

Community update



Project newsletter
September 2025

Hello neighbours

Gawara Baya wind farm is moving closer to financial close – this is the green light moment where all the planning and approvals come together so construction can begin.

As a 100% Australian-owned company, Windlab is proud to be keeping the benefits right here at home. For our community, that means more than 300 jobs at peak construction, over \$200 million in regional economic activity, and a dedicated \$200,000 a year Community Benefit Fund supporting local festivals, schools and community programs. We want to share some of the positive things already happening, and also give you a glimpse of what's on the horizon.

Approvals update

Projects like Gawara Baya don't happen overnight. They go through some of the most rigorous approvals in the country – and we're proud to say Gawara Baya has passed them all.

Every step reinforces that this project has been thoroughly tested and approved, designed to protect the environment while delivering benefits for the community.



2023

Development Approval (DA) granted.



2024

Federal environmental approval (EPBC Act): received after more than 8,000 hours of ecological studies. The EPBC Act is one of the hardest approvals to obtain in Australia and the Federal Government concluded Gawara Baya meets the highest environmental standards.



2025

All primary planning and environmental approvals are now in place, including the Federal approval, which was subject to and reaffirmed by an independent legal process. Gawara Baya is now tracking toward financial close.



2026

Construction: we are now preparing for construction to commence next year, and we will keep you informed as we move closer to a start date.

Acknowledgement of Country

Gawara Baya is located on the Traditional lands of the Gugu Badhun peoples. Windlab honour the Gugu Badhun People's sacred and enduring connection to Country, culture and community.

We respect the Gugu Badhun people's cultural values and intend for this project to have a positive legacy.

Local businesses stepping up

In August, we joined forces with the Hinchinbrook Chamber of Commerce to host an informal networking evening and Meet the Buyer event in Ingham. The turnout was incredible, with more than 130 local business representatives attending.

From catering to civil works, we can clearly see that local businesses are curious and ready to get involved. This is just the start of ensuring that as Gawara Baya is built, the region benefits directly.



Local businesses hear about opportunities to get involved



Industry breakfast event in Ingham

Jobs on the horizon

Over the next couple of years, construction of Gawara Baya will bring around 300 direct jobs at peak construction. To ease pressure on housing, workers will stay at a contained accommodation camp near site.

Job opportunities will cover:

- Civil works (road building, concreting, earthworks)
- Electrical and mechanical roles (turbine assembly, cabling, switching stations)
- Environmental and safety roles (ecologists, spotter-catchers, compliance officers)
- Support services (catering, cleaning, logistics, admin)

These roles will bring new skills, new training pathways, and new opportunities for locals keen to step into the renewable energy sector.

If you're a business or job seeker, you can register your interest in opportunities to work on Gawara Baya by using the following QR codes:

Register here if you are an individual seeking workforce opportunities:



Register here if you are a business seeking opportunities to supply goods and services:



Working together to protect cultural heritage

As we prepare for construction, Cultural Heritage investigations continue in partnership with the Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation (GBAC), Turnstone Archaeology, and ERM. A temporary camp has been established for this work, providing safe and comfortable facilities for the Cultural Heritage team and avoiding the need for daily travel up and down the Mt Fox range.

These investigations are a critical pre-construction step to identify and protect Cultural Heritage sites, artefacts, and areas of cultural significance. Guided by GBAC and the project's Cultural Heritage Management Agreement, the work may involve isolating areas or, where appropriate, relocating artefacts to ensure they are preserved with respect and care. This stage of investigations will take approximately five weeks, with further work next year.

The camp and survey works are a strong example of collaboration and respect, with GBAC leading the way in ensuring cultural values are protected. Together, this partnership reflects the shared commitment of all parties to honouring the land, supporting Traditional Owners, and building the project on a foundation of cultural respect.



Cultural heritage investigations progressing on site



42.2km

Walked in
the first two
rostered
swings



4,000+

Acres of land
investigated



37 hrs

Reduced
driving time

Supporting local projects through our Community Benefit Fund

Over the last financial year, Gawara Baya has invested in projects that strengthen the community, support recovery, and bring people together. These investments are part of a bigger picture – making sure Gawara Baya gives back in practical, meaningful ways.

Hinchinbrook Birdlife Art Awards

– celebrating local creativity

\$500

Campfire pit upgrades at Mount Fox Campground

– welcoming locals and visitors

\$2,799

Rush Festival, Charters Towers

– backing arts and culture

\$8,000 in 2024

Maraka Festival, Ingham

– a much-loved community celebration

\$4,000 in 2024 and 2025

Link2Country

– supporting the inaugural Agri Life Skills Program and community gathering

\$4,000

Shop and Win campaign, Hinchinbrook Chamber of Commerce

– boosting local retail

\$5,000

Noorla Bowls Club

– supporting important community events

\$2,000

Cane Haulout Training

– keeping skills local

\$12,000

Amenity block upgrades at Mount Fox

– with Hinchinbrook Shire Council and Powerlink. Council have completed a tender process and this work should start soon

\$33,500



Protecting koalas and wildlife

At the heart of Gawara Baya is a commitment to go beyond compliance to investing in long-term protection.

Gawara Baya has been carefully designed so that more than 98% of koala habitat will remain untouched, with less than 0.5% directly affected.

Some of the ways we are enhancing the protection of koalas during construction include:

- Spotter-catchers will be on site every day during construction to keep animals safe.
- Long-term feral dog and cat control will reduce the biggest threats they face.
- The site is now part of Australia's Tier 1 National Koala Monitoring Program, helping scientists track and protect koala populations.
- Offsets will be used to protect and restore habitat, well beyond the project's footprint.
- We've also committed to a 20-year Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy, targeting improved biodiversity across the region — leaving the environment better than we found it.

For us it's about showing that renewable energy projects can play a positive role in protecting the species we all love.

Myths vs facts

We know there's been some misinformation about the project. Here are some of the most common myths we've heard, and the facts behind them:

MYTH

Renewables make power more expensive.

FACT

CSIRO's 2024–25 GenCost Report confirms wind and solar are the cheapest new generation technologies, even after including storage and transmission. With cost-of-living pressures high, choosing the cheapest clean power sources is essential.

MYTH

Wind farms never pay back their carbon debt.

FACT

Modern turbines “pay back” the carbon used to build them within just a few months, then generate decades of zero-emission energy.

MYTH

Renewable are unreliable.

FACT

As Australia's ageing coal and gas power stations reach the end of their life, the energy mix is shifting to renewables supported by storage and other technologies. Renewables already provide about 40% of the nation's electricity, showing they are a reliable part of the system, not just an intermittent source.

Let's keep talking

We're always available to answer any questions you may have, so feel free to reach out, or visit the website for more information including FAQs on a variety of topics.

Get in touch

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Scan the QR code or visit gawarabaya.com to learn more about Gawara Baya.

