



Community Benefits Guideline for Large-scale Renewable Energy Projects in the South West Interconnected System: Community Benefits Plans

Community Benefits Plans (Plans) are strategic documents that outline how contributions from large-scale renewable energy projects will be invested to deliver meaningful, place-based outcomes for impacted communities. These Plans act as localised strategic roadmaps, developed collaboratively by a representative cross-section of an affected community to ensure that benefits funding is directed towards initiatives that reflect local priorities and create lasting social, economic, and cultural benefits.

Purpose

The purpose of Plans is to embed community voices in decision-making around benefits expenditure and ensure renewable energy development delivers tangible benefits, aligned to local priorities, and to those most directly impacted.

Objectives

- Align funding with community-identified priorities.
- Deliver positive social, economic, and cultural outcomes for impacted communities.
- Ensure transparency and accountability in the distribution of benefits.
- Foster collaboration between developers, Local Governments Authorities (LGAs), Traditional Owners and local Aboriginal groups, and key community groups.
- Streamline the delivery of benefits arrangements and expenditure while mitigating strain on LGAs, some of which have limited capacity and resources.

Key Features

- **Developed by the community:** Each Plan is developed collaboratively with input from a broad cross-section of the local community.
- **Strategic and transparent:** Plans provide a clear, publicly available framework for allocating resources, promoting accountability and alignment with community-identified priorities.
- **Place-based outcomes:** Funding is targeted to initiatives that strengthen local resilience.

Delivery Approach

To support communities directly impacted by renewable energy development in achieving the Guideline's objectives, PoweringWA will engage an independent organisation to facilitate the development and implementation of Plans and establish Community Benefits Advisory Groups. Once Plans are developed, the Advisory Groups will utilise the Plans to help guide the implementation of the projects funded through the Community Benefits Fund.

Each Plan will serve as a localised strategic roadmap for benefit expenditure. Plans will be developed by a representative cross-section of the impacted community, which should include:

- LGAs;
- Renewable energy developers seeking to develop projects in community;
- Key community groups;
- Community members that represent the broader community;
- Traditional Owners;
- Local Aboriginal organisations;
- Relevant union bodies.

This collaborative approach ensures contributions deliver meaningful, place-based outcomes and lasting benefits.

Community Benefit Advisory Groups and Governance

Community Benefits Advisory Groups will provide oversight and guidance throughout the planning and implementation process. These groups will:

- Ensure Plans align with community priorities and the Guideline's objectives.
- Monitor progress and provide feedback on delivery and benefits achieved.
- Act as a liaison between the community and the Regional Development Commissions (RDCs).

The RDCs, which will act as fund custodians, will be responsible for governance processes associated with funding allocations, and will allocate funds based on the Plans and the priorities identified by the Advisory Groups.

Prioritisation

The Pilot will focus on two areas of investigation on the South West Interconnected System (SWIS): the Central Coast area including the Shires of Dandaragan and Victoria Plains, and the Southern Wheatbelt area including the Shires of Narrogin and West Arthur. Areas of investigation were selected based on factors including project progress, size, scale and proximity, ensuring a representative mix of development conditions. This approach provides an opportunity to test a range of scenarios and generate insights that will inform future guidance for communities across the SWIS.

The State Government remains committed to supporting all communities and will continue to explore opportunities for broader engagement as projects progress.

See **Attachment - Community Benefits Guideline for Large-scale Renewable Energy Projects: Community Benefits Plans Pilot** for additional information.