

## Guy Barnett MP

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### Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

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**Guy Barnett, Minister for Energy and Renewables**

#### **Big step towards Tasmania's first Renewable Energy Zone**

The Rockliff Liberal Government is proud of Tasmania's reputation as the renewables powerhouse of Australia with a legislated target to be 200 per cent powered by renewables by 2040.

"The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) has previously identified the North-West, the North East and Central Highlands areas of the State as having excellent renewable energy resources and to be considered as Renewable Energy Zones," Energy and Renewables Minister Guy Barnett said.

"I am pleased to announce that the North-West of Tasmania will be the first region to be explored in detail for its potential to host the State's first Renewable Energy Zone (REZ).

"The development of a REZ is all about economies of scale - being able to benefit from existing energy resources and established grid infrastructure close by to unlock new energy at lower cost, while also considering environmental, heritage and other important values.

"Following a detailed examination of how any future Renewable Energy Zone may overlap with other land uses, the ability of the network to host more renewables in these areas, and market interest in new generation and load, we believe that we should first talk to the North-West communities about hosting more renewable generation," Minister Barnett said.

The next steps in the investigation will involve a series of community engagement processes in the first half of 2023, explaining what REZs are and why they are needed and asking

people to provide input into the REZ planning process. This will occur alongside more detailed technical, environmental and economic studies.

Doubling the amount of renewable energy produced in Tasmania will help the National Electricity Market transition away from fossil fuels, help develop new and existing industrial load in the State and, provide an economic stimulus through construction and operation of new projects that return benefits to local communities and the State.

The recent announcement regarding funding, financing and ownership of Project Marinus has been an important consideration to selecting the first REZ region. This agreement minimises the shared network costs for the North-West Transmission Development for Tasmanian customers and in doing so will deliver an additional 1200MW of generation hosting capacity that a REZ can tap into.

A first REZ in the North-West would provide new generation to coincide with the commissioning of the first Marinus cable and would deliver the generation needed to develop an export scale hydrogen sector and other future industries around the start of the next decade.

Before that, however, the next steps will require understanding how it can be done well from a local perspective and what communities expect in the way of benefits if they are to host a REZ.

We have recently released a draft Guideline for Community Engagement, Benefit Sharing and Local Procurement in the renewables sector that we expect to guide this next phase of discussion.

Today's announcement is the culmination of nine months' work since the release of the Renewable Energy Coordination Framework and is another significant step towards realising our renewables vision in a planned and strategic manner in consultation with North-West communities.