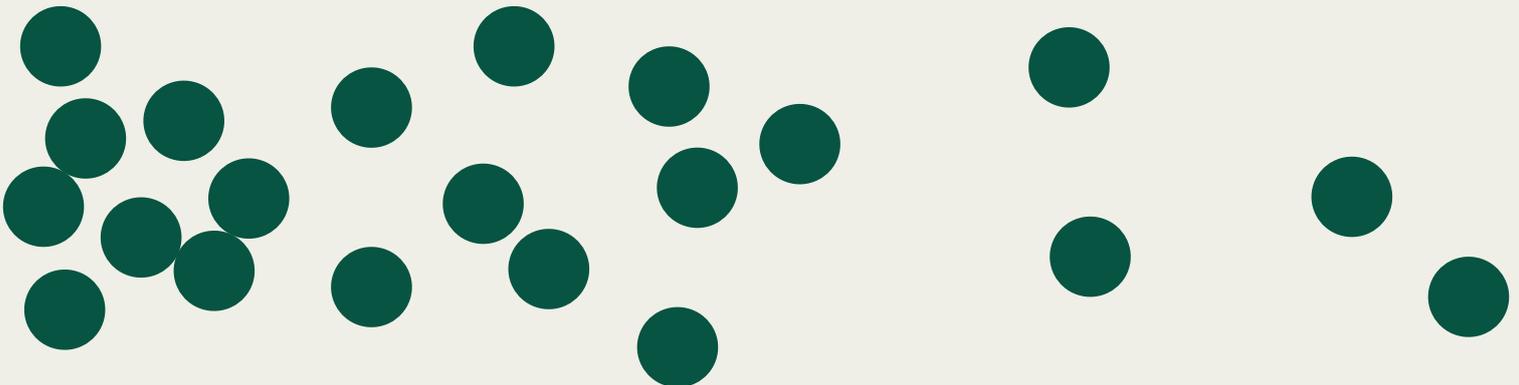


# Towards a positive transition

Statutory Review of  
the Energy Industry  
Jobs Plan 2025





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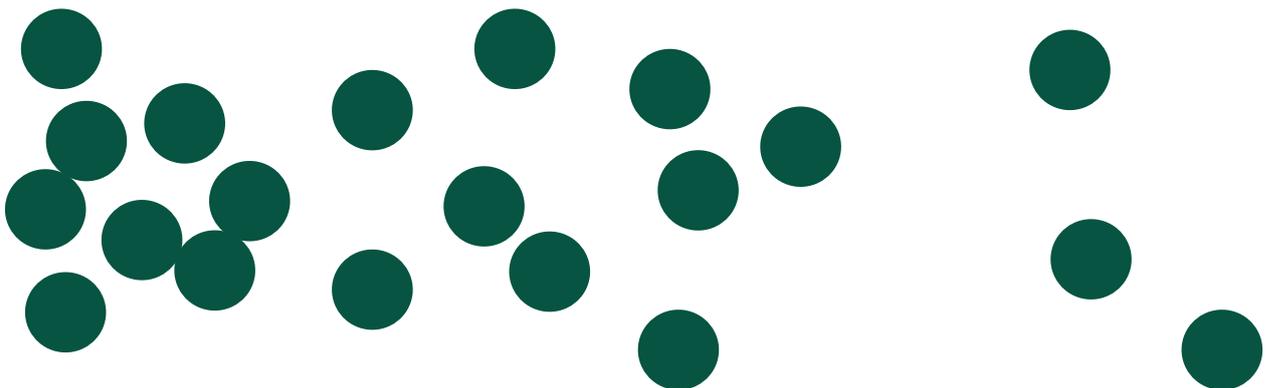
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**Acknowledgement of Country**

The Review Taskforce acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Custodians of Country and recognises their continuing connection to land, sea, culture and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.



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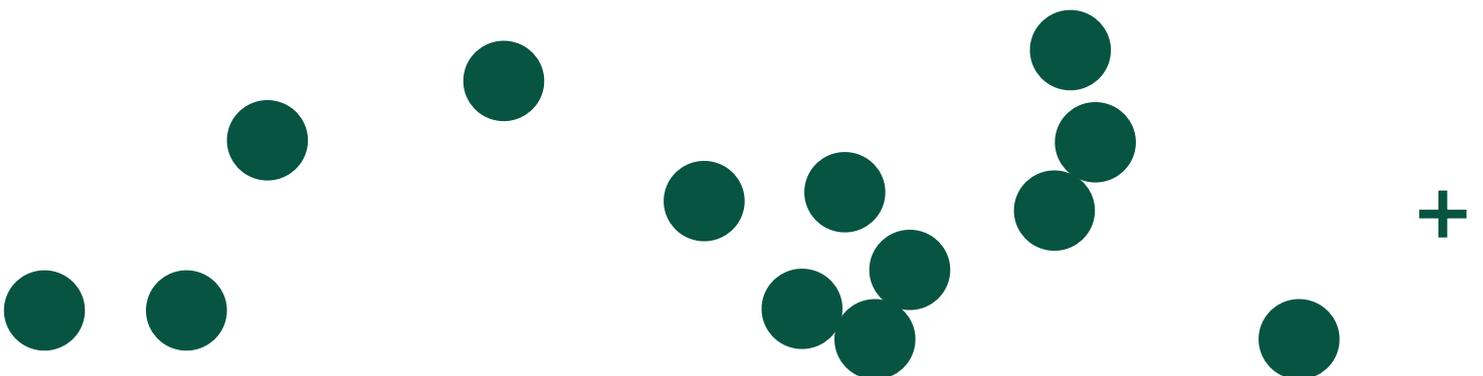
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# Foreword

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to undertake this inaugural review of the newly established Energy Industry Jobs Plan (EIJP). What a rewarding and instructive experience it has been. Rewarding because I have had the support of a collegiate and dedicated taskforce from the Net Zero Economy Authority (the Authority) led by Rachel McVicar. And instructive because there is so much for all of us to learn from the diversity of Australia's regions and their capacity for economic transformation in the context of a global transition to net zero emissions.

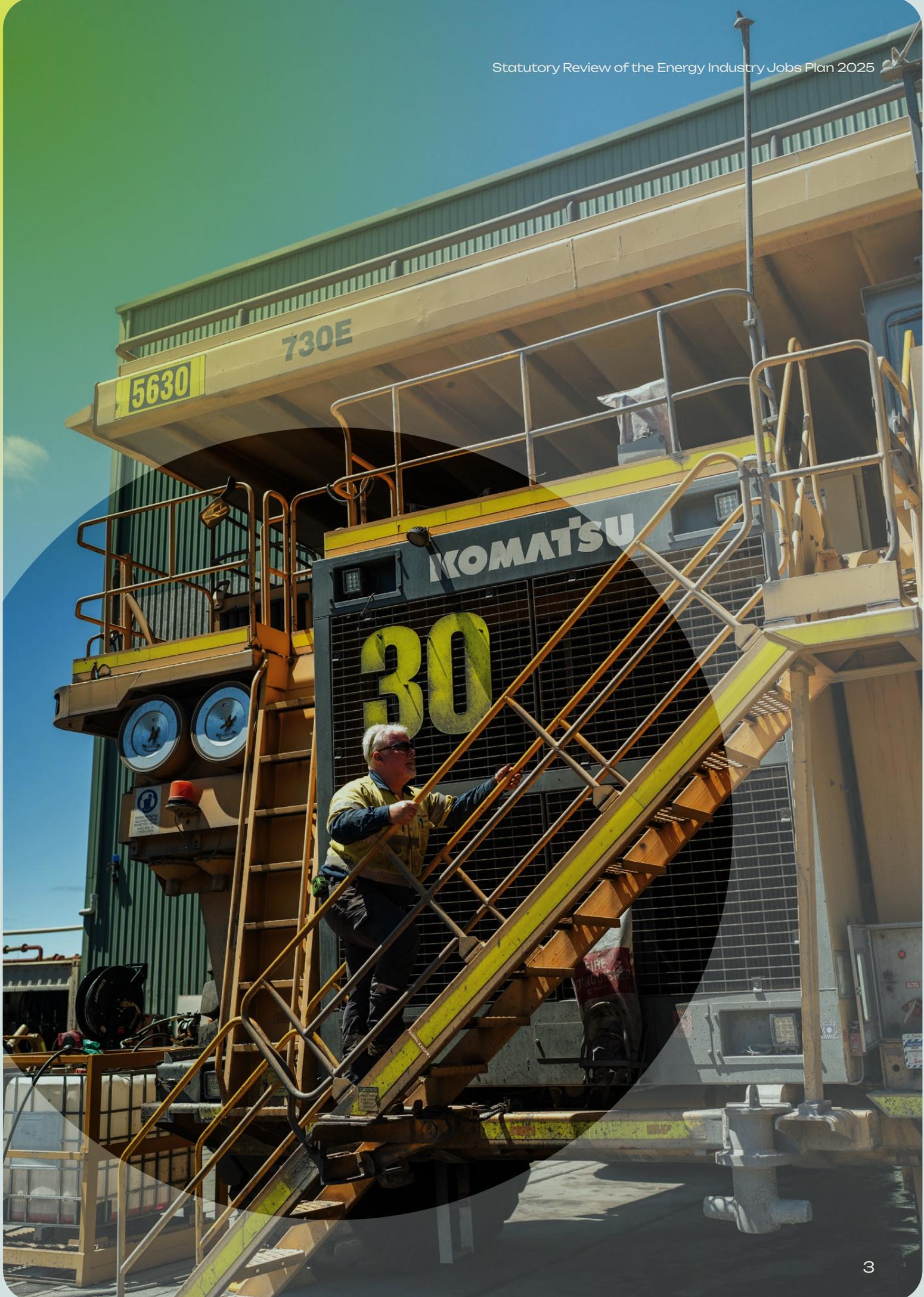
Regional businesses and communities are set to benefit from ambitious national programs such as the Albanese Government's Future Made in Australia and Net Zero Plan. But they also face a disproportionate cost in the short-term with the closure of coal-fired and gas-fired power stations in many parts of the country. This is why the Australian Government (the government) introduced the EIJP, to ensure that closing employers as well as dependent employers in the supply chain fulfil their obligations to their workforces, particularly with access to training and job-search support.

The main objectives of the review are to assess whether the provisions of the EIJP are fit-for-purpose and operating as parliament intended and to recommend improvements where appropriate. But the review was also an opportunity to go further and, drawing on case studies from around the world, to identify what 'best practice' structured regional transition might look like. The evidence suggests that a comprehensive approach to industrial and regional policy together with the effective implementation of the EIJP provides the strongest chance for workers and communities to successfully navigate the energy transition, diversify their economies and participate in the jobs and industries of the future.

Finally, on behalf of the taskforce, I would like to sincerely thank all the businesses, industry associations, unions, community organisations, academics, government officers and other stakeholders for their contributions to this review, through the many submissions, workshops and interviews. I am confident that their commitment will be matched by both practical and transformative outcomes for regional Australia.



Emeritus Professor Roy Green AM



# Executive summary

The EIJP is a legislative framework established by the government to ensure workers are supported in the transition to a net zero emissions economy, and benefit from the opportunities. The EIJP is administered by the Authority as part of a broader set of measures to support regions and achieve a more dynamic and resilient low carbon economy in Australia, including the Future Made in Australia agenda and recently announced Net Zero Plan.

The purpose of the review is to consider whether the EIJP is working effectively and as intended by parliament, as well as its likely success into the future. The review is focused on whether the EIJP could be improved to better support employees impacted by coal-fired and gas-fired power station closures, including whether any legislative amendments are desirable. The review also considered the merit and timing of any future review.

The EIJP is a new, highly targeted program designed to be rolled out where needed most across Australia's regions. The primary objective is to support employees affected by the closure of power stations and enable them to effectively plan and prepare for their next career move. It establishes a legislative framework that ensures employees can access transition supports from their employers. This framework can also extend to businesses within the supply chain which are substantially impacted by the power station closure.

At the time of the review's completion, the Authority had operationalised parts of the EIJP framework in relation to the announced closure of the Torrens Island B power station in Adelaide in June 2028, the Eraring power station in the Hunter region of New South Wales (NSW) in August 2027, and the Yallourn power station in the Latrobe Valley in Victoria in mid-2028.

Overall, the review found the EIJP to be operating generally as intended, but it makes a number of key recommendations to improve its application, including operational and legislative changes. The effect of these recommendations would be to streamline processes and enhance the experience of stakeholders in the future. However, it should be noted the review's scope for assessment was constrained by data and evidence limitations due to the short period of time from the commencement of the legislation.



The review heard from a range of stakeholders who advanced the case for more significant changes relating to broader industrial and regional policy that went beyond the intent of the current framework legislated by parliament. Many submissions contained similar content to submissions to parliament when the legislation was being considered and reinforced those positions. This prompted the review to consider what domestic and global best practice look like for industrial closures, regional energy transition and economic diversification. However, in accordance with the terms of reference, the main focus of the review continued to be on the future evolution of the EIJP, with a view to it being fit-for-purpose through the delivery of better outcomes for the individuals and communities the program was designed to serve.

The review identified several priority areas to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of the EIJP in the short term, but also more extensive policy changes over time, once there is a larger evidential base.

Enhancing the operation of the EIJP through the timeliness and clarity of 'community of interest' (COI) processes, as well as facilitating better planning and understanding of the EIJP, would improve engagement and its accessibility and usability for stakeholders. Adjustments to provide for more information around closure dates and to create opportunities for greater cooperation and codetermination of transition supports between parties could ensure supports flow sooner. Changes to commence the EIJP earlier, coverage of dependent employers, small business and decommissioning workers, as well as mental health support are also considered. A proportionate monitoring and evaluation framework, alongside a calibrated approach to future reviews, will be critical to maintaining policy integrity and ensuring the EIJP evolves in line with emerging evidence and structural and workforce changes.

However, the review also recognised the success of the EIJP relies on the broader context in which it operates. The EIJP is not intended to, nor can it, create jobs. Rather, its success depends on concurrent actions that build economic resilience and diversification in the region and high-skill, high-productivity jobs for the regional workforce. Diversifying economies impacted by power station closures will require strategies to create the jobs and industries of the future, including through investment attraction, training and education and the development of place-based innovation ecosystems.

The review concludes with the observation that the prospect of national strategies having a positive long-term impact would be enhanced by greater collaboration and alignment among local stakeholders through 'Regional Transition Agreements' and an on-the-ground presence led by the Authority in its priority regions.<sup>1</sup> The intent of these agreements and the on the ground presence is to add value to initiatives already in place by streamlining and coordinating efforts to harness efficiencies and multiply benefits. Together with the EIJP, this approach would ensure Australia's regions, communities and workers can share in the benefits of the transition to a net zero emissions economy.

The final report was delivered to the Minister for Industry and Innovation and Minister for Science (the Minister) and the CEO of the Authority on 10 December 2025.

<sup>1</sup> See glossary for priority regions. Current priority regions include Collie in Western Australia, Central Queensland, the Hunter in New South Wales, and the Latrobe and broader Gippsland region in Victoria. The Authority is also taking a project-led approach to transformational projects in the Pilbara in Western Australia and the Upper Spencer Gulf in South Australia

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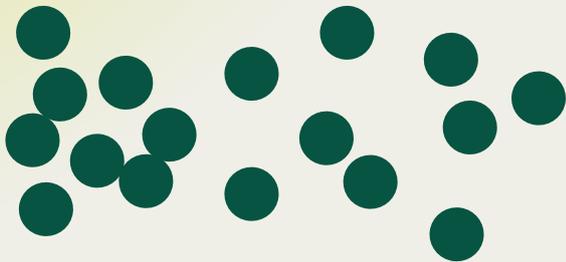
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# Introduction

**The *Net Zero Economy Authority Act 2024 (Cth)* (the NZEA Act) commenced on 11 December 2024, establishing the Authority and the EIJP. Part 5 of the NZEA Act and its associated provisions set out the operation of the EIJP.**

The EIJP is designed to support workers directly affected by the closure of coal-fired or gas-fired power stations to prepare for and transition to new employment. Most of Australia's coal-fired power stations, and some gas-fired power stations, have announced expected closure dates over the coming decades. These closures are expected to cause economic and workforce disruption, particularly in industrial regions reliant on fossil fuel power generation as an economic base. However, there are also opportunities to grow new industries, jobs and economic competitiveness so these regions can share in the benefits of a net zero economy.

Under section 68 of the NZEA Act, the CEO of the Authority (the CEO) is required to conduct, or cause to be conducted, a review into the operation of Part 5 of the NZEA Act, including consideration of whether any amendments to that Part are desirable. The NZEA Act requires the review to be completed within 12 months of the commencement of the NZEA Act. As such, the review must be completed no later than 10 December 2025.

On 26 June 2025, the CEO, Mr David Shankey:

- announced Emeritus Professor Roy Green AM (independent reviewer) would conduct the statutory review of the EIJP (the review)
- released the terms of reference specifying the matters to be considered by the review
- established the EIJP Review Taskforce (the taskforce) within the Authority to provide policy and secretariat support to the independent reviewer.

The views expressed in this report are those of the independent reviewer and may not reflect the views of the Authority.

# The Net Zero Economy Authority

The Authority is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity established as an independent statutory authority, comprised of the Authority's Board, CEO and staff.

The Board provides strategic direction and ensures accountability for the Authority's overall performance. The CEO is responsible for day-to-day administration of the Authority, including administering the EIJP under Part 5.

## The object of the NZEA Act is set out in section 3:

- **promote an orderly and positive economic transformation as the world decarbonises**
- **facilitate the achievement of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets**
- **ensure Australia's regions, communities and workers are supported to manage the impacts and share the benefits of Australia's transition to a net zero emissions economy.**

The Authority's functions outlined in section 16 of the NZEA Act include, but are not limited to:

- promoting coordination and consistency in the design and implementation of Australian government policies, programs and plans, and consulting and cooperating with persons, organisations and governments to support Australia's transition to a net zero emissions economy
- facilitating public and private sector participation and investment in net zero transformation initiatives, including referring matters to specialist investment vehicles and other entities
- supporting workers in emissions-intensive industries affected by the transition to net zero to access new employment or acquire skills to improve their employment prospects
- supporting and delivering educational and promotional initiatives to promote an understanding of, and encourage participation in, Australia's transition to a net zero emissions economy
- supporting First Nations Australians to participate in, and benefit from, Australia's transition to a net zero emissions economy.

To guide its efforts to deliver on the object and functions, the Authority has 3 missions, to:

- help workers in coal and gas facilities affected by the transition to prepare for and find new well paid, safe and secure jobs
- support communities significantly affected by the transition to net zero to prosper, including through economic development and investment
- be a trusted and influential voice to build understanding of, and shape policy on, the regional net zero transition.

Prior to its establishment, the Authority was an executive agency, the Net Zero Economy Agency, within the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio as an interim step towards creating the legislated Authority. As an executive agency, the Net Zero Economy Agency did not have statutory powers or functions, including for the EIJP.

Responsibility for the administration of the NZEA Act was transferred to the Industry, Science and Resources portfolio in May 2025.

# The Energy Industry Jobs Plan

The government established the EIJP to support the orderly phase out of ageing energy assets as the economy transitions towards a net zero economy, and ensure impacted employees are assisted to prepare for, and move to, new and high-quality employment opportunities in their region.

Support is targeted to employees of qualifying closing coal-fired and gas-fired power stations as well as some employers (defined as 'dependent employers'<sup>2</sup>) who meet all these criteria:

- have a commercial relationship with the closing power station, (or in some cases, a coal mine supplying a closing power station)
- carry on business operations located at, or in the same geographic region as, the closing power station
- will, or will be likely to, cease a substantial part of those business operations as a direct result of the eventual closure of the power station.<sup>3</sup>

Under the EIJP, employers specified in a COI determination<sup>4</sup> must offer supports to all their impacted employees (transition employees) including:

- career planning and financial advice, arranged at the employer's cost. Alternatively, where career planning and financial advice are arranged by the employee, paid time off work or flexible working arrangements to attend, and a financial contribution toward the cost
- permitting employees' engagement with unions to receive advice and support in relation to the EIJP.

Participating employees are a subset of transition employees who have given their employer an expression of interest (EOI) in finding other employment. To enable participating employees to find new employment, employers must provide them with additional supports including:

- access to training, including paid time off work or flexible working arrangements and a financial contribution toward the cost
- enabling employees' attendance at recruitment related activities through paid time off work or flexible working arrangements.

Levels of support can vary by employer depending on their operational requirements. Additionally, employers and unions that are entitled to represent the industrial interests of an employer's employees can agree on tailored actions to deliver on employer obligations.

The EIJP also involves the identification of potential 'receiving employers', which are businesses that may be interested in offering employment to suitable participating employees. Receiving employers participate in the EIJP voluntarily and are selected through an EOI process.

The EIJP is designed to complement the existing workplace relations framework, including relevant rights and obligations under the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Fair Work Act) and industrial instruments. It also operates alongside other employment supports available through the government. Employment support programs such as the EIJP must be responsive to their broader regional and economic context. Therefore, the review considered the EIJP's operation within its industrial and regional policy context, which is underpinned by the net zero transition.

<sup>2</sup> See glossary for definition of 'dependent employer'

<sup>3</sup> Throughout the report 'substantially impacted' is used as a shorthand for 'cease a substantial part of business operations' per definitions in sections 6(3)(c) and 6(4)(b)(v) respectively.

<sup>4</sup> See glossary for definition of 'community of interest determination'

# The net zero transition

Australia's transition to a net zero economy is complex and multifaceted, requiring a holistic approach to ensure the economic opportunities are realised.

**The government has legislated a commitment to reduce emissions by 43% below 2005 levels by 2030, and to reach net zero by 2050. In September 2025, the government announced a 2035 emissions reduction target of 62–70% below 2005 levels.**

Alongside the 2035 target, the government released the Net Zero Plan and 6 sector plans (electricity and energy; agriculture and land; built environment; industry; resources and transport) to detail the transition pathway in those sectors.

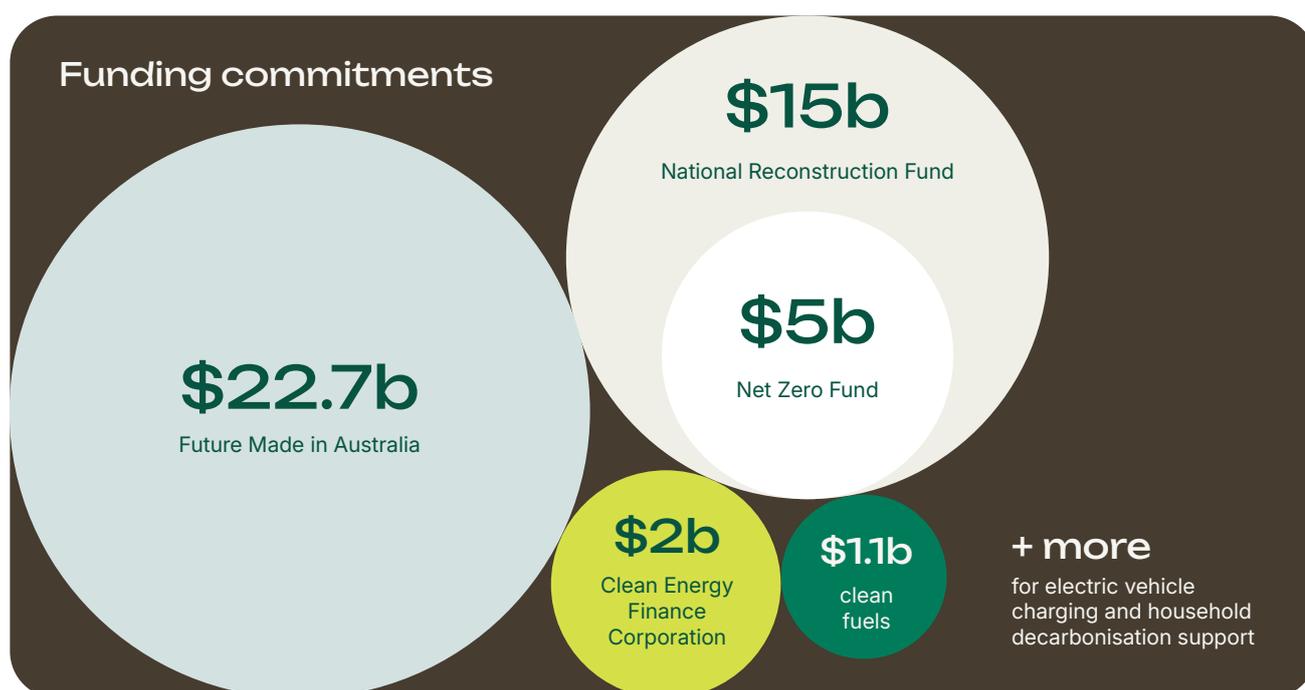
These plans were accompanied by funding announcements, including:

- \$5 billion for the Net Zero Fund, allocated from the existing \$15 billion National Reconstruction Fund (NRF)
- \$2 billion for the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC)
- \$1.1 billion for clean fuels, and more for electric vehicle charging and household decarbonisation support.

**This builds on the government's \$22.7 billion commitment for the Future Made in Australia agenda.**

This agenda will ensure Australia makes the most of the economic opportunities from the net zero transition and attracts and enables investment in net zero industries to build a more diversified and resilient Australian economy. Public sector investment in the net zero transition space is also made available through the Commonwealth's Special Investment Vehicles (SIVs) such as the NRF Corporation (NRF), the CEFC and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).

The global trend towards clean energy and low carbon production presents huge opportunities for Australia. This includes the opportunity to build further our competitive advantages – not just rely on our comparative advantages (that is, natural resources) – to add value and make high-value products, which will deliver new jobs, new industries and secure global investment in Australia and its regions.



The Department of the Treasury’s (Treasury) baseline scenario modelling<sup>5</sup> stated Australia’s Net Zero Plan will support economic growth, projecting higher living standards and employment, specifically:

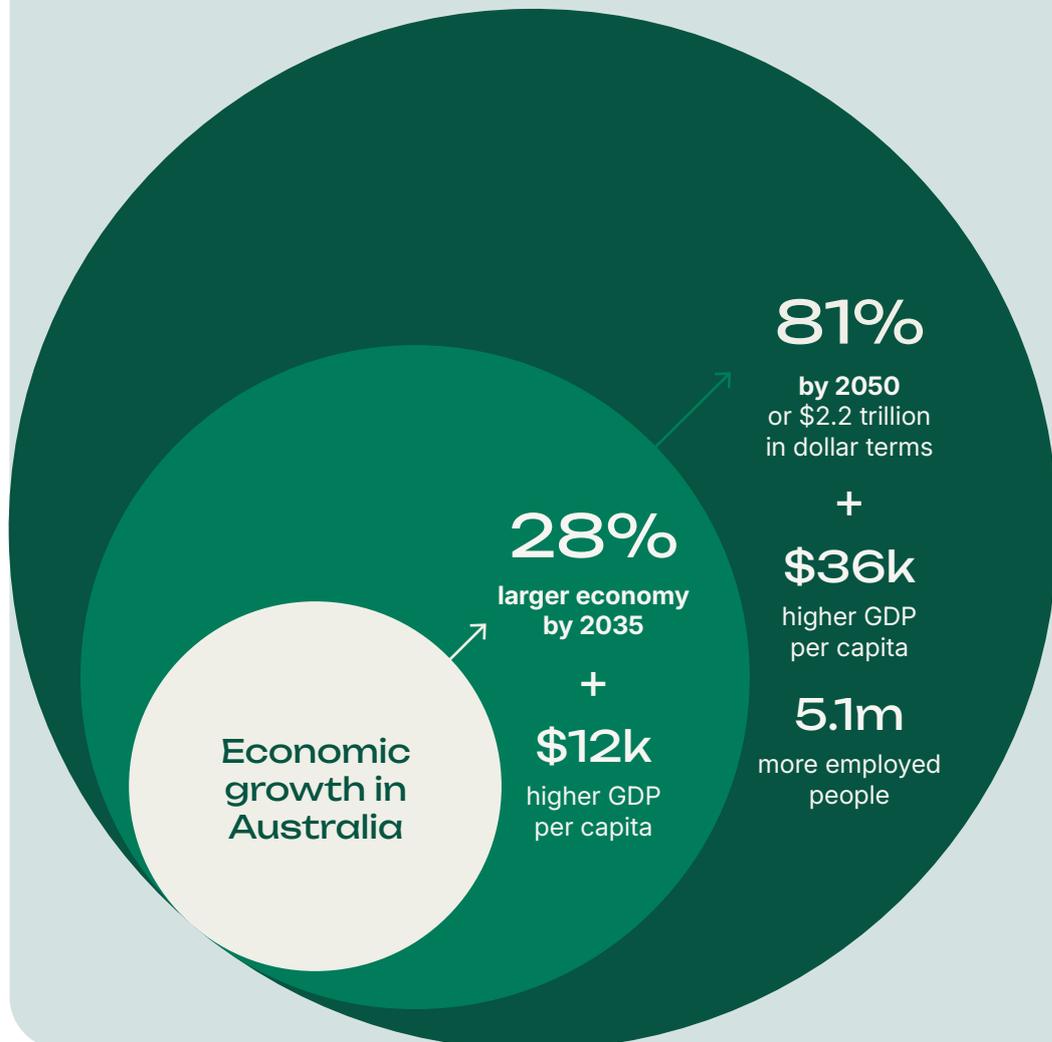
- an economy 28% larger by 2035 and 81% larger by 2050, relative to current levels. In dollar terms, the economy is expected to be \$2.2 trillion bigger by 2050, relative to current levels
- real GDP per capita projected to be \$12,000 higher in 2035 and \$36,000 higher in 2050, compared to current levels
- employment projected to increase by 5.1 million people by 2050 (Treasury 2025a:34–35).

<sup>5</sup> See *Australia’s net zero transformation: Treasury modelling and analysis* (2025). This report examines the impact of the net zero transformation on Australia and provides insights into the economic opportunities from different pathways. It was prepared to support the development of the Australian Government’s Net Zero Plan and sector plans. The ‘baseline scenario’ models a pathway consistent with existing policies and the expected availability of abatement technologies.

The Treasury’s modelling also found ‘[a] disorderly approach will cost investment, jobs and the economy. Under the Disorderly Transition Scenario, the economy is projected to be up to a cumulative \$2 trillion smaller by 2050, compared to orderly scenarios’ (2025a:7–8) and ‘[n]ot pursuing net zero by 2050 risks lower economic growth, reduced investment, missed export and employment opportunities, and higher electricity prices’ (2025a:8).

The impact of the transition is more acute in the energy sector, where old generation capacity is being replaced within the decade to support decarbonisation across the economy.

The EIJP is just one lever the Authority can draw on in this evolving and multi-layered landscape. This landscape includes all levels of government and numerous entities from the private sector, who are engaged in the economic and social aspects of the transition to a net zero emissions economy. The Authority’s role is not to duplicate the work of others, but to drive regional transformation by facilitating investment, supporting impacted workers in those regions, and providing strategic leadership where best placed to do so.



# Review background

Since the review's commencement and the terms of reference were made public, there have been several significant domestic and international policy announcements about the net zero transition the review acknowledged and considered, such as Australia's 2035 emissions reduction target and associated funding as well as further international commitments in order to meet net zero by 2050.

In undertaking the review, it became clear a number of issues raised by stakeholders experiencing the transition in impacted regions, and viewed as critical or relevant to the success of the EIJP, sat outside the formal scope of the review. The review sought to respond to these views where possible in its report. Consequently, where relevant, 'additional actions' on broader issues have been noted to inform policy considerations. However, to maintain the integrity of the process and to ensure findings and recommendations remain in the agreed mandate, the review focused on the areas specified in the terms of reference and areas that support the operation of the EIJP.

The review's full terms of reference are available at Appendix A.

## Approach to the review

The review sought to hear from individuals, employers and organisations that may be impacted by the closure of a coal-fired or gas-fired power station, or who have a broader interest in the impact of coal-fired and gas-fired power station closures on workers, communities and regional economies. Extensive consultation enabled the review to learn about these stakeholders' experiences with the operation of the EIJP to date and their views about the current and likely effectiveness of Part 5 of the NZEA Act and associated provisions. This stakeholder feedback has informed the findings and recommendations of this review.

The review drew on relevant academic research on the net zero transition and previous Australian and international responses to industrial closures, as detailed in Appendix B.



## Consultation

The Authority announced commencement of the review's consultation process on 4 August 2025 with the release of a consultation paper. Interested parties were encouraged to provide their perspectives in written submissions or meetings with the independent reviewer during extensive regional consultation.

Written submissions closed on 5 September 2025. The review received 33 public submissions, which have been published on the Authority's website. The independent reviewer and the taskforce conducted almost 100 different consultations with employers, employer representatives, unions, community groups, local government, industry, academics, and individuals. Online meetings were made available for those unable to meet in person.

Between August and October 2025, the independent reviewer and the taskforce travelled to regions likely to be impacted by the closure of coal-fired and gas-power stations in the coming years for in-person discussions with local stakeholders. These regions included the Hunter and Lithgow regions in NSW, the Latrobe Valley in Victoria, Adelaide in South Australia (SA), Gladstone and Biloela in Central Queensland, and Collie in Western Australia (WA).

The review also held roundtables with peak employer groups, industry bodies and unions in Canberra on 12 September 2025. Engagements with other Commonwealth departments and state government agencies to discuss jurisdictional overlaps, policy design and coordination also informed the review.

More information on the consultation process can be found at Appendix C.

# Limitations

The time between the commencement of the NZEA Act and the review has been brief, with the review being delivered within 12 months of the NZEA Act's commencement. No power stations involved in an EIJP process closed between commencement of the legislation and the completion of the review. Also, some legislated components of the EIJP are yet to be operationalised or subject to tribunal consideration. As a result, the EIJP has not yet been able to demonstrate its capacity to deliver in full on its policy intent of supporting participating employees to find new employment. This has resulted in limited or no data being available to assess the impact of the EIJP and whether the legislation is having the intended effect.

Routine data reported by the Authority and/or other government agencies about the operation of the EIJP and its impact is not yet available. This is due to the time needed to develop and implement monitoring and evaluation frameworks and regular reporting from the Fair Work Commission (FWC) about the number and status of EIJP-related matters.

Decisions of the FWC or the courts will be important sources of evidence on how the EIJP operates. At the time of the review's completion, the FWC has performed only some of its functions under the NZEA Act, and no matters relating to the EIJP have gone before the courts. This significantly limits the available guidance on operation of the framework.

While the review draws upon the best available advice on the operation of Part 5, these interpretations are not necessarily the views of the Authority, and the FWC or a court may reach a different conclusion.

Given these limitations, the review relied on available data, evidence collected throughout the consultation period and international and domestic best practice examples to reach its findings and recommendations. In line with the terms of reference, the review not only assessed the EIJP to date but adopted a forward-looking approach, considering both the expected operation of the EIJP and how the EIJP can remain fit-for-purpose into the future.

Figure 1:

## Timeline for the Energy Industry Jobs Plan Review





# Structure of the report

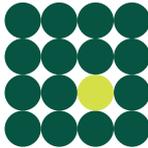
The report is structured around 6 high-level themes that emerged from stakeholders' feedback:

Each section of the report elucidates the policy intent and operation of the relevant sections of the NZEA Act and the EIJP, key feedback from stakeholders, and the review's findings and recommendations informed by the consultation process.

Beyond these substantive sections of the report, a glossary of terms (Appendix E), list of abbreviations and acronyms (Appendix F) and bibliography of references (Appendix G) are also provided in the appendices.

1

Operation of the EIJP to date



2

Improving the operation of the EIJP



3

Coverage of workers and dependent employers



4

Opportunities for broader policy reform to the EIJP



5

Scope of the EIJP beyond the energy sector



6

Building strong regional economies



# Recommendations and additional actions

The review provides recommendations in line with the terms of reference, and includes additional actions for the government to consider in response to evidence and submissions that go beyond the terms of reference, but are important to support the successful operation of the EIJP and therefore support regions and communities to manage the impacts and share the benefits of Australia's transition to a net zero emissions economy.

The review acknowledges that implementing some recommendations may have resourcing implications for government departments or agencies. While these resourcing impacts have not been assessed in the process of determining the recommendations, the review notes they would need to be considered by government in the adoption of any of the recommendations.

## Section 2



### Recommendation 1



The Authority should publish a work plan outlining scheduled closures over the forward 5 years to provide indicative timing for when COI processes are likely to commence and the intended steps and timing for each process. The work plan should:

- be updated regularly to outline changes to closure dates and/or expected milestones for individual COI processes
- provide information outlining the ways in which employees of closing employers and employees of employers in their supply chains and local communities can participate in consultations for COI processes.

