



Phillip Island battery puts community in pole position

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Tourist hotspot Phillip Island has officially opened a big battery to support power supply during summer holidays and the grand prix.

Powering more than 8000 homes for two hours, or 700 homes for a whole day, the \$10 million battery will reduce the cost, emissions and noise of running extra diesel generators during the influx of tourists.

AusNet chief executive Tony Narvaez said replacing generators with the big battery will also stabilise the local electricity supply.

"The population of Phillip Island more than quadruples over summer, which puts a strain on the local electricity network, and at times, leads to power dropping out," he said.

"This battery, which in time will be powered by renewable energy, will help solve this issue."

Preparing for high fire-danger days, each individual battery cabinet has a fire detection and suppression system and the high-voltage compound has a fire break and bush clearance zones.

The site, designed with the Country Fire Authority, also has a dedicated firefighting water tank and a connection point to piped supply.

The five-megawatt system is also a blueprint for figuring out how energy storage can help power communities as coal-fired electricity is phased out.

Victoria aims to triple the number of homes with access to renewable energy storage under plans for 100 neighbourhood batteries.

Half of the state's electricity must come from renewable sources by 2030 and community groups, councils and power companies are mapping locations.

"It's fantastic that peak periods such as summer holidays or the MotoGP will now be supported by battery power instead of diesel generators," Bass MP Jordan Crugnale said at the weekend's official opening.

The Phillip Island Community Energy Storage System, or PICES, also makes more sense than building new transmission lines because the island only needs extra power a few times each year.

Energy infrastructure company Mondo built the island's big battery for AusNet and is working with the council and two grassroots organisations – Totally Renewable Phillip Island and the Energy Innovation Cooperative – on other battery projects.

A future network of street-level batteries could host larger volumes of excess rooftop solar on the grid, potentially slashing power bills.

The locals aim for Phillip Island to be carbon neutral and 100 per cent renewable by 2030.

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