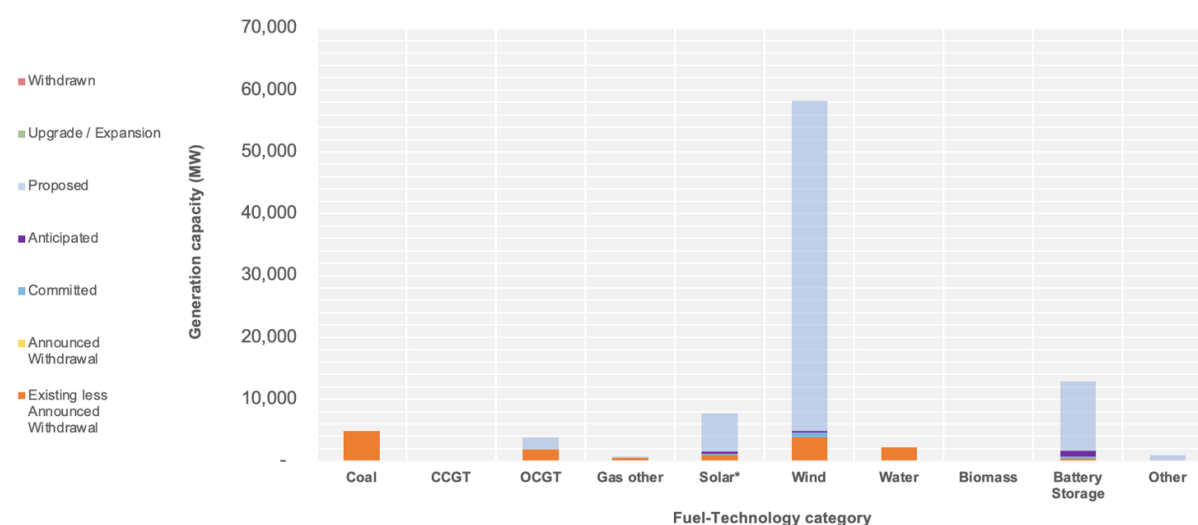
Figure 2: Electricity Generation, Victoria, September 2022-2023

5 Sep 2022 – 10 Sep 2023			
Default 	Energy GWh	Contribution to demand	Av.Value \$/MWh
Sources			
 Solar (Rooftop)	4,357	9.1%	\$9.76
 Solar (Utility)	1,545	3.2%	\$29.28
 Wind	10,890	22.8%	\$43.08
 Hydro	2,809	5.9%	\$136.33
 Battery (Discharging)	146	0.3%	\$135.04
 Gas (OCGT)	451	0.9%	\$199.26
 Gas (Steam)	280	0.6%	\$177.28
 Coal (Brown)	32,077	67.1%	\$76.07
 Imports	2,466	5.2%	-\$58.29
Loads			
	-7,390		
 Exports	-7,211	-15.1%	\$101.16
 Battery (Charging)	-179	-0.4%	\$24.31
Net	47,632		
 Renewables	19,601	41.0%	

Source: [OpenNem](#). Accessed 11 September 2023.

The latest version of AEMO's Generator Information shows a large wind project pipeline in Victoria (**Figure 3**). There are currently around 53,400 MW of wind projects under development, alongside 11,300 MW of battery storage and 6,250 MW of solar farms. Some 1,900 MW of open cycle gas turbine facilities are also proposed, the biggest being the Tarrone Power Station which will initially supply 600 MW to the grid.

Figure 3: Electricity Project Pipeline



Source: AEMO, [Generator Information](#), Accessed 12 September 2023.

Victoria's three remaining coal-fired power plants, Yallourn, Loy Yang A and Loy Yang B and are scheduled for closure in 2028, 2035 and 2046, respectively. The owner of Yallourn Power Station, EnergyAustralia, negotiated with the Victorian government to close the power station four years earlier than planned. This is a result of coal-powered plants struggling to compete with the cheaper operating costs of renewable energy sources.

The Victorian Government has taken an active role in contracting for new renewable energy. Under the first phase of the Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET1), it provided long-term contracts to build five new energy projects after a competitive auction, delivering 800 MW in renewable generation:

- Berrybank Wind Farm (180 MW)
- Cohuna Solar Farm (34 MW)
- Dundonnell Wind Farm (336 MW)
- Mortlake South Wind Farm (158 MW)
- Winton Solar Farm (99 MW).

The second phase (VRET2) has enabled six new projects to proceed, totalling 623 MW of renewable generation and 600 MWh of battery storage. The projects currently under development are:

- Derby Solar Project (95 MW with 100 MWh)
- Fulham Solar Farm & DC Coupled Battery (80 MW with 100 MWh)
- Kiamal Solar Farm (150 MW with 300 MWh)
- Frasers Solar Farm (77 MW)
- Horsham Solar Farm (118.8 MW with 100 MWh)
- Glenrowan Solar Farm (102 MW).

