

# Queensland Renewable Energy Plan

## About the new plan

Launched by the Premier in June 2009, the *Queensland Renewable Energy Plan* outlines a clear and comprehensive road map for the expansion of the renewable energy sector in Queensland – focussing on facilitating the deployment of a range of renewable energy alternatives throughout the state while creating new employment, new industries, and new investment opportunities.

Importantly, the Plan provides the framework to increase the proportion of the state's electricity capacity derived from Queensland-based renewable sources and ensure that Queensland maximises investment resulting from the national Renewable Energy Target (RET).

The Plan aims to leverage up to \$3.5 billion in new investment, create up to 3,500 new jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 40 million tonnes.

The Plan includes a number of new initiatives. These include:

- The *Queensland Solar Hot Water Program* to substantially increase the number of units installed on Queensland households.
  - Encouraging the deployment of multiple small-scale solar thermal plants in regional Queensland and undertaking a large-scale solar thermal feasibility study.
  - Advancing geothermal technology through legislation to fast-track developments and investigate a large-scale demonstration project.
  - Deploying small-scale renewable systems in Queensland's remote isolated networks to transition these communities from a reliance on diesel generation.
  - Government Owned Generators partnering with industry to identify renewable energy solutions.
  - Promoting clean energy communities by encouraging energy conservation and the uptake of renewable energy solutions in Queensland's growth hot spots.
  - Delivering a regulatory reform package to simplify the business, regulatory and planning environment in Queensland for renewable energy projects.
  - Amending the *Land Act 1994* to enable lessees to sublease to wind farms and other renewable energy projects.
- Mapping Queensland's solar, wind and geothermal resources and making these maps publicly available.
  - Designating renewable energy as a Queensland Priority Industry Sector, supported by a *Renewable Energy Industry Development Plan* that will encompass:
    - The Clean Energy Jobs Policy—aiming to create 3,500 jobs by 2020
    - Pilot Renewable Energy Priority Zones
    - Renewable Energy Incentives Package
    - Renewable Energy Technology and Innovation Strategy.

This is one of a range of initiatives within Queensland's revised climate change strategy, *ClimateQ: toward a greener Queensland*. The Strategy represents the next phase of Queensland's climate change response, and includes \$196 million of investments and policies to further reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions, and support community and industry prepare for, and adapt to, a changing climate.

## Rationale

Along with the predicted increase in demand for electricity, Queensland faces the additional challenges of a vast geographic area and a highly decentralised population. Renewable energy will play a key role in addressing all of these challenges and reducing Queensland's greenhouse gas emissions.

Another benefit of the Plan is reducing the strain on electricity distribution networks.

The timing of the Plan is supported by national drivers, including the expanded national RET. The RET stimulates direct investment in renewable energy and will require 20 per cent of electricity to be sourced from renewable energy in Australia by 2020. The Plan will seek to attract renewable energy investment to Queensland under the RET.

Additionally, under the Commonwealth Government's proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, the carbon price attached to energy generated from fossil fuels will increase the cost of electricity generation, making alternative options such as renewable energy more economically viable.



## Outcomes

Successful implementation of the Plan is expected to leverage up to \$3.5 billion in new investment, create up to 3,500 new jobs in the renewable energy sector and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 40 million tonnes by 2020.

Achieving these outcomes will be dependent on testing and deploying a wide range of renewable energy technologies including wind, solar photovoltaic, solar thermal, hydro, geothermal, biomass and solar hot water.

Under the Plan, Queensland will become the Solar Hot Water State by accelerating the installation of up to 200,000 Solar Hot Water systems over three years.

Use of these systems will reduce a household's electricity consumption by up to 25 per cent and emissions by up to 30 percent, as well as building the solar hot water industry in Queensland. The Queensland Solar Hot Water Program aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 4.9 million tonnes over the life of the systems.

A regulatory taskforce will examine legislation and provide options to remove or reduce impediments and streamline planning processes for renewable energy projects. The taskforce will also develop industry-specific planning tools and streamlined processes for project approvals which will further accelerate investment in the renewable energy sector.

Through the amendment of the Land Act 1994 agricultural lease-holders will be able to sublease to wind farms and other renewable energy projects, enabling them to benefit through an additional income stream to support the primary land use.

## How will it be delivered?

The Office of Clean Energy in the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation is responsible for the implementation of the Plan, and will provide support and expertise to assist renewable energy developers to fast track their projects.

Key components of the Plan will be delivered through leveraging Australian Government program funding and facilitating private investment in renewable energy.

The Office of Clean Energy will report annually to Government regarding progress with implementation of the Plan.

## Who will the Government partner with to implement this initiative?

- The renewable energy industry represented by groups such as the Clean Energy Council and the Australian Geothermal Association
- The Sugar industry
- Universities and researchers
- Energy Skills Queensland
- The Clinton Foundation
- Australian Government
- Queensland Government Owned Energy Corporations
- Local governments

## What are the benefits of implementing renewable energy projects?

Successful implementation of the Plan will leverage new investment, create new jobs in the renewable energy sector and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Another key reason for the implementation of the Plan is to reduce the strain on electricity distribution networks. Renewable energy can reduce the need for costly upgrades to electricity transmission and distribution networks by alleviating demand on these networks.

It can also supply power to remote areas where access to the grid is not physically or economically feasible.

## What will be the impact of the Plan on electricity prices?

The Plan does not propose any regulatory changes that will directly impact on electricity prices.

The primary objective of the Plan is to remove barriers to investment while targeting government funds at projects of strategic importance to the State, including resource mapping, research and development, and demonstration projects.

## Lead agency details

For more information about the Queensland Renewable Energy Plan, visit the Office of Clean Energy's website at [www.cleanenergy.qld.gov.au](http://www.cleanenergy.qld.gov.au) or [www.deedi.qld.gov.au](http://www.deedi.qld.gov.au)