

Building Renewables to Benefit Nature and Communities

We have a shared vision for Queensland's clean energy future. We want a nature positive renewable energy industry that increases biodiversity in Queensland, and empowers First Nations people and regional communities while providing affordable and reliable clean energy.

We know that Queensland's energy transformation is a once in a generation chance to create a better system that delivers for people and nature.

When regional communities and First Nations People are at the forefront of decision making, we can ensure that the clean energy investment in the regions is put to good use and invested in building better infrastructure and services for these communities. The transition can play a role in addressing injustices that First Nations people face by centering free, prior and informed consent in any type of system development.

And importantly, building new solar, wind and storage projects is pivotal to addressing the climate crisis. Already, higher average temperatures are putting pressure on our ecosystems and costing our communities. More frequent and extreme heat waves, droughts, fires and floods damage the environment, put pressure on Queensland farmers, and drive up our cost of living.

We urgently need to act on climate change to protect our way of life and our state's world-renowned natural wonders and wildlife. To take adequate action, and do our fair share to limit global heating to 1.5°C, we need to build new clean, sustainable industries and replace coal and gas generation with renewable energy backed by storage.

But due to our national and state poor planning frameworks, we're already seeing renewable energy development proposed and approved in environmentally significant areas. Destroying nature is not how we tackle the climate crisis. We need biological resources and services to buffer the effects of climate change.

Strong climate action means both protecting nature and repowering our polluting energy system. That's why we urgently need updated national and state-wide planning frameworks that stop development in the places we need to protect.

We, the undersigned, are calling for the Australian and Queensland governments to urgently phase out fossil fuels and replace it with renewable energy backed by storage in a manner that benefits biodiversity, First Nations people, and regional communities.





We can get the clean energy roll out right if the Australian and Queensland governments action the following:

1. Urgently deliver land-use, biodiversity and Cultural Heritage mapping, which should be ground-truthed before development, that guides the Renewable Energy Zone development and shows renewable energy developers where to build projects.
2. Strengthen the Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act as well as Queensland's solar and wind planning regulations so that projects can't proceed in unsuitable locations and habitat clearing is minimised. It's also vital that Queensland has enforceable solar and wind planning codes that require community and First Nations engagement.
3. Ensure justice is at the core of the energy transition by including the Regional Energy Transformation Partnerships Framework in statutory reforms and have a budget attached. At the very least any project delivered or backed by a government-owned corporation or in a designated Renewable Energy Zone should deliver on the framework principles to empower communities and First Nations people, build local industry and protect nature.
4. Establish community reference groups that are empowered to make strategic decisions on the allocation of pooled community benefit funds so that renewable development delivers long-term for the community, and First Nations people.
5. Work with local community reference groups, including local conservation groups, to identify and implement initiatives that will enhance environmental outcomes, beyond statutory requirements, in the regions hosting renewable energy projects. These community groups should be engaged from the early planning phase, alongside First Nations people.

