

Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023

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Every Queensland
community deserves
to be a liveable one

8 December 2023

Mr Shane King MP
Chair
Transport and Resources Committee
Member for Kurwongbah

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

Dear Chair,

RE: LGAQ Submission to Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) is a not-for-profit association representing all 77 local governments' across Queensland as the state-wide peak body for our sector.

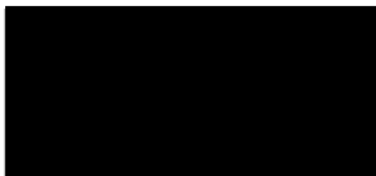
We sincerely thank the Transport and Resources Committee (the Committee) for undertaking this Inquiry into the Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023, which has peaked strong interest from our member councils.

Please find **enclosed** a copy of the LGAQ's submission for your consideration, on behalf of our members. As outlined in the submission, individual councils may also lodge their own submissions as well.

We would be more than pleased to speak to the Committee at any scheduled public hearings and understand that regional hearings will be part of the Committee's Inquiry, which is really important.

For further information in relation to this submission, please contact Mr Nathan Ruhle, Manager – Intergovernmental Relations on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,



Alison Smith
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



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Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023

Submission to Queensland Parliament Transport
and Resources Committee

8 December 2023

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About the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ)

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) is the peak body for local government in Queensland. It is a not-for-profit association established solely to serve councils and their needs. The LGAQ has been advising, supporting, and representing local councils since 1896, enabling them to improve their operations and strengthen relationships with their communities. The LGAQ does this by connecting councils to people and places; supporting their drive to innovate and improve service delivery through smart services and sustainable solutions; and providing them with the means to achieve community, professional and political excellence.

Partners-in-Government Agreement

The LGAQ on behalf of all 77 Queensland local governments is a signatory to a three-year partners-in-government-agreement with the State of Queensland.

The Agreement details the key principles underlying the relationship between the state and local governments and establishes the foundation for effective negotiation and engagement between both levels of government.

The agreement acknowledges that local government is the closest level of government to the community, affecting the lives of everyday Queenslanders and acknowledging Local Government as a genuine partner in the Australian government system.

The intent of the agreement was to continue the tradition of working in genuine partnership to improve the quality of life for all Queenslanders to enjoy. By identifying the roles and responsibilities of each party, it provides a solid foundation for effective negotiation and engagement between both levels of government.

The LGAQ is committed to working with the Queensland Government and will continue to be a passionate advocate for councils, to serve our joint jurisdiction for the people of Queensland.

Rural and Remote Councils Compact

The Rural and Remote Councils Compact¹ signed on 25 June 2021, complements the existing Partnership in Partners-in-Government agreement in place between the LGAQ and the Queensland Government to provide a platform to ensure issues of priority for these communities are properly considered by the Government when developing policies, programs, and legislation.

The Rural and Remote Councils Compact, pledges to amplify the voice of and improve outcomes for the state's 45 rural and remote councils and their local communities by enhancing engagement between both levels of government.

¹ <https://knowledgebaseassets.blob.core.windows.net/images/9c61cdc2-3cfa-eb11-94ef-002248181740/Rural%20and%20Remote%20Councils%20Compact%20-%20signed%20copy.pdf>

Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023

Executive Summary

The LGAQ welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Queensland Parliament's Transport and Resources Committee on the Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023 (the Bill).

Prior to the introduction of the Bill, the LGAQ provided a submission to a draft Bill consulted on in June this year. We acknowledge the Department of Energy and Public Works for providing a briefing on the draft Bill as well as the ongoing spirit of engagement with the LGAQ and Queensland councils. This consultation has included a Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan (QEJP) briefing to our Policy Executive by Director-General Paul Martyn; a webinar with our members – also led by Director-General Martyn; and ongoing meetings with senior departmental officials around key policy issues, following the release of the QEJP in September 2022.

It is important to note that the LGAQ's response in this submission - and our advocacy more broadly - is always evidence-led and derived from feedback from our member councils. This includes resolutions endorsed by the majority of delegates who attend the LGAQ Annual Conference each year. Supported resolutions from our Annual Conference automatically become binding policy positions and ensure that our views are truly representative of the local government sector in Queensland.

Following the release of the draft Bill for consultation on Saturday 3 June 2023, we appreciated the focus on ensuring a thorough public consultation process in developing this legislation before it was introduced into the Queensland Parliament on 24 October 2023.

The LGAQ does not have a formal position on the entire QEJP. However, communities that host these developments are looking for a guaranteed share in the benefits, not simply bearing the burden of 'hosting' the clean energy transformation. This is a view firmly held by our member councils and supported by the Association.

Too often, major industry has treated Queensland communities like rest stops – using their facilities as they briefly pass through, then leaving them to deal with the waste left behind.

The Bill outlines key principles of the State Government's public commitments to energy transformation through the QEJP. These commitments include:

- Establishing Queensland's three Renewable Energy Targets – 50 per cent by 2030, 70 per cent by 2032, 80 per cent by 2035 – and new reporting obligations in legislation. The targets provide the overarching goal during the energy transformation, and provide confidence and clarity on where Queensland is headed;

- Enshrining in legislation Government's commitment to maintaining public ownership in the energy system - 100% of distribution and transmission assets, 100% of deep storage assets, and a target of equal to or more than 54% ownership of generation assets; and
- Enshrining the Job Security Guarantee and Job Security Guarantee Fund in legislation to give confidence to affected energy workers that they will be supported through the energy transformation, in line with the Queensland Energy Workers' Charter (a tripartite agreement between Government, relevant energy unions and publicly owned energy businesses) and backed with a \$150 million dedicated fund.

Furthermore, the transformation infrastructure required to connect renewable energy generation developments to the electricity grid – the Queensland SuperGrid – is also provided for in the Bill. Specifically:

- Enshrining the process for reviewing and updating the Infrastructure Blueprint and optimal infrastructure pathway (i.e., Queensland's pathway to transform the electricity system and achieve the renewable energy targets);
- Establishing a new Priority Transmission Investment framework to identify, assess and build the backbone transmission needed to connect our pumped hydros and renewable energy zones with areas of demand; and
- Establishing a new Queensland Renewable Energy Zone framework to coordinate and efficiently connect the 22 gigawatts of new large-scale wind and solar Queensland needs by 2035 to transform the electricity system.

Finally, the QEJP identifies three new governance and advisory functions to support the coordinated delivery of the energy transformation. These functions are outlined below and established in the Bill:

- The Queensland Energy System Advisory Board will provide technical advice on Queensland's optimal infrastructure pathway to ensure a secure, reliable and affordable electricity supply is maintained for Queensland consumers.
- The Energy Industry Council will provide advice on opportunities and pathways for affected energy workers, and to support implementation of the Queensland Energy Workers' Charter.
- A Queensland Renewable Energy Jobs Advocate to provide advice on local job opportunities in the energy industry and promote the benefits of renewable energy projects.

