

# IMPLICATIONS OF QUEENSLAND'S ENERGY ROADMAP

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## SUMMARY

The Queensland Energy Roadmap released in October 2025 was headlined by the decision to keep coal-fired power stations open for longer. The Roadmap plans for Queensland's energy system in 2035 to have 10 GW less renewable energy than the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan. **This would mean Queensland's energy system is likely to reach 55% renewable energy by 2035, putting our emissions on track for only 50% reduction by 2035 on 2005 levels.**

The Queensland's Government is also proposing to remove the legislated 54% mandated minimum public ownership of Queensland's energy generation, which means that public ownership could fall to just over 40% by 2035 based on the scenario outlined in the Energy Roadmap.

The renewable energy and storage growth scenarios outlined in the Energy Roadmap represent a significant stifling of large-scale solar, wind and storage projects compared to the investment that is already well-progressed in Queensland's pipeline, and mean Queensland would not be equipped to manage coal closures as plants reach the end of their technical lives between 2035 and 2040.

Queensland already has more anticipated solar and storage projects well advanced in the pipeline than the Energy Roadmap charts to 2035. To achieve the main scenario in the Roadmap, the Government would have to actively intervene to stop projects in Queensland, in direct contradiction of their private market-led rhetoric.

To ensure that Queensland has enough energy to meet our demands by 2040 and beyond, the Government would also have to intervene to keep coal-fired power stations open longer than their technical end of life, as they have already done for Callide B. This is not an economically rational or technically useful outcome. Queensland's coal-fired power stations have broken down 78 times over the last summer, and cannot be relied upon to meet demand. We need to replace these ageing and increasingly unreliable generators, but the Energy Roadmap avoids making these hard, but important, decisions.

The only certainty provided by the Roadmap is that the Queensland Government is committed to expanding and prolonging fossil fuel dependency in Queensland, which will condemn Queensland communities to more extreme weather and devastate the Great Barrier Reef.

# THE ENERGY ROADMAP

In September 2022, the Palaszczuk Government unveiled the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan (QEJP), Queensland's first attempt to chart a path beyond our ageing coal-fired power stations. The QEJP touted 100,000 jobs and 80% renewable energy by 2035, and underpinned reaching a 75% emissions reduction target by 2035.

This plan was sorely needed as coal-fired power stations became increasingly unreliable, renewable energy investment grew rapidly without coordination, and climate impacts became more pronounced. Queensland's lack of energy policy was increasingly out of step with national energy policy and the most likely scenarios mapped by the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO).

The QEJP mapped a path to end reliance on Queensland's publicly-owned coal power stations by 2035 and replace them with:

- 11 GW of wind and 12 GW of large-scale solar;
- 7 GW of long duration pumped hydro storage at two sites.

In April 2024, Queensland's renewable energy and emissions reduction targets were legislated in a set of Bills that also allowed the Government to proactively invest in transmission as well as set a minimum public ownership percentage for generation. The Queensland Liberal National Party, then in Opposition, voted against legislating the renewable energy targets, but in favour of the emissions reduction targets: 75% by 2035 and Net Zero by 2050.

In October 2025, the current Queensland Government's Energy Roadmap was released. **Compared to both AEMO's Integrated System Plan and the QEJP, the Roadmap represents a significant step backwards in renewable energy and emissions reduction ambitions.**

The Energy Roadmap presents several scenarios for closure dates of Queensland's publicly-owned coal power stations as the basis for modelling the renewable energy and gas generation build required, although further detail on that modelling is not publicly available.

## COAL CLOSURE

Queensland entirely owns five of eight coal fired power stations in the State, and has a 50% stake in another, Callide C. Millmerran and Gladstone are entirely privately-owned. The Energy Roadmap focuses on the publicly-owned coal stations, as did the QEJP.

The Energy Roadmap scenarios open up significant discussion on the technical end of life of coal-fired power stations. In particular, Callide B was designed with a forty year life span so its technical end of life has been listed with AEMO as 2028 for decades. However, the Energy Roadmap extended its lifespan to 2031, although the investigations into why the end of life could be extended have not been made public. Therefore, the Technical scenario shown in Figure 1 has a slower coal closure schedule than the Announced scenario.

