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RAPAD RENEWABLE ENERGY VISION TO POWER QUEENSLAND ENDORSED AT RECENT FORUM

A recent renewable energy forum convened by the Central West Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) saw its vision to generate Queensland's electricity needs, and bring transformative benefit to the region, endorsed by all in attendance.

The forum, led by Professor Ross Garnaut AC, renowned economist and renewable energy expert, saw a small number of leading renewable energy companies, local and State Government representatives including Minister Anthony Lynham, Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, come together to discuss how to further RAPAD's renewable energy vision.

Cr Rob Chandler, RAPAD Chair, Barcaldine Regional Council Mayor and forum attendee said, "it was fantastic as it allowed us to not only gain endorsement from people like Professor Garnaut, but from all those in the room, that we have a strategic advantage and it can be done. The forum attendees gave RAPAD their full support our vision was worth pursuing".

Cr Ed Warren, RAPAD Director and Longreach Regional Council Mayor who also attended concurred, "Our region gets 300+ sun days a year and we have considerable geothermal reserves. We want to convert this to not only provide clean, stable and reliable power for the state, but also provide jobs in our communities and substantial savings to the state budget."

In 2017 RAPAD commissioned the Regional Australia Institute (RAI) to undertake research on its behalf, to identify key areas of potential economic growth, and renewable energy was one of those areas.

In the report RAI identified the community service obligation (CSO) paid to the RAPAD region was expected to be \$384m between 2018 and 2031.

The report went on to say if the RAPAD region met the States renewable energy target of 50%, with residential and small business self consuming energy produced rather than feeding it back into the grid it stands to generate a saving of more than \$192m in forgone CSO subsidy payments out to 2031.

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Regarding challenges Cr Chandler stated, “of course there will be some challenges but everyone felt not only do we have an enormous resource in the region but we have a genuine opportunity to create reliable cheap energy, create demand, create jobs, and create transformative change. And that’s what it’s really all about, bringing people and jobs into to the region.”

“Currently over \$100m has been invested in renewables in our region which is a fantastic achievement but we want to broaden the model and use the region’s natural advantages to not only provide green energy for the grid, but also make us competitive as a location for energy intensive industries, use it to attract energy intensive industries into the region”, said Cr Chandler.

Professor Ross Garnaut AC is scheduled to be in the RAPAD region in April to speak to the RAPAD Board and RAPAD has meetings planned with key Queensland Government departments in late March who have indicated their willingness to support RAPAD in taking the next step.

“It’s exciting times ahead”, said Cr Chandler.

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For more information go to:

- www.rapad.com.au;
- <http://www.rapad.com.au/assets/Uploads/RAPAD-Renewable-Energy-forum-post-meeting-summary-final.pdf>;
- <http://www.rapad.com.au/assets/Uploads/RAPAD-Strategic-Plan-2018-20-print.pdf>
- <http://www.rapad.com.au/assets/Documents/Media-Releases/RAPAD-Pathfinder-Report-July-2017.pdf>

RAPAD’s Renewable Energy Vision is for our region to generate Queensland’s electricity needs from renewable energy, in turn facilitating transformative economic and social benefit for our region, while becoming an energy superpower of the low carbon world.

Picture : (l-r) Professor Ross Garnaut AC, Cr Geoff Morton, RAPAD Director, Mayor Diamantina Shire Council, Hon Anthony Lynham Minister Natural Resources, Mines and Energy, Cr Rob Chandler, RAPAD Chair, Mayor Barcaldine Regional Council, and Cr Ed Warren, RAPAD Director, Mayor Longreach Regional Council, at the recent RAPAD Renewable Energy Forum in Brisbane.