Beyond what is covered in the Bill, the three most significant issues as outlined by our members in resolutions at the 2022 and 2023 LGAQ Annual Conferences, primarily relate to:

1. Transformation planning, particularly for the most impacted communities;
2. The social licence of industry; and
3. The need to condition projects under an approved regulatory framework.

These are detailed further in this submission. Individual councils will also lodge their own submission.

Despite the explanatory notes identifying that “stakeholders wanted a greater focus on social licence” as one of three key themes on consultation on the draft Bill, there are still improvements that can be made to address these concerns, which are currently missing from the Bill.

Recommendations

The LGAQ has prepared detailed comments in relation to the Bill and has made 10 recommendations, summarised below:

- **Recommendation 1:** The LGAQ recommends the establishment of ongoing employment targets at each clean energy hub, with each hub having a publicly tracked and reported local employment target.
- **Recommendation 2:** The LGAQ recommends that the State Government specifically legislates to ban 100% FIFO, DIDO and BIBO renewable energy developments in Queensland to ensure industry commitment that supports local jobs and secure work for those who live and want to work in a rural, remote or regional community.
- **Recommendation 3:** The LGAQ recommends the establishment of a Regional Transformation Authority to plan, coordinate and oversee the development of regional, place-based transition plans that enhance the liveability of communities most impacted by decarbonisation.
- **Recommendation 4:** The LGAQ recommends early, and genuine consultation undertaken with councils in the development of REZs and their management plans, with the adoption of a 'no surprises' policy, ensuring key community consultation processes are only undertaken after initial engagement with the relevant local government.
- **Recommendation 5:** The LGAQ recommends that in conjunction with the implementation of the REZ roadmap, the State Government passes associated legislation that ensures:
 - A head of power to establish a contemporary Social Impact Assessment (SIA) framework for clean energy projects with a legislated ability for the State Government to enforce compliance. This should include working with local governments to develop a contemporary and integrated Social Impact Assessment framework for the closure and end-of-project life for resource, renewable and clean energy projects, with outcomes focused on sustainable communities that host these projects.
 - As part of the development of a contemporary SIA framework, the State Government should develop a Social Infrastructure Agreement as a template, that individual proponents and host/impacted councils can negotiate. This also needs to be recognised with a head of power under legislation so that it is enforceable. The head of power also needs to include a mandatory seller disclosure component so that any Agreement is binding over the life of a project and that condition is known if a developer on-sells a project. Local government would be happy to codesign the template. The Social Infrastructure Agreement needs to be enforceable and ensure that projects are conditioned upon approval to consider cumulative impacts on host communities (housing, roads, water, etc), with waste management plans and end-of-life processes including full remediation of the site.
 - A mandatory notification process to local councils for all renewable energy projects occurring, either fully or partly, in the relevant Local Government Area (LGA).

- **Recommendation 6:** The LGAQ recommends the State Government amend the *Planning Act 2016* to enable submitter appeal rights for renewable energy projects such as solar farms and wind farms.
- **Recommendation 7:** The LGAQ recommends the State Government require solar farm project proponents to enter into make-good agreements with immediate and impacted neighbouring properties, prior to the submission of the development application to council.
- **Recommendation 8:** The LGAQ recommends the establishment of a new statutory body, like that of the GasFields Commission, with regulatory powers and sufficient resourcing, as part of a regulatory oversight model that manages the development of renewable energy infrastructure and also carbon farming, with a focus on community impacts, engagement and industry social licence. The new statutory body should include representation from the local government sector.
- **Recommendation 9:** The LGAQ recommends the establishment of community contribution fees, based on capacity, for all renewable projects to support better community outcomes and decommission bonds held in trust, to protect prime agricultural land and support better decommissioning at an acceptable standard for community.
- **Recommendation 10:** The LGAQ recommends the State Government condition renewable energy projects to provide long-term economic and social benefits for their host communities, such as a permanent housing dividend located within the local township – or at the very least a location determined in consultation with the local council. This community legacy should only be building new homes, or the purchase of empty homes that are already listed for sale.

Submission

Queensland councils welcome the long-term planning certainty provided by the release of the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan (QEJP) in September 2022 by the Premier Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk MP.

The energy transformation planned for under the QEJP is one of the most significant policy undertakings by the Queensland Government in living memory. Not only the size and scale of new generation and transmission infrastructure, but also in terms of the impact on the economy, our energy security and the environment – as well as the significant financial impact on the State Budget.

While it is recognised that there was no consultation undertaken with local governments in the development of the QEJP, consultation processes such as the release of the draft Bill earlier this year are critical in ensuring that Queensland councils and the local communities that will host these large-scale developments not only understand the QEJP but can tailor their own local decisions to maximise any opportunities and address local challenges that arise. Further, that they can flag localised issues and potential unintended consequences to regulators and legislators where necessary.

Communities should develop alongside industry. The liveability of every Queensland community should be enhanced, not negatively impacted from renewable energy projects. Critical to that success is the need for proponents to engage early with community and councils. That engagement needs to be genuine and receptive to feedback and input.

Host and supply communities should have specific benefits that are identified and tangible. These legacy benefits should also be responsive to the needs of that local community. That can only be identified through genuine engagement. A commitment to local and regional benefit sharing is important to the long-term success of any industry or specific project.

Developers should focus on buying locally and supporting locals. This will create a local footprint, meet ESG expectations, and help them to 'do the right thing'. This also means employing and retraining local workers, procuring from local businesses and supporting local community and not-for-profit groups. A successful project proponent should recognise and add value to the fabric of their local community.

Empowering local communities and building social licence will reduce costs and the time taken to develop a project. That has to recognise the impact on essential service delivery, enabling infrastructure (roads, housing, water, etc) and on the local environment.

Transparency of process will build trust and credibility with the community.

In response to the Bill, the LGAQ would provide the following feedback:

1. Commitments to the public

Queensland Renewable Energy Targets

The Bill legislates all three of Queensland's renewable energy targets:

- By 2030, 50 per cent of electricity generated in Queensland is to be generated from renewable energy sources.
- By 2032, 70 per cent of electricity generated in Queensland is to be generated using renewable energy sources.
- By 2035, 80 per cent of electricity generated in Queensland is to be generated using renewable energy sources.

It is acknowledged that the Minister must also publish the methodology for working out the amount of electricity generated in Queensland from renewable energy and that the Minister will review the renewable energy targets at least every five years to ensure the targets remain contemporary.

It is also acknowledged that section 11 of the Bill provides that the Minister must table in the Legislative Assembly by 30 September each year, an Annual Progress Statement – as prepared by the board.

