

## BRIEFING NOTE: RESPONSE TO QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT DECISION TO PAUSE APPROVAL PROCESS FOR WIND FARMS

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The [Queensland Government Gazette](#) issued on Thursday 16 January, shows that the Honourable Jarrod Bleijie MP, Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning has exercised his powers under the QLD Planning Act 2016 to:

- issue a proposed “call in” notice for the Greenleaf Renewables Moonlight Range Wind Farm (88 turbines) north-west of Rockhampton. The notice seeks submissions from the proponent, community and other interested parties about whether the proposed development qualifies as a state interest and should be re-assessed.
- “not decide” three wind farm applications from Windlab and RWE (Wongalee Renewable Energy Farm (175 turbines); Theodore Energy Development (170 turbines); and the Bungaban Renewable Energy Farm (204 turbines) for a period of 4 months to 16 May 2025 to allow proponents to demonstrate that the appropriate community consultation and impact assessment has been undertaken.

This suspension aims to ensure thorough assessment against state interests including economic growth, environmental preservation, and alignment with planning policies.

Based on informed insight, the Clean Energy Council does not believe this to be part of a campaign to shut down renewable energy development in QLD. It appears to be aimed at improving the level of community engagement in the assessment process for wind farms, such that this is consistent with other sectors in QLD and every other state. It aligns with commitments made during the election campaign to see clean energy projects impact assessable. The Clean Energy Council does have concerns with how the proposed changes have been communicated but remain committed to engaging positively and constructively in good faith to obtain the best possible outcome for the industry and the host communities.

The Clean Energy Council has been liaising with QREC and CEIG to align on an industry response.

### **Background**

As part of an election commitment, the new QLD Government is seeking the introduction of an impact assessment process for renewable energy projects consistent with other land uses like mining and infrastructure. This change was also outlined in the Deputy Premiers Charter letter:



*“Amend laws to ensure renewable energy projects are impact assessable with approval processes consistent with other land uses like mining and agriculture.”*

There was no consultation with industry prior to this decision and this has pre-empted the consultation process being undertaken through QLD Treasury - Energy and Climate on the Draft Renewables Regulatory Framework.

### **Actions**

The Clean Energy Council has participated in meetings with QREC and CEIG to discuss the situation and to agree to the following set of key messages:

- Industry will work with the Government on its Draft Renewables Regulatory Framework. The Clean Energy Council is preparing a response to the discussion paper due on 1 February.
- The developers affected by the decision will seek more information about these wind farm projects and will work collaboratively with the Government to find a timely way forward.
- Industry will continue to work with the Queensland Government and other stakeholders to ensure project assessments are comprehensive, efficient and predictable to continue to attract substantial investment across the State.
- Industry expects an open and transparent relationship with the QLD Government, including ensuring a comprehensive, efficient and predictable assessment framework that meets community expectations.

The Clean Energy Council has engaged with senior public servants from departments and ministerial offices to better understand the situation and express the following concerns:

- The lack of consultation was disappointing, particularly when the consultation process for the Draft Renewable Regulatory Framework is currently on foot.
- This decision puts investment in Queensland at risk; Queensland had been leading the country in attracting investment in the clean energy sector prior to this decision.
- The Clean Energy Council recognises the importance of genuine consultation with communities and local councils in areas hosting renewable energy development and expects the highest standards from our members in this regard. We are actively supporting members to continually improve the ways our industry engages with local communities.
- These projects deliver significant economic benefits and opportunities to local communities through local jobs, new amenities, roads and financial benefits to landholders and neighbouring communities. Any delays put at risk the benefits of renewables projects being delivered to communities on time.



The Clean Energy Council's National Spokesperson Chris O'Keefe joined 4BC Breakfast Radio this morning, where he provided the first national radio response to the Queensland Government decision to pause the assessment and approval process for four wind farm projects.

A briefing has been scheduled for the QLD Leadership Group on Wednesday 22 January at 10am AEST time via Teams. The Clean Energy Council's General Manager Media, Danielle Tricarico will outline the CEC media plan including key messages.

A follow up meeting has been scheduled by the Clean Energy Council with QREC and CEIG on Monday 20 January at 3.00pm AEST.

The Clean Energy Council will continue to work with members directly impacted and more broadly, to engage in the framework reforms to ensure Queensland remains an attractive jurisdiction for clean energy investment and development.

#### **Reference documents**

- [Queensland Government Gazette 16 January 2025](#)
- [Proposed call in notice](#)
- [MEDIA STATEMENT: Local communities to have their say on wind farm developments](#)
- [Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning Wind Farms](#)
- [Deputy Premier Jarrod Bleijie Ministerial Charter Letter](#)