

Solar Citizens: Top 3 Policy Priorities for Renewable Energy in Queensland

This election, Solar Citizens is calling on all political parties to move towards 100% clean energy by committing to three key promises:

1. Set a strong renewable energy target

Legislate a renewable energy target to ensure that, by 2030, at least 50% of the electricity generated in Queensland comes from solar, wind and other renewables.

2. Build big solar - not new coal power

Renewable energy is now the cheapest, cleanest source of electricity. The next state government should support new large-scale solar and wind farms and rule out an expensive, polluting new coal fired power station.

3. Help more Queenslanders go solar

To meet the target of one million solar rooftops by 2020, the next Queensland government must guarantee a fair price for the electricity that solar households feed into the grid and remove the roadblocks for low-income earners, businesses and communities who want to go solar.

Solar Citizens is an independent community organisation, we want all political parties to adopt strong policies that will speed up our transition to a renewable energy future. To help you make a well-informed choice, we're providing this analysis of each Party's policies on renewable energy for Queensland. Scores will be updated if new policies are announced.

THE SCORECARD

	LABOR	LNP	GREENS	ONE NATION	KAP
 Commit to a strong renewable energy target					
 Build big solar not new coal power					
 Help more Queenslanders go solar					

KEY

-  Fully supports this policy
-  Support for significant parts of this policy
-  Supports some parts, opposes others
-  Has not expressed any support for this policy
-  Opposes or contradicts this policy

HOW THE PARTIES WERE SCORED

Australian Labor Party

Committing to a strong renewable energy target: supports some parts of this policy. The Palaszczuk Government have committed to a target of 50% renewable energy by 2030 and the Queensland Labor state platform commits the party to implementing targets that align with the National Labor Platform of at least 50% by 2030.¹ There is currently no commitment from the ALP to legislate the target, to only count renewable energy projects built in Queensland or any other details of how the target will be reached.

Build big solar - not new coal power: fully supports this policy. The Palaszczuk Government has committed to a 400MW reverse auction, including 100MW of storage by 2020,² and an additional 1,000MW by 2025 through reverse auctions, power purchase agreements and other mechanisms.³ The \$100 million in funding for Burdekin falls pumped hydro is an important commitment to storage but it's unclear if it will be powered by renewable energy generation.⁴

The Premier and Energy Minister Mark Bailey have repeatedly stated that they would not build a coal-fired power station because "it is not needed" and the market would have done it if it was.⁵ A commitment to refuse state approvals for a new coal-fired power station has not been given.

The Labor policy platform includes a commitment to build renewable energy infrastructure such as grid connections to renewable resource regions, which the Palaszczuk Government has kicked off with a feasibility study for the North Queensland Renewable Energy Transmission Hub⁶ and maintaining public ownership of the power industry as it transitions to new renewable programs.⁷

Help more Queenslanders go solar: support for significant parts of this policy. The Palaszczuk Government has initiated trials of solar PV on public housing which will deliver solar to between 2,000 and 4,000 government owned houses.⁸ They have a limited program involving solar for four remote indigenous communities.⁹

The Government has announced that up to 20,000 households will be eligible for no-interest loans to install solar and battery systems, plus a rebate of \$2000 on the cost of battery storage. A trial project to incentivise landlords to install solar has been announced for 1000 houses.¹⁰

The Palaszczuk Government has maintained existing, legacy feed in tariff schemes but Labor has failed to provide or commit to a fair price for the electricity that solar households feed into the grid.¹¹ There are no commitments to community energy and minimal steps to remove roadblocks for small businesses to go solar aside from the increasing the availability of the feed-in tariff to systems up to 30KW in regional Queensland.¹²

¹ Queensland Labor Putting Queenslanders First, State Platform 2017, 5.70.

² <http://statements.qld.gov.au/Statement/2017/8/28/renewables-400-program-charging-ahead-with-huge-interest>

³ Powering Qld's Future policy p.12-13.

⁴ Powering North Queensland Plan, p 3.

⁵ <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/wed-invest-in-coalfired-plant-says-queensland-lnp-leader/news-story/20cff6c0ad81b8d6a85ef6ecb8d4c212>

⁶ <http://statements.qld.gov.au/Statement/2017/8/11/eoi-open-for-nq-clean-energy-hub>

⁷ Queensland Labor Putting Queenslanders First, State Platform 2017, 5.70.

⁸ Queensland Government response to the Expert Panel on Renewable Energy, June 2017.

⁹ Powering Qld's Future policy p.14

¹⁰ <https://www.dews.qld.gov.au/electricity/affordable-energy-plan>

¹¹ Queensland Government Response to the Queensland Productivity Commission Solar Feed-in Pricing in Queensland Inquiry, December 2016.

¹² <http://statements.qld.gov.au/Statement/2017/9/1/changes-benefit-regional-queensland-solar-users>

Liberal National Party

Committing to a strong renewable energy target: opposes this policy. The LNP have committed to scrapping the 50% renewable energy target.¹³ There are no policies or plans in place to legislate a renewable energy target or set interim targets.

