



# Solar Citizens' 2021 Queensland Policy Recommendations

**Queensland has incredible solar and wind resources that could be utilised to drive down electricity prices and create employment opportunities across the state's regions, while also slashing pollution.**

An abundance of cheap and clean energy can power new local industries, including renewable hydrogen production and 'green steel' manufacturing. But for these exciting opportunities to be realised, the Queensland State Government has an important role to play in coordination and planning, and strategic investment. Solar Citizens suggests that the Queensland Government commits to the following recommendations:

**1. Ensure the three Renewable Energy Zones announced before the 2020 state election are delivered in a timely manner that supports at least 1500MW of new renewable energy generation coming online in Queensland every year until 2025.**

It's encouraging that the Queensland Government has committed to three Renewable Energy Zones in Southern, Central and Northern Queensland. ClimateWorks modelling shows that halting climate change to 1.5°C requires renewable energy uptake to reach 79% by 2030. For Queensland to get close to reaching 79% renewable generation by 2030, at least 2GW of new clean energy generation needs to come online every year.

**2. Support the establishment of three Renewable Energy Industry Precincts before 2025 by assisting with coordination and providing \$150 million in funding for key infrastructure.**

Already, there is interest in Barcaldine, Townsville and Gladstone from local councils and businesses for the development of clean energy industry, including renewable hydrogen projects. Renewable Energy Industry Precincts co-locate industry and renewable hydrogen production facilities in a location that's powered entirely by renewable energy. By utilising shared infrastructure, having access to cheap energy and reducing the need for the transportation of renewable hydrogen, new and existing industries can achieve economies of scale and stimulate job creation in regional Queensland. The Queensland Government should work with the Federal Government to provide investment and finance to establish these precincts.



### **3. Implement a 2GW by 2025 storage target to provide firming for renewable energy generation that is coming online.**

Storage options such as batteries and pumped hydro firm renewable energy while also providing vital grid services; including, providing demand during the solar duck curve, increasing system strength, and generating electricity during times of peak demand. One of the biggest hurdles stalling the development of renewable storage is an uncertainty around revenue. The Queensland Government should follow in the footsteps of NSW by offering long-term energy services agreements that guarantee a revenue stream for storage projects by giving them the option of selling electricity at an agreed minimum price.

### **4. Allocate further funding for publicly-owned renewable energy generation, so the majority of Queensland's electricity generation remains in public hands.**

Solar Citizens commends the Queensland Government for allocating \$500 million for publicly-owned renewable energy generation, however the funding is not enough to maintain public ownership of the majority of Queensland's energy generation as state-owned coal plants head for retirement.

### **5. Ensure that Queensland is a frontrunner in the race to develop a thriving renewable hydrogen industry by matching NSW's \$50 million pledge to get the industry off the ground.**

The Queensland Government has indicated strong support for renewable hydrogen by appointing a Minister for Hydrogen and allocating \$25 million for the emerging industry. However, the Sunshine State is at risk at being left behind if the State Government fails to match the industry support being offered in other Australian states.

### **6. Power all Queensland Government operations with renewable energy.**

Select Councils across the country have signed power purchase agreements with renewable energy generators and the State Government should follow in their footsteps.

### **7. Install energy efficiency upgrades or solar panels on all of Queensland's 50,000 social homes, and ensure that all new-build social housing is equipped with solar.**

A \$215 million package to install solar and energy efficient upgrades on social homes across Queensland would save households up to \$1,100 per year on their energy bills. The scheme would also create more than 1,800 jobs and stimulate local economies during the COVID-19 crisis.





**8. Make it easier for everyone to slash their electricity bills with household solar and battery storage by expanding the successful solar for renters trial, and the interest-free loan and rebate scheme for household storage installations.**

The Queensland Government's solar for renters trial was a success with participating tenants being an average of \$600 better off per year. Similarly, the previous interest-free loan and rebate package for solar and storage installations was very well subscribed.

**9. Expand and prioritise the rollout of solar and storage for remote communities – while ensuring appropriate community consultation.**

The Queensland Government has committed to rolling out renewable solutions in remote communities Bamaga, Mapoon, Pormpuraaw and Doomadgee. This could be expanded to more remote communities. Installing solar and storage microgrids in remote communities, or fire-prone areas, can be a good investment that will result in long-term fuel and network savings.

**10. Help ensure that opportunities for good, local clean energy employment are maximised across regional Queensland by implementing the following recommendations drawn from the Australian Council of Trade Unions' 'Sharing the Benefits with Workers: A Decent Jobs Agenda for the Renewable Energy Industry' report:**

- Planning for the retirement of coal-fired generators so that affected workers can be retrained and redeployed. A planned transition will provide certainty for workers and investors, and can minimise harmful boom-bust cycles.
- Funding training and retraining to address skill shortages. The renewable energy industry has identified shortages, such as of crane and hoist operators and wind turbine blade technicians, which results in them hiring overseas workers.
- Setting local content targets where applicable to drive more local manufacturing. This has been successfully achieved in Victoria: the state's renewable energy reverse auctions had local content targets that resulted in wind towers being manufactured locally.