
SEQUANA
STREAM WEBINAR SERIES
NET ZERO: STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Sequana acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live and work across Australia and recognise their deep connections to land, water, sky and community.

We pay our respect to Elders – past and present – and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures today.

SEQUANA
WATER ENVIRONMENT ENERGY

CONTENTS

NET ZERO: STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE

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AUSTRALIA & NET ZERO

NET ZERO

'Net zero emissions' refers to achieving an overall balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced and greenhouse gas emissions taken out of the atmosphere – Source, Climate Council.

In 2023, **35-40%** of Australia's total electricity generation was from renewable energy sources, including solar **(16%),** wind **(12%)** and hydro **(6%)**.

This has continued to **grow**, at an increasing rate, as more solar, wind (onshore and offshore), battery storage and hydro projects are implemented **across the country**.

GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT

Securing the **energy supply** for many of Australia's industries including the water industry is a **key consideration** towards net zero.

Renewable energy projects, to transition from fossil fuels, can still have environmental impacts. Large-scale solar, wind farms and hydro projects can **affect local wildlife, ecosystems, land use and local communities**.

Real need to get the balance right when it comes to supporting Australia's Net Zero goals by implementing large-scale renewable energy projects.

There is a need to move beyond minimising impact to promoting **net-positive environmental outcomes** and **community benefits.**

OUR PANELLISTS

EXPERTS IN ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING, ENERGY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

DEB NEUMANN

DIRECTOR – STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING, SEQUANA

Deb leads our environment and planning offering to help our clients provide better outcomes for the environment and communities. With almost 25 years' experience, Deb has established herself as a trusted advisor with a background in the delivery of major infrastructure projects and the distribution of strategic land use, planning and environmental advice across urban and regional settings.

MADELEINE PAGE

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING LEAD, NORTH WEST, SEQUANA

Madeleine drives the delivery of major projects across the water, energy, and environment sectors. With an impressive 24 years of experience in environmental management, she has been at the forefront of delivering large-scale, multi-disciplinary projects. Her expertise spans all stages of planning, design, construction, and maintenance, implementing environmental strategies along each stage.

OWEN BOUSHEL

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, TILT RENEWABLES

Owen leads community and stakeholder engagement across a portfolio of 11 operating generators, as well Tilt Renewables development and delivery pipeline. Across his career, Owen has specialised in community and stakeholder engagement, social impact assessment, social research and social management planning.

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SETTING THE STAGE: THE BIG PICTURE

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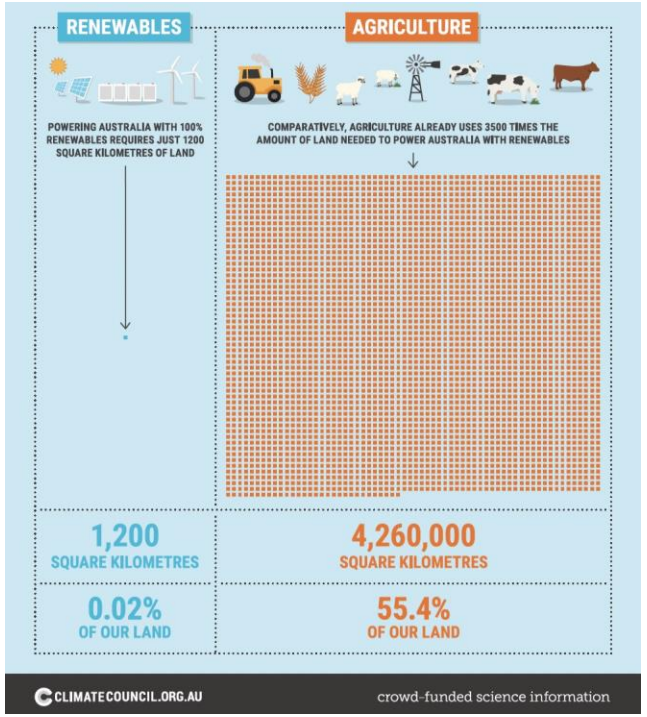
WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN BALANCING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WITH THE NEED FOR RENEWABLE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT?

