

# Tradies FOR THE transition

QUEENSLAND RENEWABLE ENERGY WORKFORCE  
ATTRACTION AND RETENTION STRATEGY







## Introduction

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The Queensland Government has set a considered, affordable, and credible pathway to transform Queensland's electricity system and deliver clean, reliable and affordable power.

The Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan (the QEJP) articulates a clear vision for our future and advances our state towards 70% renewable energy by 2032 and 80% by 2035.

Our new emissions reduction target of 75% on 2005 levels by 2035 will elevate Queensland even further to achieving net zero by 2050.

A significant pipeline of work is required to meet our targets. Between now and 2035, our Queensland SuperGrid Infrastructure Blueprint anticipates Queensland will need an additional 22 gigawatts (GW) of new large-scale wind and solar, and around 2,000 kms of new high voltage transmission up and down the State. Workers are on the frontline of our

renewable energy transformation and decarbonised economy. It is critical we attract and retain the best, provide a pipeline of trainees and apprentices, and ensure good wages and conditions.

This is the cornerstone of a strong economy, particularly in our regions. When workers are fairly compensated, they support their local clubs and pubs, retail and restaurants, and they buy homes and raise their families in the cities and towns they love.

A lot is riding on Queensland's success. The nation cannot meet its decarbonisation targets and secure the economic opportunities for Australia without us playing our part.

Reaching our targets means local jobs and Queensland businesses thrive now and into the future.

# Queensland's Clean Economy Workforce

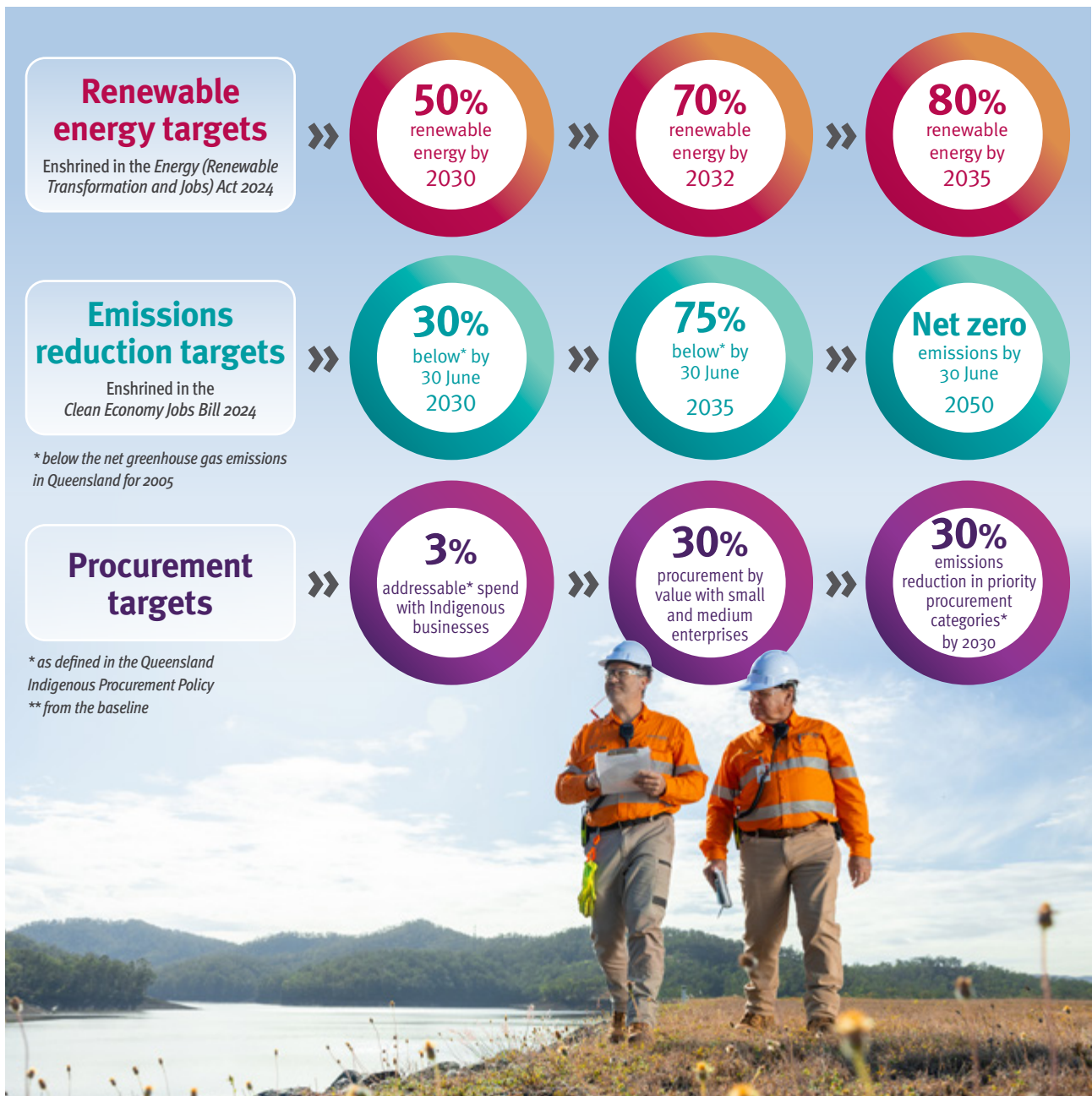
A skilled workforce is critical to enabling Queensland's transition into a clean economy future.

