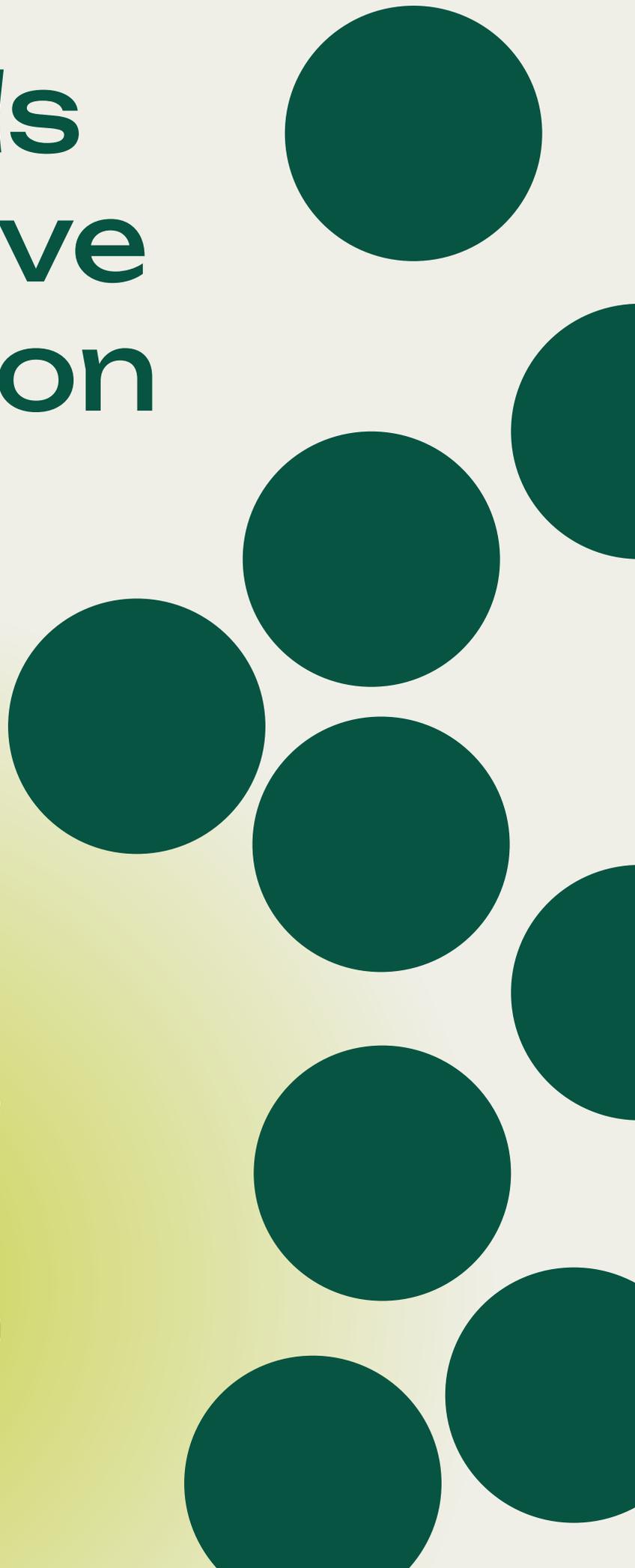


Towards a positive transition

Statutory Review of
the Energy Industry
Jobs Plan 2025

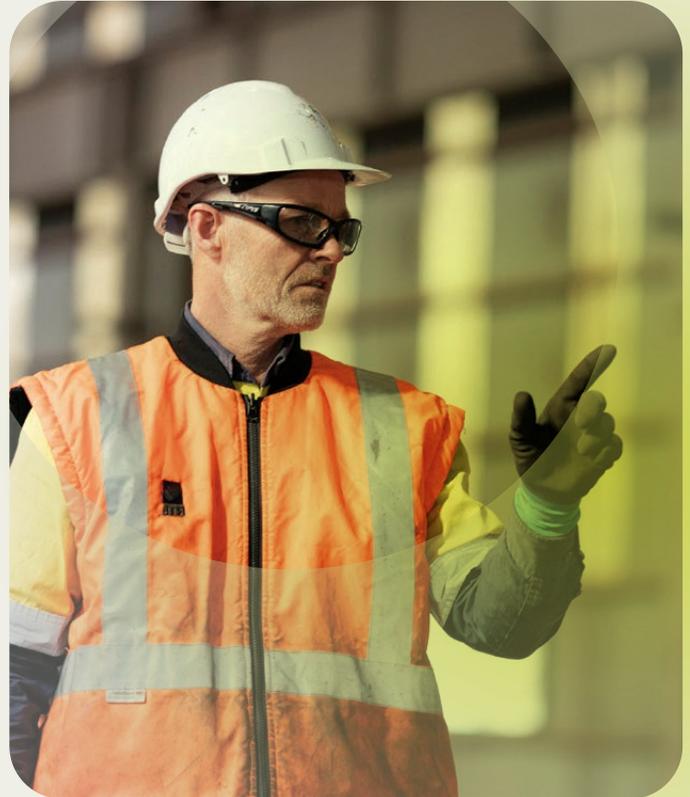
Summary report



Review purpose and context

Under section 68 of the *Net Zero Economy Authority Act 2024* (NZEA Act), the CEO of the Authority must conduct, or cause to be conducted, a review into the operation of Part 5, and ensure the review is completed within 12 months of the NZEA Act’s commencement.

The purpose of the review was to consider whether the Energy Industry Jobs Plan (EIJP) is working effectively and as intended by parliament, as well as its likely success into the future. The review was 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.



