Best Practice Charter 2025

CLEAN ENERGY COUNCIL

A summary of best practice social performance from across the clean energy industry

We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters on which we work and live. We commit to collaborate with First Nations communities, to promote sustainable practice, protect ancient sites and culture with equitable access to the benefits of clean energy. Sovereignty has never been ceded.

We acknowledge Elders, past and present, and their continuing culture and connection to Country.

← Cover image:
Tilt Renewables

Foreword

> “Communities are clear in their expectations: genuine early engagement, transparent communication, opportunities for local employment and procurement, and visible long-term legacies.

Australia’s clean energy transformation is not just an infrastructure challenge – it is a nation-building project that reaches deep into our regions, our industries and our communities. The success of this transformation depends not only on how much renewable capacity we build, but on how well we build it: in partnership with Traditional Owners, with respect for Country and with a clear commitment to leaving lasting value for the communities who host these projects.

The Clean Energy Council's Best Practice Charter exists to guide us in that task. Each of the signatories that have reported against the charter this year, have shown that good practice is more than compliance – it is about trust, collaboration and accountability. Whether it’s co-designing benefit-sharing funds with local councils, supporting First Nations equity partnerships, integrating agriculture and solar, or ensuring worker accommodation doesn’t strain local housing, the message is the same: when we get it right, everyone benefits.

As someone who has spent much of my career working to strengthen communities and economies, I know that transitions of this scale only succeed when people feel included, respected and heard. This snapshot, taken from more than 400 examples, demonstrates that developers are listening – and importantly, learning – from the lived experience of regional Australians.

Of course, there is more to do. Communities are clear in their expectations: genuine early engagement, transparent communication, opportunities for local employment and procurement and visible long-term legacies. Getting this right is not a 'nice to have'; it is central to project delivery, investor confidence and public trust in the clean energy transition.

This year’s reporting against the charter provides not only evidence of progress but also a blueprint for what’s possible when industry lifts the bar together. It shows a sector that is maturing – one that is embedding social performance as deeply as engineering or finance. That is the pathway to a transition that is not only fast, but fair; not only ambitious, but enduring.

I am proud to lead the Clean Energy Council at this pivotal moment. Together, with governments, industry and communities, we will deliver a transition that creates opportunity, strengthens resilience and leaves a legacy, of which Australians can be proud.

Jackie Trad
Chief Executive Officer
Clean Energy Council

Executive summary

In 2025, more than 40 clean energy organisations submitted reports on their commitments to the Clean Energy Council's Best Practice Charter—a voluntary code that guides how clean energy projects should be planned, built and operated with integrity and care for local communities, Traditional Owners and the environment. Our inaugural summary report report of those submissions represents the most comprehensive analysis of social performance activity across the clean energy sector ever undertaken in Australia.

The case studies outlined in this summary show a maturing sector—one that's growing in scale and ambition and also in responsibility. Across the country, from the Pilbara to Gladstone and the rural townships between, clean energy companies are working harder to make their projects inclusive, respectful and locally beneficial. Communities are being brought into the conversation earlier and more meaningfully. In one project, Traditional Owners were involved not just in cultural heritage assessments but in co-designing a biodiversity management plan—ensuring the project enhanced culturally significant sites and species.

There are strong signs that benefit sharing schemes are becoming more place based and innovative. Several projects reported tailored programs like annual payments for neighbours, reducing energy bills, training placements for local apprentices and grants for mental health, housing, sport and education initiatives. One case includes upgrading wastewater infrastructure—ensuring long-term value remains for generations to come. The industry has evolved beyond sponsoring sporting clubs and putting solar panels on the bowls club.

On the ground, practical innovation is rising to meet local challenges. In areas where housing supply is tight, developers are building dedicated worker camps and busing workers to site to avoid putting pressure on nearby communities. Where availability allows, developers prioritise placing workers in existing houses or in spare rooms with families to support the local economy. In farming regions, renewable projects are being co-located with grazing operations, using agrivoltaics to allow sheep to safely roam beneath solar panels. Some projects sourced all their construction gravel locally or built on-site concrete batching plants to reduce traffic and dust on community roads.

Alinta Energy

Environmental care featured strongly across the reports, including a case study of a project delivering a 'net gain biodiversity' scheme. All signatories demonstrated how projects are being planned with end-of-life in mind—committing to and being required to detail how they will undertake responsible decommissioning.

Importantly, many developers acknowledged that building community acceptance takes more than good intentions—it takes time, trust, transparency and action. Almost all reports noted they had revised their engagement approaches based on community feedback, established dedicated community liaison roles, formalised complaint handling processes or altered project layout in response to local feedback. There's also growing recognition the role of Traditional Owners must evolve beyond cultural heritage assessments and include employment, procurement, training, benefit sharing and decision-making, not just consultation.

The 2025 Charter submissions make it clear: the clean energy transition is not just about infrastructure, but about relationships—with land, with Culture and with community. While no two projects are the same, a common shift is emerging: one towards deeper listening, greater transparency, and long-term thinking.

As the pace of the transition accelerates, these values will matter more than ever. The Best Practice Charter is helping ensure that Australia's clean energy future is not only clean and reliable—but grounded in respect, lasting shared benefit, and community pride.

> "The clean energy transition is not just about infrastructure, but about relationships - with land, with Culture, and with community.


Lightsource bp

Contents

Introduction

Introduced in 2018, the Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Projects is a voluntary set of commitments for Clean Energy Council members. It outlines the standards that signatories will uphold in the development of current and new clean energy projects.

The Charter outlines a commitment by signatories to engage respectfully with the communities in which they plan and operate projects, to be sensitive to environmental and cultural values and to make a positive contribution to the regions in which they operate. There were 54 signatories in 2025, with more than 40 providing submissions prior to the deadline to be included in this summary. 2025 was the second year signatories were required to report on how they were adhering to the 10 commitments.

With this program of annual reporting, the CEC aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Provide information and transparency to communities and stakeholders
- Highlight the good work being pursued by the clean energy sector
- Facilitate knowledge sharing across clean energy developers

Lightsource bp

Best Practice Charter commmitments

1	We will engage respectfully with the local community, including Traditional Owners of the land, to seek their views and input before submitting a development application and finalising the design of the project.
2	We will provide timely information and be accessible and responsive in addressing the local community's feedback and concerns throughout the life of the project.
3	We will be sensitive to areas of high biodiversity, cultural and landscape value in the design and operation of project.
4	We will minimise the impacts on highly productive agricultural land and explore opportunities to integrate agricultural production.
5	We will consult the community on the potential visual, noise, traffic and other impacts of the project, and on the mitigation options.
6	We will support the local economy by providing local employment and procurement opportunities.
7	We will offer communities the opportunity to share in the benefits of the project, and consult them on the options available, including the relevant governance arrangements.
8	We commit to using the project to support educational and tourism opportunities where appropriate.
9	We will demonstrate responsible land stewardship over the life of the project and welcome opportunities to enhance the ecological, cultural and/or agricultural value of the land.
10	During the life of the project, we will recycle waste materials where feasible and commit to responsible decommissioning or refurbishment/repowering of the site at the end of the project's life.

Best Practice Charter signatories

RES

Thematic deep dive

Structured around 13 cross-cutting themes, this section provides leading practice case studies from the 10 commitments.

You can view a summary of all case studies at
cleanenergycouncil.org.au/advocacy/best-practice-charter

Community engagement

Across the more than 40 submissions, project proponents demonstrated a broad and evolving commitment to community engagement, ranging from early-stage consultation to long-term, place-based partnership models. The data reflects a strong trend toward tailored, localised, and multi-channel engagement—with many projects going beyond minimum requirements. For example, conducting social impact assessments where there is no prescriptive requirement to do so.

Key observations

Early and proactive engagement was common. Many projects commenced conversations with landholders and councils well before formal approvals, in some cases 24 months in advance.

Face-to-face contact was prioritised. A wide range of drop-in centres, kitchen table discussions, school visits, and roundtable sessions were held across regional Australia.

Most projects used multiple communication channels, including:

- **Newsletters**
- **Fact sheets / FAQs**
- **Letterbox drops**
- **Community hotlines / 1800 numbers**
- **Websites & online updates**
- **Advertisements in local media and news**
- **Local community engagement staff**

Some projects established community reference groups or community consultative committees to guide engagement over time. Almost all projects noted design alterations made because of community feedback (e.g. redesigning access roads, adjusting buffer zones, modifying visual screening plans).

Trends and improvements

- Projects are increasingly shifting from inform to place based co-design in their approach—particularly when feedback leads to tangible project changes.
- There's a noticeable trend toward long-term presence—some developers maintain shopfronts or site offices well beyond construction.
- Digital engagement tools (e.g. interactive maps, VR, live chat platforms) are beginning to complement traditional methods, especially in regions where populations are dispersed and engaging face-to-face is difficult.
- Complaints handling is becoming increasingly sophisticated, with standard response times and multiple ways individuals can make a complaint increasing, including the option to provide feedback anonymously.