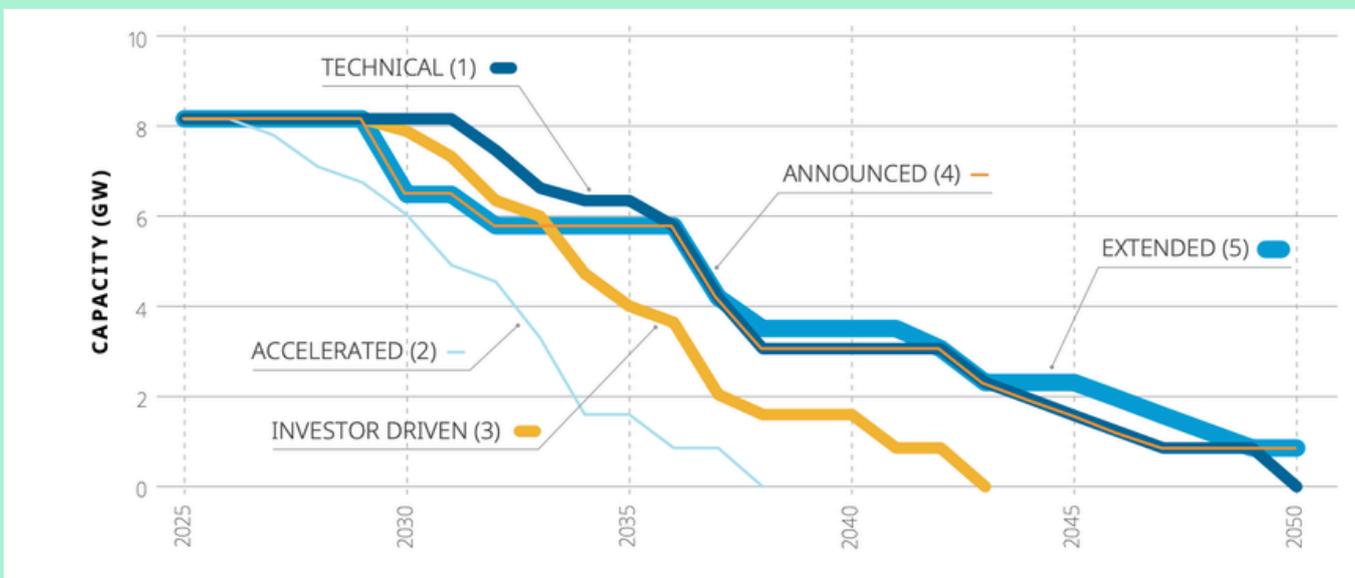


Figure 1: Queensland coal capacity under Energy Roadmap scenarios

Callide C has been plagued with issues since the explosion of Unit C4 in May 2021. The previous Queensland Government announced it was looking into taking complete ownership of the troubled station, but since being elected, there has been no indication that the Crisafulli Government is moving forward with those plans.

Just weeks before the Energy Roadmap was released, the owners of Gladstone power station, NRG Energy, announced that they were looking to bring the closure date forward to 2029 due to financial challenges.

The Investor Driven scenario in the Roadmap refers to investment in renewable energy, as private investment in renewable energy and storage may lead to the closure of coal-fired power stations earlier than in other scenarios. This reflects the strong pipeline of renewable energy and storage investment lining up in Queensland, however, it remains to be seen how much of this investment is dependent on policy certainty and forecast coal closure.

Coal closure is the only variable that is mapped beyond 2035 in the Energy Roadmap. Renewable energy, gas and storage build is only presented to 2035. Figure 1 underscores that in all scenarios there will be significant coal closure between 2035 and 2040, which does not appear to be planned for in the Energy Roadmap. The discussion below focuses on the Announced scenario as the best indication of the Government's plans.

## NEW CAPACITY BUILD

The Announced scenario plans for 6.3 GW of wind and 7.3 GW of large-scale solar by 2035. This is 10 GW less than modelled in the QEJP. It is also, concerningly, less than the large-scale solar that is already likely to be built in Queensland, in that it has support from a Power Purchase Agreement, Capacity Investment Scheme or has reached financial close. For wind, the gap between the likely projects and Energy Roadmap scenario by 2035 is only another one or two projects.

