

Advocacy Priority:

Reliable Power Supply Infrastructure

Overview

Strathbogie Shire is on the brink of a new wave of economic growth. With population increases, investment interest, and the growing need for renewable and resilient infrastructure, the time is right to invest in the systems that underpin a growing regional economy. One of the most critical - and limiting - of these systems is our power infrastructure.

To ensure our region is ready for business, Council is calling for urgent and strategic investment in energy reliability, sustainability, and equity for rural communities. Whether it is keeping our towns connected during emergencies, supporting new businesses, or providing certainty for housing development and industry, reliable power is essential.

The Problem

Strathbogie Shire's potential is being held back by outdated and unreliable power infrastructure. The current system is not fit-for-purpose to support growing towns such as Nagambie, Avenel, and Euroa, nor to meet the demands of future housing, agricultural expansion, industry attraction, or emergency resilience.

Due to the current regulatory environment, regional and rural areas like ours are not receiving equitable consideration. Our sparse population and vast land area mean essential infrastructure upgrades struggle to meet cost-benefit thresholds, despite the critical importance of energy security for community safety and regional development.

The Solution

The Solution: A Four-Pronged, Government-Supported Approach to Energy Reliability. To achieve long-term energy reliability for rural and regional communities, we are advocating for a coordinated, four-part strategy:

- **Policy Reform**

We call on the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) to reform its Regulatory Investment Test for Distribution (RIT-D) process to better reflect the needs of rural and geographically dispersed communities—not just urban density—when assessing distribution network upgrades.

- **State Support for Regional Renewables**

We urge the Victorian Government to continue supporting regional renewable energy programs, enabling the rollout of microgrids and stand-alone power systems that enhance emergency resilience and support long-term sustainability.



- **Federal Investment in Microgrids**

We seek Australian Government funding for renewable energy solutions—particularly microgrids—along critical rural transport corridors such as the Seymour-Nagambie and Benalla-Euroa lines, where reliability is essential for both residents and industry.

The Benefit

A reliable modern power supply will transform Strathbogie Shire's economy and resilience:

- **Economic Growth**

Supports business investment, housing development, and regional industry attraction — key drivers of jobs and population growth.

- **Community Resilience**

Builds the community's capacity to prepare for, adapt to, and recover from sustained power outages, minimising negative impacts and ensuring essential services and well-being are maintained, along with keeping the direct cost of such outages to individuals and business who rely on power.

- **Equity**

Level the playing field for rural communities, ensuring they are not left behind in national and state energy planning.

Reliable energy is the foundation of a competitive, investable regional economy, and essential to the liveability and safety of our growing communities.

Conclusion

Strathbogie Shire is *Investing in Tomorrow*; but we need the right infrastructure in place to support our future. Reliable, renewable, and resilient power supply is not a luxury; it is a necessity.

With \$30 million in federal and state investment and the right regulatory reform, Strathbogie Shire can unlock its potential and confidently welcome new residents, businesses, and industries. Council stands ready to partner with all levels of government to deliver this critical infrastructure for our communities.