QREC
Queensland Renewable Energy Council

Executive Insights Survey Results

OCTOBER 2026

Supported by: Create Advisory

Executive Summary

The Queensland Renewable Energy Council (QREC) has conducted its sixth Executive Insights Survey to gauge industry leaders' perspectives on the challenges and opportunities associated with the transition of Queensland's energy system.

In October 2025, the Queensland Government released its five-year Energy Roadmap. One year on, this Survey seeks to understand industry views on the effectiveness of the Energy Roadmap, how well Queensland is positioned to meet demand from new large loads such as data centres, and early experiences with the Community Benefit System, specifically Community Benefit Agreements.

Key Insights

- Industry sentiment has softened, after a partial recovery earlier in 2026. Respondents are increasingly anxious that Queensland does not have the right policy and planning settings to meet its energy transition milestones.
- One year on, most respondents consider the Energy Roadmap has not yet created the conditions needed to improve investment certainty, with calls for clearer coal exit timeframes, faster transmission delivery, and greater clarity on QIC's role.
- Policy stability is the top ranked risk for the fifth consecutive Survey, followed by the assessment process and investor confidence, reflecting additional approvals requirements and mixed signals on support for renewables.
- Survey respondents were strongly positive about the opportunity presented by data centres: the most common theme being the potential for data centres to act as creditworthy, long-term offtakers that underwrite new investment in renewable generation, storage and transmission.
- But there is work to be done – less than 10% of survey respondents considered Queensland to be well-positioned on data centres, suggesting that coordinated planning and careful energy market integration is needed to help realise the State's data centre and renewable energy aspirations.
- Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) are still relatively new, and early experiences with the Community Benefit System are mixed. Respondents broadly recognise their intent, but experiences vary depending on existing relationships, available resources and familiarity with the process. Time, cost and inconsistency in approaches between council areas remain key concerns.

Source: Stock images

Survey Overview

This is the sixth in the ongoing series of The Executive Insights Surveys to track sentiment in the Queensland renewables industry over time.

Purpose and context

- The Executive Insights Survey has been established to inform QREC's advocacy for industry, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data to complement a broad range of advocacy activities, with findings becoming increasingly valuable over time.

Response rate

- The insights outlined in this Survey and report have been derived from a sample size of n=22.
- The analysis and commentary provided in this document draw out valuable insights from the responses provided while acknowledging the limitations of this sample size. **The Survey is undertaken anonymously.**

Themes

- Each Survey revisits broad sentiment while also exploring different targeted themes.
- This iteration focuses on the Energy Roadmap one year on, meeting new demand from large loads such as data centres, and the roll out of Community Benefit Agreements.

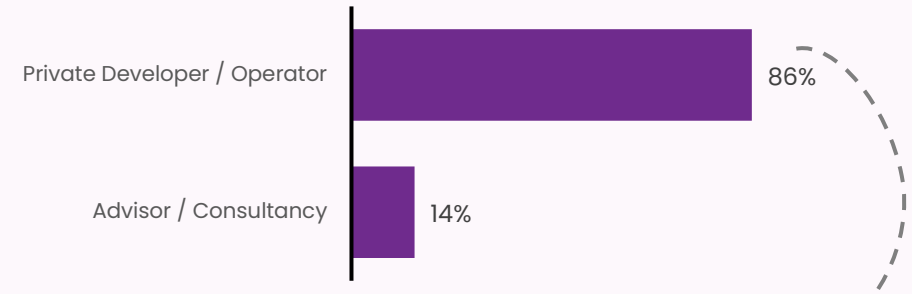
Wambo Wind Farm (under construction), Cubico Sustainable Investments

Respondent Demographics

The Survey featured responses from organisations contributing in various ways to the clean energy transformation.