CASE STUDY

Lightsource BP - Sandy Creek Solar

Early and meaningful engagement has been fundamental to ensuring that the Sandy Creek project's community and stakeholders are kept informed about what's happening and can reach out to ask questions through multiple channels. To support engagement, we've used multiple formats to communicate information and seek feedback, including:

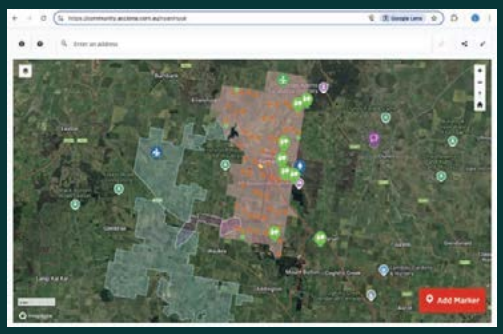
- **Letters and emails to neighbours and interested community members at key milestones**
- **One-on-one meetings with neighbours and community members**
- **Emails and phone calls**
- **Information stalls at the Dunedoo Agricultural Show in 2022 and 2023**
- **Community information days in Dunedoo and Gulgong, and online**
- **Participation in EnergyCo's community information sessions in Dunedoo and Wellington**
- **Community surveys**
- **In-depth interviews to help us understand social impacts**
- **Presentations to stakeholders and First Nations groups.**

Through engagement we have:

- **Made several changes to the project's design and layout, including removing 38 ha of solar panels close to non-associated landholders**
- **Made commitments to local sourcing, subcontracting, training and employment**
- **Designed a benefit scheme that will deliver a range of initiatives and funding to the community, local groups and the region.**

CASE STUDY

ACCIONA Energía Community Hub



Our popular online Community Hub (www.community.acciona.com.au) provides up-to date information on all projects across Australia. It offers interactive tools for feedback, including 'ask a question' forms, and showcases initiatives such as small grants and scholarships. We use a variety of formats (infographics, videos, written content and interactive maps) to ensure information is accessible and easy to understand. These resources address common community concerns such as visual, environmental, noise, and traffic impacts, and provide clear explanations of technical aspects like wind turbine shadow flicker and photovoltaic glare. Communications content is interactive, accessible and designed to inform, educate and elicit feedback. For example, our online 'ask a question' project forms are a popular feedback channel for projects like the Nyaninyuk and Tall Tree wind farms and our team of community and stakeholder engagement specialists take pride in providing prompt and public responses to every question, comment and query.

CASE STUDY

Tilt Renewables – Social value framework

Tilt Renewables has developed a social value framework to measure its performance against key social metrics and to encourage continual improvement in its engagement and benefit sharing approach. One opportunity identified through the development of this framework was for Tilt Renewables to better understand community perceptions of the company's engagement approach. To respond to this opportunity, Tilt Renewables has developed and implemented an evaluation survey which asks respondents questions about events and engagement activities. This survey was first trialled at a drop-in session in April 2025. Three responses were received with 100 per cent of responses replying that they were 'Very Satisfied' with the information provided at the event, and two of three responses advising that the event met their expectations for engagement. This survey will be available and promoted at Tilt Renewables' community engagement events going forward. Feedback will be used to improve the company's engagement approach and to tailor activities to meet individual community's engagement needs communication methods and preferences.

CASE STUDY

RES – Kerrs Creek Wind Farm

In 2025, the Kerrs Creek Wind Farm (NSW) reported to the nearby Euchareena and Molong communities on several design changes, the direct result of community feedback.

In response to community concerns about turbine height and visual impact, both were reduced, helping ease visual amenity concerns and supporting broader local acceptance.

Concerns from Molong led to the confirmation of an alternate transport route via the Port of Newcastle, avoiding the town entirely. This alleviated fears around road safety, noise and disruption to daily life and demonstrated a willingness to respond to feedback.

The project footprint was amended to avoid culturally significant sites, reinforcing respect for Traditional Owners and fostering trust in the project's cultural sensitivity.

Responding to calls for equity, RES committed to annual payments to approximately 130 neighbouring properties. This broadened the scope of benefit-sharing and has helped address some concerns from non-host community members.

From on-site engagement with Local Aboriginal Land Councils, turbines were shifted to avoid culturally modified trees and heritage areas, preserving cultural values and deepening First Nations partnerships.

Following feedback from landowners, track alignments were revised to minimise impacts on fencing, stockyards and water access, reducing disruption to farming operations, demonstrating the ability of renewable energy and agriculture to deliver mutually beneficial co-existence outcomes.

Community engagement processes are evaluated regularly within the business against leading practice and co-design principles, and the outcomes of engagement are reported to internal business leaders monthly to ensure community feedback and concerns are a key consideration during development.

Benefit sharing

As clean energy projects become increasingly embedded in regional communities, benefit sharing has emerged as one of the strongest and most widely adopted practices across the sector. The 2025 submissions show that developers are moving well beyond symbolic gestures — with many now committing to long-term, structured, and locally guided benefit-sharing programs.

Key observations

- Community benefit funds are the most common model, often calculated per megawatt of installed capacity and distributed annually for the life of the project.
- Most projects being planned today offer neighbour agreements, which provide direct payments or in-kind contributions to nearby landholders.
- Benefit funds are increasingly co-designed with community groups, councils, and Traditional Owners to ensure alignment with local priorities.

Support areas include:

- **Mental health services**
- **Education and training**
- **Housing**
- **Sports and recreation facilities**
- **Community infrastructure upgrades**
- **Local environment initiatives**

Trends and innovations

- Emerging examples of overarching frameworks or strategies to guide decision making i.e. impact financing and social value framework.
- There's a noticeable shift toward place-based and participatory design, with local voices shaping the structure and goals of benefit sharing.
- Schemes have evolved well beyond sponsoring sporting clubs and community funding grants - moving toward integrated social impact frameworks.
- Funds support mental health services, education, housing and First Nations outcomes.
- Benefit sharing schemes are delivering reductions in energy bills, across a variety of delivery methods.

Reported metrics

Community funds typically ranged from

$150

per MW for BESS and up to

$1,050

per MW for wind.

equating to hundreds of thousands in annual local investment and millions of the life of a project.

Several projects forecast lifetime benefit values of

$10m –$25 m

over 20–30 years.

One project projected a

$22 million

community investment over its operating life.

Neighbour agreements ranged from

$1,000 –$5,000

per household per year, depending on distance from turbines.

A handful of projects offered non-cash benefits, such as fencing, gravel, water tanks or access to broadband infrastructure.

CASE STUDY

ACCIONA Energía - Sustainable Impact Financing Framework

ACCIONA Energía 'Sustainable Impact Financing Framework' was first launched in 2023, combining green and sustainability-linked finance with a commitment to deliver positive outcomes for the communities where projects are built. This initiative provided energy audits and technical advice to 87 farms across Southern Queensland, making recommendations which, if implemented, could save over 2 million kilowatt-hours of electricity and 223,000 litres of diesel annually. In 2025, ACCIONA Energía also sponsored the Renewables in Agriculture Conference, bringing landowners, the industry and other stakeholders together – and supported farmers to attend the Farmers for Climate Action conference in late 2025.

CASE STUDY

Spark Renewables - Dinawan Energy Hub

Spark Renewables has developed a benefit, upskilling and industry program worth over $100 million, aimed at building community wealth, health and 'renewables-readiness'.

Benefits include the South West Renewable Energy Zone access fee contributions for community and employment components, paid during 15 years and administered by EnergyCo.

In 2024 Spark Renewables launched the Dinawan Pilot Grant Program, to award $20,000 in support of eight community-initiated projects. The Pilot Grant Program is the forerunner to the community fund as part of a long-term benefit sharing scheme proposed to run from the start of construction and throughout the operational life of the project. The final size of the community benefit sharing program will be based on the approved and constructed size of the project.

CASE STUDY

ACEN Australia - Lifeline Mudgee Community Hub

In 2025, ACEN Australia co-invested in establishing a permanent Lifeline Mental Health and Crisis Support Hub in Mudgee, NSW – an anchor initiative designed to address the escalating mental health needs of the people in the Central West Orana region. This investment was funded through project-specific allocations within ACEN's Social Investment Program and reflects a deliberate, data-informed commitment to regional resilience as a precondition for long-term infrastructure delivery.

CASE STUDY

Genex Power - Bulli Creek

Residents of Millmerran, QLD, will receive a $300 energy rebate per year for a period of 15 years under a leading practice initiative developed by Genex. Commencing upon commercial operation of the project in 2028, the scheme will help to lower energy costs and represents a $5.75 million commitment by Genex. Genex plans to build on this commitment for subsequent stages of the Bulli Creek Clean Energy Project so it can deliver cheaper energy for the community in which it is constructing this infrastructure.

CASE STUDY

Potentia Energy Tallawang Solar Hybrid

Through a Neighbour Shared Benefit Scheme, Potentia Energy's Tallawang Solar Hybrid project is offering long-term local benefits to project's neighbours. The Scheme provides a framework for making direct annual payments to neighbours based on the eligibility of their property. Owners of qualifying properties may be eligible to receive annual benefit payments during the construction and operational phases of the project

CASE STUDY

Vestas - Winterbourne Wind Farm

Walcha Council, Uralla Shire Council and Winterbourne Wind Pty Ltd have entered into a Voluntary Planning Agreement,which will establish a Community Benefit Fund (CBF) for the Winterbourne Wind Farm project. Winterbourne Wind Farm will provide $1,000,000 to the CBF when the project achieves financial commitment, and $750,000 annually to the fund from the start of commercial operations through to project decommissioning (based on a project up to 600 MW capacity).

For every megawatt over 600 MW built, Vestas will contribute an extra $1,000 per MW annually to the CBF. The annual payment will be adjusted for inflation according to the Consumer Price Index. To ensure community input, the CBF will be supported by community advisory committees, established to make recommendations about the kinds of projects and services the community wants to invest in.

CASE STUDY

Windlab – Gawara Baya

The Gawara Baya Community Benefit Fund will ensure a positive legacy through sustainable community development initiatives aligned with local needs. Two hundred thousand is available annually for the life of the project, with grants assessed by a decision-making panel. In the early stages of project development, Windlab initiated a Pilot Community Benefit Fund to test the approach and seek feedback.