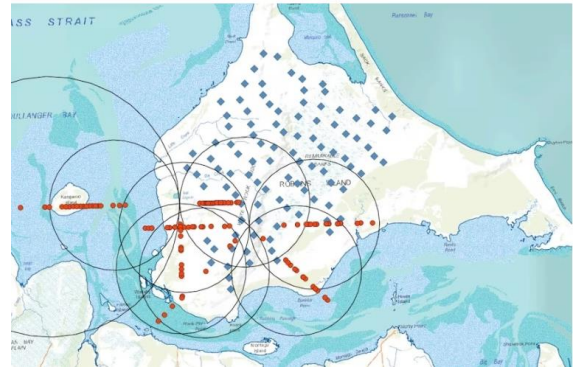
- Global warming: nature's legacy is at stake while people are affected by climate-related disasters.
- Definition of environment is broad.
- Losing sight of the forest for the trees: encouraging projects that deliver net environmental outcomes.
- Red flags reviews are critical – don't make assumptions.
- Strong understanding of complex policies and legislations per state.

RENEWABLE ENERGY NEEDS VERSUS NATURE'S NEEDS



How much space do renewables really need – Source: Climate Council

The orange-bellied parrot breeds only in Tasmania, with most of the dwindling population migrating to the mainland in the winter – Source: ABC Riverina: Hannah Laxton-Koonce).



The proposed Robbins Island wind farm turbines (in blue) and the detections of orange-bellied parrots (in red).(Supplied: Eric Woehler).

SETTING THE STAGE: THE BIG PICTURE

HOW DO DIFFERENT REGULATORY REGIMES ACROSS AUSTRALIA'S IMPACT PROJECT TIMELINES AND INVESTMENT CERTAINTY?

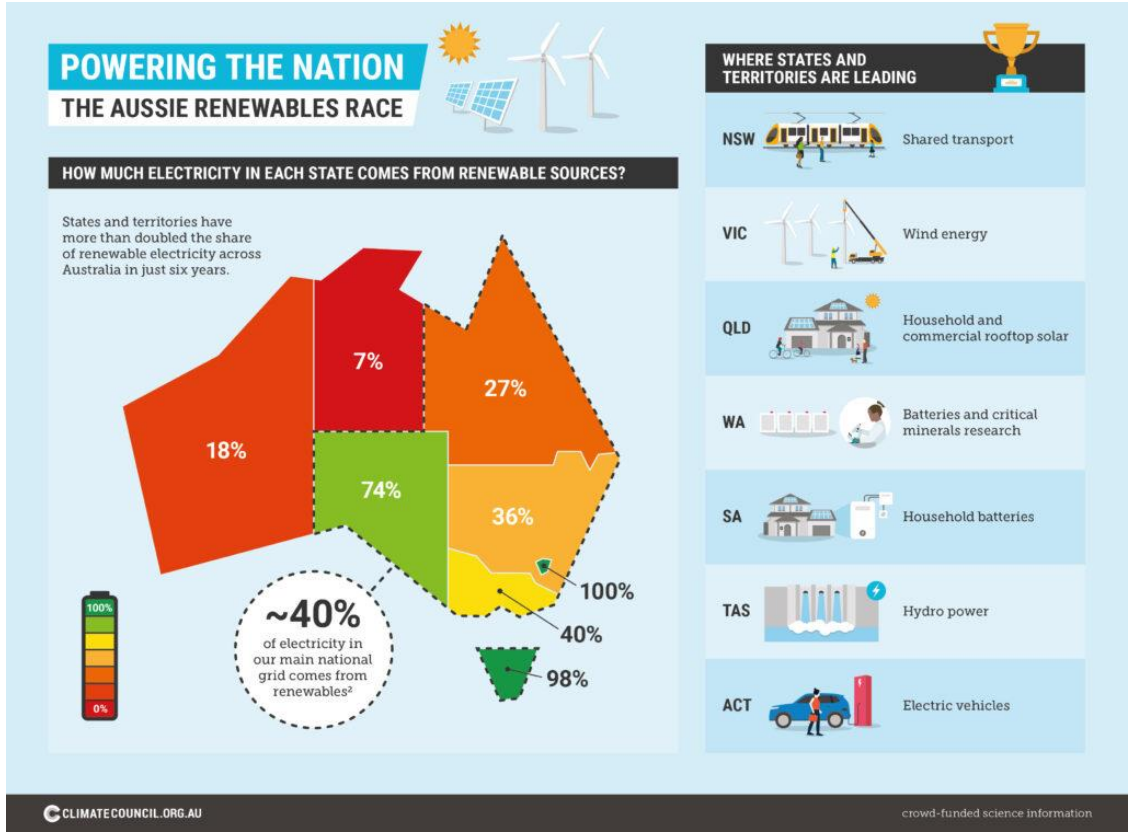
- Strong need for renewable energy balance with avoiding environment and community impact.
- Develop strategies to deliver net environmental outcomes.
- Establish early planning and strategies.
- Thoroughly determine a site selection analysis to avoid impacts.
- Align at all times with regulatory requirements.
- Time and budget constraints.
- Operational monitoring and offset design and management.
- Governance: early community engagement with Traditional Custodians and local communities.