The largest cohort of respondents were private developers and operators

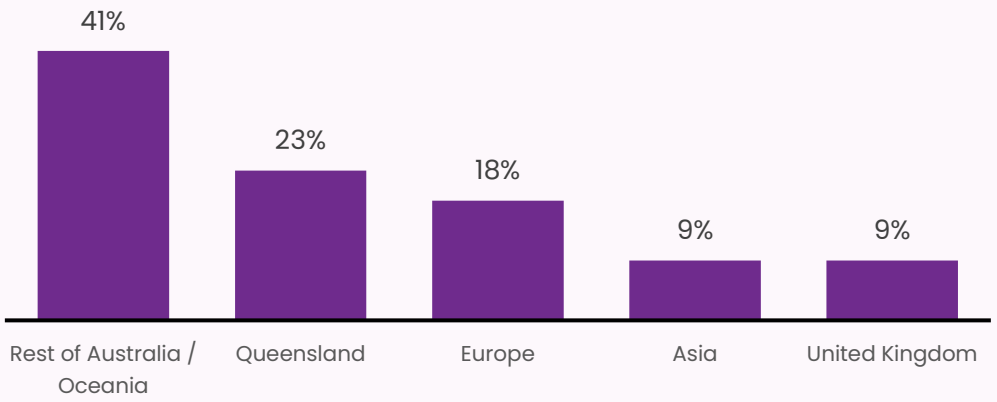
Figure 1: Organisation represented, % of unique organisations



Most **private developers and operators** surveyed focused on wind, battery storage, and solar solutions, with a smaller number of respondents representing renewable fuels and pumped hydro projects.

Rest of Australia / Oceania was the most common location for respondent headquarters, with most companies headquartered outside of Queensland

Figure 2: Location of organisation headquarters, % of unique organisations



The respondent mix has shifted over time. Respondents to this Survey include private developers and operators.

Industry Sentiment

Industry sentiment continues to be shaped by mixed signals about the State's support for renewables, alongside additional approval requirements, including the proposed Code of Conduct.

Industry sentiment has softened again, reflecting mixed policy signals and growing approvals complexity

- Respondents highlighted that changes to the planning framework, renewable energy targets and coal-fired generation timeframes have created mixed signals on the State's support for renewables, reducing the certainty needed to commit development funding.
- Together with higher construction and capital costs, these are adding pressure to project viability, with some respondents noting investment focus shifting to other jurisdictions.
- Community support remains widely recognised as vital, with respondents noting that community and political acceptance are closely linked and demonstrating regional benefits helps build confidence.
- Only 14% of respondents consider Queensland is progressing in the right direction to meet its energy transition milestones, which is down from the previous Survey.

Kennedy Energy Park, Windlab

Respondent quotes related to industry sentiment

"Policy uncertainty over the last 18 months has significantly reduced investor confidence, particularly for onshore wind… The deferral of coal plant closures in Qld has been a critical change in policy that has impacted market sentiment and demand for renewable energy investment in the short to medium term."

"The current policy and approvals uncertainty with unnecessary complexity and delays due to additional hurdles compared to other industries in Qld is creating significant investor uncertainty in Qld."

"Investment decisions have profoundly changed as a result of the Qld Government's changes to planning legislation… This has led to uncertainty to proceed with, but more particularly initiate or acquire any new renewable or BESS projects…"

- Survey respondents

Risks and Opportunities Ranked

Policy stability remains the top ranked risk and is now also the top ranked opportunity.

Figure 3: Top 5 sectoral risks ranked, with changes since last Survey

	Themes	Risk Rank	Change in rank
	Policy stability	1	-
	Assessment process	2	↑1
	Investor confidence / investment attractiveness	3	↓1
	Community support / acceptance	4	-
	Transmission availability & capacity	5	-

Respondents rank the same ten themes as both risks and opportunities. In risks, 'Investor confidence / investment attractiveness' has risen from 8th in the first Survey to 3rd, while the 'assessment process' has risen to 2nd, likely reflecting the continuing effects and implementation of changes to the approvals framework (see pages 12 to 14).

Figure 4: Top 5 sectoral opportunities ranked, with changes since last Survey

	Themes	Opportunity Rank	Change in rank
	Policy stability	1	↑1
	Community support / acceptance	2	↓1
	Assessment process	3	↑2
	Investor confidence / investment attractiveness	4	↓1
	Transmission availability & capacity	5	↓1

'Policy stability' has narrowly overtaken 'community support / acceptance' as the highest-ranked opportunity overall, although more respondents selected 'community support / acceptance' as their number one opportunity. 'Assessment process' has also risen, from fifth to third.

