

Clean Energy Council Best Practice Charter Report

August 2025



As a signatory to the Clean Energy Council's Best Practice Charter, Windlab is committed to respectful, responsible renewable energy development. Genuine engagement goes beyond engineering and economics – it's about people. The communities who live nearby, the Traditional Owners whose sacred connection to Country spans thousands of years and our shared responsibility to protect and care for the environment.

This report highlights the journey and progress we've made to date across our most advanced projects – **Bungaban**, near Wandoan, South Queensland; **Gawara Baya**, near Ingham, North Queensland; and **Junction Rivers**, near Balranald, South-West NSW. It shows how Windlab ensures projects grow alongside communities, shaped by the voices and priorities of those who call these places home.

Our host communities are long-term partners in Australia's clean energy future.

Over the past year, that philosophy has come to life through real action – more than \$100 million committed over 30 years to benefit-sharing with communities across our portfolio, including targeted funds for First Nations partnerships, neighbour agreements, and community benefit programs.

We remain committed to continuous improvement by learning from experience, listening to feedback, and adapting our approach to strengthen outcomes. As the shift to clean energy speeds up, we're proud to be doing our part in a way that's open, local, and built on strong relationships.

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 once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work together to secure a safe climate and a more prosperous future for us all. There is no better guide than Australia's First Peoples, whose strength, innovation and custodianship over thousands of years inspire how we engage, listen, and act.

About Windlab

Windlab is a pioneer of renewable energy in Australia. For over 20 years, we've delivered clean energy projects that balance the needs of community, Country, and environment. As owners and operators, we remain focused on creating lasting value and setting new standards for responsible energy development.



CASE STUDY

Bungaban Wind Energy Project

On Auburn Hawkwood and Iman Country, across the Western Downs and Banana Shire regions, the Bungaban wind energy project represents a major step towards securing large-scale wind energy to support Australia's clean energy transition.

Through collaboration with landholders, Traditional Owners, councils, and the broader community, Bungaban is being shaped as a project that coexists with agriculture, respects cultural heritage, and delivers a meaningful legacy for the region.

Early, ongoing engagement shaping a responsible design

Since 2021, Windlab has engaged with the communities of Wandoan and Taroom to understand local values and priorities. Early and ongoing engagement has included information sessions, one-on-one meetings, and regular dialogue with neighbours, Traditional Owners, councils, and industry stakeholders.

This two-way approach has allowed Windlab to listen and incorporate legacy planning into every stage of development. Importantly, feedback from the community and councils was sought more than two years before the project's development application was lodged, allowing local perspectives to be heard and incorporated.

Engagement remains accessible and transparent, with in-person interactions supported by a dedicated 1800-number, email, and website so stakeholders can engage meaningfully when it suits them.

Through our engagement with the Iman Wardinagarri Aboriginal Corporation and the Auburn Hawkwood Peoples Aboriginal Corporation, we've committed to lasting relationships rooted in mutual respect and placing cultural values at the centre of decision-making. This commitment will be supported by voluntary Shared Benefit Agreements co-designed to support the unique aspirations of each group, across the life of the project.

Commitment 1: Engage respectfully with local community, including Traditional Owners, to seek their views and input before submitting a development application and finalising the design of the project

Commitment 2: Provide timely information and be accessible and responsive in addressing the local community's feedback and concerns throughout the life of the project

Collaborative coexistence

Bungaban has been designed to complement the region's agricultural industries. Around 1% of the project landholder area will be utilised during operations.

Host landholders helped shape the footprint which includes:

- Integration with farming, grazing, and resource industries to ensure ongoing agricultural productivity
- Incorporation of mustering laneways, paddocks, yards, and watering points

- Adoption of biosecurity protocols to protect agricultural activity.

The project will also deliver upgrades to public roads, property access tracks, gates, and grids.

Commitment 4: Minimise the impacts on highly productive agricultural land and explore opportunities to integrate agricultural production

Sharing benefits and building regional resilience

Bungaban will deliver:



Shared Benefit Agreements with the Iman and Auburn Hawkwood peoples



A Good Neighbours Program offering annual payments to neighbouring landholders within 10km of turbines



Sponsorship for local events and initiatives



Legacy project funding



Opportunities to host offset areas and accommodation camps on landholder property neighbouring the project.

The project will create up to 1,000 jobs during peak construction and inject over \$500 million into the local economy through employment, supply chain, and contracting opportunities. Early engagement is underway to ensure local participation is maximised.

Windlab is also a Foundation Sponsor of the Queensland Ag Energy Hub, supporting Queensland Farmers' Federation's work to help farmers access clear, practical information on energy efficiency, renewables, and landholder support.

