



Clean Energy Council Best Practice Charter Report

August 2024

As a proud signatory of the Clean Energy Council Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Projects, Windlab is dedicated to upholding the highest standards in renewable energy development. This report highlights our ongoing achievements and steadfast commitment to the Charter's principles.

At Windlab, we prioritise meaningful consultation and engagement with regional communities, ensuring their voices are central to shaping our projects. Our host communities are long-term partners, and we are committed to fostering sustainable benefits that deliver tangible outcomes for locals.

Over the past year, we have made significant strides in community collaboration by launching community benefit programs, co-designing initiatives with local stakeholders, and engaging extensively with various community members, First Nations people

and councils to ensure our projects reflect local priorities. Our approach is rooted in respect, open communication, and a commitment to building trust by addressing concerns and fostering inclusive development.

We look forward to continuing to strive for best practice, learning from industry and engaging with stakeholders and communities about what's important to them, as we support our nation's renewable energy transition.

Acknowledgement of Country

As a renewable energy company our activities are inextricably linked to the land. Those who have cared for Country over thousands of years are at the heart of what we do.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of this country and the Traditional Custodians of the land, waters and communities on which we live and work. We respect and value their diverse, deep, and enduring connections to Country, culture, and customs. We pay our respects to their ancestors, elders and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.

The clean energy transition represents a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work together to secure a safe climate and a more prosperous future for us all. As we face the challenge, there is no greater example of determination, courage, strength, resilience, or innovation than that of Australia's First Peoples.

About Windlab

For more than 20 years, we have engaged locals in our projects, respected the needs and wishes of communities and taken pride in driving positive socio-economic outcomes for regional Australia.

Born out of the CSIRO, we use our own leading-edge technology and globally recognised expertise to find, develop and operate the best performing renewable energy projects in the world.

Our projects

We have projects in operation or in development across Australia, including:

<div><div><div>Gawara Baya</div><div>Pre-construction</div><div><i>Gugu Badhun Country</i> <i>Mount Fox, near Ingham, North Queensland</i></div><div>Highlights:</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3+ years consultation informing design• \$200,000 annual Community Benefit Fund launched in 2024• Landmark ILUA with Gugu Badhun Peoples• 7,500+ hours of cross-seasonal ecological study and analysis• Australian-first biodiversity net gain strategy</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>Junction Rivers</div><div>Approvals process</div><div><i>Kyalite, near Balranald in the South West REZ, NSW</i></div><div>Highlights:</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 years consultation informing design• Community Benefit Program informed by stakeholder feedback that includes a Voluntary Planning Agreement, community and First Nations funds• Engaging Registered Aboriginal Parties on cultural heritage• \$230+ million boost to regional economy</div></div></div>
<div><div><div>Bungaban</div><div>Approvals process</div><div><i>Iman and Auburn Hawkwood Country</i> <i>Near Wandoan, Southern Queensland</i></div><div>Highlights:</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Landmark Power Purchase Agreement with Rio Tinto• Annual Community Benefit Fund• Estimated \$500 million boost to regional economy• Early engagement to understand community values and opportunities</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>Kennedy Energy Park</div><div>Operational</div><div><i>Yirendali Country</i> <i>Near Hughenden, North West Queensland</i></div><div>Highlights:</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$50,000 annual Community Benefit Fund for five years• 240 construction jobs during construction• Around \$20 million goods and services procured locally• Sponsored key community events and tourism initiatives</div></div></div>

936

unique stakeholders engaged in the last 12 months across all projects

11

local Councils engaged to understand local priorities and build lasting relationships

3200+

communications with stakeholders about our projects in the last 12 months

“One of the standout community initiatives is Windlab’s support for the harvester training program. Thanks to their generous support, this training has made significant strides in enhancing local agricultural skills.

This initiative, launched at the Find Your Future in Hinchinbrook event, saw an overwhelming response from candidates and has already led to successful employment placements within the district.”

- Mary Brown, President, Hinchinbrook Chamber of Commerce

Case study - Gawara Baya



Gawara Baya is on Gugu Badhun Country, approximately 40 km south-west of Ingham on a 100 year+ cattle grazing property. Once operational, the project will generate 400MW of clean energy, powering up to 240,000 homes and displacing 1.2 million tonnes of CO2 annually from Australia's energy generation profile.