### Recommendation 2



The Authority should provide clear, timely and targeted guidance to clarify:

- roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, and each operational stage of the EIJP
- how employers can appropriately discharge their obligations and the rights of employees
- the relationship between the EIJP and Australia's workplace relations system, with guidance prepared in collaboration with the FWC, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) and other relevant agencies to ensure content is aligned and integrated with broader information provided by those agencies.

### Recommendation 3



The Australian Government should consider amending the NZEA Act to provide an express power for the CEO to obtain information from potential closing and dependent employers prior to a trigger notice where there is a 'reasonable expectation' of a closure, without changing provisions for COI processes to begin once a trigger notice has been made.

### Recommendation 4



The Australian Government should consider amending the NZEA Act to enable employers, their workforces and union representatives to agree on supports ahead of a COI process being conducted or a COI determination being issued by the FWC.

Agreements should be enforceable instruments made through the FWC and could use arrangements under section 60 as a basis.

Amendments enabling voluntary agreements should not disadvantage transition employees compared to what could be negotiated if a COI determination named the employer.

### Recommendation 5



The Australian Government should, after a number of completed COI processes and power station closures, consider whether COI processes are being completed with sufficient time for workers to receive appropriate supports and for employers to discharge their obligations, and whether any amendments are needed. This should also include considering whether Part 5 is sufficiently able to address workforce impacts that may occur prior to the eventual closure of a power station if it gradually winds down operations (for example, moves to a firming role or reserve outage mode).

## Section 3



### Recommendation 6



The Australian Government should amend the NZEA Act to expand the definition of dependent employer so any employees performing work onsite, or directly related to the operation of the power station, can access transition supports.

This should ensure employees of labour-hire firms can be covered, even if their employer does not have a direct commercial relationship with the closing employer, but nonetheless provides services directly related to operation of the power station.

The amendment should be consistent with other current requirements for the definition of 'dependent employer'. Namely, that the dependent employer is a constitutional corporation that will, or will be likely to, cease a substantial part of its business operations carried on at the power station concerned, or in the same geographic area as the power station concerned, as a direct result of the eventual closure of that power station.

### Recommendation 7



The Authority should establish methods in its compliance and enforcement framework to proactively identify and monitor risks and incidences of potential avoidance of obligations, including for labour hire workers and contractors employed at the relevant facility, and advise the Australian Government on any desired amendments to minimise corporate avoidance undermining the EIJP.



## Section 4

### Recommendation 8

Ahead of the first power station closure under a COI determination, the Australian Government should consider whether to amend the NZEA Act to extend the operation of a COI determination for transition employees who continue to be employed through decommissioning but will lose their job once decommissioning has been completed.

### Recommendation 9

The Australian Government, through the Authority, should monitor the impact of the EIJP on small business and consider establishing proportionate or reduced obligations, including the potential for a small business exemption from the dependent employer definition. Consideration should also include the impact on employees of small businesses and alternative forms of support that may be available, provided by government or potentially provided by the closing employer in some circumstances.

In the short-term, the Authority should develop targeted guidance materials for small businesses to build awareness of the EIJP, educate them on the COI process and assist them to navigate their obligations under the legislation.

### Recommendation 10

The Australian Government should consider amending the NZEA Act so that closing and dependent employers are required to provide information on mental health supports available in the workplace to transition employees, including how and when supports can be accessed.

### Recommendation 11

The Authority should assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the EIJP at individual closures and across multiple closures through ongoing monitoring, evaluation and reporting frameworks.

### Recommendation 12

The Authority's Board should appropriately sequence the s80A review, following power station closures and completed FWC processes to ensure an effective evaluation of the operation of Part 5.

## Section 5



### Additional Action 1



The Australian Government should determine the best model to deliver transition supports to workers in closing coal mines that are not currently captured by the EIJP (including those that sell coal to the export market).

- This work should consider the benefits, risks and suitability of existing supports across relevant Australian Government portfolios and state governments, as well as potential new models.
- The experience and insights from establishing the EIJP should be used to inform the program design and appropriate supports.

## Section 6



### Additional Action 2



The Australian Government should develop Regional Transition Agreements for priority regions, led by the Authority. Each agreement would be developed in collaboration with relevant Commonwealth portfolios, state and local governments and other stakeholders and established with appropriate funding and other supports.

### Additional Action 3



The Australian Government should establish an integrated on-the-ground presence in priority regions, led by the Authority at the Commonwealth level, to coordinate the delivery of Regional Transition Agreements and support ongoing implementation of the EIJP. In this context, it would be necessary for the Australian Government to provide appropriate funding and resourcing in partnership with relevant state governments.

### Additional Action 4



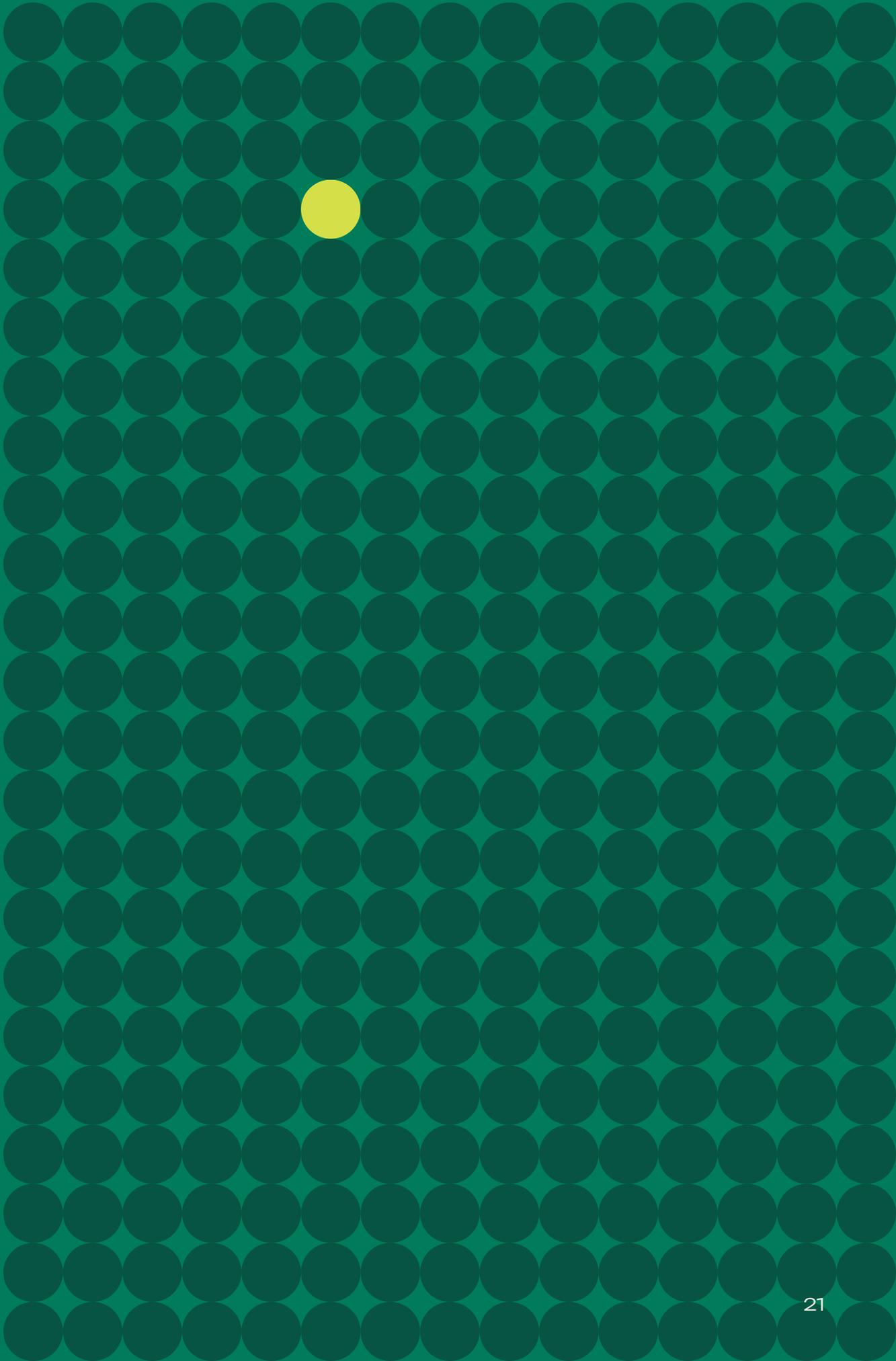
The Australian Government should consider additional ways to incentivise employers to hire employees participating in the EIJP through the use of funding streams across government programs, for example, through beneficial criteria or other forms of conditionality for Future Made in Australia and Net Zero Fund or infrastructure project funding.



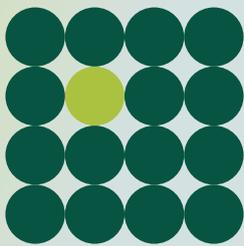
# 1

## Operation of the Energy Industry Jobs Plan

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**While it may still be too early to reach definitive conclusions about the overall operation of the EIJP, the review found that in its implementation to date, it is operating as the parliament intended. During the review, stakeholders expressed appreciation of the Authority's approach to EIJP processes, including being approachable, and readily available and responsive to inquiries.**

The review acknowledges the challenges of making recommendations based on the limited application of the NZEA Act to date. The experience to date of the use of new powers by the CEO is not indicative of what may occur into the future. Nevertheless, the Review makes recommendations that aim to streamline the process and improve stakeholder experiences in the future.

The review also received submissions and heard from a wide range of stakeholders who suggested more significant changes to the framework. While some of the issues go beyond the intent of the current framework legislated by parliament, the review has considered the key themes emerging through consultation. The review offers recommendations on some of these themes to support the maturation of the EIJP over time and to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose to deliver the best outcomes for the individuals and communities the program is designed to help.

The review's recommendations are informed by international and domestic best practice, as well as the experiences of those on the ground supporting workers through structural adjustment and industry transition.



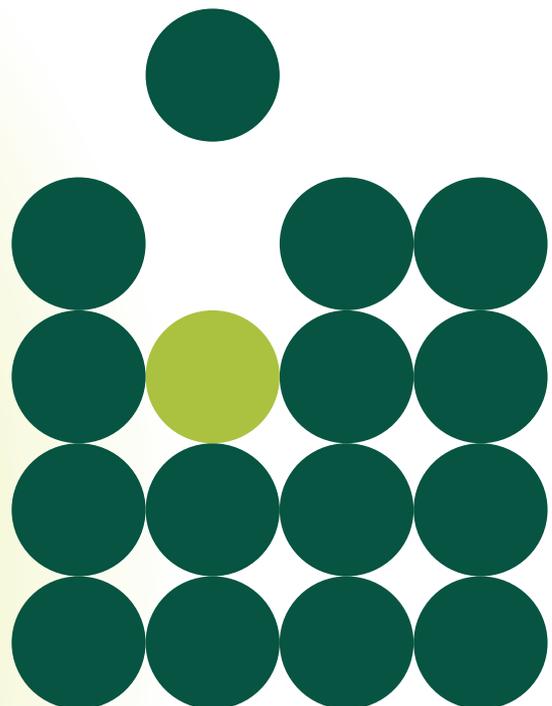
# Policy design of the EIJP

The EIJP was designed to establish a legislated framework for supporting the future employment of employees displaced by closing coal-fired and gas-fired power stations, as well as dependent employers that have a commercial relationship with the closing power station and will, or will be likely to, cease a substantial part of their business operations due to the closure (REM 2024:77).

A key principle of the legislation is that employees directly affected by power station closures are supported to connect to future employment using those supports provided by their employer and with sufficient time in the lead up to the closure event. The obligations on employers that arise under Part 5 are in addition to existing workplace obligations, for example those in enterprise agreements, but are designed to complement the existing workplace relations system.

While the CEO is required to assess all relevant power station closures, the scheme is designed to be targeted, requiring both the CEO and the FWC to consider the specific circumstances of each individual business and its workforce to 'help target the Plan to closures where it is most needed' (REM 2024:42).

A diagram outlining the process for the EIJP can be found at Appendix D.



# Role of the Authority's CEO

The CEO has key roles in administering the EIJP, as set out in the following functions under Part 5 of the NZEA Act:

- Specifying a 'trigger notice'<sup>6</sup>, which relates to the closure of the whole, or a part, of a coal-fired or gas-fired power station
- Defining the 'geographic area'<sup>7</sup> of the closure for the purposes of the EIJP, which is relevant for definitions of dependent employers and scoping matters the CEO and FWC must have regard to in exercising their functions
- Undertaking the COI process in accordance with section 55 once a 'trigger situation'<sup>8</sup> has come into existence in accordance with section 55
- Applying to the FWC in accordance with section 56, which may make a COI determination under section 57 on the basis of the CEO's application
- Providing education, assistance, advice and information on the operation of Part 5
- Monitoring and promoting compliance with Part 5
- Exercising information gathering powers under sections 64–66
- Where appropriate, making applications to the FWC under section 62 and under the *Regulatory Powers (Standard Provisions) Act 2014* (Regulatory Powers Act).

<sup>6</sup> See glossary for definition of trigger notice

<sup>7</sup> See glossary for definition of geographic area

<sup>8</sup> See glossary for definition of trigger situation

After completing the COI process, the CEO can apply to the FWC for a COI determination. The CEO must be satisfied it is reasonable to specify the closing employer and dependent employers in the application. This requires the CEO to consider each business on its own merits in relation to the legislative parameters. If the CEO decides to make an application, they must do so at least 2 years ahead of the scheduled closure date where a trigger notice has been made at least 42 months before the scheduled closure, or as soon as practicable if the trigger notice is made less than 42 months before (NZEA Act, subs 56(2)).

Part 5 also confers a regulatory function on the CEO, including powers to make applications to:

- the FWC for an order setting out the actions to be taken by the closing employer or dependent employer in relation to section 58 or 59
- relevant courts under Part 4 of the Regulatory Powers Act.

The CEO is required to promote and monitor compliance with Part 5, including by providing education, assistance, advice and information to relevant employers and employees.





# Role of the Fair Work Commission

The FWC is responsible for receiving applications from the CEO and ultimately, if an application is made, determining whether the EIJP should apply through the issuing of a COI determination. The FWC must make a COI determination if it is satisfied that one or more employers are closing or dependent employers, and that it is reasonable in the circumstances to specify them in the determination. A COI determination enlivens the employer obligations to provide supports to transition employees under the EIJP.

In making this decision, the FWC must consider the information provided in the CEO's application and information collected from stakeholders through the FWC process, and must have regard to:

- the object of the NZEA Act
- the existing supports that are available to facilitate transition employees of the employer to find other employment, including supports provided under relevant enterprise agreements or other industrial instruments
- the number of transition employees of the employer
- an estimate of the number of those transition employees who are, or who will become, participating employees of the employer
- the capacity of the employer to redeploy those transition employees in other business operations of the employer or in business operations of associated entities of the employer
- the capacity of other employers in the same geographic area in which the power station concerned is located to offer employment to those transition employees.

The FWC must also:

- consider the objects of the Fair Work Act, for example, acknowledging the special circumstances of small and medium-sized businesses (Fair Work Act, ss 3 and 578; NZEA Act, subs 57(8))
- ensure that specified closing and dependent employers, their employees and unions, relevant employer organisations, the Energy Industry Worker Redeployment Advisory Group (EIWRAG) and the CEO (or a nominated representative), have an opportunity to be heard.



The EIWRAG is an advisory group established under the NZEA Act, consisting of members with experience representing both workers and employers in affected sectors, to advise the FWC when it receives an application under Part 5.

While a COI determination is in force, the FWC may make, on application, a determination about specific actions to be taken by the closing or dependent employer through determinations and orders made under sections 60–62. A COI determination remains in force for 6 months after the closure date of the power station specified by the determination.

Division 3 of Part 5-1 of the Fair Work Act deals with conduct of matters before the FWC and applies in relation to matters under Part 5. This includes the ability for the FWC to vary its decisions either on its own initiative or on application from a person affected by the decision. For example, this may enable the FWC to vary an existing COI determination to:

- add or remove dependent employers
- amend the date of expiry under subsection 57(6)(b) if a power station's operations are extended during the life of the COI determination.

# The EIJP – implementation so far

At the time of the review’s completion, the CEO has administered Part 5 of the NZEA Act in relation to 4 power station closures:

1

## Muja C Unit power station

The CEO exercised statutory discretion to not undertake a COI process for the closure of Muja C Unit 6 in Collie, WA.

2

## Torrens Island B power station

After conducting a COI process, the CEO applied to the FWC seeking a COI determination. On 20 November 2025, the FWC issued a COI determination, which was the first implementation of the EIJP in Australia.

3

## Eraring power station

The CEO issued a trigger notice on 28 May 2025, facilitating the commencement of the COI process.

4

## Yallourn power station

The CEO issued a trigger notice on 21 November 2025, which formally commenced a COI process.

At the time of finalising the review, the CEO had made only one application to the FWC for a COI determination requesting AGL entities be covered as the closing employer, with no dependent employers specified. No parties opposed the application, and the FWC issued a decision on 20 November 2025, supporting the CEO’s application.

On 27 May 2025, the CEO announced a COI process for the Eraring power station in Lake Macquarie, NSW, which is scheduled to close in August 2027. This is an involved assessment, noting Eraring is Australia’s largest coal-fired power station and its supply chain arrangements are complex. The Eraring COI process has generated significant local stakeholder and media interest. The CEO conducted interviews with media outlets to promote awareness and understanding of the COI process. At the time of finalising the report, the Authority was gathering information from employers and other relevant parties.

Over the next 2 years, the Authority is expecting to assess an additional 4 power stations that are scheduled to close based on current publicly announced schedules, including:

- Collie power station in Collie, WA (scheduled to close in Oct 2027)
- Muja power station in Collie, WA (scheduled to close in Oct 2029)
- Gladstone power station in Gladstone, Queensland (scheduled to close in Mar 2029)
- Callide B power station in Biloela, Queensland (scheduled to close in 2031).

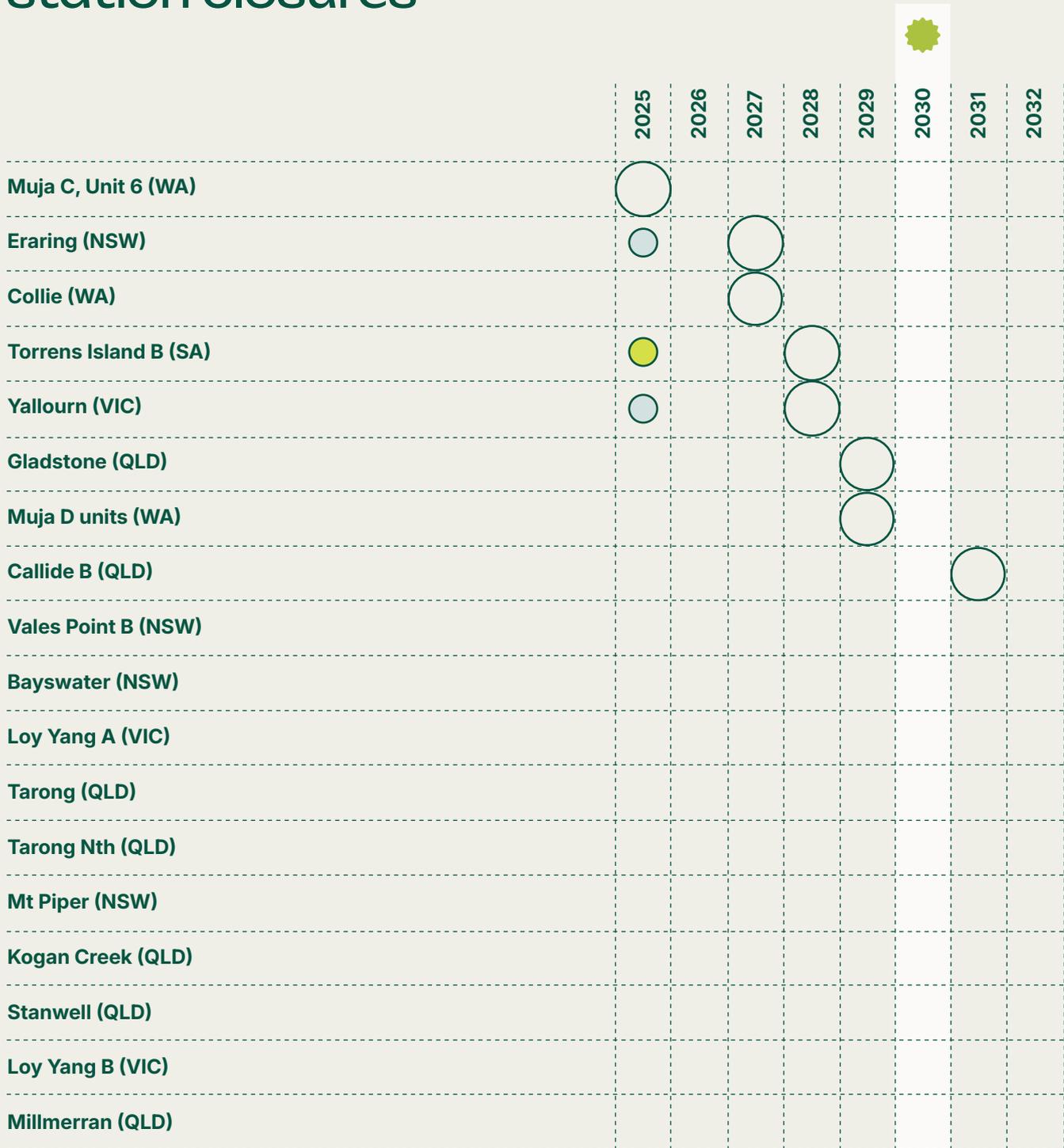


Australian Government  
commitment to reduce  
emissions by 43%

WA Government  
to retire state-owned  
stations

Figure 2:

# Timeline of power station closures



**NOTE:** Callide C (QLD) and Bluewaters (WA) closure dates unspecified. This timeline also excludes some gas generators which are in scope of the EIJP.

The CEO exercised statutory discretion to not undertake a COI process for the closure of Muja C, Unit 6.

-  COI process complete
-  COI process commenced
-  Expected closure date

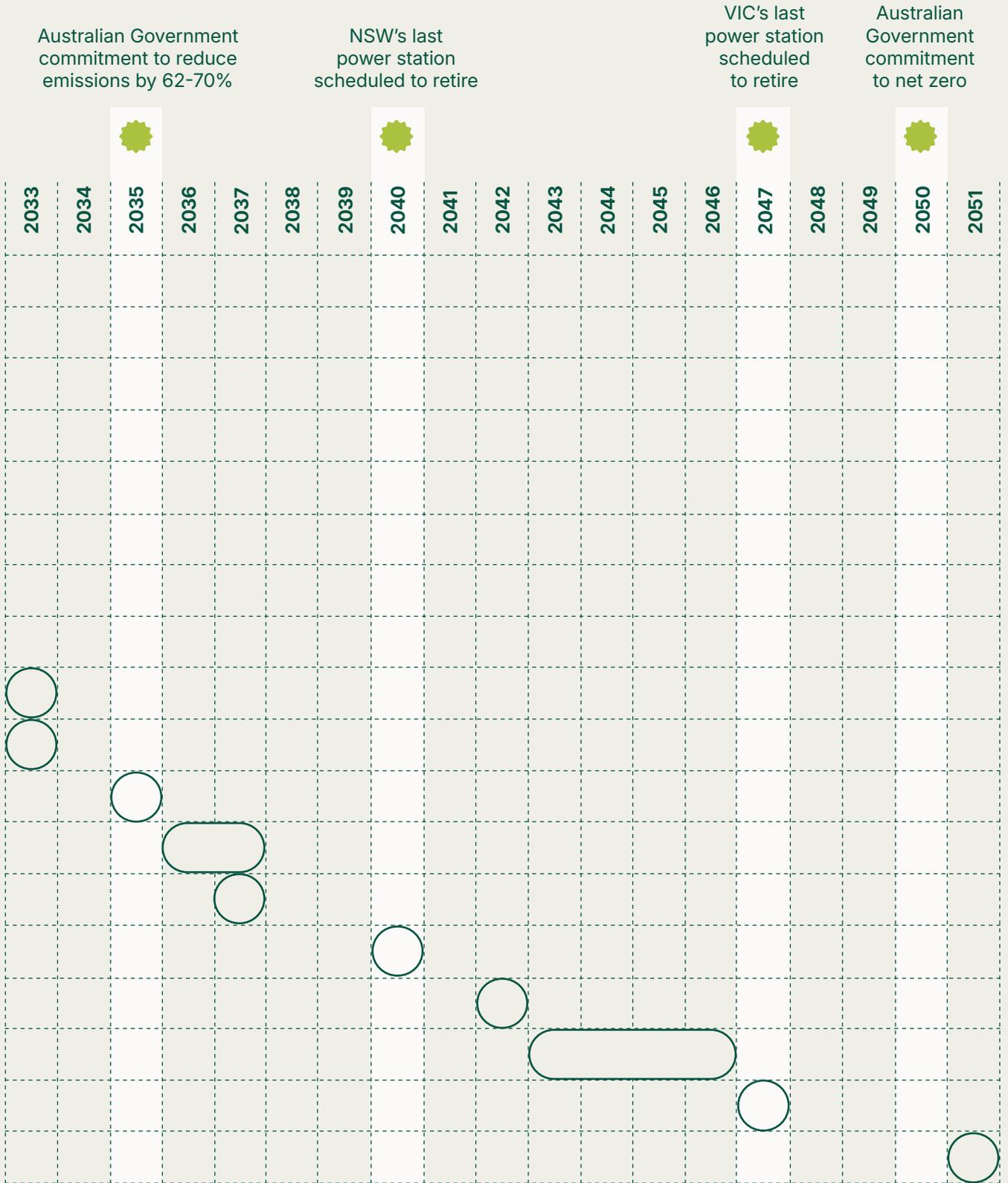




Figure 3:

# Torrens Island B power station closure timeline

Torrens Island power station (Torrens) is an 800MW gas-fired power station in Adelaide, SA, owned and operated by AGL.

All 4 remaining generating units were originally scheduled to close in June 2026. Closure is scheduled to commence in June 2026 (one generating unit) through to 30 June 2028 (remaining generating units).

The closure will impact approximately 130 workers, with around 109 directly employed by AGL.

### Timeline

- 1 **November 2022**  
AGL notifies AEMO of Torrens' scheduled closure on 30 June 2026
- 2 **December 2024**  
Net Zero Economy Authority is established
- 3 **January 2025**  
Authority commences COI process with the release of a consultation paper
- 4 **February 2025**  
Authority conducts stakeholder meetings in Adelaide and visits Torrens site
- 5 **July 2025**  
The Authority invites stakeholders to respond to information from initial consultations and CEO's preliminary views
- 6 **September 2025**  
AGL notifies Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) of Torrens' closure date extension until 30 June 2028
- 7 **October 2025**  
CEO makes first COI application to the FWC
- 8 **October, November 2025**  
The FWC holds direction hearings; receives submissions from stakeholders
- 9 **November 2025**  
The FWC makes COI determination establishing the EIJP for Torrens; AGL specified as closing employer

### Consultation

**Consultation paper published**

on NZEA website, 13 January 2025.

**6 submissions published**

**~30 entities engaged**

Through direct meetings (in person and virtual), information sessions, or via correspondence.

Torrens Island site visit to meet with AGL management and workers; further meetings with unions, employer organisations, potential dependent employers, potential receiving employers, and state & local government.

2028  
Scheduled Closure

Figure 4:

# Eraring power station closure timeline

Eraring power station (Eraring) is a black coal-fired electricity generator, owned and operated by Origin Energy (Origin), and is located approximately 40km south of Newcastle in the Lake Macquarie area of NSW. It is Australia's largest power station, consisting of 4 720MW coal-fired generating units.

Originally scheduled for closure in August 2025, Eraring's operation was extended until August 2027 under an agreement between Origin and the NSW Government to support the security of the state's electricity supply. As of April 2025, the AEMO reports that Eraring's 4 coal-fired generating units are set to close on 19 August 2027.

Eraring's closure will impact around 216 workers employed by Origin at the power station and over 200 on-site contractors.

There are also likely to be potential workforce impacts within Eraring's supply chain – for example, Centennial Coal states that both Myuna and Mandalong coal mines supply coal to Eraring Power Station.

## Timeline

- 1 February 2022**  
Origin notifies AEMO of intention to close Eraring in August 2025
- 2 May 2024**  
NSW Government announces Origin Energy agreed to extend operation of Eraring until August 2027
- 3 December 2024**  
Net Zero Economy Authority is established
- 4 May 2025**  
Authority commences COI process with the release of a consultation paper
- 5 June - July 2025**  
Authority conducts stakeholder meetings in Hunter region and visits Eraring site
- 6 July 2025**  
Submissions close for the COI process
- 7 August 2025 – ongoing**  
Assessment and consultation continuing

## Consultation

### Consultation paper published

on NZEA website, 27 May 2025.

### 34 submissions published

### ~90 entities engaged

Through direct meetings (in person and virtual), information sessions, or via correspondence.

This included meetings with workers, unions, employer organisations, potential dependent employers, potential receiving employers, state & local governments, and community organisations.





# Analysis of COI processes conducted

At the time of writing the review, the Authority was in its first 12 months of operation and in the process of implementing the EIJP – a framework unique from previous transition programs delivered in Australia. Overall, the review finds the Authority has been largely successful in implementing the new legislative regime in a short space of time and is integrating learnings from initial assessments to improve its future processes. Acting on these learnings can support faster and more efficient COI processes, which is a key area of concern for stakeholders, as discussed below.

In these early stages of implementation, care should be taken around drawing definitive conclusions on the operation of the framework based on experience from these processes. The FWC has only concluded one matter under the framework, and there has been no consideration by a court. Further guidance and principles on the operation of the framework will continue to develop as more matters are considered.

The Torrens and Eraring closures were announced before the NZEA Act commenced, meaning the Authority's consideration of these closures under Part 5 were conducted under more compressed timeframes than contemplated in the design of the framework and in shorter time than would ideally be available. Notwithstanding those time pressures, the CEO consulted thoroughly, and stakeholders have expressed broad appreciation of the Authority's openness and responsiveness, including to requests for information.

Although we have structural feedback about the operation of the EIJP, we want to acknowledge that throughout the community of interest determination in Torrens Island and Eraring the NZEA's facilitation team have been approachable, readily available for discussion, and responsive to inquiries. Their willingness to engage meaningfully has created a collaborative and constructive environment that is vital to a successful EIJP process. (AMWU 2025:3).

The ETU welcomes the NZEA's engaged approach to consultation in the Eraring and Torrens COI process. The NZEA has been available for local consultation in each region and has engaged a wide range of stakeholders including the closing employers, dependent employers in their supply chains, unions, local councils, regional planning bodies and more. It is noted that the NZEA is developing its COI process for the first time. In calling for changes to the COI process and related consultation, this is no criticism of the NZEA. (ETU 2025:21).

However, while some stakeholders have expressed support for elements of the Authority's approach to consultation in COI processes so far, they have identified the following concerns:

- The CEO's consultation, assessment and decision making has taken too long and this has delayed the delivery of a COI determination, leading to an insufficient period for the delivery of transition supports (ACTU 2025:6; AMWU 2025:5; ASU 2025:2; ETU 2025:18; Goods et al. 2025:4).
- EIJP processes were not well understood by businesses ahead of COI processes commencing (Business Hunter 2025:2), and there is a lack of clarity on timelines for the COI process (Origin Energy 2025:4).
- Due to a lack of understanding among dependent employers, consultation was hard to organise and '[e]ngaging with cohorts of workers who may not have active union representation is a further challenge' (MEU 2025:6). Unions stated the Authority's communication with employees has been limited and often facilitated by unions, which has the potential to impact employees' participation in the COI process particularly at smaller non-unionised worksites (ACTU 2025:9; AMWU 2025:7).

- However, some stakeholders noted employees experienced multiple conversations on the same issues under the COI process (ASU 2025:2) and became 'fatigued by over-consultation' (ETU 2025:22).
- In the Eraring COI experience, the Authority's engagement with the workforce was 'closely managed by the employer' limiting the employees' ability to freely discuss experiences of their employer's transition support program and 'raise concerns to NZEA staff' (MEU 2025:6). Further, an 'off-site meeting organised by unions allowed for workers to meet with NZEA staff without management present, but in the absence of paid time or employer support to participate, attendance was limited to those who were on a day off or could arrange time off work' (MEU 2025:6).
- Supply chains for closing employers are varied and can be complex, especially at larger power stations. They can include a large number of businesses providing a wide range of services or goods, which may all be impacted differently.
- lack of understanding of the EIJP among stakeholders, particularly potential dependent employers, which is understandable at the early stages of implementation.
  - This necessitated additional engagement to ensure employers understood the legislation and the importance of their participation in the assessment process.
  - There have been delays in employers responding to information requests, which has subsequently extended the assessment process.

In relation to concerns around the time taken to conduct COI processes, these are statutory processes and the CEO is required to follow mandatory steps and be satisfied that functions have been appropriately exercised. This necessarily involves:

- assessment of each potential closing and dependent employer individually
- the need to afford procedural fairness to those involved, ensuring information provided by key parties is well-considered
- ensuring the robustness of statutory decisions.

The review understands these processes are resource-intensive for the Authority. To assist the CEO's decision making, the Authority must undertake detailed analysis of the labour market, the employer's business operations and the impact on its employees, and any transition supports available to the employees. The Authority undertakes broad consultation and supply chain mapping in order to examine each business and whether it should be included in an application to the FWC for a COI determination.

The Authority advises the timeliness of COI processes has been impacted by:

- the substantial number of supply chain businesses (that is, potential dependent employers) for larger closing employers like Eraring, requiring significant time and resourcing to complete the necessary assessment

During the Torrens and Eraring COI processes, the Authority adopted a voluntary approach to seeking information from parties, rather than using statutory information gathering powers available to the CEO. While most parties engaged cooperatively, the Authority advised there were some delays and difficulties in receiving requested information in reasonable timeframes and in the form requested. This inevitably slowed down the Authority's processes and therefore the CEO's decision making.

The Authority is putting in place strategies to continuously improve and ensure it performs its functions in the most efficient and effective way possible. Efficiency of COI processes will likely improve as the Authority matures, and as guidance on the interpretation and application of the EIJP is made available by the FWC and courts.

Stakeholders provided feedback to improve the operation of COI processes, both as they apply under the existing framework and more significant reforms that move beyond the existing policy intent enshrined by the parliament. Targeted reforms to improve the operation of the EIJP process are recommended below, with broader reform proposals to the existing policy framework discussed at Sections 3 and 4 of the report.



# Provisions in Part 5 with limited or no application as yet

Some elements of Part 5 have had limited or no application as yet, and while the terms of reference invited views on all of Part 5, stakeholders understandably gave less consideration to aspects of the framework yet to be applied. These include:

- sections 60, 61 and 62 of the NZEA Act, and the dispute resolution process in section 61A
- operation of the EIWRAG
- operation of enforcement, compensation, injunction and costs provisions.

## Dispute resolution process

The FWC may deal with disputes arising under determinations made under subsections 60(5) and 61(5). Parties can agree, and the FWC can determine, that a person other than the FWC can deal with disputes. At the time of reporting, none of the provisions in sections 60–62 have been implemented and no disputes have been dealt with by the FWC under section 61A.

## Energy Industry Worker Redeployment Advisory Group

The EIWRAG is established under the NZEA Act and is an advisory group, not a decision-making body. Members of the EIWRAG are appointed by the Minister for a period of up to 3 years. The EIWRAG must include members of, or nominated by, employee organisations and employer organisations that could represent transition employees, closing employers and dependent employers. The EIWRAG made a short submission to the FWC supporting the application for a COI determination for Torrens Island Power Station B.

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) (2025:4), Hunter Joint Organisation (2025:9) and Lake Macquarie City Council (2025:5–6) recommended the EIWRAG have a broader representation, including local government. The Hunter Joint Organisation also recommended expanding the EIWRAG's scope to advise on regional economic diversification and future land-use planning (2025:9).

The review notes the statutory role of the EIWRAG is to advise the FWC when it receives an application under Part 5. As such, it does not have a role in advising government on broader social or economic issues, such as regional economic diversification or future land use planning. With this in mind, the review does not consider it appropriate to expand EIWRAG beyond industrial relations participants or its scope.

While the EIWRAG does not have an advisory role to government, local governments have a central role in the Authority's broader consultation approach. For example, the ALGA is represented on the Authority's Stakeholder Panel, which is a two-way consultative forum between the Authority's Board and the Authority and stakeholders. The panel works to the direction of the Board and provides it with information and advice.

## Promoting and monitoring compliance and enforcement

Under section 68 of the NZEA Act, the CEO is required to promote and monitor compliance with employer obligations under Part 5. These functions are active once a COI determination is made by the FWC.

