

1 April 2019

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## FEDERAL MICROGRID FUNDING A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

The Mayors of nine communities from North West Queensland (NWQ) have welcomed the federal government's \$50.4 million commitment of feasibility funds toward microgrid solutions for regional and remote communities.

This announcement is one step in the right direction as NWQ communities continue to seek commitment to deliver reliable and affordable energy across a large, diverse region that has long been ignored.

Faced with ageing and inadequate infrastructure, a more comprehensive, fair regional deal is needed to deliver the first world energy solutions, as well as transport, water infrastructure, energy, communications and community facilities, that hardworking North West Queenslanders deserve.

Under our strategic Six-point Plan for the future we have already identified microgrids as one of the solutions that can meet the needs of some of our communities.

We have sought commitment from government and opposition for our strategic, locally relevant Plan which includes support for off-grid solutions for remote communities under Point Two of our plan: *Power policy for the real world including remote Australia*.

As our Plan details: *"The divided, ideological debates over this technology or that sort of baseload power – or coal versus solar – doesn't work for our communities and businesses. The fact is, whatever technologies the activists and politicians think work for the coastal and urban communities, there is insufficient investment in networks to connect our communities to reliable power, wherever it comes from.*

*"Indeed, our region already hosts a number of major solar projects and we would be happy for more. However, we can't support anymore at the moment because the network capacity simply can't take them. Some very remote communities connected to unreliable single-wire earth return (SWER) networks would be better off with more investment in distributed power solutions.*

Among the solutions canvassed in our Plan for our region is: *Incentives for distributed solutions for remote properties and communities where unreliable SWER networks don't work and replacing the older diesel generation with cleaner hybrid generators that combine lower emitting fuels and renewables for 24-hour cleaner power.*

We look forward to discussing how this recent commitment might work for our region with the Government – if returned.

We call on Labor and others to also commit to practical measures like this as part of their proposed regional deal for NWQ.

While we welcome this announcement, there are still other elements of our Plan that need to be met both under energy and the other five points of our platform.

The sprinkling of ad hoc announcements that might be relevant to our communities – while welcome – only serves to reinforce the need for a more structured regional deal for the future.

Given our communities were smashed by unprecedented flooding, this need for a more comprehensive and structured future plan is more important than ever.

Download the NWQROC Six-point Plan at: <https://www.nwqroc.com.au/fairregionaldeal/>

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