

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 218
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Agency
Program: Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC)
Topic: Projects
Hansard Page: 60 and 61
Question Date: 23 May 2017
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Waters asked:

Mr Powell: By way of clarification: the reef funding program is really aimed at a geographical location, and it is really the reef catchment area. All projects within that space are categorised as being funded under the reef funding program. The chair has mentioned three solar projects—one at Ross River, one at the Whitsundays and one at Hamilton Solar Farm. Those three solar projects are \$144 million in size. There are also 210 small projects that we have funded through our aggregation facilities, again in this same space. Two of those specifically have the tie to water-quality benefits, because they are directly related to irrigation equipment. We like to look at projects and preference projects that have some water-quality benefit, but that is not a mandatory requirement.

Senator WATERS: Could you provide on notice for me the details of those projects where they are not only geographically in the reef catchment but are actually doing something about water quality as well as clean energy? It seemed like a bit of an accounting trick and a bit nominal to us when it was first announced—like you would just continue doing what you were doing but it gave the Prime Minister an announceable. It sounds like that is still the case, but I am very grateful that you are finding synergies, and I would appreciate some more details on that.

Answer:

Under section 14 of the *Clean Energy Finance Corporation (Investment Mandate) Direction 2016 (No.2)* the purpose of the Reef Funding Program is to support clean energy projects and businesses that support delivery of the Government's Reef 2050 Plan.

That Plan contains 139 detailed actions, of which 24 are attributable to water quality. Not all of these are relevant to the CEFC, but the CEFC has identified several types of projects that could contribute to water quality outcomes.

The examples cited in the answer above were replacement of comparatively inefficient forms of irrigation equipment with smart control centre pivot irrigators. These reduce both water and energy use and make it easier for the crop to get the right amount of water, evenly distributed, which reduces run-off compared to other methods.

Example case studies are here:

- [http://www.canegrowers.com.au/icms_docs/226537_Bugeja - Mackay.pdf](http://www.canegrowers.com.au/icms_docs/226537_Bugeja_-_Mackay.pdf)
- <https://www.news-mail.com.au/news/fight-the-power-farmer-takes-energy-into-his-own-h/3130663/> (NB actual CEFC-funded project)
- <http://www.qff.org.au/newsroom/case-studies/ingham-cane-farm/>