



A CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE FOR THE NORTHERN RIVERS



With our surging tides, our powerful winds and sun-kissed skies, The Northern Rivers has the potential to be a key hub for clean energy in Australia. But instead of investing in a clean energy future for Australia, the Liberal National Government has committed to funding 20 new coal developments in the state and Labor have no commitment to phase out coal. Decades of neglect of renewables in favour of fossil energy from Liberal National and Labor governments have led to New South Wales getting a “C” grade from the Climate Council¹ due to its climate inaction and lack of renewable energy target.

With both parties beholden to donations from fossil fuel companies, only the Greens are committed to a just transition to a clean energy future.



Our region has vast resources for solar and wind energy generation with some of the sunniest and windiest parts of the state². This creates enormous potential for microgeneration from rooftop solar and small wind turbines to meet business and community energy demands. Our region is already leading the way in community-led micro and small scale generation through initiatives such as Lismore City Council’s community solar farm³ and in innovative community energy retailing in Byron through Enova⁴. The sun and wind bounty also offers opportunities for large-scale solar and wind generation - giving us an opportunity to support job creation and small business in the community.

The powerful East Australian Current also offers ‘exciting possibilities for ocean current energy’ with the current going at the speed of 0.8 meters per second just off the coast of The Northern Rivers⁵. Tidal and wave power are an emerging technology with emergent opportunities for further research, development and trials in our region.

Last but not least, the rivers that give our region its name is a powerful source of small scale, environmentally-sensitive hydro-power generation that we will unlock by supporting pilot projects and feasibility studies.

Our roadmap to 100% Renewable Energy for the state by 2030 offers exciting opportunities for our region to lead this transition. This document will outline some of the potential projects and opportunities that the Greens plan for The Northern Rivers will activate.



SOLAR ENERGY⁶

(\$1.25 billion)

We have a plan to put solar on household roofs, create renewable jobs and reduce emissions through:

- Mandatory solar plus batteries for all new dwellings
- \$2000 rebate for 1 million rooftop solar and batteries
- Solar panels on all public housing and government buildings to benefit 110,000 public housing tenants through receiving electricity rebates.
- A community solar offset scheme for apartment owners and renters.
- A Fair Price for Solar - extra 4.4c/kWh for avoided health and social costs

According to the Nature Conservation Council, installing solar power systems in just 75% of homes in just the North Coast will create 1,100 full time jobs, save \$410 in annual energy bills and avoid 12 million tons of carbon pollution per year⁷.

RENEWABLE ENERGY FUND⁸

(\$1 billion)

The Renewable Energy Fund will boost investments made by local communities and councils on a dollar for dollar basis with the aim of generating 1 gigawatt of renewable energy generation per year.

Opportunities for the The Northern Rivers include:

- Co-funding for community-led pilot projects and feasibility studies for small scale, environmentally sensitive hydro generation and a commitment to resolve outdated regulatory barriers in order to enable these project to reach viability.
- Community Energy Information Hubs in Byron Shire, Lismore, Ballina and other towns to facilitate the uptake of local renewable energy generation for households, businesses and community-owned projects.
- Funding boosts for Lismore Southern Cross University’s Clean Energy Accelerator to kickstart clean energy business opportunities⁹.
- Support for the Ballina Shire Council to upgrade more buildings with solar generation, similar to the successful Alstonville pool upgrades¹⁰.
- Increased support for councils, such as Tweed Council to achieve ‘renewable energy self-sufficiency’ as laid out in their Renewable Energy Action Plan¹¹.

COMMUNITY ENERGY AND THE RENEWABLE ENERGY FUND



The Mullumbimby Drill Hall, like most consumers, purchased electricity that was generated far away and comes at a cost to the climate through coal mines in the Hunter valley. Millions of dollars leaves our region this way. But now, thanks to the efforts of **Community Owned Energy Mullumbimby (COREM)** which raised funds to install solar on the Drill Hall Theatre, they are now powered by renewable, locally owned, community generated energy.

The Renewable Energy Fund will unleash the potential of groups like COREM by providing dollar per dollar funding to go towards clean energy projects. This means more community energy generation, more money staying in local communities and more bills saved for households.

