

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

Submission No:	467
Submitted by:	North Burnett Regional Council
Publication:	Making the submission and your name public
Attachments:	See attachment
Submitter Comments:	

20 May 2025

Our reference: 1289682

Mr Jim McDonald MP
Chair of the Parliamentary State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee and
Member for Lockyer
Parliament House
2 George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Via: online submission

Dear Mr McDonald

RE: *Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025* – North Burnett Regional Council submission

North Burnett Regional Council (Council) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the above-mentioned Bill, which was introduced in the Legislative Assembly on 1 May 2025.

From the outset, Council would like to express its support for the intent and purpose of the Bill and acknowledge the potential benefits that are contemplated from the proposed amendments in terms of consideration of the interests and impacts on local communities from renewable energy proposals.

In reviewing the Bill, Council would like to offer the following points for consideration by the Committee:

1. In Part 5, Clause 21, the proposed Schedule 24 definition of a *prescribed renewable energy facility* includes a threshold of 1MW or more. Council considers that this threshold is too low, with facilities of such a low scale unlikely to have any meaningful or substantive impact on communities (and thus, unlikely to necessitate a Social Impact Assessment).

A facility of 15MW or greater would be a more suitable threshold. Council also considers that energy production capacity (ie. megawatt) is a preferable measure for determining the threshold, rather the land size. Should land size remain as a measure, then Council suggests a minimum site size of at least 25 hectares.

2. Council supports the requirement for affected Renewable Energy Facilities to be Impact Assessable development applications.
3. Larger scale renewable energy facilities are typically developed in regional and rural based local government areas, where land sizes are larger and more affordable and population density is lower. These Councils (including this Council) are typically not resourced to undertake extensive compliance and enforcement actions associated with monitoring compliance with development conditions. Accordingly, Council requests the Committee consider recommending to the Legislative Assembly that the development enforcement responsibilities reside with the State as Assessment Manager. This includes enforcement

responsibilities for any conditions relating to a Community Benefit Agreement. Council acknowledges that these are commercial agreements between parties, and that Council can technically address any non-compliance with Agreement terms. That said, it would be beneficial for smaller local governments if oversight of compliance with development conditions remained with the State as the Assessment Manager, in the interests of ensuring that the intent and objectives of development conditions is appropriately realised.

4. The use of the Coordinator-General Consultation Guideline is not supported by Council as appropriate for renewable energy projects. Whilst this may have provided a starting point and is useful for the purposes of defining the consultation process, Council suggests that a specific Guideline is developed for Renewable Energy proposals covered by the Bill. Council would like to see the guideline content further refined to be specifically focused on these uses and the common impacts that are felt in regional communities.

May I reiterate the Council's support for the outcomes sought by this Bill and again acknowledge the opportunity afforded by this Committee for local governments to provide feedback on the Bill.

If the Committee requires any clarification of the matters raised above, please do not hesitate to contact Council on 1300 696 272 and request to speak with Mr Garth Nolan, Manager, Planning and Environment.

Yours sincerely



Craig Matheson
Chief Executive Officer