Where necessary, the Authority may take regulatory action to ensure obligations under Part 5 are met. This includes initiating proceedings under the Regulatory Powers Act or applying to the FWC under section 62 of the NZEA Act. Enforcement action may be considered in response to:

- non-compliance with a FWC determination or order
- matters of public concern or systemic risk
- the need to clarify legal or policy issues.

It is anticipated the Minister responsible for the Authority will issue a 'Statement of Expectations' concerning the government policies and objectives relevant to the Authority's statutory obligations and the priorities in conducting its operations. This is common practice across government regulators and regulatory functions and involves the Authority responding with a 'Statement of Intent'. The Authority advised it is in the process of developing guidance, which would be published on its website, to help clarify the Authority's regulatory approach.

In addition to the regulatory role of the CEO, unions and individual employees have standing to seek enforcement outcomes as authorised applicants under the Regulatory Powers Act in relation to subsections 60(7), 61(9) and 62(9).

This is consistent with standing provided to non-government entities to seek civil penalties for non-compliance under the Fair Work Act. At the time of reporting, no matters utilising the Regulatory Powers Act have been initiated in the courts.





# 2

## Improving the operation of the Energy Industry Jobs Plan

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# Timeliness and clarity of the community of interest processes

**The review heard from stakeholders about the importance of timely and clear engagement throughout the COI process. Unions, local government, academic and other stakeholders emphasised the need to provide supports as expeditiously as possible. Power station operators and employer organisations raised concerns about the clarity of the COI process and timelines involved.**

Noting the legislated requirements of employers and unions in the COI process and any resulting FWC process, streamlining these processes may result in better usability and participation.

Based on their experience of the Torrens and Eraring COI processes, stakeholders highlighted the consultation processes leading up to any application to the FWC have taken longer than anticipated. For example:

'[T]he current community of interest process, as it has operated at Torrens Island, has been further hampered by a slow consultation process. Almost 12 months on – and just 12 months out from closure – workers at Torrens Island are still waiting for a community [of] interest determination. This is unacceptable and cuts into an already insufficient timeframe for transition support' (AMWU 2025:5).

'The steps and timeframes in the current [Torrens] COI process to have the EIJP declared has been unworkable in the context of a 2026 closure date. Members have expressed frustration at what has felt like multiple conversations outlining the same issues through the different stages in the process before being able to access the benefits of the EIJP for the workforce' (ASU 2025:2).

'In the two cases where a community transition process has been instigated, there has been no determination thus far. Torrens is scheduled to close in less than 12 months (June 2026) and Eraring in less than two years (August 2027). This process has flaws in its timing: it starts too late, and takes too long. If a decision is made to apply to the Fair Work Commission to make a determination, then these timeframes give the FWC and impacted parties limited time to achieve the policy intentions of the Act before closure' (Goods et al. 2025:4).



Similarly, Origin Energy stated that while it appreciated the open and constructive engagement with the Authority and acknowledged that the COI process is ‘new and not straightforward’, the experience would have been better if the Authority had provided ‘a clear schedule outlining requirements and timescales for Origin as [a closing] employer at the start of the process’.

Origin noted the absence of a clear schedule resulted in ‘a lack of visibility and an inability for Origin to plan effectively for the required engagement.’ (Origin Energy 2025:4).

Some stakeholders made recommendations to expedite the COI process and provide greater certainty for workers and businesses:

- Unions and community-based worker organisations proposed amending the NZEA Act to provide for the automatic or default specification of closing employers (Hunter Jobs Alliance 2025:3; Hunter Workers 2025:6) or closing and dependent employers in the CEO’s application to the FWC for a COI determination (ACTU 2025:10–11; ASU 2025:2; AWU 2025:6; ETU 2025:18); Hunter Jobs Alliance 2025:3; Hunter Workers 2025:6; MEU 2025:4). The ETU (2025:19), AWU (2025:6) and AMWU (2025:5) propose amending the NZEA Act to provide for the automatic or default specification of closing and dependent employers in a COI determination, with employers able to contest their inclusion. The MEU (2025:4) proposed the closing employer should be included in a COI determination by default.
- Another proposal was to establish objective thresholds for assessing the substantial impact of power station closures on supply chain businesses, such as a percentage figure of revenue or net profit arising from the commercial arrangement with the closing power station, number of workers impacted by the closure and existence of job vacancies and redeployment opportunities elsewhere in the business (Hunter Workers 2025:6).

While stakeholders’ concerns about the need to expedite the COI process are valid, the review considers proposals for automatic specification and thresholds for substantial impact premature, given the Authority is in the very early stages of implementing the EIJP.

# Awareness and understanding of the Energy Industry Jobs Plan

Drawing on their experiences of the Torrens and Eraring COI processes, stakeholders recommended the Authority provide better guidance materials to both employers and employees:

'The legislation would benefit from clarity around the nature of the obligations imposed on each of the key stakeholders, including closing employers, dependent employers, receiving employers, and transitioning employees' (ACCI 2025:5).

'[...] ACCI suggests that language in the EIJP provisions should be consistent with and not duplicative of the Fair Work Act 2009 and relevant industrial instruments to ensure that confusion does not arise.' (2025:5).

'To give effect to Parliament's intent and ensure dependent employers can comply with the legal requirements of the EIJP, targeted support is required. This should include tailored guidance materials, low-cost advisory tools and access to simplified compliance processes such as a best practice guide' (ACCI 2025:7).

'Clear and timely information about closure timelines, transition arrangements, and availability of support will allow employees, employers, and communities to make informed decisions and prepare effectively for the future' (Alinta 2025:2).

'Drawing from our experience delivering education programs to diverse regional communities, [Federation University] recommends ... [t]ailored guidance materials [including] [i]ndustry-specific resources for energy, construction, and related sectors... [c]ase studies demonstrating successful transition pathways, including Federation's own graduate employment outcomes... [and] [c]lear mapping of education options to employment opportunities in affected region' (Federation University 2025:11).

'The EIJP process was not well understood by business prior to the community of interest process beginning, given the relatively recent enactment of the legislation and lack of practical precedent. It is our impression that many uncertainties remain about how the EIJP will operate, which workers it will assist and what obligations it will impose on closing and dependent employers.' (Business Hunter 2025:2).

Unions submitted that the Authority needs to improve consultation with the employees of potential dependent employers. The Mining and Energy Union (MEU) observed '[c]ommunicating information about the [COI] process to workers was a challenge, particularly for those workers at ... supply chain employers who were less aware of the NZEA and its role' and potential dependent employers appeared to have 'little awareness of the NZEA and had not realised in advance that NZEA processes would apply to them' (MEU 2025:6).

The Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) observed:

'[w]e are concerned about the information flow from the NZEA to workers to date. At Torrens Island power station, for example, there has been very limited communication to workers from the NZEA – much of which has been facilitated by unions. Likewise, when surveyed our members at Eraring said they had not received any information about the closure or the NZEA. While we are happy to assist with facilitation, we are concerned that some workers are being left in the dark and inadvertently excluded from consultation – and thereby, support. This is especially true for smaller un-unionised worksites' (2025:7).

Stakeholders have also expressed a desire for greater clarity on the operation of the EIJP within Australia's workplace relations system. For example, Origin Energy said:

'Australia's industrial relations system features a well-established and comprehensive framework of standards that employers and employees must meet when employee roles are impacted because of significant structural or organisational change... [The NZEA Act] introduces 'an additional layer of regulation not previously contemplated... resulting in considerable overlap in a number of areas (including consultation, paid leave, union access rights and enforcement). It is imperative that the operationalisation of the Act through the NZEA and this review of the EIJP takes steps towards harmonising measures specific to the energy transition with the strong safety net that is already in place' (2025:4).



The review understands the Authority is in the process of finalising guidance material, including in consultation with unions and employers. The review considers it important these materials provide practical and not just technical guidance to support a good understanding of this new jurisdiction and enable compliance. It is important materials are developed in collaboration with other relevant agencies so advice is not provided in isolation of the broader context and is aligned and integrated with broader information on the workplace relations system.

The provision of a work plan for relevant workers, businesses and communities, as well as clear, timely and targeted advice and guidance on key aspects of the EIJP, would address stakeholder feedback. While circumstances may change and the work plan may need to be adjusted, greater transparency will set expectations and provide clarity about the process and timing ahead of time so stakeholders can prepare and engage more effectively.

## Recommendation 1



The Authority should publish a work plan outlining scheduled closures over the forward 5 years to provide indicative timing for when COI processes are likely to commence and the intended steps and timing for each process. The work plan should:

- be updated regularly to outline changes to closure dates and / or expected milestones for individual COI processes
- provide information outlining the ways in which employees of closing employers and employees of employers in their supply chains and local communities can participate in consultations for COI processes.

## Recommendation 2



The Authority should provide clear, timely and targeted guidance to clarify:

- roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, and each operational stage of the EIJP
- how employers can appropriately discharge their obligations and the rights of employees
- the relationship between the EIJP and Australia's workplace relations system, with guidance prepared in collaboration with the FWC, DEWR, FWO and other relevant agencies to ensure content is aligned and integrated with broader information provided by those agencies.



# Importance of early planning and analysis

The CEO's information gathering powers (to seek, inspect and retain documents) under sections 64 and 65 of the NZEA Act are dependent on a trigger notice being specified naming a closing employer. The CEO does not have any compulsory information gathering power available under the existing framework to inform their functions in relation to specifying trigger notices under section 9 of the NZEA Act. In addition to stakeholder consultations during the COI process, considerable time is spent undertaking research and analysis for each individual business potentially impacted by a closure event.

## Enabling early planning of dependent employer consultations

As highlighted earlier in the report, the CEO is required to identify businesses that meet the definition of 'dependent employer'. If the CEO identifies any dependent employers, the CEO must decide, with regard to the criteria in subsection 56(4), whether it is reasonable in circumstances to specify any of them in an application to the FWC for a COI determination.

The time that it takes to complete this process is impacted by the complexity of supply chains and how quickly businesses respond to requests for information. The process can continue well beyond the face-to-face consultation phase. This has potentially contributed to stakeholder perceptions that the COI process is slow and unwieldy. In COI processes undertaken to date, the Authority has engaged cooperatively with closing employers prior to the trigger notice being issued in order to identify initial information to prepare for a COI process. However, as noted above, the Authority has observed the time taken to fulfil information requests has been longer than expected. This risks delaying the process for gathering information and slowing down the early intervention of the Authority.

The review considers the efficiency and timeliness of processes could be improved by amending the NZEA Act to enable the CEO to gather information earlier, prior to a trigger notice being issued. This would enable the CEO to obtain information necessary for understanding power stations' supply chains earlier and support the Authority to conduct early desktop analysis of which employers may satisfy the definition of a 'dependent employer' ahead of the COI process commencing. Allowing the CEO to gather information earlier would also improve planning for COI processes (including clarity around timelines and key dates), as it would enable the CEO to exclude some supply chain businesses on account of not fitting the criteria (such as not being a constitutional corporation or not carrying out business at, or in the same region as the power station) and establish a prioritised consultation plan focused on employers most likely to satisfy the definition.

The information gathered by the CEO would not replace consultation with employers or unions under a COI process or a final individualised assessment of whether the employer should be included as a closing or dependent employer in an application to the FWC. Rather, it would support planning for streamlined consultation, information gathering and assessment by the Authority to promote a more efficient COI process. It would enable the Authority to begin consultations under the COI process earlier by allowing time-consuming administrative and research components to occur more efficiently, prior to specifying a trigger notice. This could reduce stakeholder concern about the overall length of COI processes.



# Accurate understanding of closure dates

There are also constraints on the CEO's capacity to efficiently obtain information relevant to the specification of trigger notices under section 9 of the NZEA Act, and prioritise resources for the most pressing closure events. The CEO is required to exercise their statutory functions reasonably and judiciously given the significant obligations that flow from the existence of a trigger situation under Part 5 of the NZEA Act. This includes the CEO undertaking due diligence to satisfy themselves that any announcement by the power station they intend to rely on in specifying a notice as a 'trigger notice' should be reasonably and properly relied upon.

While official notices made to AEMO and other official public notifications from the closing employer can generally be relied upon, there may be instances where there is a degree of doubt, including:

- where there is an anticipated extension of the operating facilities that has not been formally announced yet, or
- where emerging circumstances mean a closure might be at risk of being brought forward by factors out of the control of the closing employer (for example, in the event of an insolvency of a company operating a supplying coal mine).

Any additional information gathering powers should be proportionate to informing the CEO in relation to the exercise of their statutory powers and planning for COI processes. The powers should be calibrated to minimise the collection of personal information and protect information that is commercial-in-confidence.

## Recommendation 3



The Australian Government should consider amending the NZEA Act to provide an express power for the CEO to obtain information from potential closing and dependent employers prior to a trigger notice where there is a 'reasonable expectation' of a closure, without changing provisions for COI processes to begin once a trigger notice has been made.





# Promoting cooperation and codetermination of transition supports

The Second Reading speech outlined the intention to encourage voluntary participation in the EIJP:

‘Closing and dependent employers will be encouraged to participate voluntarily. Our largest coal-fired power stations are run by mature corporations. They often have strong plans in place to support their workforce as they prepare for closures. We expect that many of them will put their hand up to participate in the Energy Industry Jobs Plan. The bill provides the Fair Work Commission with powers to require their participation as a failsafe to make sure the transition is orderly. It enlivens enforceable obligations for those closing employers to provide transitional support to their employees, subject to operational requirements (Australian House of Representatives 2024:2435).’

Under the NZEA Act, there is no mechanism for employers, workers and unions to formally agree on transition supports until after a COI determination has been made. While cooperation can be facilitated throughout the COI process and in the FWC (for example if parties agree not to oppose an application) the processes still take time to progress. The COI process and applications for a COI determination involve multiple parties which may delay resolution of processes.

Many employers have developed existing support programs through workplace policies, such as Origin Energy’s ‘Future Directions’ program at Eraring and Energy Australia’s Yallourn ‘Power Your Future’ program. However, a key criticism from stakeholders of existing policy-based supports is that they are not enforceable and the parameters of support can generally be varied at the discretion of the employer.

The Joint Union Submission to the Eraring COI process noted ‘workers face challenges accessing support even from the most comprehensive programs offered by employers, and union advocacy has invariably been the driving force in improving employer programs so that they are fit for purpose. This underlines the need for programs to be enforceable, such as through an EIJP, and for there to be mechanisms to hold employers accountable to their commitments made to workers’ (AMWU et al 2025:13).

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) noted that in the case of Eraring ‘none of the proposed supports were offered on a legally binding basis, unlike supports provided under the EIJP. There is an unfortunate history of companies promising but not delivering on commitments to the workforce around plant closure’ (ACTU 2025:10).

Amending the NZEA Act to enable employers, workers and unions to agree on supports before a COI determination is made, with a role for the FWC in approving or certifying agreements, may foster greater collaboration between employers and their workforces. Parties to such agreements could then be exempted from the subsequent COI process on the basis that the employer already satisfies the obligations under the NZEA Act. This approach would enable enforceability and dispute resolution options to underpin worker transition programs without unnecessarily requiring stakeholders to partake in the current process for establishing an EIJP.

A collaborative approach would benefit stakeholders by reducing the time spent navigating EIJP and FWC processes. It would also provide greater certainty for all parties by expediting the determination of employer actions required to deliver supports.

The introduction of a new function may have resourcing implications for the FWC. However, the adoption of the new function could reduce the workloads of the Authority and the FWC in relation to the COI determination stage of the current framework by reducing steps in the administrative and assessment processes.

The review notes that transition supports may also be negotiated through the broader workplace relations framework, for instance through enterprise bargaining, noting negotiation for enterprise agreements occurs over bargaining cycles<sup>9</sup> which may not align with closure timelines. The NZEA Act requires the CEO and FWC, in exercising their deliberative functions, to consider existing supports available to facilitate transition employees to find other employment, including supports provided under relevant enterprise agreements or other industrial instruments.

Allowing agreements to be made earlier could also address suggestions made by stakeholders, including providing another option for commencing the EIJP earlier.

#### Recommendation 4

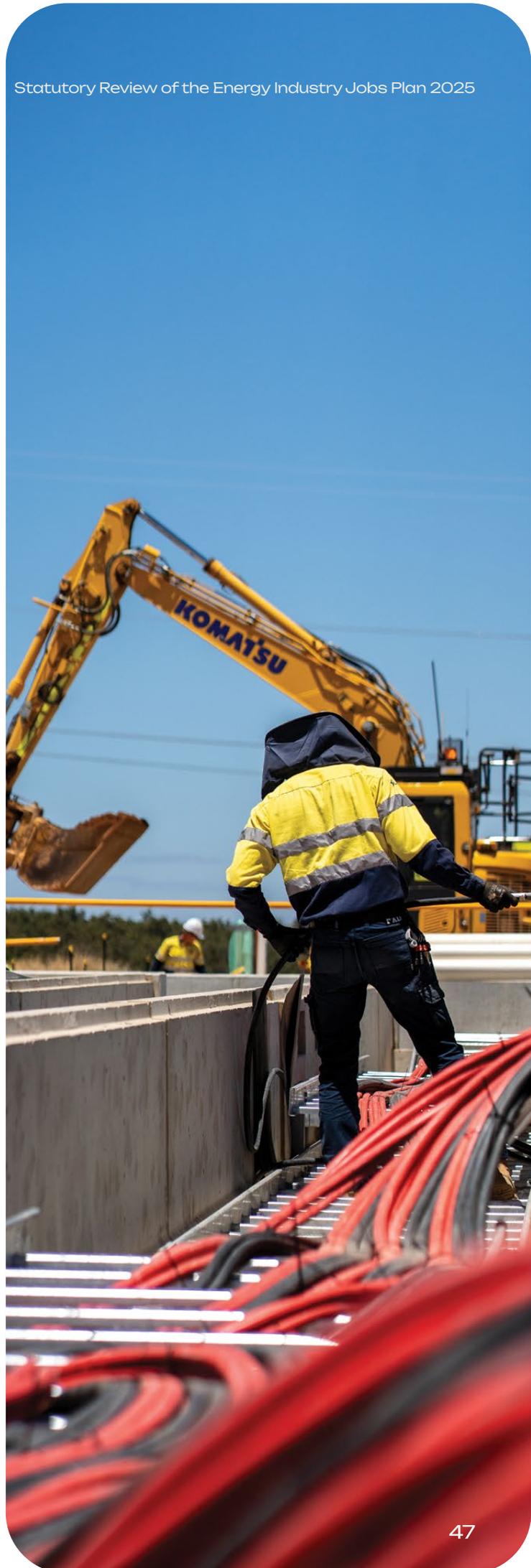


The Australian Government should consider amending the NZEA Act to enable employers, their workforces and union representatives to agree on supports ahead of a COI process being conducted or a COI determination being issued by the FWC.

Agreements should be enforceable instruments made through the FWC and could use arrangements under section 60 as a basis.

Amendments enabling voluntary agreements should not disadvantage transition employees compared to what could be negotiated if a COI determination named the employer.

<sup>9</sup> The nominal expiry date for an enterprise agreement is generally up to 4 years after the day on which the FWC approves the agreement, noting variations to enterprise agreements can be made in certain circumstances.





# Options for commencing the Energy Industry Jobs Plan earlier

Feedback received from unions, academics and local councils stated the COI process commences too close to a closure and subsequently does not allow enough time for the development and implementation of adequate transition plans for impacted workers. While it is anticipated the Authority will improve the efficiency of COI processes over time, options for starting the COI process earlier can be explored longer term.

Unions and academics argued the requirement under the NZEA Act for the CEO to make a COI application to the FWC at least 2 years (or as soon as practicable) before the scheduled closure may not allow enough time for a well-planned and coordinated transition (Goods et al. 2025:5; MEU 2025:5). The Hunter Jobs Alliance highlighted the potential risks of the legislated minimum 2-year prior closure timeframe, including:

- training and redeployment programs being left unfinished
- insufficient time to build partnerships with receiving employers
- communities being left without adequate adjustment and economic diversification strategies (HJA 2025:2–3).

Many stakeholders view the 2-year minimum timeframe requirement as insufficient, with suggestions it could be extended to at least 3 years (NZI and WCEH 2025:4), or 3.5 years to align the COI application with the timing of the generator's notice to AEMO (MEU 2025:5), or even to at least 4 years prior to the scheduled closure date (ETU 2025:18).

In addition, in some scenarios workforce impacts may materialise many years prior to closure of the power station. For example, in October 2025, AGL announced potential job losses for up to 300 employees in relation to its Bayswater and Loy Yang A coal-fired power stations (Norman 2025), which are currently scheduled to close in 2033 and 2035 respectively.

Lithgow City Council raised concerns about the potential impact of the EnergyAustralia's Mount Piper Power Station (MPPS) entering into a 'reserve role' or stockpiling coal years ahead of its closure. Specifically, the Council argued that a COI process may not be able to begin ahead of workforce impacts at MPPS and its supplying mines because the existing definitions of 'closing employer' are reliant on the CEO issuing a trigger notice relating to the closure of the power station or generating unit (LCC 2025:17–18). EnergyAustralia has confirmed it plans to gradually move the MPPS towards a renewables firming role and ultimately reserve role (that is, available on request of AEMO) in the years leading up to its scheduled closure in 2040 (2025:1).

To achieve best practice,<sup>10</sup> some stakeholders suggested the COI process should commence from as early as 5 to 10 years prior to a closure. The Net Zero Institute (NZI) and Warren Centre Energy Hub (WCEH) suggested this could be done by amending the NZEA Act to introduce an Early Intervention Framework mandating the CEO initiate community consultation when multiple indicators suggest the likelihood of closure within 10 years, enabling 'proactive rather than reactive transition planning' (2025:4).

Trigger notices can be based on notices given to AEMO under the National Electricity Rules (NER) or the Wholesale Electricity Market's Electricity System and Market Rules (ESM Rules). Under the NER, generators generally need to provide 42 months' (3.5 years') notice of intention to close to the AEMO or be subject to civil penalties. The equivalent notification period is 3 years under the ESM Rules. Generators are also required to notify AEMO of their 'Expected Closure Year', which can provide a longer-term forecast.

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix B for international and domestic examples of best practice approaches to industrial closures

The Electrical Trades Union (ETU) stated that where a power station operator provides only the minimum amount of notice to AEMO, the Authority will be hampered from implementing the EIJP any earlier than the date the notice is given if the CEO relies on AEMO notices only. Further, given the COI and FWC processes need to occur after the trigger notice is made, both of which require consideration and decisions to be made by the CEO and the FWC, this may provide substantially less time available for employees to access transition supports (ETU 2025:12–13).

The ETU suggested the Authority's reliance on AEMO notifications may incentivise generators to delay providing notice of their closure, until compelled by AEMO. Given the NZEA Act provides for the CEO to make trigger notices outside the AEMO closure notice regime, the ETU recommends the CEO should specify trigger notices 'early in response to available information and should not wait for formal notice to AEMO of a closure date' (2025:17).

The review considers the existing framework provides sufficient flexibility for the CEO to specify a trigger notice commencing a COI process at the appropriate time. The parliament did not intend to set up separate reporting obligations for power stations and link to existing obligations, but instead to rely on other credible, verifiable sources of information on closure dates (REM 2024:19). The CEO is not limited to using notices under a provision of the NER or ESM Rules and can also specify that a kind of notice or a particular notice is a trigger notice regardless of whether it is a notice under a law of the Commonwealth, a state or territory. This ensures the operation of the EIJP is not compromised by future changes to the way coal-fired and gas-fired power stations provide notifications of their closure.

The *National Electricity Market wholesale market settings review* commenced in November 2024, with the review's Expert Panel expected to deliver its final recommendations to government and the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council in late 2025. In August 2025, the Expert Panel released its draft report, which includes draft recommendation 7 which, if adopted, would increase the notification in rule 2.10.1(c) from 42 months' (3.5 years) notice to 5 years (Nelson et al. 2025:119).

In November 2025, AEMO submitted a rule change request to the Australian Energy Market Commission seeking to extend the notice of closure obligations for exiting coal fired power stations to 5 years (AEMO 2025:19). If recommendations such as these are adopted, the existing trigger notice regime under the EIJP would be flexible enough to adapt to any updated AEMO reporting arrangements.

While recommendation 3 would assist the CEO by enabling them to request information relevant to the specification of trigger notices, after a number of COI processes have been completed, it would also be desirable to further assess whether amendments are needed to ensure workers are able to receive appropriate supports in a timely manner.

## Recommendation 5



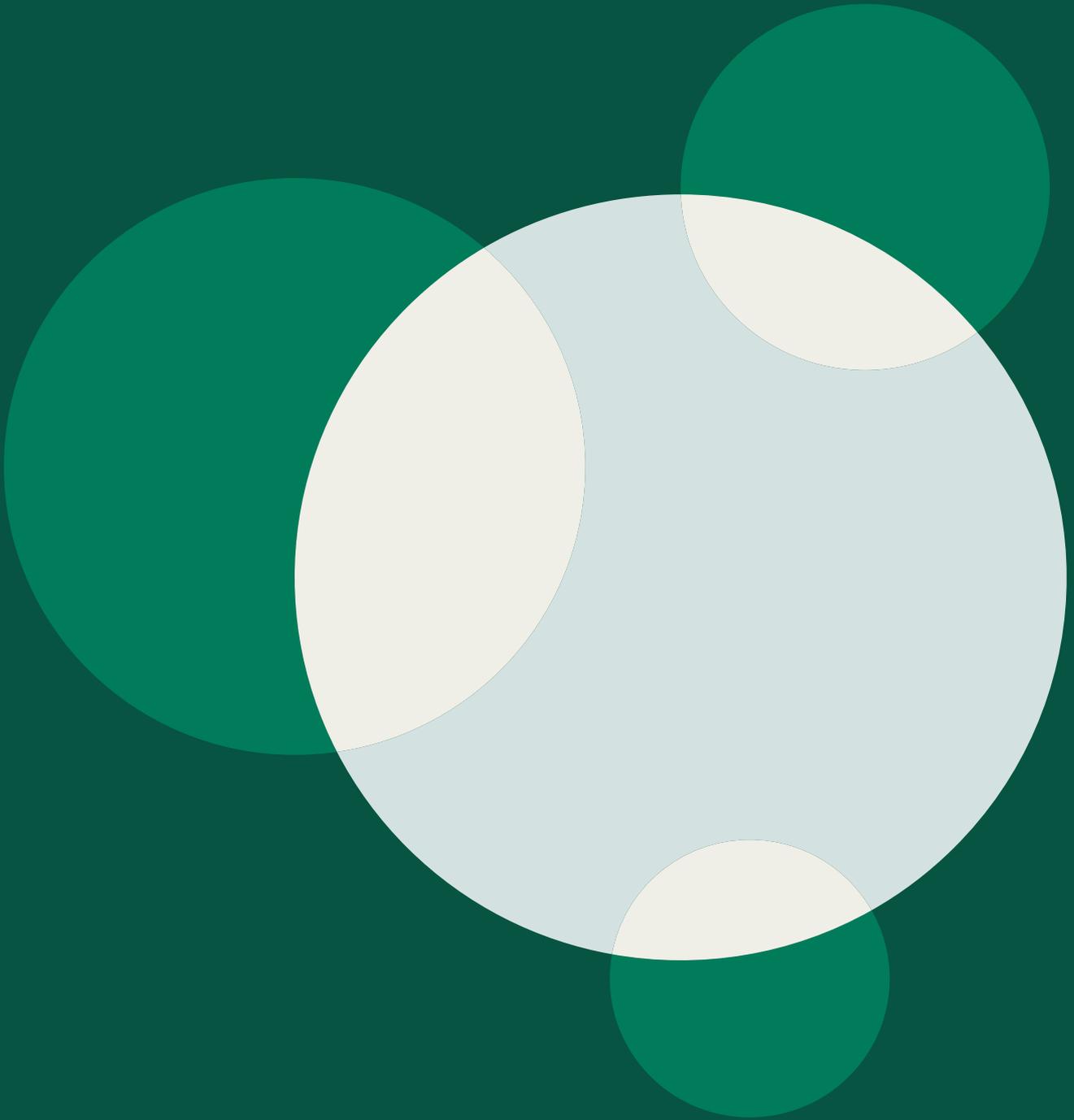
The Australian Government should, after a number of completed COI processes and power station closures, consider whether COI processes are being completed with sufficient time for workers to receive appropriate supports and for employers to discharge their obligations, and whether any amendments are needed. This should also include considering whether Part 5 is sufficiently able to address workforce impacts that may occur prior to the eventual closure of a power station if it gradually winds down operations (for example, moves to a firming role or reserve outage mode).



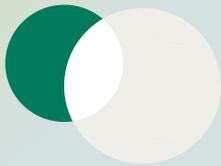
# 3

## Coverage of dependent employers and their employees

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**The EIJP framework is capable of covering employees of both closing and dependent employers, but this does not necessarily mean legal obligations under Part 5 will extend to all employees of businesses that have commercial relationships with a closing employer.**

This approach reflects the parliament's intent to 'target the [EIJP] to closures where it is most needed and not set up redeployment plans where the number of employees is small, pre-existing redeployment measures are in place or where the local labour market can effectively transition those employees without additional government intervention' (REM 2025:42).

The framework provides flexibility by:

- providing for a COI process which requires the CEO to identify closing and dependent employers and then decide whether it is reasonable in the circumstances to specify them in a COI application
- enabling unions to nominate other closing and dependent employers for the FWC to consider specifying in a COI determination, specifically wherever the Authority has chosen not to specify the employer in its application
- providing the FWC with discretion to name closing and dependent employers in a COI determination where it is considered it is reasonable in the circumstances.

In their assessments, the CEO and the FWC must consider a range of factors set out in the legislation, as discussed in Section 1 of the report. This includes having regard to the capacity of employers to redeploy transition employees in other business operations or in business operations of associated entities, and the capacity of other employers in the same geographic area to offer employment to those transition employees.

Further, the 'dependent employer' definitions are drafted to exclude businesses that will not be substantially impacted by the closure of the relevant power station.

Unions expressed concerns about the CEO's degree of discretion in determining whether to include dependent supply chain businesses in applications to the FWC for COI determinations, with many doubting whether the CEO would specify any dependent employers in the Torrens and Eraring COI processes (ACTU 2025:10; AMWU:9; ASU 2025:2; AWU 2025:8). The CEO decided to include no dependent employers in the Torrens application made on 14 October 2025. Other stakeholders argued small businesses specified as dependent employers will likely struggle with the regulatory and financial burden of the EIJP (ACCI 2025:7; Dantia 2025:2).

The CEO does not have unfettered discretion to specify a dependent employer in an application. The CEO must meet a standard of being satisfied that it is reasonable in the circumstances to do so. The FWC is similarly constrained from naming employers in a COI determination unless it is satisfied that it is reasonable in the circumstances to do so.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Relevant provisions under the NZEA Act include subss 56(3)(b), 57(2)(a)(ii) and 57(2)(b)(ii)



# Exclusion of certain cohorts of dependent employers

Several stakeholders raised concerns some workers may not be covered by the framework due to their employer not meeting the definitions of dependent employer.

The NZI and WCEH noted some workers are excluded because the definition of 'dependent employer' is restricted to businesses with direct commercial relationships with the closing employer:

'Many contractors work regularly at power stations but lack direct commercial relationships with plant owners (e.g., specialised maintenance contractors hired by third-party service companies). Union submissions [to the Eraring COI process] emphasize that "contractors are often more vulnerable because they do not have the same employer support and entitlements," yet the EIJP's current structure systematically marginalises this workforce' (2025:3).

The NZI and WCEH submitted '[t]his exclusion results in inequitable transitions for a substantial segment of the workforce and creates financial inefficiencies, leaving economically dependent contractors and labour-hire workers without support' (2025:2). NZI and WCEH suggested expanding the 'dependent employer' definition to include those who employ workers who regularly perform work at a closing power station under contract arrangements, regardless of the employer's direct commercial relationship with the closing employer, where such work will cease as a direct result of the power station's closure (NZI and WCEH 2025:3).

Hunter Jobs Alliance submitted that the existing definitions risk 'excluding labour-hire workers, apprentices (notably through Group Training Organisations (GTOs)) and supply chain workers engaged by closing employers or dependent contractors' (2025:2). Hunter Workers suggested expanding the definition of transition employees to cover labour hire workers, apprentices, cadets and trainees, including those engaged through GTOs (2025:6).

The review notes that labour hire providers and GTOs can be captured under the EIJP if they satisfy the definition of dependent employer in section 6 of the NZEA Act. Labour hire employees at some coal mines can also be captured if their employer meets the definition of closing employer in subsection 6(2) or of dependent employers. However, certain labour hire employees performing work at the power station or subcontracted to dependent employers are excluded from coverage if their direct employer does not meet the definition of a dependent employer.



## Case study 3.1

### Labour hire firm without a direct commercial relationship with closing employer

Company A is a constitutional corporation that has a commercial relationship with a closing employer to provide maintenance services at their coal-fired power station.

Company A has a commercial contract with Company B to provide employees at the site of the closing employer, or employees to provide services fulfilling the requirements of a commercial contract Company A holds with the closing employer.

Company A could meet all requirements in subsection 6(3) including the likelihood to cease a substantial part of its business operations at the power station concerned or in the same geographic area as the power station concerned.

Company B may not satisfy the definition of dependent employer because it does not have a commercial relationship with the closing employer.

This type of scenario may be a gap in the existing framework and may not align with the policy intent of the parliament. It could incentivise the use of subcontracted labour as a means to minimise application of the EIJP, including in relation to workers who wholly or regularly work at the site of the power station.

The Revised Explanatory Memorandum (REM) states:

‘1.85 Diverse corporate structures and labour supply chain arrangements are present across the electricity and mining industries. Power stations and coal mines may be owned and operated by a single entity or a collection of entities, including associated or separate entities and joint ventures.

1.86 The intent of these definitions is to ensure that all transition employees employed by the ‘owner’ (as commonly understood by the public) or ‘operator’ of the relevant power station are captured, regardless of the corporate or labour supply chain structures.’ (2024:15).

The government introduced amendments during parliamentary debate to subsection 6(4) to close a gap in coverage relating to labour hire workers in coal mines to ensure the EIJP covered a dependent employer with a commercial relationship with an associated entity of a company that owns or operates a relevant mine.

Apprentices, cadets and trainees employed directly by a closing or dependent employer are covered as transition employees. Those employed by GTOs are potentially in scope of the EIJP, but this depends on whether the GTO meets the definition of ‘dependent employer’.

However, some apprentices, trainees and cadets employed by a GTO may have less need for transition supports under the EIJP, as the GTO may be able to redeploy them to other employers, allowing them to complete their qualifications.

## Recommendation 6

The Australian Government should amend the NZEA Act to expand the definition of dependent employer so any employees performing work onsite, or directly related to the operation of the power station, can access transition supports.

This should ensure employees of labour-hire firms can be covered, even if their employer does not have a direct commercial relationship with the closing employer, but nonetheless provides services directly related to operation of the power station.

The amendment should be consistent with other current requirements for the definition of ‘dependent employer’. Namely, that the dependent employer is a constitutional corporation that will, or will be likely to, cease a substantial part of its business operations carried on at the power station concerned, or in the same geographic area as the power station concerned, as a direct result of the eventual closure of that power station.

In addition to the example of certain labour hire arrangements, there may be a range of circumstances where restructuring labour arrangements could result in employees being denied access to supports under the EIJP, for example:

- It may be possible to structure business arrangements so employing entities do not have direct commercial relationships with the closing employer and are not, or are no longer, covered under the definition of dependent employer.
- It is unclear how entitlements would transfer if operations are restructured, such as transferring employment to an associated entity of the closing or dependent employer or outsourcing functions where employees follow the job but are still anticipated to lose their jobs when the power station closes.



The review acknowledges sale of businesses, outsourcing and use of labour-hire arrangements are all legitimate functions of employers operating a business. However, it is possible in some circumstances that businesses could engage in 'sharp' practices to restructure labour for the purpose of avoiding obligations.

It is important for frameworks that establish workplace rights to include appropriate provisions to prevent technicalities being exploited that undermine policy intent. For example, the Fair Work Act includes a range of measures preventing businesses from adopting practices for the purpose of avoiding relevant obligations.<sup>12</sup> Amendments to the Fair Work Act implemented by the government addressed various gaps identified in several independent reviews, which found some employers were using avoidance strategies to undercut conditions of employment (for example, the Senate Select Committee on Job Security, Parliament of Australia, Third interim report: labour hire and contracting (2021), and the Senate Education and Employment References Committee, Parliament of Australia, Corporate avoidance of the *Fair Work Act 2009* (2017)). The NZEA Act does not contain express provisions directed at mitigating risk of corporate avoidance.

The general protections provisions in the Fair Work Act, among other things, provides protections for people in relation to their workplace rights.<sup>13</sup> This means the general protections may be engaged if an employee is selected for involvement in a restructure because they have access to supports under the EIJP. However, the general protections are not intended to be an anti-avoidance framework to address gaps in other regulatory frameworks.