RENEWABLE INFRASTRUCTURE HUB¹²

(\$5 billion)

Our commitment to a \$5 billion for “Renewable Infrastructure Hubs” across New South Wales will unleash large-scale renewable generation in our state. The Lismore electorate in particular, will benefit from the commitment to establish wind farms, environmentally-sensitive pumped-storage hydroelectricity (PSH) and solar farms in the Northern Tablelands (some of which are in the Lismore state electorate.) All of The Northern Rivers will benefit from the commitment to upgrade the power grid to strengthen the connections between Queensland and New South Wales.

Opportunities for our region include:

- Community energy benefiting from grid upgrades to create a regional subgrid allowing more peer to peer trading and increasing the size and number of connections to the grid.
- Large scale wind farms and solar farms will bring create jobs in construction and maintenance in Lismore and its’ environs.
- Piloting decentralised renewable energy models across The Northern Rivers to test the viability of community-owned energy and improve community energy resilience to complement large scale generation.

POWER NEW SOUTH WALES¹³

Our state owned renewable energy retailer will support consumers and producers of renewable energy. Consumers will get lower power prices and community producers will get a ready buyer of surplus energy and help facilitate access to the electricity grid in a fair and equitable way. The Northern Rivers already leads the way in community-owned generation such as COREM in Mullumbimby, Byron’s solar garden and Lismore City Council’s Solar farms. Power New South Wales will also create a reserve market for renewable energy demand and help community owned generators connect with purchasers.

Opportunities for our region include:

- Cheaper, cleaner power for consumers
- A fair price for community providers to access the grid
- Partnerships between Power New South Wales and Community Providers to facilitate greater access to capital, expertise and markets for both.

POWER NSW AND COMMUNITY ENERGY PROVIDERS

We know you want affordable, clean, renewable electricity. We also know local people are often the best at finding local solutions. Power NSW can support programs such as Byron Shire’s proposed social access solar garden. This would allow tenants and those unable to get solar on their own home to benefit from a local solar farm. Power NSW would undertake analysis to identify the locations on the network that are best placed for a solar farm and finance the grid upgrades required for the project. Just as importantly, as a retailer they will facilitate the billing so their customers can elect to purchase the social access’ solar garden electricity.

A non-for profit state owned renewable energy company will be a boon to community energy providers. Not only could this company act as a wholesale retailer, buying surplus power from community energy providers, it will also facilitate a fair price for access to energy grids, form partnerships with providers to enable access to capital and enable a greater level of coordination and long-term planning. For example, COREM could sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Power Up NSW to provide power for all of Mullumbimby in return for a set level of funding, investment in capital, an agreement to sell any surplus units at a given price to the wider state market.

The Greens are committed to a clean energy future for New South Wales and for our region. Our policies will lead enable us to unlock the potential of our region to its’ fullest extent leading to cheaper bills for consumers, jobs for the region, funding for community energy and a clean energy future for us all.

PRESENTED BY

TAMARA SMITH MP

MEMBER FOR BALLINA



ENDNOTES

- 1 <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/leaders-laggards-states-renewable-energy/>
- 2 https://www.resourcesandgeoscience.nsw.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0004/665527/RenewableEnergyMap2017_side-1.pdf
- 3 https://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-FQZ-40-34-15
- 4 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-01-05/australia-first-community-owned-energy-retailer-enova/7068420>
- 5 <https://energy.nsw.gov.au/renewables/renewable-generation/ocean-energy-nsw>
- 6 <https://greens.org.au/node/23222>
- 7 <https://www.nature.org.au/media/287133/repowering-our-regions-ncc-2017.pdf>
- 8 <https://greens.org.au/node/23079>
- 9 <https://www.scu.edu.au/enterprise-lab/clean-energy-accelerator/>
- 10 <https://www.ausleisure.com.au/news/reopened-ballina-shire-council-pools-welcome-large-crowds/>
- 11 https://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/Download.aspx?Path=~\Documents\Environment\TSC08451_Renewable_Energy_Action_Plan_Tweed_Shire_Council_Facilities_October_2017.pdf
- 12 <https://greens.org.au/node/23079>
- 13 <https://greens.org.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/Powershop%20NSW%20Initiative.pdf>