Independent modelling identified the QEJP could support up to 100,000 direct and indirect jobs by 2040, including:

- up to 28,500 direct jobs in construction, onshore manufacturing, and maintenance of new transmission and large-scale renewable generation
- up to 35,000 indirect jobs each year supported in services, hospitality and other industries across Queensland as a result of capital investment

- up to 36,000 additional direct and indirect jobs from expansion of new industries—renewable hydrogen, battery manufacturing, resource mining and metal refining.

*Tradies for the Transition* outlines the strategy to attract a workforce for these new jobs, while protecting existing ones. It is the Queensland Government's commitment to train the young workers of today, so they may become the industry leaders of tomorrow. It is our roadmap towards the transformation of Queensland's economy, while backing Queensland workers, communities, and our enviable Queensland lifestyle.



# Tradies for the Transition

## Queensland Renewable Energy Workforce Attraction and Retention Strategy

### 1 Tripartite support for Queensland energy workers

#### Queensland Energy Workers' Charter

Energy workers within our publicly owned energy businesses are the backbone of Queensland's secure and reliable energy system. Generations of workers in our traditional power-generating assets have helped keep the lights on across Queensland. The Queensland Energy Workers' Charter bridges our state's traditional energy history with our energy transformation for the future through principles and actions to support workers. This landmark agreement sets out principles and actions to support affected energy workers through the energy transformation. The Charter's signatories (unions, publicly owned energy businesses and government) are committed to supporting workers, their families and communities, and regions to continue to deliver a lasting legacy and prosperous future for Queensland.

Complete ✓

#### Energy Industry Council

The EIC is a tripartite body comprised of unions, publicly owned energy businesses and government. It will play a key role in the Job Security Guarantee, and in ensuring affected energy workers are supported through the energy transformation. The EIC is to be established through the *Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Act 2024*. An interim EIC, and subcommittee, was in operation from the signing of the Charter to ensure an immediate focus and progress on implementing the Charter.

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### 2 Job Security Guarantee

The Job Security Guarantee gives future certainty through the energy transformation to government-owned corporation (GOC) workers and eligible long-term contactors, including those onsite at Meandu Mine and Kogan Creek Mine.

Legislating the Job Security Guarantee and Fund enables choices and opportunities for workers to pursue the options and pathways that best suit their individual circumstances.

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### 3 Legislative reform

#### *Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Act 2024*

The QEJP lays out a vision for Queensland's energy future, provides a clear pathway to clean, reliable and affordable power for generations, and sets a renewable energy target of 80% renewable energy by 2035.

The *Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Act 2024* (the Act) is the next foundational element in implementing the QEJP and:

- enshrines key commitments such as the Job Security Guarantee and Fund, from the Plan in law,
- creates the frameworks required to build the Queensland SuperGrid, including to build the high voltage backbone transmission and to deliver renewable energy zones, and
- establishes the governance frameworks to ensure a smooth, coordinated transition that ensures affected workers and communities are supported.

Advice from the interim EIC has informed the definition of 'affected energy worker' in the Act. The advice of the interim EIC is also informing the development of supporting Regulations, which will set out the eligibility requirements and categories of support available from the Job Security Guarantee Fund.