Build big solar - not new coal power: opposes this policy. Tim Nicholls and the LNP have repeatedly committed to building, with the private sector, a coal-fired power station in North Queensland. It is unclear whether this will include public subsidies or not.¹⁴

On the other hand the Party has committed to “end costly subsidies for renewable energy”¹⁵ but has not specified which subsidies they are referring to.

There is a commitment to investigate and monitor network linkages to the National Energy Market to ensure renewable energy projects in Queensland have access to the National Energy Market.¹⁶ It is unclear whether this includes a commitment to investing in new infrastructure. There is no commitments on public ownership or reverse auctions.

Help more Queenslanders go solar: has not expressed any support for this policy. No commitments or references to helping Queenslanders to go solar or in regards to rooftop solar have been made. However, Solar Citizens is concerned that the LNP’s promise to end subsidies to renewable energy¹⁷ may include axing the Solar Bonus Scheme which reduces power bills for around 240,000 Queensland homes and businesses. The policy may also threaten regular feed-in-tariffs. We have requested further information on this point from the LNP.

The Queensland Greens

Committing to a strong renewable energy target: fully supports this policy. The Queensland Greens have a policy of a mandatory Queensland Renewable Energy Target of 90% by 2030 for electricity power generation.¹⁸

Build big solar - not new coal power: fully supports this policy. The Greens policy paper backs a moratorium on the issuing of licenses for new coal-fired power stations and maintaining public ownership of electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure as well as current electricity generation infrastructure.¹⁹ There is a commitment of \$15 billion in investment over the next five years to build publicly owned clean energy.²⁰

There is no reference to new infrastructure to connect renewable power stations to the grid or the use of reverse auctions.

Help more Queenslanders go solar: fully supports this policy. The Greens policy includes a commitment to fair and reasonable feed-in tariffs, incorporating the value of greenhouse gas offsets and reduced transmission needs; subsidising the installation of clean energy generation and storage for social housing, low-income households and the not-for-profit sector. It also states support for a program where government funds the purchase and installation of solar panels to all houses than recoups the cost through savings in household energy bills over a 10 year period; facilitating the establishment of clean energy

¹³ <https://www.betterqueensland.org.au/fairgo>

¹⁴ <https://www.betterqueensland.org.au/fairgo>

¹⁵ LNP Cheaper Electricity Policy <https://www.betterqueensland.org.au/cheaperelectricity>

¹⁶ <https://www.betterqueensland.org.au/powering-renewable-energy>

¹⁷ LNP Cheaper Electricity Policy <https://www.betterqueensland.org.au/cheaperelectricity>

¹⁸ <https://greens.org.au/policies/qld/energy>

¹⁹ <https://greens.org.au/policies/qld/energy>

²⁰ <https://greens.org.au/qld/powerpeople>

generation and storage cooperatives and encouraging installation of clean energy generation infrastructure by agricultural producers, business owners, community groups and householders.

Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party

Committing to a strong renewable energy target: opposes this policy. The Australian reported Mr Dickson stating "if One Nation held the balance of power after the November 25 election, it would stop any further renewables projects in Queensland that is part of Labor's 50 per cent target by 2030."²¹ There have been no statements in support of a renewable energy target.

Build big solar - not new coal power: opposes this policy. The ONP has committed to using cross-river rail money to build a coal-fired power station in North Queensland.²²

Help more Queenslanders go solar: opposes this policy. There have been no announcements or statements in relation to helping Queenslanders to go solar.

Katters Australia Party

Committing to a strong renewable energy target: has not expressed any support for this policy. No statements have been made by KAP in relation to a strong state renewable energy target.

Build big solar - not new coal power: supports some parts, opposes others. There have been public statements opposed to new coal-fired power station in Queensland with an article stating "Katter's Australian Party will block any move to build a new coal-fired power station in Queensland should it win the balance of power in the new parliament."²³ The Katter Party has made previous statements in support of solar.²⁴

Help more Queenslanders go solar: No statements have been made by KAP in relation to helping more Queenslanders go solar.

²¹ <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/newspoll/voters-prefer-cut-in-power-prices-to-paris-climate-accord/news-story/52debc51d1a5c0fda935cf15259e8289?csp=f4184534b2a9b3da59ad456c37f5add9>

²² <https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queensland/the-deal-breakers-one-nation-s-five-balance-of-power-demands-20171030-p4ywq2.html>

²³ <http://www.cairnspost.com.au/news/national/queensland-election-2017-kap-vows-to-block-coalfired-power-station/news-story/14e9fbc05123a5ddc59f534e1ea18dde?csp=2c2d7fe0faf68f452ce6aa14207a9f2c>

²⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/robkatterMP/photos/a.610287545655348.157615.590171327666970/1375761985774563/?type=3&theater>