Note: Rankings are based on a weighted score of respondents' rankings. Only 1 to 3 points separate the top three themes in each table. Change in rank compares each theme's position with the previous Survey.

Risks and Opportunities Themes

Respondents identified policy uncertainty and the approvals environment as key risks, while streamlined assessment, community support and policy stability are highlighted opportunities.

Risks

Policy uncertainty: Respondents noted that changes to renewable energy targets, planning frameworks and coal-fired power station timeframes have reduced the certainty proponents need before committing development funding, with some perceiving reduced support for renewables.

Approvals requirements: Respondents noted that impact assessment, Social Impact Assessment and Community Benefit Agreement requirements, together with the exercise of call-in powers, have added time, cost and uncertainty to project development.

Opportunities

Streamlining assessment: A clearer, more coordinated assessment pathway with less duplication between local, State and Federal processes was seen as the area where government action could have the most immediate effect.

Building community support: Demonstrating regional benefits and building community acceptance were seen as tangible opportunities to help build greater policy stability.

Policy stability and enabling infrastructure: Stable, long-term settings maintained across electoral cycles, together with timely transmission delivery, were seen as key to unlocking investment.

Respondent quotes related to risks and opportunities

"There is ever more opportunity to highlight benefits for regional communities. When benefits outweigh perceived impacts, acceptance increases."

"The biggest opportunity is accelerating transmission delivery and improving network access certainty. Together with stable policy settings and more efficient assessment processes, this would unlock significant private investment..."

"Removing duplication and unnecessary hurdles and uncertainty for renewable energy approvals will significantly improve investor confidence in Qld."

Wambo Wind Farm (under construction), Cubico Sustainable Investments

- Survey respondents

Energy Roadmap One Year On

One year on, most respondents consider the Energy Roadmap has not yet improved investment certainty, with calls for clearer coal exit timeframes, faster transmission delivery and greater clarity on QIC's role. This sits within a broader pattern of concern about investment conditions evident across Surveys since early 2025.

Wambo Wind Farm (under construction), Cubico Sustainable Investments

Respondents suggested a range of changes to the Energy Roadmap's key initiatives

- **Recognising renewables:** Clearer recognition of renewables, supported by storage, as the lowest-cost new generation, alongside clarity on GOC offtake appetite.
- **Emerging demand:** Better reflecting growing demand from electrification, data centres and industry, within a broader Queensland development plan.
- **Transmission:** Faster priority transmission delivery, greater connection certainty and enabling proponents to build transmission assets.
- **Coal-fired generation:** Clear closure dates for coal-fired power stations were the most common change sought, with some noting the Electricity Maintenance Guarantee has removed price signals. These were also the lowest rated Roadmap signposts in December 2025.
- **QIC and the Investor Gateway:** Greater clarity on QIC's role, with respondents noting limited communication on progress and potential confusion given its multiple responsibilities.

Quotes related to the Energy Roadmap one year on

"The greatest opportunity now is implementation. Priorities should include accelerating transmission delivery, improving connection certainty, streamlining assessment processes and maintaining stable policy settings."

"At present the EMG [Electricity Maintenance Guarantee] *has removed price signals for investment and given the Energy Roadmap's short time horizon, there is not adequate visibility over when these price signals will return."*

"Clear and committed closure dates for coal generation. A commitment to replace closing coal generators with renewable generators."

"Attracting capital for renewable energy in Queensland requires a clear plan for coal fleet retirement and some level of political support for the sector."

"Greater coordination between energy policy, transmission planning and project assessment processes would further strengthen Queensland's attractiveness for private capital. Continued engagement with industry on the implementation of the Investor Gateway and other market mechanisms would also help ensure these initiatives deliver the certainty required for long-term investment decisions."

- Survey respondents

Meeting New Demand

Data centres are seen as a significant opportunity, with respondents identifying a range of ways data centre investment could support renewable energy development in Queensland.

