

# Media release

## JOINT STATEMENT

Premier and Minister for the Arts

The Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk

Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment

The Honourable Curtis Pitt

Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports

and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water

Supply

The Honourable Mark Bailey

Minister for Disability Services, Minister for

Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on

North Queensland

The Honourable Coralee O'Rourke



## **Palaszczuk Plan to power North Queensland jobs and drive down energy costs**

The Palaszczuk Government has released a plan to unlock a wave of energy projects to power the North Queensland economy and support 5000 jobs.

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk in Townsville today joined Energy Minister Mark Bailey, Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland Coralee O'Rourke, Member for Thuringowa Aaron Harper and Member for Townsville Scott Stewart to launch the *Powering North Queensland* plan.

The Premier said the State Budget, to be delivered on 13 June, would invest \$386 million into the *Powering North Queensland* plan.

"Our plan will not only deliver investment and jobs to North Queensland but will also help to secure energy supply and drive down energy costs for consumers," she said.

"Under the plan, we will deliver a transmission line for renewable energy projects across the region and contribute funding to the proposed hydro-electric power station at Burdekin Falls Dam."

"The \$386 million committed in the State Budget is a down payment on future energy security and 5000 jobs for North Queensland."

Actions under the Powering North Queensland plan include:

- \$150 million reinvestment of Powerlink dividends for the development of strategic transmission infrastructure to support a clean energy hub, with up to 1000 jobs for Powerlink construction of infrastructure, in addition to the

approximately 3600 jobs that will be created in the development of the three proposed renewable energy projects along the transmission line;

- \$100 million reinvestment of Stanwell dividends to help fund the proposed hydro-electric power station at Burdekin Falls Dam. Subject to feasibility investigations and other dam construction works, project construction will be targeted to commence from 2020, and support up to 200 jobs;
- \$100 million equity injection and reinvestment of dividends towards improvement works to ensure that the Burdekin Falls Dam continues to meet design standards, which is estimated to support around 250 jobs, and will support the proposed hydro-electric power station; and
- commissioning a hydro-electric study to assess options for deploying new hydro in the state, including North Queensland.

The Premier said the Government was making these vital, economy-growing investments on behalf of Queenslanders by reinvesting the SunWater dividend and part of Powerlink and Stanwell dividends.

Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment, Curtis Pitt, said these 2017-18 Budget initiatives underlined the government's ongoing commitment to investing in regional communities, renewable energy, and jobs.

"We're ensuring our Government owned corporations are delivering new energy infrastructure and energy security to drive new investments in energy projects and new jobs in regional Queensland," Mr Pitt said.

"This extensive pipeline of clean energy projects is also opening the door for the region to become a hub for the renewable manufacturing and services industry.

"This plan will power North Queensland's communities and its industries with energy and jobs for the future and it will help further stabilise electricity prices.

"These far-reaching initiatives show how we are shaping the future of our state and creating jobs through our economic plan including the first two State Budgets I have delivered and continuing into the 2017-18 Budget on June 13."

Ms Palaszczuk said the state's North had a significant pipeline of committed and proposed energy projects which would bolster generation in the north.

"Since January 2016 North Queensland has seen an unprecedented level of renewable energy investment activity, with more than 830 megawatts of large-scale projects either commencing construction or finalising commercial arrangements," the Premier said.

"It is estimated these projects will deliver \$1.6 billion of infrastructure spending and create more than 1400 jobs."

The Premier said a new transmission line could help to unlock around 2000 megawatts of wind, pumped hydro and solar projects in North Queensland, which would create 3600 jobs.

"The clean energy hub would connect the 75MW wind farm at Forsayth being developed by Infigen, the 520MW Kidston Hydro and Solar project being developed by Genex and

the Kennedy Energy Park, a combination of wind and solar generation with a capacity of 1200MW near Hughenden or other projects in the area.”

Minister Bailey said the Plan also involved investigating potential hydro sites in North Queensland and across the state that could be developed to provide baseload renewable power.

“This extensive pipeline of clean energy projects will open the door for the North to become a hub for the renewable manufacturing and services industry,” he said.

“This plan will power North Queensland’s communities and industries with the energy and jobs of the future.”

Minister O’Rourke said the Powering North Queensland Plan builds on the Palaszczuk Government’s ongoing efforts to stabilise electricity prices for regional Queensland.

“We know people in the North are really concerned about power prices. An important part in stabilising prices is making sure we invest in local, North Queensland infrastructure,” Mrs O’Rourke said.

“Excitingly, the transmission line will support an Energy Hub that will generate North Queensland energy for North Queensland businesses and families.

“Our long-term energy strategy for the North will also mean jobs for our regions”

Minister Bailey said a lack of Federal leadership on climate and energy policy under Tony Abbott and Malcolm Turnbull had created uncertainty for industry which had undermined investment, and prevented new supply coming online.

“The Palaszczuk Government is taking action and we have kick-started a renewable energy boom,” he said.

“With additional generation competition and supply - we can help put downward pressure on prices which is great news for all Queenslanders.”

For more information visit [www.dews.qld.gov.au](http://www.dews.qld.gov.au)

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