

Transitioning to a low-carbon energy sector

Doomadgee Solar Farm (photo courtesy of Ergon Energy)

The Queensland Government is committed to achieving a target of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030—to reduce emissions and act on climate change, create new jobs and diversify the state’s economy.

Queensland is experiencing a renewable energy boom

Since January 2016, Queensland has seen an unprecedented level of investment in renewable energy, with 17 large-scale projects either commencing construction or finalising commercial arrangements.

These projects will deliver almost 1200 megawatts of clean power to the state, boost investment by more than \$2.2 billion and create 2200 new jobs, mostly in our regional centres.

The recent activity in the market confirms Queensland has well and truly commenced its transition to a renewable energy future. This is great news for Queenslanders, and we are taking a planned and measured approach to managing the transition.

A key part of this approach was the establishment of an independent Expert Panel in January 2016 to lead an inquiry into credible pathways to a 50 per cent renewable energy target for Queensland. Importantly, the panel found that a 50 per cent target is achievable by 2030, while maintaining energy affordability and security.

To establish Queensland as the nation’s renewable energy powerhouse, the Government will implement a series of initiatives that will bring forward investment into the state and set the stage for long-term project development.

ACTIONS

- ▶ Confirm the Government's commitment to a 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030
- ▶ Maintain affordability and security in the transition to 50 per cent renewable energy generation
- ▶ Facilitate the next wave of up to 400 megawatts of diversified renewable energy, including 100 megawatts of energy storage through a reverse auction
- ▶ Improve large-scale project facilitation, planning and network connections
- ▶ Continue to advocate for stable, integrated national climate and energy policies



Our actions in more detail

Confirm the Government's commitment to a 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030

Based on the positive outcomes of the independent Expert Panel public inquiry, the Government reaffirms its commitment to a 50 per cent renewable energy target for Queensland by 2030.

Achieving a 50 per cent renewable energy target has the potential to deliver broad benefits to the economy, particularly in regional Queensland. The Expert Panel found that the target could drive \$6.7 billion of new investment, and deliver a net increase in employment of 6400–6700 full-time equivalent positions on average per year between 2020 and 2030.

Maintain affordability and security in the transition to 50 per cent renewable energy generation

The Expert Panel's modelling estimated the target would have a broadly cost neutral impact on electricity consumers, and security of supply would be maintained through the transition.

The Government is committed to a planned and measured approach, taking advantage of rapidly falling technology costs and competitive auctions to drive a cost-effective clean energy transition.

The Government is also establishing the Queensland Energy Security Taskforce to develop an energy security plan for Queensland.

Facilitate the next wave of up to 400 megawatts of diversified renewable energy, including 100 megawatts of energy storage through a reverse auction

In the period up to 2020, a significant opportunity exists for additional renewable energy projects to be developed in Queensland under the national large-scale renewable energy target.

In addition to creating an attractive environment for these projects, there is also a role for the Queensland Government in supporting a diverse mix of renewable technologies, some of which are not currently being deployed on a fully commercial basis. This diversity is important for maintaining system security and reliability.

The Government will undertake a reverse auction for up to 400 megawatts of renewable capacity, to commence in the second half of 2017, with priority given to projects that support local jobs and businesses.

Energy storage technology is expected to play an important role in the transition to higher levels of renewable energy.

As part of the 400 megawatt auction, and to support the accelerated deployment of this technology, the Government will undertake a specific process to secure up to 100 megawatts of energy storage prior to 2020.

Improve large-scale renewable project facilitation, planning and network connections

Most renewable projects will need to connect to a transmission or distribution network. Under a 50 per cent renewable energy target, there will be an increasing workload for Queensland's network businesses to deliver network connection services.

The Queensland Government will work with Powerlink and Energy Queensland to ensure efficient and timely network connections.

Timely provision of information to project proponents and entities assessing project proposals will be critical to facilitating the rapid expansion of Queensland's renewable energy industry. To meet this need, the Queensland Government will establish a centralised web portal in the second half of 2017 to provide an integrated information service for renewable energy project proponents.

The Queensland Government will also work with stakeholders to develop best practice guidance material on project planning and development. This guidance material will help the renewable energy industry, local governments and landholders have a common understanding of best practice, and ensure that strategic land use considerations are factored into the planning process.

Continue to advocate for stable, integrated national climate and energy policies

The Queensland Government will also continue to advocate for stable and more integrated national climate and energy policies, to ensure the electricity sector can deliver a meaningful contribution to Australia's emission reduction commitments and to support new clean energy investment.

The Queensland Government will further consider its renewable energy policy in 2019, following the completion of the Finkel Review and the national review of climate change.