Early investments are already making a difference. More than $60,000 has supported projects like upgrades to the Mount Fox Campground, sponsorship of the Maraka Festival in Ingham and Rush Festival in Charters Towers, and an inaugural agri-skills expo Link2Country.

CASE STUDY

Wind Prospect - Whyte Yarcowie Wind Farm benefits package

For each Wind Prospect project, a benefit-sharing program is designed that reflects the priorities and values of the host community. From the public launch of a project, Wind Prospect establishes an annual Community Sponsorship Fund that runs throughout the planning and permitting phase. For projects currently under development, Wind Prospect has contributed more than $150,000 to community initiatives for its current Victorian and South Australian projects.

Packages are tailored to each project and may include:

- Community Benefit Funds overseen by local committees
- Neighbour benefit payments
- Energy offset payments
- Construction impact payments
- Traditional Owner group programs and initiatives.

In 2025, Wind Prospect announced the Whyte Yarcowie Wind Farm benefits package - worth up to $500,000 annually - including $2,000 per turbine to the Community Benefit Fund, neighbour and energy offset payments for residents within 6 km, and direct support for the Traditional Owner group on whose traditional lands the project would be built.

First Nations engagement

The 2025 submissions show a significant uplift in both the breadth and depth of First Nations engagement across clean energy projects in Australia. Engagement is increasingly embedded in project lifecycles—from early planning to construction and operation—and framed around principles of respect, consent, shared value and cultural recognition.

While maturity varies across the sector, there is growing consistency in how proponents are approaching engagement: with a commitment to Free, Prior and Informed Consent, transparent partnerships and economic inclusion.

Key observations

- Early and repeated engagement with Traditional Owner groups was reported across most projects, often beginning during site selection or feasibility.
- Many projects conducted walk-on-Country sessions, cultural heritage assessments, or archaeological surveys in partnership with local First Nations groups.
- Some developers are progressing or have completed Indigenous Land Use Agreements or Shared Benefit Agreements.
- Cultural awareness training is increasingly offered to project staff and contractors.

A growing number of projects reported:

- Procurement from First Nations-owned businesses
- Employment or training placements for Indigenous workers
- Governance roles for Traditional Owners in benefit fund allocation
- A few submissions demonstrated long-term commitments to cultural revitalisation, language projects and support for Aboriginal ranger programs.

Trends and innovations

- Engagement is shifting beyond cultural heritage to relational and place-based—with increasing emphasis on shared governance, co-design, and long-term partnerships.
- Developers are beginning to include First Nations outcomes in project KPIs—from procurement targets to employment pathways.
- A few projects introduced joint communications or storytelling initiatives, supporting Traditional Owners to speak publicly about their involvement.
- There are early discussions around equity sharing but this is a complex area that is impacted by structural barriers caused by colonisation.

CASE STUDY

AGL & Fluence – Blackrock Industries

During FY25, AGL and Fluence, AGL's construction contractor, partnered with Blackrock Industries, a local First Nations-owned business, at the Liddell Battery project in NSW. Through the Second Chance for Change program, 12 incarcerated First Nations men on work release were employed in meaningful, above-award wage roles on the project.

This initiative provided more than just training - it offered dignified employment, skill development and a renewed sense of purpose. Several participants have since transitioned into full-time roles within the energy sector.

Participants were supported through a structured, culturally safe employment and training pathway that included above-award wages, nationally accredited training in areas such as construction, electrical safety, and battery systems, and hands-on experience working directly on the Liddell Battery project. The program was co-designed with local Aboriginal Elders and community leaders, embedding cultural safety and respect for Country throughout. In recognition of its impact, the program was awarded the Clean Energy Council's Diversity and Inclusion Award in 2025.

The program was initiated by Steven Fordham, Managing Director of Blackrock Industries and a proud Kamilaroi man. He launched the Second Chance for Change program in 2016 after employing a formerly incarcerated First Nations man and witnessing the transformative impact of meaningful work.

CASE STUDY

Alinta Energy – Walking Together

Alinta Energy have entered the Walking Together (Yabera Dandjoo) Partnership Agreement implemented together with the Gnaala Karla Booja Aboriginal Corporation. It is based on Alinta Energy's positive relationship with the corporation, based on mutual information exchange about Country, culture and strategy, and sets cultural principles for respectful collaboration — including respecting cultural authority, meeting on Country, and pursuing projects for mutual benefit in south-west Western Australia.

CASE STUDY

Atmos Renewables - Merredin BESS Project

The Atmos team formed a strong relationship with the Njaki Njaki group and Ballardong Aboriginal Corporation to co-design economic opportunities for the Merredin BESS Project in Western Australia.

As a result of this consultation, the project's Principal Contractor, Genus, developed custom work packages suitable for Merredin-based First Nations civil contractor Maarli Services. These work packages, valued at over $3 million, include civil and structural works as well as ongoing facility maintenance such as roads, fencing and vegetation control.

This effort provides employment opportunities for local First Nations people and supports the expansion of their contracting business.

CASE STUDY

Iberdrola Australia - Aurora Green Offshore Wind

As part of the Aurora Green Offshore Wind project, planned for more than 25 kilometres off the coastline of Gippsland in Victoria, Iberdrola Australia spent 18 months engaging with the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC), actively listening and building mutual trust.

The culmination of this early engagement saw Iberdrola Australia become the first offshore wind developer to achieve a landmark Engagement Agreement with GLaWAC. This Agreement supports resourcing and participation in ongoing discussions, and frames the pathway for the coming decades of engagement, contribution and collaboration.

CASE STUDY

Beon Energy Solutions - Broadsound Solar Farm and Battery

In 2024, Beon was engaged by Iberdrola Australia to construct the Broadsound Solar Farm and Battery. The site is located 150km northwest of Rockhampton on Barada Kabalbara Yetimarala Country in Central Queensland. The Solar Farm component is a 377MW project that covers approximately 900 hectares. Construction is ongoing.

As of August 2025, Beon had employed 130 workers in a variety of roles via its labour hire partner, Chandler Macleod. Forty two per cent of these workers identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, including 14 percent that identify as part of the Barada Kabalbara Yetimarala Traditional Owner group. This is the highest percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers on any of Beon's projects to date.

CASE STUDY

Spark Renewables – Engagement staff

Spark Renewables has appointed local Aboriginal community members as engagement coordinators to build connections with community stakeholders, Traditional Owners and Registered Aboriginal Parties, and to guide the development of its First Nations Engagement Strategy. Through this consultation, Spark Renewables has gained a valuable insight on community opportunities and issues that impact First Nations peoples, which will inform the initiatives it can design for a shared vision for change.

In 2024, Spark Renewables launched its Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan and established a working group to implement it in accordance with Reconciliation Australia's formal program.

CASE STUDY

Potentia Energy - Agreement with the Yorta Yorta National Aboriginal Corporation

Potentia Energy's cultural agreement with the Yorta Yorta National Aboriginal Corporation includes an annual Opportunity Fund, contribution towards upskilling for renewable project-related training, funding for a dedicated solar farm liaison resource during construction, and a commitment to a target of employing approximately 10 per cent Yorta Yorta people as part of the project's construction workforce. During the mechanical build phase of the project construction, approximately 27 per cent of the engaged mechanical workforce by the .engineering, procurement and construction contractor identified as Indigenous.

CASE STUDY

Wind Prospect – Hexham Project

As part of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage assessment for its Hexham project, Wind Prospect's team trialled new technology to support the identification of Aboriginal Cultural heritage beyond standard survey methodologies. Wind Prospect worked with Latrobe University researchers alongside the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation to use LiDAR imagery and innovative modelling techniques to identify undocumented mounds to investigate during cultural heritage surveys.

CASE STUDY

Windlab - Gawara Baya

Gawara Baya is on Gugu Badhun Country and, in recognising the Native Title and cultural rights of Gugu Badhun Peoples, Windlab formed an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with the Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation. The ILUA provides meaningful Gugu Badhun language, employment, education, and contracting outcomes for Gugu Badhun peoples. This includes funding a Gugu Badhun Liaison Officer within GBAC to support implementation, as well as the formation of an Employment Committee with Windlab and GBAC representatives working together to develop strategies needed to meet the binding employment and training commitments. As the moves from agreement-making to implementation, Windlab is working closely with GBAC and its main contractors to embed these commitments across the project.

CASE STUDY

WestWind Energy - Warracknabeal Energy Park

Warracknabeal Energy Park is located on the unceded lands of the Wotjobaluk Nation in Victoria with Traditional Owners represented by the Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC). Tangible cultural heritage values have been assessed across the project site, with Aboriginal Places expected to be registered through the Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

WestWind recognises the potential impact on intangible cultural heritage values - such as changes to the visual landscape and areas connected to traditional Wotjobaluk stories and oral histories. These will be assessed through a Cultural Values Assessment (CVA).

The CVA will map and record intangible values to deepen understanding and provide a valuable resource for both Traditional Owners and the project. BGLC has expressed a preference for this cultural mapping approach over a conventional report.

Over the past two years, WestWind has been meeting with the Traditional Owners several times each month to build relationships, share project updates, and ensure their perspectives are fully considered. WestWind is committed to developing a benefit sharing model with the BGLC and maintaining a close relationship throughout the project lifecycle.