Gawara Baya means 'Wind Song' in Gugu Badhun language. This name was gifted by Gugu Badhun peoples and its logo was designed by Gugu Badhun Traditional Owner, Alison Hoolihan.

Gawara Baya received Federal Government approval in June 2024 and State Development approval in August 2023.

Responsive design

For nearly three years, we've worked with the Mount Fox community to develop a design based on feedback.

This includes:

- Removing turbines and infrastructure to reduce visual impact
- Reducing the project footprint by over 50 per cent
- Relocating infrastructure away from sensitive habitats.

The project is informed by more than 7,500 hours of cross seasonal ecological study and analysis.

Sharing benefits to support regional growth and sustainable development

In May 2024, Windlab launched the Gawara Baya Community Benefit Fund to support stakeholder and community driven projects that deliver on the aspirations and growth of the region. \$200,000 will be available each year, for the life of the project.

21 applications were received in the first funding round, and will be assessed by a decision-making panel that includes community, Council, and First Nations representatives, empowering the community to have a say about which projects are funded.

Australian-first biodiversity net-gain strategy

Gawara Baya will be the first renewable energy project in Australia to implement a robust, measurable biodiversity net-gain program. This voluntary initiative exceeds regulatory requirements, focusing on ecological restoration and species recovery on nearby land.

>20 year commitment delivered over the life of the project

\$4 million initial implementation investment

>10% improvement in biodiversity at a landscape scale

10 key species with targeted recovery actions delivering halo benefits for broader ecosystems.

The strategy will be implemented in partnership with leading regional conservation and land management experts and Traditional Owners.

Landmark ILUA signed with Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation

In 2022, we signed a landmark Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with the Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation, that delivers an enduring legacy for generations to come.

The ILUA ensures Gugu Badhun people's culture, knowledge, and perspectives are central to decision-making, in addition to providing employment, contracting, education and training opportunities. It will also see the Gugu Badhun people take a leading role in delivering conservation and improvement initiatives with the project, including active land management incorporating traditional knowledge and techniques.

"Gugu Badhun People consider the environment to be very closely aligned with our Cultural Heritage and the ILUA with Windlab provides for robust environmental provisions and the sharing of information which is critical for Gugu Badhun People to be informed about what is happening on our Country"

Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC

Economic and community impact

 **\$200 million+** regional economic boost

 **\$200,000** annual Community Benefit Fund

 **~300 jobs** at peak construction

 **Infrastructure enhancements** to improve roads, bridges, and other facilities

In the last year:

 **197 unique** stakeholders engaged

 **3 public information** sessions

 **\$65,000** in local sponsorships and donations



Case study - Junction Rivers



Junction Rivers is a proposed 750MW wind energy project that will power up to 434,000 New South Wales (NSW) homes and displace over 2 million tonnes of carbon from Australia's energy generation profile every year. Located near Kyalite, Junction Rivers is ideally positioned within the NSW South West Renewable Energy Zone.

Local perspectives driving collaborative, responsible design

Collaboration with stakeholders and the communities has informed a balanced and responsible project, and shaped the proposed capacity building, employment, contracting and community development initiatives.

Junction Rivers' design has been informed by cross-seasonal ecological studies and analysis over eight seasons. Windlab has focussed on avoiding, minimising or mitigating impacts wherever possible. Junction Rivers provides the opportunity to deliver a project on land that is already cleared due to its current land use, minimising the potential impacts to biodiversity.

Named by the community

Junction Rivers was officially named in mid-2023 following consultation with community, landholders, and local First Nations groups. The name represents the vital importance of the local waterways to the region, and the five iconic rivers are captured in the logo designed by First Nations artist and Balranald local, Louise Murray.

Louise's artwork was also commissioned by Windlab and features in our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Community benefits co-designed by stakeholders

The Junction Rivers community benefit commitments were developed through extensive consultation to address local and First Nations issues and project impacts. In 2023, Windlab launched a \$60,000 Pilot Community Benefit Program, supporting six initiatives and testing the approach. Engagement with Councils resulted in a Voluntary Planning Agreement for sustainable development. The First Nations Community Benefits Fund will support local employment, education, health, and environmental stewardship, following consultation with Registered Aboriginal Parties.