Key energy market institutions

Institution Types	Organisations and Roles
Electricity Networks	Five electricity distributors own and manage the distribution infrastructure across Victoria. They are:

- Citipower
- Jemena
- Powercor Australia
- AusNet Services
- United Energy Distribution
- Essential Energy.

The electricity transmission system is owned and maintained by AusNet Services.

Regulators

The Essential Services Commission (ESC) regulates Victoria's energy, water and transport sectors. ESC fulfils roles including:

- Management and administration of licences to energy businesses
- Enforcing compliance with regulation by licence holders
- Creation of new regulation.

Government agencies

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) (previously Department of Environment, Land, Water Planning (DELWP):

- Increases the affordability and accessibility of energy services
- Ensures the energy system is secure, reliable and safe
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions from Victoria's energy system
- Increases consumer control over household energy costs
- Increases jobs and economic development in the energy sector.

State Electricity Commission (SEC)

The State Electricity Commission (SEC):

- Investing \$1 billion directly in new renewable energy and storage projects to deliver 4.5 GW which is equivalent capacity to the Loy Yang A scheduled to close in 2035
- Operates the SEC Centre of Training Excellence, which will coordinate and work with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority to accredit courses in renewable energy
- The Victorian Government is establishing a 10-year plan for the SEC (see above for information about the SEC's Strategic Plan).

Clean Energy Targets and Strategies

Policy Domain	Targets and Strategies
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	<p>Victoria has legislated a target of net-zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2045, under the <i>Victorian Climate Change Act 2017</i> (Vic). Current legislated interim targets (relative to 2005 levels) are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28% - 33% by 2025 • 45% - 50% by 2030 • 75% - 80% by 2035 <p>Future legislation is expected for 2040, 2045 and 2050 targets.</p>
Renewable Energy	<p>Victoria has legislated targets to supply 40% renewable energy by 2025 and 50% by 2030, under the <i>Renewable Energy (Jobs and</i></p>

Investment) Act 2017(Vic). Victoria has announced their intention to legislate updated targets of 65% by 2030 and 95% by 2035.

Energy Storage

Victoria aims to have:

- at least 2.6 GW of energy storage capacity by 2030
- at least 6.3 GW by 2035

achieved through the [Renewable Energy Action Plan](#), Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET) auctions 1 and 2, [Renewable Energy Zone Fund](#), and [Neighbourhood Battery Initiative](#).

Offshore Wind Target

Victoria targets:

- At least 2 GW of offshore generation capacity by 2023
- 4 GW by 2035
- 9 GW by 2040.

This will be carried out according to Offshore Wind Implementation Statements [One](#) and [Two](#).

Energy Efficiency

Under the [Victorian Energy Upgrades \(VEU\)](#) program for households, businesses and industry, there are legislated annual energy efficiency liabilities for energy retailers to reduce electricity and gas use. Targets increase annually from 6.9 million certificates awarded in 2023 to 7.3 million certificates awarded in 2025 (each certificate is equivalent to a tonne of CO-2).

Gas and Electrification

The [Gas Substitution Roadmap](#) aims to transition Victoria away from fossil gas by electrifying home and business gas uses such as water heating, cooking and air-conditioning. There is no end-date target but interim targets include:

- Removing gas connections in new households from 2024 onwards.
- Phasing out VEU incentives for gas appliances by the end of 2023.

The [Solar Homes Program](#) aims to promote the installation of renewable and energy-efficient technologies in 778,500 homes across Victoria over ten years from 2018 - 2028.

The [7 Star Homes Program](#) aims to promote building energy efficiency standards. There is no overarching target for this initiative.

Key Renewable Energy Policies

Policy title	Key Initiatives
Victorian Climate Change Strategy 2021	<p>The Victorian Climate Change Strategy 2021 sets out a five-point plan for securing net-zero emissions. Actions are grouped into five categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A clean energy economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitioning away from fossil fuels to renewable energy

- Ensuring an affordable and reliable energy system
 - Building greener homes and buildings
 - Expanding skills and jobs for Victorians
2. Innovation for the future
 - Investing in technology trials and pilot schemes in new technologies as they emerge
 - Decarbonising gas use through switching to electricity
 - Encouraging the uptake of zero emissions vehicles
 3. Resilient farms and forests
 - Investing in the natural environment to revitalise and protect lands and forests
 - Researching and piloting new solutions for agriculture
 - Promoting new emission-reducing technologies and practices to farmers
 4. Climate smart businesses and communities
 - Promoting energy efficiency and productivity for businesses
 - Lower waste emissions and create a circular economy
 - Improve public transport and cycling/walking paths
 5. A climate resilient Victoria
 - Supporting efforts to address current climate change impacts
 - Reducing barriers to climate adaption.

**Victorian
Renewable Energy
Target (VRET)**

The Renewable Energy Action Plan details Victoria's approaches to reaching the target. This includes:

- Supporting commercial investments to increase renewable generation and storage.
- Following the New Energy Technologies Sector Strategy to prepare for the future demand for new jobs and training.
- Promote an energy-efficient economy through the Energy Efficiency and Productivity Strategy.