CASE STUDY

Squadron Energy - Workforce training for First Nations locals in Wellington

Squadron Energy facilitated an intensive, four-week training program for Weilington-based First Nations identified people. The program was run by local Registered Training Organisations SKIVL and Integral and funded by Training Services. In July 2025, eight students completed the course, with many moving onto jobs in the local area. The course provides training to equip participants for roles on project sites throughout the Central-West Orana in NSW, including civil construction skills, vehicle operation and maintenance, and work safety.

The presence of multiple projects and employers seeking the graduates underscores the depth of renewable energy opportunities available.

Minimising environmental impact

Environmental stewardship remains a central focus for clean energy projects, with developers minimising impacts and integrating offsets, restoration, and protection efforts from the earliest planning stages. The 2025 Charter submissions demonstrate a more deliberate, science-informed, and locally sensitive approach to managing environmental impacts across construction and operations.

Key observations

- All projects are required to undertake ecological assessments during planning assessments, including biodiversity, soil, erosion, and water studies, among others. Projects are also required to have ongoing monitoring of flora, fauna, groundwater and rehabilitation progress, often with third-party verification.
- There is a strong trend toward avoiding sensitive habitats through refined project siting and design modifications.
- Erosion and sediment control plans were standard practice during construction phases.
- Biodiversity offset strategies were commonly reported, with some projects adopting a 'net gain' approach—seeking to improve ecological values beyond baseline conditions.
- Native vegetation was often retained or restored as part of landscaping or buffer zone strategies.
- Dust, noise, and lighting impacts were managed through proactive controls and community input.

Trends and improvements

- Net Gain strategy focuses on a holistic environmental value that is quantified and measured, leading to a replicable framework for the industry.
- AI is being deployed to avoid turbine bird strike to great success.
- Some developers are going beyond compliance to partner with landcare groups, local schools, or Traditional Owners for environmental education or restoration programs.
- Technology use is increasing, with drones, sensor-based erosion detection, and AI-assisted wildlife monitoring mentioned in some projects.
- Integrated environmental and cultural heritage planning is becoming more common in areas of cultural significance.

CASE STUDY

Atmos Renewables – Cattle Hill Windfarm

Using the 5+ year dataset collected by Identiflight at the Cattle Hill Wind Farm, Atmos is collaborating with a group of renewable energy developers on a research project around bird collision risk with turbines.

The first stage of this project aims to develop a neural network for the White Throated Needle Tail and various parrot species (bluewinged, orange-bellied etc) so that their presence at Cattle Hill Wind Farm and flight height/behaviour around turbines can be analysed. This information is fundamental to understanding collision risk with turbines and therefore the potential impact at new wind farm development sites.

CASE STUDY

Kilara Energy

The results and observations of more than three years of fieldwork and insights produced through the engagement process have led to proactive adjustments to the original project area and layout at Wilan Wind Farm. Key design considerations to mitigate impacts have included:

- Reduction in the project area by 33 per cent in response to a deeper understanding of important environmental constraints and preparation of the project design has been carefully managed to avoid and mitigate residual impacts.
- Reduction in the number of wind turbine locations by 46 per cent resulting in increased spacings between turbine locations and inclusion of corridors to enable bird flight paths during seasonal events, informed by two years of comprehensive seasonal bird and bat studies across the site.
- Inclusion of setbacks and buffers from important habitats confirmed by extensive flora and fauna surveys on-site.

The resultant design is one that considers important natural and cultural characteristics at the site and will ensure a net positive outcome.

CASE STUDY

Neoen – Goyder South

Worlds End Gorge was purchased as the native vegetation offset for Neoen's Goyder South Stage 1 Wind Farm. In 2023, it was gifted to the South Australian Government to own and manage together with Traditional Owners, the Ngadjuri Nation. Combined with an adjacent conservation area, it will form a new 1,600 hectare national park.

The new national park will permanently preserve the environmentally and culturally significant gorge for future generations. Hosting permanent spring-fed waterholes and significant rare habitat, it is home to several threatened species of fauna including the Pygmy Blue Tongue Lizard and the Flinders Ranges Worm-lizard. Light-touch public access will be permitted, with conservation being the park's primary objective. The local community and Traditional Owners will reap multiple benefits in cultural land access, tourism and economic development.

CASE STUDY

RES - Moah Creek Wind Farm

Within the project area of the proposed Moah Creek Wind Farm, located 30 kilometres west of Rockhampton on Darumbal country, the RES team in collaboration with a multi-disciplinary team of ecologists and engineers updated the design of the project to completely avoid impacts to Commonwealth-listed Threatened Ecological Communities, and significantly reduce impacts to ghost bat (Macroderma gigas) roosting habitat.

Ghost bats are listed as Vulnerable under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and Endangered under the Queensland Nature Conservation (Animals) Regulation 2020. The application of LiDAR modelling to identify potential caves and roosting sites guided the targeted survey of areas within the project footprint, which was undertaken using traditional and remote sensing survey techniques. This approach allowed for these ecological values to be identified and avoided to the greatest extent practicable.

CASE STUDY

Squadron Energy – Bat Research

Squadron's development team is leading Australia's first evidence-based research into bat collision risks at wind farms - an initiative that's already shaping how the company assess biodiversity impacts and design renewable energy projects.

The project began with a comprehensive literature review into bat ecology, turbine strike, survey design, and technology solutions. The research helps Squadron to screen sites, prioritise species of concern, and design surveys with greater precision. These findings were presented at the 20th International Bat Research Conference, held in Cairns QLD in August 2025.

CASE STUDY

Tilt Renewables - Palmer Wind Farm & Rye Park Wind Farm

Tilt Renewables identifies opportunities through the design and construction phases to minimise disturbance as much as possible and looks at innovative solutions to reduce impacts during construction.

Examples include the use of tower cranes at Rye Park Wind Farm in NSW to minimise hardstand size requirements, and the use of electrical junction boxes in the design for the Liverpool Range Wind Farm in NSW to reduce the number of underground cables, minimising vegetation disturbance.

These internal processes and policy have not gone unnoticed. In July 2024, the Tilt Renewables Palmer Wind Farm was deemed 'not a controlled action' under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. In a media release dated 27 July 2024, the then Federal Environment Minister the Hon. Tanya Plibersek explained her decision:

"The site is already cleared land and used for grazing. The project demonstrates how good site selection can lead to faster environmental approvals. Projects need to be placed in the right areas and designed so that their environmental impacts are minimised – as is the case with this wind farm."

CASE STUDY

WestWind Energy - Warracknabeal Energy Park

Design development for Warracknabeal Energy Park in Victoria has been ongoing since 2017. Central to this approach is avoiding potential environmental impacts and, where avoidance is not possible, minimising them to protect environmental and social values.

As a result, there have been 22 major iterations of the turbine layout and more than 200 minor updates to ancillary infrastructure designs, including access tracks and underground electrical reticulation.

Key considerations informing the design include environmental constraints, input from Traditional Owners, community and stakeholder feedback, and minimising impacts on landholders and agricultural activities.

As technical assessments and consultation findings emerged, the project design has been continuously refined and improved. Public exhibition of the Environment Effects Statement for Warracknabeal Energy Park is expected in mid-2025.

CASE STUDY

Windlab – Gawara Baya

Gawara Baya, located in North Queensland, will be the first renewable energy project in Australia to implement a robust, measurable biodiversity net-gain program. The strategy will be delivered in partnership with Traditional Owners and leading regional conservation and land management experts.

It is 100 per cent voluntary and beyond regulatory requirements The program is a 20+ year commitment delivered over the life of the project, with a $4 million initial investment. It aims for more than 10 per cent improvement in biodiversity uplift across the landscape and includes targeted actions for 10 key species.

Local employment

Local employment continues to be one of the most tangible and visible ways renewable energy projects deliver benefits to regional communities. Across the 2025 submissions, project proponents consistently emphasised their commitment to hiring local, upskilling local residents, and investing in long-term workforce development.

Key observations

- Hiring local is a standard practice, particularly during construction phases. Some projects reported that up to 70 per cent of their workforce came from the surrounding region.
- Many developers are working with local councils, TAFEs and employment providers to source workers and match skill needs.
- Apprenticeships, traineeships and graduate roles featured prominently in over half the submissions.
- Specific emphasis is being placed on First Nations employment.
- Some projects included employment as part of their community benefit programs, offering local job guarantees or subsidised training for residents.
- Developers track gender diversity and workforce participation metrics, particularly for technical roles.

Trends and innovations

- Workforce development is becoming more structured, with developers setting clear KPIs and tracking job creation across project stages.
- Projects are starting to build local skills pipelines, by engaging high schools, TAFEs, and universities early.
- Almost all developers are exploring social procurement as part of local employment—including contracting local suppliers who employ marginalised groups.
- Longer-term retention is now a focus for some operators, who are developing training pathways from construction into operations and maintenance.

Reported metrics

Around

50–70%

of total construction workforce reported as locally sourced for several projects.

Multiple projects reported offering

5–10

traineeships or apprenticeships per development.

Some initiatives targeted specific cohorts, such as First Nations youth or long-term unemployed residents.

Local procurement

The 2025 submissions reflect a strong and consistent commitment to supporting local and regional supply chains through direct procurement. Clean energy developers are increasingly focused on ensuring that local businesses—ranging from earthworks contractors to catering suppliers—benefit from the economic activity generated by renewable energy construction and operations.

Local procurement is now a strategic pillar of project planning, with many developers embedding it into EPC contractor agreements and broader regional development goals.

Key observations

- Most projects prioritised local sourcing for civil works, fencing, electrical services, materials transport, and accommodation.
- Procurement strategies often defined 'local' by radius (e.g. within 50km or 100km of the project).
- Several developers established local supplier registration portals, meet-the-buyer events, or procurement information sessions prior to major works.
- Some submissions included targets or KPIs for local spend and tracked subcontractor origin.
- Local procurement was frequently linked with employment and benefit-sharing strategies, especially in First Nations communities.