Community Benefit Fund

Annual fund of approx. **\$300,000-\$400,000*** to support community projects



Voluntary Planning Agreement

Annual fund of approx. **\$600,000 - \$750,000*** shared between two Councils



First Nations Community Benefit Fund

Annual fund of approx. **\$300,000 - \$400,000*** to support long term economic growth for First Nations communities

**Total funds will be calculated per MW, with estimates based on current project design, and subject to final approval and network access rights.*

Coexistence with existing land use

Windlab has extensively consulted with host landholders to ensure agricultural activities continue throughout the project's operation. We will use existing access tracks where possible and align turbine strings, access tracks, and hardstand locations with cropping directions. Post-operation, the land will be restored to pre-construction conditions, guided by best practice decommissioning plans.

Open and transparent First Nations consultation

Our focus is on ensuring open and transparent dialogue, protecting cultural heritage, and a self-determination process to identify opportunities for people who have a sacred connection to the Country the project is on and all other local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Economic and community impact



\$230 million+ regional economic boost



Community Benefit Funds available



~400 jobs at peak construction

In the last year:



438 unique stakeholders engaged



2 public information sessions



\$60,000+ in local sponsorships and donations



How we're honouring the Clean Energy Council's Best Practice Charter in our projects:

Commitment	Gawara Baya Stage: Pre-construction	Junction Rivers Stage: Progressing approvals	Bungaban Stage: Progressing approvals
Engage respectfully with the local community, including Traditional Owners, to seek their views before submitting a development application and finalising the project design.	<p>For nearly three years, we've worked with the Mount Fox community to develop a design based on feedback.</p> <p>We respect the Gugu Badhun people's cultural values and Native Title rights and worked together to formalise enduring shared benefits through a landmark ILUA which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect cultural heritage • Embed language and culture in the project • Provide meaningful environmental protection, employment, education, and enterprise outcomes. 	<p>Since 2021, we've had the pleasure of getting to know the communities in and around Junction Rivers.</p> <p>Extensive engagement has informed project design and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple public consultation sessions and opportunities for feedback to refine the project • Co-designing community benefit programs • Engaging Registered Aboriginal Parties around cultural heritage. 	<p>As we advance development and regulatory approvals, we will build on early engagement to understand local values, and consult communities to inform the project design.</p> <p>Engagement to date has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community information sessions • Engaged the Iman and Auburn Hawkwood peoples, committing to lasting relationships rooted in mutual respect and placing cultural values at the centre of decision-making.
Provide timely information and be accessible and responsive to address the local community's feedback and concerns throughout the project's life.	<p>Provided regular updates at key milestones via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community information sessions • Council briefings • Community newsletters • Public exhibition periods. 	<p>Shared information via multiple community drop-in sessions, council briefings and newsletters at key milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained open lines of communication with stakeholders, particularly during the EIS public exhibition. 	<p>Ongoing communication via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with host landholders and project neighbours • Local community information sessions • Council and local industry engagements
Each project has a dedicated website, email and 1800 hotline connecting you directly to the project team.			
Be sensitive to areas of high biodiversity, cultural, and landscape value in the design and operation of projects.	<p>Took significant steps to protect biodiversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7,500+ hours of cross-seasonal ecological study and analysis • Australian-first biodiversity net-gain strategy • Relocated infrastructure away from sensitive habitats • Reduced project footprint by over 50%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted three years of cross-seasonal ecological studies to minimise impacts • Project site carefully selected on cleared agricultural land, reducing impacts on remnant vegetation • Removed 11 turbines to avoid remnant vegetation and sensitive habitats • Redesigned and relocated the original network connection proposal to avoid impacts. 	<p>Ongoing biodiversity assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early design phase focused on minimising environmental impacts • Comprehensive management plans in place for long-term environmental stewardship.
Minimise impacts on highly productive agricultural land and explore opportunities to integrate agricultural production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project design tailored to minimise disruption to local agriculture • Less than 0.3% of the total landholding occupied by the project • Reduced number of turbines to minimise land use impact. 	<p>Integrated project design with existing land use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 3% of the total landholding occupied by the project • Compatibility with cropping and grazing activities. 	<p>Focus on coexistence with agriculture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 2% of landholdings used during operations • Ensuring coexistence between the project and current land use, including agricultural operations and grazing.
Use the project to support educational and tourism opportunities where appropriate.	<p>Supported local educational initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvester training in Ingham • Sponsorship of key tourism initiatives like Charters Towers Rush Festival • Engagement with local schools and community groups to promote renewable energy education. 	<p>Sponsored educational and community events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Joseph's School Christmas Fete • Kyalite Fishing Competition • Early education infrastructure upgrades. 	<p>Exploring opportunities to support local educational and tourism initiatives, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsorship of the Wandoan Show, Wandoan Rodeo and other local events • Pilot Community Benefit Program • Consultation about the post-approval Community Benefit Fund framework.

