



Tuesday, 15 October 2024

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## Submission – NSW 2030 Renewable Energy Workforce Plan

The Clean Energy Council welcomes the opportunity to make a submission in response to the New South Wales (NSW) 2030 Renewable Energy Workforce Plan (REWP).

The Clean Energy Council is the peak body for the clean energy industry in Australia. We represent and work with around 1,000 businesses operating in Australia across renewable energy, energy storage, and renewable hydrogen.

We welcome the development of the REWP, and the vision of securing the workforce required to achieve legislated emissions targets and creating legacy employment for host communities. The Pillars and outcomes accurately reflect the workforce challenges and opportunities facing the clean energy transition. We recommend that the Department consider partnering with the Clean Energy Council to extend and amplify existing programs of work relevant to the outcomes across the Awareness, Mobility, Equity and Support pillars. These programs include Careers For Net Zero, Clean Energy Required Training projects currently being run in Victoria and Queensland, our Women in Renewables program, and the Grid Connection Engineer Graduate Program.

### **Awareness**

#### *Careers For Net Zero*

In October 2023, the Clean Energy Council and the Energy Efficiency Council launched [Careers For Net Zero](#). This nationwide movement seeks to enhance the visibility of clean energy careers, attracting and securing the workforce needed to achieve Australia's ambitious decarbonisation targets. Careers For Net Zero highlights the diverse career opportunities available across the clean economy for Australians of all levels of education and experience.

The campaign was launched at the inaugural Careers For Net Zero Fair. This event was well attended, with participants from State and Commonwealth Governments, education and training, clean energy and energy efficiency industries. Following the success of this event, we have received requests from interested parties to hold similar events across the country. In partnership with the Queensland Government, we held three regional events in Toowoomba, Gladstone and Townsville in August 2024. We have also received strong interest in holding events in Western Australia and have had preliminary conversations regarding an event in South Australia. We have received speaking requests from regional networks including the South East and Outer East Local

Learning & Employment Networks. This widespread interest confirms the enduring desire of communities to understand the critical occupations and skill needs of the energy transition.

Careers For Net Zero is a demonstrated, trusted brand that can assist the REWP objective of improving visibility and attraction of workers to clean energy. We would welcome partnering with the State Government in pursuit of these outcomes. Specifically, such a partnership could involve:

- Extending the program of events, with one large metropolitan event each year and several regional events in key jurisdictions hosting Renewable Energy Zones.
- Rolling social media campaigns designed to promote visibility of clean energy careers.
- Maintaining and expanding our existing digital assets to include a comprehensive range of occupations critical to secure the energy transition.
- Identifying, coordinating, and recruiting new champions in these occupations.
- Working with the Net Zero Economy Agency on identifying and promoting opportunities and pathways for transitioning workers.
- Developing a range of assets, materials and programs to extend visibility and awareness of clean energy careers to school-aged audiences.

## **Mobility**

### *Clean Energy Required Training*

The Clean Energy Council has commenced Clean Energy Required Training (CERT) projects in Victoria and Queensland. The CERT projects aim to improve worker mobility for the clean energy industry. They establish consistent, industry-agreed benchmarks on the qualifications required for trade workers employed in the construction, commissioning and operations of onshore wind, solar and battery projects in each state.

This information will be published via a digital platform including a worker passport solution. It will enable workers and prospective workers to identify career pathways relevant to their existing skills, upload qualifications for independent verification, and identify relevant employment and/or professional development opportunities in the industry. This information will inform a training matrix that underpins a digital platform to track worker competencies.

The objectives of the CERT projects are to:

- Develop and benchmark the skills and training required across trade occupations for clean energy projects so that industry can communicate with workers, RTOs, government, and employment services about their training needs.
- Increase the pool of qualified and experienced workers, including under-represented or marginalised labour groups, the long-term unemployed, and workers transitioning out of the thermal energy sector, available to clean energy developers and contractors.
- Enable individual workers to establish career development pathways and move between clean energy projects more efficiently and seamlessly because they understand what skills and training are required for specific occupations and what opportunities exist.

The outcomes of these projects are:

- Improved training participation, by clarifying demand to the TAFE and training sector and aligning delivery with industry requirements. It would also provide governments with the evidence-base to make data-driven decisions regarding training investment.
- Improved productivity for industry, by increasing efficiency for project owners and contractors in attracting and employing job-ready workers, reducing time-to-competency and overheads from unnecessary in-house training.
- Improved outcomes for workers, by clarifying, harmonising, and tracking worker qualifications. This will empower the workforce through clear progression pathways.

Once deployed in 2025, we envisage the digital solution will provide a valuable mechanism through which industry can identify future training needs including core competencies, transferable skills, and new skill requirements in emerging technologies.

With support from the NSW government, there is an opportunity to expand this work to New South Wales.

## Equity

### *Women in Renewables Program*

The Clean Energy Council's Women in Renewables program enables and champions women working in the renewable energy industry. By building a united community of people who share a collective mission and vision, we support women to step up as empowered leaders within their organisations. The Women in Renewables initiative has five core aims:

1. To showcase the contribution of women in renewables.
2. To provide professional development opportunities and advice for women in renewables.
3. To foster a sense of valued community, and wider industry pride in Women in Renewables.
4. To provide opportunities for informal self-guided development and support for women in renewables.
5. To foster positive change in the renewable industry so it can be more inclusive and supportive of women.

The program includes a suite of initiatives, including:

- A **Mentoring Program** that facilitates connections and support for women in the industry as they progress their careers.
- **Women in Renewables Scholarships**, including the Chloe Munro Scholarship for Transformational Leadership and the Australian Institute of Company Directors Scholarship. These enable professional development of women in the clean energy industry.
- The **Panel Pledge**, which commits signatories to only participate in forums and panels that embrace gender diversity.
- A **Speakers Guide**, which showcases the breadth, expertise and knowledge offered by women in the sector to event organisers.

- The **Career Launcher Program**, which enables member companies to sponsor a student or recent graduate who identifies as a woman to attend a major conference.

The Clean Energy Council is also an experienced leader in developing and delivering continuing professional development for clean energy professionals. A partnership under the REWP could see the development of industry tools and continuing professional development resources to improve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in workplaces, including inclusivity guidelines for sites.

## Support

### *Grid Connection Engineer Graduate Program*

The clean energy industry is experiencing a growing shortage of grid connection engineers, with elevated demand projected as the rate of renewable deployments increases. To address this shortage, the Clean Energy Council and the Australian Energy Market Operator have combined efforts to create a [new industry-wide graduate program](#). This program will see graduates rotate between several host organisations from across the clean energy sector, including developers, original equipment manufacturers, transmission network service providers and AEMO. This will provide participants with unique experiences, skills, perspectives and networking opportunities to jump start their careers and secure the talent pipeline for industry. The program also aims to improve the diversity of a critical engineering occupation.


The program has conducted a rigorous assessment of candidates and is scheduled to commence in 2025 in Victoria and Queensland. A partnership under the REWP could support an expansion of the program and secure future offerings, as well as rotations within New South Wales.

We thank the Department for the opportunity to provide input and feedback on the development of the REWP. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these programs in further detail.

Yours sincerely,



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