

Our ref: WR26/9092

Your ref: 4380-26

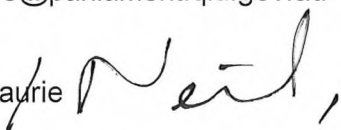
16 APR 2026

Mr Neil Laurie
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Dear Mr Laurie



I refer to petition 4380-26, tabled in the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 24 March 2026, about renewable or other industrial development proposals within the headwaters of the Baffle Creek catchment area.

The petition calls for the House to disallow any renewable or other industrial development proposals from the head waters of the Baffle Creek river system and through to the mouth of the Baffle Creek catchment.

On 1 March 2026 and 2 March 2026, the Baffle Creek Catchment Protection Group, and on 18 March 2026 and 31 March 2026, a member of the Baffle Creek Catchment Protection Group, emailed me about the impact of heavy industry and large-scale renewable energy projects on the Baffle Creek catchment.

I was requested to call in the Rutherglen Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (837 Red Hill Road, Bororen), the Eurimbula BESS (1274 Red Hill Road, Bororen) (Eurimbula project), and the Djandori pumped hydro project.

On 12 December 2025, the Crisafulli Government introduced changes to the regulation of battery storage facility development through the *Planning (Battery Storage Facilities) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2025* which amends the Planning Regulation 2017. The reforms ensure that the social and development impacts of battery storage facility (BSF) development are consistently identified, considered and managed.

Under these changes, BSF with an output of 50 megawatts (MW) or more are now subject to the community benefit system under the Queensland planning framework. This system requires proponents of certain development types to undertake a social impact assessment and enter into a community benefit agreement before lodging a development application. The new approach ensures BSF developments respond to identified social impacts of development and deliver tangible benefits to local communities.

The reforms also make the State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) the assessment manager for all assessable BSF development across Queensland. *State code 27: Battery Storage Facility development* has been introduced under the State Development Assessment Provisions. Assessable BSF development is now subject to impact assessment across the State, requiring public notification and providing third party appeal rights. This will ensure stakeholders can have their say on these developments.

These reforms deliver the Crisafulli Government's commitment to ensure that large-scale battery storage projects deliver tangible benefits to host communities and are subject to rigorous assessment, including consideration of community sentiment. Further information about these changes is available on the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning's (the Department) website at: www.planning.qld.gov.au/planning-issues-and-interests/battery-storage-facilities.

I am advised that the Rutherglen application was withdrawn by the applicant on 17 March 2026.

On 29 August 2018, the Gladstone Regional Council (the Council) approved the development application for the Eurimbula Renewable energy facility and Substation. This approval is due to lapse on 29 August 2026. On 24 April 2023, the proponent lodged a minor change application seeking to confirm the location of the BESS, to increase the BESS from 81.3 MW/163.6 megawatt hour (MWh) to one gigawatts (GW)/two GWh, and to increase the solar array from 300 MW direct current (dc) to 752MWdc and to upsize the main high-voltage substation to accommodate the increased capacity. The change application was approved by the Council on 26 April 2023. Further, a request to extend the currency period, from 29 August 2025 to 30 August 2030, was refused by the Council on 1 August 2025. This refusal is currently subject to an appeal in the Planning and Environment Court which remains ongoing, with the hearing of the appeal set down for 27 April 2026.

A call in of the currency period decision for the Eurimbula project could have only been issued within 15 business days of the Chief Executive of the Department receiving a notice of the appeal. As this timeframe has passed, I do not have the power to call in this application.

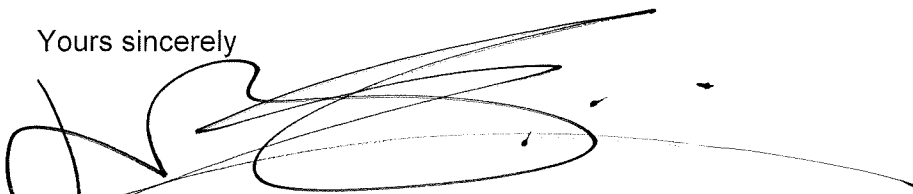
As the Rutherglen application has been withdrawn there is no application for me to consider calling in.

The petition requests that any renewable or other industrial development proposals within the Baffle Creek and headwaters be rejected.

All development applications lodged with either the Council or SARA are assessed against the applicable assessment benchmarks, including consideration of the potential impacts of that development on the surrounding locality. I am satisfied that the now amended development assessment framework provides sufficient assurance that applications and their impacts will be appropriately assessed.

I would like to thank the petitioners for raising this matter with me and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



JARROD BLEIJIE MP
DEPUTY PREMIER
Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning
Minister for Industrial Relations