Commitment	Gawara Baya Stage: Pre-construction	Junction Rivers Stage: Progressing approvals	Bungaban Stage: Progressing approvals
Consult the community on the potential visual, noise, traffic, and other impacts of the project, and on the mitigation options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Altered design to remove turbines from visually sensitive areas based on feedback Consulted community about potential construction impacts and shared proposed haulage routes Ongoing Council briefings about mitigation measures ahead of construction. 	<p>Engaged the community on key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public consultations focused on visual, noise, and traffic impacts Removed turbines to reduce visual impact on the community and refined layout to reduce visual impacts on the Edward River Provided detailed assessments and mitigation options during EIS process. 	<p>Ongoing opportunities for community to learn about the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community information roadshow across two local government areas Direct engagement and consultation with neighbouring landholders Identifying key stakeholders and engaging with Council to understand values, priorities and opportunities.
Support the local economy by providing local employment and procurement opportunities.	<p>Supporting local economy through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$200,000 annual Community Benefit Fund ~300 jobs during peak construction activities Sponsorships and donations for local initiatives, including educational and community development projects. <p>Engaging with Council to understand priorities and plan for infrastructure upgrades.</p>	<p>Significant economic contributions during project lifecycle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimated \$230+ million boost to the regional economy Up to 400 local jobs during peak construction <p>More than \$60,000 invested in sponsorships and donations for community initiatives.</p>	<p>Commitment to local jobs and economic boost:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimated \$500 million will be injected to the regional economy Over 600 jobs during peak construction Principal contractors required to submit Local Content Plans to prioritise regional employment.
Offer communities the opportunity to share in the benefits of the project and consult them on the available options, including relevant governance arrangements.	<p>Established a Community Benefit Fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$200,000 available annually Grants assessed by a panel, ensuring community has a say on which projects are funded. <p>Supported local projects like amenity block upgrades and training initiatives.</p> <p>Partnering with Council on infrastructure upgrades.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback has informed commitment to a community benefit program that includes community and First Nations funds, as well as a Voluntary Planning Agreement with Council. Pilot Cost of Living relief initiative and investment in local community initiatives including village water supply project. Commitment to providing local employment and contractor opportunities once approved. 	<p>Launched a Pilot Community Benefit Fund during development phase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$50,000 initial funding Testing approach to community funding and seeking feedback to co-design program A benefit sharing framework will be implemented post approval, including an annual Community Benefit Fund.
Demonstrate responsible land stewardship over the life of the project and welcome opportunities to enhance the ecological, cultural, and/or agricultural value of the land.	<p>Prioritised land stewardship by working closely with Traditional Owners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified and protected significant cultural and environmental areas Encouraged sustainable land management practices. 	<p>Integrated ecological preservation in project design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established buffer zones around sensitive habitats Ongoing monitoring and management to ensure minimal disruption. 	<p>Early consultation to align project with existing land uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landholder inclusion in design process to minimise impacts to farming operations Developed management plans for ongoing ecological preservation.
Recycle waste materials where feasible and commit to responsible decommissioning or refurbishment/repowering of the site at the end of the project's life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Waste Management Plan will be created to ensure opportunities for recycling are identified Commitment to developing detailed decommissioning plans guided by best practice Engaging with landowners and neighbours to ensure their preferences and needs are addressed. 		

To find out more:

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