The Energy Roadmap plans for more large-scale battery storage than the QEJP by 2035, partly a reflection on the shifted focus away from pumped hydro, but also likely due to the reduction in large-scale storage costs and huge market interest in building battery projects in Queensland.

The Energy Roadmap appears to significantly underforecast utility storage build in Queensland, forecasting that by 2035 there will be 2.6 GW less capacity than is likely to be built, based on the current pipeline.

The only technology that is supported by the Energy Roadmap beyond likely projects and the QEJP is new peaking gas.

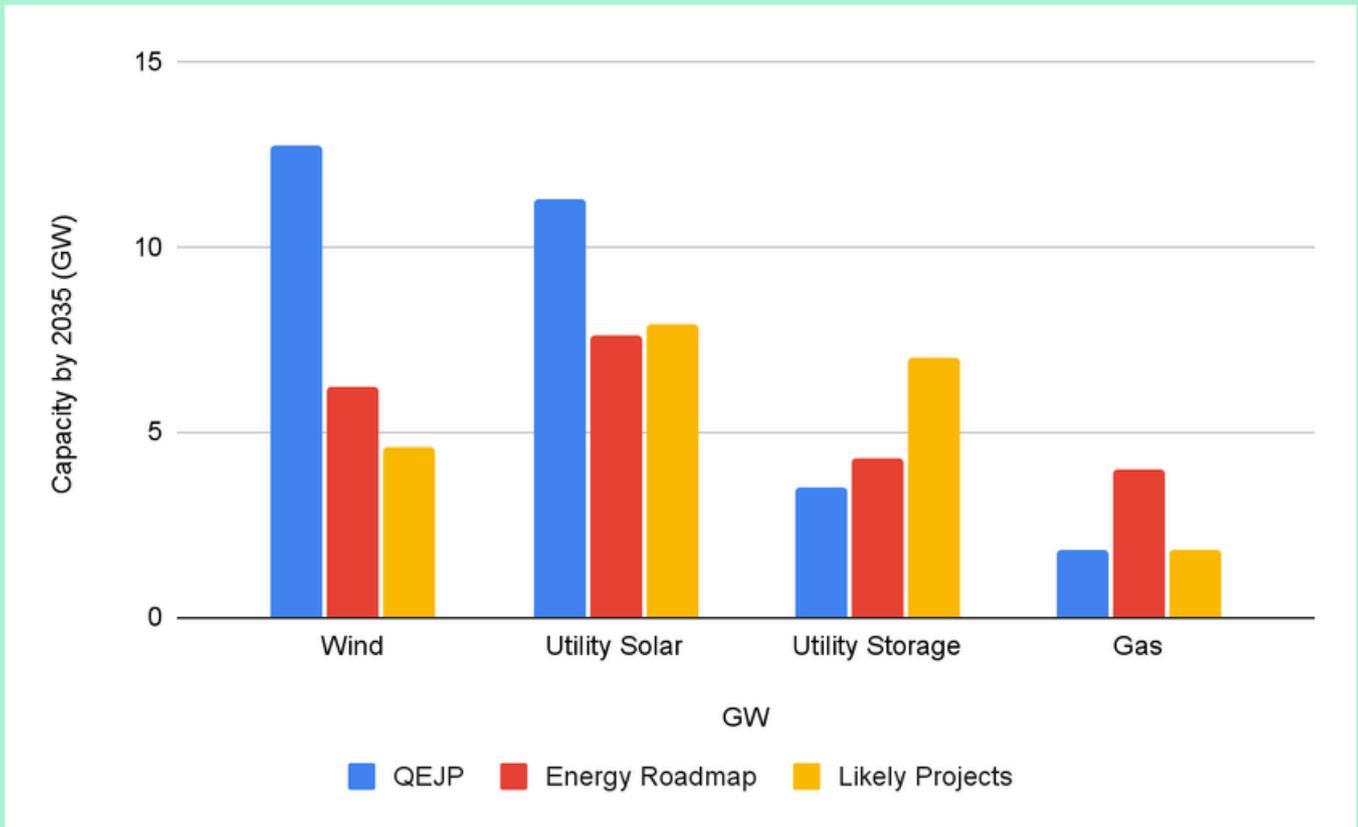


Figure 2: Energy Build by 2035 in Queensland

## RENEWABLE ENERGY PERCENTAGE

Under the Announced scenario, Queensland would reach only 55% renewable energy by 2035. Based on the likely projects already well advanced in Queensland's pipeline, this would essentially stagnate growth in renewable energy penetration in Queensland from 2030 to 2035 (Figure 3).