Under the general protections, a person takes 'adverse action'<sup>14</sup> against another person if they take that action for a 'prohibited reason' (for example, an employer dismisses an employee because of a workplace right). A reverse onus of proof applies to the general protections provisions, which means that where a person alleges action was taken for a prohibited reason, it is assumed the action was taken for that reason unless the other person proves otherwise.

Only an affected person, an employee organisation entitled to represent them, or the FWO can pursue civil remedies for a breach of the general protections. The CEO is unlikely to be considered an 'affected person' by the contravention for the purposes of the Fair Work Act and would not have standing to apply to a court in relation to potential contraventions of the general protections. This means any applications for remedies under the general protections would need to be pursued by a party with standing, such as an individual affected by the contravention or an employee organisation entitled represent the interest of affected employees.

There is a strong argument that government should not wait for issues to arise and instead proactively identify and address potential avoidance issues to maintain the integrity of the EIJP. This could include:

- considering how obligations transfer in the event employment arrangements change, for example, providing the FWC with a targeted power to vary a COI determination where appropriate to include a new employer
- measures preventing employers from entering arrangements for the purpose of avoiding the operation of the EIJP.

## Recommendation 7



The Authority should establish methods in its compliance and enforcement framework to proactively identify and monitor risks and incidences of potential avoidance of obligations, including for labour hire workers and contractors employed at the relevant facility, and advise the Australian Government on any desired amendments to minimise corporate avoidance undermining the EIJP.

<sup>12</sup> For example, s 333H relating to limitations on fixed term contracts and Div 4, Pt 2-7A relating to regulated labour hire arrangements orders and Div 6, Pt 3-1 – prohibiting sham arrangements.

<sup>13</sup> The Fair Work Act provides that a person has a 'workplace right' if a person is entitled to the benefit of a workplace law, workplace instrument or order by an industrial body or able to initiate or participate in a process or proceedings under a workplace law or workplace instrument.

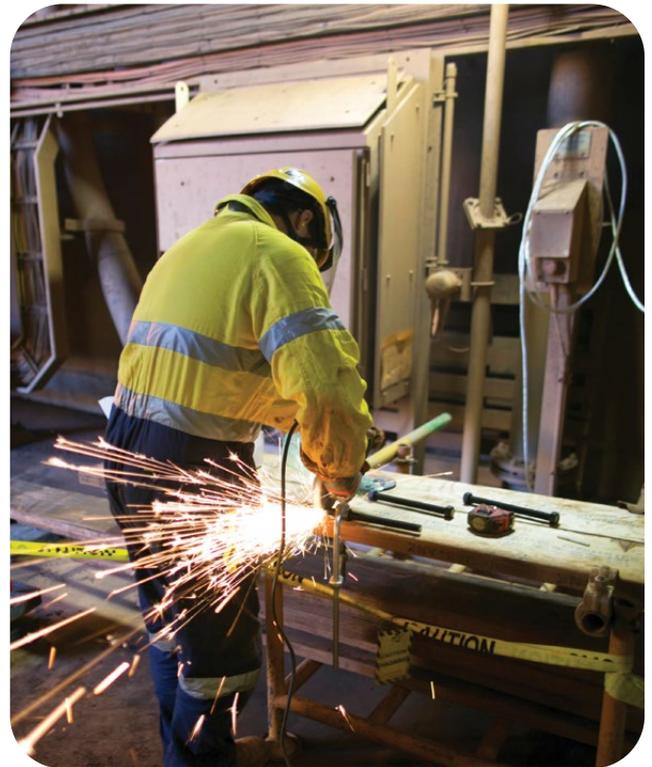
A 'process or proceeding' includes (but is not limited to) court proceedings, or any other process or proceedings under a workplace law that concerns the employment relationships.

<sup>14</sup> Adverse action can include such actions as being dismissed from employment, refusing to employ a prospective employee, injuring the employee in their employment or altering an employee's position to their detriment (for example, loss of promotional opportunity, changes to duties or seniority).

# Differences in supports for employees

Under the existing EIJP framework, supports are determined at the enterprise level. As a result, it is possible for employees at the same worksite to receive different levels of transition support, or no supports at all. Where a closing or dependent employer is specified in a COI determination, the employer must provide transition supports unless doing so would be unreasonable with regard to the following considerations:

- the operational requirements of the closing employer or dependent employer
- the need for transition employees of the closing employer or dependent employer to be provided with supports to facilitate those employees to find other employment
- relevant enterprise agreements or other industrial instruments, including supports provided under those agreements or instruments.



## Case study 3.2

### Different supports across a single worksite

Maeve, Cameron, Lamis, April, Harrison and Zac work in the same maintenance team in Power Station X, which is expected to close in 2 years and is a closing employer specified in a COI determination.

Maeve and Cameron are employed directly by Power Station X. Lamis is a labour hire worker employed by This Labour Hire Co, which is also specified in the COI determination as a dependent employer of Power Station X.

Because This Labour Hire Co has significantly less revenue than Power Station X, its operational requirements do not allow it to provide the same level financial contribution to training for its employees. Lamis therefore receives a lower financial contribution to her retraining than Maeve and Cameron.

April is a labour hire worker employed by Other Labour Co, which has not been specified in the COI determination. The EIJP therefore does not require Power Station X or Other Labour Co to provide April with supports, though she has access to entitlements under her enterprise agreement, modern award or the National Employment Standards. Harrison is an independent contractor and Zac works for a family partnership – neither will receive support from Power Station X and cannot be captured as dependent employers.



Many stakeholders argued this approach is inequitable. The MEU, for example, submitted a 'two-tier system of supports' for affected workers may arise, 'with employees of closing employers benefitting from significantly greater levels of support due to the greater financial capacity of their employer, and employees of dependent employers at greater risk of falling through the cracks' (2025:6-7). The Centre for Policy Development noted '[a]lthough the Fair Work Commission can require employers to conduct certain activities to support their workers there is a high risk that the employer-led process will mean workers receive varying levels of assistance' (2025:4).

Outside of the EIJP, energy companies have taken various approaches to date:

**Synergy in WA acknowledged this inequity by agreeing with unions to extend access to its transition program at the Muja and Collie power stations to embedded contractor workers on-site (MEU 2025:6-7).**

**EnergyAustralia's Yallourn 'Power Your Future' program provides funding to match contract workers' own financial contributions toward transition activities.**

**Origin Energy's 'Future Directions' program offers businesses in their supply chain materials so they can offer similar supports in-house or an option to provide supports directly to their employees on a fee-for-service basis.**

While closing employers captured under the EIJP can choose to extend transition supports to contract workers at their power stations, or assist their supply chain businesses to provide the supports, they are not obligated to do so.

# Whole-of-site approach

Some unions suggest establishing an obligation for the closing employer to provide supports to on-site workers directly impacted by its closure, such as independent contractors, labour hire workers, and apprentices, trainees and cadets employed by GTOs, for example:

- AMWU submitted the closing employer should provide supports where a dependent employer provides labour or services to them and is not running an independent operation outside of the closing employer's worksite (2025:9).
- MEU suggested closing employers should be responsible for funding and contributing to supports for workers of dependent employers, noting closing employers typically have greater capacity to provide appropriate support and that in many cases, the work carried out by dependent employers has been outsourced and was once directly undertaken by the power station operator (2025:7).
- Australian Workers' Union (AWU) submitted that closing employers retain de facto financial and operational control over workers on site, and with the need to ensure equality of support, closing employers should be required to meet any financial shortfall, where a dependent employer is unable to provide supports as required (2025:9).

Hunter Workers recommend extending the EIJP to supply chain workers engaged as 'dependent contractors' who are not employees (2025:6). Independent contractors working at a closing power station or its supply chain businesses are not captured because they are not employees.<sup>15</sup> The review notes it is possible some of these workers provide their services exclusively to a closing power station and as such would be substantially impacted by the closure.

Requiring closing employers to provide direct supports to employees of other employers would pose operational complexities. For example, under section 59 of the NZEA Act, an obligation is to provide paid time off or flexible work arrangements to employees to receive financial planning, career advice, training and engage in recruitment related activities. To facilitate access to this right it may be necessary for an employer to arrange changes to rosters to accommodate for employee absences, which may have implications for the pay of other workers, such as attracting overtime rates.

While closing employers may have considerable control over how to direct contractors in their supply chain, they would not necessarily have the same control afforded by an employer's right to issue lawful and reasonable instructions to an employee. The closing employer is generally not responsible for, nor has the direct power to, alter rostering arrangements, approve leave entitlements or pay employees of its dependent employers, meaning entitlements relating to paid time off or flexible working would necessarily need to include cooperation from the dependent employer to deliver. Similarly, extending obligations of closing employers to support independent contractors onsite may present practical difficulties as they are not covered by modern awards or enterprise agreements and don't have the same minimum standards, so different consideration is needed on how the supports would practically apply in their circumstances.

An alternative approach could be to require the closing employer to financially cover (either wholly or partially) the cost of transition supports for all workers onsite only but for paid time off work or flexible working arrangements to continue to be the responsibility of the dependent employer, subject to the reasonableness test. Obligations to make financial contributions could be discharged through directly providing supports to the relevant workers or through a cost sharing or cost recovery mechanism. Policy consideration could also be given to the circumstances in which a closing employer is obliged to make a contribution, such as where a dependent employer is a small business or financially distressed to the point of being unable to pay for relevant supports.

The review accepts the principle that all workers at the closing employer site should have equal access to transition supports – but not necessarily the same supports depending on circumstances. While accepting this principle of equity for different categories of workers, the review acknowledges implementation issues would need to be addressed through policy design.

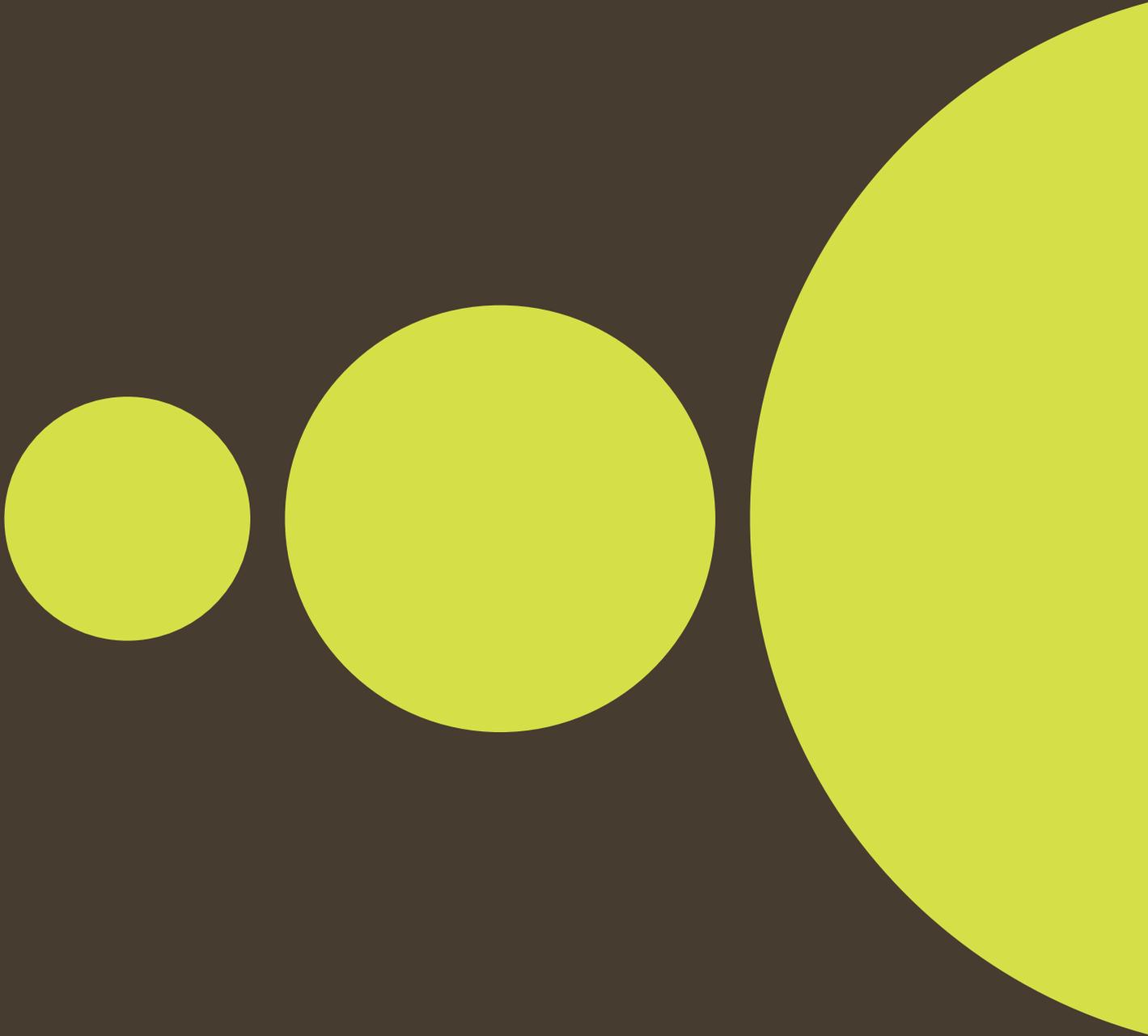
<sup>15</sup> Independent contractors work for themselves by providing services to another person or business. Independent contractors differ from employees and do not have the same rights and obligations.



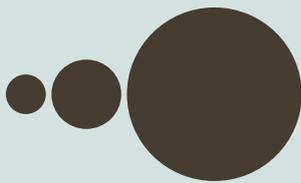
# 4

## Opportunities for broader policy reform

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**Stakeholders raised a range of broader policy ideas and proposed amendments beyond the elements of the EIJP framework that have been experienced or tested at the time of the review's completion. This included opportunities for improvement, such as extending the EIJP to decommissioning workers for longer, considering the potential impact on small businesses and the need for mental health supports for workers impacted by power station closures.**

The review acknowledges that data is still emerging on the operation of the legislation due to the early stage of the EIJP's operation, and lack of application of some parts. However, anecdotal evidence gathered through consultations and submissions point to opportunities to consider policy design changes in the future. The review also received expert evidence from a range of stakeholders. Noting the early stage of the EIJP's implementation, expert evidence incorporates research on previous industrial closures and policy interventions, social and economic features of the regions that will be impacted by power station closures and inferences about how the EIJP might operate in the future.

While the review proposes some smaller more technical changes to the EIJP initially, other significant structural changes can be considered in the future as evidence develops around the actual operation of the EIJP. This will support a balanced, pragmatic case for change.



# Duration of supports after closure of the power station

Under the NZEA Act, COI determinations remain in force for 6 months from the day of the closure of the whole, or a part, of the power station concerned (NZEA Act subs 57(6)(b)). A power station closes when it permanently ceases generating power. For the duration of the COI determination, specified closing and dependent employers are required to provide supports to their transition employees. However, when the employment relationship ends, for example due to redundancy, employer obligations also end.

Unions, academics and local councils raised concerns the 6-month post-closure end date of COI determinations risks removing transition supports at the most critical time for workers looking for new jobs. Some stakeholders see extending supports as important to starting the EIJP process earlier. The AMWU reasoned:

‘[p]ast closures have shown us that successful and holistic transition requires support to begin as early as possible and have a long tail’ (2025: 5) and ‘[r]esearch from past closures warn that many of the most significant negative social ramifications do not emerge for 18 to 24 months, when the retrenched workers’ payouts diminish (AMWU 2025:6).

Similarly, the Centre for Policy Development submitted ‘it takes considerably longer than six months – or even a year – for retrenched workers to find new pathways for their lives’ (2025:5). It argued that other transition programs have operated for longer periods – including the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers and the Worker Transition Service from the Hazelwood Power Station – and the approach should be tailored to the needs of the region:

‘...the ability to recover and create new jobs will also vary across regions, meaning that some regions will need a longer timeframe for transition and potentially more support than others (CPD 2025:7).

In addition to concerns about the duration of supports for transition employees overall, stakeholders argued the definition of closure in the NZEA Act is too limited and does not extend to the decommissioning of the power station. The decommissioning phase can last significantly longer than 6 months.

Union stakeholders have raised that those who remain employed for decommissioning work could lose access to supports before the work is finished, making it harder for them to transition to new employment after decommissioning is complete. Recommendations included amending the NZEA Act to extend EIJP supports for 12 to 24 months after the power station has been decommissioned (AMWU 2025:6; ETU 2025:18; MEU 2025:8). In its submission, the ETU specified the NZEA Act should be amended to differentiate between the employees whose employment finishes when the power station stops operating and those who remain employed for the decommissioning, but for EIJP supports to be extended to 12 months post-employment for both cohorts (2025:18).

The EIJP was designed to provide transition supports in the context of an employment relationship – its purpose is to ensure employees receive supports from their employers and transition to new employment at, or prior to, the time they would be made redundant as a direct result of the power station’s closure. Once a transition employee’s employment has ended, they will cease to meet the definition of a transition employee under the NZEA Act and will no longer be entitled to supports from their employer.

The review acknowledges some transition employees may not find employment by the time they are made redundant and more vulnerable cohorts of transition employees may be overrepresented in that group such as young, female, migrant and Indigenous employees. However, changes to the NZEA Act to extend the definition of 'transition employee' beyond employees' period of employment would be complex and overlap with the broader suite of government employment programs. Additionally, legally requiring closing and dependent employers to continue to provide supports post an employment relationship ending would be a substantial impost on employers, and a significant divergence from current policy.

Beyond the EIJP, the government has a range of transition and employment supports for the broader workforce and labour market. For instance, DEWR has programs geared towards supporting people after their employment relationship has ended or in exceptional circumstances, such as major industry transitions and large business closures. The EIJP should not duplicate these supports if they already exist for certain sectors, regions or cohorts of people.

The review accepts that workers impacted by the transition should be supported until they find other employment or decide to leave the labour market, for example retirement. However, it is not appropriate to extend the EIJP to operate too long beyond the employment relationship terminating as existing government employment programs are designed for this purpose.

In the review's assessment, there is a clearer and more immediate imperative to consider whether transition employees involved in decommissioning power stations should have access to supports across the duration of their employment, that is, until the decommissioning works are complete. This more clearly fits within the intent of the EIJP to provide transition supports to relevant employees while they are employed.

However, apart from the EIJP, the Regional Workforce Transition Plans (RWTPs) or another mechanism may also provide alternative options to support decommissioning workers. The feasibility of any approach for workers who remain employed for the decommissioning phase would require careful consideration to determine the most suitable timeframe for the extension of supports.

## Recommendation 8

Ahead of the first power station closure under a COI determination, the Australian Government should consider whether to amend the NZEA Act to extend the operation of a COI determination for transition employees who continue to be employed through decommissioning but will lose their job once decommissioning has completed.





# Challenges for small business

During policy development and the parliamentary debate, small businesses were not exempted from the EIJP. As a result, they can be captured by the EIJP framework if they meet the definition of 'dependent employer'.

At the time of the completion of this review, no small business has been included in a COI determination. However, if a small business were to be included in a COI determination, it would need to comply with the obligations under the EIJP while also managing the substantial impact of a power station closure. The preferable outcome is for small businesses to be able to adapt to new economic opportunities in the region and inclusion in the EIJP may make it more challenging. Existing industry programs are relevant in this regard and the need for a coordinated approach to the economic transition of regions is discussed in Section 6 of this report.

The decision of the CEO to apply to the FWC for a COI determination is significant. The process and resulting obligations may have considerable financial and time impacts for business, particularly small business:

- If small businesses are included in FWC applications, they are likely to need to engage with the FWC. This could include appearing at hearings and providing submissions to help the FWC decide whether to specify them in a COI determination.
  - For example, while the FWC is a low-cost, informal jurisdiction, for a small business without an in-house legal team, navigating the FWC could be challenging as business owners may need to take time away from work or seek legal advice.
- Navigating processes under Part 5 and complying with any obligations may be more pronounced on smaller employers, given they generally have fewer resources and are time-poor.

Employer organisations and several other stakeholders emphasised that smaller dependent employers captured by the EIJP will likely struggle to understand and appropriately discharge their obligations. ACCI said:

‘...insufficient attention has been given to dependent employers, many of whom are small businesses. These businesses are often the least resourced to navigate complex legislative obligations, yet they are among the most exposed to the risks of non-compliance (2025: 7).’

The Centre for Policy Development advocated for government support for workers of smaller dependent businesses noting 'smaller businesses, such as those who provide security, cleaning or canteen services to power generators, are likely to find it more challenging to provide adequate assistance to their employees as they face greater liquidity and credit constraints than power generators' (2025:6).

ACCI identified the lack of any definition of 'unreasonable' in determining the quantum of transition supports as particularly problematic (2025:6-7). In the same vein, Dantia, an economic development organisation set up by the Lake Macquarie City Council, said:

‘...dependent employers are likely to be small businesses. Dantia would want to ensure that the [sic] any supports mandated of them are not unreasonable. The NZEA should clearly define what it considers unreasonable. There may be instances where there is disagreement between the NZEA and a dependent employer on what is reasonable' (2025:2).

These stakeholders recommended mitigating the regulatory burden on small dependent employers through the provision of tailored guidance materials, like a best practice guide (ACCI 2025:7; Dantia 2025:2). ACCI further recommended amending the NZEA Act to define what transition supports would be 'unreasonable' and reducing or even abolishing civil penalties for small dependent employers who fail to comply (2025:6-7). Dantia suggested the government provides funding to help small dependent employers to meet their EIJP obligations, such as to provide paid time off and financial assistance (2025: 2).

Providing an exemption for small businesses would be consistent with the treatment of small business employers in some limited contexts in the Fair Work Act. For example, businesses that meet the Fair Work Act definition of a small business employer (employers with fewer than 15 employees) are exempt from the obligation to pay redundancy pay under the National Employment Standards, subject to certain conditions. The use of exemptions would help provide clarity and certainty for small businesses, including by reducing financial and regulatory burden. As discussed in Section 1 of this report, the substantial number of supply chain businesses for larger closing employers that need to be assessed has also been a factor in the length of COI processes to date.

The review considers a small business exemption, based on objective properties such as number of employees, would serve to clarify the parliament's intent to target the EIJP where it is most needed, and provide certainty in relation to EIJP coverage and processes for all parties including the Authority, small businesses and employees. It would allow small businesses to focus on new economic opportunities in their regions. As such, a small business exemption would align the EIJP with the government's commitment in the National Small Business Strategy to 'ease pressure on small businesses by streamlining processes to minimise administrative burden and help small businesses bounce back from challenges' (Treasury 2025b:38).

Where needed, small businesses and their employees may have access to existing employment and training support via the the Transition Support Network coordinated by DEWR. This network helps employers through the retrenchment process, including in terms of how they can meet their obligations and provide their workers with the support they need, such as immediate access to tailored employment services under the Early Access initiative. RWTPs and the Transitioning Workforce Fund (TWF), once established, may offer additional supports tailored to the needs of local businesses, employees, and communities in key regions.

## Recommendation 9

The Australian Government, through the Authority, should monitor the impact of the EIJP on small business and consider establishing proportionate or reduced obligations, including the potential for a small business exemption from the dependent employer definition. Consideration should also include the impact on employees of small businesses and alternative forms of support that may be available, provided by government or potentially provided by the closing employer in some circumstances.

In the short-term, the Authority should develop targeted guidance materials for small businesses to build awareness of the EIJP, educate them on the COI process and assist them to navigate their obligations under the legislation.



# Issue of mental health for workers and communities

The issue of mental health links into the Authority's stated purpose as described in the object of the NZEA Act:

‘ensure Australia's regions, communities and workers are supported to manage the impacts, and share in the benefits, of Australia's transition to a net zero emissions economy (s3).’

The review heard from stakeholders who emphasised the critical role of mental health support for workers and communities where a transition is underway. While this is a complex and interconnected policy issue that has significant intersections with health policy, it is critically important for workers, families and communities impacted by power station closures.

Several stakeholders submitted the EIJP could be amended to include mental health supports. Gippsland Climate Change Network and the Centre for Policy Development noted the important role of mental health support in previous workforce transitions – the privatisation of Victoria's State Electricity Commission in the mid-1990s and the Hazelwood power station in 2017 respectively. The Centre for Policy Development points out that for many workers, generations of their family have a connection to the coal industry and their regions depend on it as a key employer. This underpins workers' strong sense of connection to the industry and the role of the closing employers in fostering social connection and routine. Closures therefore can lead to a:

‘loss of purpose and identity, increasing the risk for the development of psychological illness (CPD 2025a:7).’

Some stakeholders suggested mental health supports are required for the whole community in transition. For example, the Gippsland Climate Change Network suggested the EIJP should include ‘dedicated funding for mental health, counselling, and wellbeing supports ... to help people of all ages adapt to the significance of the transition’ and prioritise ‘counselling and psychological services targeted toward supporting youth who are facing apprehension about the future’. This approach would require ensuring services are ‘accessible Gippsland-wide, covering communities that are not just confined to the Valley’ (GCCN 2025:5).

On the other hand, the Hunter Joint Organisation recommended broadening ‘obligations of either the employer, State or Federal Government, to require early social investment, including housing, education, and mental health services in affected communities’ (2025:9). Similarly, Lake Macquarie City Council recommends ‘targeted community services, including mental health support..,’ that are ‘designed to complement workforce transition initiatives and ensure that the broader wellbeing of the community is maintained throughout the transition period’ (2025:8). The Centre for Policy Development suggested ‘government can also play a key role in providing this support, and this would be a useful way to ensure workers receive a similar level of assistance, regardless of their previous employer’ (2025:7).

‘Currently, the EIJP framework does not include specific obligations for closing or dependent employers in relation to mental health support for their employees. Experiences from the closure of the Automotive industry in Australia showed providing impacted workers with access to transitional supports such as career counselling, training and job placement assistance has been successful in mitigating some of the negative emotional effects of job loss such as fear and anxiety (Weller et al. 2020:16).’

The comprehensive, community-wide approach to mental health support sought by stakeholders falls outside of the remit and intent of the EIJP in its current form. In the employment context, employees already have rights to access certain types of paid and unpaid leave related to mental health – including personal leave, carer’s leave, and, in some circumstances, unpaid leave. Employers must also take reasonable steps to prevent psychosocial hazards in the workplace, which can result in psychological or physical harm under relevant Work Health and Safety laws.

Further, DEWR’s RWTPs, will be developed and delivered in priority regions with closing coal-fired power stations. While the RWTPs will not be used to provide mental health services directly, they will inform people of existing services, potentially including mental health supports. The review acknowledges some stakeholders have raised concerns the services people will be referred to will be ‘generic in nature, such as Beyond Blue, and may not be able to offer the specialised support that workers who lose their jobs in regional areas with limited opportunities for alternative employment may need’ (CPD 2025a:7).

While the review acknowledges there are entitlements already available for employees under the national employment and workplace relations system that may assist them to access mental health supports as they prepare for life after the closure of a power station, reinforcing and providing clarity in relation to those entitlements as an obligation for closing and dependent employers is sensible.

Mental health supports will be critical for workers, families and communities experiencing industrial closures. However, healthcare is beyond the remit of the EIJP and should instead be delivered through more suitable alternative programs and policies.

### Recommendation 10

The Australian Government should consider amending the NZEA Act so that closing and dependent employers are required to provide information on mental health supports available in the workplace to transition employees, including how and when supports can be accessed.





# Future review and ongoing policy evaluation

Under the terms of reference, the review was also required to 'assess the merit and timing of future reviews of the operation of Part 5 and associated redeployment supports provided by the Authority'.

Several stakeholders stated this review has occurred too early in the EIJP's implementation, with some noting the EIJP is in its infancy (Singleton Council 2025:5) and this review is premature (ACCI 2025:7). As highlighted previously, more data, evaluation and analysis of processes under Part 5 and its associated sections is required and would be beneficial to ensure the scheme is operating as intended and remains fit-for-purpose. The Authority will address this gap with the establishment of routine monitoring, evaluation, compliance and reporting activities to measure the performance of the EIJP as the program matures.

Many stakeholders felt another legislative review of the EIJP would be beneficial. For example, the ACTU called for another review to be conducted 'two years after this one has concluded' (2025:11). Local governments recommended regular reviews (LMCC 2025:6; Singleton Council 2025:5-6), reviews after major power station closures (ALGA 2025:3) or a review after a fixed period of 3 years (Banana Shire Council 2025). The NZI and WCEH recommended a 'multi-tiered review cycle, spanning 3, 5, and 10 years... to assess both the short-term effectiveness and long-term impact of the EIJP' (2025:9). ACCI suggested it would 'likely be appropriate to review the EIJP within 3 to 5 years, contingent on a COI determination being made' as this would provide 'adequate time for determinations to be made, for obligations under the Act to be tested in practice, and subsequently for their impact to become clear' (2025:7).

The NZEA Act provides for additional review and reporting mechanisms to further assess the effectiveness of the EIJP. For instance, section 80A of the NZEA Act mandates for a statutory review of the whole Act (including Part 5) to be conducted within 10 years (80A review). These mechanisms may negate the need for rolling reviews or a separate, future review of the EIJP as requested by stakeholders. Importantly, the timing of the 80A review should be appropriately sequenced to power station closures and FWC processes to effectively evaluate the operation of the EIJP.

## Program monitoring and evaluation

Stakeholders emphasised the EIJP should be subject to monitoring and review (Dantia 2025:3) or monitoring and evaluation (ACTU 2025:2).

The review considers that public policy evaluation is crucial to understanding why a program is successful and is helpful in fostering continuous improvement in design and delivery (OECD 2022:6). The Authority is subject to the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and the Commonwealth Evaluation Policy. Under the PGPA Act, the Authority must outline its purpose, priorities and associated performance measures in its corporate plan. Under the 2025–26 performance measures, the Authority must fulfil its obligations to ensure the EIJP is being implemented appropriately and operating as intended (Measure 1.3) (NZEA 2024:14). Additionally, the Authority must provide an update on its performance in its annual report, including on the operation of the NZEA Act, 'in response to the needs and circumstances of communities, regions, industries and workers' (subs 74(b)) who are affected by the energy transition.

Stakeholders provided metrics they consider important for assessing the EIJP's effectiveness. While some stakeholders suggested metrics to underpin a future review, the review considers these metrics could be used in monitoring and evaluation. For instance, stakeholders suggested measuring the effectiveness of redeployment and training pathways in securing ongoing employment for transition employees (ACCI 2025: 8; ACTU: 11; Hunter Workers 2025:8) and transition employees' pre- and post-transition wages and conditions (ACTU: 11; MEU 2025: 10). The ACTU's recommended metrics were specifically proposed for a monitoring and evaluation framework. In line with parliament's intent, 'to support the capacity of regions to thrive through the energy transition' (REM 2024: 90), academics, unions and employer groups advocated for a socio-economic lens to be incorporated into EIJP assessments to measure the impacts on the local, impacted community (ACCI 2025:8; ALGA 2025:4; Goods et al. 2025:7; MEU:10; NZI and WCEH 2025:9).

The EIJP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is under development at the time of this review's completion. The framework will be key to identifying trends, issues and potential opportunities to improve the EIJP. Employers, unions and other government agencies have been consulted on the framework's design. This work will be critical in understanding whether the EIJP is meeting its objectives and highlight areas that can be improved.

Despite stakeholder recommendations for a separate, future review of the EIJP, the review has found this may be unnecessary given the Authority's legislated 80A review and its planned monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities. Committing to another review at a specific future date may face similar issues with a lack of, or limited evidence on which to base the review. As demonstrated by this review, enough time needs to pass to review key components of Part 5. In addition to COI processes and applications to the FWC, this should include the operation of employer obligations across COI determinations and for the EIJP to demonstrate its overall effectiveness in relation to power station closures. Timing needs to be carefully considered in scheduling any future legislative review.

In the interim, it is crucial the CEO, the Board and the government have a clear understanding of how the EIJP is functioning. The establishment of the framework and the mandated reporting obligations under the PGPA Act and NZEA Act can work to keep key parties informed. Together, these measures can ensure the EIJP continues to meet its objectives as the program and the Authority mature.

### Recommendation 11

The Authority should assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the EIJP at individual closures and across multiple closures through ongoing monitoring, evaluation and reporting frameworks.

### Recommendation 12

The Authority's Board should appropriately sequence the s80A review, following power station closures and completed FWC processes to ensure an effective evaluation of the operation of Part 5.

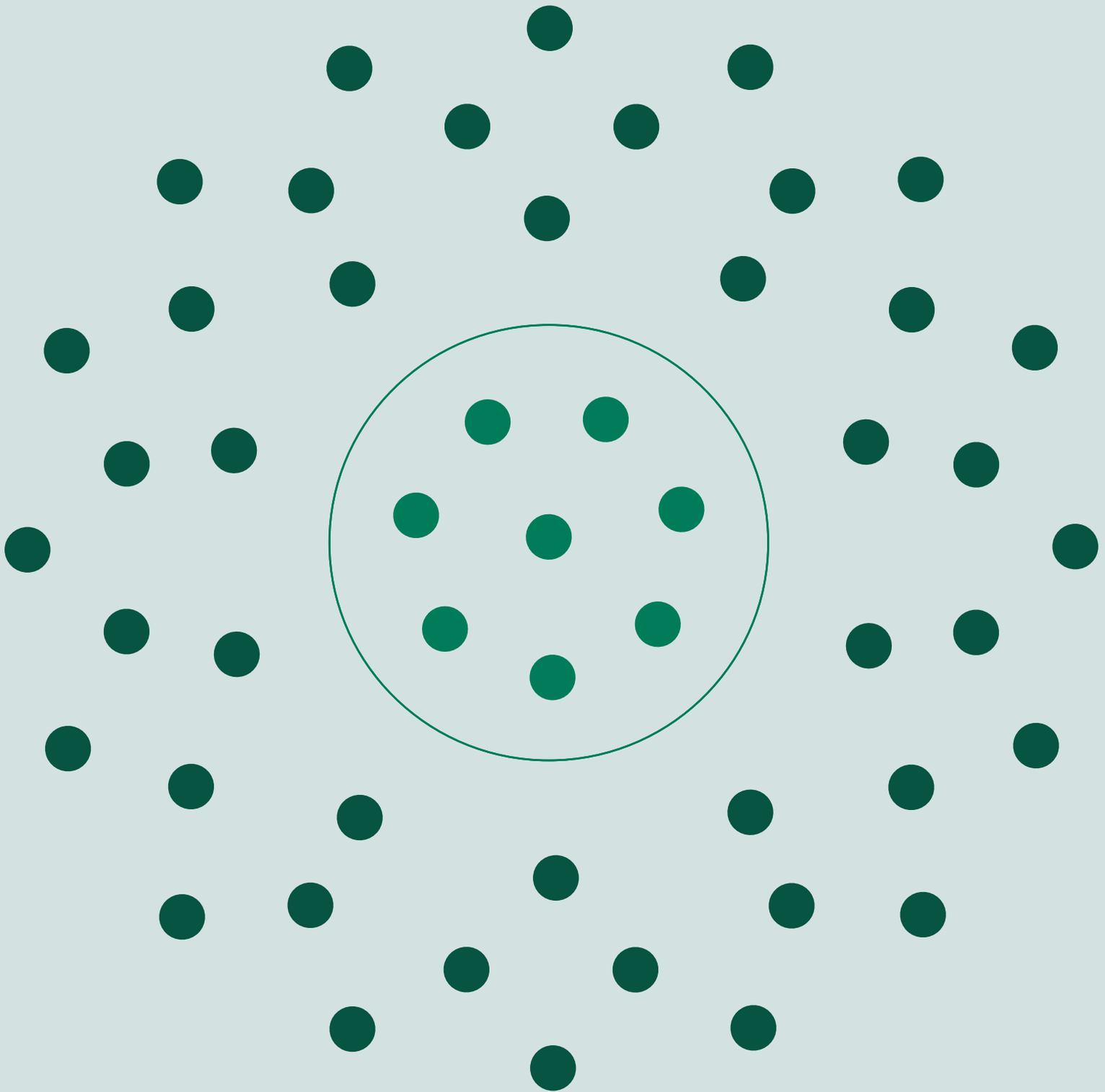




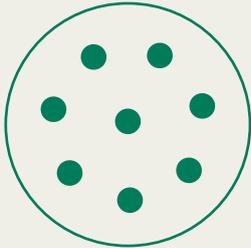
# 5

## Scope of the Energy Industry Jobs Plan beyond the energy generation sector

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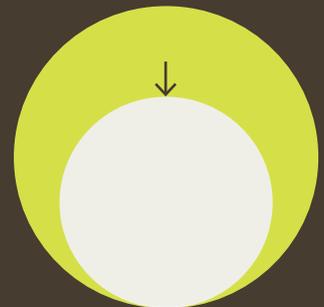
**During the review, stakeholders expressed a desire for the economic transition of their regions to be managed proactively and effectively. The expected closure of coal-fired and gas-fired power stations and supplying coal mines is compounded by broader stakeholder concerns about the future of the export coal industry and other carbon-intensive industries.**

The Australian and state governments have a history of supporting industry and structural transitions through a range of programs and supports, including industry and workforce supports. However, these initiatives have had varying degrees of success. Successful transitions have been contingent on the establishment of coordinated and well-planned transition programs tailored to the needs of workers (refer to Appendix B).