Data centres could provide significant new demand for renewable energy, but realising the opportunity will depend on how new loads are integrated into Queensland's energy system.

- Respondents saw significant potential for data centre investment to drive new renewable generation, storage and transmission.
- However, slow and costly connections, together with competition for approvals, skills and connection capacity could limit the opportunity.

Respondent quotes related to meeting new demand

"To maximise this opportunity, planning for new large loads should be closely aligned with transmission development and renewable energy investment. Queensland has an opportunity to position itself as a destination for energy-intensive industries by providing clear pathways for grid connection, timely delivery of network infrastructure and stable policy settings that support both energy users and renewable energy developers."

"The data centre investment will require significant increase in required generation capacity in Qld; the opportunity is to structure the facilitating infrastructure so that the generation development investment happens where it is wanted and is effective from a state development - not just energy supply - perspective. The opportunity for renewables to be the main contributor to the new DC demand is great."

"Alternative load requirements, avoidance of increasing consumer energy bills, positive messaging around the benefits of RE, offsetting CAPEX. Noting that alignment on DC [data centre] *development timelines and supporting renewable energy approvals has the potential to stall DC investment."*

- Survey respondents

Respondents identified a range of specific opportunities, including

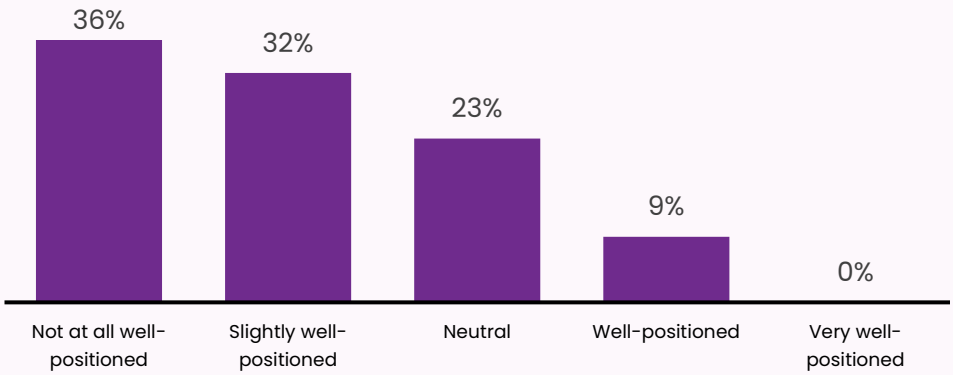
	Long-term offtake: Data centres as foundational Power Purchase Agreement customers, providing demand certainty for new generation and storage.
	Co-location: Behind-the-meter supply on renewable energy sites, reducing transmission constraints and optimising land use.
	Coordinated planning: Aligning the location of new loads with generation and transmission to support regional development.
	Renewable supply: Encouraging large new loads to contract new renewable generation and storage.
	Regional investment: Increased investment, jobs and economic growth in host communities.

Meeting New Demand

However, most respondents consider Queensland is not yet ready to support new large loads.

Over a third of respondents consider Queensland is not at all well-positioned to support new large loads

Figure 5: Responses to "How well positioned are Queensland's current network planning, connections and general energy policy settings for supporting new large loads such as data centres and industrial and commercial electrification?", % of respondents



- Over a third of respondents consider Queensland's network planning, connections and energy policy settings not at all well-positioned to support new large loads, with only 9% considering them well-positioned.
- Respondents noted that network connections remain costly and slow, and that the Energy Roadmap does not yet reflect the scale or pace of emerging demand from data centres, electrification and industry.
- Several respondents called for a detailed strategy for large loads, with coordinated planning of generation, transmission and new loads.

