



Speeding up planning approvals for energy projects

Deep dive discussion
pre-reading pack

18 June 2026, 3-4pm AEST

About this CPD roundtable (online)

To achieve current policy goals, Australia needs to accelerate the deployment of renewable generation 6x faster, transmission 5x faster, and we need to build out 10x the 2025 levels of utility-scale storage. These changes require a fundamental shift in how things are done.

This deep dive discussion builds on our first roundtable discussion on *building energy infrastructure at warp speed*, and is focused on the main question, **how can Australia streamline and reduce the timeframes for planning approvals?**

The conversation will be held under the Chatham house rule, where ideas may be shared freely beyond the space, but not be attributed to any individual or organisation.

You can join the meeting [via this link](#).

CPD is an independent, not-for-profit policy institute with staff in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Jakarta.

Our vision is a fair, sustainable society and wellbeing economy that serves current and future generations in Australia and Southeast Asia.

Our mission is to help create transformative systems change through practical solutions to complex policy challenges.

The energy system transition is more important than ever

Meeting Australia's climate and energy transition targets

Planning scenarios like AEMO's "step change" assumes significant inflection points to accelerate the deployment of key infrastructure, which are not on track to happen under current policy settings and trajectories.

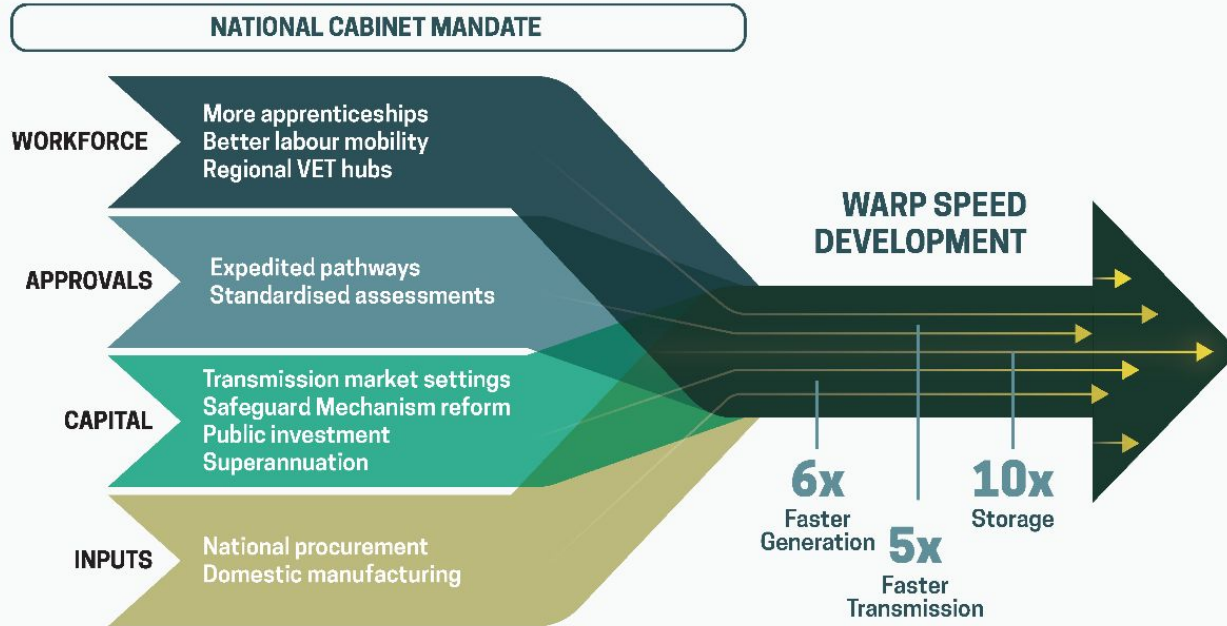
Decarbonising the economy and developing new green industries

Establishing clean energy infrastructure and data centres is energy intensive, along with an economy-wide decarbonisation. These are likely to lead to increased demand at least in line with projections, if not moreso.

