

THE NEED FOR A REGIONAL TRANSFORMATION AUTHORITY

PROPOSED MOTION
LGAQ CONFERENCE 2022

That LGAQ calls on the State and Federal governments to establish a Regional Transformation Authority with statutory powers inclusive of local governments, to:

- Respond to changing supply and demand for fossil fuel.
- Develop regional plans and coordinate a sustainable transformation, principally for Queensland's coal mining regions, but also for all local government areas supplying to or reliant on the economic output of coal mining, as well as heavily coal reliant industrial regions.
- Ensure all planning supports the ongoing and sustainable diversification of the resources sectors.



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DESIRED OUTCOME

A multi-agency, intergovernmental Regional Transformation Authority is created to:

- Manage and coordinate the negative social and economic impacts associated with end of mine life and decarbonisation in coal mining regions;
- Ensure that all stakeholders can meaningfully participate in decision making processes and in the design of new plans and programs to decarbonise the economy;
- Work across all aspects of the energy transition community and economic transformation to enable the flow of information and resources enable effective, timely and regionally appropriate investment and action – including working with relevant groups and agencies to facilitate/implement:
 - Regional workforce support and planning well in advance of mine closures.
 - Place-based investment in social infrastructure/services to support the future needs of regional communities.
 - Economic diversification to build on strengths of the regions to attract investment and jobs.
 - Investment in coal mining regions and catalysing infrastructure development/investment, by providing a vehicle to attract and/channel funds into economic diversification initiatives;
 - Adaptation of legislation and policy as necessary.
 - Community capacity building to leverage social and economic diversification initiatives.
- Provide feedback to government and industry which is integrated to ensure coordinated post-mining land use planning.
- Timely pre-closure planning applying contemporary social impact assessments across the resource sector.

BACKGROUND

Coal mining regions and the local governments that support them have borne the brunt of environmental, social and governance impacts associated with mining projects for decades.

Regional Australia is undergoing a social and economic transformation that will be beyond the capability of local councils to address.

Existing coal heartlands like Central Queensland are in a position to capitalise on the global shift to net zero emissions provided appropriate Federal and State Government planning and investment is received.

Equally, coal mining regions are particularly vulnerable in the decarbonisation process.

Numerous reports have articulated both the social and economic opportunities and risks for regional Australia associated with decarbonisation.

Modelling by Accenture suggests that over 395,000 jobs could be created if Australia can capitalise on changes to the energy sector and become a 'renewable energy superpower'.

Another report by Deloitte projects that the Queensland economy could grow by 7% if it successfully manages the shift to net zero.

Each of the reports clearly highlight that the risks associated with getting this transformation wrong are equally as

significant as the potential for growth. Transition authorities have played a significant role in helping regions navigate changes in the energy sector in other parts of Australia and globally – this has included coordinating planning efforts to ensure energy security, economic diversification, industry adaptation, environmental regeneration, and positive social outcomes.

Despite governments in other states with significant economic ties to coal having already instigated different forms of transition or change authorities, Queensland currently lacks a clear mechanism or vehicle to coordinate the change across the broader social and economic needs in regional Queensland (with the exception of hydrogen).

Given the Federal Government's adoption of net zero emissions targets and the reality that Queensland is likely to face disproportionate impacts as a result of decarbonisation, it is critical that there is coordination of resources across government departments and agencies to plan for and implement transformation actions.

Without a responsible authority with a clear mandate and statutory powers to manage change, local councils will be fighting for their community's very existence under the pressure of negative social, economic, and environmental impacts resulting from end of mine life and global climate change responses.