

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP
Minister for Climate Action
Minister for Energy and Resources
Minister for the State Electricity Commission



Thursday, 4 July 2024

RENEWABLE HYDROGEN HELPING REGIONAL STORM RESILIENCE

The Allan Labor Government is investing in renewable hydrogen to keep Victorians connected during emergencies and power outages.

Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio today launched the Neerim North mobile network renewable hydrogen back-up system which will boost energy resilience during storms and other extreme weather events.

The 10-kilowatt renewable hydrogen generators will deliver up to 72 hours of back-up power and help maintain mobile coverage during power outages – keeping communities connected when they need it most.

Hydrogen fuel cells work like batteries, producing electricity using the fuel supplied. The fuel cell generator sets will be equipped with enough renewable hydrogen for a minimum 72-hour running capacity.

The Labor Government invested \$1.1 million into the Telstra Hydrogen Fuel Cell Pilot project which has installed five hydrogen fuel cells in communities that have experienced extreme storms like Coldstream, Kinglake, Christmas Hills and Chum Creek.

This pilot is one of the projects funded through the \$6.6 million Renewable Hydrogen Commercialisation Pathways Fund. Other companies like Volgren Australia, Viva Energy, Energys Australia and Boundary Power are also undertaking hydrogen pilots, trials and demonstrations as part of the program.

In June 2023, Boundary Power successfully commissioned Australia's first solar-renewable hydrogen standalone power system. Similarly Telstra is now trialling how renewable hydrogen can play a role in decarbonising energy supply and building energy resilience.

The Telstra Hydrogen Fuel Cells were manufactured by Energys Australia at their Mulgrave factory. Energys Australia has also been supported through the Commercialisation Pathways Fund support for a renewable hydrogen production facility that will facilitate the uptake of renewable hydrogen in Victoria.

Quote attributable to Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio

"Victoria's Gas Substitution Roadmap confirms that renewable hydrogen will play a critical, targeted role in the energy transition by strengthening energy resilience as we keep communities powered reliably and affordably."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing

"We are focused on delivering more renewables to ensure communities are better supported during emergencies to maintain vital communications with emergency services during outages."

Quotes attributable to Telstra Integrated Network, Facilities & Environment Executive Vicki Romanovski

"Our network and other infrastructure can be affected during an extreme weather event and renewable hydrogen is an alternative energy option that could help keep our customers connected. The pilot will help us determine its future role in this space."