

Our ref: OUT25/6437

Your ref: 4250-25

22 DEC 2025

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
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Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition 4250-25, tabled in the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 9 December 2025, about a proposed battery energy storage facility at 292 Cawthrays Road, Colosseum. The petition calls for the proposal to be rejected by Gladstone Regional Council (the Council) and raises concerns about safety risks, environmental impacts, and the proximity of the project to Miriam Vale township.

I understand that the development application was formally withdrawn by the applicant on or around 13 June 2025. There is no development application currently under assessment for a battery energy storage facility at this site.

In response to stakeholder feedback, I asked the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (the Department) to explore the regulation of stand-alone Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), including:

- how BESS is currently assessed, including the level of assessment and assessment benchmarks
- impacts of BESS development, and the role of Local Government and the State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA)
- whether BESS land uses should be subject to the community benefit system under the *Planning Act 2016*.

On 12 December 2025, the Queensland Government introduced changes to the regulation of battery storage facility development through the Planning (Battery Storage Facilities) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2025 (Amendment Regulation) which amends the Planning Regulation 2017. The changes ensure that the social and community impacts of battery storage facility development are consistently identified, considered and managed through a new impact assessable approval process.

This is in line with the Government's election commitment to amend laws to ensure renewable energy projects are impact assessable with approval processes consistent with other land uses like mining and agriculture.

Battery storage facilities with an output of 50MW or more will now be subject to the community benefit system under the Queensland planning framework. This system requires proponents of certain development types to undertake a social impact assessment and enter into a community benefit agreement before lodging a development application. This new approach ensures battery storage facility developments respond to identified social impacts of development and empower local communities through the project approval system.

The regulatory changes also make the State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) the assessment manager for all assessable battery storage facility development across Queensland and provides state-wide assessment requirements through the new State Code 27: Battery Storage Facility development under the State Development Assessment Provisions (SDAP). Assessable battery storage facility development is now subject to impact assessment across the state, requiring public notification and providing third party appeal. This will ensure stakeholders can have their say on these developments.

Any future proposals for battery storage facilities that have an output of 50MW will need to respond to the community benefit system before a proponent can lodge a development application with SARA.

These recent changes relating to battery storage facilities follow other recent legislative changes that strengthened requirements for renewable energy projects in Queensland:

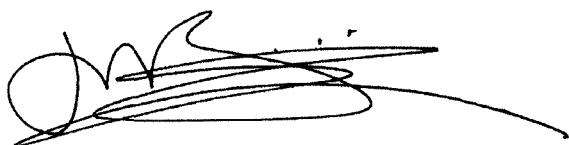
- from 3 February 2025, the Planning Regulation 2017 was amended so all wind farms require impact assessment and public notification, with updated benchmarks under State code 23
- from 18 July 2025, the *Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Act 2025* introduced a community benefit system into the *Planning Act 2016*, requiring certain projects to complete a social impact assessment, consult with the community, and have a community benefit agreement before submitting a development application
- other amendments made large-scale solar farms impact assessable, strengthened public notification rules, added a solar farm code, and made the Social Impact Assessment Guideline a statutory instrument.

These changes reflect the Crisafulli Governments' commitment to ensuring that large scale battery storage projects empowering host communities through a rigorous planning assessment, including consideration of community sentiment. Further information about these changes is available on the Department's website at:

<https://www.planning.qld.gov.au/planning-issues-and-interests/battery-storage-facilities>.

I would like to thank the petitioners for raising this matter with me and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jarrod Bleijie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

JARROD BLEIJIE MP
DEPUTY PREMIER
Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and
Minister for Industrial Relations