

**Comment on the Capricornia Energy Hub Transmission Project Referral EPBC  
2023/09627**

Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the EPBC referral of the Capricornia Energy Hub (CEH) Transmission Project (EPBC 2023/09627). QCC is the peak environment body in Queensland, currently representing 51 member groups and has been supporting communities to protect our natural environment since 1969.

We recognise the need to reduce our emissions as soon as possible to protect unique and irreplaceable Queensland ecosystems including the Gondwana and Wet Tropics World Heritage Areas, where every incremental increase in temperature significantly reduces habitat range for endemic species.

Renewable energy backed by storage is one of the best and fastest ways we can reduce emissions. However, building the renewable energy and storage we need cannot come directly at the expense of the species and habitats we are attempting to save and protect.

Queensland's terrible land clearing and nature protection record has left many species endangered and means that the areas of remaining vegetation and habitat must be protected.

The Capricornia Energy Hub transmission project would impact hundreds of hectares of critical threatened species habitat for greater glider, grey headed flying fox, northern quoll and koala.

These species are being threatened by development of all kinds including coal mining and urban expansion. The continued loss of habitat cannot be offset. Any project must be looking for ways to avoid threatened species habitat destruction from the beginning.

**We urge the Government to declare this a controlled action and require a rigorous environmental impact assessment process.**

This transmission project should be assessed considering the cumulative impacts of the pumped hydro project as a whole.

We also urge the Government to consider whether likely runoff from construction could impact the Great Barrier Reef and Ramsar wetland at Cape Bowling Green.

We want to see renewable energy displacing fossil fuel generation as quickly as possible in Queensland, but we have to make sure we are protecting threatened species and the very Reef we are trying to save from climate change, in the process.

Kind regards,

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Clare Silcock, Energy Strategist  
Queensland Conservation Council  
[clare.silcock@qldconservation.org.au](mailto:clare.silcock@qldconservation.org.au)