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## Queensland's Clean Economy Jobs Bill 2024 and 2035 Clean Economy Pathway

On 14 February 2024, the Premier introduced the Clean Economy Jobs Bill 2024 and released Queensland's 2035 Clean Economy Pathway (Pathway). The legislation and Pathway are focused on delivering clean economy jobs for Queenslanders.

Overall, legislating the government's emissions reduction intent creates a strong clean investment signal for Queensland. The Queensland Government is protecting traditional jobs as industries decarbonise and creating new jobs in emerging industries.

Modelling prepared for the QEJP identified the potential creation of 100,000 jobs across the state. This includes 28,500 direct jobs across construction, manufacturing, and operations. The QEJP supports more than 35,000 jobs across sectors such as resources, refining, hydrogen, and battery manufacturing.

Delivering the QEJP represents 20% of the government's 75% by 2035 emissions reduction target. Work across other key sectors, identified in sectoral decarbonisation plans and delivered in partnership with community and industry, will create further jobs.

Taking action ensures Queensland a portion of the \$435 billion green industrial economic opportunity for Australia that was identified by National Australia Bank and Deloitte in a 2023 report, ensuring Queensland remains an investment destination of choice and helping to create new industries and jobs of the future.

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## 4 Queensland Renewable Energy Procurement Policy – Creating Local Jobs

The *Queensland Renewable Energy Procurement Policy – Creating Local Jobs (QREPP)* outlines how the *Buy Queensland* approach to procurement is applied to certain kinds of Queensland Government-supported renewable energy investment and infrastructure set out in the QEJP.

The QREPP also outlines how key policy initiatives, such as local benefits, local content targets, Best Practice Principles: quality, safe workplaces, and Best Practice Industry Conditions Renewable Energy Facilities and related construction projects are enacted ensuring strong industry conditions detailing work, pay and safety expectations to industry.

*Buy Queensland* is about ensuring a responsible public procurement approach to driving economic, ethical,

environmental and social outcomes. Applying the *Buy Queensland* approach to procurement, supported by the QREPP, helps to ensure that Queenslanders and their communities gain the maximum benefit from renewable energy investment.

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## 5 Equal by 30

The Queensland Government has committed to signing up to the international Equal by 30 campaign. Equal by 30 aims for equal gender balance, equal pay, leadership and opportunity in the clean energy sector by 2030.

Queensland will join more than 180 signatories from around the world in committing to Equal by 30. Five proposed commitments have been developed to assist the Queensland Government in improving women's participation in the energy sector.

Adopting the campaign commits the Queensland Government to:

- Develop a Women in Renewables Strategy with industry, universities and training organisations to increase leadership and participation of women in the energy sector with a focus on supporting women in regional Queensland.
- Drive practical actions to improve gender diversity and participation, and completion of apprenticeships and training in vocational and university-level qualifications in the energy sector, especially in traditionally male dominated industries.
- Work across government and with the energy industry, including Queensland's public owned energy businesses, to improve data collection and reporting on gender participation in the clean energy workforce to provide greater visibility of gender equality in the sector and inform policies and initiatives.
- Set clear expectations and monitoring Queensland's publicly owned energy businesses in providing sectoral leadership in gender diversity and equality by continuing to deliver strong, practical actions to build and maintain an inclusive culture and close the gender gap in the clean energy workforce.
- Lead the way in gender inclusive recruitment, promotion, and to increase the participation of women in Department of Energy and Climate and the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training to achieve gender balance at all levels and job types within the organisation.

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## Navigating renewable energy job opportunities

### Queensland's Clean Energy Workforce Roadmap

Released in October 2023, Queensland's Clean Energy Workforce Roadmap (the Roadmap) builds on our strong skills and training base to ensure there are the right pathways and support available to deliver the clean energy workforce needed.

The Roadmap builds on key Queensland Government strategies and policies to deliver Queensland's clean energy transformation across the state, and ensure the benefits of the energy transformation flows equitably throughout Queensland. The strategies and policies include: Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032, the QEJP and the Queensland SuperGrid infrastructure Blueprint.

The Roadmap is an initial \$30 million investment in Queensland's clean energy workforce. The Roadmap is delivering 37 actions across the following three key themes to support the development of the clean energy workforce:

- Build our future workforce
- Partner with industry to mobilise our existing talent
- Prepare our regions for growth.

