

PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH BRIEF

A Research note from the Institute of Public Affairs distributed to all Queensland parliamentarians



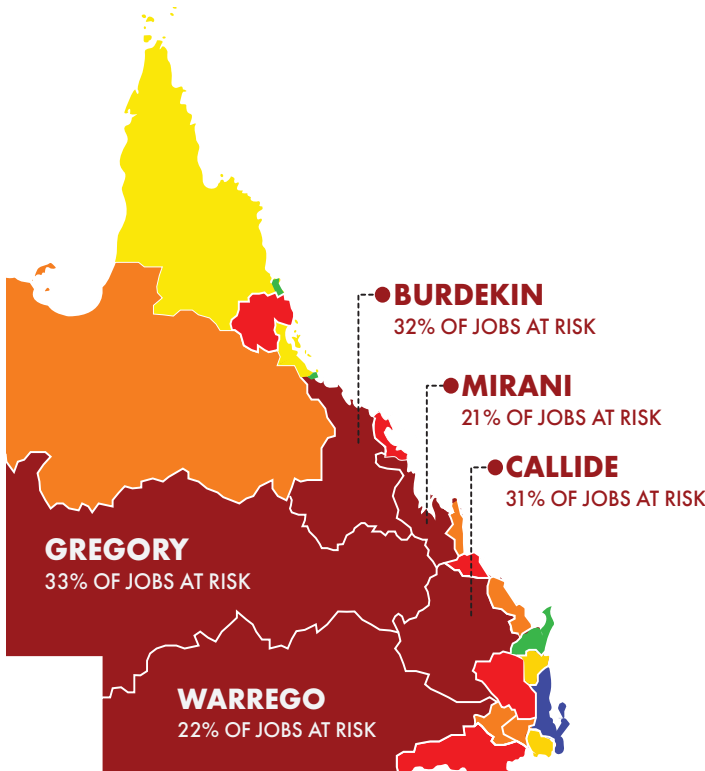
NET ZERO PUTS 157,000 JOBS AT RISK IN QUEENSLAND

In April, the Queensland state government passed the *Clean Economy Jobs Act 2024*, adding to the state’s already extensive collection of environmental red tape and which enshrines in legislation the state’s target of net zero emissions by 2050.

Research by the Institute of Public Affairs finds that up to 157,710 jobs will be put at risk by the policy of net zero emissions and legislation enshrining a net zero target in Queensland.¹

Approximately 70 per cent of all the jobs at risk are in regional Queensland.

Figure 1: Queensland’s net zero impact map



	Percentage of jobs at risk
	>20%
	14% - 20%
	12% - 14%
	8% - 12%
	3% - 8%
	<3%

Source: IPA

Jobs in critical industries are most at risk

A government target to reduce emissions will have the greatest impact on jobs that are relatively more emission intensive. As such, the ‘at risk’ jobs will be those in industries where emissions per job are above the economy-wide sectoral average of 210 tonnes of CO₂ -e per annum.

Key industries, essential to Queensland’s economic development, are put most at risk. Net zero-driven job losses are likely to be concentrated in the agricultural, mining, energy, and manufacturing sectors.

According to industry emissions data from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water’s latest National Greenhouse Gas Inventory by Economic Sector report, nine sectors have above average emissions per job.² According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, these sectors account for 157,710 workers, with almost 100,000 alone being employed in agriculture and coal mining.³

Table 1: Industries with above average emissions per job

Industry	Number of jobs in Qld
Agriculture	62,715
Coal mining	36,127
Electricity supply	16,055
Primary metal manufacturing	15,442
Mineral product manufacturing	8,738
Waste disposal services	8,681
Oil and gas extraction	8,344
Forestry and logging	1,026
Petroleum and coal product manufacturing	582
Total	157,710

Source: IPA

These industries are critical to Queensland’s economic success and competitiveness. In 2022-23, one in five jobs in Queensland was supported by exports, driven primarily by the export of coal and agricultural goods, and one-fifth of all Australia’s goods exports were from Queensland.⁴

Likewise, Queensland’s fiscal health compared to the rest of the country, represented in metrics such as the state’s relatively low debt burden, has been possible due to the revenues that Queensland’s resources and agriculture sectors have earned, and the high paying jobs they support.⁵

It is these jobs, which underpin Queensland’s economic success, that net zero threatens.

