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POTENTIAL NEW WIND FARM NEAR ARARAT, VICTORIA

RES Australia Pty Ltd, today announced its intention to move forward with preparing a Planning Permit Application for a wind farm seven kilometres northeast of Ararat. Residents of the area will soon get the chance to learn more about plans to build a wind farm on the ridges of farmland adjacent the Pyrenees Highway. RES Australia has commenced detailed site investigations into a wind farm of around 50 turbines and associated wind farm infrastructure. If the project goes ahead, it will unlock a \$250 million investment within Ararat Rural City Council and Northern Grampians Shire Council areas. The project will produce clean green electricity, without pollution, for about 40,000 homes and will contribute to Victoria's renewable energy target.

Sedat Erol, Wind Farm Developer with RES Australia and responsible for preparing the Permit application explained;

“RES Australia has assessed many potential sites in Victoria and after extensive feasibility studies, we identified that the Ararat ridges are likely to be a suitable location for a windfarm. In addition our research indicates that there is broad support amongst the local community for a windfarm in the area. RES Australia commissioned a study of community perceptions and we found that more than 90% of people are in favour of windfarms being developed in the region and more than 80% of people would be in favour of a windfarm within 10km of their home.

We will conduct a rigorous environmental assessment to ensure this is a world class project from all points of view. When the environmental assessment is complete, it will go on public exhibition and anyone who is interested will have an opportunity to comment. As our plans progress, we will keep the community up to date with newsletters, open days and our website. Details of our first open day will be made public in the New Year.”

RES Australia commissioned Environmental Resources Management Pty Ltd and Reark Pty Ltd to prepare the ‘Report on Community Perceptions towards Wind Farms in the Ararat Region, Victoria’ in October, 2007. The report found amongst other things that:

- 94% of respondents are in favour of wind farm projects being developed in southwestern Victoria;
- 82% of respondents are in favour of a wind farm within 10 kilometres from their home; and

- 71% of respondents are in favour of a wind farm within 1 kilometre of their home.

Mr Erol also expressed the company's commitment to maximizing the local economic benefit to the Ararat and the Northern Grampians regions. *"We are committed to making sure that wherever possible we will use local people, business and expertise. As we commence our detailed investigations, we are also launching a register of local tradespeople. We expect 40 - 50 jobs to be created during the construction phase and several ongoing jobs during the life of the wind farm for operations and maintenance. Local people and businesses who believe they can provide services in fields such as earthworks, roads, concreting, electrical services, carpentry, steel fixing, fencing and accommodation may contact me to register."*

On 22 November, 2007 RES Australia submitted a Referral with the Victorian Minister for Planning requesting a decision on whether an Environmental Effects Statement will be required. A decision is expected around March, 2008. The Referral documentation, the community perceptions survey report and other project information are available on the RES Australia website www.res-australia.com.au. More details for the project will be published as detailed environmental, planning, engineering and consultation activities are conducted during next year. RES Australia hopes to have a Permit Application ready for submission by around mid-2008.

Steve Chapple, Chief Executive Officer said; *"Ararat Rural City Council welcomes responsible economic development investment into our community and the wider region. Council has recently commenced discussions with RES Australia representatives seeking to investigate the establishment of a new 50 turbine wind farm in our municipality. Council looks forward to working with the proponents over the next few months as the application process evolves. The community will be provided ample opportunities to be consulted on the proposal. Our council and community are committed to clean renewable energy initiatives. As with all such wind farm applications of this size and scale, the Minister for Planning has final approval responsibility"*.

Glen Davis, Chief Executive Officer of Northern Grampians Shire Council said; *"Northern Grampians Shire Council is supportive of low-emission power generation. With two national parks and large areas of crops, pasture, shrubs and forests, Northern Grampians is proud of its ecological contribution in burying carbon, creating 'carbon credits'. The Federal Government has emphasised Australia's need to reduce greenhouse gas emission. The substitution of wind power for coal-fired power generation (a source of much of Australia's 'carbon debits') is a major opportunity. The proposed carbon trading regime will be a market in which both low emissions and carbon credits will be economically rewarded. And the Victorian Government seeks to use wind power for water desalination plants. Northern Grampians Shire supports these government initiatives. We also welcome investments that will create new jobs and enhance local employment opportunities. The Shire looks forward to receiving and reviewing the planning application from RES for a wind farm in the Shire,"*.

ENDS

Note to Editor:

RES Australia is an independent wind farm operator in the local market. It is a subsidiary of the Renewable Energy Systems group of companies based in the U.K. The RES Group is a specialist wind farm developer with 26 years experience that has, to date, built 54 wind farm projects around the world.

Renewable Energy Systems (RES) is a global success story in the world's fastest growing energy sector. Based in the UK, RES has been an established presence at the forefront of the wind energy industry for over two decades. Today companies within the RES Group are operating internationally across three continents.

As one of the world's leading wind energy companies, our work to develop, build and run wind farms is contributing to national renewable energy targets and to a sustainable future for us all.

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