As per the LGAQ Policy Statement, local government supports the development of an integrated renewable energy strategy for Queensland by the State Government, in genuine consultation with Queensland councils. The LGAQ has no sector-approved view on what those targets should be, but we acknowledge the transparency in both the methodology and accountability on how the targets are tracking, as outlined in the Bill.

Job Security Guarantee

The Bill implements Action 3.2 of the QEJP, which commits that the State Government will ensure workers in Queensland's publicly-owned coal-fired power stations have a secure economic future, choices and clear employment pathways and opportunities. It is acknowledged that to do this, the State Government will implement a new \$150 million Job Security Guarantee.

Support for workers in Queensland's resource regions is welcomed. Our coal-fired generators are significant local employers in the South Burnett, Western Downs, Central Queensland and Mackay-Isaac regions. Retaining these workers is critically important to the economic security of these regional communities.

It is acknowledged that the Bill enshrines the government's Job Security Guarantee in legislation, with a commitment to provide security and support to affected energy workers. This includes providing support for training, access to employment opportunities, or by providing other benefits or opportunities to support affected energy workers.

As the coal-fired generators transition to publicly-owned clean energy hubs, the local host communities would appreciate an ongoing commitment to local jobs in those communities.

While the jobs of existing workers in these generators is protected, there is no ongoing commitment to future local jobs that these facilities could provide as well as other local employment opportunities. This could be done by introducing suitable local jobs targets at each clean energy hub – which are then publicly tracked and reported on.

Workforce attraction and retention remains one of the key challenges for local governments across Queensland. That is both an issue for councils as a key employer across Queensland,

but also when it comes to attracting new industry and opportunities with a private sector proponent, across a range of different industries.

Job security is a key component of the economic sustainability of any community, particularly in rural, remote and regional parts of Queensland.

Delivering the energy transformation, in terms of the construction and operation of projects, will provide significant employment benefits.

- **Recommendation 1: The LGAQ recommends the establishment of ongoing employment targets at each clean energy hub, with each hub having a publicly tracked and reported local employment target.**

In terms of local employment opportunities, the LGAQ is opposed to 100% FIFO/DIDO/BIBO developments in established resource communities for the following reasons:

1. It discriminates against all Queensland workers outside of identified FIFO hubs for employment opportunities;
2. It negatively impacts the social cohesion of local communities; and
3. It diminishes the transfer of economic benefits to local and regional communities.

As the LGAQ highlighted when the *Strong and Sustainable Communities Bill* was introduced in 2016, the introduction of the SSRC Policy Framework and legislation presented an unmatched opportunity to transform the way Queensland manages the social impacts of the resources sector on regional communities. A project's social licence to operate must include having an approved plan for managing the impacts of its activities on people.

As was noted in the introduction of the SSRC Policy Framework, the purpose of the prohibition of a 100% FIFO workforce is to help ensure that the economic and social benefits of resource projects flow to resource communities, including through employment.

It is generally accepted that one of the challenges accompanying clean energy projects is the lack of any direct jobs once a project has been constructed. Therefore, the prospect of direct employment opportunities is largely confined to the construction phase.

Many workers within the existing workforce will require support and training to upskill or reskill for these jobs. In-region training hubs and localised upskilling opportunities will be vital in supporting opportunities for local economic benefits to many communities. Those jobs will also include opportunities throughout the supply chain or as part of new industries that are attracted as a catalytic industry development.

The State Government needs to work with industry and local governments to train and re-skill a locally based workforce. Where possible, this should be used as an opportunity to retain long-term, secure jobs within rural and regional communities that host these projects.

- **Recommendation 2: The LGAQ recommends that the State Government specifically legislates to ban 100% FIFO, DIDO and BIBO renewable energy developments in Queensland to ensure industry commitment that supports local jobs and secure work for those who live and want to work in a rural, remote or regional community.**

While the transition planning for workers at existing coal-fired generators is acknowledged, there is no community transition process legislated in the Bill. Without a regulated process,

community will continue to feel a lack of certainty and without a seat at the table as part of the consideration of these new developments.

A resolution, endorsed by the majority of Queensland councils at the 2022 LGAQ Annual Conference, called for the need to establish a Regional Transformation Authority:

The LGAQ calls on the State and Federal governments to establish a Regional Transformation Authority with statutory powers inclusive of local governments, to:

- *Respond to changing supply and demand for fossil-fuel.*
- *Develop regional plans and coordinate a sustainable transformation, principally for Queensland's coal mining regions, but also for all Local Government Areas supplying to or reliant on the economic output of coal mining, as well as heavily coal reliant industrial regions, like the Bowen Basin, and ensure all planning supports the ongoing and sustainable diversification of the resources sectors.*

The effective management of this change is critical – principally for coal mining regions but also for all LGAs supplying to, or reliant on, the economic output of coal mining, as well as heavily coal-reliant industrial regions.

A multi-agency, intergovernmental Regional Transformation Authority should be created to:

- Manage and coordinate the negative social and economic impacts associated with end-of-mine life and decarbonisation in coal mining regions.
- Ensure that all stakeholders can meaningfully participate in decision making processes and in the design of new plans and programs to decarbonise the economy.
- Work across all aspects of community and economic transformation to enable the flow of information and resources for effective, timely and regionally-appropriate investment and action to facilitate:
 - Ensure regional workforce support and planning well in advance of mine closures;
 - Oversee place-based investment in social infrastructure/services to support the future needs of regional communities;
 - Foster economic diversification to build on strengths of the regions to attract investment and jobs;
 - Enable investment in coal mining regions and infrastructure development, by providing a vehicle to attract and channel funds into economic diversification initiatives;
 - Ensure legislation and policy is adapted as necessary; Build community capacity to leverage social and economic diversification.
- Provide feedback to government and industry which is integrated to ensure coordinated post-mining land-use planning.
- Ensure timely pre-closure planning that applies contemporary social impact assessments across the resource sector.

Coal mining regions and the local governments that support them have borne the brunt of environmental, social and governance impacts associated with mining projects for decades. Regional Australia is undergoing a social and economic transformation that will be beyond the capability of local councils to address. Existing coal heartlands, like Central Queensland, can capitalise on the global shift to net zero emissions provided appropriate Federal and State government planning and investment is received. Equally, coal mining regions are particularly vulnerable in the decarbonisation process.

Numerous reports have articulated both the social and economic opportunities and risks for regional Australia associated with decarbonisation.

Modelling by Accenture suggests that over 395,000 jobs could be created if Australia can capitalise on changes to the energy sector and become a 'renewable energy superpower'. Another report by Deloitte projects that the Queensland economy could grow by 7 per cent if it successfully manages the shift to net zero. Each of the reports clearly highlight that the risks associated with getting this transformation wrong are equally as significant as the potential for growth.