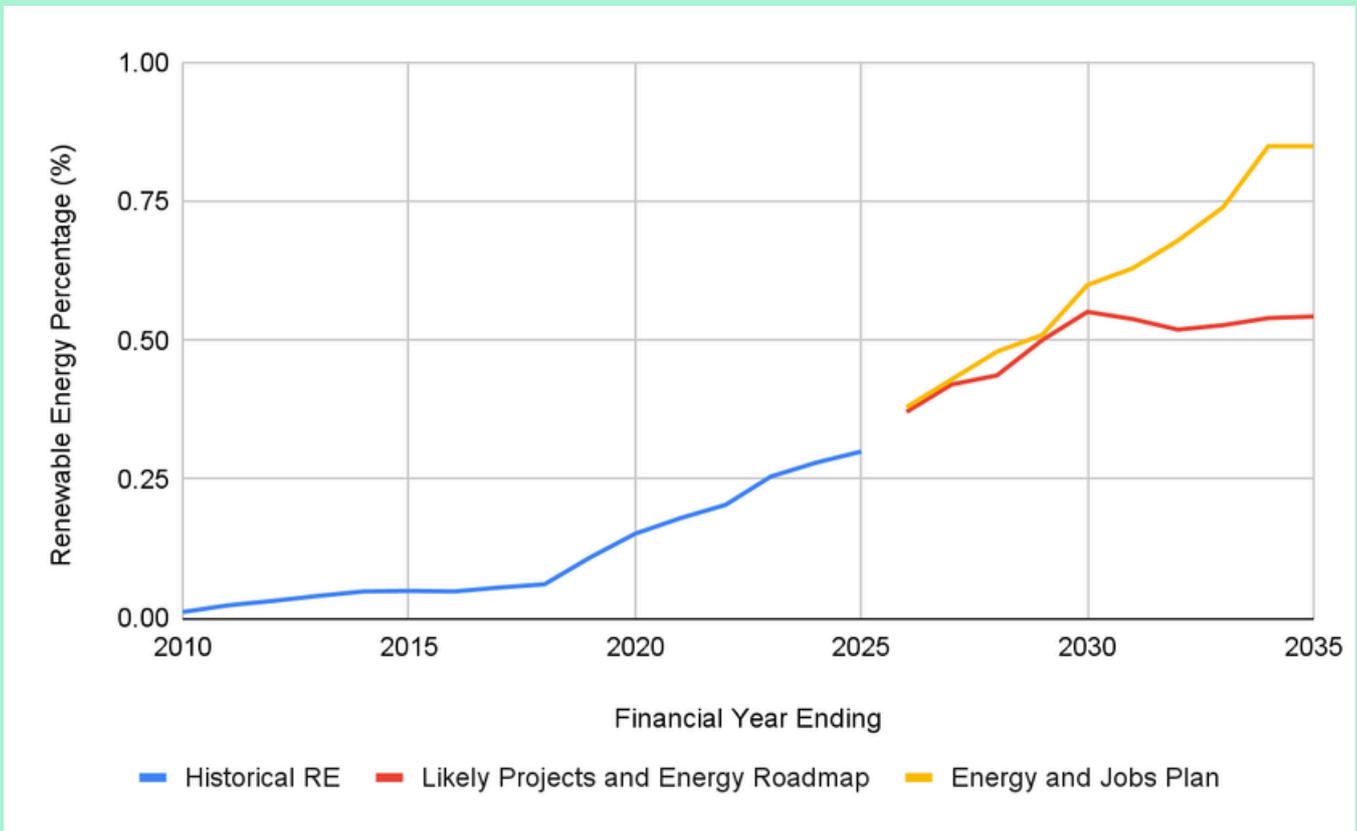


Figure 3: Renewable energy trajectory for Queensland

## EMISSIONS

This build of renewable energy would translate to around a 30% reduction in electricity emissions on 2005 levels by 2035. Emissions could actually rise from electricity in Queensland between 2030 and 2035 if likely projects are built on schedule but the Announced scenario is realised. Figure 4 shows that electricity emissions could still be around 33,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/year by 2035 under the Announced scenario, compared to 5,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e/year under the QEJP.

