

## Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023

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## Farmers for Climate Action Submission: Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023

Committee Secretary, Transport and Resources Committee,  
[trc@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:trc@parliament.qld.gov.au)

**Subject:** Submission on the Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023

Dear Committee Secretary,

Farmers for Climate Action is pleased to contribute to the discussion surrounding the Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023.

Our goal is to protect the future of farms and food security. So, we strongly support the deployment of renewable energy to achieve deep emissions reduction in a way that respects farmers and regional communities, to limit climate change impacts. A recent survey conducted by Farmers for Climate Action in September 2023 showed that 92% of respondents are supportive of Australia's shift to more renewable energy in the national grid.

Given this bill seeks to enshrine critical commitments from the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan, we support the bill's efforts to establish a clean, competitive energy system while ensuring a just transition for workers and communities.

Farmers for Climate Action has made a number of recent submissions to various state and federal consultation processes relating to renewable energy infrastructure and community engagement. We wish to draw to your attention our response to the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner's (AEIC) review of community engagement practices.

In this submission we have underscored the importance of robust consultation processes and meaningful stakeholder engagement. Representing more than 8,000 farmers and 45,000 supporters across Australia, Farmers for Climate Action acknowledges the significance of renewable energy deployment for emissions reduction and energy security. However, we have voiced the concerns of our members regarding the quality of consultation by Transmission Network Service Providers (TNSPs) and large-scale renewable projects with landholders.

This situation has resulted in instances of a lack of social licence and resistance to transmission infrastructure and large-scale renewable developments in farming communities. Our recent survey clearly showed that the majority (92%) of farmers who responded support Australia's shift to more renewable energy in the national grid, but revealed that only 23% are

open to hosting transmission infrastructure on their land. In contrast, 52% of farmers are open to hosting large-scale renewable energy projects.

Key points highlighted in our AEIC review submission that we hope the Committee will find relevant when strengthening the Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023 include:

### **1. Model Code of Conduct (MCC)**

We advocate for the development of an MCC developed by farmers, for farmers, that incorporates best practices for integrating renewables and transmission, ensuring genuine recompense and mitigation options to address concerns related to social licence and community support.

### **2. Benefit Sharing**

We encourage TNSPs and all energy companies to explore improved benefit-sharing arrangements, such as discounted electricity bills for affected postcodes, higher payments to hosts, support for impacted neighbours, and long-term funding for community benefit programs.

### **3. Addressing Inequity**

We propose measures to address the inequity in rural households' capacity to supply renewable energy to the grid, including enabling them to feed power into the grid and subsidising connectors for larger projects.

### **4. State Regulatory Restrictions**

We advocate for the elimination of restrictions preventing farmers from generating energy on one property and sharing it with adjacent properties, even where these properties do not share the same title.

Building upon our recommendations, as outlined in our report 'Farm Powered: Opportunities for regional communities in the renewable energy boom,' we further suggest the following considerations for the Committee in considering Queensland's Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill: Energy and Jobs Plan:

#### **1. Mid-scale Community and Farmer 'Informal REZs'**

Establish mid-scale community and farmer 'informal Renewable Energy Zones (REZs)' outside of declared REZs to identify under-utilised hosting capacity and encourage dispersed 1-5 megawatt solar developments.

#### **2. Community Energy Component in Large Scale REZs**

Trial the integration of a community energy component within large-scale REZs to develop and sustain social licence for substantial investments, with accommodations within the transmission infrastructure for smaller 1-5 megawatt projects.

### **3. Eliminate Export Limits**

Remove export limits preventing farmers from exporting more renewable energy to the grid, fostering greater participation and contribution from regional communities.

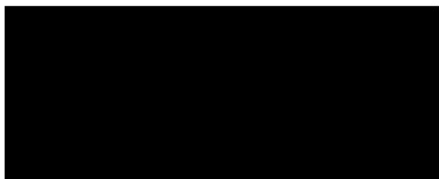
### **4. Australian Energy Regulator's Framework**

Broaden the Australian Energy Regulator's framework beyond population density calculations when determining infrastructure upgrades for the distribution network.

It is crucial to consider and learn from challenges faced by other states and territories in recent years. Notwithstanding our support for Australia's shift to an energy grid supplied by renewable energy, Farmers for Climate Action remains concerned about the level and quality of consultation by TNSPs with landholders. Transmission infrastructure is crucial to the success of Australia's net zero emissions goals. Farmers in our network have shared negative experiences with TNSPs, indicating a pressing need to restore and build trust and collaborative models for coexistence.

The Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023 offers a unique opportunity to establish a legislative framework that ensures the success of Queensland's energy transformation. We appreciate your consideration of the points raised in our submission and look forward to the positive impact this bill can have on our energy sector and the well-being of our communities.

Sincerely,



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