

OUTBACK REGIONAL ENERGY HUB BROUGHT TO LIFE

11 June 2020

Sustainable new industries, more jobs and a more robust economy in the central west is within closer reach with the Queensland Government's investment of \$300 000 towards the RAPAD initiative to develop a Renewable Energy Hub in Barcaldine.

The Remote Area Planning and Development board (RAPAD) has collaborated with leading renewable energy company Sunshot Energy to undertake a study into establishing a new solar farm that has the potential to create new industries.

The renewable energy hub project aims to;

- Create a minimum 200 new long-term full-time jobs.
- Increase the local population by 38%.
- Regional economic benefit of \$41 million per annum and an annual wage increase in the region of \$16.2 million.
- Generate a robust segment of the local economy which is immune to drought.

"The State Government's support for this modern and sustainable approach to establishing emerging industries underpinned by solar power is warmly welcomed," said RAPAD Chair Tony Rayner.

Sunshot Energy's Executive Chairman, Professor Ross Garnaut AC has been working with RAPAD since 2017 and will carry out the study.

"This is the best solar country in eastern Australia and just about as good as any in the world," Professor Garnaut said.

The Barcaldine Renewable Energy Hub is a RAPAD initiative developed in partnership with Sunshot Energy, Barcaldine Regional Council and other corporate partners.

"To have solar farms in our region is not enough, while we welcome forward thinking energy providers establishing themselves in our region, when the construction is complete almost all of the work and contracts dry up and the local economy sees little benefit," Councillor Rayner said.

"If we can attract new industries in areas like manufacturing, waste management, primary production or processing that will have access to cheap and clean power, that will make a real difference in terms of jobs, the economy, sustainability and liveability of the local region," he said.

"This is about a practical plan to generate more long-term jobs and diversify our western economies. Barcaldine were happy to opt in and take the lead in this exciting RAPAD initiative. There is still plenty of hard work to do, the Government's support and financial contribution are gladly received at this critical time," said Barcaldine Regional Mayor Sean Dillon.

ENDS

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