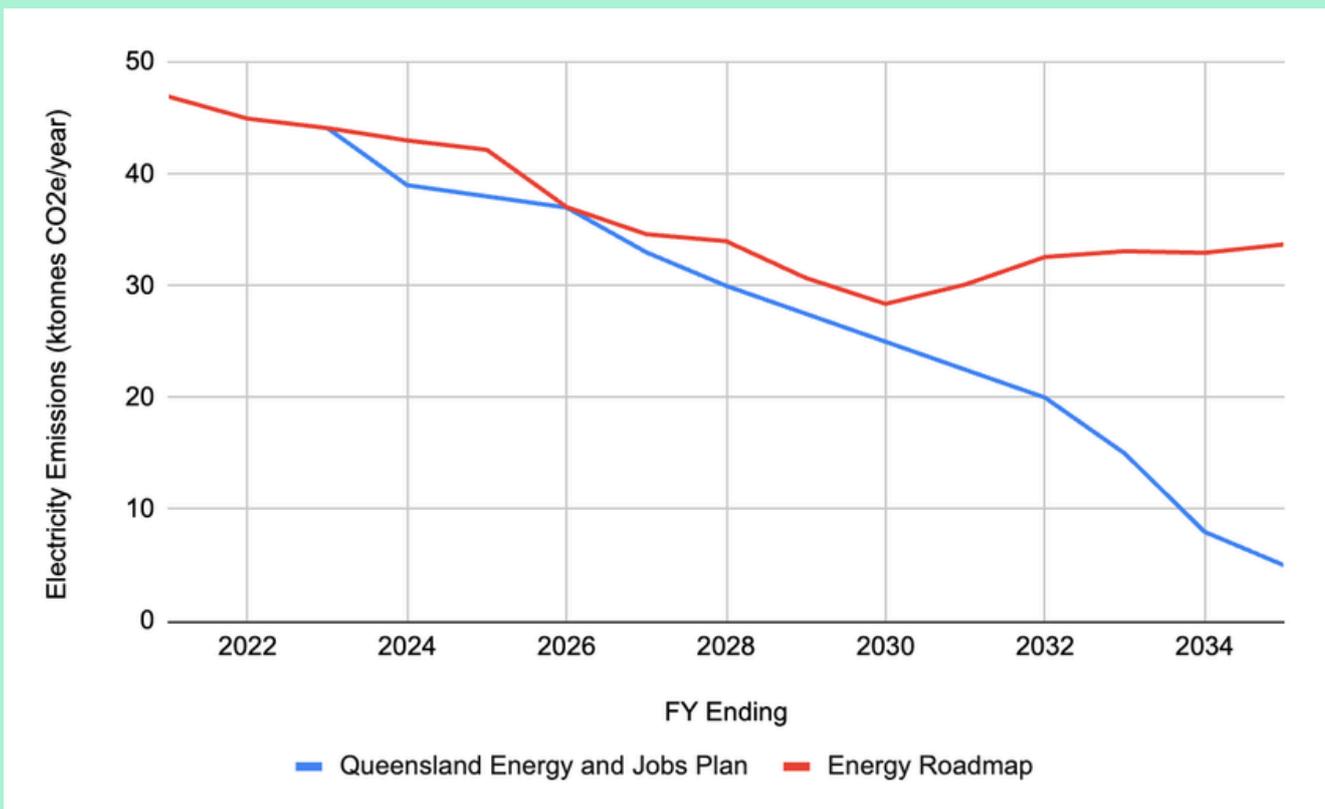


Figure 4: Emissions from electricity in Queensland

Emissions reductions from electricity underpin reductions from other sectors, especially transport and manufacturing and other industries. The Queensland LNP reiterated their committed, including during the launch of the Roadmap, to the 75% by 2035 emissions reduction target. However, with emissions reductions from electricity curtailed, the opportunities to reduce stationary and transport emissions will be severely limited.