Source: Delburn Wind Farm

SETTING THE STAGE: THE BIG PICTURE

GIVEN THE PUSH FOR NET ZERO, ARE WE MOVING FAST ENOUGH ON APPROVALS AND INFRASTRUCTURE ROLLOUT, OR ARE REGULATORY HURDLES SLOWING PROGRESS?

- Depending on each state: different policies and regulations, timelines encompassing international and local considerations, non-economic impacts (environmental, regional and First Nations matters), sectorial decarbonisation pathways and economic analysis.
- Huge necessity to integrate and align Commonwealth and State processes to achieve Net Zero targets.
- The country can look unattractive to international investors as they are looking for stable and clear policies to ensure their investments are secure.
- Investing in nature-based and renewable energy solutions places Australia as proactive in tackling climate risk uncertainty and therefore is more attractive to international investors.



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NAVIGATING REGULATORY COMPLEXITIES

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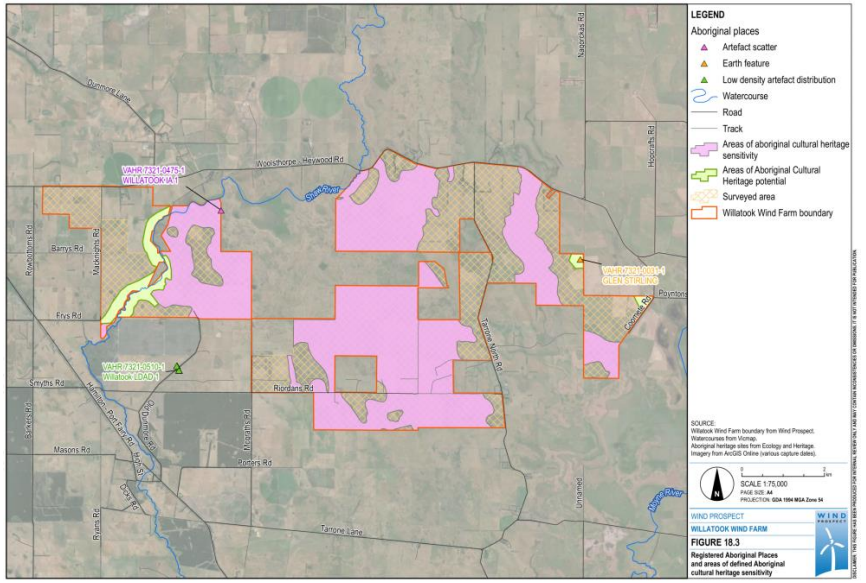
THE WILLATOOK WIND FARM DECISION HIGHLIGHTED HOW ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS CAN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE PROJECT SCALE. HOW DO DEVELOPERS NAVIGATE THESE CHALLENGES WHILE STILL ENSURING PROJECTS REMAIN VIABLE?

- The key to projects of this scale is to start early, plan early and start assessments and consultations early. Proponents want to avoid surprises, escalating costs and design changes.
- Commence ecology at the very start of the project to understand the environmental characteristics of the site and any potential impacts and avoidance and management measures.
- Early collaboration with First Nations people and local communities to start early in a project's life cycle.
- Areas of importance to Traditional Custodians: water, soil, biodiversity and sky country. It can help the assessment of environmental impacts and develop relationships with First Nations people.
- Assessments need to consider all phases of the life cycle of a project, including decommissioning.



