

About this Toolkit

Introduction

Councils face both opportunities and challenges when navigating renewable energy projects in their regions, across all scales and types of renewable energy technology.

This Toolkit aims to support Queensland councils in harnessing opportunities and managing challenges of renewable energy projects, while delivering for their communities to meet their current needs and support future goals.

The Toolkit specifically supports councils in understanding, planning for and managing the development of renewable energy projects in their Local Government Area (LGA).

This Toolkit has been developed to assist councils with understanding their role in the stages of renewable energy project development, including those prescribed under the *Planning Act 2016* (Planning Act), and engaging with proponents and communities.

Importantly, the Toolkit provides practical tools, templates and checklists that can build on the strategies, policies, plans and procedures councils already have in place.

This Toolkit supports councils in:

- > **championing** community needs, interests and values to guide renewable energy projects and ensure lasting local benefits
- > **engaging** meaningfully with proponents and communities
- > **understanding** and advocating for communities by highlighting potential social impacts, including cumulative impacts of renewable energy projects
- > **assisting** their community's understanding of the proponent's obligations in planning, delivery, operation and end-of-project-life of renewable energy projects
- > **negotiating** fair and transparent Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) informed by community input and assessments on project impacts
- > **supporting** frameworks and practices, both council-led and proponent-led, that build social licence.



Kingaroy

Toolkit audience

This Toolkit is designed for:



Mayors and Councillors

To assist in:

- ✓ guiding councils and the community as they navigate renewable energy projects to ensure communities benefit
- ✓ identifying direct and cumulative impacts on the community
- ✓ championing current and long-term community interests with proponents and stakeholders
- ✓ engaging with communities, businesses and industries and other stakeholders.



Council executives and officers

To assist in:

- ✓ setting broader strategies on the LGA's infrastructure priorities with consideration to their community, businesses and industries
- ✓ the preparation and negotiation of CBAs with proponents, on behalf of council
- ✓ developing and implementing council policies and frameworks related to renewable energy projects
- ✓ engaging with the community
- ✓ representing community interests, needs and aspirations when engaging with proponents and communicating council's position on renewable energy.



MacIntyre Wind Farm

Using this Toolkit



Each section stands alone and councils are able to choose which tools may be helpful considering their own circumstances.



It is intended to be flexible and scalable. Councils can choose to apply some or all the elements provided.



Tools, including templates and checklists, are provided, however councils may apply and adapt the tools to suit their needs.

The Toolkit offers a guide for councils and aims to support them as they engage with communities and proponents on renewable energy. Councils are encouraged to seek advice on contractual, financial and legal matters associated with renewable energy projects in their region to manage risks and achieve the desired outcomes that support and benefit their communities.

The information provided in this Toolkit does not replace council strategies and policies. Instead, it is structured to support council strategies and policies in the context of renewable energy projects. The Toolkit complements **Queensland Government policies and legislation.**

Councils can use this Toolkit for any renewable energy project in their region, at any stage of development, at any scale, and for any type of technology.

This Toolkit is provided as guidance only about some aspects of the Community Benefit System (CBS) under the Planning Act. Councils are directed to the **Planning Act, Planning Regulation and relevant subordinate statutory instruments and guidance material** for the requirements of the CBS.

Exclusions

The Toolkit is not designed to apply to renewable energy projects categorised as:

- > consumer energy resources such as rooftop solar panels – these represent residential or commercial assets
- > coordinated projects declared under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*.

Note: Specific requirements may apply for Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for certain coordinated projects and for developments that are subject to the *Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Act 2017*.

This resource is not an instrument prescribed by statute and provides no statutory guidance. Any references to policies are not an interpretation of those policies. The material or any part of the material in this resource (including any references to legislation) does not constitute legal advice. This resource should not be relied upon for the making of any decisions or the taking of any actions.