

Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

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Submitted by: Barfield Road Producer Group
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State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee,
Parliament House

Sent via email: sdiwc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

RE: Submission - Qld Government Bill – Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

Formed in 2019, The Barfield Road Producer Group (BRPG) represents twenty-five multi-generational beef and grain producing families who mostly reside in Central Queensland. Our group collectively manages 30,000 hectares of grazing land, 3,000 hectares of farming land and over 20,000 head of cattle.

The aim of our group is to lead the way in best practice agriculture through caring for our land, our people and our animals. By taking this approach, we create stronger, more connected communities, ensuring a sustainable future for our regions. Organisations we work closely with are Landcare Agriculture, The Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA), and Dawson Catchment Coordinating Association (DCCA).

Many producers within our group are unfamiliar with the complexities of the clean energy industry and government processes. For many, farming is a home, a workplace, and a legacy passed down through generations. We support renewable energy however hold concerns about its potential impacts on productive agricultural land and rural communities, particularly in relation to environmental harm, food security, and the unintended consequences that may impact our livelihoods.

We welcome this Bill, as it reduces uncertainty for rural communities, placing community engagement at the forefront. However, we still have questions about the long-term, positive outcomes it will deliver for regional communities. We are confident the Queensland Government can deliver a more transparent, accessible, and well-understood clean energy transition by drawing on lessons learned from past projects in other Australian states.

Our Submission relates directly to the *social impact and community benefits*.

SUBMISSION

The draft regulation indicates that proponents seeking to develop wind farms and large-scale solar farms will be required to undertake SIA and enter a CBA with the local government before lodging a development application. We recommend a clear definition of large-scale solar farms is provided to ensure regulatory compliance and transparency.



- ***Policy objectives and the reason for them (pg. 1):***
 - *“The introduction of a Community Benefit System will require proponents to invest time and effort into building social licence with a host community”. This should be measured through indicators like hours spent engaging diverse stakeholders and must be backed by concrete actions on community concerns. A consistent, genuine approach is essential to ensure fairness and transparency.*
 - *“Local governments will be empowered to have a greater role in negotiation and decision making around community benefits”. While we welcome this increased involvement, we have concerns regarding the capacity of local governments to take on these expanded responsibilities. Adequate staffing and resourcing must be in place before this new role begins. To support effective representation, we recommend establishing a local working group comprising members from diverse industries, including agriculture, ensuring that the voices of local industry and the broader community are genuinely heard.*
 - *“The community benefit system frontloads the requirement to build social licence with communities”. To ensure fairness and equity, the concept of social licence should be defined in consultation with communities through a transparent and inclusive feedback process.*
- ***Achievement of policy objectives (pg. 5): “By ensuring social impact and community benefit are appropriately considered and assessed by a proponent before a development application is lodged under the Planning Act, the proposed changes ensure all renewable energy proponents build social licence with local and host communities prior to a development application being lodged to drive accountability, improve transparency and deliver tangible benefits for the community”. Genuine partnerships between renewable energy proponents and local host communities must also be included here.***
- ***Part 3 Amendment of Planning Act 2016 (Page. 20) Division 6 Deciding particular applications and appeal rights***
 - *“The decision to enter into a community benefit agreement and what that community benefit agreement relates to is agreed between the parties, most often the local government and the proponent. These parties agree what community benefit is relevant for the community”. To promote industry accountability and uphold high standards in community engagement and project delivery, we recommend the implementation of an independent developer rating scheme.*

In summary, we ask the Committee to ensure that the proposed Bill:

1. Actively addresses the growing community divisions caused by wind, solar, and transmission projects through consistent and transparent governance.
2. Requires renewable energy companies to engage with communities and respond to their needs to support the long-term resilience of our regions.
3. Strikes a fair balance between the rights of producers and Queensland’s energy demands, ensuring food security and sustainable land management are not compromised.

We thank you for the extension to provide a submission to the Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025.



Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Melanie Shannon

Facilitator

On behalf of The Barfield Road Producer Group

