

# Turning Townsville into a Renewable Industry and Hydrogen POWERHOUSE

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North Queensland's natural advantages can power  
a prosperous economic future.



**SolarCitizens**



# KEY FINDINGS

Townsville can have a bright economic future producing minerals and materials to power the world's transition to a low-carbon future.

Solar Citizens' latest report, produced by Acacia Sustainability, found a staggering 11,000 jobs would be created if Townsville became a Renewable Energy Industry Precinct – a hub for advanced manufacturing and processing that's powered entirely by clean energy backed by storage and renewable hydrogen.

**11,000 jobs represents approximately 10% of Townsville's current full and part-time workforce.**

The analysis looked at several industry projects proposed across Townsville—including the Renewable Hydrogen Hub and Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct—finding that 8,300 jobs would be created if these projects proceed. In addition, building new renewable energy projects to power these new industries would generate an extra 2,700 construction and ongoing jobs.

**Turning Townsville into a Renewable Energy Industry Precinct would power more than 3,950 ongoing full-time jobs.**

Over 3GW of new clean energy generation would likely be required to power these new industry projects – a staggering 1.5GW of solar, wind and storage projects are already proposed in the area. Building out a Renewable Energy Zone in North Queensland is a key step towards providing around the clock clean energy for proposed and existing industry.

The new industry projects analysed would also provide a massive \$154 billion economic boost over their lifetime and support the global transition to a low-carbon economy.





# REPORT OVERVIEW

As nations around the world shift towards net-zero emissions, there's a growing global demand for low-carbon energy and materials. Countries rich in renewable energy resources, like Australia, have an opportunity to benefit from the transition by manufacturing products like renewable hydrogen and low-carbon materials for domestic and export markets.

**Australia has some of the world's best solar resources and key minerals required for clean technology such as storage batteries and electric vehicles. We can utilise these natural advantages to generate abundant cheap electricity and reinvigorate our manufacturing sector.**

Townsville in particular, is strategically located to establish and expand clean energy manufacturing because it has an established port, skilled workforce and is in close proximity to the North West Minerals Province (NWMP), which has deposits of new economy minerals like Copper, Cobalt and Zinc.

To explore the opportunities awaiting Townsville, Solar Citizens commissioned Acacia Sustainability to analyse the employment impact of Townsville becoming a Renewable Energy Industrial Precinct.



***A Renewable Energy Industry Precinct is made up of a cluster of manufactures powered by 100% renewable energy. These precincts are either located within a Renewable Energy Zone or connected to renewable energy generation through high voltage transmission lines and have access to clean heat and renewable hydrogen production and infrastructure. – WWF Australia and Beyond Zero Emissions<sup>1</sup>***

This report identified a list of seven advanced manufacturing, technology and processing projects within the Townsville local government area that would support the global transition to a low-carbon economy. The amount of new renewable energy generation required to power the identified industry projects was also analysed and considered in employment calculations.

Townsville is already positioning itself as an advanced manufacturing hub of new-economy products. But now there's an opportunity for all levels of government to work together to ensure that abundant cheap renewable energy is unlocked in the region to power new and existing industry proposals.

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<sup>1</sup> World Wildlife Fund and Beyond Zero Emissions (2020). Renewable energy industrial precincts briefing paper.



# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

**Townsville has an exciting opportunity to become a job-rich renewable energy manufacturing and processing industry powerhouse. But these opportunities won't be fully realised unless the Federal and State Governments take action to invest in developing industries while ensuring new and existing manufacturers have access to abundant renewable energy.**

To turn Townsville into a renewable industry and hydrogen powerhouse, Solar Citizens is urging the Australian and Queensland Governments to work together and commit to the following:

- 1** Support the establishment of three Renewable Energy Industry Precincts before 2025 by assisting with coordination, providing funding for key infrastructure as well as low-cost finance.
- 2** 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.
- 3** Guarantee 2GW of storage is built in Queensland by 2025 to provide firming for the renewable energy generation that is coming online.
- 4** Stimulate local demand for electric vehicles and household battery storage by providing grants and interest-free finance for their rollout.
- 5** Fund training and retraining programs to meet the needs of emerging Renewable Energy Industry Precincts and address existing skill shortages in the renewable energy sector.





# BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE FOR ALL

**While the world's transition towards a low-carbon future presents exciting economic opportunities for North Queensland, it is vital that each proposed industrial and renewable energy project is rigorously assessed before proceeding to construction. Protecting the health of local communities and the environment, and safeguarding cultural heritage are of the utmost importance.**

In addition, the benefits from new projects should be shared with the local community, especially Traditional Owners, and no projects should proceed without informed consent from local Traditional Owners.

Solar Citizens encourages project proponents and governments to support efficient mining and processing methods, ongoing environmental monitoring, and the adoption of 100% renewable energy generation.





