

Regional Profiles

Central Queensland

Overview

Central Queensland is one of Australia's largest coal mining and electricity producing regions. As Australia transitions to a decarbonised future, the region faces a significant adjustment. All four coal-fired power stations expected to progressively close over the coming decades, alongside longer-term changes across the coal mining industry.

While some parts of the region have a lower adaptive capacity due to heavy reliance on coal-related employment, strong potential for clean industry, established industrial capability, and enabling infrastructure position Central Queensland to manage impacts over time and capitalise on new economic opportunities.



Population (2025)

- 235,953 persons
- 1.1% 5-year avg. annual growth
- QLD: 1.9% 5-year avg. annual growth



Total Area

- 113,815.2 km²
- 6.6% of QLD



Gross Regional Product (2022-23)

- \$37.3 Billion
- 7.0% of QLD



Employment (2022-23)

- 106,335 persons
- 4.4% of QLD

Working Zones: Banana, Biloela, Central Highlands-East, Emerald and Central Highlands-West, Gladstone and surrounds, Rockhampton and surrounds, Yeppoon and surrounds (maps at end).

Region Selection Rationale

Exposure to Decarbonisation	Economic Opportunities from Decarbonisation
• Carbon Intensity: Large number of carbon-intensive facilities, including 4 coal-fired power stations and 25 safeguard facilities. As of 2024-25, safeguard facilities account for 54.8% of Queensland's Safeguard Mechanism direct (scope 1) emissions. • Urgency: 2 of the region's 4 coal-fired power stations are projected to close by 2031. • Adaptive Capacity: Adaptive capacity across Central Queensland is moderate but unevenly distributed. Communities with a high concentration of coal mining and coal-fired electricity generation face greater exposure. Reflecting strong workforce concentration in these industries and, in some areas, limited diversification opportunities. • Readiness: Gladstone demonstrates more advanced planning and coordination, while broader regional planning is still developing in parts of Central Queensland. Queensland's revised Energy Roadmap and legislative settings now extend the operational lifespan of the State's coal-fired generation fleet to at least 2046, reversing previous commitments to close units by 2035.	• Natural Capital: Considerable potential for green industry, including green aluminium and alumina. This is underpinned by high-quality solar and wind resources and proximity to existing industrial precincts. • Workforce Compatibility: High proportion of workers in Central Highlands, the Banana shire and Gladstone in roles compatible with forecast clean energy occupations. Medium compatibility in Capricorn Coast and Rockhampton. • Enabling Infrastructure: Central Queensland benefits from well-established transport, energy and export infrastructure. The region has widespread 5G coverage, commercial airports at Gladstone and Rockhampton, and access to the Port of Gladstone, one of Australia's largest multicommodity ports. The port is progressing plans to support future hydrogen exports. Curtis Island is home to the LNG export terminals, the only such facilities on Australia's east coast.

Source: NZEA (2026).



Carbon-Intensive Industries

Coal-Fired Power Stations

Facility		Owner	Public closure date	Employees	Supplying Coal Mine	S1 emiss. (tCO2-e) (23/24)	% of QLD S1 emiss. (23/24)	% of Aus S1 emiss. (23/24)
Callide Power Station B		CS Energy	2031	263	Callide	4,004,358	2.8%	0.8%
Callide Power Station C		IG Power and CS Energy	Unknown			675,798	0.5%	0.1%
Gladstone Power Station		Rio Tinto, NRG Energy, and others	2029	50	Rolleston (primary), Callide, and Ensham	6,492,467	4.5%	1.2%
Stanwell Power Station		Stanwell	2046	553	Curragh	6,975,068	4.8%	1.3%
Total	4	5+	-	866	-	18,147,691	12.6%	3.4%

Note: S1 emiss. indicates Scope 1 Emissions. Further information on Scope 1 emissions can be found [here](#).
Source: AEMO (2026a), DCCEEW (2025a, 2025b).

