

Victorian jobs and industries at risk after decision to import steel for Victorian wind farm

The Committee for Portland is calling on the state and federal governments to introduce measures to encourage the use of local suppliers after it was revealed a multinational company will import steel for a wind farm in western Victoria.

The decision to use imported steel for its \$360 million wind farm at Ryan's Corner ahead of the local product from Portland's Keppel Prince Engineering is devastating to the local community and industry, putting more than 150 jobs at risk.

More job losses are expected if the state and federal governments do not step in to protect local manufacturers.

The committee is calling for the Federal Government to mandate Australian content in major projects like the wind farm, which will supply power to the government's Snowy Hydro 2.0 scheme.

They also want the State Government to offer greater certainty over the introduction of Victoria's Renewable Energy Targets for local industries working towards greater environmental sustainability.

Committee for Portland Deputy Chair John Weichert says it is crucial for the state and federal governments to support local businesses by introducing firmer measures through its power purchase agreements and renewable energy targets.

"Australia needs sovereign manufacturing for the long term and the government must make changes now to ensure these industries survive," he says.

"Our local businesses are committed to the social and environmental sustainability of the regions in which they operate and they should have the support of the government to ensure they are the first choice for local projects, especially where the government is involved in the purchase of the end product."

The decision to import the steel is yet another blow for the region already left reeling after China banned imports of timber and crayfish from the region in 2020, leading to losses of more than \$100 million to the fishing and timber industries in western Victoria.

"A lot of Victorian, and Australian, businesses are suffering from the impact of the pandemic and the trade bans, so it is vital that the government does everything it can to protect local businesses and keep Australian manufacturing alive," Mr Weichert says.

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