Transition authorities have played a significant role in helping regions navigate changes in the energy sector in other parts of Australia and globally - this has included coordinating planning efforts to ensure energy security, economic diversification, industry adaptation, environmental regeneration and positive social outcomes.

Despite governments in other states with significant economic ties to coal having already instigated different forms of transition or change authorities, Queensland currently lacks a clear mechanism or vehicle to coordinate the change across the broader social and economic needs in regional Queensland (except for hydrogen).

Given the Federal Government's adoption of net zero emissions targets and the reality that Queensland is likely to face disproportionate impacts because of decarbonisation, it is critical that there is coordination of resources across government departments and agencies to plan and implement transformation actions.

Without a responsible authority which has a clear mandate and statutory powers to manage change, local councils will be fighting for their community's very existence under the pressure of negative social, economic and environmental impacts resulting from end-of-mine life and global climate change responses.

While the establishment of a National Net Zero Authority is acknowledged and strongly welcomed, Queensland councils still strongly believe there is a separate and distinct role for the State Government to play as well, given the regulatory responsibilities of the State.

The case study of Glenden – the transition of assets between mining companies and the impact it has had on the community - and also Mount Isa, with the recent announcement by Glencore, has only strengthened the case for a permanent, funded, coordinated and ongoing approach to community transition, as our economy decarbonises.

While we strongly welcomed the establishment of a National Net Zero Authority by the Federal Government, there is still a role for the State Government to play and working with local governments to undertake place-based collective impact and decision making to adapt, respond to and ensure the ongoing liveability and viability of Queensland's resource communities.

The most recent meeting of Commonwealth and State Energy Ministers on 24 November 2023 noted that Energy Ministers agreed that the Commonwealth and respective state and territory governments will work in partnership to negotiate bilateral Renewable Energy Transformation Agreements (RETAs) under the National Energy Transformation Partnership

(NETP). According to the meeting communique, RETAs will detail how the parties will work together to achieve shared objectives in the renewable energy transformation, including to ensure reliability through an orderly and timely exit of ageing coal generators, as well as addressing non-market barriers to investment.

It is intended that RETAs will be delivered under the Partnership framework through bilateral agreements that reflect the unique needs of each state and territory. The Partnership recognises that each jurisdiction can pursue its own policies according to its unique needs and circumstances, while working collaboratively to deliver the best outcomes at a national level.

As outlined in National Cabinet's endorsement of the National Transformation Principles on 9 December 2022, *"global efforts to decarbonise present opportunities for regional communities to be active players in achieving and sharing the benefits of the net zero economy. These principles reflect the National Cabinet's intent to capture the benefits of the energy transition, with a focus on supporting regional pathways for economic transformation associated with decarbonisation for those communities that have helped grow Australia's prosperity. They also guide how the Commonwealth and state and territory governments will work together and with local government, regional communities and industries."*²

Local government's role in representing regional communities strengthens the call for a state-based authority – particularly in relation to assisting in the development of a Queensland bi-lateral transformation partnership.

- **Recommendation 3: The LGAQ recommends the establishment of a Regional Transformation Authority to plan, coordinate and oversee the development of regional, place-based transition plans that enhance the liveability of communities most impacted by decarbonisation.**

Public Ownership

The Queensland Government's long-standing commitment to public ownership in the electricity system is acknowledged. This public ownership provides certainty and security for future investment decisions, particularly to those local host communities of our existing coal-fired generators.

One of the commitments that has reassured many communities is that the publicly owned coal-fired generators will transition to publicly-owned clean energy hubs.

Legislated public ownership targets on distribution, transmission, deep storage and generation also provides an additional level of security to regional communities.

2. Investment opportunity in Queensland

Queensland SuperGrid Infrastructure Blueprint

The Bill outlines the processes and requirements for updating the Queensland SuperGrid Infrastructure Blueprint. This includes reviewing and updating the optimal infrastructure pathway, which is Queensland's pathway to transform the electricity system and achieve

² <https://federation.gov.au/national-cabinet/media/2022-12-09-national-transformation-principles>

three objectives: (a) achievement of the renewable energy targets (b) provision of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity to Queensland consumers (c) minimisation of the cost of electricity for Queensland consumers.

It is acknowledged that under the Bill, the Infrastructure Blueprint will be reviewed by 31 May 2025 and then every two years after.

Action 1.1 of the QEJP commits the Queensland Government to investigate appropriate legislative models to support the delivery of the backbone transmission needed to transform Queensland's electricity system. Notwithstanding the commitment that the backbone transmission outlined in the Infrastructure Blueprint needs to be built at the right time, in the right sequence – local consultation with landholders and key stakeholders should never be compromised.

The Bill establishes the new Priority Transmission Investment Framework which allows the State Government to identify and assess Priority Transmission Investment projects outside of the national framework, and direct Powerlink to construct these projects and recover its associated costs.

Queensland Renewable Energy Zones

Action 1.4 of the QEJP commits to the coordinated development of an additional 22 gigawatts of large-scale wind and solar by 2035 in any Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) across northern, central and southern Queensland.

The Bill provides for the process of how a REZ is declared, including linked transmission infrastructure under a designated management plan. This will be overseen and coordinated by a REZ delivery body.

In relation to general planning for renewable energy projects and specifically designated REZs, the LGAQ notes QEJP Action items 1.4 (Build more renewable energy and connect an additional 22 GW by 2035) and 3.6 (Partner with industries and communities to maximise benefits from the energy transformation and drive regional economic opportunities). The LGAQ submission to the State Government's review of the Wind Farm Code 23 and associated guidance has more specific feedback in relation to broader land-use and planning initiatives to the separate and deliberative consultation being undertaken in relation to the REZ Roadmap in this Bill.

As the LGAQ noted when the REZ Roadmap was released for consultation in July 2023, if communities are hosting major renewable energy generation, it's only right that they benefit from their fair share of the economic and social benefits that will come from these large-scale projects.

That means locking in social licence with upfront, detailed guarantees of improved liveability in these areas, not to their detriment, damage or destruction while benefitting proponents. Social licence demands real benefits – far beyond a few sets of footy jerseys like those that have sometimes been offered in the past.

It is recognised and appreciated that the three regions (Northern, Central and Southern) which will be home to the 12 REZs are drawn on local government boundaries.

All of the relevant issues listed as part of the development of a REZ Readiness Assessment are critical in understanding the ability of host communities to support development, and the impact of any development on local and regional economies. Therefore, they should provide the quantifiable evidence of the impact on workforce, housing, supply chains, waste management, other land uses and social infrastructure. For example, if a project will require 50 workers during construction, then the assessment should outline that specific detail – as well as where those workers will be drawn from, and where they will be housed. The REZ Readiness Assessment process should work with the relevant council and State Government departments to include those important and detailed, project-specific considerations.

It should identify opportunities to support local jobs and local businesses.

