



meridian

Meridian to build Mt Mercer wind farm

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Meridian Energy Australia will commence construction of the Mt Mercer wind farm in December this year and will take about two years to complete.

Meridian Australia's Project Director, Wes Ferguson said the wind farm, with 64 turbines, will provide sufficient renewable energy to meet the electricity needs of the entire population of Ballarat and will have a capital cost of around AUD \$260 million.

"The project will employ around 200 people during construction and upon completion it will provide about 20 permanent jobs in the local region. There will also be other external jobs in the local community for the supply chain, such as ongoing maintenance," Mr Ferguson said.

"During construction, Meridian will continue to engage the local community to ensure that the benefits of the wind farm are maximised and any impacts minimised."

The 131MW Mt Mercer wind farm occupies seven conjoint landholdings (2,460 hectares). This land will continue to be used for cropping, sheep, cattle and pig farming.

Meridian Energy Australia - a wholly owned subsidiary of Meridian Energy Limited – bought the consents for Mt Mercer in April 2009 and will be Meridian's third wind farm in Australia.

The wind farm will be connected to the Victorian Electricity Grid by a new powerline and green field terminal station near the town of Elaine. This connection will be built, owned and operated by Transmission Operations (Australia), which has the same majority owners as distribution companies Powercor/Citipower.

Mr Ferguson says the competitive National Electricity Market, combined with the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (requiring approximately one fifth of electricity generation to be from renewable sources by 2020), is enabling renewable energy to be delivered for all Australians on a low cost and efficient basis.

"Our job is to deliver efficient sources of renewable energy to the market and assist electricity retailers to meet the MRET liabilities, improve choice and price for Australian electricity consumers," Mr Ferguson said.

"We're excited to be proceeding with Mt Mercer with the support of our partners – REpower Systems SE, Downer EDI and Transmissions Operations (Australia)."

Meridian Australia Chief Executive Ben Burge says that "with a capital cost of around AUD \$260 million, the Mt Mercer project increases Meridian's existing presence in Australia and further leverages Meridian's proven experience in designing and managing the construction of new wind farms in some of the toughest terrains on the planet."

Key facts about Mt Mercer

- 64 turbine, 131MW wind farm, located 30km south of Ballarat, Victoria.
- Occupies seven conjoint landholdings (2,460 hectares). The land will continue to be used for cropping, sheep, cattle and pig farming.
- Grid connection will be via 23km of new, 132KV powerline and a new Terminal Station near the town of Elaine.
- Meridian Australia bought the consents for Mt Mercer in April 2009.
- Construction projected to start in December 2012.
- Completion scheduled for December 2014.
- The project will provide sufficient renewable energy to meet the electricity needs of the entire population of Ballarat.
- Construction partners will be: REpower Systems SE for wind turbines; Downer EDI for civil works; and Transmission Operations (Australia) for grid connection.
- Mt Mercer will be Meridian's third wind farm in Australia.

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About Meridian Energy

Meridian Energy is an integrated renewable energy company; the largest generator in New Zealand, with a strong pipeline of development options in Australasia; and an electricity retailer throughout New Zealand.

Meridian and its online subsidiary Powershop retail electricity to approximately 290,000 connections – homes, farms and businesses throughout New Zealand. Meridian received the highest customer satisfaction ratings of all the major national retailers, and Powershop was rated first overall, as voted by customers in two independent surveys¹ carried out in 2011.

The Meridian Energy Group includes a parent company Meridian Energy, subsidiary businesses in Australia and the USA and other innovative New Zealand investments that complement our core activities as an electricity generator and retailer. In total the Group employs approximately 750 people and has offices in Wellington, Christchurch and Twizel, and, internationally, in Melbourne, Australia, and San Francisco, California.

Meridian generates electricity from renewable sources – wind and water in New Zealand; wind in Australia; and solar in the USA. The company supplies thirty per cent of New Zealand's total electricity needs, including to the country's largest consumer, the New

Zealand Aluminum Smelter, near Bluff. Meridian owns and operates seven hydro stations, six within the Waitaki Hydro Scheme, and four wind farms throughout New Zealand.

In Australia, Meridian owns and operates Mt Millar wind farm and is partnering with AGL Energy to build the Macarthur wind farm, which, at 420 megawatts, will be the largest wind farm in the Southern Hemisphere. The company also built the world's southernmost wind farm at Ross Island in Antarctica, in partnership with Antarctica New Zealand. Meridian's solar farm, CalRENEW-1, was the first grid-connected solar farm to be built in California, and the company has used that expertise to build the first solar farm in Tonga.

Meridian's pipeline of renewable development projects includes options at different stages of investigation and consent. The Australasian development pipeline equates to more than 1,000 megawatts.

Meridian's commitment to renewable energy, environmental stewardship and support for the communities living alongside its assets makes it authentically sustainable. Meridian continually looks for ways to provide positive energy solutions to customers to help them reduce their energy use.

1. Independent surveys
 - Consumer. Energy provider survey results, 28 July 2011. Available at <http://www.consumer.org.nz/reports/energy-providers/survey-results>
 - Fair Go/Colmar Brunton Best in service poll – power companies, 19 October 2011.