Safeguard Facilities (Emit 100,000+ tonnes CO2 annually – power stations connected to grid are exempt)

Facility	No.	S1 emiss. (tCO2-e) (24/25)	% of QLD Safeguard emiss. (24/25)	% of Aus Safeguard emiss. (24/25)
Manufacturing	9	8,197,250	22.2%	6.1%
Coal mines	12	6,181,706	16.7%	4.6%
Oil and gas extraction	4	5,879,987	15.9%	4.4%
Total	25	20,258,943	54.8%	15.1%

Note:

- S1 emiss. indicates Scope 1 Emissions. Further information on Scope 1 emissions can be found [here](#).
- Not all coal mines qualify as a safeguard facility. The total number of coal mines in the region is 14 facilities.
- Fisherman’s Landing manufacturing facilities, Clinker and Cement, and Lime, have been aggregated together in this table.

Source: CER (2026).

Coal Mines

No. of Coal Mines	Mines Supplying Domestic Market	Mines Supplying Export Market	Thermal Coal Mines	Metallurgical Coal Mines
14	5	14	12	9

Note: Individual coal mines may produce both thermal and metallurgical coal and may therefore be counted in both categories. Similarly, some mines may supply both domestic and export markets and may be counted in both market categories.

Source: Geoscience Australia (2026), Wood MacKenzie (2026).

Major Commonwealth Funded Net Zero Projects (excluding cancelled and completed) (top projects by value)

This table reflects projects that have received Commonwealth funding (as of April 2026), identified through publicly available sources, consistent with the [Net Zero Investment Map](#), including the programs below.

- **Capacity Investment Scheme (CIS)**
- **Australia Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA)**
- **Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC)**
- **Northern Australian Infrastructure Facility (NAIF)**
- **National Reconstruction Fund (NRF)**
- **Regional Hydrogen Hubs Program**

Project	Description	Status	Cwth Govt Funding	Value
Alpha HPA (High Purity Aluminium) First Project	Based in Gladstone area, this facility will leverage modern process control systems and automation and will be capable of producing over 10,000 tonnes of HPA per year. The site intends to run on 100% renewable energy.	Development	\$200.0M NAIF Loan \$75.0M NRF	\$647.4M
Yarwun Hydrogen Calcination	Yarwun Hydrogen Calcination aims to use hydrogen in the calcination process at the Yarwun Alumina Refinery	Construction	\$32.1M ARENA	\$111.1M
Queensland Alumina Refinery (QAL) double digestion	In the double digestion process, bauxite is processed in two stages of low temperature and higher temperature which significantly reduces energy use and emissions.	Development	\$94.0M ARENA	\$188.0M
Iberdrola Australia – Moura Dawson Renewable Hydrogen Hub FEED Study	The project comprises: Pre-FEED study for a new renewable hydrogen plant; FEED study for the hydrogen production facility (HPF FEED); Permitting and approvals study for the hydrogen plant; and FEED study for integrating renewable hydrogen into QNP's existing facility (QNP FEED).	Development	\$2.7M ARENA	\$7.3M

Note: Information correct as of April 2026.

Source: DCCEEW (2024), NZIM (2026).



Regional Renewable Energy Projects *(aggregated)*

The aggregated tables below draw on RenewMap’s energy project database which contains information on the location and size of public and privately funded energy generation projects. Results are shown in aggregated form to illustrate the breadth and depth of projects in the region.

Operational

Type	Projects (No.)	Total Project Size (MW)	Total Storage Size (MWh)
Battery	5	66	132
Biogas	1	1	N/A
Hydrogen	2	<1	N/A
Onshore Wind	1	450	N/A
Solar Photovoltaic (Solar PV)	4	658	N/A
Total	13	1,175	132 (Known Storage)

Note:

- RenewMap is a commercial subscription and is not publicly available.
- MW = Megawatt. A unit that measures capacity of energy systems.
- MWh = Megawatt hour. In battery technology, this unit measures the total amount of energy the system can store.
- Information correct as of April 2026.

Source: RenewMap (2026).



