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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**New England Renewable Energy Hub**

COUNTRYMINDED candidate for New England Peter Mailler today announced his vision for a regional renewable energy hub to plan for investment and development of renewable technologies in the electorate.

Pete said addressing energy security was essential to improved commercial investment in industry and to drive economic activity going forward.

“Our elected representatives should provide certainty and confidence for private investment to maximise the value of any complimentary government investment,” he said

“Renewable energy generation opportunities exist right throughout New England and Australia, but we have failed to adequately plan for optimised investment and development in renewable technologies. So, New England has an exceptional opportunity to benefit and be a leader in this field.

“Energy generation close to energy consumption significantly improves transmission efficiency. It provides a key means to reduce the cost of operating transmission infrastructure and that will significantly reduce retail cost of power over time.”

Pete said there should be an energy strategic planning forum for the New England hub immediately after the election that would need to address two key issues:

* Pre-development survey capacity including site suitability, surveys for different technologies, network surveys and optimised grid planning for renewable generation to maximise benefit to the region.
* Planning pre-approval and development optimisation by local, state and federal agencies in line with the specific needs of local communities and renewable developers.

“It should be a forum that receives input from all local governments, state planning, regulators, network operators, developers, investors and research agencies including universities,” he said.

“The outcome of the forum would be to identify and secure capacity and resources within the electorate to identify key development sites that are suited to different technologies.

“It would necessarily address issues of network and off-take capacity, topography, environmental constraints and community consent.”

Pete said one eventual aim was to be able to offer pre-approved development sites for tender.

“Initial funding to bring the relevant organisations together and undertake a strategic planning exercise is minimal and the outcomes of this event would inform the development of a suitable operating budget including funding sources,” he said.

“It is essential that an integrated planning and assessment model is implemented with input from commercial and government interests, and not hobbled by excessive bureaucratic interference.

It would require focussed political will and engagement from community representatives at local, state and federal levels of Government.”

Ends

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