Since the release of the Roadmap, implementation has continued at pace. The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training has worked with government and non-government sectors to implement and ensure Queensland has the future energy workforce it needs. Key actions currently being implemented under the Roadmap include:

- establishment of the Renewable Energy Gateway to Industry Skills Program (GISP) for schools, helping to build the pipeline of future energy workers
- expansion of the VET (vocational education and training) Emerging Industries Initiative to develop renewable energy industry innovative training solutions, delivering new forms of high-quality training to support the skills we need
- establishment of the Clean Energy Workforce Roundtable to collaboratively develop workforce solutions
- Queensland signing up to the Equal by 30 campaign
- co-funded with Manufacturing Skills Queensland the appointment of a dedicated renewables project officer, to work with local manufacturing businesses to build workforce capability and access renewable supply chain opportunities.

The Queensland Government will continue to implement Roadmap actions in collaboration with key stakeholders across government, industry, unions, and the broader community. Ensuring the continued development of the clean energy workforce required to support Queensland's energy transition.

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### Energy Jobs Portal

Serving as a "one-stop-shop" for jobs in Queensland's publicly-owned energy businesses, the Energy Jobs Portal will increase visibility of the workforce transformation and promote career opportunities and vacancies across the state. It will provide a platform for broader awareness of initiatives aimed at developing the capacity and capability of the sector including:

- Queensland's Clean Energy Workforce Roadmap
- the Future Energy Jobs Guide—designed to assist school leavers, job seekers and existing skilled workers to explore career opportunities in the clean energy sector and identify the education and training pathways to get there
- career events.

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## Training for tradies

Delivering high quality, responsive training in the right location, at the right time, is essential for Queensland's energy transformation, with qualified tradespeople needed for the construction, installation, operation and maintenance of all clean energy projects across the state.

Our world class TAFE sector will be key to delivering the workers we need. In addition to the \$1.2 billion we invest annually in skills and training, our Free TAFE initiative makes vocational education and training more accessible and affordable for Queenslanders, providing opportunities for individuals to upskill, reskill or start their career in high-demand industries.

Free apprenticeships are available for apprentices Under 25 years of age who choose a high priority apprenticeship or traineeship, such as qualifications in construction or electrotechnology. This will ensure we have a skilled and ready workforce, when and where they are needed, as we deliver the transition.

The Queensland Government is investing at least \$350 million to support critical skill development

required for the energy transformation. The QEJP sets out a plan to deliver the Queensland SuperGrid to deliver clean, reliable and affordable power across Queensland. Building Queensland's SuperGrid will require a skilled workforce with specific capabilities to work on the high voltage transmission network that forms the backbone of Queensland's future energy system.

In partnership with Powerlink, the publicly owned energy business responsible for managing the state's transmission network, the Queensland Government is establishing new SuperGrid training centres and transmission hubs to upskill energy workers in a range of areas, including high voltage technical training.

In 2023, Powerlink opened two interim SuperGrid training centre and transmission hubs in Gladstone and Townsville. Work on the permanent facilities is underway. The permanent facilities will upskill hundreds of energy workers each year to support the delivery of the SuperGrid. Both hubs will have innovative indoor HV substation equipment simulating a real-world environment to complement on-the-job training.

In early 2024, Powerlink welcomed its first intake of Townsville-based apprentices at its interim SuperGrid Training Centre and Transmission Hub to support the critical CopperString 2032 project.

This builds on the Queensland Government's investment of more than \$50 million in state-of-the-art hydrogen and renewable energy training facilities, including:

- **\$20 million** for Stage 2 upgrades to the industry led Queensland Apprenticeships Centre, featuring a new Hydrogen Training Centre of Excellence at Beenleigh
- **\$17 million** to build the Pinkenba Renewable Energy Training Facility
- **\$12.45 million** to build a hydrogen and renewable energy training facility for training in renewable energy such as hydrogen, solar and wind at the Bohle Trade Training TAFE in Townsville
- **\$2 million** to upgrade facilities at Gladstone State High School to prepare students for jobs in the hydrogen industry.

An additional \$40 million is being invested to deliver the Eagle Farm Robotics and Advanced Manufacturing Centre projects to provide specialist trade training, including facilities for advanced manufacturing and robotics, process instrumentation, telecommunications and renewable technologies training.

In partnership with Energy Skills Queensland, the Gateway to Industry Schools Program (GISP) is being expanded to include a new hydrogen focussed

program, which will connect students with local industries to explore career opportunities in the sector.