Under Development and Proposed

Type	Projects (No.)	Total Project Size (MW)	Total Storage Size (MWh)
Battery	53	16,119	53,502
Biogas	1	1	N/A
Hydrogen	6	870	N/A
Onshore Wind	21	11,340	N/A
Pumped Hydro	2	2,200	20,600
Solar Photovoltaic (Solar PV)	30	10,208	N/A
Total	113	40,738	74,102 (Known Storage)

Note:

- RenewMap is a commercial subscription and is not publicly available.
- MW = Megawatt. A unit that measures capacity of energy systems.
- MWh = Megawatt hour. In battery technology, this unit measures the total amount of energy the system can store.
- Information correct as of April 2026.

Source: RenewMap (2026).

Transmission Infrastructure Projects

Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) Draft 2026 Integrated System Plan (ISP)

Project	Description	Status	Timing	Cost
Gladstone Project	Increase network capacity from Central Queensland into Gladstone area to support the area's industry once Gladstone Power Station retires and add capacity between North and South Queensland.	Actionable	Mar 2029	\$2.4B (-20% to +30%)

Note: ± indicates the cost uncertainty range.

Source: AEMO (2026b).



Major Industries

Gross Value Add (2022-23)

Ranked Industries (Top Five)	Value (\$M)	% of GVA
Mining	\$18,733.1	52.1%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	\$2,556.9	7.1%
Construction	\$2,026.9	5.6%
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$1,656.6	4.6%
Manufacturing	\$1,531.7	4.3%

Note: Gross Value Add estimates are sourced from REMPLAN (2026), incorporating Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021 Census (PoW), ABS 2024 Estimated Resident Population, ABS 2022–23 National Input–Output Tables, and ABS June 2025 Gross State Product into its modelling. Gross Value Add (GVA) measures the value of goods and services produced, minus the cost inputs used in production. Further information on GVA can be found [here](#).
Source: REMPLAN (2026).

Employment

Place of Work (2022-23)

Ranked Industries (Top Five)	Employees (No.)	% of Employment
Health Care and Social Assistance	14,075	13.2%
Mining	10,170	9.6%
Construction	9,924	9.3%
Education and Training	9,913	9.3%
Retail Trade	9,832	9.2%

Note: Employment by Place of Work (PoW) estimates are sourced from REMPLAN (2026), incorporating Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021 Census by PoW, ABS 2024 Estimated Resident Population, ABS 2022–23 National Input–Output Tables, and ABS June 2025 Gross State Product into its modelling.
Source: REMPLAN (2026).



Place of Usual Residence (2021)

Ranked Industries (Top Five)	Employees (No.)	% of Employment
Health Care and Social Assistance	13,144	13.4%
Education and Training	9,344	9.5%
Retail Trade	9,036	9.2%
Construction	8,764	8.9%
Mining	8,691	8.9%

Source: ABS (2021).

Key Economic and Social Indicators

Employment

Indicator (2021 Census unless otherwise stated)	Central Queensland	Queensland
Median working age	40	40
Median income (annual gross, exc. super)	\$33,800 – \$41,599	\$33,800 – \$41,599
Participation in workforce	61.7%	61.6%
Female participation in workforce	59.1%	58.9%
Workforce Self-Sufficiency (% of Workforce)	94.6%	N/A
Unemployment rate (Dec 2025)	3.9%	4.1%
Regional Labour Market Index (Sep 2025)	Average	N/A

Source: ABS (2021), DEWR (2026), JSA (2026)



Demographics

Indicator (2021 Census)	Central Queensland	Queensland
Median age	37	38
First Nations (% of population)	7.9%	4.9%
Educational attainment (% of population aged 15 and above):		
Below Year 12	51.1%	40.8%
• Year 12 or equivalent	48.9%	59.2%
• Certificate III and IV	25.9%	20.7%
• Bachelor and above	14.5%	24.0%

