



Simone's Story: Supporting mob to be part of the renewable energy transition

HUNTER, NSW



I'm a Wiradjuri woman and grew up on Awabakal and Worimi Country, which is where I live today. I'm deeply connected to the land and am passionate about working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in my role as Chair of Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council and in the Office of Indigenous Strategy and Leadership at the University of Newcastle.

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For the past 35 years, I've worked in government, health and education and have been part of advisory boards, such as the Newcastle Knights Indigenous Advisory Committee and the Port of Newcastle Community Committee. I've seen the importance and positive impacts of including First Nations peoples in decision making and our mob must be involved in the shift to renewable energy in Newcastle and the Hunter region.

I see renewable energy as more than just a practical solution for cleaner energy in our communities. It also aligns with First Nations cultural values of land care, sustainability and self-determination and supports sustaining cultural heritage. Renewable energy technologies often have less intrusive impacts on Country, which is vital for maintaining cultural continuity and preserving sacred lands.

It's important for First Nations peoples to have a say and be involved in the renewable energy transition. Our communities must have a voice in this change and without it, we risk being left out.

I'm a big advocate for authentic partnerships in renewable projects. Supporting First Nations peoples be part of this change looks like jobs, early engagement with Traditional Owners, land leases and potential community-owned energy initiatives.

This brings excitement and opportunities to Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities as we move forward to a more sustainable future.

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Find more information about the renewable energy transition at futuremadeinaustralia.gov.au