Timeline for the Energy Industry Jobs Plan Review

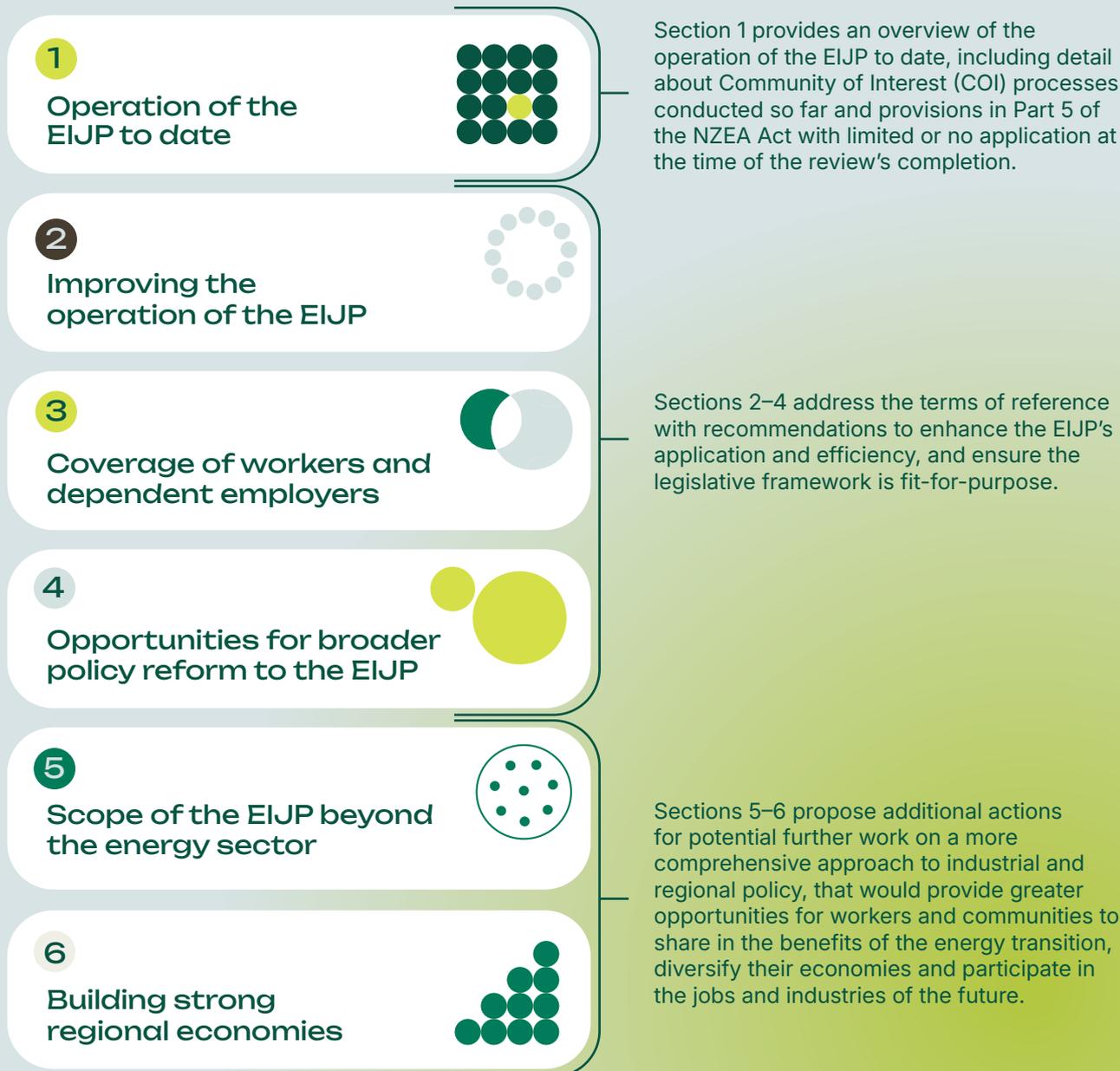


Structure of the report

The report provides 12 recommendations in line with the terms of reference and includes 4 additional actions in response to evidence and submissions raised during consultations that go beyond the terms of reference.

These additional actions 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 report is largely structured into 6 parts:



Recommendations and additional actions

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 Fair Work Commission (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.

Key findings

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

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 and enhancing the operation of the EIJP through the timeliness and clarity of processes can support faster and more efficient COI processes, which is a key area of concern for stakeholders. Further, facilitating better planning and understanding of the EIJP, would improve engagement and its accessibility and usability for stakeholders, including through providing more information around closure dates and the roles of parties in a COI process.

