

# Bill Overview

**This factsheet provides an overview of amendments proposed to the Queensland planning framework through the *Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025* (the Bill).**

The primary objective of the Bill is to amend the *Planning Act 2016* (Planning Act) to introduce a community benefit system into the Queensland planning framework for renewable energy development. The community benefit system will provide the ability to identify, avoid, manage, mitigate and counterbalance the direct, indirect, and cumulative social impacts of specific identified land uses. Initially, it is proposed that wind farms and large-scale solar farms be subject to the new community benefit system.

In Queensland, there are varied approaches to regulating renewable and non-renewable energy developments. This has resulted in inconsistency in regulation for industry, uncertainty for the community, inadequate consultation with stakeholders and no community benefit sharing.

To date, development for wind farms and solar farms have not been required to identify, consider or mitigate the indirect or cumulative social impacts they may have at a local level on a host community. In practice this means that local government and the community cannot ensure a positive legacy benefit commensurate to the scale of social impact because there is no formal mechanism or minimum requirement for a proponent to undertake social impact assessment or commit to delivery of community benefit.

## What does the Bill do?

The Bill will:

- establish a community benefit system under the Planning Act comprised of two core components:
  - social impact assessment (SIA)
  - community benefit agreement (CBA)
- require a proponent to conduct a social impact assessment and enter into a community benefit agreement with the local government (as a minimum) before lodging a development application;
- provide for the Planning Regulation 2017 (Planning Regulation) to prescribe the uses subject to the community benefit system;
- provide reserve powers to the chief executive of the department administering the Planning Act to:
  - allow a development application to be lodged without a social impact assessment and/or community benefit agreement
  - impose conditions for social impacts
- provide transitional provisions to clarify how the *Planning Act 2016* and subsequent Planning Regulation amendments will apply to a development application that has been made, or lodged, but not decided.

Amendments are also proposed to the *City of Brisbane Act 2010*, the *Local Government Act 2009* and the *Planning and Environment Court Act 2016*.

## Why do we need these amendments?

The introduction of the community benefit system will require proponents to invest time and effort into building social licence with a host community and local government (as a minimum) in advance of the formal development assessment process. The community benefit system will also ensure that local governments, on behalf of the communities that they represent, are empowered to make decisions and negotiate outcomes around community benefits prior to development assessment, enabling positive legacy outcomes for affected local and regional host communities.

Frontloading the requirement for proponents to build social licence with communities before a development application is made also provides certainty to all stakeholders on minimum mandatory requirements under the Queensland planning framework to undertake community consultation as part of social impact assessment process.

In summary, the amendments will facilitate:

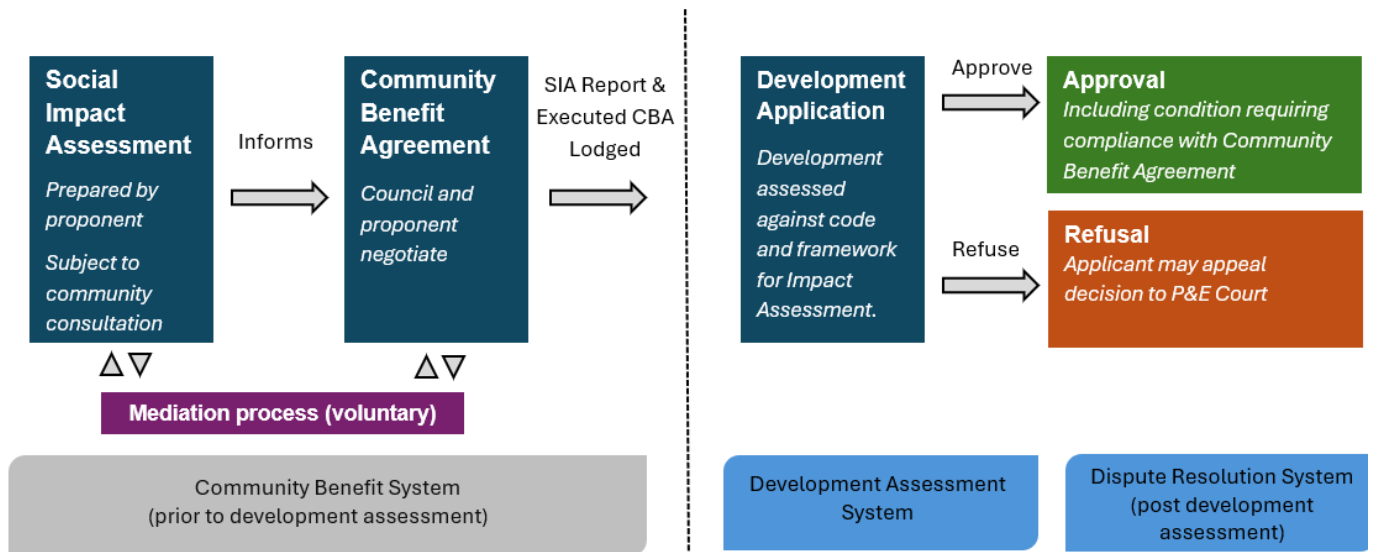
- community awareness of renewable energy proposals subject to the community benefit system prior to development assessment
- consideration of the social impact of renewable energy development on host communities
- a formal mechanism to undertake the social impact assessment process