Reported metrics

- Local procurement spend ranged, depending on project size and phase.
- Some projects reported 60–80 per cent of procurement spend occurring within the local region.
- Dozens of regional subcontractors were directly engaged in early works and construction activities.

Trends and innovations

- Developers are increasingly using weighted tender criteria to preference local and Indigenous suppliers.
- A few projects introduced real-time dashboards to track local spend and supplier diversity.
- There is growing integration between local procurement and social impact strategies, ensuring regional economic value extends beyond the project's footprint.
- Long-term partnerships with local businesses are emerging in operation and maintenance phases—not just during construction.

CASE STUDY

SEC Renewable Energy Park - Horsham

In developing the project, OX2 committed to social procurement goals which included engaging Victorian Aboriginal people and Traditional Owners, supporting job readiness for women and young people, and maximising local employment. OX2 (formerly Esco Pacific) joined the Kinaway Chamber of Commerce to connect with Aboriginal businesses and partnered with the Industry Capability Network (ICN) to promote local opportunities via an ICN Gateway page. Local briefing sessions encouraged contractor engagement, training, and apprenticeships, supported by ICN's business registration assistance. Guidance to the Principal Contractor has led to:

- **5 local apprenticeships, with 13–15 more expected**
- **65 per cent of site-based workers from the Horsham region**
- **Employment of 3 First Nations people**
- **21.55 per cent female participation in trade-based roles**

CASE STUDY

Potentia Energy - Girgarre Solar Farm

During the construction phase of Potentia Energy's Girgarre Solar Farm, EPC contractor procured sorting and processing services from 'We Are Vivid', a local disability support enterprise. Vivid's workers added efficiency and value to the project by sorting harness clips to brace the 169,500 solar panels across the entire project site.

CASE STUDY

Atmos Renewables - Hayman and Daydream Solar Farms

Atmos' collaboration with DMK, a local operations and maintenance contractor for the Hayman and Daydream Solar Farms, has delivered outstanding results. In 2025, Atmos was able to award DMK additional operational and maintenance (O&M) contracts for the Susan River and Childers solar farms in Queensland.

These additional contracts have enabled DMK to grow their operations across regional Queensland, creating full-time employment for seven tradespeople and one apprentice from the Wide Bay region.

Their appointment has not only strengthened DMK's position in the industry but also elevated their portfolio as they now provide O&M services for seven solar farms across Queensland.

CASE STUDY

Engie – Goorambat East Solar Farm

The Goorambat East Solar Farm in Victoria has generated 278 employment opportunities during the construction phase. ENGIE, in collaboration with its head contractor and a locally based workforce provider, has prioritised job placements for local residents.

As the project approaches peak construction, 222 individuals - accounting for 79.86 per cent of the workforce - are directly engaged by the local workforce provider and reside within a 50-kilometre radius of the site. Additionally, the head contractor has employed 36 residents from within this radius in more specialised roles, bringing the total proportion of locally sourced personnel to 92.81 per cent.

Education partnerships

Across the 2025 submissions, education partnerships emerged as an important and growing avenue for clean energy companies to contribute to long-term regional resilience. These efforts range from primary school engagement and school excursions to more formal arrangements with TAFEs and universities that create pathways into clean energy careers or undertake research.

While levels of activity vary by project, there is a clear commitment to building knowledge, awareness, and opportunity, especially for young people in host communities.

Key observations

- Most projects engaged local schools through site tours, presentations, or project-based learning activities.
- A number of developers provided teaching resources or STEM kits to rural schools, often focusing on renewable energy education.
- Several submissions reported scholarship funding, often targeted at students pursuing engineering, environmental science, or trades.
- Partnerships with TAFEs and registered training organisations (RTOs) were common, supporting local skill-building aligned with workforce needs.
- Some companies provided internships or mentoring for university students or hosted student placements during construction phases.

Trends and innovations

- There's a growing focus on aligning education partnerships with workforce planning—helping students move from interest to employment.
- A few developers embedded First Nations education goals, including language revival programs and school cultural exchange initiatives.
- Regional collaboration is increasing, with multiple stakeholders (schools, councils, training bodies) involved in design and delivery.
- A handful of projects are now using virtual reality tools or digital simulations to bring renewable energy learning into classrooms.

Reported metrics

Individual projects engaged between

50–500+

students through tours or events.

At least

10 projects

contributed direct funding to education programs or scholarships.

Several developers reported hosting

3–5

student placements or internships during construction.

One project supported a STEM leadership program for girls in regional schools, reaching over

100

participants.

CASE STUDY

ACEN Australia - Country Universities Centre, Mudgee

In 2024, ACEN Australia entered a five-year partnership with the Country Universities Centre (CUC) Mudgee Region – a strategic investment in local capability, education equity, and long-term regional resilience.

By July 2025, CUC Mudgee celebrated its 200th student enrolment, with measurable outcomes showing the transformative potential of this model:

- 73 per cent of students are women - a sign the model is actively dismantling long-standing barriers to education and professional growth for women in regional Australia, especially those balancing caregiving roles or re-entering the workforce. Enabling more women to complete tertiary education is one of the most effective ways to increase labour force participation, reduce poverty, and uplift entire communities, both socially and economically.
- Fifty four per cent are first-in-family to attend university - this represents significant intergenerational impact. First generation students who have to relocate to pursue their education are much more likely to experience financial hardship, self-doubt, and limited career exposure, yet their success statistically improves outcomes for their families and communities for generations.
- Forty three institutions, 15 fields of study - the breadth of academic programs accessed through the Centre shows that regional students are not just pursuing education – they're expanding their career horizons. Local industries stand to benefit from this increasingly diverse, skilled pipeline.
- Top areas of study: Health, Education, Psychology - These are frontline service sectors currently facing workforce crises across rural and regional Australia. Local students trained in these disciplines are more likely to stay, work, and lead in their communities – strengthening critical infrastructure and care systems.

CASE STUDY

Engie – Powering Her Pathway

ENGIE is proud to be a founding partner in Powering Her Pathway, a three-year initiative (2025– 2028) led by Tradeswomen Australia and funded through the Federal Government's Building Women's Careers program. This transformative project is focused on breaking down barriers for women pursuing careers in clean energy trades and driving long-term, systemic change within traditionally male-dominated industries.

Delivered in collaboration with TAFE Gippsland and RMIT University, Powering Her Pathway is shaping a more inclusive future. TAFE Gippsland leads the delivery of a dynamic, supportive learning environment, while ENGIE contributes vital industry expertise, hands-on skills, and employment pathways to help ensure strong career outcomes for participants. RMIT University has been engaged to provide a robust evaluation framework, helping measure impact and inform future best practice.

By the end of the project, Powering Her Pathway will have supported the placement of 30 women into meaningful roles within the clean energy sector.

CASE STUDY

Spark Renewables - Partnership with Macquire Law School

In 2024 Spark Renewables announced its partnership with Macquarie University under the leadership of Dr Madeline Taylor, the Director of Research Training at Macquarie Law School and a Senior Lecturer in Law at Macquarie University. Dr Taylor was awarded an Australian Research Council Early Career Industry Fellowship, creating a partnership between Spark Renewables, NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, and Macquarie University.

The three-year Fellowship will support research on the energy transition that responds to industry needs. This program will connect researchers, industry, and government to develop the best regulations for agrivoltaics, aiming to improve energy justice.

This partnership is part of Spark Renewables' ongoing effort to build relationships with Australian universities, to work together with some of the best minds from across the nation and play its part in progressing the renewable energy transition in Australia.

CASE STUDY

Iberdrola Australia Graduate Program

Iberdrola Australia's Graduate Program, introduced in 2023, is a two-year rotational experience across Development, Energy Markets, Networks, Operations, and Projects.

The first cohort of 14 graduates are based in Sydney and Melbourne, with Brisbane joining in 2025 to host 18 graduates across all three offices— building a diverse pipeline of future energy professionals.

CASE STUDY

Potentia Energy – Green Steps Program

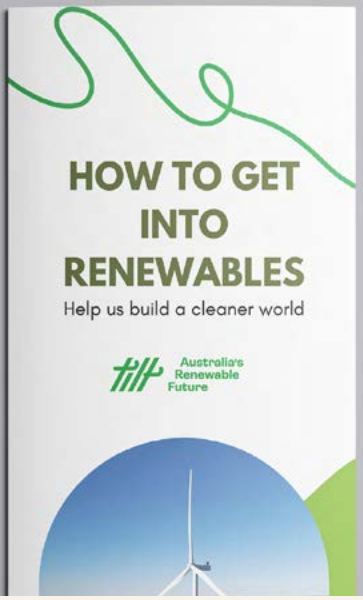
Supported by Potentia Energy, the Green Steps Program run by Monash Sustainable Development Institute, is an opportunity for students to undertake innovative and practical sustainability training and consultancy projects for ambitious emerging leaders.

During the course, students have the option to apply for a 25-hour team-based consultancy role undertaking a sustainability-related project with Potentia Energy's team. The program's objective is to equip students with the skills, tools and knowledge needed to become effective leaders and sustainability change-agents.

CASE STUDY

Tilt Renewables – Renewable Energy Awareness and Career Training (REACT) Centre.

Tilt Renewables partnered with Dubbo Regional Council in the development of a business case for their proposed Renewable Energy Awareness and Career Training (REACT) Centre. This facility is proposed to support employment, training and apprenticeships for the renewable sector as well as employment on the construction of the facility (short and long term).