Commitment 7: Offer communities the opportunity to share in the benefits of the project and consult them on the available options, including relevant governance arrangements

Commitment 6: Support the local economy by providing local employment and procurement opportunities

Ongoing consultation to address impacts and maximise benefits

To address housing and workforce accommodation needs, Windlab commissioned a Workforce Accommodation Options Report, developed with councils, local providers and community groups. It assessed:

- Housing availability and affordability
- Pressure on social and physical infrastructure
- Alignment with local preferences and existing housing strategies
- Options to maximise local benefit and minimise long-term strain.

Feedback from neighbouring landholders influenced the project's design to minimise impacts relating to access routes, noise, traffic and construction activities. It also informed the Good Neighbours Shared Benefit Program, ensuring visual, traffic, noise and proximity impacts were addressed in long-term benefit sharing.

Commitment 5: Consult the community on the potential visual, noise, traffic and other impacts of the project, and on the mitigation options

Gawara Baya

On Gugu Badhun Country, among the ridgelines and cattle country near Ingham, the 400MW Gawara Baya wind energy project is taking shape. Meaning 'Wind Song' in Gugu Badhun language, the project will generate enough clean energy to power up to 240,000 homes and cut more than 1.2 million tonnes of CO2 emissions from Australia's energy generation profile each year.

Beyond the numbers, Gawara Baya is about people, place, and a deep sense of shared purpose. The project name was gifted by the Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation, and the logo was designed by Gugu Badhun Traditional Owner, Alison Hoolihan – these acts reflect a foundation of trust, cultural recognition and shared purpose.

Responsive design informed by local feedback

Since 2020, Windlab has worked with the Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation, Hinchinbrook Shire and Charters Towers Regional councils, and its closest neighbours – the Mount Fox community, to refine the project through dialogue and collaboration. Key outcomes include:

- Removed all turbines south of Lava Plains– Mount Fox Road to reduce visual impact
- Reducing the project footprint by more than 50%, halving the number of turbines from 136 to no more than 69
- Relocated infrastructure away from sensitive habitats
- Undertaking over 8,000 hours of ecological studies.

Design continues to evolve through dialogue with landholders, the Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation and stakeholders. A dedicated on-site accommodation camp will house workers during construction to further limit local traffic,

reduce pressure on local infrastructure and support community safety.

Construction is expected to commence in 2026, and we will continue engaging with communities to ensure we're responding to local needs and delivering tangible regional benefits.

Commitment 1: Engage respectfully with the local community, including Traditional Owners, to seek their views and input before submitting a development application and finalising the design of the project

Commitment 2: Provide timely information and be accessible and responsive in addressing the local community's feedback and concerns throughout the life of the project

Commitment 5: Consult the community on the potential visual, noise, traffic and other impacts of the project, and on the mitigation options

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.

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

Commitment 3: Be sensitive to areas of high biodiversity, cultural, and landscape value in the design and operation of projects



Is **100% voluntary** and beyond regulatory requirements



20+ year commitment delivered over the life of the project



\$4 million initial investment



More than 10% improvement in biodiversity uplift across the landscape



Includes **targeted actions for 10 key species**.



Powering local opportunity through early engagement

During peak construction, Gawara Baya will create around 300 direct jobs across trades, transport, catering, environmental services, and more. Windlab is working with contractors who commit to hiring locally and using local suppliers. That means more work for people already living in the region and fewer fly-in, fly-out crews.

Local businesses have also been invited to get involved in everything from concrete supply and accommodation to fuel, water, and cleaning services, and a dedicated workforce camp will source goods and services locally wherever possible.

Windlab has been working with local schools, training providers and organisations like Construction Skills Queensland to support hands-on learning and inspire young people to explore careers in construction, engineering, and environmental science.

Initiatives like the Link2Country Find Your Futures Expo and classroom visits have already made an impact, with more to come as the project moves closer to construction.

Commitment 6: Support the local economy by providing local employment and procurement opportunities

Commitment 8: Use the project to support educational and tourism opportunities where appropriate

JCU recognises Windlab's commitment to the region and workforce development as evidenced in its involvement in regional events, openness to industry collaboration and support for SMEs in energy transition. Windlab has engaged with JCU students and has a vision to support the upskilling of students in critical energy pathways.

Professor Jenny Seddon
Deputy Vice Chancellor
Research James Cook University

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Working together with Traditional Owners to deliver outcomes

Gawara Baya is on Gugu Badhun Country and, in recognising the Native Title and cultural rights of Gugu Badhun Peoples, Windlab formed an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with the Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation.

The ILUA provides meaningful Gugu Badhun language, employment, education, and contracting outcomes for Gugu Badhun peoples. This includes funding a Gugu Badhun Liaison Officer within GBAC to support implementation, as well as the formation of an Employment Committee with Windlab and GBAC representatives working together to develop strategies needed to meet the binding employment and training commitments.

