

Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023

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Hon Mick de Brenni MP
Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen
Minister for Public Works and Procurement
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11 December 2023

Dear Committee Secretary,

Response to the Transport and Resources Committee's Inquiry on *Energy (Renewable transformation and jobs) Bill 2023*

Windlab welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Queensland Parliamentary Transport and Resources Committee's Inquiry into the *Energy (Renewable transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023* (the Bill) initiated on 24 October 2023.

Windlab is a 100% Australian renewable energy company established out of the CSIRO. For more than 20 years we have used our world-leading technology and globally recognised expertise to find, responsibly develop and operate the best performing renewable energy projects in the world. Over this time, Windlab has played a pioneering role in establishing Australia's wind energy industry, including identifying the strategically critical significance of the renewable energy resources of the Flinders Shire region in North West Queensland more than 10 years ago. This work saw Windlab deliver the world's first grid-connected hybrid wind, solar and battery storage facility, Kennedy Energy Park, near Hughenden. As the first, large scale, hybrid clean energy development in the region, Kennedy highlights the incredible value and opportunity of collocated mixed generation that leverages the unique profiles of north Queensland's renewable energy resources.

Today, Queensland is a strategically critical region for Windlab and its shareholders and we are investing significantly to deliver our 15GW+ Queensland development pipeline. Windlab's projects in Queensland include Gawara Baya – our most mature project - Bungaban, and the North Queensland Super Hub. Combined, these priority projects will eliminate tens of millions of tonnes of carbon from Queensland's energy profile every year from as early as 2027.

As a foundation member of the Clean Energy Investor Group Windlab supports the points raised in the organisation's detailed response to Bill, **attached**. Windlab thanks the Queensland Government for its genuine approach to consultation and engagement with industry and stakeholders throughout the development of the Bill.

Windlab applauds the Queensland Government's clear and measurable renewable energy targets of 70% by 2032, and 80% by 2035. We recognise the criticality of the work of the Queensland Government in supporting the timely delivery of the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan (QEJP). This, coupled with the Federal Government's climate change and renewable energy policy is a critical enabler for industry.

At the same time, we are deeply concerned that the escalating impact of delays to Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act* (EPBC) approvals on investor confidence is putting future investment in renewables at risk. Federal Government data shows as of early December 2023, no wind energy projects had received Federal Government approval in more than 12 months. Based on modelling by the Australian Energy Market Operator, at least 3.3GW of wind energy generation should have been approved in 2023 for the Federal Government to achieve its own renewable energy target of 82% by 2030. This result is out of step with the Federal Government's stated policy position, and hampers investment and delivery of renewables in Queensland.



Windlab supports the Queensland Government enshrining its renewable energy targets and reporting obligations in legislation as this will have a positive impact on investor confidence. However, without urgent address of the current delays to EPBC approvals, both the Queensland and Federal Governments' respective renewable energy targets will be compromised.

New, large-scale renewable generation must come online within the next three to four years if we are to address the critical lack of supply expected by retailers by 2025, place downward pressure on energy prices for Queenslanders, and make meaningful progress against our national and international climate change commitments.

The release of the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan in 2022 was a strong signal of Government support for the transition to renewables, and clearly demonstrated that the Government was focussed on and willing to engage with private investors to solve the most challenging problems for the sector – policy and network.

Windlab is committed to our continued productive collaboration with the Queensland Government to support the timely delivery of our shared objectives, and we will continue to work with the Government to ensure that risks are addressed.

If you have any questions about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me directly on [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Nathan Blundell
General Manager Development
Windlab

