



Name: Queensland Conservation Council

Submission date: 6/06/2025

1. Reduce the cost of meeting carbon targets

1. What could be done to improve the cost-effectiveness and alignment of policies to reduce emissions across the industrial, electricity and transport sectors?

The participant did not respond to this question.

2. Are there gaps in the emissions-reduction policies in the industrial, electricity and transport sectors which should be addressed?

The participant did not respond to this question.

3. Are there any duplicative emissions-reduction policies in the industrial, electricity and transport sectors which could be streamlined?

The participant did not respond to this question.

2. Speed up approvals for new energy infrastructure

1. Are planning and approvals processes for large energy infrastructure taking too long? If so, what causes the most delay?

We do believe that planning and approvals processes for large energy infrastructure are taking too long but more crucially, these decisions are not protecting nature when they are made. A review of the EPBC Act in 2024 found that the EPBC Act is not delivering on its primary purpose to halt biodiversity loss. Simply speeding up decisions under this framework is not going to improve outcomes for nature.

In Queensland, EPBC referrals are so complicated, particularly for wind projects, because these developments are being incentivised by the access to the grid and wind resources to develop along ridgelines in central, north and far north Queensland which have not historically been developed. These areas therefore host remnant vegetation and important threatened species habitat but are not formally protected. This creates significant concern for the community, complex EPBC Act referrals and bad outcomes for nature.

2. How can planning and approvals processes be sped up without unduly compromising regulatory standards?

We believe that better planning, through both state based Renewable Energy Zones and EPBC regional planning reforms, to guide where development happens is the best way to reduce approval time frames.

Better planning is needed to identify areas that are not suitable for development. This would rule out clearly unacceptable projects and avoid protracted EPBC battles as seen in the recent Wooroorra station wind farm proposal. The damage done to investor confidence and social licence of the energy transition through that debacle is significant. Similar battles are looming with renewable projects down the ridgelines into Central

Queensland, with further damage to communities, investors and the transition expected, unless there is a clear improvement in industry practice and government regulation to site renewables well.

There needs to be an agreed upon methodology for assessing the environmental value of areas and thresholds for unsuitable areas for development. This process is also an opportunity to improve engagement with local communities especially First Nations communities and attempt to regain control of social licence.

As well as defining areas that are clearly unsuitable, we need a regional planning approach to ensure that the cumulative impacts of renewable energy are managed. The EPBC Act does not currently manage cumulative impacts so that threatened species are at risk of becoming more threatened despite every project which impacts them being EPBC compliant. The delay to the EPBC reforms is a significant blow to confidence that the Federal Government will be able to deliver the energy transition well. Implementing strong new standards and progressing bioregional planning must be prioritised and communicated well.

The Federal Government should work with states to deliver Renewable Energy Zones that will include regional planning for cumulative impacts, in consultation with communities, to avoid costly and harmful lengthy assessments of renewable energy projects in areas of extremely high biodiversity.

3. Should clean energy projects be treated differently to other projects for the purpose of environmental and other approvals? If so, how?

We support clean energy projects being prioritised for assessment to accelerate decisions. In particular, we want to see renewable energy prioritised over fossil fuel projects in planning and environmental approvals. However, we don't agree that clean energy projects should be subject to a different framework to be fast tracked as we are concerned that this would lead to further biodiversity loss and also further community concern about renewable energy build. We need to find solutions through the planning frameworks to allow Australia to ensure it is addressing both the climate and nature crisis at the same time, not one at the expense of the other.

4. What can be done to build local community support for new energy infrastructure projects?

Well delivered bioregional planning including community consultation would help build support for new energy infrastructure by involving the community in planning where infrastructure should go and how cumulative impacts will be managed.

The Federal Government should adopt a Local Energy Hubs concept, funding offices in 50 locations around Australia, staffed with professionals who can provide advice on energy from the household level up to the large-scale, and help communities become involved and own the transition in their region.

All levels of Government should work together to progress regional benefit sharing models to enable pooled benefit funds to deliver long term benefits and legacy projects for communities.

We need to ensure that renewable energy planning protects nature as well as accelerating the build of renewable energy.

5. Please outline any evidence showing the productivity benefits of faster approvals for energy projects.

The participant did not respond to this question.

3. Encourage adaptation by addressing barriers to private investment

1. What are the barriers and enablers impacting decisions by owner-occupiers, landlords and developers about how housing is built and updated over time so that it is resilient to the effects of climate change?

The participant did not respond to this question.

2. What information do people need to make decisions about where to live, how to build and how to upgrade their homes to appropriately factor in climate change?

The participant did not respond to this question.

3. What are the most cost-effective retrofitting options for improving the resilience of Australia's existing housing stock? What are their costs and benefits?

The participant did not respond to this question.

4. What role might minimum standards play in ensuring the resilience of Australia's housing stock?

The participant did not respond to this question.

5. The impacts of climate change are being factored into the regulation of where and how houses are built in different ways around Australia. What does leading practice look like? Where is there room for improvement? Are there lessons we can learn from other countries?

The participant did not respond to this question.