

Coonabarabran:

14-22 John Street
Coonabarabran NSW 2357

PO Box 191
Coonabarabran NSW 2357

ABN: 63 348 671 239



Calls from within Shire
1300 795 099

Calls from outside Shire area

Coonabarabran:
02 6849 2000

Coolah: 02 6378 5000

Fax: 02 6842 1337

Email:
info@warrumbungle.nsw.gov.au

Coonabarabran - Coolah - Dunedoo - Baradine - Binnaway - Mendooran

Please address all mail to:
The General Manager

Please refer enquiries to: Doc ID: 203256

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Peter O'Doherty
Senior Project Manager
Skills Policy
NSW Department of Education

peter.odoherty@det.nsw.edu.au
renewableenergyskills@det.nsw.edu.au

Dear Peter and Team

Comments on the Draft NSW 2030 Renewable Energy Workforce Plan ('Workforce Plan')

Thank you for the opportunity for Council to comment on the abovementioned document.

As you are aware, Council is a key player in the CWO REZ and it wishes to see the provision of an adequate construction workforce to deliver projects, together with optimal benefits accruing to locals seeking a job and to local businesses.

Council notes that in relation to the delivery of the five REZ zones across NSW by 2030, the draft Workforce Plan suggests some 16,000 to 22,000 jobs will be required. Council also notes that:

- a) There is relatively low unemployment in our Shire;
- b) The renewable energy sector is likely to compete for workers traditionally employed in agriculture;
- c) Competition for workers may generate wage pressures - the impact on the existing workforce not just in competing for skilled workers but in the impact on other support roles if there is a demand in the energy sector. For example, if bus drivers are required to transport workers from camps to worksites, this may divert available workers from their traditional roles like driving school buses or providing community transport. Higher wages offered by renewable energy companies to meet the demand for support roles like this could lead to competition for labour putting pressure on other sectors.
- d) The construction phase for the CWO REZ is relatively short, so has implications for long term job security; and
- e) TAFE training capacity in the region appears limited. It is recommended that TAFE facilities be upgraded to support delivery of face-to-face courses (particularly trades) in local as well as REZ demand – e.g. construction, trades, and that mobile training units be scaled up as these could also service local employers, including but not limited to local government.

- f) Recommend including Veterans as a target cohort and that recognition of their skills be incorporated in the Mobility pillar

Council notes the Workforce Plan briefly lists many current and proposed apprenticeship, traineeship, VET and TAFE programs. Given the urgency of delivering the CWO REZ major transmission line plus about 30 energy generation and storage projects within the next six years Council recommends that the Workforce Plan be revised to show explicit, detailed plans regarding say no more than ten specific actions.

The ten actions should focus on the multiple aspects of delivering jobs in the field; for example:

- a) Fit-for-purpose education and training by both Government and non-government entities;
- b) Buy-in by the renewable energy industry representative associations;
- c) Buy-in by the renewable energy developers; and
- d) Buy-in by the engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) contractors who actually build the projects. This last aspect is critically important as the contractors typically train up and bring their own teams into a region, which often negates employment opportunities for locals.

Council suggests that each action detail:

- a) What specific outcome is to be delivered and how that outcome will actually generate additional jobs in the field;
- b) At what cost;
- c) By when; and
- d) Which organisation will be responsible to deliver the outcome.

Council would be pleased to discuss any of the content herein.

Yours sincerely



ROGER BAILEY
GENERAL MANAGER