

Media Release

12 September 2022

Environmental referrals submitted for G-REZ project

AusNet Services (AusNet) has submitted its environmental referrals to the state and federal governments for the Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone™ project (G-REZ™).

These referrals are an important first step in defining the requirements AusNet will need to meet to receive state and federal government approvals for the project.

A referral has been submitted to the Victorian Government under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* to determine if an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is required for the G-REZ project.

In addition, AusNet has submitted a referral to the Federal Government which identifies and outlines how it will assess nationally and internationally important flora and fauna, ecological communities and heritage places under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

AusNet's General Manager Infrastructure, Damien Sanford, said the G-REZ project is in the early development phase.

"We're still engaging with landowners and conducting a number of technical and ecological studies to better understand our current preferred route," Mr Sanford said.

To coincide with the submission of the referrals, AusNet will be hosting three community pop ups in locations near the preferred transmission route as well as holding an online webinar.

"These build on the pop ups we hosted earlier this year and the ongoing engagement we've had, and will continue to have, with landowners, neighbours, the broader community and other key stakeholders as we work through this project," Mr Sanford said.

"I'd encourage anyone who wants to learn a bit more about the G-REZ project to visit one of our pop ups and have a chat with members of the team or register for the webinar."

Both referrals will be published online in the coming days on the relevant government department websites, with the EPBC Act referral to be open for public comment for 14 days.

"We'd encourage people to provide submissions during the 14-day comment period for the EPBC referral," Mr Sanford said.

Nominations have also opened for the G-REZ Community Advisory Group which has been established as a key avenue for community involvement during the project.

The Community Advisory Group will play a key role in providing local feedback about key elements of G-REZ as well as supporting the development of the project's community benefits scheme.

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"We're looking for representation from a range of stakeholders including local community groups, the farming and agricultural sector, local government, business and industry, training and education and environmental groups," Mr Sanford said.

Nominations are open until 23 September 2022.

Further information about the upcoming pop ups and webinar, as well as how to nominate for the G-REZ Community Advisory Group is available on the G-REZ website (www.grez.com.au).

About AusNet Services

AusNet's purpose is to connect communities with energy and accelerate a sustainable future. AusNet is the largest diversified energy network business in Victoria and owns and operates over \$11 billion of regulated and contracted assets. It owns and operates three core regulated networks: electricity distribution, gas distribution and the state-wide electricity transmission network, as well as a significant portfolio of contracted energy infrastructure. It also owns and operates energy and technical services businesses (which trade under the name "Mondo"). AusNet engages around 1,500 employees to service over 1.5 million customers. www.ausnetservices.com.au