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Planning for renewables – taking a national approach

Australia has vast renewable energy resources suitable for power generation, that have the potential to significantly reduce our need for fossil fuels and deliver sustainable change for local, national and global benefit.

The renewable energy sector is experiencing rapid growth in Australia. There are a number of successfully operating wind and solar projects and many more on the drawing board or seeking planning approval. As the nation begins to engage with renewables and understand the requirements for the sector, newer technologies are quickly emerging. However, growth and change in the sector is outpacing planning systems.

There are relatively few land use planning policies and guidelines for engaging effectively with renewable energy. Investment in the renewable sector relies on foreign capital, often taking a nationwide approach to project delivery. Inconsistencies and complexities in the various State and local land use planning approvals process tied with the absence of a national planning framework to support the sector, creates barriers to investment and the successful and efficient delivery of renewable energy in Australia.

So, what is the role of planning? What actions must planners and authorities consider for the renewable energy transition to be effective?

By using first-hand working examples and experience of national delivery of solar farms and the challenges arising for new technologies including 'energy from waste', the presentation will explore the land use and planning issues and identify a best practice approach for addressing change and encouraging project delivery of this important sector.