

Senator the Hon Tim Ayres  
Minister for Industry and Innovation  
Minister for Science  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Ayres

## Statement of Intent of the Net Zero Economy Authority

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Net Zero Economy Authority (the Authority). We welcome your Statement of Expectations for the Authority and your acknowledgement of the important role the Authority plays in supporting the Government's objectives for an orderly and positive transition to an economy powered by renewable energy and clean industries. We are delighted to provide the Authority's responding Statement of Intent outlining how we will meet your expectations.

### Operating environment

The Authority is operating in a period where the shape and pace of the transition will become clearer over the next three to five years. Decisions already taken by governments and industry, and those expected soon, will define the economic path of several major industrial regions. In the lead up to 2030, responding to power station closures will continue to be a major focus of our work. Based on publicly announced closure dates, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) expects to assess more coal fired power station closures over the next four years than in any other comparable period in the next decade. There is community expectation that these closures are followed by openings of new industrial facilities.

Across regions that are mostly affected by the transition, such as the Hunter, Latrobe, Collie and Central Queensland, the pace and nature of change vary, requiring strong coordination between governments, industry, investors and communities. Some regions face repeated cycles of closures and downsizing, while others have clearer transition pathways but still need targeted support to attract new industries and manage workforce impacts. Opportunities for new energy and industrial development also differ between regions, with some transitions expected to unfold more gradually due to local circumstances and policy settings."

These regional differences between the Hunter, Latrobe, Collie and Central Queensland will require the Authority to sequence its work, adjust its approach and vary the level of intensity in each location. This work also seeks to align with the Government's broader focus on strengthening Australia's industrial capabilities and securing our economic and national security as global decarbonisation progresses. This is the operating environment in which we act. It involves a mix of near-term closure pressures, medium-term feasibility decisions, and long-term industry creation opportunities. The Authority's role is to bring coherence to this picture, encourage investment, promote understanding and provide confidence to regions about what lies ahead. By further informing Government actions it can assist communities to prepare for change and benefit from new opportunities.

## **Supporting regions most affected by the transition**

Consistent with your expectations, the Authority will work actively to support transition in the Hunter, Latrobe, Collie and Central Queensland.

Our work in these locations reflects the functions you have set out. These include providing independent analysis, coordinating across governments, linking Commonwealth and state programs, and working closely with Specialist Direct Investment Vehicles (SIVs). You have also asked the Authority to lead investment focused planning, attract new industrial and energy projects and support the diversification of regional economies.

To do this effectively, we will work with national, state and local governments and regional partners to define and drive a positive transition in each region. We will work with you to define what this approach involves and how it is progressed. Our intent is that it brings together the industrial, workforce and infrastructure planning needed to attract new investment and support workers and communities as industries transition from fossil fuel to green industries. This work will support the Future Made in Australia agenda and the Government's commitment to reach net zero by 2050.

We will provide structured advice to you and the Government on what is required to drive regional industrial transition in each region. This advice will draw on our regional analysis and engagement, our assessment of investment opportunities and barriers, and our understanding of workforce and community impacts. We will use this analysis to set out practical actions for Government; identify the roles other departments and agencies need to play and recommend how SIVs and state programs can be mobilised to support the transition. We will also provide early identification of risks and opportunities so Government can respond in a timely way.

To support this work, we will grow our regional presence so workers, communities and investors can engage directly with the Authority, starting with the Hunter. This presence will be established with other Commonwealth agencies and state and local governments.

Beyond the Hunter, Latrobe, Collie and Central Queensland, we will continue engagement where transition is already underway or where significant opportunities exist. This includes the Upper Spencer Gulf and the Pilbara. We will also contribute our expertise to your department in regions where it has the lead, such as Mount Isa and Bell Bay, and will engage in other regions identified through our Regional Prioritisation Framework.

## **Worker transition supports and our regulatory responsibilities**

Supporting workers is central to the Authority's mandate. The Energy Industry Jobs Plan (EIJP) provides a national framework to help workers prepare for and secure well-paid, safe, and secure jobs when coal and gas fired power stations close. This support extends to employees of businesses substantially affected by these closures.

As a new regulator, we have focused on establishing ourselves as an open, collaborative and data-driven entity. The CEO has developed consultation, information gathering and assessment processes to ensure decisions are fair, consistent and transparent, and that we fulfill our legal expectations and meet worker and community expectations. To date, the CEO has successfully applied for an EIJP determination with respect to the closure of Torrens B power station in Adelaide and has commenced community of interest processes for the Origin Energy Eraring Power Station and Yallourn Power Station closures. Over the near term, the CEO will also focus on assessing the closures of Collie and Muja power stations, as well as Gladstone. Decisions will be risk-based, proportionate and informed by clear evidence. The CEO will ensure workers and communities are supported and will respond transparently to issues that attract significant community interest.

