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***Wind energy industry call on Andrews govt to set science-based Emissions Reduction Targets***

A coalition of ten leading wind energy companies and supportive organisations have today released a joint statement calling on the Andrews government to set science-based Emissions Reductions Targets that help limit global warming to 1.5C.

The statement comes as the state government enters the final week of its decision-making process on Victoria's first interim targets to cut emissions across the whole economy.

Managing Director of Westwind Tobi Geiger said:

"Renewable energy projects, including wind, solar and pumped hydro projects are ready to play their role in drastically cutting emissions from the electricity sector."

Westwind is developing the Golden Plains wind farm at Rokewood near Ballarat, which will be the country's largest wind farm and is expected to power as much as 500,000 homes with clean renewable energy, deliver over 3.5 million tonnes of annual greenhouse gas savings, creating 700 jobs during the construction phase and 70 ongoing.

Chief Executive Officer of Windlab, Roger Price, said the climate impacts experienced during summer underscore the need for governments to be "courageous and bold" when tackling climate change:

"We have just experienced one of the most difficult summers in living memory; drought, fires, and multiple record setting extreme weather events. This has resulted from a 1.1 degrees of global warming."

"We can and must act. We have the technology within the electricity sector to be near zero emissions in less than 15 years."

"Victoria has been one of the leaders and we need them to remain courageous and bold by committing to 1.5°C Emissions Reduction Targets."

The wind industry statement was facilitated by Friends of the Earth and the Australian Wind Alliance.

Friends of the Earth, the group who led the community campaign for the Victorian Renewable Energy Target, says the Andrews government has prepared the energy sector to deliver deep emissions cuts.

Since 2014, the Andrews government has enshrined Victorian Renewable Energy Targets into law, held the country's largest reverse auction for new generation capacity, and initiated the Solar Homes scheme.

“The Victorian Renewable Energy Target is proving that state government efforts to tackle the climate crisis is creating jobs and benefiting the economy,” said Pat Simons.

“Setting science-based Emissions Reduction Targets is the next logical step for the Andrews government and would allow Victoria to build on the momentum and kickstart a jobs-rich offshore wind energy industry.”

“The South Gippsland coast has been identified as the best place to build the country’s first offshore wind farm Star of the South,” said Pat Simons.

“Targets that are bold and ambitious will send a signal to investors that Victoria is ready to kickstart this new, jobs-rich industry.”

The Australian Wind Alliance represents regional community members and wind energy workers and see the Emissions Reduction Targets process as an opportunity for regional and rural Victoria.

“Wind energy is already a mainstay of employment in Western Victoria, with over 1500 wind farm construction jobs at the moment,” said Tony Goodfellow, Australian Wind Alliance Victorian Organiser.

“Setting ambitious targets will help provide more regional jobs into the future and boost the economic health of regional communities while moving the state away from fossil fuels,” said Tony Goodfellow, Australian Wind Alliance spokesperson.

The Andrews government must make its final decision on the Emissions Reduction Targets by 31 March and is expected to announce the final result in May or June. The signatories of the joint statement will be paying close attention to the government’s decision.

**FOR COMMENT:**

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