The Hydrogen GISP will be delivered in at least 30 Queensland schools, engaging more than 2000 students over three years.

To further develop the capacity and capability of the VET sector to support Queensland's energy workforce, under the Queensland Government's \$15 million VET Emerging Industries initiative, \$4 million is being invested in an Energy Strategy that includes a \$1 million Hydrogen Skills Fund, a \$2 million TAFE Queensland Renewable Energy Strategy, and a \$1 million Electric Vehicles Skills Fund.

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## Queensland Battery Industry Strategy

As the world continues to decarbonise, the demand for battery storage is set to increase tenfold by 2030.

This shift brings with it a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Queensland to become a driving force in the development, manufacture and deployment of new energy storage technologies. This will provide opportunities to accelerate industry growth and deliver the highly skilled jobs of the future.

To seize these opportunities, we have released a multi-technology Queensland Battery Industry Strategy 2024-2029.

The Queensland Battery Industry Strategy outlines actions that will target \$570 million in investment over the next 5 years. A key action is the development of the Australian Battery Industrialisation Centre (ABIC) proposal, in partnership with the Australian Government. The ABIC has the potential to build Australia's battery capabilities by providing shared access to commercial, pilot-scale manufacturing and educational services that will encourage industry to co-locate, form strategic partnerships, and invest in larger-scale battery manufacturing over time. A detailed business case is currently being prepared for government consideration.

Queensland's regions will play a major role in successfully delivering the strategy, with dividends expected through the creation of new jobs and more economic growth and long-term prosperity.

Commercialising innovative technology that leverages our state's critical minerals and manufacturing expertise is key to bringing forward a pipeline of battery investment that provides opportunities for regional businesses.

We will continue to work with the battery ecosystem and academia at a local and national level with a focus on building the battery industry supply chain to deliver jobs and benefits across regional Queensland.

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## Remote and First Nations Clean Energy Strategy

The Remote and First Nations Clean Energy Strategy develops community-led initiatives with Ergon Energy to support local job outcomes. Ergon Energy is undertaking feasibility studies to define the technical solutions required to transition all 33 stand-alone power stations from diesel to renewable energy resources. This will be reflected in their updated Isolated Network Strategy 2030.

Engagement with communities seeks to identify a range of local opportunities as a result of the transition to renewables.

Current projects include:

- **Doomadgee**—install 4.5MW of solar PV and 4MWh of energy storage, which is forecast to save around 680,000 litres of diesel per year.
- **Windorah**—install 850kW of solar PV and 1,000kWh of energy storage, which will save 150,000 litres of diesel each year.
- **Burketown**—install 1,200kW of solar PV and 1,000kWh of energy storage, which has a forecast saving of 270,000 litres of diesel per year.
- **Boulia**—install 1,700kW of solar PV and 1,500kWh of energy storage, with a forecast saving of 360,000 litres of diesel each year.

The transition to renewables across the 39 communities supplied by Ergon Energy's isolated networks will deliver clean and secure energy and provide both direct and indirect contractor and supplier opportunities in these communities.

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## Queensland Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Roadmap

The updated Queensland Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Roadmap (the Roadmap), outlines the pathway for connecting 22GW of new wind and solar generation to provide clean, reliable, affordable power for generations.

This Roadmap will help improve long-term regional planning and coordination of renewable energy projects.

A REZ is a area strategically planned to connect electricity generators in a coordinated way to optimise renewable development and network infrastructure. REZs consider factors like natural resources availability, existing grid infrastructure, and environmental, community and economic impacts.

The Roadmap supports Queensland industries to decarbonise and energise regional areas by ensuring benefits flow back to local communities.

REZs are critical to ensuring Queenslanders have access to affordable energy in the long-term, as well as creating regional job opportunities, and lowering emissions.

They will deliver a steady pipeline of approximately 4,000 direct ongoing renewable energy construction jobs.

These jobs are part of 100,000 direct and indirect jobs expected by 2040 detailed in the QEJP to build our SuperGrid and in emerging green opportunities like renewable hydrogen, battery manufacturing, resource mining and metal refining.

New laws are being established for Queensland's REZ framework to ensure better coordination of energy infrastructure while delivering long-term benefits.

This framework prioritises community collaboration, balances opportunities and impacts, and delivers long-term benefits.

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[qld.gov.au/energyandjobsplan](https://qld.gov.au/energyandjobsplan)



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