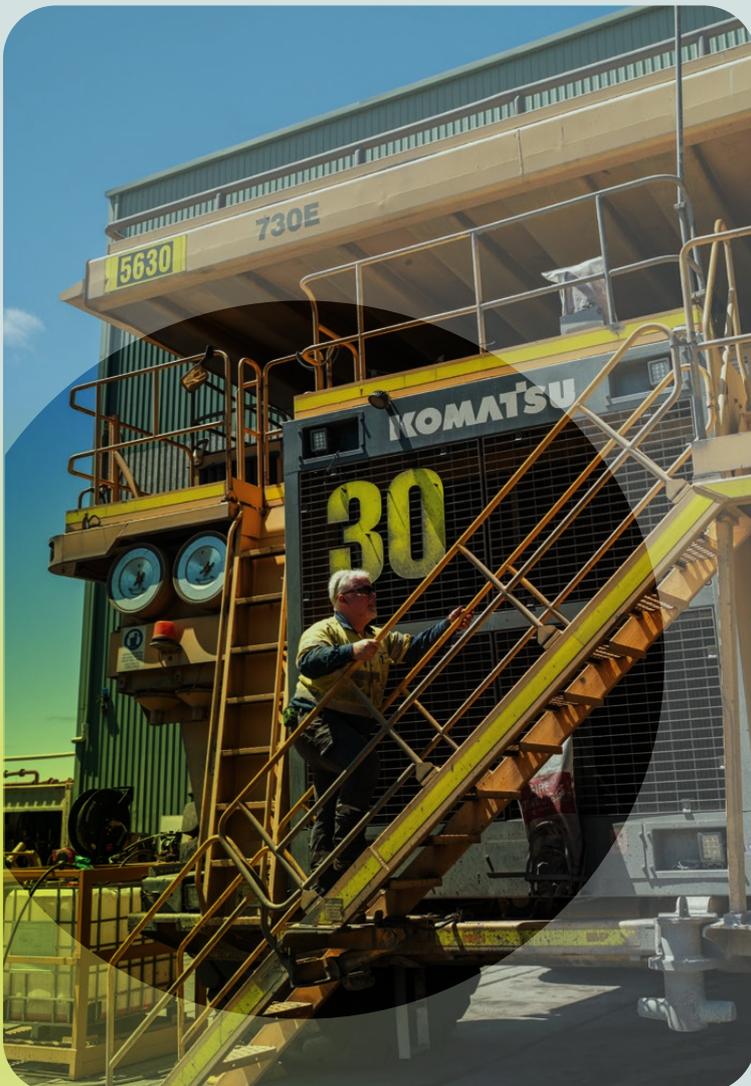
The review identified that the potential for greater cooperation and codetermination of transition supports between parties could mean that supports flow sooner to impacted workers. The report also deals with a range of issues identified through consultations including, consideration to commence the EIJP earlier, coverage of dependent employers, small business and decommissioning workers, as well as mental health support. The report also notes that 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.

The EIJP does not operate in isolation to create jobs and relies on the broader economic and regional context in which it operates. Success depends on concurrent actions that build economic resilience and diversification in the region to create 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. 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.

Limitations

The time between the commencement of the NZEA Act and completion of the review was brief. 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. 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.



