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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?

Yes, currently, the assessment for large-scale renewable energy projects is too slow.

Inconsistent application and changing requirements for environmental assessment under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) (EPBC Act) creates lengthy delays and uncertainty – threatening both the clean energy transition and Australia's ability to achieve its net zero targets.

Particularly, the delay is caused by:

- Inconsistent and changing application of both the EPBC Act and assessment framework, including between individual assessment teams.
- Frequent policy and 'goal post' shifts without prior notice, including during project assessments.
- Complex and duplicative requests for information (RFIs) throughout assessment of a single project, that go well beyond the requirements outlined during initial Preliminary Documentation RFIs or published guidelines.
- Frequent staff changes, resulting in the loss of important project knowledge and inconsistent interpretation of information requirements beyond the scope of publicly issued information requests.
- Duplicative and fragmented assessment between the State/Territory and Commonwealth approvals processes.
- Overly conservative and pedantic application of frameworks with little to no regard for practical and effective ecological outcomes.

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However, it's important to note that this experience is not isolated. For example, on a separate project, the original Preliminary Documentation (PD) requirements identified that a project could proceed with an offset strategy (as opposed to an offset management plan (OMP)). However, following preparation and submission of the PD to the Department, the adequacy review required the locations of offset areas, details of the management actions to ensure conservation gain and evidence that protected matters are present i.e., information that is typically presented in an OMP, not a strategy.

In the same month, the PD requirements for a different project stated that offset strategies would not be accepted by the Department and that an OMP was required to be submitted with the PD.

These shifting goalposts and inconsistent interpretation of information requirements make it difficult for proponents to accurately plan and develop projects.

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

Substantial time and effort can be saved with:

- consistent and upfront assessment requirements; and
- identification, recognition and subsequent streamlining of assessment of projects that will help to achieve Australia's decarbonisation objectives and result in positive outcomes for biodiversity.

Specifically, [REDACTED] recommends planning and approvals pathways can be streamlined by:

- Coordinating and ensuring an expedited approval pathway for renewable energy projects, per the government's own reform goals and in line with national environment, energy and economic priorities.
- Where projects are developed with a 'nature positive' approach, such as committing to frequent predator/pest management strategies, traditional fire management and/or voluntary commitments to increase biodiversity, these outcomes are considered alongside potential impacts arising from construction of the project.
- Recognition of climate benefits as a relevant consideration in assessments.
- Developing standardised guidelines to ensure consistent and transparent application of the EPBC Act and assessment framework – including consistent and clear requirements for flora and fauna surveys.
- Establishing consistent and objective criteria for RFI triggers and limiting the number of RFIs per project assessment, with flexibility for new issues that may arise.
- Coordination and oversight of pre-lodgement meetings and advice from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water to ensure clear and consistent messaging over the duration of the assessment process.
- Ensuring project assessment teams are adequately resourced with skilled staff to conduct assessments within reasonable, pre-defined timelines.
- Minimising personnel changes during the assessment period whenever possible.
- Providing accountability for assessments to be undertaken within reasonable, pre-defined timeframes.

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

Yes, the benefits that clean energy projects can deliver to reducing energy consumers' costs-of-living and securing a decarbonised future for Australia means that they should be treated differently to other projects for the purpose of environmental and other approvals.

Like the resources sector, the clean energy sector has the potential to create thousands of jobs, enhance local infrastructure, support economic development, foster resilience and bolster the stability of regional towns and communities. However, clean energy can also deliver sustainable, low-cost power to Australians while decarbonising the nation and its economy.

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

Early, transparent and meaningful engagement with landholders, host communities and local governments are essential for all large-scale development.

Through its projects, [REDACTED] implements a proactive and detailed engagement process, developed in accordance with the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum, the Clean Energy Council (CEC) Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Projects and the Queensland Renewable Energy Council's (QREC) co-designed Developer and Investor Toolkit for Leading Practice Landholder and Community Engagement.

Broadly, this results in engagement actions that include:

- Engaging consistently and respectfully with local landholders, communities and prioritising the creation of a positive legacy in the region.
- Scheduling numerous in person sessions with local councils and regional interest groups in communities.
- Hosting open community information sessions to seek views and input from local councils and communities well before approvals documentation are submitted.
- Advertising community information sessions via multiple methods, such as letterbox drops, community newsletters, direct emails and posts on local Facebook groups.
- Providing multiple ways for the community to provide views and input, such as a dedicated 1800 number, email address, and project-specific websites.
- Framing our approach to engagement and development through an understanding of the local communities lived experience and lessons learned from previous major projects and the coal seam gas (CSG) industry.
- Considering views and input provided by specific interest groups and the local community and responding. Where appropriate, actioning views and input.

- Clearly advising the community of potential visual, noise, traffic and other impacts of the project.
- Supporting the Queensland economy by providing local employment and procurement opportunities.
- Providing opportunities for local community to share in the benefits of the project and consulting on the options available.
- Engaging with specific stakeholders to inform the design of the project including transmission operators, telecommunication services, other industry operators and government departments.

However, [REDACTED] also asks that the Commonwealth government provide coordinated and supportive messages about the importance of the clean energy transition for regional communities and economies.

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

Delays to approvals of energy project have a compounding effect on the economic viability of the project, a delay to major investment activities, and job opportunities for the host community and regional stakeholders.

Delays to financial close can also cause contracts to be renegotiated or re-tendered, causing a significant increase in direct development cost for projects.

Finally, the ongoing delay and uncertainty in timing can lead to community and landholder anxiety, an erosion in the confidence of the project and the viability of the energy transition as a whole.

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[REDACTED] also refers to and relies on the following Clean Energy Investor Group (CEIG) reports:

- CEIG, Mar-25, The cost of no renewables report: <https://www.ceig.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025-03-CEIG-The-cost-of-no-renewables.pdf>
- CEIG, Dec-24, Review of the EPBC Act: <https://www.ceig.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/HSF-x-CEIG-EPBC-Act-Report.pdf>
- CEIG, Apr-24, Decarbonising Australia: Accelerating our energy transition with a credible 1.5 degree C scenario: https://www.ceig.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/CEIG-x-Baringa-Report_2023-Final.pdf

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.