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Queensland renewables have bright future – but key question remains

An independent panel report released today on Queensland’s 50% renewable energy target highlights the importance of a national approach to carbon and energy policy.

The Energy Networks Association (ENA) today welcomed the report’s recommendation that Queensland should keep ‘flexibility’ when national policy was still being developed.

ENA Chief Executive Officer John Bradley said the report highlighted Queensland’s enormous renewable energy resources, but was focussed only on one policy option – a renewable energy target.

“We welcome the recommendation that Queensland’s policies will be more credible and durable if explicitly integrated with national carbon and energy policy,” Mr Bradley said.

“Yes, more renewable generation will be vital, but it’s still just a ‘means to the end’ of achieving carbon abatement.

“The final Panel report should answer the right question – what is the cheapest way to reduce carbon emissions, while keeping the lights on for customers?”

Mr Bradley said previous analysis by the Climate Change Authority and Jacobs had indicated that technology specific targets resulted in higher cost carbon abatement.

“The Expert Panel report suggests the potential for higher cost outcomes if Queensland tries to go it alone – it is right to recommend a flexible approach, working with national policy.

“A staged approach also allows careful consideration of power system security and national electricity market reforms, given Queensland would have a greater use of renewable energy on the system in 2030 than South Australia has today.”

Mr Bradley said the report recognised the potential for Queensland Government measures to be significantly different if national carbon policies were introduced.

“The Report’s *Stronger National Action* scenario would see Queensland contributing *more* carbon abatement with *less* renewable energy and avoiding a state scheme with direct subsidies of \$500 to \$900 million.

“We welcome the Queensland Government’s commitment to a cleaner energy system. If national policy frameworks are used with clear carbon targets, consumers will pay less and energy security can be better managed.”

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The Energy Networks Association is the peak national body representing Australia’s electricity transmission and distribution networks and gas distribution networks on economic, technical, environmental and safety regulation, and national energy policy issues. ENA members provide energy to virtually every household and business in Australia.