Strengthening energy security and easing the cost of living

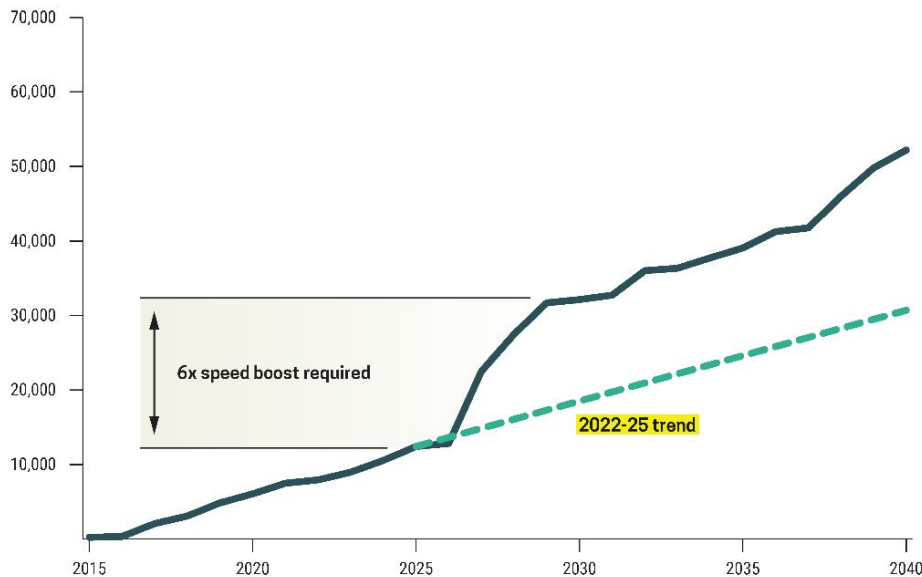
The energy crisis globally is disrupting supply chains and exposing Australians to price shocks, and pushing for a greater shift to energy independence with clean and renewable sources.

CPD proposal: four areas of policy reform to speed up deployment at warp speed

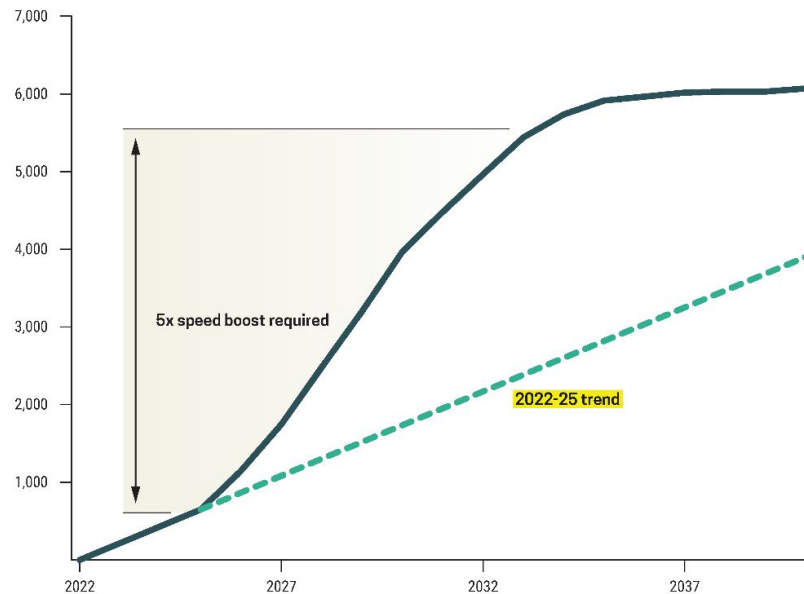


Australia must facilitate a six-fold increase in the build-out of generation and a five-fold acceleration of transmission

Utility solar capacity (MW)