Agriculture and co-land use

As clean energy projects continue to expand across regional Australia, many developers are actively working to ensure their projects co-exist with ongoing agricultural land uses. The 2025 submissions reveal a range of thoughtful, locally adapted approaches that support both energy generation and agricultural productivity on the same land.

While the maturity and complexity of these initiatives vary, a clear shift is underway toward integrated land use—one that respects regional identity, supports farm viability, and helps foster long-term acceptance of clean energy infrastructure.

Key observations

- Grazing under solar panels (agri-solar) is the most common form of co-use, particularly with sheep.
- Several projects maintained or improved pasture conditions, with grazing continuing uninterrupted post-construction.
- Developers frequently collaborated with landowners to adjust infrastructure layout, access routes, or fencing to accommodate cropping or stock movement.
- A few projects implemented biodiversity corridors or regenerative agriculture practices alongside energy infrastructure.
- Co-use arrangements were often formalised through leaseback agreements, land access protocols, or community-led stewardship plans.

Trends and innovations

- There's a growing movement toward 'productive land design', with energy and farming viewed as complementary rather than conflicting.
- Developers are working closely with landholders to trial pasture mixes, improve soil health, and manage erosion, benefitting both uses.
- Biodiversity and carbon outcomes are increasingly being layered into co-use plans—turning agricultural areas into revenue stacked landscapes.
- A few projects are exploring knowledge-sharing networks with other landowners to scale regenerative agri-solar practices.

Reported metrics

Several projects reported

100%

of non-hardstand areas retained for agricultural use.

Some developers reported

20-500

hectares of active grazing or cropping alongside energy infrastructure.

One project estimated that more than

1000 sheep

could be supported under their solar array footprint.

CASE STUDY

Iberdrola Australia – Avonlie Solar Farm

Iberdrola Australia's Avonlie Solar Farm, near Narrandera, NSW, is an example of agrivoltaics, combining sheep grazing with solar energy production. This approach to coexistence with farming is proving successful. The 245 MW solar farm operates across two Merino wool properties. Each spring—during the peak sheep growth season—around 2,500 sheep graze across the site for four months.

Sheep grazing has also proven to be an effective means of reducing bushfire risk by lowering the vegetation fuel load, while simultaneously reducing tractor and mower emissions and associated workforce hazards.

CASE STUDY

ACEN Australia – New England Solar: Scaling land use value stacking

In 2025, ACEN Australia and the University of New England (UNE) reached an in-principal agreement to deliver the first formal, quantitative evidence in Australia on the productivity and environmental outcomes of grazing beneath utility-scale solar arrays, via a three-year, peer-reviewed research study.

The partnership builds on the successful Solar Grazing program delivered at NES in 2023. Since then, host landholders have observed strong pasture growth and healthy flock integration under and around solar panels.

What began as a practical land-use trial with local graziers is now scaling into a structured research program designed to provide robust evidence and create a replicable model for agrisolar practice across Australia.

CASE STUDY

Spark Renewables Bomen Solar Farm

Spark Renewables partners with landowners from early investigation, through project development, construction, and during operations. Its long-term partnerships with host landowners are of critical importance. Minimising the impacts on highly productive agricultural land and exploring opportunities to integrate agricultural production serves to achieve that outcome.

Spark Renewables plan for grazing and agriculture activities to continue within the project areas throughout wind farm operation largely undisturbed. The developer avoids placing infrastructure in more productive cropping zones as much as possible, and locates turbines in areas where they can co-exist with grazing activities.

Spark Renewables have a particular focus on supporting research and trials that drive the successful long-term colocation of agricultural and renewables projects to maximise the productivity of the land through coexistence of solar and agriculture work, also known as 'agrivoltaics' and 'agrisolar'.

At Bomen Solar Farm, which is an operational agrisolar farm, Spark Renewables invested in critical farm infrastructure to make sheep grazing viable, enabling hosting Merino wethers and dry ewes on the site.

CASE STUDY

Potentia Energy - Cohuna Solar Farm & Agriculture Victoria

Research conducted at the Cohuna Solar Farm in Victoria by Agriculture Victoria (Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action) aimed to measure microclimate and soil characteristics below solar panels in a commercial solar farm and identify potential plant and livestock production systems that could successfully co-exist within, beside and around large-scale solar farms.

The ultimate outcome is to support co-development of land to combine agriculture production and energy production that contributes to the region's viability and resilience.

CASE STUDY

Atmos Renewables – Hayman Solar Farm

Atmos conducted a sheep grazing trial with approximately 1000 dorper sheep over 590 hectares at Daydream and Hayman Solar Farms in Queensland from September to December 2024. The dorper breed were chosen because of their relative short wool length, low maintenance and suitability to more arid regions.

The trial resulted in tangible benefits to both the landholder, by introducing an additional income stream to their farming operations, and Atmos due to a 50 per cent reduction in vegetation management (mowing and slashing) time and cost (estimated to be a saving of ~$200,000/year). Other benefits include a reduction in diesel fuel use (~6,000L/year) and associated greenhouse gas emissions (~17,200 CO2e/year), reduced fire risk and herbicide use.

CASE STUDY

Tilt Renewables - Coopers Gap Windfarm

At Coopers Gap Wind Farm in Queensland, located primarily on beef grazing land, landholders raised concerns about the potential spread of foot and mouth disease through wind farm maintenance activities.

In response, the Operations and Maintenance provider implemented a biosecurity system that includes educating workers during site inductions and integrating screening questions into the daily check-in app to identify individuals who have recently travelled to Indonesia. This proactive approach has reassured landholders that the risk of disease transmission from returning workers is being effectively managed.

Innovative worker accommodation

Workforce accommodation is emerging as a critical pressure point—especially in regions already experiencing housing shortages or cost-of-living stress. The 2025 submissions show that clean energy developers are becoming more aware of their social footprint and are adopting increasingly creative, context-sensitive solutions to housing construction workers without negatively affecting local residents.

While not all projects required accommodation strategies, those that did demonstrated growing sophistication and collaboration with councils, landholders, and communities to ensure worker housing is well-managed, safe, and respectful of local capacity.

- Balancing local context between encouraging local economic activity while not further exacerbating housing shortages was a key theme.
- Many developers provided dedicated on-site or off-site worker accommodation, particularly in remote or housing-constrained areas.
- Some projects leased local motels, camps, or holiday parks, or placed workers with local families, while others constructed temporary mobile camps with private rooms, kitchens, and recreation facilities.
- A few submissions described co-investment with local government to improve worker housing stock or leave legacy benefits for future housing use.
- Stakeholder engagement with councils and community members was common prior to camp siting or workforce arrival.
- Several projects included transport services to and from site, reducing traffic and impact on small communities.

Trends and innovations

- Increasing use of mobile/modular accommodation, enabling rapid deployment and demobilisation.
- A few developers integrated health, wellbeing, and recreation spaces—improving worker welfare and retention.
- Some projects included cultural safety training and signage within accommodation facilities, particularly on shared Country.
- Early-stage planning now often includes housing impact assessments and stakeholder workshops.

Reported metrics

Some projects accommodated between

40-200+

workers during peak construction.

Some developers maintained buffer zones or curfews to reduce noise or disruption to neighbours near camps.

Several projects included worker codes of conduct, curfews, and community orientation sessions.

Tourism opportunities

While not a universal focus, several clean energy projects are beginning to explore their potential as tourism and educational destinations, creating new regional experiences that showcase clean technology, local history, and landscape values.

The 2025 submissions reflect an emerging but imaginative set of initiatives, with developers trialling visitor infrastructure, guided tours, educational signage, and partnerships with councils. This trend supports regional economic diversification, especially in areas where tourism complements agriculture and conservation.

Key observations

- Educational tourism was the most common focus, especially through school group visits, site tours, and viewing platforms.
- Some projects installed interpretive signage, lookouts, or QR code-based digital storytelling features.
- A few developers partnered with local councils to promote renewable energy tourism through visitor maps or open days.
- Projects near heritage or scenic areas often integrated landscape-sensitive designs to encourage visits without compromising visual values.
- Some projects were featured in renewable energy trails or state-level tourism campaigns.

Trends and innovations

- Projects are beginning to view tourism not only as a community engagement tool, but as a way to build broader public support for the energy transition.
- Co-designed tourism elements with Traditional Owners—like cultural walks or language signage—are emerging as high-impact educational tools.
- Fun runs or walks, designed in and around projects (where safe to do so), offer an innovative way for residents and travellers to get up close to clean energy projects.

CASE STUDY

AGL – Supporting tourism in Gippsland

AGL supports long-term partnerships that drive tourism and economic growth in the communities where AGL operate. This includes a 31-year partnership with the Traralgon Tennis Association for the Traralgon International Junior Tennis Tournament, generating around $2.4 million annually for the Gippsland region.

AGL also sponsors the Morwell International Rose Garden Festival, attracting over 5,500 visitors and delivering an estimated $1 million in economic benefit.

