

Queenslanders to be banned from dumping solar panels in landfill under new recycling program

More than 25m panels are expected to be installed across the state over the next decade



▫ The Queensland government's draft e-products waste action plan also aims to encourage the repair and reuse of household electronic products like fridges and mobile phones. Photograph: Glenn Hunt/AAP

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Queenslanders would be banned from dumping solar panels in landfill within the decade in order to reduce electronic waste under a proposed recycling expansion program.

The Palaszczuk government on Sunday announced its draft e-products waste action plan, which outlined the proposal to ban the dumping of solar panels within five to 10. The plan also aims to encourage the repair and reuse of household electronic products like fridges and mobile phones.

Queensland's energy minister, Mick de Brenni, said on Sunday the proposal would create more jobs in the clean energy sector.

"We're able to bring high-end, advanced manufacturing jobs back here to Queensland as we recycle, reuse and repurpose these solar panels," he told reporters.

"If we don't take action that [waste] will end up in the ground, we'll miss out on jobs and our transition to a clean energy economy won't be as productive as it possibly could be."

In partnership with the Smart Energy Council - backed by a \$250,000 investment - the government will run a trial solar panel recycling program. The pilot will investigate how to provide incentives to solar-installers to remove the products at the end of their life cycle and transport them to collection centres. Locations for the trial are yet to be determined.

The draft plan also proposes equipping e-product retailers with materials to ensure better longevity of products and developing incentives like vouchers for consumers to encourage them to make environmentally conscious choices.

De Brenni said Queensland was on track to have a further 25m solar panels installed across the state over the next decade, creating up to 17,000 annual tonnes of landfill waste by 2030. Currently solar panels account for 1,000 tonnes of yearly waste in Queensland.

"We don't want to see those solar panels ending up in landfill, going to waste," he said.

The acting chief executive of the Smart Energy Council, Wayne Smith, said the plan would make Queensland the "solar panel recycling state".

He said the peak body would also push for a national recycling solar panel scheme.

The government has invited Queenslanders to have their say and submit a submission to the draft plan.