

Renewable Energy: Planning for tomorrow – today!

While Queenslanders and the rest of the world deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic it is important that councils continue to provide their usual services but with an eye to the future - as the pandemic subsides there will undoubtedly be economic stimulus to kick-start the economy.

Queensland councils are big consumers and big users of energy, collectively spending over \$250 million per annum. The Energy team at Peak is focused on providing much needed energy services to Queensland local government. Our mission is to find ways to reduce these overall costs and doing our bit to help councils lower the impact on the environment.

Over recent times, Peak has advised councils on the development of renewable energy solutions on more than 160 assets across 27 councils, estimated to provide them with combined total electricity cost savings over \$2.69 million per annum

One of the risks that organisations face when headed down the renewables path, is finding themselves irreversibly tied to vendor driven solutions, that don't always leave them in an optimal position financially.

Renewable energy sources allow councils to improve financial sustainability. Savings can then be reinvested into further projects to form an ongoing, rolling energy program. It's the gift that keeps on giving and one of the easiest ways to reduce your ongoing operational expenditure – year on year.

As an example, Peak was engaged to provide Concept Designs for photovoltaic solar installations to six sites for Blackall-Tambo Regional Council. Current energy costs for these six sites are over \$90,000 per annum. Even considering the necessary capital investment costs, Peak have estimated savings to Council in excess of \$1 million over the next 20 years. This project will provide substantial and ongoing savings for the community.

To provide context in terms of scale, Peak also undertook a similar service for Murweh Shire Council (13 sites) and Longreach Regional Council (10 sites), providing an estimated saving of over \$6.5 million between the three councils in the region across 28 sites collectively over the 20 year period.

Ideally, we need to be in front of the eight ball and have these business cases and concept designs completed to inform the budget and more importantly take advantage of any grant funding opportunities that may arise. With likely funding on the table from stimulus measures taken by the state and federal governments over coming months, this is an ideal time to be planning and positioning our organisations for success in securing these funds.

In the recent Building Better Regions Fund, Infrastructure Projects Stream (Round 4 – Drought Support), several councils were successful in securing grants for these types of energy projects. This is in support of building stronger regional communities into the future.

For further information and to understand how the team at Peak can assist your organisation, contact Energy Advisory Team Leader, Simon Martin on 0448 102122.