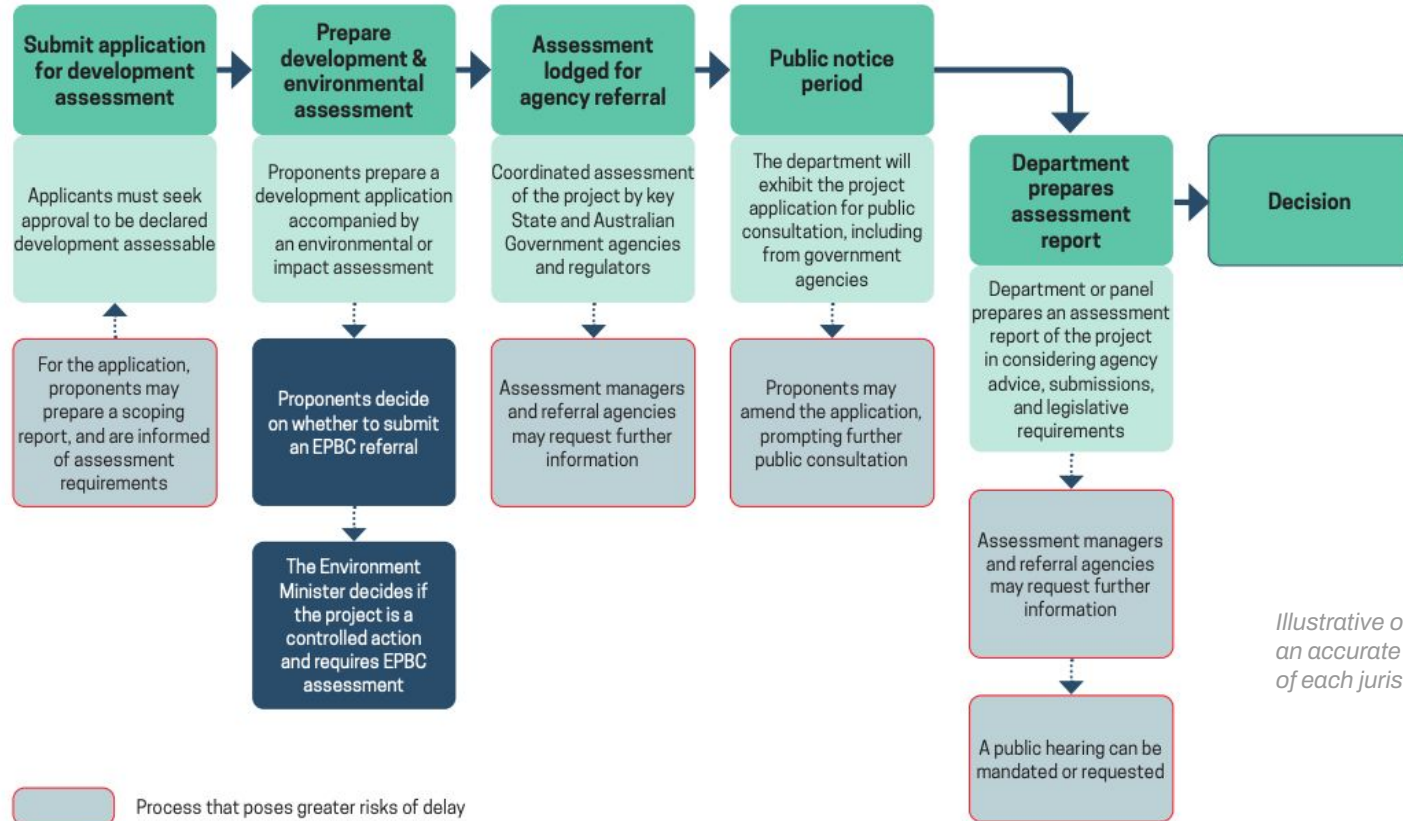


Cumulative total new transmission (km)



Source: CPD calculations based on AEMO (2026) Draft 2026 ISP chart data

Common phases and bottlenecks of the approvals process for large scale development



Illustrative only, rather than an accurate representation of each jurisdiction

Process that poses greater risks of delay

Governments must navigate environmental, social, regulatory and political factors in planning approval systems

Environmental protection - Environmental approvals are a great source of delay in the planning system. Reforms to the EPBC Act in 2025 will partly address this issue. State planning requires proponents to scope before a DA starts and to prepare an environment assessment/statement - processes that require much time and can be more efficient.

Regulatory responsibility - State development approval processes often have multiple points where regulators and assessment authorities can request additional information from proponents. While it is necessary for assessors to be able to seek additional information, this is a common cause of delays and uncertainty for proponents.

Social license - Dealing with high volumes of community objections slows down approvals. Many development and renewable energy projects are impact assessable, requiring proponents to exhibit their development approvals and environmental assessments for a public notice period.

Political accountability - Since powers and responsibilities are distributed across jurisdictions, there is not a whole of government imperative to ensure the clean energy transition happens. Additionally, the transition is not a siloed issue that can be addressed by a single government department.

CPD report recommendations on planning approvals

Use expedited approval pathways and provide support for significant projects	Recommendation 10: Use existing or new approval pathways that are dedicated to state significant developments for renewable energy projects.
	Recommendation 11: Use a legislated authority in the state planning department or a Coordinator General Office with expediting powers to streamline existing approval pathways.
	Recommendation 12: Provide integrated case management support early on and throughout for clean energy projects.
Limit the time and effort for assessments, requests for information and decision making	Recommendation 13: Along with statutory time limits for decision making, ministers should provide directives to regulators to encourage faster approvals.
	Recommendation 14: Limit the number of requests for information (RFIs) to one per stage.
	Recommendation 15: Ensure communities closely or directly impacted by projects have a proportionately greater voice in consultation and objections.
Simplify and standardise data inputs for assessments	Recommendation 16: Use clear and efficient ready-made assessment requirements (i.e. that are industry-specific) for projects that have predictable and mitigatable impacts.
	Recommendation 17: Identify best practice technical handbooks across Australia that specify knowledge and methodologies to assist proponents in impact assessments, and use them as common standards.



To reflect ahead of discussion:

Where do you see the highest-impact opportunities for change?

Warp Speed

Accelerating renewable
energy infrastructure
deployment



Esther Koh
Toby Phillips
Kieran O'Malley

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Contact

Esther Koh

esther.koh@cpd.org.au