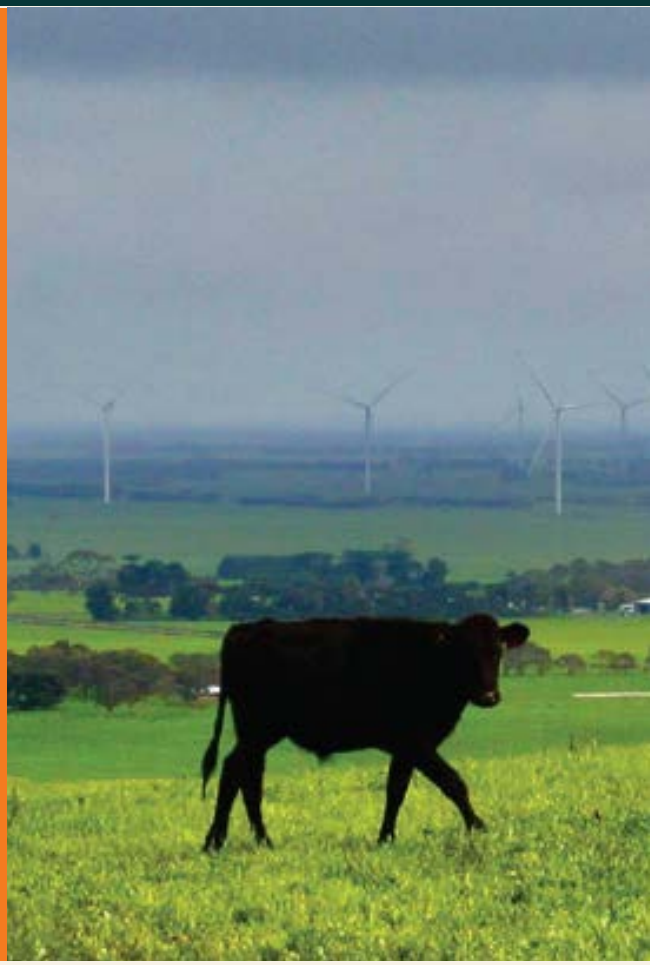
As a founding sponsor of the Gippsland New Energy Conference (GNEC), AGL helps bring together industry, government, and community leaders to shape the region's renewable energy future, with the 2024 event generating $1.1 million in local economic benefits.

CASE STUDY

ACCIONA Energía - Mortlake South Wind Farm

A scenic viewing area has opened at Mt Noorat in Victoria, providing a unique panoramic view of the Mortlake South Wind Farm and surrounding pastoral land. The viewing platform has been integrated into the Mt Noorat walking track, also funded by ACCIONA Energía, which leads to a volcanic crater and has attracted over 5,000 visitors since its launch in late 2024.

The scenic viewing area in Corangamite Shire and another viewing platform at the Waubra Wind Farm just off the Sunraysia Highway, assist with educating local communities about specific projects, and lead to increased understanding and acceptance of the important role regional communities are playing in the clean energy transition.



CASE STUDY

OSMI Australia – Delburn Wind Farm

The Delburn Wind Farm in Victoria will complement existing experience tourism in the region with two viewing platforms and a Visitor Information Centre. A walking and cycling track may be incorporated at a later date.

This project presents an opportunity to develop an energy trail to learn about wind turbines, renewable energy and the historical land use from a Traditional Owners perspective post European settlement. Signage, viewing platforms and QR codes will link to Gunnaikurnai information about culture and country.

Opportunities will also be presented to educate tourists and communities about wind energy and renewable benefits and will include community open days and educational tours of the wind farm. Celebrations will be held on Global Wind Day and community events such as renewable energy themed picnic days or fun-runs.

CASE STUDY

WestWind Energy – Bottle Tree Energy Park

Through Bottle Tree Energy Park, WestWind has been proudly sponsoring Roma's Sculptures Out Back initiative almost since it started. Now in its fifth year, Sculptures Out Back is a thriving arts tourism event that brings more than 30,000 visitors to the region each year. It is considered outback Queensland's premier outdoor sculpture exhibition.

WestWind's valued relationship with this notable arts event led to the Committee introducing the WestWind Acquisitive Wind Prize in 2025 – aimed at celebrating the power and beauty of the wind. The new category attracted many amazing entries, with the category won by Rod Buckland from Toowoomba with his work Autumn Whispers (pictured) reflecting the changing season.

When communities come together through events like Sculptures Out Back, it helps towns thrive on many levels - culturally, socially, and economically.

Waste and recycling

Waste management is a core operational responsibility for clean energy developers, especially during construction phases. The 2025 submissions reveal that many projects are beginning to embed circular economy principles into procurement and construction.

Key observations

- Projects are developing Circular Material Management Plans to reduce waste.
- Many developers reported working with certified recycling facilities and local waste contractors.
- Some developers specified the use of recycled content in construction materials (e.g. aggregate, crushed glass).
- Waste tracking, while improving, is still inconsistently measured or disclosed across projects.

Trends and innovations

- Circular thinking is gaining momentum, with several developers now asking suppliers to reduce or reclaim packaging.
- Partnerships with schools that take construction waste (especially timber, steel and plastic) as part of their procurement and then use in the curriculum.
- A few projects are starting to track embedded carbon in materials and use this to inform procurement choices.
- Strong cross over with decommissioning —especially for solar and battery components—to avoid future waste burdens.
- Internal education (e.g. toolbox talks, signage) is helping to drive worker behaviour toward better recycling practices

Reported metrics

Some projects reported diverting

80–95%

of construction waste from landfill.

One project recycled over

250 tonnes

of steel and concrete during early works.

At least

5 projects

required contractors to submit waste reports during project delivery.

Some developers reported zero-waste targets for certain construction phases, with tracking via internal audits.

CASE STUDY

ACCIONA Energía – Draft Surf Collaboration

In 2025, ACCIONA Energía unveiled the world's first surfboards made from decommissioned wind turbine blades. In collaboration with professional surfer Josh Kerr and his surfboard brand, Draft Surf, ACCIONA Energía created 10 prototype surfboards that utilise retired turbine blades. This project is part of its Turbine Made initiative, which explores innovative ways to repurpose retired wind turbine blades into new materials and products. By transforming blades into surfboards, ACCIONA Energía is not only reducing waste but pushing the boundaries of sustainable innovation in the renewable energy sector.

The initiative was recognised for its leadership as a finalist in the 2025 Clean Energy Council Awards. ACCIONA Energía was ranked among the top companies for Sustainability in the Australian Financial Review.

The initiative has sparked a national conversation about the potential of turbine blade recycling, and conversations with local councils and Australian innovators and manufacturers are underway.

CASE STUDY

Beon Energy Solutions

Beon installs hundreds of thousands of solar panels every year, with a small proportion inevitably defective or damaged. Sending these panels to landfill doesn't align with our commitment to sustainability so Beoen partnered with PV Industries to close the loop. Through its partnership, Beon and PV Industries have been able to process bi-facial solar panels to produce clean output materials that can be utilised in other manufacturing components.

Solar panels present unique recycling challenges. Components are sealed within a plastic polymer to ensure reliable performance in harsh outdoor conditions, making cells difficult to dismantle and process at the end of their life.

PV Industries has developed a mechanical recycling process designed specifically for solar panels, improving on existing systems that rely on chemicals or repurposed electronic waste recycling methods.

In July 2025, Beon delivered 500 damaged panels to PV Industries' Derrimut facility to support the company's research and development program. These panels are the latest handover from more than 5,000 Beon has collected through the construction of solar farms across Australia's eastern states since 2022.

CASE STUDY

Squadron Energy - Dubbo wastewater treatment plant

Squadron Energy and Dubbo Regional Council are delivering water security to the region through a public private partnership to build a new advanced wastewater treatment facility at Dubbo Sewerage Treatment Plant.

Squadron Energy and Council are co-funding the advanced wastewater treatment facility capable of treating up to 700 megalitres of water per year. The partnership was a finalist in the 2025 Clean Energy Council Awards. The turning of the first sod for the project took place in August 2025.

CASE STUDY

SEC Renewable Energy Park – Horsham

OX2 commissioned a Circular Material Management Plan (CMMP) during the development of the project in Victoria. The CMMP supports sustainable, circular management of materials throughout the project's lifecycle – from design and construction to operation and decommissioning. While renewable energy plays a key role in reaching net zero targets, it's increasingly important to consider how materials are used, reused, and managed. The CMMP aligns with the three core principles of the circular economy and proposes strategies to be appliedto project components:

- **Eliminate waste**
- **Circulate materials**
- **Regenerate nature**

Although circular materials management may be new for some suppliers, it is gaining traction across infrastructure projects – including renewables. Promoting transparency and end-of-life reporting along the supply chain will help improve material recovery and reuse.

CASE STUDY

RES - Dulacca Wind Farm

RES takes responsibility for products and services through improving waste and material management, repurposing, recyclability and promoting the use of sustainable materials where possible.

Throughout construction of the Dulacca Wind Farm in Queensland, the site contractors donated transport packaging and excess components to the Trade School at Miles High School, and the broader community, saving 104,000kg of steel, 61,000kg of timber and 50 cubic metres of high-density plastic from going to landfill or paying for it to be transported for recycling.

This saved approximately 104,000kg of steel, 61,000kg of timber and 50 cubic metres of high-density plastic from going to landfill or paying for it to be transported for recycling. With the recycling donations from Dulacca, Miles High School has more than enough materials to replace their entire materials budget, and this funding can now be reallocated elsewhere within the school.

CASE STUDY

RATCH Australia Corporation – Collector Wind Farm

The construction phase of the Collector Wind Farm (NSW) required a specific waste management plan that focused on the waste hierarchy of: (i) avoidance in the first instance; (ii) recycling where possible, and (iii) waste disposal as a last resort. Successful implementation of this plan was demonstrated by the contractor reporting all waste management records monthly, showing over 800,000 m3 of recycled waste (packaging, paper etc) and over 170,000 kg of recycled steel.

The workforce also recycled bottles and cans through the NSW 'return & earn' scheme both to reduce waste and raise money for the local Collector school.