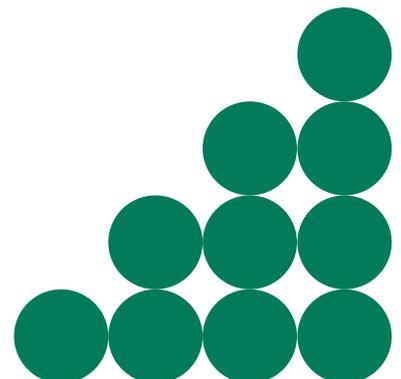


Key issues raised in the review

The review heard from stakeholders that, while the EIJP is generally operating as parliament intended, there are opportunities to streamline processes and improve their experience.

Key views and concerns raised by stakeholders included:

- need for greater clarity and transparency around COI processes so parties can prepare and understand the requirements for participation
- to date, COI processes have taken longer than stakeholders anticipated and commence too close to a closure and subsequently do not allow enough time to develop and implement adequate transition plans for impacted workers
- that some workers may not currently be covered by the EIJP due to their employer not meeting statutory definitions, or the potential for employers avoiding obligations due to technicalities which undermine policy intent
- the COI process and resulting obligations may have considerable financial and time impacts for small businesses
- mental health support for workers and communities is critical
- the EIJP should be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and that more data and experiences from closures and operation of the EIJP is needed before a future review is undertaken
- there is a perceived gap in supports for workers in heavy industry, particularly coal mine workers and coal communities
- the impact decarbonising the economy will have on the future of regions and the need for a coherent, collaborative and place-based policy approach underpinned by strategic public (and private) investment is needed to diversify the economies of impacted regions
- the government should establish hubs in priority regions to drive innovation and create new industries.
- there should be greater incentives to encourage local businesses to participate as receiving employers under the EIJP.



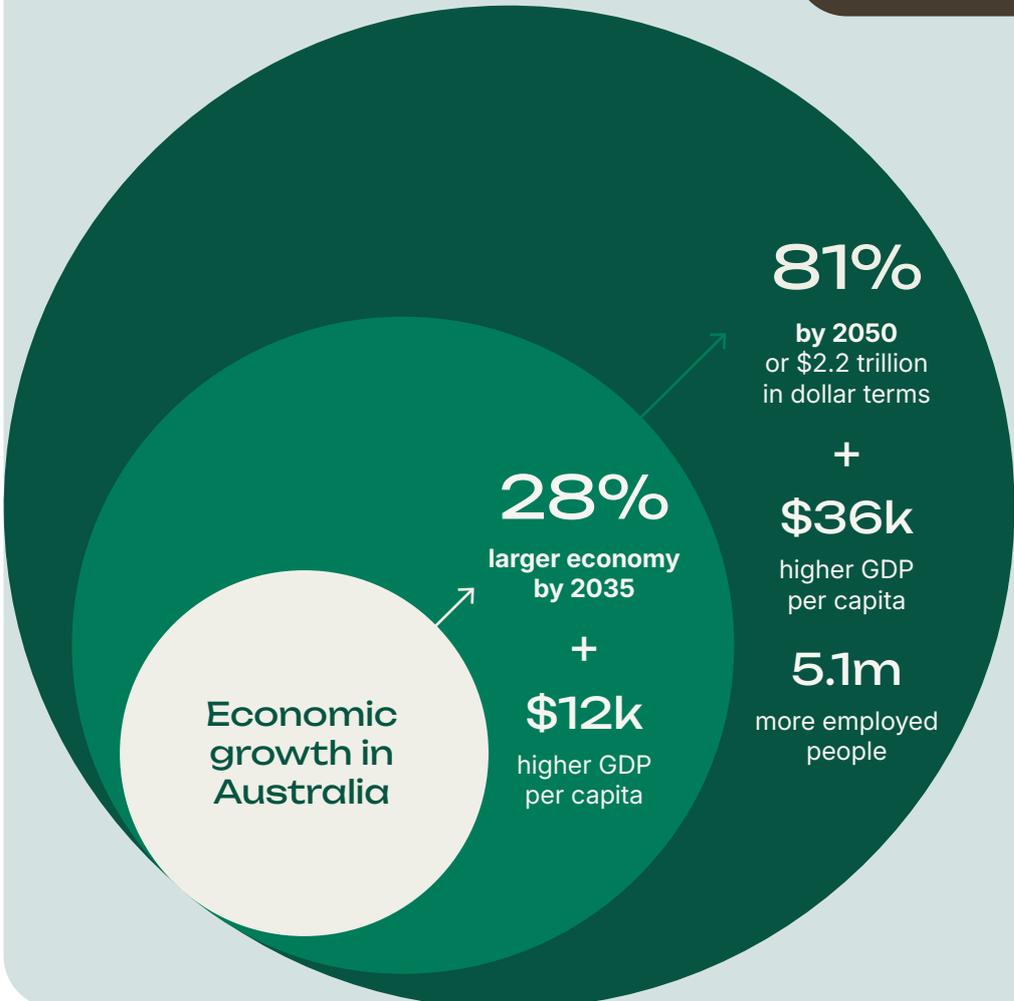
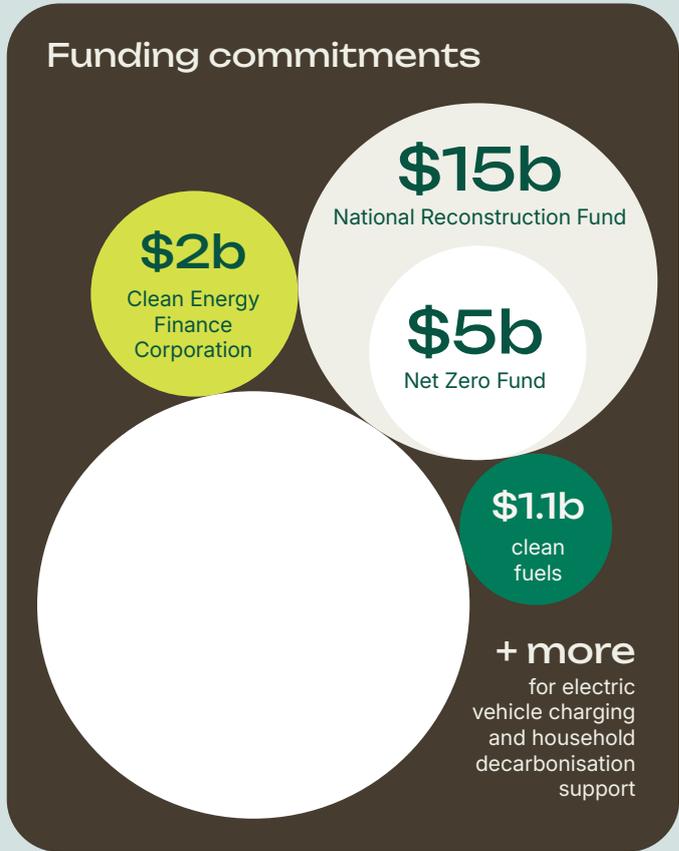
Australia's net zero transition

