



Renewable Energy Community Benefit Framework

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: 22 MAY 2024

1. RENEWABLE ENERGY COMMUNITY BENEFIT FRAMEWORK

The objectives of the Renewable Energy Community Benefit Framework (**Framework**) are to promote benefit sharing strategies associated with the development of state significant and regionally significant renewable energy projects in the Armidale Regional Council Local Government Area (**LGA**) that:

- secure off-site benefits for the community so that renewable energy development delivers a future sustainable net community benefit;
- ensure that the wider community share in the benefits resulting from renewable energy development in the LGA;
- ensure that the costs and benefits of renewable energy development will be equitably distributed within the community and inter-generationally;
- ensure that community benefit outcomes are determined through appropriate governance processes which include REZ community representation.

2. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Section 1.3 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (**EP&A Act**) provides the legislative basis for the Framework. Subdivision 2 of the EP&A Act provides the legislative basis for planning agreements.

3. PLANNING AGREEMENTS

Armidale Regional Council (**ARC**) will use the planning agreement provisions of the EP&A Act to deliver the objectives of the Framework. A planning agreement is a voluntary agreement between Council and a developer, who has made a development application, under which the developer is required to dedicate land free of cost; pay a monetary contribution; provide any other material benefit to be used for or applied towards a public purpose.

4. COMMUNITY BENEFIT

Community benefit excludes that which is required to mitigate adverse impacts of development including (but not limited to) host and adjoining landowner payments required to obtain consent or prescribed by legislation. The financial value of community benefit will vary from project to project, however, the minimum community benefit threshold for ARC is:

- \$850 per megawatt [of capacity](#) per annum for solar energy development for the life of the development (including future modified or recommissioned projects).

- \$1050 per megawatt [of capacity](#) per annum for wind energy development for the life of the development (including future modified or recommissioned projects).
- \$850 per megawatt of capacity [per annum](#) for energy storage developments (including pumped hydro).

Note: Amounts above are in 2023 dollars and will be adjusted annually for CPI.

Projects that do not deliver community benefits above this threshold are likely to be considered not in the public interest.

Developers who demonstrate involvement with and for the community will be encouraged against those who show no such initiatives. Council requires developers to be responsible members of the community eg. The support of an ongoing workforce, disincentives for FIFO practices, landscape rehabilitation incorporated into projects.

5. PUBLIC PURPOSE

The public purpose that funds will be applied to include works to embellish public spaces, the provision of spaces for public recreation and community facilities, the provision of affordable housing and works to rehabilitate or conserve biodiversity values, options to improve energy efficiency, community batteries. low-cost electricity deals to allow local use of renewable energy, low-cost electricity deals for local manufacturers and supply chains or some other public purpose if the Council reasonably considers that the public interest would be better served by applying the funds towards that other purpose.

6. GOVERNANCE AND INTER-GENERATIONAL EQUITY

Council will ensure a governance structure that as far as possible reflects the needs and concerns of the immediate communities of impact and the broader region to assist with determining the public purpose for funds.

Council will manage funds to ensure that they benefit future generations as well as the present generation.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW		
Responsible Business Unit	Planning and Activation	
Responsible Officer	Chief Officer Planning and Activation	
Date/s adopted	<i>Council Executive</i> 29 April 2024	<i>Council</i> 22 May 2024
Date/s of previous adoptions	25 October 2023	
Date of next review	22 May 2025	
TRIM Reference		