Source: Willatook Wind Farm | Environment Effects Statement | Chapter 18 Aboriginal cultural heritage

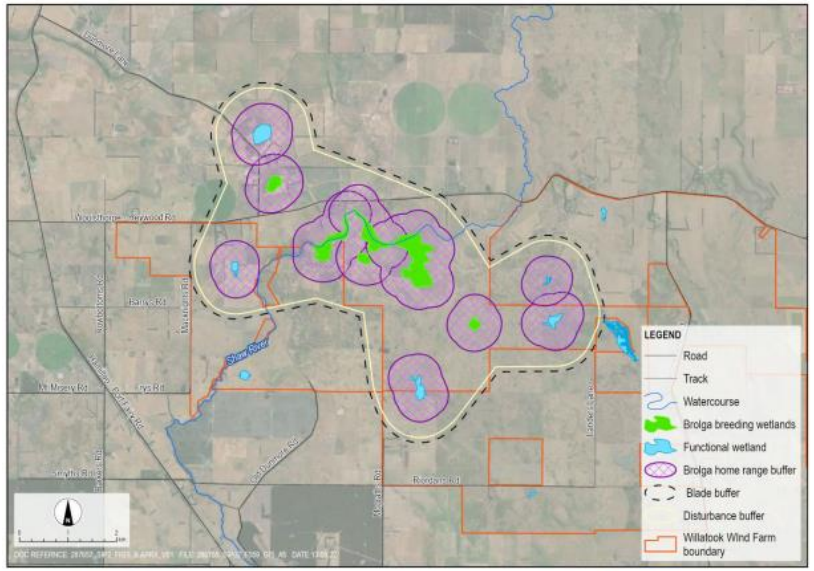


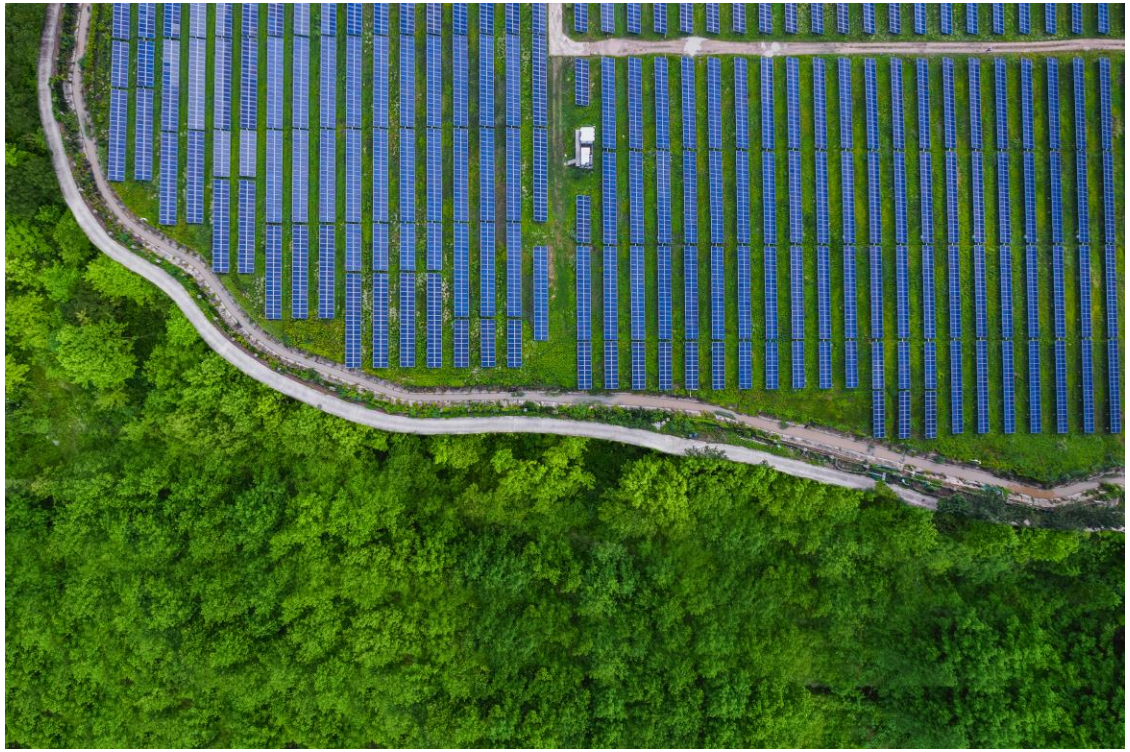
Figure ES.27 Turbine free buffers to protect potential Brolga breeding habitat

Source: Willatook Wind Farm | Environment Effects Statement | Executive summary

NAVIGATING REGULATORY COMPLEXITIES

WHAT LESSONS CAN WE LEARN FROM QUEENSLAND'S RECENT CHANGES TO WIND FARM ASSESSMENTS, AND SHOULD OTHER STATES FOLLOW SUIT?

