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REASONS FOR ORDER UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978*

Proponent: VicGrid

Public works: Gippsland Offshore Wind Transmission 2GW Project

Description of project

The public works to which the Order relates broadly comprise the following:

- a double-circuit, high-voltage alternating current overhead transmission line from the proposed onshore connection hub (in the area of Giffard) to the proposed grid connection substation near the Loy Yang Power Station (in the Latrobe Valley);
- an onshore connection hub in the area of Giffard broadly comprising a high-voltage substation plant and equipment, including transformers, synchronous condensers and switchgear; and
- a grid connection substation near the Loy Yang Power Station

Order

Being satisfied that works proposed to be undertaken for the purposes of the Gippsland Offshore Wind Transmission 2GW Project could reasonably be considered to have, or be capable of having, a significant effect on the environment, I have declared the works to be public works for the purposes of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*.

Reasons for order

The project is significant in length traversing a rural landscape with potential for significant effects on ecological, cultural heritage, social, visual and landscape, agricultural and other land use values.

There is opportunity to avoid and minimise significant effects, particularly through refinement of the project corridor and site selection within the study area.

An environment effects statement (EES) will provide a robust, transparent and integrated framework through which the different potential environmental effects can be rigorously assessed and the effectiveness and acceptability of proposed measures to avoid, minimise, manage and offset environmental effects can be evaluated. An EES will enable appropriate opportunities for public input into the project and its effects.

VicGrid has proposed that, subject to obtaining any necessary approvals, “excluded works” be undertaken prior to the completion of the EES process. These works, specified in Schedule 1 of the order, are required to inform the assessment of the project including ‘geotechnical and environmental investigations, site surveys and locating existing utility services’.

I am satisfied that the excluded works set out above could not reasonably be considered to have, or be capable of having, a significant effect on the environment as described in the *Ministerial Guidelines for Assessment of Environmental Effects under the Environmental Effects Act 1978*.

Date 24 September 2024