

# BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Wind's growing role in regional Australia



## FAST FACTS ON AUSTRALIAN WIND POWER

Australia's 87 operational wind farms are delivering significant financial and social benefits to their host communities.

- ≈ Wind farm construction has delivered an economic boost of almost \$5.1 billion to regional Australia—over half of this is in the last five years. Wind farms under construction are now injecting a further \$4.8 billion in economic activity into the regional economy.
- ≈ The number of jobs in wind energy has almost tripled in the past 2 years. The 6 gigawatts of new wind farm capacity currently under construction has created an estimated 5,700 direct jobs and a further 13,300 indirect jobs in local businesses that supply to the projects.
- ≈ Across the 25-year life span of Australia's existing wind farms and wind farms under construction, an estimated \$18.31 billion could be delivered to host communities.

Sharing these benefits equitably with local host communities ensures these projects generate not just much-needed clean energy, but also strengthen the social and economic health of regional Australia.

In this 2019 updated edition, after years of a booming industry *Building Stronger Communities: Wind's growing role in regional Australia* presents a list of wind farm Community Enhancement Funds across the nation and illustrates the direct and indirect financial and social benefits to Australia's regional communities from wind power.

Between \$24.5 and \$28.9 million goes directly into regional communities every year through payments to host landholders and wind farm Community Enhancement Funds (CEFs). With 26 more wind farms under construction, that annual figure will double to between \$56.3 and \$60.8 million.

From 2019, Community Enhancement Funds will make available \$4.7 million annually for community projects. A diverse range of other benefit sharing mechanisms will see additional payments go to neighbouring landholders, local councils and community shareholders.

If the 74-plus wind farms in the development pipeline are constructed, more than \$8.35 million could flow into regional communities through CEFs alone each year.

Wind farms have established their vital contribution to regional communities. With the right Federal and State policy settings, wind farms, and other renewable energy projects, can become an even stronger part of regional community life around the continent.

Australia has built huge amounts of wind power to meet the 2020 Renewable Energy Target (RET), providing substantial and timely benefits to regional Australia. However, a lack of forward-looking energy policy is holding back the 21st century infrastructure we need for this contribution to continue.

This energy policy void has dragged new renewable energy investment levels back down to low 2016 levels. Industry and regional communities desperately need the federal government to implement an energy policy that will lower power bills and allow Australia to supercharge its regional areas with renewable energy projects.