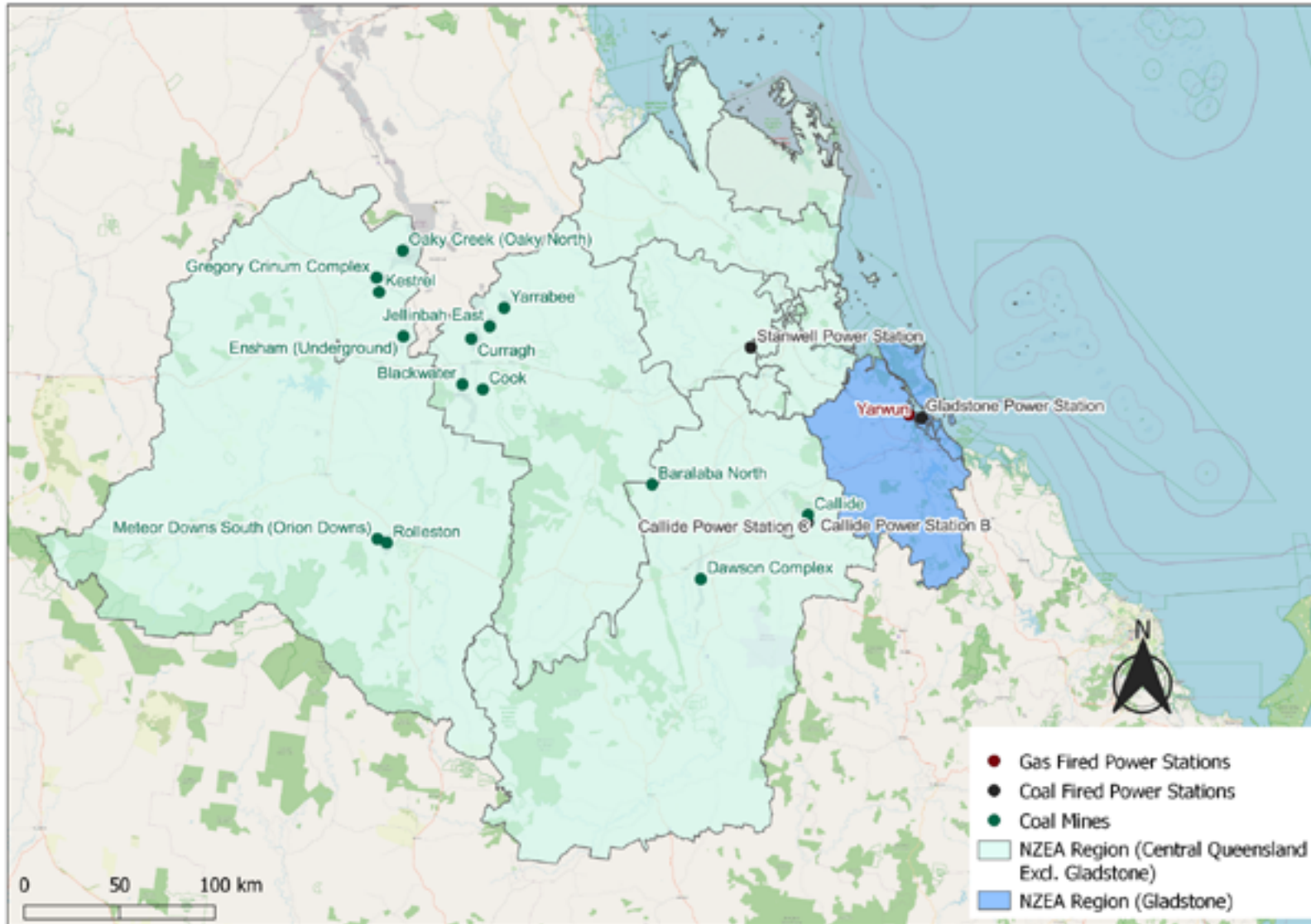
Source: ABS (2021).