It should also be undertaken with reference to Local Housing Action Plans that are being delivered through the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy.

A 2023 LGAQ Annual Conference Resolution called on greater community consultation for renewable energy projects.

The resolution called for the *Planning Act 2016* to be amended to ensure the voice of the community can be heard, as well as provide community members and neighbouring landowners with the right to appeal during any assessment of renewable energy projects.

Without the opportunity for these rights in relation to renewable energy projects, governments will not be able to fully consider and condition projects appropriately to mitigate impacts on neighbouring landowners and the broader community. Landowner rights and opportunities are important in balancing the transition of the State and the nation to renewable energy with the needs and impacts on the community. This would also promote the liveability of our regions and, in turn, support the attraction of workers needed for the energy transition.

Another 2023 LGAQ Annual Conference resolution called on the establishment of make-good obligations and agreements to ensure fair and equitable treatment of neighbouring properties and solar farm proponents, demonstrating strong social licence with landholders.

Two further 2023 LGAQ Annual Conference resolutions dealt with the issue of social licence and impacts on infrastructure.

Queensland councils are keen to ensure the State Government require - through its State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) planning authority for renewable energy projects - that neighbouring councils with road infrastructure critical to the delivery of these projects are engaged and that appropriate road infrastructure agreements are made prior to the commencement of construction.

It is imperative that all affected councils have full engagement with the renewable energy companies that progress through the SARA process. Road infrastructure is greatly impacted, not only in the host council area, but through the whole supply chain to get the product from port to site. Infrastructure agreements that involve full restoration and/or compensation for the impact of the development on any council area need to be fully developed at the approval stage.

Furthermore, Queensland councils also called on the State Government to work with local government to develop an enforceable framework, similar to the concept of a Road Infrastructure Agreement, to be used by councils and proponents across all industries, allowing for hard and soft social infrastructure needs to be addressed in affected communities.

Social infrastructure includes the physical buildings and services which support community life and represents a fundamental component of overall social sustainability, supporting positive outcomes across peoples' environmental, economic, political and cultural conditions. It is the foundation communities need to secure a positive and desirable future as they embrace a changing world.

Current regulation requires that major project proponents develop an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to gain project approval. However, social impacts are not given the same weight as environmental nor economic concerns. This has led to shortcomings in meaningful and sustainable investment in social infrastructure, including ad hoc planning based on immediately felt needs, identified in hasty community engagement processes which aim to mitigate impacts by not making a bad situation any worse. This disregards the long-term aspirations of host communities.

- **Recommendation 4:** The LGAQ recommends early, and genuine consultation undertaken with councils in the development of REZs and their management plans, with the adoption of a 'no surprises' policy, ensuring key community consultation processes are only undertaken after initial engagement with the relevant local government.
- **Recommendation 5:** The LGAQ recommends that in conjunction with the implementation of the REZ roadmap, the State Government passes associated legislation that ensures:
 - A head of power to establish a contemporary Social Impact Assessment (SIA) framework for clean energy projects with a legislated ability for the State Government to enforce compliance. This should include working with local governments to develop a contemporary and integrated Social Impact Assessment framework for the closure and end-of-project life for resource, renewable and clean energy projects, with outcomes focused on sustainable communities that host these projects.
 - As part of the development of a contemporary SIA framework, the State Government should develop a Social Infrastructure Agreement as a template, that individual proponents and host/impacted councils can negotiate. This also needs to be recognised with a head of power under legislation so that it is enforceable. The head of power also needs to include a mandatory seller disclosure component so that any Agreement is binding over the life of a project and that condition is known if a developer on-sells a project. Local government would be happy to codesign the template. The Social Infrastructure Agreement needs to be enforceable and ensure that projects are conditioned upon approval to consider cumulative impacts on host communities (housing, roads, water, etc), with waste management plans and end-of-life processes including full remediation of the site.
 - A mandatory notification process to local councils for all renewable energy projects occurring, either fully or partly, in the relevant Local Government Area (LGA).

- Recommendation 6: The LGAQ recommends the State Government amend the Planning Act 2016 to enable submitter appeal rights for renewable energy projects such as solar farms and wind farms.
- Recommendation 7: The LGAQ recommends the State Government require solar farm project proponents to enter into make-good agreements with immediate and impacted neighbouring properties, prior to the submission of the development application to council.

Grid Supporting Technology

Action 1.1 and Action 1.3 of the QEJP commit the Queensland Government to begin building the SuperGrid and investing in more batteries and storage (respectively).

To facilitate this additional investment in a coordinated way, the Bill outlines the proposed amendments to the *Electricity Act 1994* which designate 'operating works' to include grid supporting technologies such as batteries and synchronous condensers and 'battery storage devices' which refers to plant that converts electricity into stored energy and releases stored energy as electricity, and includes any equipment necessary for the operation of the plant.

3. Governance and Advice

The role and remit of the Queensland Energy System Advisory Board, Energy Industry Council and Queensland Renewable Energy Jobs Advocate are noted. These are all established under relevant Action items from the QEJP, and their respective roles are important.

In relation to the establishment of a Queensland Renewable Energy Jobs Advocate, the Bill provides that a key function of the Advocate will be to provide advice to the Minister in relation to opportunities for employment and workforce development in the energy industry, undertaking relevant research and promoting the benefits of projects relating to renewable energy to the community.

While the role of the advocate will be critical, local host communities deserve further guarantees on the employment dividend that will be provided by project developers – and the need for a commitment to supporting local jobs.

Lessons from the expansion and development of the coal-seam gas industry are worth noting.

On 1 July 2013, the GasFields Commission was established in Queensland as an independent statutory body. The role of the GasFields Commission is to:

1. Facilitate effective stakeholder relationships, collaborations and partnerships to support education and information sharing related to Queensland's onshore gas industry.
2. Review effectiveness of the implementation of regulatory frameworks related to Queensland's onshore gas industry.
3. Advise agriculture and gas industry peak bodies, government ministers and regulators, landholders and community groups on matters relating to sustainable coexistence, leading practice and management of Queensland's onshore gas industry.