The EIJP is the first legislated program of its kind in Australia. It has been designed specifically to support workers in closing coal-fired and gas-fired power stations and their dependent employers. To provide greater certainty for workers and the regions, many stakeholders want the EIJP expanded to capture other sectors impacted by the global transition to net zero. However, the EIJP is a new program and its effectiveness is yet to be fully assessed, given no power stations under the EIJP have closed at the time of the review's completion.

Coal mines are facing a series of wind-downs and closures under the global transition to net zero. Demand for Australia's coal exports is contingent on major importing markets, such as India, Japan and South Korea. A decline in international demand for coal would have an outsized impact on regional economies with high levels of employment in the sector. Modelling released by the Treasury projects a drop in Australia's production of coal ranging between 42% to 51% to 2035 under different scenarios, due to declining global demand (2025a: 37).<sup>16</sup> The International Energy Agency suggests that between 2025 and 2050, global demand for coal is projected to decrease by 71% (DISR 2025b).

**Treasury modelling projects a drop in Australia's production of coal ranging between 42% and 51% to 2035.**



<sup>16</sup> To 2035, 42% under the 'disorderly transition scenario', 47% under the 'baseline scenario' and 51% under the 'renewable exports scenario'



**In contrast, the outlook for metal-ore processors is characterised by both challenge and opportunity. Recent government packages to upgrade and reposition smelters to benefit from the transition to a net zero economy demonstrates their strategic importance to Australia's economic future, signalling much-needed certainty for workers and regions.**

The viability of smelters has been impacted by international competition and energy costs but they remain critical for Australia's participation in global markets and value chains. Bolstering smelters' competitiveness relies on access to affordable renewable energy and investment in the technological transformation of facilities. The government's industry policy settings aim to achieve this result.

While there will be opportunities for Australian businesses and support for ongoing employment in the broader mining sector and increasingly in adding value through processing – for example in relation to critical minerals – there is a perception of a gap in supports for individual coal mines and their affected communities ahead of a closure. To address this gap, a policy approach for individual coal mines and affected regions must be more immediately centred on supporting workers to transition to new employment.

A policy development process is necessary to determine the most suitable transition model to support workers at coal mines not captured by the EIJP. This process would consider how existing initiatives could be used and how any new policy would complement existing approaches. For instance, expanding the EIJP to additional sectors would be complex, require additional resourcing and the viability of the approach would need to be carefully considered.

Further, the DEWR is responsible for a number of initiatives that may apply in these circumstances and should be judiciously considered in the development of any transition model for the coal mining sector. These initiatives include the RWTPs, TWF and other structural adjustment supports led by the Transition Support Network in collaboration with state and territory governments and other stakeholders.



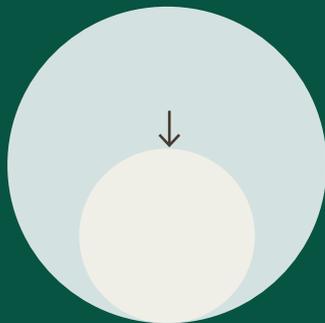
# Export coal

There are coal deposits in almost every state and territory across Australia with the majority of coal mining concentrated on the east coast. Many mines, especially those in Queensland and NSW, are export oriented and produce both thermal and metallurgical coal.<sup>17</sup> Australia is one of the world's major exporters of both. It is anticipated the demand for thermal and metallurgical coal will taper over the coming decades. The decline of metallurgical coal is expected to be more gradual, due to the slower pace of industrial decarbonisation (Martus 2025:1).

The decrease in demand for Australian coal could have a pronounced impact on the Hunter Valley and Central Queensland, both of which are among the Authority's priority regions. There are different dynamics across the Upper and Lower Hunter regions. The transition may be felt more acutely in the Upper Hunter, including Singleton and Muswellbrook, due to the high concentration of coal mining (Egan et al. 2023:3).

Some regions where an EIJP could be established may feel the cumulative impact of closures. This was highlighted by unions and local councils in the Hunter region. For instance, Singleton Council has estimated the combined impact of the early closures of Wambo Underground Coal Mine, Liddell Coal Mine, Integra Underground Mine, Glendell Mine and Hunter Valley Operations will result 'in a \$6.8 billion decrease in economic output for Singleton with a further \$6.6 billion in lost output in the broader Hunter region' (Singleton Council, 2025:2).

**Global demand for coal is projected to decrease by 71% by 2050.**



<sup>17</sup> Metallurgical coal is typically a bituminous coal that is heated to produce coke, which is used in steelmaking. By contrast, thermal coal is a lower carbon and higher moisture content coal which is directly burned to heat water into steam for electricity generation.

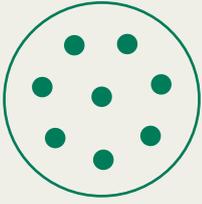
Historically, demand for Australian coal has been variable due to the sector's exposure to international market conditions and operational variables (IEEFA 2025b). These variables include fluctuating commodity prices, geological factors, extreme weather events and significant safety incidents (Laurence 2006:87–88). Exposure to these variables can lead to producers closing prematurely or with limited notice. This can result in major workforce restructures or the mine being placed in 'care and maintenance' mode.

Most of Australia's major coal trading partners are parties to the Paris Agreement. Accordingly, they have Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) in place to reduce their national emissions. These commitments have resulted in several actions from Australia's major trading partners shifting towards renewable energy and away from importing Australian thermal coal to mitigate climate change. For instance, South Korea, which is the third-largest customer of Australian coal, joined the Power Past Coal Alliance at COP30 and committed to phasing out its coal fired power by 2040 (Mercer 2025).

Modelling from the Treasury (released in September 2025), projects steep decreases in Australia's coal production due to decreased global demand. As referenced previously, under all 3 of the Treasury's modelling scenarios, Australia's coal output is expected to decline by between 42% and 51% by 2035. By 2050, the Treasury's modelling shows that by 2050, Australia's coal output will decrease further by at least 71% by 2050 (2025:37)<sup>18</sup>. A decrease in demand from importers of Australian thermal coal – Japan, Taiwan and South Korea – is projected. This is owing to the deployment of renewable energy generation (IEEFA 2025b). Similarly, demand for metallurgical coal is expected to fall, as key importers shift to less carbon-intensive steel production (IEEFA 2025b).

Despite La Niña in Queensland causing declines in export volumes, Australia's production has remained generally steady. However, there are some signs of financial stress (DISR 2025a:43–44). This has contributed to the announced redundancy and job cuts by BHP and Anglo American at their respective mines in Central Queensland (Brennan and O'Connell 2025). The nuances of mining closure timeframes are explored in the Saraji South and Mt Arthur case study.

<sup>18</sup> To 2050, 71% under the 'disorderly transition scenario', 72% under the 'baseline scenario' and 74% under the 'renewable exports scenario'



### Case Study 5.1

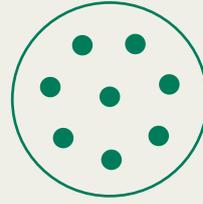
#### Upcoming closures of Saraji South and Mt Arthur coal mines

The volatility of the coal mining industry is evident in BHP Mitsubishi Alliance's (BMA's) and BHP's respective closures of the Saraji South and Mt Arthur coal mines.

In September 2025, BMA announced its plans to place the Saraji South coal mine in Central Queensland into 'care and maintenance' by November 2025 (Jacques 2025). This closure will result in the loss of 750 jobs across operations (Jacques 2025).

By comparison, for its Mt Arthur coal mine in the Hunter Valley, BHP gave 8 years of forward notice of its intention to close (Butler and Cox 2022). As part of a broader effort to divest from thermal coal, BHP listed the mine for sale in August 2020 (Butler and Cox 2022). However, after failing to secure a buyer, they consequently announced plans to close the mine in June 2030 (Butler and Cox 2022).

While Saraji South was a sudden closure, largely as a response to economic pressure, the Mt Arthur closure was a planned and strategic closure. These case studies demonstrate the differing factors that can lead to coal mine closures.



### Case study 5.2

#### Demand for coal from Asian trading partners

The Asian region is shifting away from its reliance on Australia's thermal coal as renewable energy and battery storage become more cost-competitive than coal-fired generation (IEEFA 2025a:4). For instance, across Southeast Asia, there is now 10 times more renewable capacity than coal capacity (IEEFA 2025a:5). This shift is coupled with a concurrent rise in nuclear energy and gas investment, which has further reduced demand for Australian thermal coal (IEEFA 2025a:4-5).

Growing investment in electric arc furnaces (EAFs) is an indicator of a shifting demand for Australian coking coal. EAF-based steel production can significantly reduce emissions when compared to conventional blast furnace methods depending on energy sourcing. However, regardless of energy source, EAFs are less carbon intensive than blast furnaces. This is due to their ability to utilise primarily scrap metal, direct reduced iron and hot briquetted iron as their source materials (Wondris et al. 2025). Growing investment in this technology across multiple major steel producing markets is likely to have an impact on long-term demand.

**Table 5.1 NDCs and share of Australian coal exports by key consumers**

Country	Most recent NDC, as at November 2025	Share of coal exports in 2023*	Year-on-year 2023 data*
<b>China</b>	7–10% reduction below peak levels by 2035 (Tingle 2025)	16%	NA
<b>India</b>	Reduce the emissions intensity of the GDP by 45% from 2005 levels by 2030 <sup>19</sup> (Koshy 2025)	14%	-11%
<b>Japan</b>	60% reduction by 2035 and a 73% reduction by 2040, both from 2013 levels (UNFCCC 2025)	30%	-17%
<b>South Korea</b>	53-61% below 2018 levels by 2035 (Sung-mo 2025)	10%	-24%
<b>Taiwan</b>	38±2% reduction below 2005 levels by 2035 (Intended Nationally Determined Contribution) <sup>20</sup> (Ministry of Environment (Taiwan) 2025)	8%	-11%

\*Data sourced from IEEFA 2024

<sup>19</sup> At the time of publication, India had not yet announced its 2035 NDC. The NDC included in the table is the 2030 target updated in 2022.

<sup>20</sup> Taiwan voluntarily adheres to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and, as required by the Paris Agreement, has set a 2035 NDC, often referred to as an 'Intended Nationally Determined Contribution' (Ministry of Environment (Taiwan), 2025).



# Coal mines supplying the domestic market

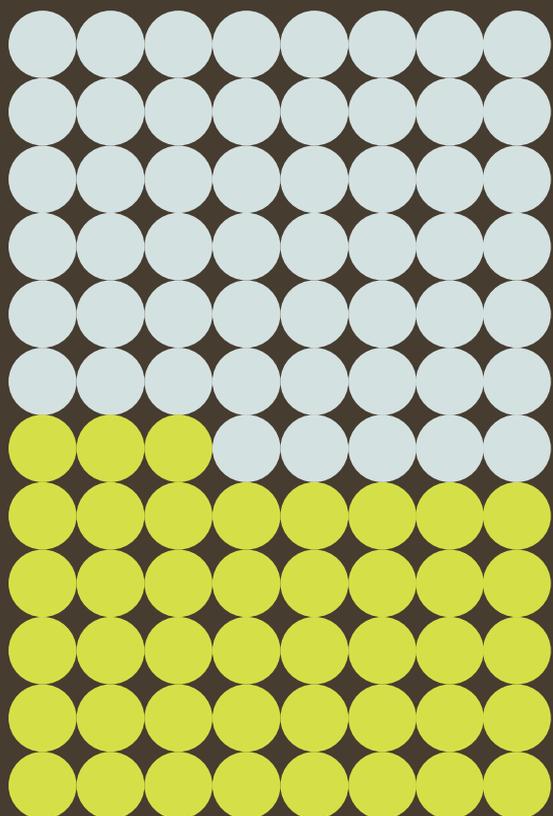
Some coal mines are only able to supply Australian coal-fired power stations, for example due to the scale of the mine, quality of coal mined or its relative distance from a port. The operation of these coal mines relies on contracts with nearby power stations and they may not be able to pivot to opportunities in the export market (noting that global demand for coal is expected to decrease in any case).

The employees of coal mines supplying Australia's coal-fired power stations can be supported under the EIJP if their employer meets a definition under section 6 of the NZEA Act and is specified in a COI determination. However, there may be instances where workforce impacts occur before the CEO can commence or complete a COI process, or before a COI determination is made, or the coal mine may be outside of the 'geographic area' of the power station.

Where a regional economy relies on coal mines supplying the domestic market, workers and communities may be particularly vulnerable in circumstances where workforce impacts occur before the EIJP framework can provide support. For example, the Lithgow City Council stated that 80% of its local coal mining workforce is 'integrated into supplying the MPPS with coal [and] [t]here is little capacity for coal export switching' (2025:3). The Lithgow City Council expressed concern coal mining activities integrated into power station supply chains could cease 'well in advance of a trigger notice' being made under the EIJP due to the power station stockpiling coal or entering into a 'reserve' role, meaning impacted employees could not receive support under the current EIJP framework (2025:17).

The Lithgow City Council noted that '43% of its economy [is] derived from coal-fired power generation and associated coal mining' (2025:3) and in particular 'Centennial Coal's Lithgow operations, currently employ about 650 FTE [full time equivalent] workers together with 150 contractor positions' (2025:13). The contribution of those 'direct jobs to the regional economy to range from \$5.0 million to \$7.2 million per year, supporting an estimated 1,910 to 2,468 residents in the region (2025:12).

43% of Lithgow City Council's economy is derived from coal-fired power generation and associated coal mining.



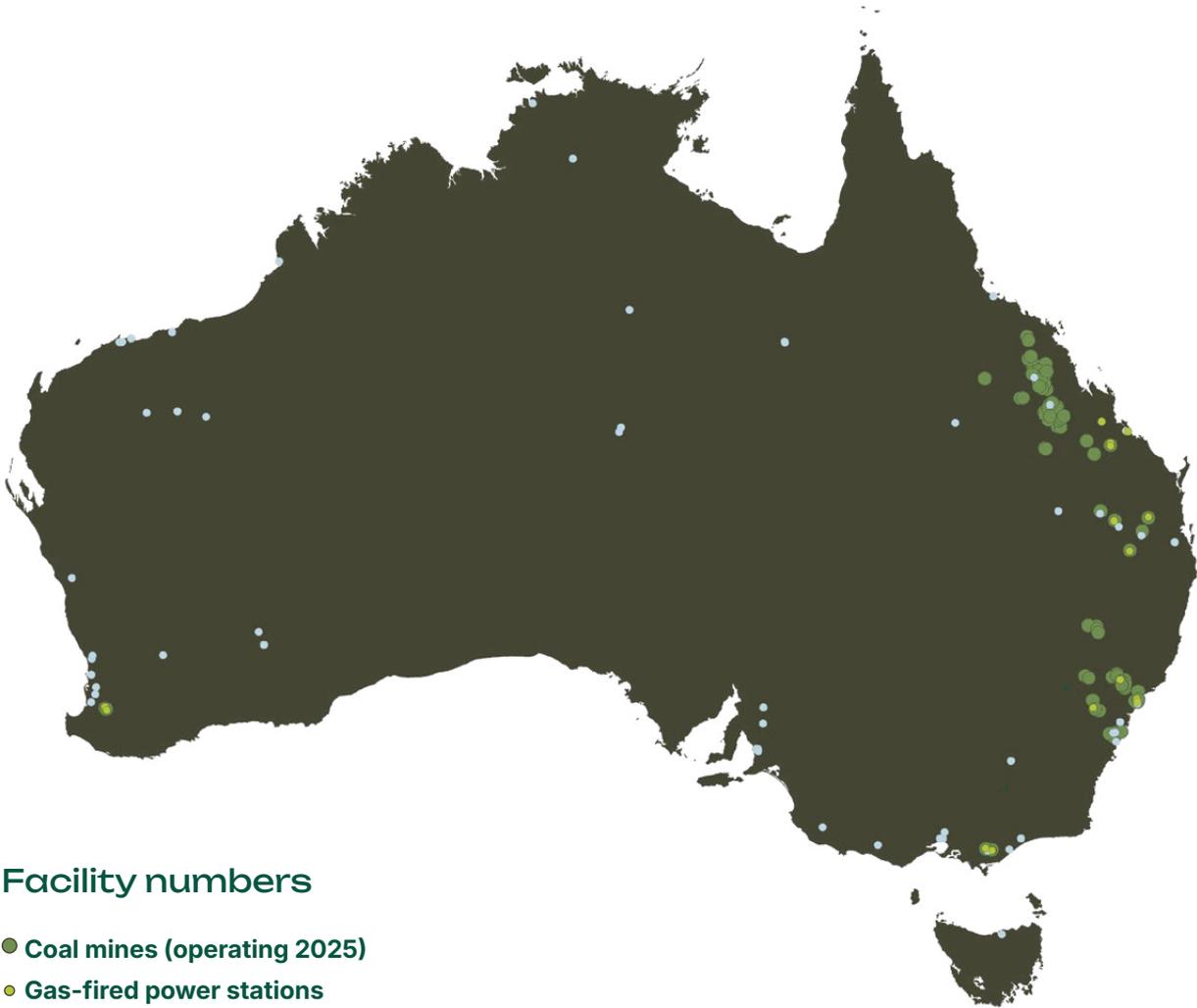




# Data

The following maps highlight the cumulative impact of facility closures for communities.

**Figure 5:** Map of power station and operating coal mine facilities



## Facility numbers

- Coal mines (operating 2025)
- Gas-fired power stations
- Coal-fired power stations

Please note that some coal mines may be obscured due to the close proximity to coal-fired power stations and/or gas-fired power stations. For example, Griffin and Premier coal mines in Collie WA.



# Metal-ore processing

While coal mine and industrial facility closures risk significant impacts on regional economies, the challenges faced by sectors and their potential future in a net zero economy differ. This means bespoke approaches may be needed to accommodate different circumstances.

The NZI and the WCEH stated:

‘[e]nergy-intensive operations, such as aluminium smelters, may face closure as coal-fired generation exits the grid. In this context, the EIJP’s mission could be extended or adapted, with lessons from current transitions informing future support frameworks (2025:12).’

Contemporary challenges facing smelters, such as international market issues, have contributed to a sense of uncertainty for some regional communities, including in relation to the Whyalla Steelworks, the Nyrstar Port Pirie and Hobart smelters, the Glencore Mt Isa copper smelter and Townsville refinery and Rio Tinto’s Tomago aluminium smelter. Energy costs are also a critical factor, including for the Tomago aluminium smelter in the Hunter region.

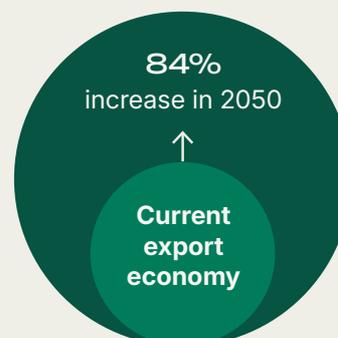
Smelters are strategically important to Australia. They can play a central role in processing and supplying critical minerals essential to our modern technologies, and strategic materials that are important for the global transition to net zero and broader strategic applications, such as renewable energy and defence. Enabling smelters to manage immediate challenges, while transitioning further to renewable energy sources and capturing opportunities as part of the global transition to net zero will help to strengthen Australia’s role in international supply chains.

Joint support packages from the Australian Government and state governments for Whyalla Steelworks, and the Nyrstar Port Pirie smelter highlights the opportunity, as raised by the AWU to, ‘...support quality job retention and creation should Australia realise its ‘green manufacturing superpower’ ambition’ (2025:6). The \$2.4 billion support package for Whyalla Steelworks provides a means for the facility to decarbonise and be a critical component of the government’s ambitions for green steel manufacturing (Albanese 2025a) – the package is ‘the first step in turning a crisis into a nation-building opportunity by creating a new industry from the legacy of an old one’ (Green 2025a).

Similarly, the South Australian, Tasmanian and Australian governments’ commitment for the Nyrstar Port Pirie and Hobart facilities, is centred on upgrades to help secure a critical minerals production future in Australia (ABC News 2025). These upgrades are an example of government co-investment in processing technologies. Australia’s capacity to build a more complex and knowledge-driven economy relies on Australia maintaining its sovereign capability and keeping manufacturing facilities open (Green, cited in Verrender 2025).

The Treasury modelling presents a positive future for green metals in Australia, particularly if Australia leverages its renewable energy production advantages to realise more potential in emerging clean energy export markets. The ‘Renewable Exports Upside Scenario’ projects that green exports could be \$68 billion higher in 2050 than under its ‘Baseline Scenario’ (2025a:7).<sup>21</sup> The outlook is positive for regional communities, with the Treasury’s modelling indicating regional Australia is well positioned to benefit from large-scale renewable energy and transmission projects (2025a:45). Some commentators have proposed a role for SIVs to accelerate investment in renewable energy capacity in conjunction with offtakes for users (Yates 2025).

**The ‘Renewable Exports Upside Scenario’ projects that green exports could be \$68 billion higher in 2050 than under its ‘Baseline Scenario’**



<sup>21</sup> Note ‘green exports’ includes critical minerals, renewable hydrogen and green metals exports

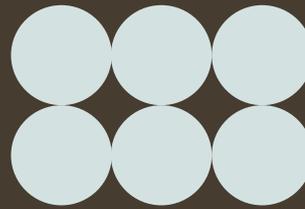
The government released the Net Zero Plan to outline the pathway to net zero. The Net Zero Plan is supported by 6 sector emissions reduction plans (sector plans) which outline emissions reduction opportunities and pathways for each sector (DCCEEW 2025:24). The Net Zero Plan suggests the decarbonisation of industry sectors will continue at pace beyond 2035. Resource emissions are expected to fall by more than half and industry emissions by around one-third by 2050 (DCCEEW 2025:51). For the industry sector, decarbonisation will significantly ramp up as the deployment of existing technologies and commercialisation of new technologies becomes more widespread (DISR and DCCEEW 2025:19–26). Scaling up and firming the supply of renewable energy and low carbon fuels will be a key challenge in ensuring the diversification of these industry facilities.

As part of the Net Zero Plan, a new \$5 billion Net Zero Fund (allocated from the existing NRF), has been announced to support major investments by large industrial facilities in decarbonisation and energy efficiency (DCCEEW 2025:10). The government has also announced a range of other measures to help drive transformation in the sector, including 2 measures administered by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR):

- the \$2 billion Green Aluminium Production Credit will support Australian aluminium smelters to produce green aluminium
- the \$1 billion Green Iron Investment Fund supports early-mover green iron-ore projects (Albanese 2025b).

In addition, a \$750 million allocation under the Future Made in Australia Innovation Fund aims to support the development and deployment of novel green metals technologies. To continue to accelerate development of new carbon management technologies, a second round of the Carbon Capture Technologies Program will open in early 2026 and provide \$52 million (DCCEEW 2025:11). The aim of these measures is to support heavy industry facilities in their efforts to adopt new technology to reduce emissions.

### The Net Zero Plan:



Supported by 6 sector emissions reduction plans which outline emission reduction opportunities and pathways for each sector:

- Electricity and energy
- Agriculture and land
- The built environment
- Industry
- Resources
- Transport



Net Zero Fund announced to support major investments to support industry to decarbonise and scale up low emissions technology



# Future role for worker transition supports

Many workers will be impacted by coal mine closures in coming years both due to mines ending life or ceasing to supply Australian coal-fired power stations and a projected decrease in international demand. Under the EIJP, these workers will only receive supports if they are employed by an employer specified in a COI determination – noting some employers may provide transition supports in line with their enterprise agreements or workplace policies. Singleton Council, among others, raised that, '[t]he scope of the EIJP is too narrowly focused on a small component of the net zero industry transition' (2025:3).

Several stakeholders raised concerns the exclusion of export coal mine workers from the EIJP will exacerbate community division and socioeconomic decline, which in turn will, 'undermin[e] the fairness and effectiveness of Australia's just transition framework' (HJA 2025:9). The Hunter Joint Organisation submits the scope of the EIJP 'fails to address the closure of export coal mines, which will inevitably occur as global demand declines' and not extending the EIJP to these workers means they will be left without adequate supports (2025:4). This was mirrored by Singleton Council, who stated the exclusion of export coal is a '[s]ignificant shortcoming of the current legislative framework. The urgency regarding transition lies with coal dependent communities reliant on a declining export market...' (2025:3).

An unplanned approach to structural adjustment can cause serious harms, as labour disruption may entrench poverty, unemployment and depopulation in affected regions. As noted in the preamble of the Paris Agreement, a just transition of the workforce is required, through the creation of decent work and quality jobs (UNFCCC 2015). Stakeholders noted that supports for vulnerable populations are essential for strengthening community resilience (HJA 2025; LMCC 2025).

While the EIJP can support employees and regions on the frontline of the energy transition, the range of government initiatives aimed at supporting the broader net zero transition could be better coordinated to go where they are most needed (see Section 6 of this report). As noted above, a range of industry policy mechanisms, including the Net Zero Plan and Future Made in Australia, aim to support the diversification and ongoing viability of manufacturers such as smelters. More immediately, the Treasury modelling indicates there is a clear need for workers in coal mines to be supported. This is emphasised by the greater certainty surrounding coal mine closures in the coming years.

A number of stakeholders suggest the EIJP could be rolled out to support a broader range of transitioning industries. Some unions proposed expanding the scope of the EIJP to capture high-emitting industrial employers (ACTU 2025:3; AMWU 2025:12; ASU 2025:3; AWU 2025:5). The ACTU stated '[t]here are two groups of employers here: Those that will eventually close – for example, an export coal mine – and those that will change their method of production – for example, cement manufacturing or aluminium smelting. Employees in both types of employers may need support. The work of the NZEA, including the EIJP framework, should be adapted to both scenarios' (2025:3).

Other stakeholders specifically recommended expanding the EIJP or implementing similar worker transition supports to cover the export coal sector.

- This included the MEU who argued 'Australia's export coal industry is distinct from other industries that face significant change due to the net zero transition' because it cannot 'transition to produce 'green' products like, for example, manufacturing industries can' (2025:12). The MEU acknowledged 'a more nuanced mechanism for identifying mine closures' would be needed and suggested amendments to definitional criteria for closing employers and the approach to trigger notices (2025:12–13).
- The Hunter Jobs Alliance recommended expanding the definition of 'closing employer' and trigger notices in order to allow the EIJP to capture export coal mine closures (2025:10). Meanwhile, the Hunter Joint Organisation recommended definitions under the EIJP are expanded to capture 'all workers and industries materially dependent on coal and energy, including export coal mines' (2025:3).
- The Muswellbrook Council noted there is an 'urgent need' for a program for the mining sector comparable to the EIJP, so as not to have a 'two-tier system of assistance' for workers, depending on what industry they work in (2025:1). The current approach 'would exacerbate, not mitigate the socioeconomic impacts of the transition' (2025:1). Meanwhile, the Singleton Council suggested the EIJP be expanded to cover all coal-dependent communities and supply chain workers (2025:4).
- Lithgow City Council recommended amendments so the CEO could specify a trigger notice where a supplying coal mine substantially ceases operations due to the eventual closure of a power station (2025:18).

- Committee for the Hunter (2025:1) and Dantia (2025:1), noted the newness of the EIJP. Committee for the Hunter recommended expanding the role of the Authority in terms of 'broader policy, programs and activities' (2025:1) and Dantia suggested an expansion of the EIJP could be 'determined through a review of the effectiveness later' (2025:1).

A key reason stakeholders want the EIJP expanded is because it is underpinned by a legislated framework, which means the provision of worker supports are enforceable. It also ensures transition supports remain stable over time and are not subject to sudden change. When assessing the appropriateness of expanding the EIJP, a range of practical, legal and design issues need to be considered. For example, other industries may lack the regulatory architecture around closure notifications which supports the 'trigger' for early intervention required for the program's success.

As noted earlier in the report, long lead times are best practice for economic transitions. While electricity generators must declare their closure dates in advance, most other facilities are not required to publicly announce their closures and some closure announcements are made with little to no notice. If the EIJP were to expand without a similar notification requirement in place, there may not always be sufficient time for the EIJP process to play out and for workers to benefit from the supports.

The longer notice periods under the EIJP are essential to its legislative and administrative functions, such as conducting COI processes, making applications to the FWC and implementing program supports including grants for receiving employers. Critically, this lead time enables employees to benefit from the supports provided, such as retraining or upskilling. Under the EIJP, workers are only eligible to receive supports from their employer for the duration of their employment.

Introducing a new notification regime for the closure of export coal facilities would be complex. Its design would require significant consultation and consideration of differences in notice and reporting requirements for closing coal mines across state jurisdictions. Noting that coal mine leases and the regulation of coal mining operations are within the remit of state governments, there may be challenges in establishing a consistent national approach. Coal mine closures are more volatile than power station closures, which would also impact the approach to notification regimes and the way supports could be delivered.

For the EIJP to operate effectively in the export coal sector in its current form, consideration would need to be given to whether governments could or should compel facilities to stay open to a specific date. This would be required to ensure sufficient time for supports to be designed and flow through to impacted workers. Power stations are critical infrastructure and their role in supplying the power grid means there is a stronger case to regulate arrangements for their closure. It may be harder to justify compelling an unprofitable business to continue its operations to a pre-arranged date, especially in situations where there are no buyers for its products.

At the time of this review, the NSW Parliament is considering the *Future Jobs and Investment Bill 2025* (FJIB). Under the FJIB, NSW coal mine leaseholders would be required to provide the NSW Government with at least 3 years notice – or as soon as reasonably practicable – of planned mine closures. If directed, coal mine leaseholders would also need to prepare a workforce plan and share key workforce and supply chain information with the NSW Government. If the FJIB is passed, the approach could inform a broader notification regime.

While the FJIB before NSW Parliament points to the capacity to create a notification regime for coal mine closures, the FJIB has not yet passed and other states do not have comparable arrangements in place. For any notification regime to successfully support the EIJP, it will be important to not only have advanced notice of an intended closure but for the coal mine to not close before its intended closure date.



# Application of broader employment programs

There are a range of initiatives across government designed to support workers impacted by structural and economic transitions, particularly for regions transitioning to a net zero economy.

DEWR's RWTPs and the TWF will be developed with communities, state governments and other stakeholders. Key aims include identifying the employment and skills supports required in the Authority's priority regions. While the Authority's priority regions may change over time, some regions that will be impacted by coal mine closures are not currently included (for example, NSW's Lithgow region).

Some unions recommended a portion of the TWF could be reserved for union-led transition support projects (ACTU 2025:7-8; AMWU 2025:11-12). The ACTU state union-delivered supports funded under the TWF could include programs such as brick and mortar Just Transition Learning Academies, on-the-ground support officers and, where required, to address gaps in training pathways such as access to qualified educators (2025:8).

While the RWTPs and TWF are specifically targeted at priority regions most impacted by coal and gas power station closures, the review understands DEWR's remit extends beyond supporting Australia's transition to net zero. As such, the review understands there may be scope for supports to be implemented in line with existing structural adjustment measures and other regional, place-based solutions, such as the Local Jobs Program, and broader skills and workforce development initiatives. In addition, the design of the RWTPs is underway, which presents an opportunity to shape the best ways to manage the impact of decarbonisation on regional workforces.

Stakeholder feedback regarding the scale of the transition away from coal over an extended period of many years and the impact on these communities suggests further consideration must be given to whether current policies and programs will provide a sufficient response. This will be particularly important for regions impacted by coal closures that are not among the Authority's priority regions.

## Additional Action 1



The Australian Government should determine the best model to deliver transition supports to workers in closing coal mines that are not currently captured by the EIJP (including those that sell coal to the export market).

- This work should consider the benefits, risks and suitability of existing supports across relevant Australian Government portfolios and state governments, as well as potential new models.
- The experience and insights from establishing the EIJP should be used to inform the program design and appropriate supports.





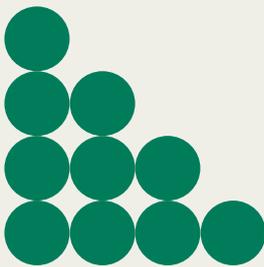
# 6

## Building strong regional economies

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**A successful EIJP can benefit communities by ensuring workers and their families are able to continue employment in their regions, find new opportunities and support local businesses and the local economy more widely. The EIJP itself does not create jobs, rather its success relies on economic resilience in the region and the availability of high-quality jobs for the regional workforce.**

Under the EIJP, job availability is supported by the participation of 'receiving employers'. However, this participation is voluntary and the EIJP does not guarantee there will be enough receiving employers to provide jobs for all participating employees.

During the review, stakeholders expressed concern about the impact closures will have on the future of their regions. These concerns relate to the employment opportunities for employees immediately impacted by the closure of power stations as well as supplying coal mines, other coal mining (expressly export coal) and the community as a whole (LCC 2025:3,6,8; LMCC 2025:7, Singleton Council 2025:3). Stakeholder feedback included personal accounts, such as from a resident of the Latrobe Valley who is not only uncertain about which opportunities will be available to them, but also their colleagues, family and community as the region's coal-fired power stations close. This resident stated that '[i]f there were more manufacturing and local jobs, people like me and my colleagues would have real choices to continue working and building a future without leaving home' (Name withheld 2025:1).

Diversifying economies impacted by power station closures and fostering the growth of high-skill, high-productivity jobs will therefore be essential. This will require a coherent, collaborative and place-based policy approach underpinned by strategic public (and private) investment. The Australian Government and state and territory governments have established a number of programs, policies and bodies to support this objective. The Authority has been set up to have a central role in the approach, which relies on its capacity to deliver results in line with the object of the NZEA Act as outlined in the Introduction above.



# Best practice approaches to regional economic transition

Large-scale public and private investment in Australia's regions will be required to support new and existing industries to adapt and grow in the transition to a net zero economy, and to create new employment opportunities. This is supported by international and domestic experience, which shows worker transition is most successful when complemented by comprehensive and coordinated industrial policies targeted to the context of impacted regions.

The European Union's (EU) approach is characterised by significant investment and place-based solutions. The EU's Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) will mobilise around €55 billion between 2021 and 2027 to address the impacts of the transition to a net zero economy. Funding is available to all EU member states, focusing on regions that are the most carbon-intensive or with the most people working in the fossil fuel industry (European Commission n.d.). The economic diversification of the Asturias region in Spain is supported by €263 million under the EU's Just Transition Fund (a funding mechanism under the JTM). The coal phase-out in Asturias is generally considered to be an example of best practice (Wright 2022:43), which can be attributable to industry initiatives, adequate funding and region-based plans, in addition to collaboration between government, unions and industry. Large energy companies in the region have also worked with the government and communities to implement various initiatives for new economic opportunities (Wright 2022:45–46).

Coordination and collaboration also feature strongly in successful international and domestic responses to industrial closures. Collaboration between different levels of government as well as employers and unions can enable bespoke policy responses tailored to the specific needs of different regional economies. The Spanish Government's tripartite relationship with industry and unions has been a key element of the successful approach in Asturias (Wright 2022:43). Multi-level government and stakeholder collaboration also supported the response to the closure of BHP's Newcastle Steelworks in 1999.

See further details on Spain's Asturias region and the Newcastle Steelworks, in Appendix B.

Across the review period, unions, community groups and several other stakeholders contended investment pipelines must be strengthened to create jobs in regions where power stations are expected to close. They see regional economic diversification as critical for a just and orderly transition that supports workers and communities. For example, the AMWU noted '[a]n orderly and effective EIJP cannot operate in a silo, and a best practice worker support program will be useless without an urgent and effective industry development to create good quality jobs in the impacted regions' (2025:5). Academics said early investment is critical, noting that Germany's brown coal phase-out was 'policy-driven and accompanied by early investment, regional planning, and compensatory measures' (NZI and WCEH 2025:5).

Stakeholders have also suggested a need for better planning and coordination between government agencies, including state and territory government agencies. The ETU, for example, recommended establishing a scalable and replicable transition body in each state, which would be tasked with planning, engagement, investment, increasing productivity, implementing projects and creating long-term solutions for workers (2025:30).

Lithgow City Council's notes '[I]leading practice for responding to regional economic disruption has considerably developed over the last twenty years with much more focus on collaboration between multiple key actors, early intervention, and building regional adaptive capacity.' And that implementation to date has 'been slow, lacked genuine collaboration, and may have come too late to avoid the worst aspects of the transition to net-zero' (2025:21).