We will continue to work closely with other departments across the Commonwealth, including to ensure that workers and their families affected by transition receive support. This includes

collaborating with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) so that EIJP provides support that is complementary to existing programs, including the Regional Workforce Transition Plans and the Transitioning Workforce Fund which will be rolled out across four of the Authority's priority regions.

Moving forward, and as power station closure dates become closer, we will ensure a strong focus on delivery and building stakeholder confidence. This includes establishing redeployment pools, administered by local Jobs Coordinators and supported by an online Jobs Board, hiring subsidies and early retirement grants to support affected workers to obtain high quality roles in their local area. The CEO will also establish a compliance and enforcement framework, based on clear engagement and proportionate action, with guidance to employers and workers to promote understanding and support voluntary compliance.

The CEO will administer the EIJP in accordance with all applicable legal and policy frameworks, including the Act, the Regulatory Policy, Practice and Performance Framework and the *Privacy Act 1988*.

We will use authoritative data, including labour market trends and employer and employee information, to inform our decisions. This approach will evolve as the Authority matures as a regulator, incorporating lessons learned and a commitment to continuous improvement. In responding to the statutory review of Part 5 of the Act, the CEO will consider recommendations promptly and will work with your department on any matters beyond the CEO's remit.

### **Increasing understanding and awareness**

The Authority will communicate with transparency, using evidence as well as building trust through place-based and federal partnerships with a focus on delivery of economic outcomes for workers and communities in our priority industrial regions.

We will continue to provide information for Australians about energy system change, industrial projects, employment opportunities and government investments as well as the government's Future Made in Australia economic diversification strategy.

Our website has a broad range of information for Australians nationally but with a focus on our priority regions. This supports our regional community engagement aimed at informing decision-makers and community members.

Our work in this area is underpinned by our legislated function: "to encourage, support, develop and deliver educational and promotional initiatives for the purpose of promoting an understanding of, and enabling participation in, Australia's transition to a net zero emissions economy."

### **Working collaboratively**

We recognise the importance of working with state, territory and local governments, industry and community to deliver a better future for industrial regions and workers.

The Board has established a Stakeholder Panel made up of representatives and expert bodies to provide real-time insights into transitional issues and the effectiveness of policy responses. The Authority will work with existing place-based Commonwealth delivery networks to ensure coordinated, on-the-ground engagement and delivery in priority regions.

We have built strong relationships with government agencies and Specialist Investment Vehicles, including the National Reconstruction Fund Corporation. We will continue to collaborate with SIVs to help deliver investment in transition regions.

We will work with Industry, Science and Resources portfolio agencies such as Commonwealth Science and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Geoscience Australia and the NRFC

to ensure a unified approach. We will also work with agencies outside the portfolio including DEWR, Treasury, the National Indigenous Australians Agency, the Office for Women, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication, Sport and the Arts, and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water to support secure and inclusive jobs.

We will continue to work with DISR to support the net zero transition of our priority regions, and to provide timely and accurate advice regarding broader industrial transition matters related to the Authority's remit.

### **Ensuring effective governance and reporting**

We will continue to comply with all relevant legislation, including the *Net Zero Economy Authority Act 2024* (NZEA Act) and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). We will act in a proper manner consistent with our obligations under the PGPA Act and relevant Resource Management Guides (RMGs).

We will exercise our functions and powers in accordance with regulatory best practice as outlined in RMG 128.

### **Relationship with the Minister**

We welcome your acknowledgement of the Authority's independence and the role of the Board and CEO. The Board and CEO will lead strongly to deliver positive outcomes for regional communities.

We will maintain close coordination with your office and DISR, including providing timely notice of proposed major announcements, events, consultations and public documents. This will be important as we continue our work to be an authoritative voice through education and outreach that promotes understanding of, and participation in, Australia's transition to a net zero economy.

The Board will continue to keep you informed of key decisions and conflicts in accordance with the Board Charter, provide reports and advice related to our functions and consider the operation of the NZEA Act to inform you whether an independent review is required.

The CEO will administer Part 5 of the NZEA Act, manage the day-to-day operations of the Authority and ensure the Authority's financial and operational management reflects care, diligence and transparency.

On behalf of the Board, thank you for your ongoing support for the Authority and its purpose.

Yours sincerely



Dr Iain Ross  
Chair  
Net Zero Economy Authority  
23/02/2026



David Shankey  
Chief Executive Officer  
Net Zero Economy Authority  
24/02/2026