Regional Queensland will be the hardest hit by net zero

The ten electoral districts most affected by net zero’s employment consequences are all located in regional Queensland.

Table 2: The 10 electoral districts with the highest share of jobs at risk from net zero

Electorate	Jobs at risk (%)	Geographical region
Gregory	33.3%	Central Queensland
Burdekin	31.6%	North Queensland
Callide	30.5%	Central Queensland
Warrego	22.4%	Darling Downs & Maranoa
Mirani	20.8%	Central Queensland
Gladstone	19.0%	Central Queensland
Southern Downs	17.5%	Darling Downs & Maranoa
Hill	17.3%	Far North Queensland
Nanango	16.8%	Darling Downs & Maranoa
Whitsunday	14.2%	North Queensland

Source: IPA

Sixty nine per cent of all jobs at risk are located in Regional Queensland. This is in contrast to southeast Queensland, where all ten least affected electorates are located.

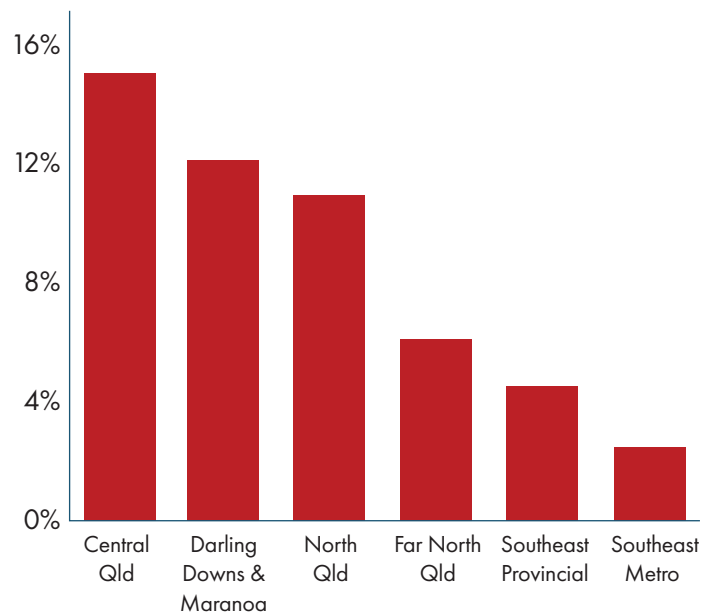
Table 3: The 10 electorates with the lowest share of jobs at risk from net zero

Electorate	Jobs at risk (%)	Geographical region
Mermaid Beach	1.1%	Gold Coast
Southport	1.2%	Gold Coast
Surfers Paradise	1.3%	Gold Coast
Bonney	1.4%	Gold Coast
Burleigh	1.5%	Gold Coast
Mudgeeraba	1.8%	Gold Coast
Stretton	1.9%	Brisbane
Gaven	1.9%	Gold Coast
Broadwater	1.9%	Gold Coast
Toohay	2.0%	Brisbane

Source: IPA

The most impacted part of the state is Central Queensland, where up to fifteen per cent of all jobs are at risk, compared with the metropolitan areas of southeast Queensland, where fewer than three per cent of all jobs are at risk.

Chart 1: Proportion of jobs put at risk by net zero, by geographic region



Source: IPA

End Notes

- Saxon Davidson and Kevin You, *Analysis of the Employment Consequences of a Net Zero Target in Queensland* (Institute of Public Affairs Research Report, March 2024).
- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, *National inventory by economic sector: data tables and methodology* (May 2023) Available from: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/climate-change/publications/national-greenhouse-accounts-2021/national-inventory-by-economic-sector-2021>.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed: Industry, Occupation and Sector* (February 2024) Available from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/jan-2024>.
- Trade and Investment Queensland, ‘Queensland shines on global business stage’: <https://www.tiq.qld.gov.au/news/queensland-shines-on-global-business-stage>.
- Lachlan Clark, *State Economic Scorecard 2024* (IPA Research Note, March 2024).

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