Stakeholders also proposed a whole-of-region approach in areas where there are multiple closures: 'To safeguard the future of industrial regions like the Hunter, the EIJP needs to widen its scope to consider the energy transition in a comprehensive and integrated way across all industries and the region as a whole' (BZE 2025:2). Additionally, stakeholders noted plans for regions should be holistic and 'the energy transition and regional economic development go hand in hand' (Wright 2025:1).

The Hunter Joint Organisation recommended the Authority consider the benefits of developing regional plans that would be 'updated annually to strengthen place-based delivery mechanisms for implementation of the Act'. The plans would be co-designed with local and state governments, to coordinate integrated action across all levels of government and align planning and investment with local needs and priorities. (2025:6–7,11).

# Place-based innovation and industrial ecosystems

During the review, some stakeholders proposed establishing hubs in priority regions to drive innovation and the creation of new industries. According to Beyond Zero Emissions, '[r]egions like the Hunter are industrial ecosystems' which can 'continue to thrive in a net zero economy as Renewable Energy Industrial Precincts' (2025:2). Clustering industry can unlock capital investment, create jobs, generate substantial revenue, and protect existing manufacturing activities. Similarly, unions suggested the Authority establish engineering and industrial innovation precincts that create high-quality, skilled jobs in the impacted regions (AMWU 2025:1).

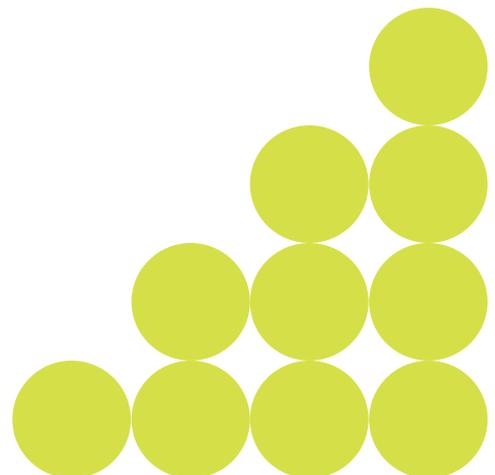
Place-based innovation ecosystems are critical in creating high-quality jobs as they can attract employers to regions, from large-scale international companies to the start-up of smaller local businesses. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook 2025 highlighted that innovation activities typically cluster among leading firms, sectors, and regions due to economies of scale and knowledge spillovers, which can lead to the concentration of economic and societal benefits in limited geographic areas. However, there needs to be better emphasis on 'policies and investments to promote diffusion and to translate innovations into economy-wide productivity gains and societal benefits' (OECD 2025:12).

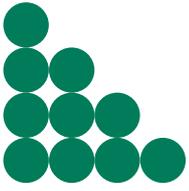
The benefit of bridging the gap between industry and research has been demonstrated through Germany's Fraunhofer Institutes, United States' National Science Foundation (NSF) Regional Innovation Engines and ManufacturingUSA Institutes and the United Kingdom's Catapult Centres<sup>22</sup> (Green 2025b; Howard 2025). Other facilities include Japan's and the UK's quantum innovation hubs, which are 'specifically intended to facilitate collaboration between academia and the private sector' (OECD 2025:172). Similarly, innovation hubs such as the European Space Agency's Φ-lab and the United States' NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory have fostered collaboration between specialists, researchers, and experts from industry to generate 'new space systems and applications that could not emerge in isolation' (OECD 2025:173).

<sup>22</sup> These innovation hubs are not-for-profit organisations focused on applied science and technology specialisations. They are supported by public-private partnerships and collaborate with businesses of all sizes to build local innovation capacity, including through the provision of R&D infrastructure and expertise.

Technology and innovation hubs have also been established in Australia to facilitate research, industry collaboration and innovation. Examples are mainly in capital cities and include the Parkville precinct in Melbourne, Tonsley in Adelaide, Sydney's Tech Central precinct and Brisbane's Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing (ARM) Hub. However, there are huge opportunities in Australia's regions as well. For example, the University of Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources (NIER) includes a variety of collaborative research activities. NIER was established in 2010 as a government initiative funded by \$30 million from the Education Investment Fund and supported by \$2.2 million funding from the NSW Government. NIER includes the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Enabling Eco-Efficient Beneficiation of Minerals, which is a national research centre comprising 9 Australian universities, as well as the Trailblazer for Recycling and Clean Energy (TRaCE).

More recently, the University of Newcastle gained government funding to establish the Future Industries Facility (FIF), with the intent of embedding Newcastle as a hub for manufacturing innovation. The FIF will bring together undergraduate students, small and medium enterprises and communities from across the Hunter to test and scale-up new technology and upskill people in Australia's energy, resources and manufacturing sectors, for the net zero economy (University of Newcastle 2025).





## Case study 6.1

### Contrasting lessons from the Ruhr and Appalachia

Germany's Ruhr Valley region was able to successfully transition from its economic reliance on coal by using a holistic approach underpinned by large-scale investment in place-based innovation and economic diversification to create new industries and jobs. Transition funding came from budgets at the European, federal, state and municipal levels and the approach to structural change was driven through multi-stakeholder partnerships and agreements. This included large scale investment to diversify the economy, including in infrastructure, universities and training colleges, service sectors, and environmental technology and renewable energy (Galgóczy 2014:226–230). As a result, the Ruhr region was successfully managed in moving from a resource-intensive economy to a knowledge-based, resource-efficient one (Galgóczy 2014:218).

In contrast, the relative failure of the policy responses in Appalachia has been attributed to the fact that they lacked strategic coordination and planning and did not pay enough attention to infrastructure spending, including the potential to develop local industry clusters and innovation systems (Sheldon 2018:44–46).



# Engagement and impact for First Nations people

The review received feedback about the importance of genuine engagement and working in partnership with First Nations peoples in regional transitions. Many investments in energy infrastructure will be on the lands of Traditional Owners and Custodians. Coordination and planning should necessarily engage with First Nations peoples at an early stage and throughout the process. The government should look for opportunities to utilise First Nations businesses and create an enabling environment to support those businesses to prosper.

The review heard examples of innovative ideas, such as work being undertaken by Powering Australia to support First Nations businesses to access opportunities and benefit from investment in clean technology manufacturing. These principles could extend to ensuring First Nations businesses are well positioned to capitalise on broader economic diversification in the regions. Powering Australia has just released a series of strategic assessments of what it will take to unlock Australia's full potential in the energy transition, including the 'Horizon 2025: First Nations as critical partners' report that identifies multiple clean-tech manufacturing pathways for skills development, employment participation and business creation, while also supporting cultural and environmental objectives (Powering Australia 2025:4). Powering Australia's report notes that:

'This is the first time in Australian history that First Nations consent and partnership will play a key role in industry transformation. First Nations participation can be structured through co-ownership, equity, employment, and business partnership opportunities. First Nations business ownership is growing fast, valued at about A\$16 billion and employing nearly 120,000 people as of 2022. Net zero modelling shows that 43% of the clean energy infrastructure needed by 2060 will be built on First Nations Estate. In addition, 65% of iron ore assets and up to 79% of critical minerals projects are on land covered by native title or similar rights. This underscores the scale and significance of First Nations' role in Australia's clean energy future.'



The recently established First Nations Economic Partnership will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people around Australia to uphold and advance First Nations rights and interests in land, sea and waterways, boost skills and education, create jobs and back business. Exploring how SIVs can deliver for First Nations Communities across Australia is an immediate priority for the Economic Partnership (The Commonwealth of Australia 2025b:5–12) and a priority action of the First Nations Clean Energy Strategy (DCCEEW 2024:12), which provides a national clean energy framework for governments, industries and communities. Indigenous Land Use Agreements – voluntary agreements between native title parties and other people or bodies – may also play a role in planning and coordinating energy infrastructure in regions and achieving codetermined outcomes (National Native Title Tribunal n.d.).

The Authority also has a key role in this space with the NZEA Act providing a legislated function to 'support Indigenous persons to participate in and benefit from Australia's transition to a net zero emissions economy' (NZEA Act, subs 16(1)(d)). To enliven this obligation, in early 2025, the Board agreed to establish a First Nations Working Partnership to work with the Authority to develop a First Nations Strategy/Action Plan outlining how the Authority will ensure First Nations benefit from the transition to net zero. This partnership brings together First Nations representatives from the National Native Title Council, First Nations Clean Energy Network, Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Peak Organisations, Central Land Council, and NSW Aboriginal Land Council.



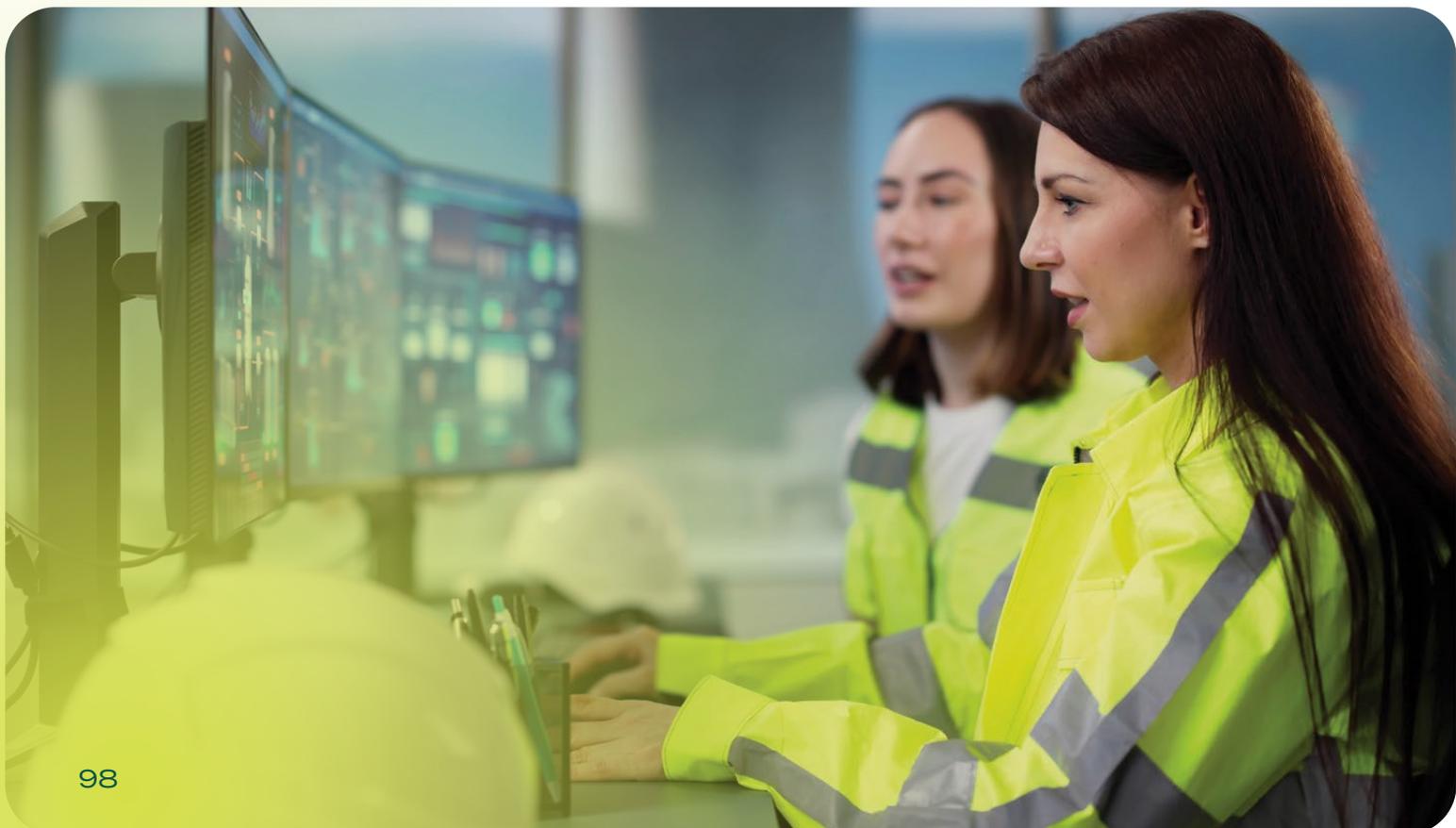
# Strong regional economies benefit women and families

The 'Impact Analysis' undertaken to accompany the EIJP legislation states '[t]he closure of coal mining and fossil fuel generation facilities will have direct impacts on women working at these facilities, as well as impacts on women living in households affected by closures' (NZEA 2024b:61).

Some stakeholders consulted during the review noted that household incomes may be predominantly or solely supported by the income of a power station or mine worker (predominantly men), meaning power station closures risk significant strain on whole families. The Impact Analysis noted 'most direct benefits [of the EIJP framework] would flow to male workers, reflecting the gender composition of industries covered by the [EIJP]', and that 2021 Census data indicates women accounted for around 16% of coal mining and 19% of fossil fuel electricity generation workers (NZEA 2024b:61).

Analysis previously undertaken by the Authority has found the higher wages of power station workers do not necessarily equate to household incomes that are higher than the national average. For example, the Authority's analysis of the Gippsland and Latrobe Valley income rates found that, while individual salaries in the region are higher than national averages for the same skill level, the region's average household income is lower (ABS 2021). This reflects the prevalence of primary or sole income households.

Power stations and coal mines have been integral to communities for decades, and their closure can be a complex social process. When longstanding industries close, the impact can be felt beyond the immediate worker and can change family dynamics, for example poor financial decision-making may lead to family breakdowns and bankruptcy (Sharma 2024). The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare notes that 'studies consistently show that the risk of [family, domestic and sexual violence] increases as financial stress and economic hardship increases' (2025). As Australia moves to a net zero economy and invests in the economic transition of regions, there are opportunities to reduce gender segregation so the benefits can be shared more equally, including by encouraging women into engineering.



# Policy levers for regional diversification and growth

The government's approach to industrial policy aims to maximise the economic and industrial benefits of the global move to net zero, bringing new jobs and opportunities to regions across Australia. As part of this approach, the government has committed over \$22.7 billion over the next decade and introduced legislation to implement its Future Made in Australia agenda. Future Made in Australia combines the objectives of economic resilience and the transition to net zero with opportunities to secure Australia's place as a 'renewable energy superpower' in a rapidly changing global environment.

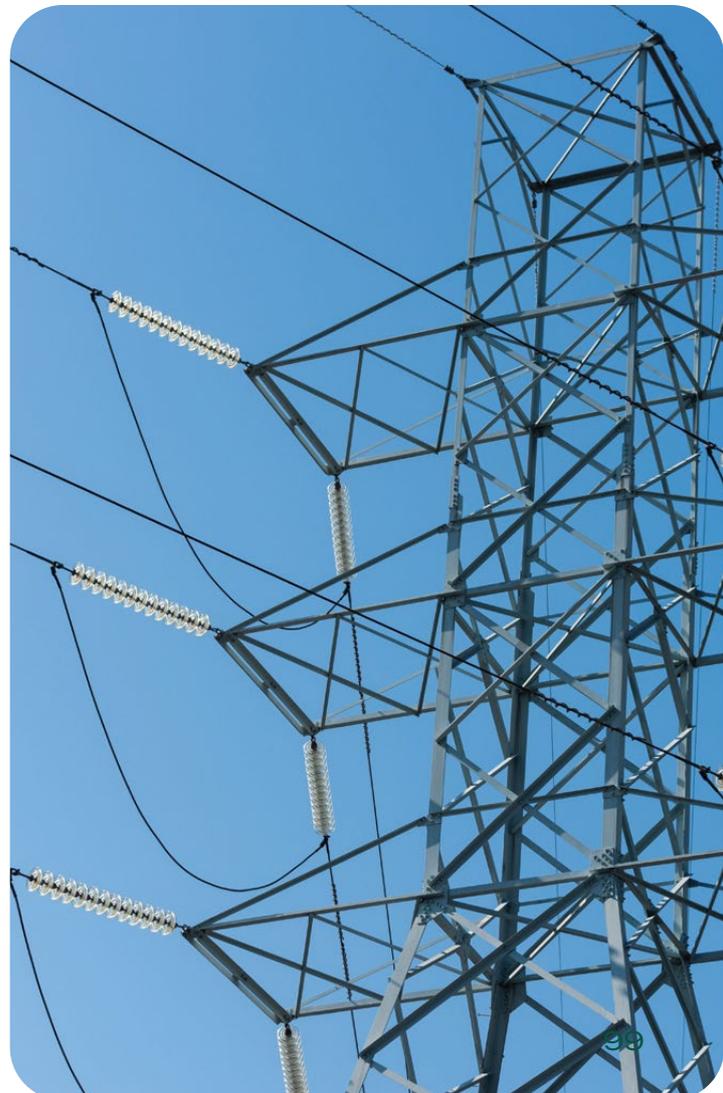
The government has also more recently introduced the Net Zero Plan, which sets out sector by sector how it will achieve a fair, orderly and efficient transition to net zero that builds on Australia's strengths. The government is in the process of establishing the \$5 billion Net Zero Fund, which will enable delivery of the Net Zero Plan, including major investments by large industrial facilities in decarbonisation and energy efficiency as well as manufacturing renewable and low emissions technologies.

The Future Made in Australia agenda, the Net Zero Plan and its 6 sectoral plans are long-term initiatives for industrial transformation. Alongside the government's 2035 national emissions reduction target, they provide an overarching plan for how industry policy will support the transition to a net zero economy and provide opportunities for transformative strategic investment across Australia's regions. The government's broad approach is supported by the Regional Investment Framework, which establishes principles, priorities and processes to guide a tailored, coordinated and collaborative approach to place-based policy.

The government also has a number of programs and bodies focused on supporting innovation, commercialisation and collaboration, including the national science agency Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), the Research and Development (R&D) Tax Incentive, the Industry Growth Program, and the Australian Economic Accelerator and Cooperative Research Centres. The government is considering how to improve research and innovation capability and performance through its Strategic Examination of Research and Development (SERD) as investing in research and development is a key driver of high-value jobs, industries and productivity growth.

State and territory governments also have industry policy levers such as the NSW Government's Net Zero Innovation Investment Plan and the WA Government's Collie Industrial Transition Fund (CITF). It is worth noting the CITF is Australia's only transition-specific funding mechanism, meaning it does not have to compete for funds for a range of transition initiatives across industry, workforce and community.

Regions also need to be equipped with up-to-date infrastructure to support them to transition, including enabling digital and physical infrastructure. For example, initiatives like Telstra's Aura Network's Sydney to Melbourne route will help support regions to prepare for the future (Worrall 2025). Similar initiatives and enabling infrastructure are important in supporting regions affected by economic transition.





# Role of the Authority

In addition to supporting workers through mechanisms such as the EIJP, and in line with the Authority's other functions under the NZEA Act, the Authority promotes coordination and consistency in the design and implementation of government policies, programs and plans to help achieve Australia's emissions reduction targets and support Australia's transition to a net zero economy.

The Authority does not have administered funding to directly invest in regions or projects, but has sought to identify, attract and facilitate initiatives in the Authority's priority regions and where appropriate, guide these projects to the relevant government supports including SIVs and grants programs.

The Authority seeks to operate in a collaborative manner by working with state and local governments, industry, community and stakeholder groups in its regions (NZEA 2025a:2). As a new body, the Authority is still evolving its approach, including how it works with state-based bodies such as the NSW Government's planned Future Jobs and Investment Authorities (FJIAs), the WA Government's Collie Delivery Unit and associated Collie Just Transition Working Group (which now includes the Authority as a member) and Regional Development Victoria. The Authority has established strong foundational relationships with each of these entities and has built regular and ongoing engagement with local communities to better understand their challenges and opportunities.

The NZEA Act provides the Authority with a series of legislated functions that can support Australia to align with international best practice. However, the Authority's capacity to achieve its mandate depends on it having appropriate levers to channel investment and coordinate policy. In its 2025 submission to the Economic Reform Roundtable, the Authority identified a number of program-level and systematic challenges to its work. These include:



- Funding programs are not equipped for a place-based approach to transformative change – there are not mechanisms in place to guide thematic programs to specific regions and there are few place-based programs.
- SIVs take a project-by-project approach, most do not actively seek investment opportunities, and the similarity of their risk settings mean that very small, very large and high-risk projects are unattractive to them and unlikely to be funded.
- Like SIVs, grants programs have blind spots due to their focus on specific projects aligned with their grant guidelines and miss multi-staged projects and transformative programs of work.
- The complexity and quantity of programs, lack of coordination between jurisdictions and slow, cumbersome and unpredictable approval processes are confusing for industry and inhibit the efficient sequencing of projects (NZEA 2025a:5-7).

Ensuring the Authority is appropriately equipped to fulfil its mandate and support a more coordinated and collaborative approach to place-based industrial policy is critical for addressing stakeholder feedback and ensuring Australia's regions can share in the opportunities the transition brings. Both the Authority and stakeholders have argued SIVs and other funding programs could be better leveraged to fill this gap.

There is some initial consideration of leveraging SIVs more productively. For example, the NRFC Statement of Expectations now outlines the NRF should consider investment opportunities in the Authority's priority regions that support economic diversification and transformation. Several unions advocated for empowering the Authority to direct or coordinate the Australian Government's SIVs to identify, prioritise and roll-out industry investment in regional Australia (AMWU 2025:7; AWU 2025:11; ETU 2025:4). The AWU observed these various initiatives are overlapping and confusing, and '[p]otential recipients would benefit from coordination of their activities' (AWU 2025:11), with the Authority the most appropriate agency to lead coordination.

# Regional agreements to support the transition

The creation of 'Regional Transition Agreements' would bring together a range of existing levers – including SIVs and other Commonwealth and state and territory funding programs – under an economic transformation strategy to support communities in transition through economic diversification. These agreements would be focused on the Authority's priority regions and align with the Authority's legislated role to coordinate policy and facilitate investment in the context of the transition to net zero. This approach would enable the success of the EIJP by supporting the availability of high-quality jobs in regions impacted by power station closures into the future.

The Authority could be responsible at the Commonwealth level for forming Regional Transition Agreements with relevant state or territory governments. However, for the Authority to meet this mandate, it needs to have adequate levers such as the ability to appropriately influence funding decisions or independently fund projects that underpin a strategic approach to each region's economic future. These agreements would complement existing place-based initiatives such as RWTPs and be co-designed with local stakeholders including employers and unions, education and training providers, and state and local governments to ensure workforce needs are addressed alongside project development.

A collaborative place-based approach will enable tailored strategies that reflect the specific strengths, challenges and opportunities of each region, while aligning with the approach under the Regional Investment Framework and intergovernmental funding arrangements under Australia's Federation Funding Agreements Framework (FFAF). The FFAF recognises states and territories have primary responsibility for many areas of service delivery, but coordinated action is necessary to address Australia's economic and social challenges. This coordination would extend to workforce planning, where the Regional Transition Agreements could leverage stakeholder engagement channels, to ensure investment in infrastructure is effectively supported by the development of local skills and employment pathways.

Greater collaboration and focus on place-based issues provides for the strategic, coherent and efficient use and sequencing of public funding. It can also prevent all levels of government duplicating resources. The absence of coordinated planning can lead to job losses, workforce displacement and economic decline. Place-based approaches such as Regional Transition Agreements would bring together governments, industry, unions and communities to coordinate investment, workforce planning and economic diversification. By doing so, the agreements would ensure that workers and communities affected by the transition are supported through a range of initiatives specific to their region. The Authority's approach to the agreements should complement and link to mechanisms for industry research and collaboration at the regional level, including the outcomes of the SERD.

While investment in industry is essential, it must be complemented by robust workforce planning and support. Economic diversification cannot deliver lasting prosperity unless workers are equipped with the skills to transition into emerging industries. Regional Transition Agreements will complement the EIJP and broader workforce strategies across government – including targeted training, reskilling, and redeployment initiatives – to ensure communities can take advantage of economic opportunities.

## Additional Action 2



The Australian Government should develop Regional Transition Agreements for priority regions, led by the Authority. Each agreement would be developed in collaboration with relevant Commonwealth portfolios, state and local governments and other stakeholders and established with appropriate funding and other supports.



# Establishing an on-the-ground presence in regions

The Authority should lead the approach to establishing an integrated on-the-ground presence in each of its priority regions to support Regional Transition Agreements and the implementation of the EIJP. This presence could be a physical regional 'hub' or be mobile, dispersed or integrated into other bodies in line with the needs of the region. An on-the-ground regional presence is critical to building trust and social capital and delivering effective supports during the transition. However, this regional presence must be appropriately structured, resourced and empowered to meet its aims, with roles and responsibilities clearly articulated. It must also add value by complementing, streamlining and improving existing government service offerings – not result in additional bureaucratic processes.

A regional presence would support the development and implementation of Regional Transition Agreements in a similar manner to the Collie Delivery Unit and the Just Transition Working Group. Noting the maturity and success of the Collie Delivery Unit, duplication would be avoided by not establishing a hub and instead establishing a position for a locally based representative from the Authority to support the existing approach.

To support the EIJP, a regional presence would keep communities updated on the status of COI processes, COI determinations and arrangements relating to receiving employers. Being visible and accessible also strengthens relationships, builds community confidence in the transformation process, and helps maintain social licence for change. Importantly, local teams can act as a bridge between levels of government, industry and community stakeholders – translating policy into practical action and ensuring accountability for outcomes on the ground.

The Authority's regional presence would also inform an 'industrial ecosystems perspective' which will help 'identify the full range of relevant stakeholders, including firms, start-ups, workers, investors, suppliers and trade partners, to design policies that better reflect the true complexity of the industrial landscape' (OECD 2025:13).

The Authority's regional presence would focus on complementing and coordinating – not duplicating – the efforts of new and existing initiatives and agencies, such as Regional Development Australia, AusIndustry Regional Managers, DEWR's Regional Workforce Transition Officers (RWTOs) and Local Jobs Coordinators and the National Indigenous Australians Agency. In addition, some state governments already have or are establishing a regional presence – such as the WA Government's aforementioned Collie Delivery Unit and the NSW Government's proposed FJIA, which will help guide the future economic development of NSW's 4 coal mining regions.

The success of these on-the-ground presences will depend on strong community engagement and participation from relevant portfolios across the Commonwealth and state governments. Ensuring the Authority has the appropriate convening power and resourcing to deliver on this recommendation is fundamental to its success. By proactively navigating these existing efforts and establishing clearly defined roles and responsibilities among all relevant parties – including the Authority, other Commonwealth agencies, state and territory governments, industry, unions, and local stakeholders – the Authority will avoid duplication, ensuring that communities benefit from a single, cohesive source of information and assistance.

## Additional Action 3



The Australian Government should establish an integrated on-the-ground presence in priority regions, led by the Authority at the Commonwealth level, to coordinate the delivery of Regional Transition Agreements and support ongoing implementation of the EIJP. In this context, it would be necessary for the Australian Government to provide appropriate funding and resourcing in partnership with relevant state governments.

# Coordinated approach to employment opportunities

As noted above, the transition of workers into high-quality employment opportunities in their region requires coordinated action to diversify and grow regional economies. The review recognises economic diversification will not be instantaneous or the same across all regions.

Part 5 of the NZEA Act enables the participation of receiving employers in the EIJP. Receiving employers are those specified by the CEO based on an EOI during the EIJP's COI process.<sup>23</sup> However, noting circumstances may change over time, EOIs can be sought across the life of a COI determination. The CEO has developed guidelines for determining receiving employers, which includes considering an employer's location and the extent to which it can provide ongoing employment in a safe work environment and in roles that are an appropriate match for participating employees (NZEA 2025b).

In submissions, many unions focussed on the importance of attracting enough receiving employers into the EIJP to ensure the program's success and the necessity of having the right program levers in place to achieve this (ACTU 2025:4-5; AWU 2025:10; ETU 2025:25-26). Employers and employer groups similarly discussed the critical role of receiving employers and the need for program levers to support employers to incorporate transition employees into their workforces (ACCI 2025:8-9; Alinta 2025:1).

There is some evidence there will be sufficient demand for workers from coal mining and power generation industries, although the available opportunities are likely to vary depending on the region. For example, the Civil Contractors Federation highlighted that 'at the time of the last census in 2021, 62,000 Australians work as drillers, miners or shot firers, while around 47,000 are employed as earthmoving plant operators. These roles mirror the day-to-day requirements of civil contractors preparing renewable energy sites, building subdivisions, and constructing transport links' (2025:3).

The current receiving employer process is voluntary and may not guarantee sufficient job vacancies that are a good fit for workers at the time of closure. Employment outcomes will ultimately depend on the

strength of the local labour market. Given this, the government should consider whether further actions are needed to ensure there are a range of suitable jobs for participating employees.

In the 2024-25 Budget, the government committed \$34.3 million to deliver the EIJP Redeployment Grants Program to encourage local employers to offer jobs to participating employees. Parallel to the review, the Authority has undertaken a consultation process to support the design of this program to ensure it reflects user requirements.



**committed by the government to deliver the EIJP Redeployment Grants Program**

The grants program aims to incentivise businesses to participate in the EIJP as a receiving employer and offer employment to participating employees. It also supports businesses to offer early retirement packages to existing staff to create vacancies for transitioning employees, where necessary and appropriate. In its submission, ACCI advocated for 'a targeted grant program of up to \$10,000 per employee' to assist receiving employers with onboarding costs (2025:8).

In addition to the EIJP Redeployment Grants Program, the Authority will fund EIJP coordinators, publish information on career transition pathways for participating employees and create a jobs board to assist employees to find new employment in their region. These programs will be supplemented by RWTPs and DEWR's RWTOs, which help business, industry, and communities navigate the transition to net zero, including connecting stakeholders to emerging industries and the workforce to job opportunities. DEWR also provides Job Coordinators in 51 Employment Regions as part of the Local Jobs Program.

<sup>23</sup> The CEO will specify receiving employers when applying to the FWC for a 'determination'. Under section 57 of the NZEA Act, the CEO may apply, in writing, to the FWC for a determination by the FWC after completing the COI process.



# Incentives for receiving employers

The EIJP is designed to provide transition supports for employees before the end of their employment at the closing power station or its dependent employers. However, the EIJP's success ultimately depends on the availability of employment opportunities for participating employees to move into.

Employer and union stakeholders argued incentives will be critical to encouraging local businesses to participate as receiving employers under the EIJP. For example, ACCI said:

‘To ensure the EIJP achieves its purpose of facilitating smooth redeployment pathways for transition employees, consideration should be given to the provision of grants or other financial incentives for receiving employers. These employers will inevitably play a critical role in absorbing redeployed workers yet are likely to face additional costs in doing so, such as onboarding or retraining (ACCI 2025:8).’

In addition, the ACTU:

‘raised concerns about the effectiveness of a voluntary approach for receiving employers to participate in pooled redeployment schemes. The experience of unions during the EIJP consultation process of Torrens Island Power Station closure validates these concerns... Part of the challenge may be the very low financial incentives that receiving employers are offered to participate, which we understand to be \$10,000 per transitioning employee... To ensure the EIJP has enough receiving employers participating, unions recommend... [s]ubstantially lifting the financial incentives for receiving employers to participate in the EIJP (2025:4).’

At the time of the review's completion, the Authority's approach to incentives under the EIJP has not been finalised or implemented. Since the effectiveness of these incentives will be assessed over time as part of the Authority's monitoring and evaluation approach and in line with its responsibilities under the Commonwealth Evaluation Policy and the PGPA Act, the review does not consider there is a strong evidence base to recommend changes at this stage.

To mitigate the risk that not enough suitable receiving employers will voluntarily participate in the EIJP, some unions proposed empowering the Authority, or the Authority and other parties such as unions, to apply to the FWC to compel suitable employers to participate in the program (ACTU 2025: 4–5; AWU 2025: 10; MEU 2025: 13).

‘Roping in’ receiving employers and compelling them to offer employment to participating employees would dramatically increase the regulatory and financial burden on local businesses. It would also discourage business investment in regions where the EIJP operates. As noted by the government's recent Economic Reform Roundtable, ‘there has been persistent growth in government regulation over time, which may have contributed to a decline in Australia's ranking amongst advanced economies in terms of ease of doing business’ (Commonwealth of Australia 2025a:5). The review does not consider ‘roping in’ to be a proportionate and reasonable regulatory approach at this early stage of the EIJP's implementation.

Stakeholders also recommended encouraging more receiving employers through broader industry policy and government levers such as procurement, inward investment attraction and early-stage venture support. This included suggesting suitable employers benefitting from any kind government financial assistance should be required to participate in the EIJP as receiving employers (ACTU 2025:5; AWU 2025:12). Similarly, the Centre for Policy Development has proposed participation in the EIJP as a receiving employer as one component of their framework for structuring government funding to ensure the community benefit (2025b:3). In this vein, the review considers leveraging other government initiatives a more feasible approach to incentivise employers to hire participating employees. In addition, the Industry Capability Network, with its database of local suppliers for large projects, may have a role in this context.

Beyond the Authority's direct remit, broader government initiatives could be used to encourage the employment of participating employees under the EIJP. Employers could be incentivised to hire participating employees under other funding streams and government procurement guidelines. For example, the *Future Made in Australia Act 2024* establishes Community Benefit Principles to ensure public investment and the private investment it attracts flow to communities in ways that benefit local workers and businesses. The principles are intended to ensure projects benefiting from government support deliver community benefits. The principles are:

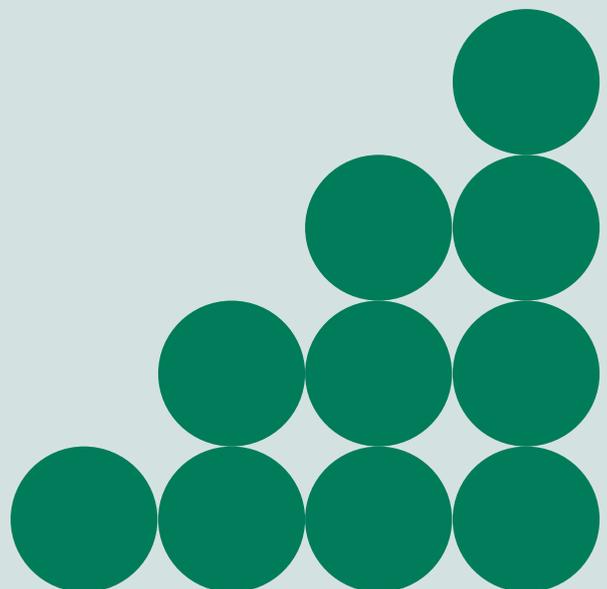
- promote safe and secure jobs that are well paid and have good conditions
- develop more skilled and inclusive workforces, including by investing in training and skills development and broadening opportunities for workforce participation
- engage collaboratively with and achieve positive outcomes for local communities, such as First Nations communities and communities directly affected by the transition to net zero
- support First Nations communities and Traditional Owners to participate in, and share in the benefits of, the transition to net zero
- strengthen domestic industrial capabilities, including through stronger local supply chains
- demonstrate transparency and compliance in relation to the management of tax affairs, including benefits received under Future Made in Australia supports.

Committing to employ participating employees from the EIJP could enable project proponents located in the regions to more persuasively demonstrate they are meeting the community benefit principles as part of the overall assessment criteria for receiving support through Future Made in Australia. Successful proponents would also benefit from bringing workers with relevant and in-demand skills and experience into their businesses. Furthermore, the need for proponents to demonstrate they are promoting safe and secure jobs that are well paid and have good conditions, would help to ensure receiving employers are of a high quality.

#### Additional Action 4



The Australian Government should consider additional ways to incentivise employers to hire employees participating in the EIJP through the use of funding streams across government programs, for example, through beneficial criteria or other forms of conditionality for Future Made in Australia and Net Zero Fund or infrastructure project funding.





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# Appendix A

## – Terms of reference

### Terms of Reference – Statutory Review of Part 5 of the *Net Zero Economy Authority Act 2024*

#### Context

The *Net Zero Economy Authority Act 2024* (the Act) commenced in December 2024, establishing the Net Zero Economy Authority (Authority) and the Energy Industry Jobs Plan (EIJP). The objects of the Act include ensuring that Australia's regions, communities and workers are supported to manage the impacts, and share in the benefits, of Australia's transition to a net zero emissions economy.

Most of Australia's coal-fired power stations, and some gas-fired power stations, have announced expected closure dates over the coming decades. The retirement of ageing energy assets will cause significant economic and workforce changes, particularly in Australia's industrial regions. Accordingly, the EIJP was designed to promote a coordinated response to these changes by ensuring that workers directly impacted by power station closures and workers in some dependent businesses in their supply chains (such as coal mines) have the right supports, skills and opportunities to access new employment. The intent is to provide these supports well ahead of facility closures to give people more time to prepare for new employment and to avoid the adverse impacts experienced by communities from previous unplanned closures.