VRET auctions

VRET auctions provide developers with long-term contracts to build new energy projects while creating investment certainty.

VRET1 delivered five projects, providing 800 MW of renewable generation.

VRET2 is delivering six projects, providing 623 MW of renewable generation and 600 MWh of battery storage.

Developers intending to participate in VRET2 must follow requirements set by the [community engagement and benefit-sharing guide](#). Part of these requirements involves demonstrating that meaningful efforts have been made to engage

with relevant Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal organisations. Some examples of engagement include:

- Collaborating with DEECA on how to best engage with relevant Aboriginal organisations.
- Integrating social and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people in future developments (e.g. designating a certain number of jobs or contracts to Aboriginal people).
- Appointing a cultural heritage adviser to assist in the planning stages.

However, whilst there are local content requirements, there are no targets or quantified requirements for First Nations participation.

Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Development

Through the \$540 million Renewable Energy Zone Fund, the Victorian government will:

- Identify key network investments that can be delivered in the short term.
- Establish VicGrid to actively plan and develop Victorian REZs.

Investment in REZ infrastructure in planned REZ locations.

Offshore Wind Implementation

An offshore wind zone was established in the Bass Strait off the coast of Gippsland, Victoria. The zone will cover 15,000km² and is predicted to produce more than 10 GW of year-round wind energy generation. The application period for developers took place in early 2023 and will be approved based on criteria outlined in the *Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021* (Cth) and the [Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Regulations 2022](#). The first auctions for offshore wind contracts will take place in 2025.

The Victorian Government is engaging with local Traditional Owner Corporations affected by offshore wind development and associated transmission infrastructure. The government seeks to build partnerships, enabling consultation and feedback in the design process.

The [Local Jobs First Program](#) will also set requirements for local participation. This program is in the planning stages and there will be more information on it in Implementation Statement 3 (released late 2023).

Key Energy Efficiency & Demand Management Policies

Policy title	Key Initiatives
Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) Program	This scheme provides discounts on energy-saving activities by households and businesses such as:

- Energy-efficient lighting, water heating, appliances and AC upgrades
- Energy management information systems, smart thermostats and ceiling insulation.

Most of the activity in the current scheme is commercial building lighting upgrades.

Gas and Electrification Policies

Policy title	Key Initiatives
Gas Substitution Program	<p>The program encourages transition away from gas use in homes by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving energy efficiency and electrification in Victorian homes • Regulatory reform for all-electric homes • Providing incentives (e.g. Victorian Energy Upgrades, Solar Homes and 7 Star Homes Program).
Solar Homes Program	<p>The Solar Homes Program reduces the upfront cost of installing solar panels, hot water systems and batteries. Eligible households can receive both a solar panel rebate and a hot water rebate, or a solar battery rebate.</p>
7 Star Homes Program	<p>In August 2022, the Victorian government announced their intention to increase the minimum energy efficiency building standards for new homes from 6 to 7 stars. This will be mandatory from 1 May 2024. The program works with homeowners and developers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer financial rebates to assist with upgrade costs. • Provide training for skills and capabilities to deliver more energy-efficient homes.

Key Renewable Hydrogen Policies

Victoria has no overarching renewable hydrogen policies or plans to implement any. However, there are plans for worker training for employment in the future hydrogen industry (see below).

Key Policies for Local Workforce and Businesses

Policy title	Key Initiatives
Clean Economy Workforce Development Strategy	<p>This strategy aims to develop a responsive training system and a skilled clean economy workforce through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing alliances with industry partners to co-develop training. • Skill and upskill workers where they are proven and emerging needs. • Developing workforce plans for relevant industries.

- Establishing pathways for under-represented cohorts to improve representation and attract workers into the clean economy workforce.
- Establishing the State Electricity Commission (SEC) Centre of Training Excellence to coordinate and accredit courses in clean energy.
- Opening two new clean energy worker training centres: Wind Worker Training Centre and Hydrogen Worker Training Centre

Key Policies for Social Housing and Low-Income Households

Policy title	Key Initiatives
Energy Bill Relief Fund	This is a one-off payment of \$250 over the 2023-2024 financial year. To be eligible for the payment, recipients must hold a relevant concession card (e.g., Pensioner Concession Card, Department of Veteran's Affairs Gold Card, Health Care Card).
Energy Efficiency in Social Housing Program (EESHP)	<p>\$112 million was allocated for energy efficiency upgrades for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Housing • Special Disability Accommodation • Cooperative Housing • Rooming Houses • Accommodation owned by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing <p>The program will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace existing heaters with efficient reverse-cycle air conditioners. • Replacing existing hot water systems with heat pump hot water systems. • Instal draught sealing and insulation to help maintain liveable temperatures.

Information in this document should not be relied upon as legal advice. Each situation will be different and you should obtain and rely on legal advice for your own situation.