The Federal Government’s Safeguard Mechanism, which is designed to reduce emissions from large facilities, aims to reduce emissions from covered facilities such as factories and fertiliser plants, by 60% from 2022 to 2035. **Under the Announced scenario, the emissions intensity of electricity in Queensland would be nearly seven times higher than the QEJP or Federal Government modelling, at around 0.5kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/kWh in 2035.**

While electrification would still reduce emissions for many purposes, for example, using heat pumps instead of gas boilers to generate heat, the emissions reduction would be much less. The LNP has committed to continuing programs in land use such as the Land Restoration Fund to capture and abate carbon emissions. There have been no announcements on emissions reduction plans for agriculture, fugitive emissions or industrial and waste sectors.

**It is difficult to see how the LNP could hope to achieve more than a 50% emissions reduction by 2035 if the Announced roadmap scenario eventuates (Figure 5).**

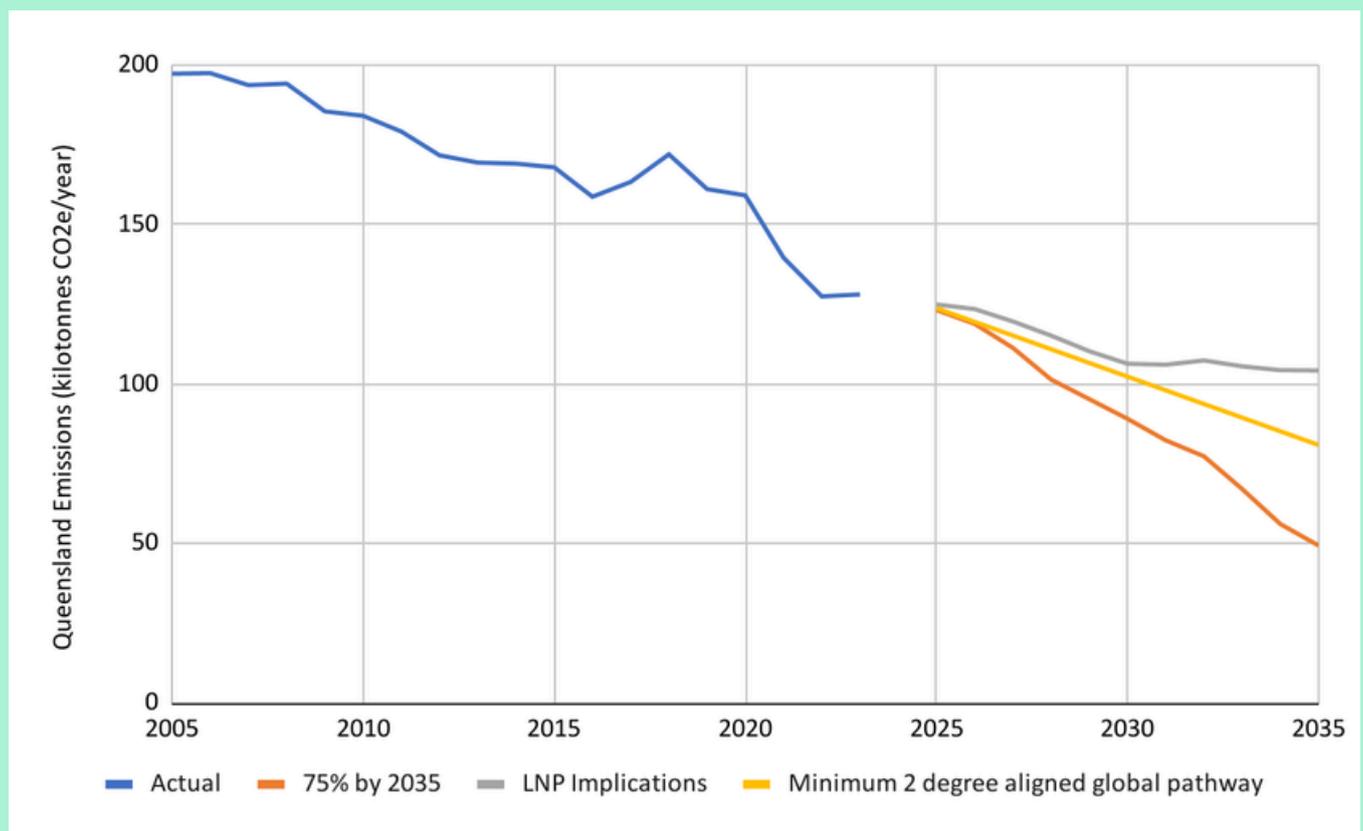


Figure 3: Renewable energy trajectory for Queensland

A 50% emissions reduction on 2005 levels by 2035 is well above a global emissions trajectory limiting warming to 2°C [1]. Above 2°C, the Great Barrier Reef’s future is dire and Queensland communities will be facing even more extreme weather events.

If Queensland cannot even contribute to a 2°C pathway, we are likely looking at an even more devastating future. In the recently-released National Climate Risk Assessment [2], it was made clear how vulnerable Australia is to climate change.

## The assessment outlines that if temperatures rise by 3°C:

- Townsville will see heat related mortality rise by almost 350%.
- The number of residential buildings at very high risk in Queensland is expected to rise to 185,000.