#### Legislative scope and framework

The EIJP provisions are set out in Part 5 of the Act. The implementation of this Part realises Parliament's intention to build a world-leading and consistent approach to worker support in the context of the energy transition while recognising the individual circumstances of each business. The legislative framework targets the EIJP to closures where it is

most needed.<sup>1</sup> The model 'reflects the outcomes of detailed consultations with employee and employer groups. [It is] about supporting workers on the front line of the energy transition.'<sup>2</sup>

Parliament intended for this framework to operate within the existing workplace relations framework. Likewise, the intent is not to set up separate reporting obligations to announce closure dates, but rather to link to existing obligations and reporting methods (such as under electricity rules or notices to the Australian Stock Exchange).<sup>3</sup>

The EIJP framework enables the Authority to identify, and the Fair Work Commission (FWC) to determine, which employers and workers would benefit from the application of the EIJP provisions. Part 5 of the Act is administered by the CEO of the Authority. Under this Part, the CEO may undertake a process (i.e. the community of interest process set out in section 55) to assess whether the EIJP is needed for an upcoming closure (i.e. through an application for a community of interest determination under section 56). The process includes consultation with key stakeholders including employers, employee organisations, employer organisations and community groups. After completing the process, the CEO may apply to the FWC to make a determination (i.e. under section 57 of the Act). In this application, the CEO must have regard to various matters, including factors that could impact the employment outcomes of workers, and the impact on the broader community, after the closure. The CEO of the Authority and FWC are required to consider existing industrial arrangements and supports, among other things, when deciding how the legislative framework applies to a particular power station closure.

Where the CEO decides to apply to the FWC for a community of interest determination, and the FWC makes a determination, closing power stations and dependent employers specified in that determination will have legislated obligations under Part 5 of the Act to support their employees to seek and obtain new employment, including access to training, career planning and financial advice. The

<sup>1</sup> Revised Explanatory Memorandum, *Net Zero Economy Authority Act 2024*, p.42.

<sup>2</sup> Second Reading Speech, delivered by the Hon Patrick Gorman MP, Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister, on Wednesday, 27 March 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Revised Explanatory Memorandum, *Net Zero Economy Authority Act 2024*, p. 19.

legislative framework specifies the types of support that participating employers must provide to their employees and establishes pathways for employers and unions to clarify what actions the employer must take for employers to meet their obligations.

Since the Act commenced on 11 December 2024, the Authority has applied Part 5 of the Act in three separate instances:

- On 19 December 2024, the Authority's CEO exercised statutory discretion to not undertake a community of interest process under Part 5 for the closure of Muja C Unit 6 in Collie, Western Australia. This decision was informed by significant consultation and took into account that the closure of the unit would not result in any involuntary redundancies in the broader Muja Power Station or within its supply chain.
- On 13 January 2025, the CEO announced a community of interest process under Part 5 of the Act for Torrens Island B Power Station in Adelaide, South Australia, which is scheduled to close in June 2026.
- On 27 May 2025, the CEO announced a community of interest process under Part 5 of the Act for Eraring Power Station in Lake Macquarie, New South Wales, which is scheduled to close in August 2027.

In relation to Torrens Island B and Eraring power stations, the community of interest processes will support the CEO to decide whether to make an application to the FWC for a community of interest determination for either closure. The Authority will announce the outcome of these processes as soon as practicable.

Upcoming closures where the EIJP provisions in Part 5 of the Act may apply include Collie Power Station in Western Australia scheduled to close in October 2027 and Yallourn Power Station in Victoria scheduled to close in June 2028.

## Legislative basis for the Review

Subsection 68(3) of the Act states that the CEO must conduct, or cause to be conducted, a review into the operation of Part 5, including consideration of whether any amendments to that Part are desirable. Subsection 68(4) provides that the CEO must ensure that the review is completed within 12 months of the day on

which section 68 commenced (i.e. the review must be completed by the end of 10 December 2025).

Subsections 68(5) and 68(6) of the Act state that the responsible Minister must be provided with a written report of the review. Under subsection 68(7), the Minister must then table a copy of the report in each House of Parliament within 15 sitting days of that House after the report is given to the Minister.

## Matters to be considered by the Review

The review will seek to identify the effectiveness (including the likely effectiveness) of Part 5 and include consideration of whether any amendments to this Part are desirable (because, for example, there are unintended consequences of the legislative framework).

Noting some provisions in Part 5 may not have been used due to the timing of the review, this will necessarily limit the assessment of their practical operation.

1. The review will assess whether the following aspects of Part 5 are operating, or are expected to operate, as the Parliament intended:
  - 1.1 The definitions of employers (closing, dependent and receiving) and transition employees, and how trigger notices and geographic areas are specified (sections 6-9 of the Act).<sup>4</sup>
  - 1.2 The community of interest process outlined in section 55 of the Act, including the expression of interest for employers who may offer impacted workers new employment, the application process for a community of interest determination outlined in section 56, and the process in section 57, which provides for the FWC to make a community of interest determination.
  - 1.3 Obligations applying to closing and dependent employers specified in a community of interest determination, as outlined in sections 58 and 59 of the Act.
  - 1.4 Processes available to employers, employee organisations, workers and the CEO of the Authority for the FWC to determine actions that

<sup>4</sup> These definitions are not located in Part 5 of the Act but are relevant to how Part 5 operates.



closing or dependent employers must take to meet their obligations, as outlined in sections 60, 61 and 62 of the Act, and the dispute resolution process in section 61A.

- 1.5 The Energy Industry Worker Redeployment Advisory Group established under section 63, and whether the group is undertaking its role as set out in the Act.
  - 1.6 Information management provisions under sections 64, 65 and 66, including whether these provisions have worked as intended where the CEO has relied on them to require or inspect information or documents, or to provide information to employers.
  - 1.7 Enforcement, compensation, injunction and costs provisions under sections 67, 67A, 67B, 67C.
  - 1.8 The CEO's promotion of compliance with Part 5 under section 68, including through the provision of education, assistance, advice and information to closing, dependent and receiving employers and employees of those employers, and whether the CEO has monitored compliance with Part 5.
2. The review will also assess the merit and timing of future reviews of the operation of Part 5 and associated redeployment supports provided by the Authority.

## Out of scope

The review will not consider changes to or make recommendations on:

- Parts of the Act outside of Part 5 and not directly related to the operation of Part 5
- The operation of the *Fair Work Act 2009*
- The broader operation of the Fair Work Commission
- Other Commonwealth legislation (e.g. relating to energy, resources or industrial facilities)
- The administered funding appropriated to the Authority to establish redeployment pools.

## Process and timing

The Authority CEO has appointed Emeritus Professor Roy Green AM (the Reviewer) to undertake the Review. The Reviewer will be supported by staff from the Authority.

The Review will commence in July 2025. The Review will involve a period of public consultation, commencing with a call for public submissions. Consultation must be conducted with relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to employee organisations, employer organisations, designated closing and dependent employers, non-governmental organisations, relevant communities, and other interested groups and individuals.

Once the Review is complete, the Reviewer must give the CEO and the Minister a written report of the Review.



# Appendix B – Industrial closure case studies

## Introduction

With renewable energy sources becoming a more cost-competitive option for new electricity generation (IRENA 2025:14), thermal coal production and power generation has been declining in key economies globally (IRENA 2025:16). In Australia, the majority of coal-fired power stations have announced their closure dates in the coming decades. The closure of these power stations will impact businesses in their supply chains, including supplying coal mines, as well as the workers and communities in which these facilities are located. More broadly, coal mines that supply the export market will be impacted by declining global demand. The phase-out of coal will significantly change the structure of the economy, particularly in Australian regions where coal-fired power stations and coal mines are large employers.

There are many domestic and international examples of governments implementing supports to mitigate the impact of industrial closures. Governments can play a 'positive role ... in ensuring that the burden of structural adjustment does not fall disproportionately on some sections of business and the workforce' (Buchanan et al. 1992:8). However, best practice is characterised by collaboration between governments, businesses, unions and local communities within the context of regional economic diversification. This report examines the policy responses of several closure events – both internationally and in Australia – to reflect on the lessons learned from large-scale economic transitions.

The case studies discussed in this paper suggest that best practice policy responses to industrial closures share most of the following features:

- structured early intervention
- multi-level government and stakeholder collaboration
- supports tailored to the needs of workers and communities
- public investment in economic diversification.

## Early intervention

Early intervention supports the implementation of investment and transition programs with sufficient time to mitigate the impacts of industrial closures. The question of when interventions should begin depends on the context of the industrial closure, including local labour market conditions and the size and characteristics of the impacted workforce.

For individual workers and their families, early intervention puts them in a better position to plan for the future, pursue upskilling or retraining opportunities and find new employment. For communities and regional economies, it allows for the development and implementation of phased closure plans and long-term economic diversification strategies.

The approach to transitioning from coal in the Ruhr region of Germany offers an example. The German Government intervened early – from the 1968 Ruhr Development Program through to the 2007 tripartite agreement between coal companies, representative trade unions and the federal and state governments – to diversify the region's economy and strengthen its capacity to absorb transitioning workers. This meant the Ruhr had time to build an economy which was no longer dependent on coal, but focussed on innovation, renewable energy, tourism and education, with many workers able to find new jobs in new industries. 'The availability of time, finance, and a setup that fostered participation [has] proved critical to usher just transition' in the Ruhr (Arora and Schroeder 2022:10).

Another example is the closure of Australia's automotive industry. The 3-year closure notification period negotiated between the Australian Government and Ford, Holden and Toyota was vital in mitigating the impacts of the cessation of car manufacturing in Melbourne, Geelong and Adelaide. This provided time for collaboration between employers, unions and government, enabling the car manufacturers to develop and roll out coordinated and well-planned transition programs tailored to the needs of their workers.



## Multi-level governance and stakeholder collaboration

Policy responses to industrial closures are most successful 'when communities are engaged at an early stage of the process in a deep and meaningful manner [and] co-design solutions for their own future economic development' (Wright 2022:24). Strong collaboration between different levels of government as well as employers and unions enables the development and implementation of bespoke policy responses tailored to the specific needs of different regional economies.

One example is the Asturias region of Spain, where the Spanish Government established a tripartite relationship with industry and unions to manage the closure of all coal mines and coal-fired power stations in the region by 2030. This tripartite arrangement was the basis for Just Transition Agreements requiring national, regional and local governments to work together, and with employers and unions, to mitigate the impact of these closures on Asturias. Spain's just transition framework embeds the principle that each local community faces its own challenges requiring bespoke policy responses – from investing in the storage of pumped hydro to working with small- and medium-sized councils who lack the capacity to run their own energy projects.

The important role of multi-level government and stakeholder collaboration is also illustrated by the closure of BHP's Newcastle steelworks in 1999. Representatives from BHP, relevant unions and non-union employees formed the Transition Steering Team, which negotiated redundancy packages and redeployment opportunities, including through the Personal Pathways program. This approach was complemented by investment from BHP and the New South Wales (NSW) and Australian governments in the region's economic revitalisation, including establishment of a CSIRO research facility and remediation of the steelworks site for development of NSW's second container terminal.

## Supports tailored to the needs of workers

In the same way that local communities can benefit from bespoke policy responses to industrial closures, individual workers and their families tend to experience more positive outcomes when supports are tailored to their specific needs and personal circumstances and take into account current and expected labour market conditions in the regional economy.

For example, in the Limburg region of the Netherlands, the Dutch Government implemented short- and long-term policies, which included relocating government bodies, universities and other enterprises to the affected communities. They also implemented policies to retrain coal miners and power station workers for in-demand jobs. This included transferring some employees into new sectors to undertake on-the-job training. These transition policies helped ensure that workers were trained for jobs where there was demonstrated demand and workers' skills were suited to the current and future needs of potential employers in Limburg.

In Australia, Toyota's transition program was designed to provide tailored supports to its employees impacted by the closure of its car manufacturing plant in Melbourne. Workers could access career advice and financial counselling focused on their unique needs and circumstances, as well as education and training assistance, job search facilitation, and health and wellbeing support. Workers had the option to undertake training or study for employment in new industries such as logistics, construction and healthcare, or to upskill for jobs requiring higher-level qualifications and skills. As a result, some workers were able to transition to opportunities in new industries. Those who remained in similar industries were attractive candidates to new employers and in some instances found employment at a higher level than they had at Toyota.

## Public investment in economic diversification

Best practice policy responses to industrial closures tend to involve significant public investment in the economic diversification of impacted regions. This kind of intervention is often critical for crowding-in private investment, growing new industries and creating new employment opportunities for transitioning workers; as such, it naturally complements expenditure on retraining, upskilling and redeployment programs. Economic diversification and the reskilling and redeployment of displaced workers are mutually reinforcing determinants of orderly and positive transitions.

In the European Union (EU), the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) will mobilise around €55 billion between 2021 and 2027 to address the impacts of the transition to a net zero economy. Funding under the JTM is available to all EU member states and focuses on regions that are the most carbon-intensive or with the most people working in fossil fuels (European Commission n.d.). The economic diversification of the Asturias region in Spain, for example, is supported by €263 million under the EU's Just Transition Fund (a funding mechanism under the JTM). This funding was prioritised for large companies to undertake carbon reduction projects, with the intention of engaging small and medium enterprises through their supply chains (Wright 2022:44). A further €103 million is also available solely for regional and local council projects in the Asturias region (Wright 2022:44).

In Australia, the lead up to the closure of the automotive industry saw the Australian Government partner with the Victorian and South Australian governments to establish a \$155 million Growth Fund. This was followed 4 years later by the Australian Government's \$100 million Advanced Manufacturing Fund. These programs supported firms in automotive supply chains to diversify into non-automotive advanced manufacturing sectors. Similarly, in response to BHP's closure of the Newcastle steelworks in the Hunter region of NSW, the Australian and NSW governments partnered with BHP to commit \$30 million for new regional projects. This together with other government expenditure in the region was an important driver of Newcastle's economic diversification in the years after the closure.

## Determinants of poor outcomes

This paper also considers examples of inadequate policy responses to industrial closures resulting in poor outcomes for individual workers and their families, communities and regional economies.

The factors consistently determining poor outcomes include:

- political and regulatory uncertainty
- reactive decision-making
- a lack of strategic planning.

All of these factors were more or less prominent features of the industrial closures in the South Wales Valleys region of the United Kingdom (UK) and the Appalachia region of the United States (US). The overall approach was to allow the market to resolve closure outcomes, and to the extent that policy responses were undertaken, they were reactive in nature and implemented without sufficient regard for long-term economic diversification. This has led to enduring socio-economic disadvantage and the devastation of communities in the impacted regions.

Australia has previously experienced a number of abrupt power station closures, including the Hazelwood power station in the Latrobe region of Victoria and Playford B and Northern power stations in Port Augusta, South Australia. Short notice for each of these closures prevented the early intervention and community engagement often exemplified in best practice policy responses. Due to subsequent rule changes, power stations are now generally required to provide between 3 and 3.5 years of notice, enabling earlier preparation.





# Case studies

Key points and learnings by case study

Case study	Key learnings
<b>Ruhr region, Germany</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The transition of the Ruhr region was successful because of early intervention and significant government investment to diversify the economy, including in infrastructure, universities and training colleges, as well funding for the growth of new service sectors (including tourism, health precincts and retirement villages).</li><li>• The government took a decentralised, inclusive approach to community engagement, which was conducted in partnership with trade unions.</li></ul>
<b>Asturias, Spain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaboration between government, unions and industry, coupled with industry initiatives and adequate funding has led to positive outcomes for the region of Asturias.</li><li>• Central to Spain's policy intervention was the creation of a Just Transition Institute. The Just Transition Institute has overseen a range of projects, including the use of Just Transition Agreements.</li></ul>
<b>Limburg region, Netherlands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The coal phase-out in the Limburg Region was successful due to clear forward planning and economic diversification measures from the government.</li><li>• The transition featured targeted training supports for workers, including the use of on-the-job training.</li></ul>
<b>South Wales, United Kingdom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The sudden phase-out of coal mining and steel making in South Wales led to widespread inequality, job loss and worker outmigration.</li><li>• Government policies to diversify the economy and redeploy workers largely failed due to an inconsistent and uncoordinated approach.</li></ul>
<b>Appalachia, United States of America</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The decline of the coal mining and power generation industries had severe impacts on Appalachian communities, entrenching unemployment and poverty.</li><li>• The negative impacts of the transition were exacerbated by a lack of funding and strategy from the federal government.</li></ul>
<b>Hazelwood power station, Australia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The sudden announcement of the closure of the Hazelwood power station left the people of the Latrobe Valley facing economic, employment, health and wellbeing challenges.</li><li>• The closure highlighted the need for ample lead-in time to develop and deliver coordinated and well-planned transition programs and the importance of considering the impacts on dependant suppliers and their workers.</li></ul>
<b>Automotive Industry, Australia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many good practices were identified in the handling of the automotive manufacturing plant closures in Melbourne, Geelong and Adelaide.</li><li>• Early notification of the closures, tailored transition supports for workers, and strong collaboration between the employers, unions and government were vital in successfully transitioning workers impacted by the closures into new employment.</li></ul>
<b>BHP Steelworks, Australia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The handling of this closure illustrated the benefits of ample lead-in time, strong collaboration between impacted parties, and tailored supports for workers in achieving a successful transition.</li><li>• Government policies to diversify the economy in Newcastle and the Hunter region were largely successful and created jobs in new industries for former steelworkers and their families to transition to.</li></ul>

# International policy responses

## Ruhr region, Germany

### Context

For much of the 20th century, the Ruhr region was economically dependent on coal mining, coal power generation and iron and steel production. At their peak in 1957, these industries employed around 807,000 people. However, since then they have experienced a steep decline. Coal industry employment shifted from 70% of total employment in 1957 to just 2% by 2007 (Sheldon et al. 2018:28).

### Policy intervention

Through forward planning and staggered closures, the region mitigated the most adverse impacts of the transition away from coal, iron and steel production.

The policy intervention recognised there would be disproportionate burdens placed on the mining community, prompting the German Government to provide financial relief through social security and welfare benefits. For example, between 1966 and 1982 the government provided redundancy payments totalling around 223 million euros to miners who lost their jobs. The German Government also invested to diversify the economy in the region. One initiative from North Rhine-Westphalia, known as 'Development Program Ruhr', included inviting General Motors to build a factory in the region (Arora and Schroeder 2022:6).

After the 1980s, the structural transition was more inclusive and collaborative between different government levels. This involved forming social partnerships and seeking consensus amongst stakeholders to achieve socially acceptable structural change – for example, a 'coal roundtable' agreed to a deal to scale down the coal sector by 1995. The roundtable established a mechanism requiring companies to retrain employees for alternative employment or relocate them to other sectors and a re-employment strategy was created for each affected worker (Arora and Schroeder 2022:7).

In later years, structural policy programs began to focus on ecological and cultural priorities, and on encouraging entrepreneurship and education infrastructure. Cities had autonomy to create their own plans. For instance, some former industrial sites were regenerated to become tourist sites, including a former mining site being added to the UNESCO World Heritage list. With the shift in focus, entrepreneurship thrived, including in transport, technology, education and research (Arora and Schroeder 2022:7).

### Impact of interventions and learnings

The success of the transition has been attributed to significant government investment to diversify the economy away from coal. This included large scale investment in infrastructure, universities and training colleges, as well funding for the growth of new service sectors (including tourism, health precincts and retirement villages) (Sheldon et al. 2018:10, 30). The region also prioritised net zero technologies, including renewable energy (Sheldon et al. 2018:30).

The government's collaborative and inclusive approach to community engagement was considered effective. The federal and state governments were able to successfully collaborate with municipal governments, employers and unions to coordinate, fund, plan and implement transition initiatives and help to diversify the Ruhr economy (Sheldon et al. 2018:34). The transition meant the region took on a new identity – no longer focussed on mining, but on innovation, renewable energy, tourism and education. Notably, tourism in the Ruhr increased by 95% between 1990 and 2012 (Arora and Schroeder 2022:7).

The transition was not completely without issues. Structural change to the economy led to upward mobility, but the benefits were not received by everyone. Relatively unskilled workers from producing industries, migrants and young people were particularly vulnerable to unemployment (Arora and Schroeder 2022:8). In the south of the Ruhr, where structural adjustment had commenced in the 1950s, the outlook is better than the northern region, which maintains higher levels of unemployment and lower economic power (Dahlbeck et al. 2021:14). However, on balance, the approach of the German Government led to a largely successful transition out of coal mining. Key to the success was inclusive community engagement, a community-driven approach and significant funding for innovation and welfare.



## Asturias, Spain

### Context

The region of Asturias in Northern Spain is undergoing a large-scale transition from its economic dependence on the coal industry. 100,000 people employed in the coal industry in the 1950s fell to 45,000 in 1990 and to less than 850 in 2022 (Justem 2022:5; Rentier et al. 2019:627).

Much of the transition has occurred in more recent years, with most coal mines ceasing to operate in Asturias in 2018. Some thermal power stations ceased to operate in 2020 while others are planning to shut down by 2030 (Justem 2022:6). As of 2022, 21 of its municipalities were facing severe and direct socioeconomic consequences – including a downturn in economic activity and a loss of job opportunities – from the closure of power stations (Justem 2022:5).

### Policy intervention

Recognising that the country's coal regions – Asturias, León, Palencia and Teruel – would face new closures in 2018, the Spanish Government sought an agreement to support both workers of mines identified in the *Closure Plan for the Kingdom of Spain* in 2010 (Closure Plan), and the affected areas (Just Transition Institute 2024:9–11).

The *Framework Agreement for a Just Transition of Coal Mining and Sustainable Development of the Coal Mining Regions for the period 2019–2027* (Framework Agreement) extended and improved upon the social measures covered by the European Union's *Decision 2010/787/EU*, which was about state aid to the coal industry. It facilitated access to social measures for all workers from mines included in the Closure Plan. However, workers at ancillary companies were unable to receive monetary benefit under the Framework Agreement. The Framework Agreement included the option for workers of mines included in the Closure Plan to opt for early retirement, with 327 early retirements worth up to 37.02 million euros paid out up to 2024 (with 172.23 million euros estimated remaining in the system). Additionally, there were 36 paid redundancies, totalling 1.33 million euros up to 2024. The Framework Agreement also applied to measures aimed at providing an economic boost to mining districts, including employment in the mining municipalities (Just Transition Institute 2024:11–12). Under the Framework Agreement's 'Restoration Plan', 82.3 million euros were invested in Asturias (Just Transition Institute 2024:13).

A similar *Agreement for a just transition for coal power plants: jobs, industry and territories* was signed in 2020 by government, unions and owners of thermal power plants in closure across Spain (Just Transition Institute 2023:42). The agreement sought to guarantee appropriate social schemes for affected workers who lose their jobs in relevant closing power stations (Just Transition Institute 2020:6). The agreement was implemented by the companies and government, with unions providing oversight (Wright 2022:43).

Central to Spain's policy intervention was the creation of the Just Transition Institute. The Just Transition Institute is an autonomous governmental body attached to Spain's Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, which is devoted to delivering just transition measures to affected regions (Just Transition Institute 2023:39). The Just Transition Institute has overseen a range of projects, including the implementation of Just Transition Agreements, which were introduced under the Framework Agreement in 2018 and expanded upon in the 2020 agreement. Just Transition Agreements target regions affected by the closure of power plants and engage national, regional and local stakeholders to 'propose support instruments to ensure the reactivation of the territories. They are based on extensive public participation processes and the assessment of socio-economic impacts and opportunities at the local level' (Just Transition Institute 2023:6). Projects launched by Just Transition Agreement in Asturias include environmental restoration, improvements to industrial estates, support for workers (such as early retirement), and local business projects (such as rural tourism, agri-food industry and biomass) (Just Transition Institute 2023:26).



## Impact of interventions and learnings

While the region did experience some depopulation as a result of industrial closures (Lopez et al. 2023:3), the coal phase-out in Asturias is generally considered to be an example of best practice. Its success is attributable to the collaboration between government, unions and industry, coupled with industry initiatives, adequate funding, and region-based plans. Tripartite collaboration between the Spanish Government, trade unions and industry arrangement drove 'social agreement', which enabled dialogue, planning and innovation between the parties (Wright 2022:24,43).

Part of the success in Asturias is attributable to the willingness of coal companies to shift their business model to renewable energy. Large energy companies in the region have worked with the government and communities to implement various initiatives, including:

- building a photovoltaics manufacturing facility locally – creating 100 jobs and reskilling displaced workers
- developing individual transition plans for closing coal-fired power plants – with different sites implementing customised energy projects, including battery, sodium and air storage, renewables, network flexibility and hydrogen hubs
- rehabilitating former mining sites, including to provide warm water for heating systems, to install biomass and heating plants and to build a green hydrogen plant (Wright 2022:45–46).

Several elements could be adjusted in regions seeking to adopt a similar approach to Spain and Asturias. Windows to submit applications for funding need to be sufficient, particularly for complex projects, and have been argued to be too tight in Asturias. Additionally, it has been argued that regulation and a lack of capacity and capability among local councils meant that innovation and progress was sometimes delayed on the ground (Wright 2022:47).

### Limburg Region, Netherlands

#### Context

Limburg, a southern province of the Netherlands, accounted for the Netherlands vast coal mining production until 1974 (Braaksma and Fleming 2020:270). The region's economy was centred on the coal industry, with slightly over a third of Limburg's workforce in the mines and firms supplying mines in 1965 (approximately 75,000 jobs). However, the emergence of cheap European natural gas resulted in coal being displaced in the Dutch market (Sheldon et al. 2018:29). This shift meant that from 1965

coal mines would be gradually closed due to their prolonged unprofitability, precipitating a staggered phase out (Sheldon et al. 2018:35).

#### Policy intervention

In light of the impending loss of jobs, the Dutch Government developed both short- and long-term policies to assist the region to transition.

The policy intervention included relocating government bodies and universities, and other enterprises, to the affected communities to diversify the economy and create demand for new employees (Caldecott et al. 2017:19). The Dutch Government, in partnership with 47 organisations, concluded the *Agreement on Energy for Sustainable Growth* in 2013, which included the ambition to create 15,000 new jobs and work-to-work facilities for employees who lost their jobs as a result of the closure (Braaksma and Fleming 2020:272).

Additionally, the government implemented measures to retrain workers for positions or roles where there was demonstrated need, which included some employees transferring to new sectors to undertake on-the-job training. This ensured workers' training and skills development were suited to the need of their potential employers, as opposed to undertaking classroom-based learning. The government also invested in education in the region more broadly to ensure the families of mine workers were supported. This included financial support for people to attend education after finishing high school and investing in local infrastructure (Caldecott et al. 2017:19).

One study estimated that the Dutch Government invested around 11.6 billion euros (adjusted for 2017 prices) to support coal prices and regional reconversion (Caldecott et al. 2017:11).

## Impact of interventions and learnings

This transition is considered a success due to early preparation and engagement ahead of closure, a relatively high level of consensus across unions and stakeholder groups and stable policy aims. On balance, the transition was generally accepted by the community. This acceptance was fuelled, in part, by investment into other sectors in the region which enabled displaced workers to find other jobs in close proximity and minimised the transition's impact on workers (Caldecott et al. 2017:19). From peaks in 1978 and 1984, unemployment was reduced to nearly half of its peak level by 1990 (Sheldon et al. 2018:35).



## The Valleys, South Wales, United Kingdom (UK)

### Context

Coal mining played a significant role in the Welsh economy during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was most pronounced in the coal producing region of South Wales Valley, often referred to as the Valleys. Coal mining formed the core of the region's industry, cultural identity and employment (Merrill and Kitson 2017:26). However, in the 1980s, amidst the recession in the UK, government support for the industry declined and productivity waned (Merrill and Kitson 2017:8). The Thatcher Government, also pursuing a strategy to wind back union power, proceeded to close the remaining coal mines and either closed or privatised the state-owned steelworks, leaving many unemployed (Sheldon et al. 2018:41).

### Policy intervention

Under pressure, the UK Government introduced limited economic and social adjustment policies in response to the negative impacts of the mine closures (Welsh Government 2016:19). It adopted a general approach of diversifying regional economies through economic interventions designed to promote market activity through private sector investment (Rising et al. 2021:15), and introduced measures to facilitate employment transition and social welfare. The state-owned British Coal Corporation offered workers at relevant closing mines across the UK the option to retire early or shift to another mine. Indeed, during this time, approximately 10% of working-age males moved into disability benefits, other government schemes or early retirement. However the government's response was mostly reactive and narrowly targeted, and the abrupt loss of industry has had a lasting impact on the Valleys (Rising et al. 2021:16).

### Impact of intervention and learnings

Although the UK Government implemented several initiatives to ease the region's transition out of coal mining, the policies failed to mitigate the most serious impacts of the transition. This was attributable to the absence of a clear and overarching policy framework, which manifested in inconsistency and a lack of coordination between transition policies, a lack of understanding of the geographic and economic nuances within regions and underfunding of key policies (Sheldon et al. 2018:42). The policy response was further complicated by industrial conflict during the 1984 Miners' Dispute, which fuelled an adversarial environment between the government and affected mining communities.

The devolved Welsh Government has more recently developed other participatory planning policies to prepare for future structural adjustments.

This notably includes the *Well-Being of Future Generations Act 2015*, which aims to strengthen sustainable development in Wales and ensure a growing economy with gainful employment for all. The Act also imposes a statutory process for the Welsh Government to better anticipate future transitions (Rising et al. 2021:42).

## Appalachia, United States of America

### Context

After the decline of local manufacturing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Appalachian region became increasingly dependent on coal mining and power generation. However, the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 fuelled demand for low-sulphur coal, which redistributed a portion of coal production to the states on the west coast (Lobao et al. 2016:346). The coal industry then began to decline steeply from the early 2000s onwards due to a loss of competitiveness of American coal in international markets (Shade et al. 2025:4).

With a lack of economic diversity and minimal new job opportunities, as well as a legacy of regional poverty, the region suffered severe socioeconomic consequences (Sheldon et al. 2018:45). This notably resulted in massive declines in coal employment: Virginia lost 78%, Kentucky and West Virginia each lost 85% and Ohio and Pennsylvania lost 98% over the past century (Lobao et al. 2020:18). Widespread unemployment has led to entrenched inequality and working-age population loss in many of Appalachia's coal dependent counties (Bowen et al. 2018:29).

### Policy intervention

There have been a number of different policy responses to the loss of the Appalachian coal industry from different levels of government, including ongoing policies. For instance, the Appalachian Regional Commission – a partnership of the federal government and 12 state governments – was established to promote economic growth across the 423 different counties (Appalachian Regional Commission n.d.). The commission encourages local development districts to develop strategies to spur economic growth through infrastructure, workforce planning and market development. Despite the existence of the Appalachian Regional Commission, the region's vast spread over different local and state government borders meant that the overall governmental policy response was fragmented and delivered uneven outcomes for communities. This issue has been exacerbated by the differing levels

of population density and development across the region (Sheldon et al. 2018:i).

The transition resembled more of a series of local 'bottom-up' initiatives which could have been improved with strategic leadership and funding at a federal level. Most initiatives were reactive and short-term, including 'early warning systems' for preventing layoffs or facilitating employment transfers (Sheldon et al. 2018:44). Attempts to diversify the economy have been top-down and employer focussed, including subsidising in-bound investment rather than targeting development opportunities. This meant measures were largely ineffective for job creation given they did not address skills shortages or ensure suitable local infrastructure (Sheldon et al. 2018:44–45).

Other programs exist in the region, such as the abandoned mine land program which seeks to rehabilitate former mining sites. However, little is known about the program and the public engagement requirement for site remediation decision-making. It has been found that the lack of information on public participation opportunities and the unclear project selection and awards processes are key barriers limiting public engagement (Kendrick and Kim 2025:629).

## Impact of intervention and learnings

The failure of these responses was attributable to the fact that many of them were reactive in nature, ad-hoc, and lacking in strategy and planning (Sheldon et al. 2018:44). Many coal workers were left without any employment, retraining or upskilling opportunities, and there was not enough consideration of how training and education could assist with the supply of labour for new initiatives in the region, which have been hampered by skills shortages (Sheldon et al. 2018:45–46).

While local and state initiatives were top-down, there was a lack of federal leadership, including any commitment to a 'green transition'. Additionally, there was not enough attention afforded to infrastructure spending, including the potential to develop local clusters or local innovation (Sheldon et al. 2018:45–46).

# Policy responses in Australia

## Hazelwood power station, Latrobe Valley

### Context

On 3 November 2016, it was announced that the Hazelwood power station would be closed on 31 March 2017, providing just 5 months to prepare for the closure. This closure was especially sudden because in the months prior Engie (the majority owner and operator of the power station) had publicly stated that no decision had been made to close Hazelwood (Wiseman et al. 2020:23).

The unexpected nature of the closure of Hazelwood created distress and anxiety for some workers and families, and some left the region to find alternative employment (Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee 2022:25). Concerns about the social and economic impacts of 750 job losses from the closure of Hazelwood were further heightened by the announcement the Carter Holt Harvey timber mill in nearby Morwell was also ceasing operations, resulting in the loss of 200 jobs. Many former power industry workers and community members expressed 'scepticism about government policy and funding commitments given the previous history of multiple unsuccessful economic renewal strategies' (Wiseman et al. 2020:23).

### Policy intervention

In the days after the announcement of the closure, the Victorian Government committed to provide \$42 million and the Australian Government committed to provide \$23 million to assist workers directly impacted by Hazelwood's closure. Included in the Victorian Government funding was the creation of the Latrobe Valley Authority, a centralised body based in the Latrobe Valley tasked with coordinating the region's transition.

The Latrobe Valley Authority established 2 key programs to provide immediate assistance to workers and their families affected by the Hazelwood closure: the Worker Transition Service and the Worker Transition Scheme. The Worker Transition Service supported Hazelwood workers and their families with career navigation, training and health and wellbeing. It was established as a partnership with employers, unions, employment agencies, adult education providers and accredited training agencies and was initially open to all former Hazelwood employees as well as contractors, supply chain employees and their family members, with it later



being opened to other workers affected by closures of businesses in the area (Wiseman et al. 2020:16). The service was allocated \$22 million to deliver the following supports:

- future employment support such as resume writing and interview preparation
- training and qualification attainment support
- support for small business creation and development
- broader financial support; and
- personal and family support such as counselling (Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee 2022:15-16).

In the 2 years following the closure, a high percentage of those who used the service were able to transition to new employment, but many were only able to find casual employment rather than the full-time employment they were seeking. Specifically, from the 833 workers affected, 307 (36.85%) had casual work, 306 (36.73%) had full-time work, 35 (4.2%) had part-time work and 185 (22.21%) were unemployed (Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee 2022:18). A Victorian parliamentary inquiry into the Hazelwood closure found that this outcome was due to rushed beginnings of the Worker Transition Service and the fact this was the first service of its type being implemented (Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee 2022:18). Business and union leaders agreed that the timing of future closures in the region (such as Yallourn) will be imperative to ensure new industries are ready to employ displaced workers (Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee 2022:41).

The Worker Transfer Scheme was established to facilitate the transition of 150 employees at Hazelwood to employment at other power stations operating in the Latrobe Valley (Yallourn, Loy Yang A and Loy Yang B). It did this by offering early retirement packages to workers at the operating power station workers to create vacancies for Hazelwood workers. \$20 million was allocated for the scheme, with participating employers able to access funding to provide early retirement packages to their employees and to facilitate the re-deployment of the Hazelwood workers. By June 2019, the scheme had redeployed 96 former Hazelwood workers over 3 remaining power stations in operation in the area (Wiseman et al. 2020:16).

Both the Victorian Government and Australian Government funding for impacted workers were part of bigger holistic packages provided to support the economy of the Latrobe Valley to mitigate the impacts of the closure on the region. In addition to the \$42 million for workers, the Victorian Government provided \$224 million for long-term measures aimed to promote economic growth, business investment and job creation. This included \$50 million for the creation

of an economic growth zone and \$174 million towards community infrastructure and investment fund (Premier of Victoria 2016). Meanwhile, the Australian Government package included an additional \$20 million to support new infrastructure projects in the region (AAP 2016).

## Impact of interventions and learnings

In the years after the closure, workers, households and communities of the Latrobe Valley faced a wide range of economic, employment, health and wellbeing challenges. These challenges could have been easier to manage with longer notice of the closure (Wiseman et al. 2020:26). Earlier notice would have allowed for more coordinated, proactive planning and more inclusive conversations with the workers affected by the closure, their families, the community, and closing and receiving employers (Wiseman et al. 2020:26). Since the closure, additional market rules have been put in place requiring National Electricity Market (NEM) generators to provide the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) with at least 42 months advance notice of their intention to close, unless granted an exemption by the Australian Energy Regulator (AER). The Western Australian Electricity Market has similar rules – companies are required to inform AEMO of an expected generator closure date no less than 3 years before closure.

The closure also highlighted the importance of considering the potential impacts of power station closures on dependent suppliers, with the Victoria's Economy and Infrastructure Committee finding supply chain businesses were not sufficiently supported when Hazelwood closed and should be targeted for support in the lead up to the closure of other power stations (Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee 2022:38). The workers at these dependant employers were not able to access the same services as employees at Hazelwood, for instance, the Worker Transition Scheme was only open to Hazelwood employees.