The GasFields Commission has certain functions that are established in legislation:

- a) Facilitating better relationships between landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry;
- b) Reviewing the effectiveness of government entities in implementing regulatory frameworks that relate to the onshore gas industry;
- c) Advising Ministers and government entities about the ability of landholders, regional communities and the onshore gas industry to coexist within an identified area;
- d) In response to requests for advice from the chief executive under the Regional Planning Interests Act 2014 about assessment applications under that Act, advising that chief executive about the ability of landholders, regional communities and the resources industry to coexist within the area the subject of the application;
- e) Making recommendations to the relevant Minister that regulatory frameworks and legislation relating to the onshore gas industry be reviewed or amended;
- f) Making recommendations to the relevant Minister and onshore gas industry about leading practice or management relating to the onshore gas industry;
- g) Advising the Minister and government entities about matters relating to the onshore gas industry;
- h) Obtaining particular information from government entities and prescribed entities;
- i) Obtaining advice about the onshore gas industry or functions of the commission from government entities;
- j) Supporting the provision, to the community and stakeholder, of information prepared by appropriate entities on health and wellbeing matters relating to the onshore gas industry or geographical areas in which the onshore gas industry operates;
- k) Facilitating appropriate entities to undertake community engagement and participation in initiatives about assessing health and wellbeing concerns relating to onshore gas activities;
- l) Publishing educational materials and other information about the onshore gas industry;
- m) Partnering with other entities for the purpose of conducting research related to the onshore gas industry;
- n) Convening advisory bodies to assist the commission to perform a function mentioned above.³

Queensland councils have remarked upon the successful implementation of this function and how it re-shaped the coal seam gas industry's engagement with community - and how the economic and social dividends of the industry were guaranteed for those communities that hosted the individual projects.

The LGAQ welcomed the announcement in October this year by the Premier that the State Government was investigating an expanded remit of the GasFields Commission Queensland to promote coexistence of renewable energy developments, resources, agriculture and other industries and provide support for communities with a trusted, independent body for information, education and engagement.

As we have consistently said in response to the QEJP, Queensland councils and the communities they represent support new development and a clean energy future. If communities are hosting major renewable energy generation, it's only right that they benefit from their fair share of the economic and social benefits that will come from these large-scale

³ <https://www.gfcq.org.au/about-us/>

projects. That means locking in social licence with upfront, detailed guarantees of improved liveability in these areas, not to their detriment, damage or destruction for the benefit of proponents.

The announcement in October reflects feedback we have provided to the State Government and we look forward to hearing more details about the frameworks that are needed to lock in social licence and ensure everyone benefits from the renewable energy boom.

We not only want to see an announcement of an investigation, but tangible action and implementation of a necessary framework that supports developments, supports local workers and businesses and mitigates infrastructure impacts.

A 2023 LGAQ Conference Resolution called on the State Government to either:

1. Establish a dedicated, independent and statutory Carbon Farming and Renewable Energy Projects Commission; or
2. Extend the legislative functions of the current Queensland Gasfields Commission to cover the development and growth of Queensland's carbon farming and renewable energy industries.

New industries such as carbon farming and renewables must be able to coexist with traditional industries (such as Agriculture and Resources) in regional, rural and remote communities. Importantly, the development and growth of these new industries must support broader regional development goals such as sustained workforce participation, population retention and growth as well as community cohesion.

The projected massive scale and expansive nature of Queensland's carbon and renewable energy industries will mean that cumulative impacts are unavoidable and should be the focus of future policy development and legislative frameworks – especially acknowledging the lessons learnt from the rapid growth of Queensland's resource and coal seam gas (CSG) industries over the past decade.

As observed by the research report *Renewables & Rural Australia (A study of community experiences in Renewable Energy Zones in NSW and the case for more equity and coordination of the clean energy transformation)* - by the Australia Institute and The University of Sydney - the "cumulative impacts are profoundly transformative in rural areas, and while there is a chance for sustained and equitable development in local economies, there is also a risk of mounting community objections".

While it is acknowledged that there is a Ministerial Energy Council and proposed Energy Industry Council as well as a Queensland Energy System Advisory Board under the QEJP and also outlined in the Bill, the remit of these groups does not appear to cover issues associated with cumulative impacts, co-existence frameworks or 'shared value'. Further, the remit of these agencies does not cover carbon farming as an emerging industry that will support Australia and Queensland's transition to Net Zero.

Additionally, as cited on page 26 of the Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan, *"The Queensland Government has established several institutions to assist resources companies and landholders to coexist successfully. While these institutions have served*

Queenslanders well in balancing the interests of the resources industry and those affected by it, the Queensland Government will review some of the current coexistence institutions to ensure that they remain contemporary, efficient, and effective”.

Another 2022 LGAQ Annual Conference Resolutions relate to the need to regulate social impact and condition clean energy projects in a similar way to that of large resource projects.

• Establish a contemporary framework for Resource, Renewables and Clean Energy Projects

The LGAQ calls on the State Government to:

- 1. Undertake a wholesale review of the regulatory frameworks associated with resource, renewable and clean energy projects with consideration of a centralised agency approach to ensure consistent outcomes relative to size and impact of all projects.*
- 2. Develop and implement contemporary Social Impact Assessment (SIA) type values to underpin the Queensland Resource Industry Development Plan and that those SIA values are applicable for all resource, renewable and clean energy projects with a legislated ability for the State Government to enforce compliance.*
- 3. Work with local government to develop a Contemporary Integrated Social Impact Assessment Framework for closure of resource, renewable and clean energy projects with outcomes focused on sustainable communities;*
- 4. Lead policy agendas in relation to the resource, renewable and clean energy sectors and that those policy settings inform regional planning and future sector investment.*

The resolution and desired outcomes put forward highlight the challenges experienced on the ground as a resource council and what that means for supporting communities and opportunities presented to ameliorate the challenges and harness the benefits provided by the development and implementation of the Queensland Resource Industry Development Plan (QRIDP), not only for industry as it stands now, but for the transforming and new industries and the sustainability of communities supporting industry now and into the future.

There is an opportunity, through the establishment and implementation of the QRIDP, to provide a contemporary framework which applies principles like those developed by the State Government for Social Impact Assessment (SIA) guidelines as part of the *Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Act 2017* (SSRC Act), for all resource, renewables and clean energy sector development in Queensland.

This could be through an extension of the SSRC Act or similar legislation specific to the renewables and clean energy sectors.

Key social sustainability principles need to be entrenched in the planning of all future investment in the resources, renewables and clean energy sectors to ensure future sustainability for industry sectors and the communities that support them.

The experiences of councils can be best summarised as:

- The SSRC Act - nor any other legislative framework - captures or addresses the holistic cumulative impacts of currently operating and new resource, renewable or clean energy projects.
- While regulation underpins the Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) performance in the newly developed QRIDP, history shows that unless commitments are

conditioned, there is no mechanism for enforcement and no community benefit nor any flow-on for community sustainability.

- Without the benefit of conditioned compliance on ESG elements, local government is left to engage in a time, legal and ratepayer consuming process to advocate for committed outcomes under the pre SSRC Act EIS documentation, which are not enforceable on proponents by the State unless conditioned.

It is through lived experience and an extensive, costly advocacy commitment that one of our regional townships – Glenden - was in social and economic decline because of the abandonment of ESG principles.