Housing

Indicator (2021 Census)	Central Queensland	Queensland
Homelessness (% of population)	0.5%	0.4%
Commonwealth Rent Assistance (% of population) (Sep 2025)	6.0%	6.2%
Mortgage stress	9.6%	11.9%
Rental stress	26.8%	32.4%

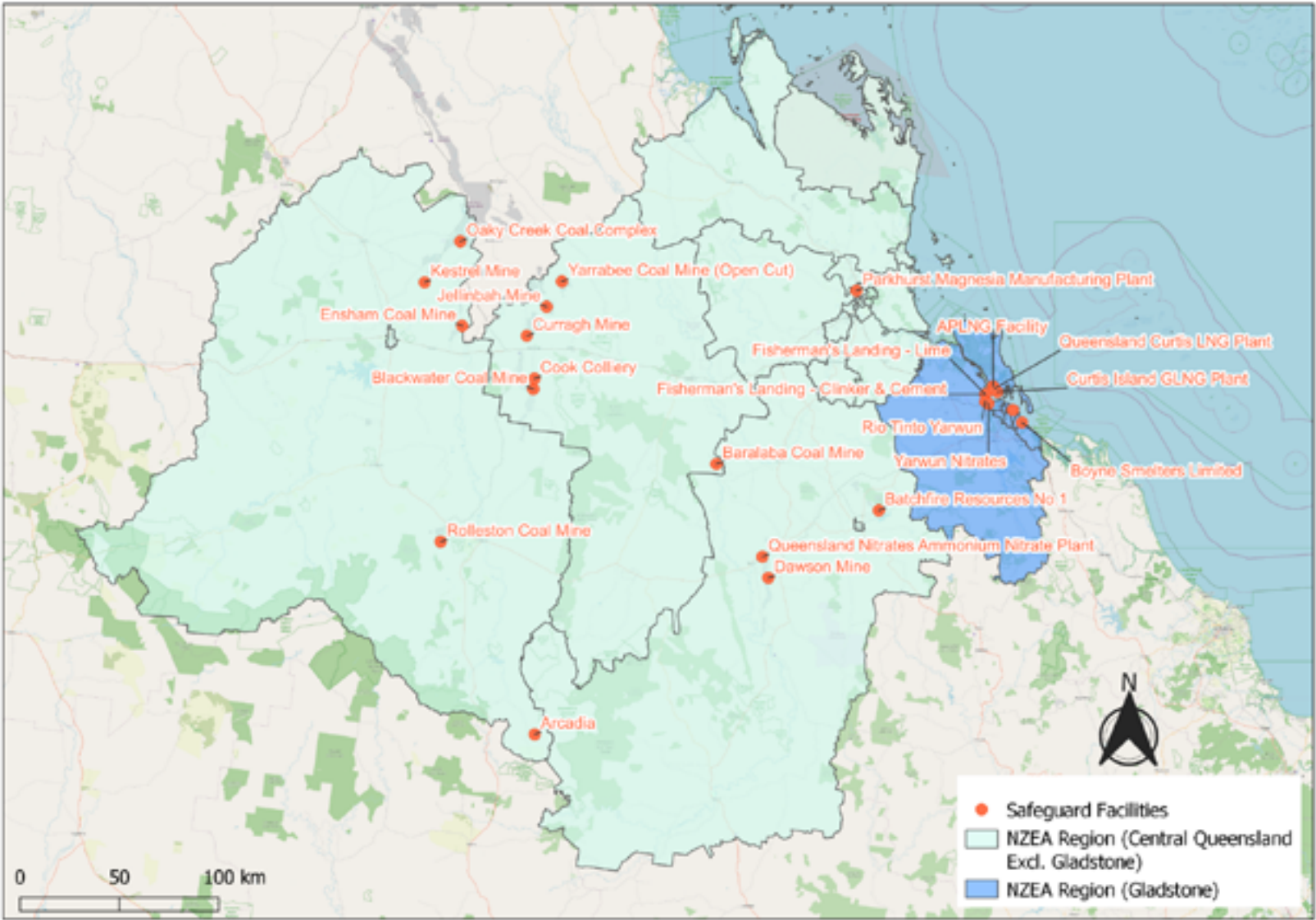
Source: ABS (2021), DSS (2025).