The region experienced a decline in unemployment after the closure, however this has not been attributed to government intervention. In the 12 months preceding the Hazelwood closure unemployment averaged 7.8%, compared to an average of 6.4% in the 12 months following the closure (Wiseman et al. 2020:24). While the period immediately following closure was marked by anxiety about the social and economic impacts of a sharp rise in unemployment (with the additional closure of Morwell's Carter Holt Harvey timber mill in October 2017) (Wiseman et al. 2020:23), unemployment declined from mid-2018 with the total number of people employed increasing by around 5% between July 2018 and June 2019, compared to one year earlier. This was the result of a greater number of jobs opening in the region (Wiseman et al. 2020:24).

## Automotive industry, Melbourne, Geelong and Adelaide

### Context

Over 2013 and 2014, the 3 remaining motor vehicle manufacturers in Australia, Ford, Holden and Toyota announced their intention to cease car production in Australia by the end of 2017. This brought an end to almost 70 years of motor vehicle manufacturing in Australia, an industry that at its peak in the 1970s employed around 90,000 workers and produced nearly 500,000 vehicles a year (DIIS 2020:4).

It was estimated these decisions from Ford, Holden and Toyota would result in 27,500 direct job losses, 6,600 directly employed by the motor vehicle manufacturers, and 20,900 employed within 215 supply chain business expected to be significantly impacted by the closures (ACIL Allen 2019). In addition to job losses, the closures of motor vehicle manufacturing plants threatened to destabilise the communities where the plants were located. For instance, in the close-knit communities of northern Adelaide, many friendships and community networks stemmed from working together at the Holden plant (Vigya and Loginova 2024:9–10).

At the time of the closure announcements by car manufacturers, the automotive industry was one of the most important durable manufacturing sectors in Australia, producing around \$17.5 billion in total shipments from motor vehicle and parts manufacturing and providing high-quality, well-paid and secure jobs (Stanford 2016:1).

### Policy intervention

In response to the motor vehicle manufacturers' decision to leave Australia, the Australian Government worked with the Victorian and South Australian governments to introduce targeted transitional support programs, including programs to make affected workers more competitive in the labour market, limit impacts on the supply chain, and create diverse jobs in affected regions (Vigya and Loginova 2024:6). In addition to government programs, each of the motor vehicle manufacturers offered additional resources to support their workforce. This included assisting their workers to redeploy to new roles within their businesses. The co-ordinated response from governments and the manufacturers provided around \$380 million in funding for supports for affected workers and for programs to assist supply chain companies to diversify (ACIL Allen 2019:4).

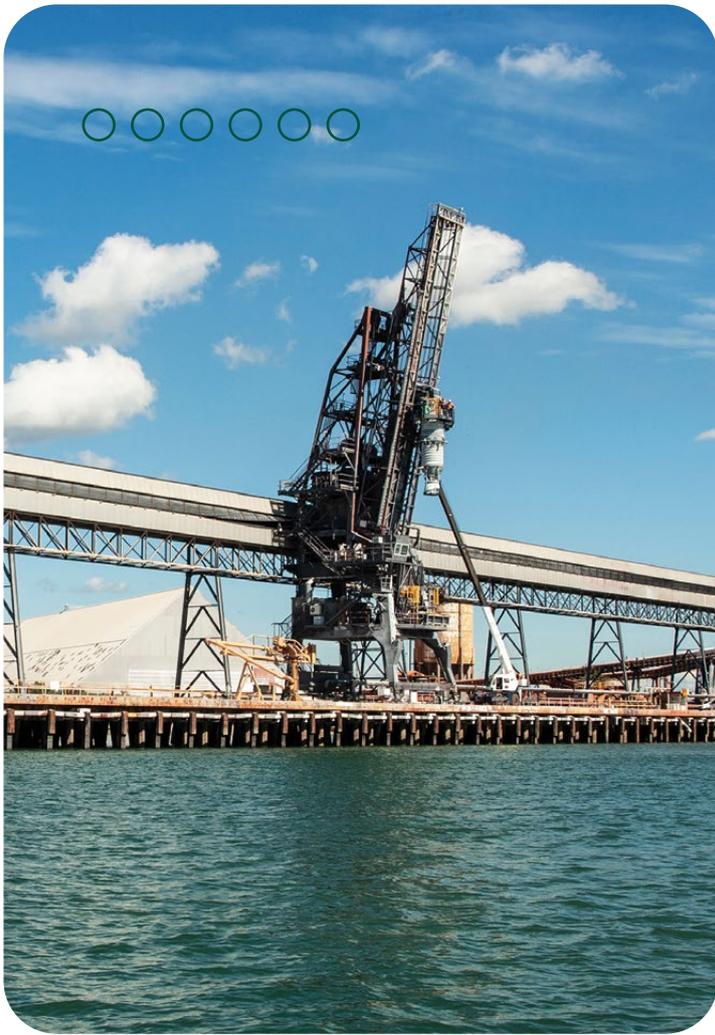
The Australian Government received a commitment from the manufacturers that they would continue production until 2017, with an agreement from the

government that the existing financial support for the automotive industry would continue to the time of the closures (Department of Industry 2014:i). The 3-year notification of the plant closures provided sufficient time for stakeholder collaboration and coordination in designing appropriate programs for affected workers. The supports offered to workers varied depending on which program they were eligible for, but included a combination of:

- information on existing support services and how to access them
- career advice and local labour market information including jobs in growth sectors
- skills recognition and training support including financial assistance with training costs
- resume, application, interview and job search assistance and job fairs
- health and wellbeing support, including financial counselling; and
- the continuation of some services and support measures post closure (ACIL Allen 2019:5).

To prepare their workforce for the closures, the car manufacturers allocated resources beyond what they were obliged to provide. For instance, Toyota assigned a large budget for training and transitional support activities over 4 years, with the activities continuing for 6 months after production ceased at its Altona plant. Toyota encouraged its employees to be proactive in developing personal transition plans and provided access to training which enabled workers to upskill, making them more attractive to future employers (Samson 2017). Around 70% of training for Toyota workers was for licences, tickets and skills for specific jobs (ACIL Allen 2019:16). During the transition process, workers' performance and engagement improved at the Toyota's Altona plant. This supports the proposition that there are organisational benefits associated with a 'respectful' approach to closure, which for Toyota involved allocating 'resources beyond typical expectations to prepare its workforce for their post-Toyota careers and lives' (Samson and Swink 2023:67).

The support for workers was complemented by government funded transition programs which strategically targeted supply-chain firms to plan, re-invest and develop new capabilities, products and markets (DIIS 2020:4). This included the legislated \$3.4 billion Automotive Transformation Scheme, which commenced in 2011 and provided grants for production, research and development and capital investment to vehicle and component manufacturers. In 2014, the Australian, Victorian and South Australian governments established a \$155 million Growth Fund, which encouraged supply-chain firms to transition to high-value, non-automotive advanced manufacturing sectors (DIIS 2020:6). This was followed in 2018 by the Australian Government's \$100 million Advanced Manufacturing Fund.



## Impact of interventions and learnings

According to expert assessments, many people who were made redundant from the auto industry had 'pretty good outcomes, much better than expected' (Gibson 2023). Estimates of actual job losses are close to 14,000. This is just over half of the estimate in 2014, with the decrease mainly due to fewer job losses from supply chain companies (ACIL Allen 2019:4).

Data collected 12 months after the closures showed an average employment rate of 84% for former Ford, Holden and Toyota workers (59% in full-time work), with 9% having retired and 2% studying, and the remaining 5 per cent either looking for work or taking a break (ACIL Allen 2019:6). In comparison, data collected 2 years after the Hazelwood power station indicated an employment rate of 78% for former Hazelwood workers who accessed the Worker Transition Service, but with only 36% in full time work and 16% still looking for work (Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee 2022:17).

Meanwhile, outcomes for supply chain workers were not as positive as those of the workers from the manufacturers, with an employment rate of 79%. Of the workers who had found new employment, 47% were in full-time work (ACIL Allen 2019:6). Larger supply chain firms established programs to support the transition, but some of the smaller suppliers did not have the resources to do this (ACIL Allen 2020:48). Government support at both the federal

and state levels primarily focussed on supply chain workers and firms, and affected supply chain workers were able to access government supports locally (ACIL Allen 2019:11).

The data collected also suggests that auto sector workers were generally positive about the outcome after the closures, with 86% of former Ford, Holden and Toyota workers and 84% of supply chain workers satisfied with their new salary. Additionally, the health and wellbeing of these workers was generally at or better than the national average (ACIL Allen 2019:2, 7).

These outcomes have to have been attributed to good practices including:

- early notification of the closure and ample lead in time to develop programs and enable the delivery of supports such as career advice, upskilling and the redeployment of workers (ACIL Allen 2019:10)
- information delivered to workers in a timely manner, which is tailored to the needs of the workers and if possible, to be delivered through a trusted intermediary (ACIL Allen 2019:12)
- use of case managers with a good understanding of industry to deliver advice and information (ACIL Allen 2019:14)
- providing training tailored to the needs of workers that responds to career plans which identify employment opportunities (ACIL Allen 2019:16)
- strong collaboration at multiple levels and a number of governance arrangements to oversee the delivery and continual improvement of services to workers and employers (ACIL Allen 2019:18).

## BHP steelworks, Newcastle

### Context

In 1997, BHP announced it would close its Newcastle steelworks in 1999. This brought to an end around 85 years of BHP producing steel in Newcastle. The closure resulted in the loss of almost 4,000 direct and contracting jobs and the unemployment rate in Newcastle rose to 10.4% (Jones and Tee 2017:9). At the time, the closure was thought to be the largest de-industrialisation event in Australia's history (Atteridge and Strambo 2021:3).

There were widespread fears that the closure would have devastating impacts, not only for the workers at the steelworks and their families but on the economy of Newcastle and the Hunter region. Also, that the closure could fracture social cohesion, resulting in an increase in negative social and community impacts in the region, such as violence and crime (Atteridge and Strambo 2021:3).

## Policy intervention

In 1996, prior to the final closure announcement, BHP and the unions who represented the workers at the steelworks formed the Transition Steering Team (TST) which consisted of representatives from BHP management, the unions and non-union employees. This was supplemented by the 'Common Purpose Group', comprising representatives of industry, unions and policy experts at a regional level, whose task was to make the case for positive post-closure outcomes. Following the announcement of the closure, the TST helped to negotiate redundancy packages and redeployment opportunities for BHP employees. It also developed the Personal Pathways program, which provided BHP employees at the steelworks with transition supports, including access to:

- employee-tailored retraining
- financial planning and advice services; and
- mental health services (Atteridge and Strambo 2021:4).

Personal Pathways was personalised to meet the individual needs of the employees. Each employee was interviewed about their aspirations and supported to train or upskill in almost any area of their choice, as long as it was likely to help them find new employment (Payne 2013). BHP funded and managed the program, including covering the cost of university and TAFE fees and textbooks and providing flexible work arrangements around the study of approved courses (Payne 2013). The program resulted in a wide range of career changes for steelworks employees, varying from nursing to public relations (Payne 2013).

Local employers used the program to recruit new staff, and jobs and skills matching led to employees being retrained in vocations where there were skill shortages. For instance, there was a shortage of technology teachers in NSW at the time. So, BHP, the NSW Department of Education and the University of Newcastle collaborated to train around 80 employees onsite at the steelworks to become teachers (Payne 2013).

The Personal Pathways program was complemented by an Area Consultative Committee (ACC) analysis of skill gaps and shortages and by government investment in the economic revitalisation of the region. The NSW Government established the Economic Development Office, an Economic Development Strategy and the Hunter Advantage Fund for the region. These provided land for new manufacturing ventures and coordinated studies on the development of a new container port on the steelworks site. BHP, the NSW Government and the Australian Government pledged \$30 million towards new projects in the Hunter region. Additionally, there was an effort to develop a new 107-hectare industrial precinct, known as Steel River, which involved the

establishment of the CSIRO Energy Centre. The development of the precinct was supported by BHP, as part of its transition plan to create jobs in the region and soon became host to several significant manufacturing companies and distribution centres.

## Impact of interventions and learnings

The handling of the closure illustrated the benefits of lead in time, strong collaboration between impacted parties, and tailored supports for workers. Complementary economic development measures and investments from state and federal governments were equally important. Growing profitability in the coal industry also provided viable economic diversification opportunities, while growth in the service economy through tourism and a growing population both helped to offset the closures broader economic and social impacts.

It is estimated that 90% of the participants in the Personal Pathways program found new employment within a year of the steelworks' closure (Atteridge and Strambo 2021:4). Despite the unconstrained nature of the supports provided by the program, it proved to be cost effective for BHP. Specifically, BHP avoided paying out redundancy and other entitlements where employees found employment before the steelworks closed (Atteridge and Strambo 2021:4).

More broadly, the unemployment rate in Newcastle declined gradually after the closure while the participation rate increased in Newcastle and the Hunter region. However, the decrease in unemployment was driven by absolute increases in employee numbers, with employee numbers increasing in sectors such as healthcare, education, tourism and professional services. Notably, much of the job creation in the region resulted in part-time, casual, low-paid, and temporary positions (Atteridge and Strambo 2021:5). Export coal mines also continued to be big employers in the region (Jones and Tee 2017:9–10).

Many of the societal fears associated with the closure were allayed and avoided. However, post closure research indicated there was a 'social exclusion' experienced by many young people, women and older men in the region, along with a widening gap between high skilled workers in growth industries and lower skilled workers in insecure employment (Atteridge and Strambo 2021:5).



# Appendix C – Consultation

The review followed a consultation strategy to ensure perspectives and experiences were captured from a diverse range of stakeholders, including workers, employers, unions, employer organisations, local, state and Australian Government, academia, policy advocacy organisations, and community organisations.

The review sought views from stakeholders who have experienced the EIJP, were likely to be impacted by a scheduled coal-fired or gas-fired power station closure, or are in one of the Authority's identified priority regions. The review also consulted with stakeholders with a broader interest in energy transition or with expertise in best practice industry transition events, such as the closure of Hazelwood power station and the automobile industry.

Given the diversity and breadth of stakeholders across multiple regions, the review established a range of channels for individuals and organisations to contribute, including:

- public submissions via the online platform Converlens – supported by a consultation paper
- regional in-person consultation with local stakeholders, including employers, union representatives, community organisations, local government and industry
- online consultations
- in-person roundtable sessions with national level union representatives and employer associations.

Almost 100 meetings were conducted across Australia's regions including the Latrobe Valley in Victoria, the Hunter (upper and lower) and Lithgow in NSW, Gladstone and Biloela in Queensland and Collie in WA. Meetings were also held in Adelaide, Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane, and Perth as well as online.

All consultations were conducted in-confidence to foster frank and honest discussions on the operation of the EIJP and the landscape in which it is situated in the regions. Throughout the report, stakeholder views from consultations are aggregated with no direct attribution to individuals unless express consent was provided.



# Consultations and roundtables

Between August and October 2025, the review travelled to regions likely to be impacted by the closure of coal-fired and gas-power stations in the coming years for in-person discussions with local stakeholders.

The consultation schedule included:

- **Online meetings**  
29–30 July  
20 and 29 August
- **Latrobe Valley**  
4–7 August  
8–10 September
- **Hunter Valley**  
12–14 August
- **Adelaide**  
1–3 September
- **Canberra union and employer group roundtables**  
12 September
- **Brisbane and Central Queensland (Gladstone and Biloela)**  
15–18 September
- **Collie and Perth**  
22–25 September
- **Lithgow**  
7 October.

In addition to the consultation paper, the review approached 206 stakeholders directly to encourage participation from a diverse range of stakeholders. From those avenues, the review conducted almost 100 meetings.

**Figure 7:** Number of meetings for the review by organisation type

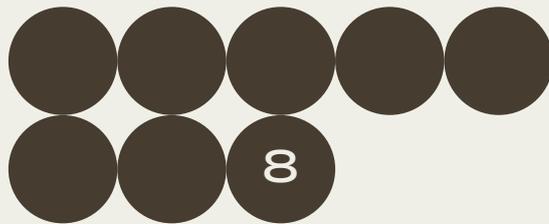




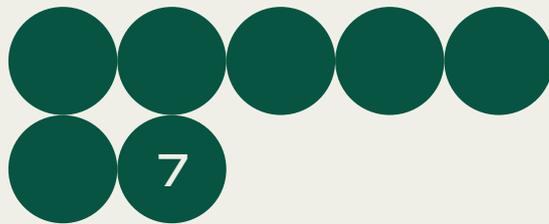
**Figure 8:** Number of public submissions received for the review by organisation type

## Submissions

### Unions and worker organisations



### Government - local



### Policy, advocacy and economic development



### Employers



### Employer organisations



### Academics



### Individual



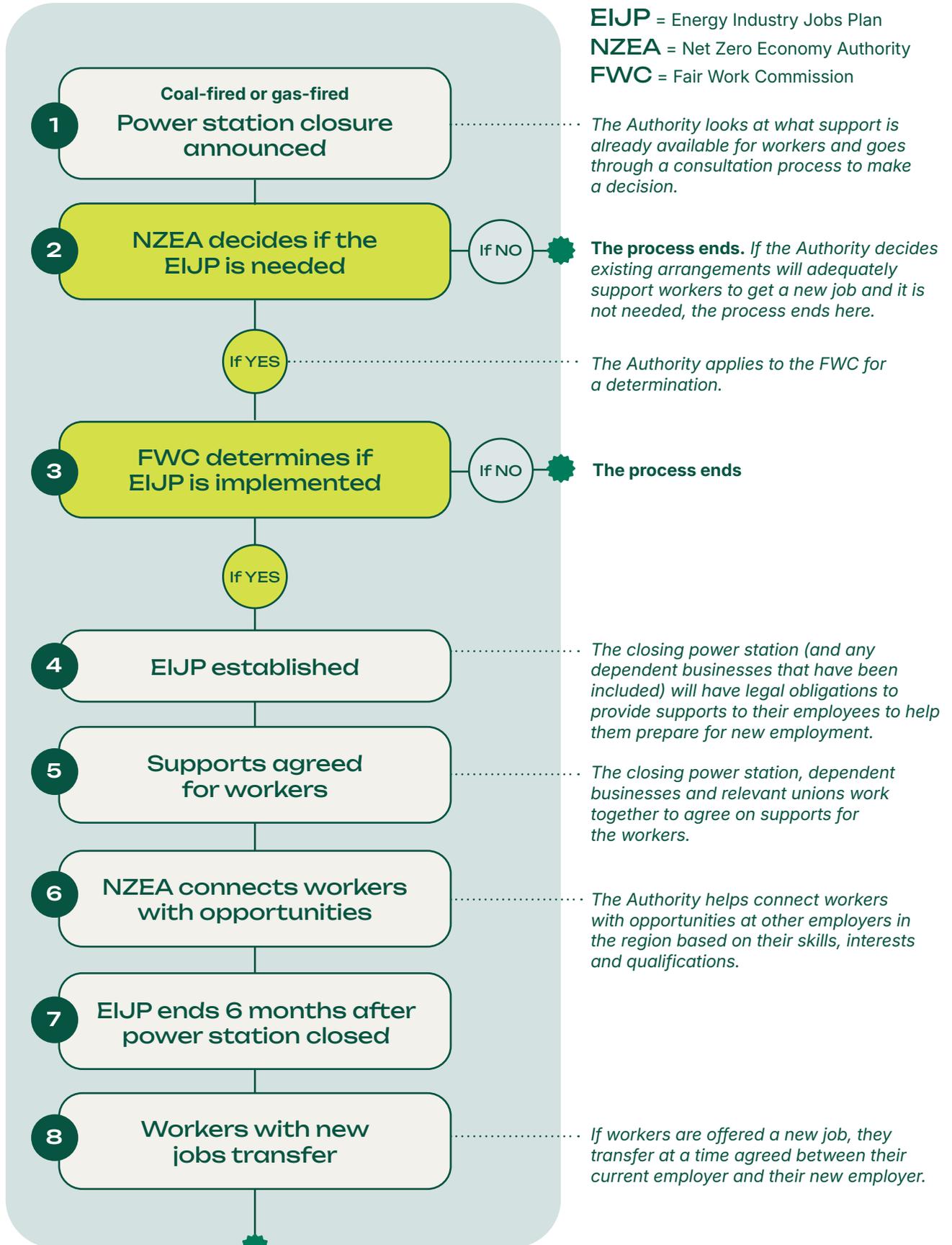
## Written Submissions

Written submissions were open between 4 August and 5 September 2025, with acceptance of late submissions determined on a case-by-case and at the discretion of the reviewer. The review received 33 written public submissions from a range of stakeholders. Where permitted by the author of the submission, they have been published on the Authority's website.

### List of public submissions made (alphabetical order):

1. Alinta Energy
2. Anonymous (name withheld)
3. Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
4. Australian Council of Trade Unions
5. Australian Local Government Association
6. Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMMU) National
7. Australian Services Union
8. Australian Workers' Union
9. Banana Shire Council
10. Beyond Zero Emissions
11. Business Hunter
12. Centre for Policy Development
13. Civil Contractors Federation
14. Committee for the Hunter
15. Dantia
16. Dr Caleb Goods, Professor Bradon Ellem, and Dr Daniel Nicholson – Work and Industrial Relations Unit, The University of Western Australia
17. Dr Simon Wright
18. Electrical Trades Union of Australia
19. EnergyAustralia
20. Federation University Australia
21. Gippsland Climate Change Network
22. Hunter Jobs Alliance
23. Hunter Joint Organisation
24. Hunter Workers
25. Lake Macquarie City Council
26. Lithgow City Council
27. Master Electricians Australia
28. Mining and Energy Union
29. Muswellbrook Shire Council
30. Origin Energy
31. Professor Deanna D'Alessandro et al. (University of Sydney's Net Zero Institute and the Warren Centre Energy Hub)
32. Singleton Council
33. Southerly Ten

# Appendix D – Energy Industry Jobs Plan process map





# Appendix E – Glossary

Term	Definition
Authority	The Net Zero Economy Authority
Board	The Board of the Net Zero Economy Authority
CEO	The Chief Executive Officer of the Authority
Closing employer	<p>Closing employers are defined in subsections 6(1) and 6(2) of the NZEA Act. Under each subsection, a closing employer must be constitutional corporation. The definitions are intended to capture the diverse corporate structures and labour supply chain arrangements that are present across the electricity generation and mining industries.</p> <p>Under subsection, 6(1) an employer is a closing employer if it owns or operates one or more parts of a coal- or gas-fired power station that is the subject of a trigger notice (section 9 of the NZEA Act). The employer could own or operate the power station alone or jointly and can be defined as a closing employer whether or not it employs employees to perform work at the power station.</p> <p>Under subsection 6(2) an employer would also be a closing employer if it is an associated entity of another constitutional corporation that either alone or jointly owns or operates one or more parts of a coal-fired or gas-fired power station that is the subject of a trigger notice. Additionally, the employer must meet either or both of the following criteria to be defined as closing employer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• employs employees to perform work at the coal-fired or gas-fired power station</li><li>• where the power station that is subject to the trigger notice is a coal-fired power station and the employer alone or jointly operates a coal mine that supplies coal to the power station to generate electricity at that power station, the employer employs employees to perform work at the coal mine.</li></ul>
Community of interest process	<p>The community of interest process described under section 55 of the NZEA Act is one of the first steps the CEO takes under the EIJP when a 'trigger situation' (under subsection 55(2) of the NZEA Act) exists and the CEO must undertake a community of interest process of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identifying employers as closing and dependent employers</li><li>• seeking expressions of interest from employers that are constitutional corporations that may be interested in becoming 'receiving employers'</li><li>• identifying the number of transition employees of the closing employers or dependent employers and the kinds of jobs performed by those employees and obtaining details relating to the employment of transition employees</li><li>• identifying an estimate of the number of transition employees who are, or who will become, participating employees of the closing employers or dependent employers.</li></ul> <p>The purpose of obtaining this information is to enable the CEO to make an application to the FWC for a community of interest determination under section 56 of the NZEA Act.</p> <p>The community of interest process requires the CEO to undertake consultation. This includes consulting with employers that may be closing or dependent employers, relevant employer and employee organisations and, to the extent that the CEO considers appropriate, the community. Additionally, the CEO will seek information from employers that may become receiving employers on the number, nature and location of the jobs they could offer and the skills required.</p>

**Term****Community of interest application****Definition**

On completion of the community of interest process, the CEO may decide to make an application to the FWC for a community of interest determination under section 56 of the NZEA Act.

The CEO will consider a range of factors in deciding whether to apply to the FWC for a community of interest determination and in deciding which employers to include in such an application. These factors include the object of the NZEA Act, existing supports available to transition employees to find new employment, the number of transition employees, the number of transition employees likely to become participating employees, employers' capacity to redeploy transition employees in other business operations and the capacity of other employers in the power station's geographic area to offer employment to transition employees. The CEO is not limited to considering only these factors.

If the CEO decides to apply to the FWC for a community of interest determination, the FWC will consider these same factors in deciding whether to specify a closing or dependent employer in that determination. The FWC is also not limited to considering only those factors.

If the CEO decides to make an application, they generally need to make that application at least 2 years before the scheduled closure of whole or part of a coal-fired or gas-fired power station – provided the trigger notice is given at least 42 months before the closure. Otherwise, the CEO must make the application as soon as practicable after completion of the community of interest process under section 55 of the NZEA Act.

The FWC will hear from relevant parties about any application from the CEO. This includes:

- the Authority's CEO or their nominated representative
- the EIWRAG (as defined below)
- each employer named in the Authority's application
- employee organisations entitled to represent the industrial interests of a transition employee of a closing or dependent employer named in the Authority's application
- any employers nominated by a relevant employee organisation for inclusion in the community of interest determination
- each employer organisation entitled to represent the industrial interests of an employer named in the Authority's application or nominated by a relevant employee organisation
- transition employees who have notified the FWC that they would like to be heard.

Where the FWC specifies an employer in a community of interest determination, that employer will have obligations under sections 58 and 59 of the NZEA Act, including to provide supports to facilitate their employees to find other employment. The CEO must inform employers that they have been specified in a determination as soon as practicable after the determination is made.



## Term

## Definition

### Community of interest determination

Upon receiving a community of interest application made by the CEO, the FWC must determine whether the EIJP should apply through the issuing of a community of interest determination. This determination can be made by the FWC under section 57 of the NZEA Act.

When making a determination, the FWC will hear from relevant parties about any application from the CEO. This includes:

- the Authority's CEO or their nominated representative
- the EIWRAG (as defined below)
- each employer named in the Authority's application
- employee organisations entitled to represent the industrial interests of a transition employee of a closing or dependent employer named in the Authority's application
- any employers nominated by a relevant employee organisation for inclusion in the community of interest determination
- each employer organisation entitled to represent the industrial interests of an employer named in the Authority's application or nominated by a relevant employee organization
- transition employees who have notified the FWC that they would like to be heard.

Where the FWC specifies an employer in a community of interest determination, that employer will have obligations under sections 58 and 59 of the NZEA Act, including to provide supports to facilitate their employees to find other employment. The CEO must inform employers that they have been specified in a determination as soon as practicable after the determination is made.

### Constitutional corporation

A financial or trading corporation formed in Australia or a foreign corporation. A business is usually a constitutional corporation if it has 'Pty Ltd' or 'Ltd' within its business name.

Term	Definition
<p><b>Dependent employer</b></p>	<p>Dependent employers are defined in subsections 6(3) and 6(4) of the NZEA Act. Under each subsection, a dependent employer must be a constitutional corporation. The definitions are intended to capture the diverse corporate structures and supply chain arrangements that are present across the electricity generation and mining industries</p> <p>Under subsection 6(3), an employer can be a dependent employer if it has a commercial relationship with a closing employer – where the closing employer meets the definition under subsection 6(1), or under subsection 6(2) (where the closing employer employs employees to work at the power station concerned). To be a dependent employer, the employer must also be, or be likely to, cease a substantial part of its business operations at the power station or in the same geographic area as the power station as a direct result of the power station’s eventual closure.</p> <p>Subsection 6(4) captures outsourced workers at coal mines that are included in the EIJP. Under subsection 6(4), an employer is a dependent employer if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a commercial relationship with another constitutional corporation that operates a coal mine (alone or jointly); or</li> <li>• have a commercial relationship with an associated entity of another constitutional corporation, where the other constitutional corporation operates a coal mine (alone or jointly); or</li> <li>• is an associated entity of another constitutional corporation, where the other constitutional corporation operates a coal mine (alone or jointly).</li> </ul> <p>Under each of these options, the coal from the coal mine must be supplied to a closing employer to generate electricity at the relevant coal-fired power station and the other constitutional corporation will, or will be likely to, cease a substantial part of the business operations in the same geographic area as the power station as a direct result of the power station’s eventual closure. Additionally, the employer must employ employees to perform work at the coal mine.</p>
<p><b>Energy Industry Jobs Plan (EIJP) Framework</b></p>	<p>The worker transition framework outlined under Part 5 of the <i>Net Zero Economy Authority Act 2024</i></p>
<p><b>Energy Industry Worker Redeployment Advisory Group (EIWRAG)</b></p>	<p>The EIWRAG is established under section 63 of the NZEA Act. It is an advisory group with the right to be heard in relation to various applications made to FWC.</p> <p>EIWRAG members are appointed by the Minister. The membership of the EIWRAG comprises persons who are members of, or who have been nominated by, employer and employee organisations entitled to represent the industrial interests of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one or more employers, if that employer became a closing employer</li> <li>• one or more employers, if that employer became a dependent employer</li> <li>• one or more employees, if those employees became the transition employees of a closing employer</li> <li>• one or more employees, if those employees became transition employees of a dependent employer.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Employer organisation and employee organisation</b></p>	<p>An employer organisation or employee organisation is an organisation registered under the <i>Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009</i>.</p>



Term	Definition
<b>Fair Work Commission (FWC)</b>	<p>The FWC is Australia's national workplace relations tribunal and registered organisations regulator.</p> <p>The FWC was established by the <i>Fair Work Act 2009</i>.</p>
<b>Geographic area</b>	<p>Provisions for the geographic area are under section 8 of the NZEA Act.</p> <p>By notifiable instrument, the CEO can specify a geographic area consisting of one or more areas. The geographic area may consist of one or more Statistical Areas level 2 (as per the Australian Bureau of Statistics). However, alternative types of areas can be selected.</p>
<b>NZEA Act</b>	<p><i>Net Zero Economy Authority Act 2024</i></p>
<b>Parliament</b>	<p>The federal legislature of Australia, known as the Parliament of Australia</p>
<b>Part 5</b>	<p>Part 5 of the <i>Net Zero Economy Authority Act 2024</i></p>
<b>Participating employee</b>	<p>A participating employee is defined under section 5 of the NZEA Act. Participating employees are transition employees (defined under section 7 of the NZEA Act) of closing or dependent employers who have provided expressions of interest to their employer in finding other employment.</p>
<b>Priority regions and Regional Identification Framework</b>	<p>Priority regions are regions where the Authority is facilitating investment and support due to being most at risk from decarbonisation or where there is the greatest potential to benefit from emerging industries.</p> <p>The priority regions were informed by the Authority's Regional Identification Framework. The Regional Identification Framework is an evidence-based approach to that provide advice to the Australian Government on the regions where the Authority should prioritise its focus.</p> <p>Current Priority regions include Collie in WA, Central Queensland, the Hunter in NSW, and the Latrobe and broader Gippsland region in Victoria. The Authority is also taking a project-led approach to transformational projects in the Pilbara in WA and the Upper Spencer Gulf in South Australia.</p>
<b>Receiving employer</b>	<p>Receiving employers are defined under subsection 6(5) of the NZEA Act. A receiving employer is a constitutional corporation that has both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• given an expression of interest to the CEO (as mentioned under section 55 of the NZEA Act) and not withdrawn it</li><li>• been specified in a determination by the CEO.</li></ul>
<b>Specialist Investment Vehicle (SIV)</b>	<p>Specialist investment vehicles are Commonwealth entities that prudently invest public funds across a diverse range of sectors, including energy and climate and critical minerals or resources. SIVs relevant to the NZEA Act include the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and the National Reconstruction Fund Corporation.</p>

**Term****Definition****Transition employee**

Transition employees are defined under subsections 7(1), 7(2), 7(3) and 7(4) of the NZEA Act.

Subsections 7(1) and 7(2) define transition employees of closing employers. A transition employee is an employee employed by a closing employer (as defined under subsections 6(1) or 6(2) of the NZEA Act) to perform work at a relevant coal-fired or gas-fired power station or a coal mine (under subparagraph 6(2)(c)(ii) of the NZEA Act).

Subsections 7(3) and 7(4) define transition employees of dependent employers. A transition employee is an employee employed by a dependent employer (as defined under subsections 6(3) and 6(4) of the NZEA Act) to perform work in the business operations that will, or will be likely to, cease as a direct result of the closure of the relevant power station.

**Trigger notice**

Provisions for trigger notices are under section 9 of the NZEA Act.

By notifiable instrument, the CEO can specify a kind of notice or a particular notice as a trigger notice if they are satisfied that the notice relates to the closure of the whole, or part of a coal-fired or gas-fired power station. This could include a notice given under a provision of the National Electricity Rules or a provision under a law of Western Australia. The CEO can also specify other types of notices as a trigger notice, including notices which are not under the law of the Commonwealth, a state or a territory.

Once a trigger notice is in place, the CEO must conduct a community of interest process under section 55 of the NZEA Act.

**Trigger situation**

A trigger situation exists if the CEO becomes aware of the giving of a kind of notice covered by the definition of trigger notice in section 5 or specifies a particular notice for the purposes as a trigger notice.



# Appendix F – Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>ABC</b>	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
<b>ACCI</b>	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
<b>ACTU</b>	Australian Council of Trade Unions
<b>AEMO</b>	Australian Energy Market Operator
<b>AMWU</b>	Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union
<b>ALGA</b>	Australian Local Government Association
<b>ASU</b>	Australian Services Union
<b>AWU</b>	Australian Workers' Union
<b>BZE</b>	Beyond Zero Emissions
<b>CEFC</b>	Clean Energy Finance Corporation
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CITF</b>	Collie Industrial Transition Fund
<b>CCF</b>	Civil Contractors Federation
<b>COI</b>	Community of interest
<b>COP30</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> annual session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>CPD</b>	Centre for Policy Development
<b>CSIRO</b>	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
<b>DCCEEW</b>	Department of Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water (Australian Government)
<b>DEWR</b>	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
<b>DISR</b>	Department of Industry, Science and Resources
<b>EAF</b>	Electric arc furnace
<b>EIJP</b>	Energy Industry Jobs Plan
<b>EIWrag</b>	Energy Industry Worker Redeployment Advisory Group
<b>EOI</b>	Expression of interest
<b>ESM Rules</b>	Electricity System and Market Rules
<b>ETU</b>	Electrical Trades Union
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FIF</b>	Future Industries Facility
<b>FJIA</b>	Future Jobs and Investment Authority
<b>FJIB</b>	Future Jobs and Investment Bill

<b>FWC</b>	Fair Work Commission
<b>GCCN</b>	Gippsland Climate Change Network
<b>GTO</b>	Group Training Organisation
<b>HJA</b>	Hunter Jobs Alliance
<b>HJO</b>	Hunter Joint Organisation
<b>IEEFA</b>	Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis
<b>JTM</b>	European Union's Just Transition Mechanism
<b>LCC</b>	Lithgow City Council
<b>LMCC</b>	Lake Macquarie City Council
<b>MEU</b>	Mining and Energy Union
<b>MPPS</b>	Mount Piper power station
<b>NDC</b>	Nationally Determined Contribution
<b>NEM</b>	National Electricity Market
<b>NER</b>	National Electricity Rules
<b>NIER</b>	Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources
<b>NRF</b>	National Reconstruction Fund
<b>NRFC</b>	National Reconstruction Fund Corporation
<b>NSW</b>	New South Wales
<b>NZEA</b>	Net Zero Economy Authority
<b>NZEA Act</b>	<i>Net Zero Economy Authority Act 2024</i>
<b>NZI</b>	Net Zero Institute
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PGPA Act</b>	<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>
<b>R&amp;D</b>	Research and development
<b>REM</b>	Revised Explanatory Memorandum for the Net Zero Economy Authority Bill 2024
<b>RWTO</b>	Regional Workforce Transition Officers
<b>RWTP</b>	Regional Workforce Transition Plan
<b>SERD</b>	Strategic Examination of Research and Development
<b>SIV</b>	Special Investment Vehicle
<b>TSN</b>	Transition Support Network
<b>TWF</b>	Transitioning Workforce Fund
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>WA</b>	Western Australia
<b>WEM</b>	Wholesale Energy Market

# Appendix G – Reference list

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