• Renewable energy project contributions and engagement with local communities

The LGAQ calls on the State Government to introduce legislation and policy which requires proponents of renewable projects to make a 'local benefit' contribution to regional communities by implementing the following measures:

- *Have a mandatory notification process to local government for all renewable energy projects occurring within their region.*
- *Have meaningful engagement with local government, community, and local leaders.*
- *Have a community contribution fee, based on capacity, for all renewable projects to support better community outcomes.*
- *Provide access to Renewable Project Decommission Bonds, or local government hold these in trust, to protect prime agricultural land and support better decommissioning at an acceptable standard for community.*

Engagement and notification processes are covered earlier in this submission.

There has been a surge in the number of renewable projects being developed across Queensland. As the number and scale of renewable projects grows, so does the impact they have upon local communities. Additionally, profits from many major renewable investments in Queensland will flow back to shareholders of multi-national organisations. There is a need to ensure that impacts are managed and there are benefits for local communities in the locations where renewable resources are being developed.

To coordinate the substantial increase in investment in renewables, the State Government has committed to the establishment of the Northern, Central and Southern Renewable Energy Zones. A primary objective of the QREZ is to ensure that “real and lasting benefits are delivered for regional host communities;” however, there has been no detail provided nor substantial engagement with councils as to how this is to occur. There also needs to be full integration and a line-of-sight between major project ‘parent’ approval processes and downstream approvals in the assessment of major projects, ensuring project impacts are fully considered at each appropriate stage of the assessment process.

Recent examples have highlighted how project proponents have exploited loopholes in the assessment system to choose a path of least resistance, where impacts of these proposals have not been appropriately consulted or managed, nor align to earlier approvals issued by the Coordinator-General or Department of Environment and Science as part of the environmental impact assessment process.

In Queensland, there are well-established approval processes enshrined in legislation which govern the non-renewable resource sector. The *Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Act (2017)* applies to all resource projects for which an Environmental Impact Statement is required, or that hold an environmental authority and have 100 or more workers. It is a requirement that a Social Impact Assessment be completed in accordance with the statutory Social Impact Assessment Guideline (2018).

This includes submission of a Social Impact Management Plan which details the commitments the proponent makes to regional communities. This provides a statutory mechanism for local governments to negotiate with project proponents the specific commitments they make to ensuring local communities' benefit.

A similar framework to the SSRC is not in place for renewable energy projects in Queensland. Rather, the planning and development approval processes vary in Queensland for renewable energy projects. For example, local governments are typically the assessment manager for solar farm developments whereas the State Government is the assessment manager for a wind farm under the Planning Regulation 2017, with SDAP (State Development Assessment Provisions) Code 23 applying to the assessment of a windfarm project.

Under the Queensland *Planning Act 2016*, only formal public notification of development proposals is required in relation to impact assessable development.

While the explanatory notes outline that 'greater focus on social licence' is one of the three key themes of consultation, there Bill provides little comfort to any certainty of process or regulatory framework to address these concerns.

Getting this right will save project proponents time and money, while protecting the interests of host communities and enhancing greater opportunities to share the economic benefits of the largest industry developments some of these areas will have ever seen.

The LGAQ believes there should absolutely be a coordinated scheme in place to invest in local priorities to leave a positive legacy for REZ communities.

Renewable energy projects, including an energy transmission project's construction plans, transportation plans and overall project design, should be developed in close consultation with councils. This is to ensure impacts are minimal and planning for the region's future can incorporate and adhere to other council plans for the growth of the region including land use, infrastructure, priority roads etc. Key contacts including the developer and/or its construction contractors must be provided to landholders to allow them to more easily raise issues that arise during construction.

Developers must also meet regularly with council and landholders during construction to proactively discuss and resolve issues, as well as keep landholders and the neighbouring community informed of the project's status. Proponents are making significant financial investments in these projects to deliver shareholder returns; they must also be required to make significant social and economic commitments to the communities that will host their projects.

Opportunities for local procurement, manufacturing and other supply chain opportunities should not only be encouraged but mandated. There are real concerns about the ongoing

economic contribution these projects make to their host communities during the construction phase, but particularly beyond that phase.

Long-term economic benefits to a host community need to be provided up-front. They can include community benefit funds to support local organisations and also other needs in that community – such as housing supply. Those opportunities should be negotiated and facilitated in discussions with the relevant local government.

Local government acknowledges the value of long-term community planning to develop priorities and inform specific projects and programs. Any State Government based long-term planning must recognise the diversity of local governments across Queensland and accept the right of individual councils to determine a fit-for-purpose arrangement that reflects their individual circumstances and capacity to respond.

Empowering local governments to implement solutions that are tailored to the needs and wishes of their local communities is always our favoured approach. Place-based solutions that are purposely designed to respond to a particular local issue have a much greater likelihood of achieving intended outcomes.

Local community leaders want to ensure that benefit sharing is delivered to not only mitigate but outweigh the additional social and economic impacts placed on communities.

The New South Wales Government has introduced an access scheme to enable efficient investment in generation, storage and transmission infrastructure in the long-term interest of consumers while delivering positive outcomes for local and First Nations communities. Under that proposal, generation and storage projects that wish to connect to network infrastructure which is subject to an access scheme will need to apply for an access right through a competitive tender. Access right holders will be charged access fees that include components to fund community benefit and employment programs.

A 2023 LGAQ Annual Conference Resolution suggested that a Queensland scheme could include a community contribution fee of \$1000 per annum per megawatt of a renewable project site, with 50 per cent of these funds paid directly to the local government hosting the site to enable the construction, maintenance, and operational management of local community-owned infrastructure projects. The same resolution also called for the State Government to regulate for proponents to be held accountable to the Clean Energy Council best practice charter for renewable energy projects – or mandating an industry standard to create a level playing field for industry and guaranteed expectations of conduct for community.

REZ access schemes are intended to:

- govern the volume of projects that may be granted access rights to connect to REZ network infrastructure and define the terms and conditions of the access rights
- enable investment in new, low-cost generation and storage projects by providing increased certainty of curtailment risks for access right holders while maintaining an efficient level of utilisation of the REZ scheme infrastructure

- create a streamlined connection process for projects that will improve connection timeframes, provide greater certainty and reduce re-work and costs compared to the open-access connection process.⁴
- Recommendation 8: The LGAQ recommends the establishment of a new statutory body, like that of the GasFields Commission, with regulatory powers and sufficient resourcing, as part of a regulatory oversight model that manages the development of renewable energy infrastructure and also carbon farming, with a focus on community impacts, engagement and industry social licence. The new statutory body should include representation from the local government sector.
- Recommendation 9: The LGAQ recommends the establishment of community contribution fees, based on capacity, for all renewable projects to support better community outcomes and decommission bonds held in trust, to protect prime agricultural land and support better decommissioning at an acceptable standard for community.
- Recommendation 10: The LGAQ recommends the State Government condition renewable energy projects to provide long-term economic and social benefits for their host communities, such as a permanent housing dividend located within the local township – or at the very least a location determined in consultation with the local council. This community legacy should only be building new homes, or the purchase of empty homes that are already listed for sale.