As we move from agreement-making to implementation, Windlab is working closely with GBAC and our main contractors to embed these commitments across the project.

Commitment 7: Offer communities the opportunity to share in the benefits of the project and consult them on the available options, including relevant governance arrangements

Commitment 9: 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



Sharing benefits to support regional growth and sustainable development

The Gawara Baya Community Benefit Fund will ensure a positive legacy through sustainable community development initiatives aligned with local needs.

\$200,000 is available annually for the life of the project, with grants assessed by a decision-making panel. In the early stages of project development, Windlab initiated a Pilot Community Benefit Fund to test the approach and seek feedback.

Early investments are already making a difference. More than \$60,000 has supported projects like upgrades to the Mount Fox Campground, sponsorship of the Maraka Festival in Ingham and Rush Festival in Charters Towers, and an inaugural agri-skills expo Link2Country.

Commitment 7: Offer communities the opportunity to share in the benefits of the project and consult them on the available options, including relevant governance arrangements

Events like our Link2Country Expo play a vital role in showing young people the career opportunities and pathways available. Windlab's engagement with students in Ingham, Abergowrie, and Charters Towers highlights their genuine commitment to building local skills and creating future opportunities in the clean energy sector—options that have great potential to help during quieter farming periods.

Nicole Chiesa
Managing Director,
Link 2 Country Pty Ltd

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CASE STUDY



JUNCTION RIVERS

Junction Rivers

Near Kyalite, where five iconic rivers shape the landscape and sustain local communities, Windlab is developing the 750MW Junction Rivers wind energy project. The project has the potential to power up to 434,000 NSW homes and cut more than 2 million tonnes of CO2 annually.

The project's name was chosen by the community, acknowledging the cultural, environmental and

economic significance of the region's waterways. The logo was created by Balranald-based First Nations artist Louise Murray.

Through collaboration with landholders, councils, Traditional Owners, and the broader community, Junction Rivers is being shaped as a project that respects the past, supports today's land use, and helps create a cleaner energy future for NSW.

Design grounded in local knowledge

Since 2021, Windlab has worked with landholders, councils, Traditional Owners, and community members to shape a design that fits the landscape. Over eight seasons of ecological surveys and eight weeks of pedestrian cultural heritage surveys with Registered Aboriginal Parties have guided major design changes:

- Turbines and roads align with cropping patterns to avoid disrupting farmland
- 90% of infrastructure is located on previously cleared or disturbed land
- Turbines closest to Kyalite were removed and buffers to Yanga National Park were increased to remove visual impact
- Ephemeral waterways protected by reducing crossings

- More than 80 Aboriginal heritage sites identified and avoided with turbines relocated accordingly.

A Cultural Heritage Management Plan will formalise protections in partnership with the Balranald Local Aboriginal Land Council and Registered Aboriginal Parties.

Commitment 3: Be sensitive to areas of high biodiversity, cultural, and landscape value in the design and operation of projects

Commitment 5: Consult the community on the potential visual, noise, traffic, and other impacts of the project, and on the mitigation options

Community benefits co-designed by stakeholders

The Junction Rivers community benefits were developed through consultation with local stakeholders. In 2023, Windlab launched a \$60,000 Pilot Community Benefit Program, supporting six initiatives and testing the approach.

The broader community benefit program, available once construction is underway, will include annual funds to support community projects, a voluntary planning agreement shared between two Councils, and a First Nations fund.

In 2024 we also shared an energy bill relief initiative, providing direct financial support by offering \$1,000 in electricity bill relief to residents closest to the project site.

Commitment 7: Offer communities the opportunity to share in the benefits of the project and consult them on the available options, including relevant governance arrangements

Working alongside agriculture

Less than 3% of host land will be permanently impacted by infrastructure. Windlab has worked directly with landholders to ensure the project supports ongoing farming operations.

Commitment 4: Minimise impacts on highly productive agricultural land and explore opportunities to integrate agricultural production

Commitment 10: Recycle waste materials where feasible and commit to responsible decommissioning or refurbishment/repowering of the site at the end of the project's life



Temporary fencing and signage will clearly mark work zones to maintain safety for people and livestock



Strict biosecurity controls will prevent the introduction or spread of weeds and pests



Recycling and waste management



Best-practice decommissioning and land rehabilitation.

Engaging the next generation of clean energy champions

To help inspire the next generation of clean energy workers, Windlab ran a regional workforce and skills roadshow in collaboration with local education and industry partners. The roadshow featured:

- Presentations through the Regional Industry Education Partnerships (RIEP) program
- Teacher and careers advisor workshops
- Participation in the Echuca Jobs Expo, where multiple local businesses expressed interest in project delivery.

These initiatives are laying the foundations for local careers in construction, STEM, and the clean energy sector.

Commitment 8: Use the project to support educational and tourism opportunities where appropriate