- Positive outlook on Queensland's efforts in optimising wind farm assessments thanks to recent changes.
- Assessment has strengthened the community engagement guidelines and the impact assessment (both environmental and social) and unified the regulatory framework.
- While we are seeking a more harmonised approach, project developers and states still need to consider their unique contexts and tailor the strategy accordingly.



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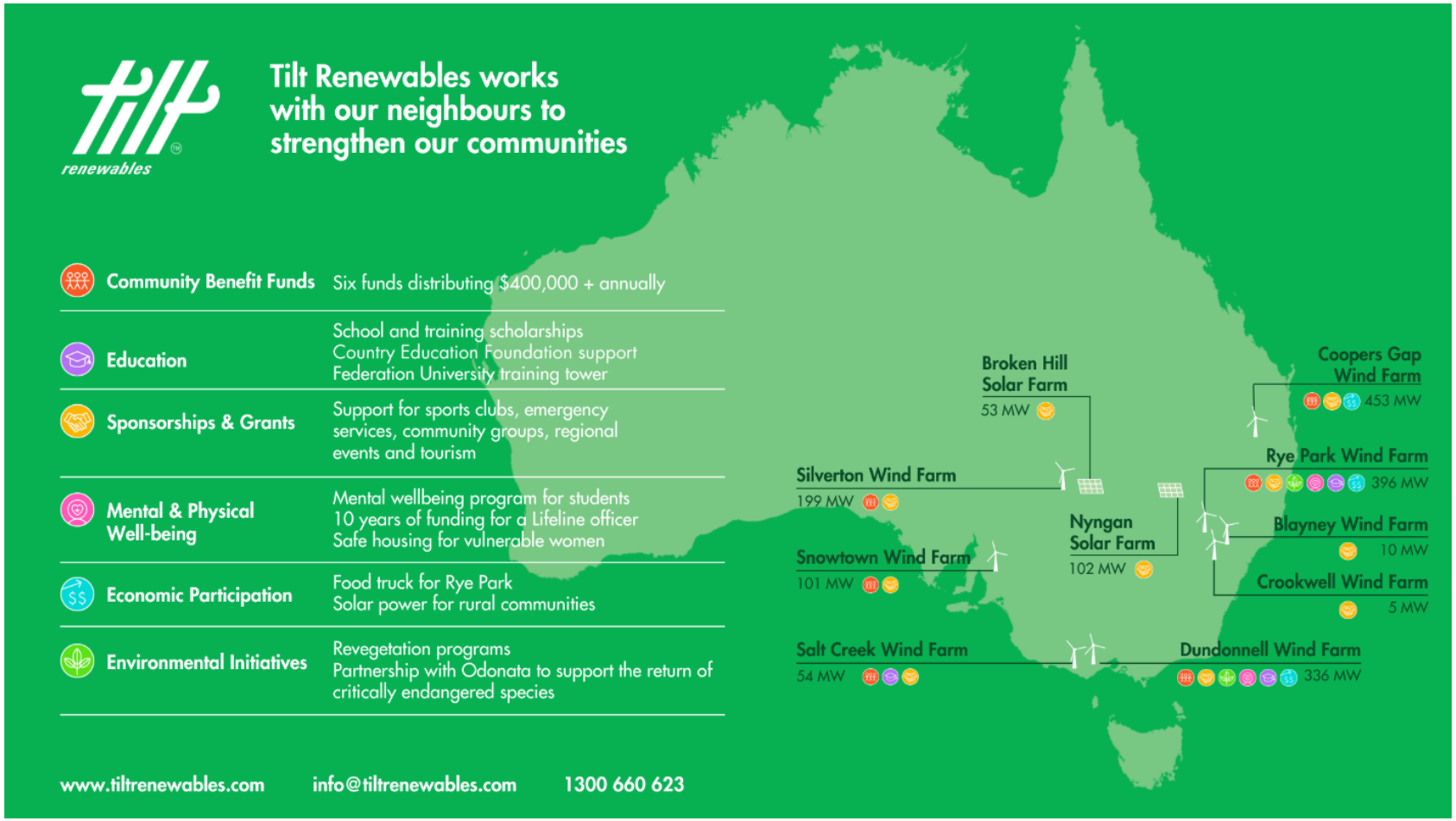
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SOCIAL LICENSE

BUILDING LOCAL SUPPORT

COMMUNITY OPPOSITION IS A MAJOR HURDLE FOR RENEWABLE PROJECTS. WHAT STRATEGIES HAVE PROVEN EFFECTIVE IN BUILDING LOCAL SUPPORT?