⁴ <https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/industry/access-schemes>

Conclusion

Overall, the LGAQ appreciates the long-term planning certainty that is provided through the release of the Queensland Government's Energy and Jobs Plan.

However, it is crucial that suitable efforts are made to engage with local governing bodies to ensure that planning for these projects is undertaken in conjunction with the relevant council(s). This needs to happen with considerable urgency, as these projects are springing up all over regional Queensland.

Despite the explanatory notes identifying that "stakeholders wanted a greater focus on social licence" as one of three key themes on consultation on the draft Bill, there are still improvements that can be made to address these concerns, currently missing from the Bill.

Queensland has a chance to be a leader on the benefits that a regulated social licence framework can provide to the communities that host projects, our environment and the broader economy. Failures to address these concerns have seen considerable local political upheaval in other states.

Working with local communities and councils will ensure better project planning, avoid delays and ensure that land use and infrastructure is better managed - now and into the future. Of course, avoiding sub-optimal outcomes will also mean developers, as well as council and the community they serve, will not be burdened with unnecessary and potentially substantial costs.

Contact Details

Please do not hesitate to contact Nathan Ruhle, Manager – Intergovernmental Relations via email [REDACTED] phone 1300 542 700 should you wish to discuss any aspect of this submission.

Appendix

LGAQ Policy Statement

The LGAQ Policy Statement⁵ is a definitive statement of the collective voice of local government in Queensland. The relevant policy positions of local government in the context of Infrastructure and Energy are as follows:

8.6 Infrastructure

8.6.1.5 Local government is opposed to 100% FIFO/DIDO/BIBO developments in established resource communities for the following reasons: 1. It discriminates against all Queensland workers outside of identified FIFO hubs for employment opportunities; 2. It negatively impacts the social cohesion of local communities; and 3. It diminishes the transfer of economic benefits to local and regional communities.

8.7 Energy Use

8.7.1 Local government supports the development of an integrated renewable energy strategy for Queensland by the State Government, in genuine consultation with Queensland councils.

LGAQ Annual Conference Resolutions

The LGAQ is committed to member driven advocacy and working with members to build stronger local government and more resilient local communities.

Relevant Annual Conference resolutions have been listed in this submission.

2022 LGAQ Annual Conference Resolutions

#73 The LGAQ calls on the State and Federal governments to establish a Regional Transformation Authority with statutory powers inclusive of local governments, to:

- Respond to changing supply and demand for fossil-fuel.
- Develop regional plans and coordinate a sustainable transformation, principally for Queensland's coal mining regions, but also for all Local Government Areas supplying to or reliant on the economic output of coal mining, as well as heavily coal reliant industrial regions, like the Bowen Basin, and ensure all planning supports the ongoing and sustainable diversification of the resources sectors.

The effective management of this change is critical – principally for coal mining regions but also for all Local Government Areas supplying to, or reliant on, the economic output of coal mining, as well as heavily coal reliant industrial regions.

⁵ <https://www.lgaq.asn.au/downloads/file/183/2019-lgaq-policy-statement>

#75 The LGAQ calls on the State Government to:

1. Undertake a wholesale review of the regulatory frameworks associated with resource, renewable and clean energy projects with consideration of a centralised agency approach to ensure consistent outcomes relative to size and impact of all projects.
2. Develop and implement contemporary Social Impact Assessment (SIA) type values to underpin the Queensland Resource Industry Development Plan and that those SIA values are applicable for all resource, renewable and clean energy projects with a legislated ability for the State Government to enforce compliance.
3. Work with local government to develop a Contemporary Integrated Social Impact Assessment Framework for closure of resource, renewable and clean energy projects with outcomes focused on sustainable communities;
4. Lead policy agendas in relation to the resource, renewable and clean energy sectors and that those policy settings inform regional planning and future sector investment.

#78 The LGAQ calls on the State Government to introduce legislation and policy which requires proponents of renewable projects to make a 'local benefit' contribution to regional communities by implementing the following measures:

- Have a mandatory notification process to local government for all renewable energy projects occurring within their region.
- Have meaningful engagement with local government, community, and local leaders.
- Have a community contribution fee, based on capacity, for all renewable projects to support better community outcomes.
- Provide access to Renewable Project Decommission Bonds, or local government hold these in trust, in order to protect prime agricultural land and support better decommissioning at an acceptable standard for community.

2023 LGAQ Annual Conference Resolutions

#59 The LGAQ calls on the State Government to amend the Planning Act 2016 to enable submitter appeal rights for renewable energy projects such as solar farms and wind farms.

#60 The LGAQ calls on the State Government to require - through its State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) planning authority for renewable energy projects - that neighbouring councils with road infrastructure critical to the delivery of these projects are engaged and that appropriate road infrastructure agreements are made prior to the commencement of construction.

#61 The LGAQ calls on the State Government to either:

1. Establish a dedicated, independent and statutory Carbon Farming and Renewable Energy Projects Commission; or
2. Extend the legislative functions of the current Queensland Gasfields Commission to cover the development and growth of Queensland's carbon farming and renewable energy industries.

#62 The LGAQ calls on the State Government to:

- Regulate for proponents to be held accountable to the Clean Energy Council best practice charter for renewable energy projects; and
- Seek a community contribution fee of \$1000 per annum per megawatt of a renewable project site, with 50 per cent of these funds paid directly to the local government hosting the site to enable the construction, maintenance, and operational management of local community-owned infrastructure projects.

#64 The LGAQ calls on the State Government to require solar farm project proponents to enter into make-good agreements with immediate and impacted neighbouring properties, prior to the submission of the development application to council.

#65 The LGAQ calls on the State Government to work with local government to develop an enforceable framework, similar to the concept of a Road Infrastructure Agreement, to be used by councils and proponents across all industries, allowing for hard and soft social infrastructure needs to be addressed in affected communities.

#67 The LGAQ calls on the State Government to undertake legislative reform of the assessment process for major projects in Queensland to ensure contemporary impacts of major projects are appropriately consulted, considered and regulated for all stages of the project lifecycle.

#133 The LGAQ calls on the State Government to introduce legislation and policy which requires proponents of renewable projects to make a 'local benefit' contribution to regional communities by implementing the following measures:

- Have a mandatory notification process to local government for all renewable energy projects occurring within their region.
- Have meaningful engagement with local government, community, and local leaders.
- Have a community contribution fee, based on capacity, for all renewable projects to support better community outcomes.
- Provide access to Renewable Project Decommission Bonds, or local government hold these in trust, in order to protect prime agricultural land and support better decommissioning at an acceptable standard for community.