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## **Submission on Inquiry into Budget Savings (Omnibus) Bill 2016**

The North Queensland Conservation Council welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the Budget Savings (Omnibus) Bill 2016.

NQCC is the regional conservation council for the area from Cardwell to Bowen, and from the Reef to the Northern Territory border. Established in 1974, it falls under the broad umbrella of the Queensland Conservation Council and focuses on education, advocacy and policy development.

### **On behalf of our members and supporters, I urge you to amend the Budget Savings (Omnibus) Bill to remove funding cuts of the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).**

ARENA is responsible for Australia's most innovative renewable energy projects by driving investment into the sector. ARENA funding bridges the investment gap and reduce investment risk, which accelerates innovation to make the transition to renewable energy faster, cheaper and easier.<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that each dollar of public funding leverages \$1.30 in private sector R&D funding. Public investment is the vital support that a cutting-edge project needs that would otherwise be too risky for commercial lenders.

Sixty projects have been completed with ARENA funding across Australia, with 200 being currently managed. The majority (70%) of ARENA funding has been invested in regional and rural electorates.<sup>2</sup> Reducing the funding of ARENA would greatly impact the region that NQCC represents.

There are 10 large-scale solar projects planned for Queensland currently being considered by ARENA. These projects will create around 2,695 direct jobs. Of these

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Renewable Energy Agency, '[ARENA: accelerating innovation](#)'

<sup>2</sup> Australian Renewable Energy Agency, '[Projects](#)'

10 projects, 8 are located within North Queensland.<sup>3</sup> To put this into comparison, 2,695 clean energy jobs easily eclipses the estimated 1,464 jobs that the Adani Carmichael coal mine would offer Queensland,<sup>4</sup> but without the added costs of 4.7 billion tonnes of emissions pollution over its operational lifetime, and jeopardising the 70,000 Reef-based jobs.<sup>5</sup>

Because of the uncertainty created by proposed funding cuts set out in the Budget Savings (Omnibus) Bill, some projects have already been suspended.<sup>6</sup> The 'jobs and growth' and the 'innovation age' that we heard so much about during the election cannot progress without investor certainty and stable policy. In order for the renewable energy industry to open up new jobs and new opportunities, ARENA funding must be maintained.

**We need to continue to attract innovation and open up job opportunities in the renewable energy sector. We need to continue research and development in commercialising clean energy technology.**

Cutting funding to ARENA is inhibitive to achieving our shared goals of a cleaner, safer, brighter future.

Yours faithfully,

Maree Dibella  
Coordinator

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<sup>3</sup> Queensland Government, '[Queensland solar projects jump one step closer to construction](#)', January 2016

<sup>4</sup> Sydney Morning Herald, '[Adani Carmichael mine to create 1464 jobs, not 10,000](#)', 28 April 2015

<sup>5</sup> Australian Conservation Foundation, '[How short sighted federal policy is stunting jobs growth in Queensland](#)', 24 August 2016

<sup>6</sup> ABC News, '[ARENA: Doubts in funding leads to clean energy company suspending projects](#)', 2 September 2016