- proponents building social licence with host communities
- a formal mechanism for achieving community benefit and positive legacy for host communities
- a consistent assessment of wind farm and large-scale solar farm development across Queensland

## Process overview for the community benefit system

The figure below represents the new community benefit system and its relationship to the existing development assessment system and the dispute resolution system under the Queensland planning framework.

### Community Benefit System (SIA and CBA) Process



## What are the key elements of the Bill?

The below section provides an overview of the key details of the legislative amendments proposed by the Bill:

Proposed Amendments	
<b>Planning Act</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• defines what a SIA and CBA are, and how they will be implemented</li> <li>• requires a proponent to conduct a SIA</li> <li>• requires a proponent to enter into a CBA before lodging a development application</li> <li>• requires a SIA and CBA to be submitted as part of a properly made development application</li> <li>• provides for the Planning Regulation to prescribe the uses which require a SIA and CBA</li> <li>• grants the chief executive of the department administering the Planning Act discretionary powers to:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ allow a development application to be properly made without a SIA and/or CBA</li> <li>○ impose conditions for social impacts</li> </ul> </li> <li>• provides for a mediation process to support SIA and CBA processes and negotiations</li> <li>• provides transitional provisions to clarify how the Act amendments will apply to a development application that has been made, or lodged, but not decided.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Acts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• amends the <i>City of Brisbane Act 2010</i> and <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> to:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ enable local governments to set fees and recover costs associated with SIA and CBA, including mediation</li> <li>○ require local government to keep registers about CBAs and cost recovery.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• amends the <i>Planning and Environment Court Act 2016</i> to provide for the ability for declaratory proceedings to be made about certain aspects of a SIA and CBA.</li> </ul>

## What are the supporting amendments of the Bill?

To deliver the Bill, supporting amendments are proposed to the following instruments under the Queensland planning framework:

- Planning Regulation 2017
- Development Assessment Rules (DA Rules)
- State Development Assessment Provisions (SDAP)

It is also proposed to establish a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Guideline as a statutory instrument under the Queensland planning framework.

Proposed amendments to the Planning Regulation, DA Rules, SDAP and the SIA Guideline have been made available concurrent to Parliamentary Committee consideration of the Bill to assist understanding of how the changes will be implemented and operationalised.

It is intended that commencement of the amendments to the Regulation and statutory instruments will coincide with commencement of the Bill.

For information regarding the proposed amendments to the Planning Regulation and statutory instruments, please see the factsheet: *Amendments to the Planning Regulation 2017 and statutory instruments*.

## Further information

For further information please contact the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning via [renewablesplanning@dasilgp.qld.gov.au](mailto:renewablesplanning@dasilgp.qld.gov.au).