- Coastal communities in Queensland will be exposed to increased sea level rise, which could reach over half a metre by 2090. Urban coastal centres and infrastructure hotspots are among the most at-risk areas.
- Regional agricultural communities in Queensland, particularly in the north and along the east coast, can expect longer droughts, more severe heatwaves affecting livestock, disrupted water supplies for irrigation, increased cyclone-related damage to crops and supply chains, and growing risks from pests and diseases, all threatening farm productivity, local jobs, and the economic viability of single-industry towns.
- Queensland has some of the highest percentages of small businesses located in very high-risk areas. The northern region's sea level rise in 2030 will put over 40% of small businesses at risk.
- All natural systems will be challenged, with severe impacts expected on ecosystems. Many species will be forced to move, adapt to the new conditions or die out. The science is clear that all tropical reefs are likely to be gone in a 2°C warming scenario.

Over the last three years alone, more extreme and frequent weather events, fuelled by climate change, have cost an estimated \$24 billion [3] to the Queensland economy. Abandoning the ambition that underpins Queensland's energy transformation will saddle Queenslanders with the physical, emotional and financial burden of more frequent and extreme weather events.



## INVESTMENT AND JOBS

The QEJP investment in large-scale renewable energy, storage, gas and batteries amounted to nearly \$60 billion investment in Queensland to 2035. In the Energy Roadmap this is forecast to reach \$36 billion. Just considering renewable energy projects, there are around \$30 billion of projects already in the pipeline, and likely to be built, which is the entirety of the Energy Roadmap Announced scenario to 2035. To achieve the Energy Roadmap, the Queensland Government would have to actively restrict approvals or use other mechanisms to stop likely projects going ahead.