Power Stations and Coal Mines Map



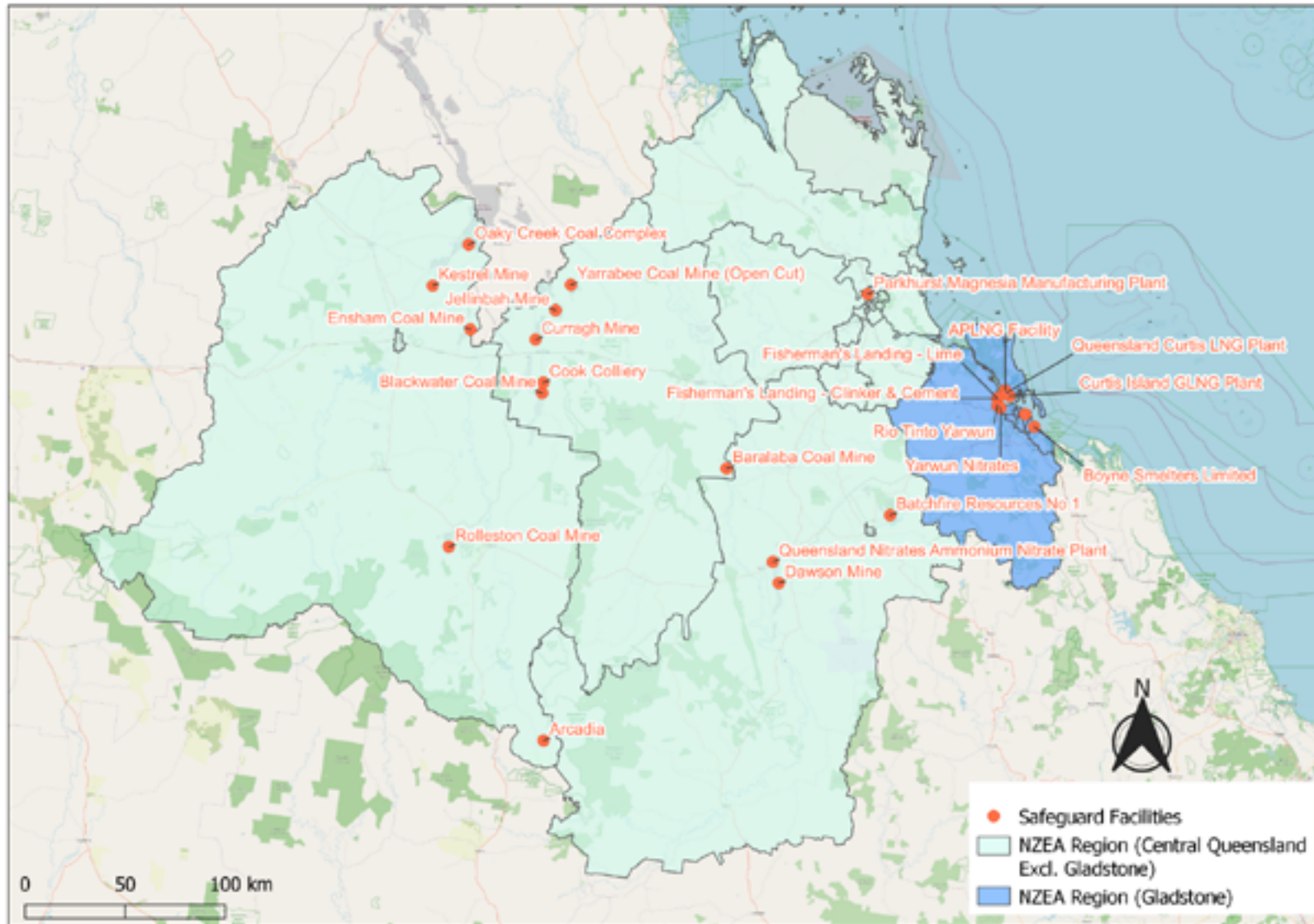
Source: DCCEEW (2025b).

Safeguard Facilities Map



Source: DCCEEW (2025b).

Commonwealth-Funded Net Zero Projects Map (Current and Proposed)



Note:

- Commonwealth funded projects include projects from the following schemes, Capacity Investment Scheme, Australian Renewable Energy Agency, Clean Energy Finance Corporation, Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility, National Reconstruction Fund, Regional Hydrogen Hubs Program.
- Information correct as of April 2026.

Source: NZIM (2026).



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