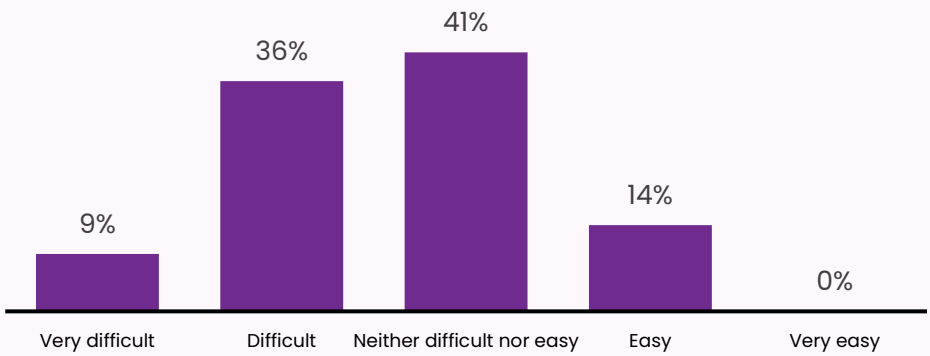
Battery installation, Stanwell

Community Benefit Agreements

CBAs are still new and early experiences are mixed, largely reflecting the council involved and existing local relationships.

Early experiences of negotiating CBAs are mixed, with respondents divided on how easy the arrangements have been to work with

Figure 6: Responses to "Recognising the relatively short time the system has been in operation, based on your organisation's experience, how have Queensland's current arrangements for negotiating Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) been to work with?", % of respondents



- CBAs are still new, with many respondents having negotiated only a small number of agreements, so experiences to date reflect early interactions.
- More positive experiences were associated with established relationships with councils and communities, early completion of assessment work, and greater familiarity with the process.
- Respondents also identified greater clarity around contributions, consistency across council areas and streamlined negotiations as areas that could further improve the process.

Respondents suggested a range of improvements to CBA arrangements, including

- Clearer State guidance on the scope of CBAs
- Benchmarks for reasonable contributions
- A process for resolving disputes
- A coordinated approach for projects spanning multiple councils

QREC Members' Forum: Understanding Community Responses to Renewable Energy Development – Brisbane, Jul 2026

Community Benefit Agreements

Respondents broadly support the intent of CBAs and see a pathway to making them work well, with clearer guidance, experience and capacity across the system key to more consistent outcomes.

The CBA mechanism is broadly supported, with challenges mainly in implementation

- Across all levels of experience, respondents recognised benefits of CBAs, including a more structured framework for discussing local priorities and improved communication with communities.
- Where CBAs have worked well, early preparation, established relationships and familiarity with the process were key factors, suggesting a pathway to more consistent outcomes.
- The main challenges relate to implementation: negotiations have added time to project development, with delays of up to 18 months cited, and different approaches across council areas can add complexity, particularly for projects spanning multiple local government areas.
- Some respondents raised concerns about the balance of negotiating positions where CBAs must be agreed before projects can be submitted for approval, as well as whether benefits are always directed to host communities.

Quotes related to Community Benefit Agreements

"The CBA arrangements have been mostly beneficial. They have given councils a formal role early in project development and led to more structured discussions about local priorities such as roads, housing, local employment and community funding."

"CBAs have provided a robust, clear way forward for managing community benefits. The issue has been the lack of capability and resources within Councils, who are at the leading edge of this without proper guidance from State government."

- Survey respondents

Quotes related to Community Benefit Agreements

"The process to achieve the CBA has taken almost 18 months, which has stalled the development. However, I appreciate the issues that this has also created for the Council. The SIA process has, I believe, improved the communication with stakeholders and the community…"

"Without consistent guidelines on acceptable ranges for community benefits, the requirement for CBAs provide[s] significant unilateral power to councils to demand unreasonable expectations on renewable projects…"

"Re multiple LGAs - LGs vary in their approach and sophistication, making contiguous negotiations difficult and feedback on SIAs often contradictory."

"…the CBA arrangements do promote consistency and for greenfield projects can make community benefits negotiations much more efficient."

- Survey respondents

QREC collaborates with industry, communities, and all levels of government to drive the growth of Queensland's renewable energy sector.

As Queensland's only renewable peak industry body, we represent stakeholders across solar, wind, pumped hydro, electricity transmission and distribution, and battery storage.

Our leadership in policy development promotes leading practices and fosters positive community relationships. Through this focus, we aim to power regional growth, support Queensland's economic future, and provide access to clean, reliable and affordable energy for all.

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