- Co-designed solutions.
- Locally focused benefit-sharing programs co-designed with community.
- Community engagement that prioritises the directly impacted like neighbours.
- Clarity in process, timeframes and how feedback is being used.



BENEFITS AND ADDRESSING IMPACTS

HOW CAN DEVELOPERS AND REGULATORS BETTER COMMUNICATE THE LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF RENEWABLES WHILE ADDRESSING IMMEDIATE CONCERNS LIKE NOISE, VISUAL IMPACT, AND LAND USE?

- Be honest: Clean energy benefits largely accrue to the broader community.
- Importance of co-developing tangible benefit-sharing programs
- Concerns can be addressed through:
  - Visiting operating sites.
  - Be clear about the standards that need to be met, and the implications of not meeting them.
- Provide access to suitably qualified experts to talk through noise and landscape Impacts.

COOPERS GAP CHRISTMAS PARTY

SALT CREEK SCHOLARSHIPS

BUILDING COMMUNITY BUY IN

WHAT ROLE SHOULD GOVERNMENTS PLAY IN FACILITATING COMMUNITY BUY-IN FOR LARGE-SCALE RENEWABLE PROJECTS?

- Put landholders and neighbours at the centre of the engagement process.
- Shorten assessment and approval timelines to reduce the level of stress in the community.
- Help shift the broader discussion from technology type to outcomes - Australia needs clean, reliable and affordable sources of energy to replace our existing generators.
- Clearly articulate what local benefits the transition will and won't bring to local communities.

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LOOKING AHEAD: SOLUTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

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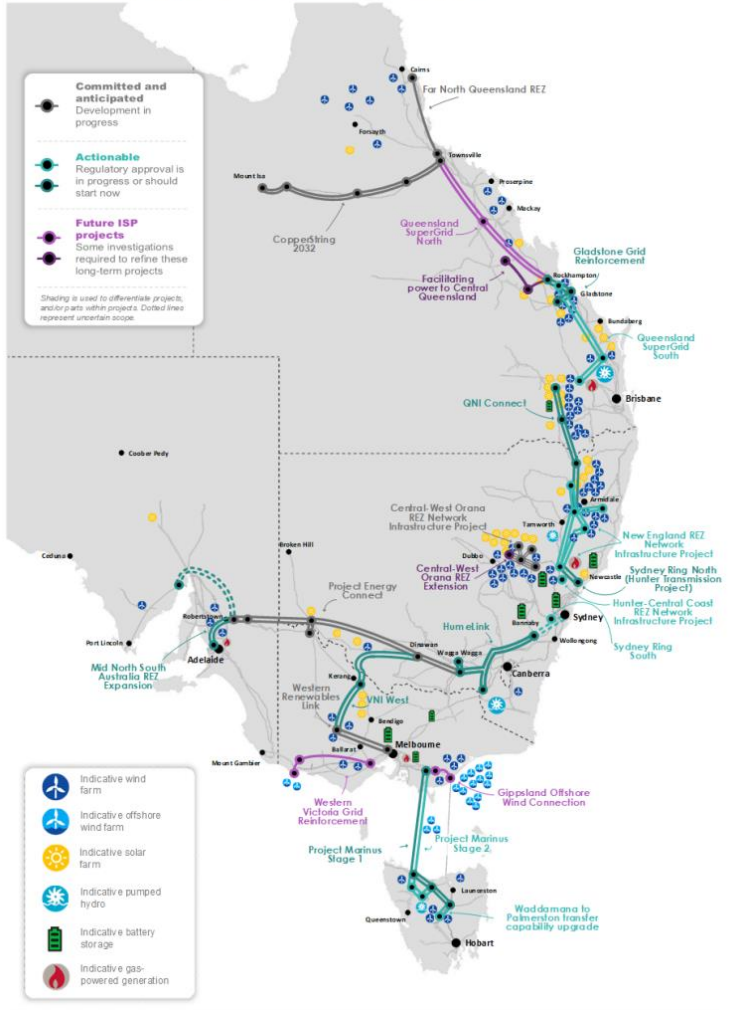
HOW WOULD YOU NAVIGATE THE CURRENT REGULATORY FRAMEWORK TO ENABLE RENEWABLE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT?