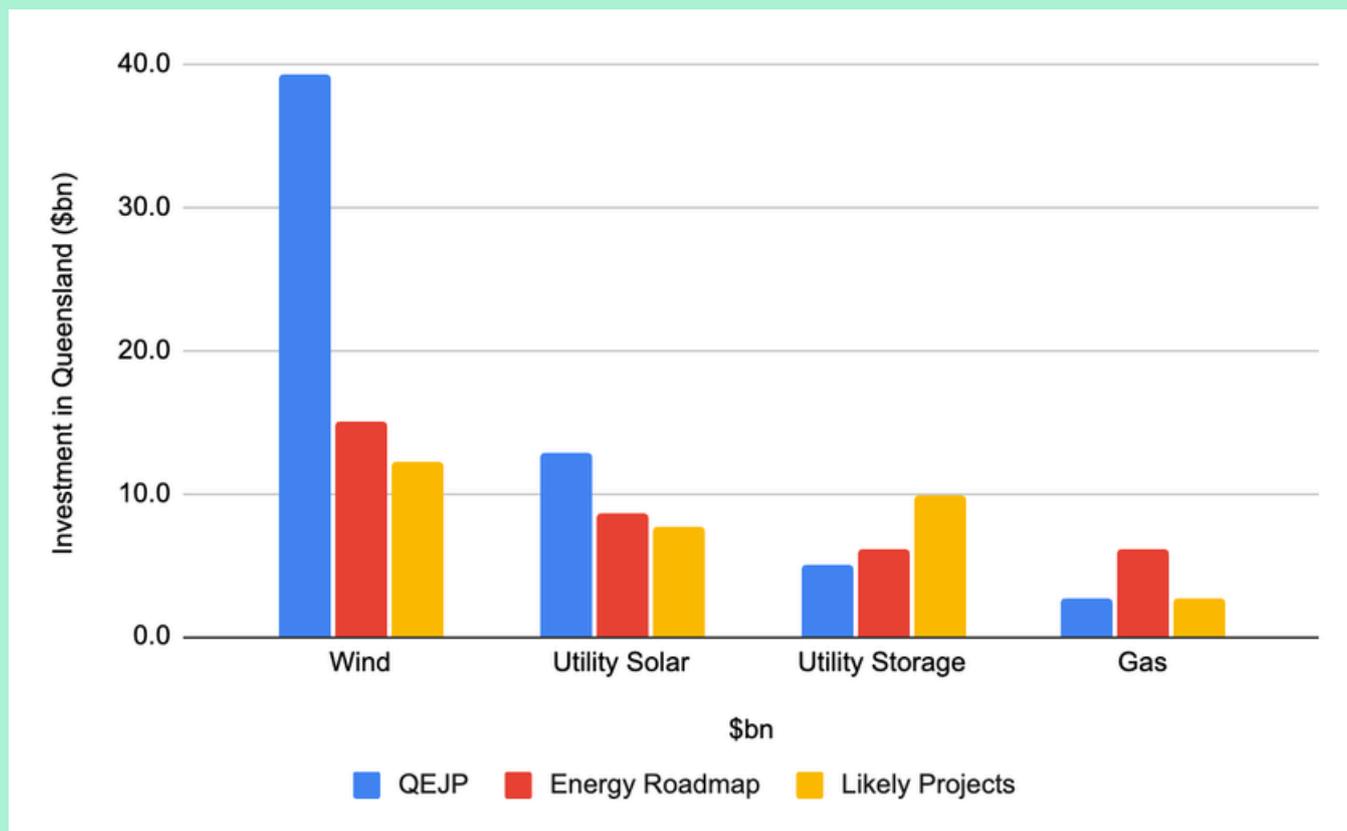


Figure 6: New capacity investment in Queensland to 2035

The difference in capacity between the Energy Roadmap and the QEJP means nearly 20,000 job years will not be created in Queensland to build renewable energy [4].

## TRANSMISSION

The Energy Roadmap commits to the first stage of CopperString 2.0, from Townsville to Hughenden, and the Gladstone Grid Reinforcement transmission project currently being planned by Powerlink. However, it does not commit to the Hughenden to Mt Isa part of CopperString, or any upgrade of the Queensland network to 500 kV.

## PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

The Energy Roadmap flagged that the minimum requirement of 54% public ownership of generation would be removed from legislation, which the Government has now tabled. The Roadmap envisions existing transmission, pumped hydro and new gas remaining publicly-owned. By 2035, this means that public ownership of generation in Queensland would likely reduce to around 43%.

# REFERENCES

[1] United Nations Environment Program. (2024). *Emissions Gap Report 2024: No more hot air ... please!*.

[2] Australian Government. (2025). *National Climate Risk Assessment*.

[3] Based on direct costs reported by the Government, and indirect costs estimated based on *Deloitte's Access Economics report 2022*.

[4] Rutovitz, J., Gerrard, E., Lara, H., Tahir, F. and Briggs, C. (2024). *Electricity Workforce Projections for the 2024 Integrated System Plan: Focus on Queensland*. Prepared for RACE for 2030.





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