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.

The Department of the Treasury's baseline scenario modelling stated Australia's Net Zero Plan will support economic growth, projecting higher living standards and employment.



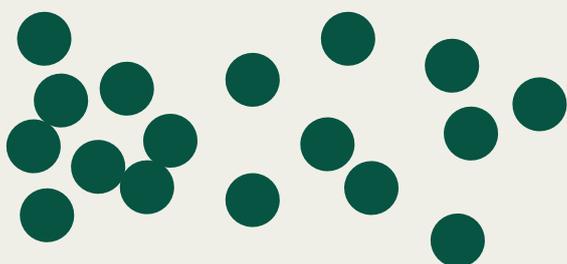
Consultation

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.

The review's final report is based on extensive consultation with a diverse range of stakeholders, including workers, employers, unions, employer organisations, academia, community groups, local councils and Commonwealth and state government agencies.

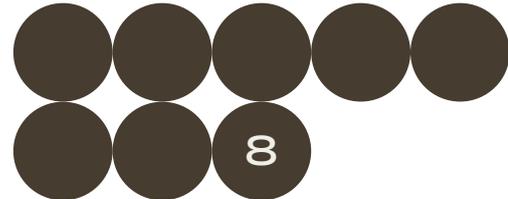
The review received 33 public submissions. All public submissions have been published on the Authority's website. The review also undertook 99 in-person and online consultation meetings.

The review travelled to regions likely to be impacted by the closure of coal-fired and gas-power stations. These regions included the Hunter and Lithgow regions in New South Wales, the Latrobe Valley in Victoria, Adelaide in South Australia, Gladstone and Biloela in Central Queensland, and Collie in Western Australia. In addition, roundtables with peak employer groups, industry bodies and unions were held in Canberra. Engagements with Commonwealth departments and state government agencies to discuss jurisdictional overlaps, policy design and coordination also informed the review.



Submissions

Unions and worker organisations



Government - local



Policy, advocacy and economic development



Employers



Employer organisations



Academics



Individual