- Early phase planning and impact assessment to inform site selection and design and provide strong data sets to support approval applications.
- Opportunities for collaboration: localities working together to deliver workers' accommodation, offset opportunities, and community outcomes.
- Working with industry and NGOs to develop and support education and understanding of renewables and their impacts.
- Embrace knowledge share, consultants and developers work across states and territories.

Figure 3 Transmission projects in the optimal development path



Source: 2024-integrated-system-plan-isp.pdf

LOOKING AHEAD: SOLUTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

ARE THERE INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES IN BALANCING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WITH INFRASTRUCTURE ROLLOUT THAT AUSTRALIA SHOULD CONSIDER?

UNITED STATES	FRANCE	NETHERLANDS	DENMARK	GERMANY	BELGIUM
• OSW: derisking sites through baseline work and identifying actual sites rather than zones	• Several best practices in balancing environmental protection with infrastructure rollout to achieve Net Zero targets.	• Multi-functional infrastructure projects that combine renewable energy generation with other land uses, such as agriculture and recreation.	• Energy planning that includes comprehensive environmental impact assessments and stakeholder consultations.	• Energy transition strategy, known as Energiewende, focuses on increasing renewable energy while phasing out nuclear and coal.	• Nature-based solutions to enhance biodiversity and wildlife corridors are well-developed in European countries. Here, we have an example from Life Elia, Belgium, creating green corridors under overhead electrical lines.

Source: Offshore Market Intelligence & Marine Cable Consulting | 4C Offshore

Source: Sheep among the panels: Using solar sites forpastureland

Source: Wildlife corridors under transmission lines? - RE-Alliance

LOOKING AHEAD: SOLUTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

IN FIVE YEARS, WHAT DO YOU HOPE WILL HAVE CHANGED IN THE WAY WE PLAN, APPROVE, AND DEVELOP RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS?

- Streamlining the assessment process.
- Shorter approval time frames that give great certainty to communities.
- Real shift for environmental and Traditional Custodians standards and how to tackle biodiversity and cultural loss while supporting renewable projects.

Source: First Nations Energy Projects - First Nations Clean Energy Network

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A LONG ROAD AHEAD: HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

SEQUANA'S ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING TEAM

SENIOR SPECIALISTS ACROSS AUSTRALIA

- Growing national practice with expertise across all states.
- Intended to complement and enhance Sequana.
- Deep practical ‘end to end’ experience across water, renewable and environmental sector.

Key focus on derisking projects:

- Development of policy supported by industry knowhow
- Ability to have open conversations with Commonwealth and State regulators due to genuine working relationships – from early business case support to negotiating conditions
- Scoping of targeted impact assessments
- Real expertise in navigating legislation to achieve bankable and constructible projects
- Ability to build bespoke teams - trusted partnerships with the best environmental specialists
- Development of communications and stakeholder engagement strategies
- Traditional Custodian strategies.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

PLANNING & APPROVALS		WATER & ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY	PROJECT SUPPORT
• Red flag reviews and due diligence	• Policy development	• Policy development, analysis and implementation	• Project Management - project resources to support project delivery
• Approvals Strategies and Legislation Monitoring	• Submissions to public consultations	• Strategic planning and management strategies	• Contract management and administration
• Environmental Impact Assessment under State and Commonwealth Legislation	• Engagement with regulators & Traditional Custodians	• Project or program scoping and evaluation	• Analysis and negotiation of tenderer appointment, contract variations and amendments
• Development applications and scheme amendments	• Natural resources management	• MERI Frameworks and Planning	• Time, budget, cost and financial control and reporting
• Funding submissions	• Streamlined functions and a 'one-stop-shop' for Environment & Planning services	• Risk assessment and management strategies	• Project budget, schedule development and assessment
• Licence applications	• Development Facilitation	• Peer and gateway reviews, business case input and reviews	• Workshop facilitation
• Requests for major project designation		• Options Assessment and MCAs	

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THANK YOU

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