CASE STUDY

Spark Renewables – University Collaborations

Spark Renewables has established several university collaborations and industry partnerships to drive the diversion of solar panel waste from landfill and find sustainable end-of-life solutions for solar panels.

Spark is collaborating with University of New South Wales on a machine-learning project funded by ARENA using solar panel data from the Bomen Solar Farm.

They have partnered with PV Industries and participate in the Circular Solar Trial to support end-of-life solutions for solar and battery technologies.

Decommissioning

Decommissioning planning is embedded across all clean energy developments, with all projects now acknowledging the need to responsibly manage the end-of-life phase. While practices are still evolving, there is growing attention on how to recover materials, restore land, and embed circular economy thinking into early project design.

The 2025 submissions reveal that developers are starting to treat decommissioning not as a distant obligation, but as a core component of responsible project lifecycle management.

Key observations

- Most projects note their intention to repower.
- Many projects committed to developing Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plans (DRPs), often as a condition of approval or lease. Plans typically include commitments:
  - Remove above-ground infrastructure
  - Restore land to original or agreed-upon condition
  - Recycle or reuse valuable materials (e.g. steel, copper, concrete)
- Several developers included financial provisioning mechanisms, such as: bank guarantees, decommissioning bonds, dedicated reserve accounts for end-of-life costs
- A few developers are working with manufacturers on product stewardship programs for future waste streams.

Trends and innovations

- Decommissioning bonds that are based on the risk profile of the project, i.e prioritising funds for later years in project life, rather than the beginning.
- There's early movement toward sector-wide frameworks for end-of-life materials (e.g. solar, wind, battery) to reduce waste and maximise recovery.
- Transparent financial provisioning is helping address stakeholder concerns about future land restoration and abandonment risk.
- Increasing interest in long-term land use planning, including potential for re-powering, re-use, biodiversity restoration, or agricultural return.
- Significant interest from the clean energy industry to develop commercial waste streams for turbine blades.

CASE STUDY

ACE Power

ACE Power has committed to comprehensive decommissioning obligations, including a structured fund accumulation during operations to ensure decommissioning costs are fully covered.

CASE STUDY

ACEN Australia

ACEN Australia's focous building awareness around decommissioning planning requirements under development consents, and financial assurance mechanisms embedded into landholder agreements has already provided stakeholders with greater confidence. Additionally, early outcomes of pilot programs with recycling innovators demonstrate our commitment to planning for legacy from the outset and provide confidence that scalable solutions are on the horizon.

As these approaches mature, ACEN Australia expect to see stronger investor confidence, lower long-term risk, and practical opportunities for re-use and recycling.

Looking ahead, ACEN Australia plans to work with our industry peers, governments, and regional stakeholders to identify and scale workable solutions, potentially establishing new industries and economic diversification opportunities. These commitments will be codified into our ESG Strategy and tracked through our Community Perceptions Survey to ensure communities recognise the benefits of our approach.

CASE STUDY

Neoen – Degrussa Solar Farm

In 2024-25, Neoen has been responsibly decommissioning and rehabilitating the DeGrussa Solar Farm & Battery. DeGrussa was Neoen's first Australian project in 2012 and will now be the first asset that Neoen has decommissioned globally.

Comprising a 10.6 MW solar plant and a 6 MW / 1.4 MWh big battery, the asset was built off-grid in a remote part of Western Australia's Pilbarra region. The solar farm supplied energy to the Sandfire Copper mine, while the battery ensured stability of the network during fluctuations in solar generation; this was a way to offset Sandfire's diesel consumption on site.

The solar farm was developed to operate for 5.5 years, but this was later extended to 7 years to align with the mine's operational life. In 2023, Sandfire announced the mine's retirement and began implementing its rehabilitation plan including the decommissioning of our asset. During 2024 Neoen dismantled the site and removed all materials to ensure the 240,000 sq. meters of land covered by the asset could be rehabilitated within the agreed timeframe.

All salvageable equipment such as the solar panels, inverters and transformers were taken to Perth for storage, while Neoen went through a competitive tender process to find a suitable second life and home for them. In H1 2025, Neoen selected Elecsome and the purchase agreement is currently being finalised. Elecsome are planning to re-use the panels at two small solar sites in Australia, and will potentially re-use some of the other equipment or otherwise recycle them.

Other equipment from DeGrussa such as the asset's tracking system and cabling were sent directly to relevant recycling facilities in line with Neoen's commitments to sustainably dealing with them.

During operation

After decommissioning

CASE STUDY

Engie - Canunda Wind Farm

Commissioned in 2005, Canunda Wind Farm is one of Australia's pioneering wind energy projects. Located just south of Millicent near Mount Gambier in South Australia, the 23-turbine site has been a consistent producer of renewable energy for two decades, boasting a high wind yield by global standards.

Canunda generates up to 46 MW of electricity - enough to power approximately 30,000 homes across South Australia. Its contribution to clean energy has been vital in supporting the state's low-carbon goals and reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

Originally designed with a 20-year operational life, the wind farm recently celebrated its 20th birthday. Following an end-of-life assessment, the results confirmed that Canunda's infrastructure remains robust. As a result, its design life can be extended by another 10 years.

Rather than retiring the site, ENGIE will continue to operate Canunda - ensuring continued energy output and sustainability benefits without the need for full redevelopment.

CASE STUDY

WestWind Energy

To address community misinformation around decommissioning costs - as well as potential resulting landholder uncertainty - WestWind Energy undertook a targeted campaign on the topic in the past year. They also refined their approach to decommissioning in our landholder agreements.

Addressing myths at the hyper-local level was essential so communities had factual responses to counter misconceptions and, also, to reassure landholders. WestWind's multi-pronged education campaign included a dedicated FAQ section (online and in print) on decommissioning, a supporting video, factsheet, social media posts, and print ads in local papers.

CASE STUDY

Vestas

Decommissioning wind farm infrastructure at the end of project life is generally a legal condition of project development consent. Vestas' agreements with host landowners require that wind turbines and other infrastructure are removed at the end of the lease term. Specifically, decommissioning will involve:

Consulting key stakeholders including landowners;

- All above ground structures not required for the ongoing agricultural use of the land, including the wind turbines, transformer stations, and substation, will be removed and the land rehabilitated to ensure it can be returned to agricultural use;
- Access tracks and hardstands not requested by the landowner to be retained will be removed and land rehabilitated and returned to agricultural use;
- Below ground infrastructure, including cabling and the wind turbine foundations, will typically be left in situ to avoid further disturbance and minimise clearing of revegetated areas.
- Rehabilitated areas will be adequately graded to reflect the slope of the surrounding area and to mitigate the risk of soil erosion.
- All materials removed from the Project Area will be sorted and packaged for reuse and/or recycled where possible in accordance with the waste hierarchy.

CASE STUDY

Cubico

Cubico's land agreements include decommissioning conditions which ensure that infrastructure is removed from site, and the land is rehabilitated in accordance with the landowner's requirements. When decommissioning occurs in the future, the intention is to recycle as much of the materials as possible to minimise waste.

Cross-sector collaboration

Collaboration continues to emerge as a core enabler of success in Australia's clean energy sector. In the 2025 submissions, many developers showcased strong partnerships that go beyond compliance—bringing together councils, Traditional Owner groups, training providers, community organisations, and other industry players to deliver shared value and long-term regional benefits.

These partnerships often span across social, environmental, cultural and economic outcomes, demonstrating how cross-sector collaboration strengthens trust, builds capability, and supports a just transition.

Key observations

- Many developers are formalising multi-stakeholder agreements, often with local councils, Traditional Owner corporations, regional development groups, and community foundations.
- There is increasing collaboration with education and training organisations (TAFEs, RTOs, universities) to co-design employment and upskilling pathways.
- Several developers participate in industry working groups, regional coordination committees, or shared planning initiatives.

Trends and innovations

- Developers are collaborating to respond to common community concerns or pool benefit funds. Further opportunities exist in this space.
- Collaboration to inform feedback on government consultations.

CASE STUDY

Mint Renewables – Benefit Sharing Pool

Mint's first public project, the Dederang BESS project in Victoria, demonstrates our genuine intent to engage respectfully with the communities in which Mint plan and operate projects, to be sensitive to environmental and cultural values and to make a positive contribution to the region. On behalf of the host landowners for our Dederang BESS project, Mint have committed to establishing a community fund (of the value of $70,000 per annum) from the commencement of operations. Over the 20-year lifetime of the Project, this represents a significant investment of $1.4 million directly into the local area.

Mint want these funds to be directed by local people, for local people, so they are seeking input on how the community fund is governed and distributed, ensuring it reflects the community's own priorities and values. So far some of what Mint have heard includes that the funds should be pooled, with another nearby project (which has been committed to), and that governance should consider establishing a committee made up of community and skills-based representatives.

CASE STUDY

Isaac Regional Council for Regional Investment

Multiple leading renewable energy developers have convened to collaborate with Isaac Regional Council on regional investment opportunities. This collective commitment seeks to pilot a replicable model using an integrated regional approach, delivering investment with enhanced, legacy outcomes.

Focus areas being explored include upgraded regional digital connectivity, pest management programs (specifically targeting feral pigs), and comprehensive training opportunities for residents of the Isaac Region.

CASE STUDY

Tilt Renewables

As an Access Rights holder in the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWO REZ), Tilt Renewables works collaboratively with EnergyCo NSW and is participating in an investigation into the cumulative impacts from construction of multiple projects within the CWO REZ.

This includes participating in a Health Services Study which will investigate the health service requirements for the REZ workforce within the CWO REZ, and how to minimise impacts on local health services. Industry engagement for this study commenced on 11 July 2025.

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ENGIE Australia