

Joint Letter to NSW Premier Chris Minns: NSW Leads the Charge

Dear Premier Minns,

Action is needed to realise NSW's clean energy opportunities

Our organisations represent a diverse array of stakeholders spanning business, workers, agriculture, community and environmental interests all united in our desire for NSW to raise ambition and maximise the benefits of renewable energy across the state.

We recognise and congratulate the progress the government has made since coming to office, in particular the passing of the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act, the establishment of an independent Net Zero Commission and steps to accelerate the rollout of renewables.

NSW has the potential to be the renewable energy powerhouse of Australia. We are fortunate to have abundant solar and wind resources, critical minerals, skilled labour resources, and existing heavy industry and manufacturing capabilities to leverage.

But despite good progress, we are at risk of missing opportunities and suffering a disorderly transition. We need to embrace this opportunity and back a plan that will maximise the benefits for our communities, industries and households across NSW. The people we represent, the communities, workers and industry in NSW are ready to get this done, but we need big ambition and coordination from government to make this a reality.

We urge the NSW Government to:

1. **Achieve a faster and fairer deployment of renewable energy projects.**
2. **Support households to electrify appliances, install solar & batteries to slash energy bills**
3. **Provide leadership to dramatically scale clean industry and manufacturing opportunities, creating high-quality and secure jobs across the regions.**

The world is currently in a global climate finance and technology race. We recognise the state currently faces a range of policy challenges including housing and restoring essential services. The window to capture this renewables opportunity is closing and failing to act will be to the state's economic detriment for decades to come. This moment presents a rare opportunity. Renewed leadership at a Commonwealth level is welcome and crucial, but international experience tells us we also need strong subnational leadership.

We need the NSW Government to clearly communicate a resolute commitment and elevated leadership to get this done.

Recognising the government is continuing to construct and deliver its energy agenda, we have identified the below measures as immediate priorities for NSW.

1. Achieve a faster and fairer deployment of renewable energy projects.

The opportunities for both clean industries and household energy savings cannot be realised unless our rollout of domestic renewable generation and firming are significantly fast tracked, we simply cannot afford further delays.

- There can be no further delays to scheduled coal power station closures, we can't afford further chills and mixed signals to renewable energy and clean industry investors. Until the government

publicly commits to ensuring sufficient clean energy capacity to enable coal power stations to close on time, the transition risks being mired in costly uncertainty and delays.

- Planning system roadblocks need to be urgently addressed. Accelerated planning pathways should be made available for renewable projects. Ensure timely delivery of NSW Offshore Wind Strategy that maximises local employment and industry co-benefits.
- Ensure First Nations communities are engaged in free, prior and informed consent for all projects on Country, and are supported and resourced to lead or collaborate on renewable energy development projects¹.
- Implement strong environmental and planning laws to protect nature in the renewables rollout and to provide social licence and certainty for community and investors.
- Support commercial and industrial (C&I), and agricultural opportunities for mid-scale renewables. Enable wind and solar farms to connect to the distribution network.
- Provide support and coordination to ensure that communities and regional stakeholders are involved and benefiting from new transmission and clean energy projects within their area.

2. Support households to electrify appliances, install solar and batteries to slash energy bills.

Consumer energy resources (CERs), such as efficient electric appliances, solar and batteries, alongside performance improvements offer an unprecedented cost of living relief opportunity that will provide long term savings for households². CER's also contribute significantly to grid capacity and reliability by reducing peak demand, and present exciting domestic supply chain manufacturing opportunities.

- The [NSW Consumer Energy Strategy](#) currently in development must set ambitious targets and deliver ample funding. NSW should be aiming for electrification of 75% of NSW homes currently connected to gas by 2030 with any disconnection fees removed, encourage all-electric new builds, and plan for the phase-down of gas distribution networks.
- Deliver the Gas Substitution Roadmap in 2025, including measures to ensure no one gets caught in a “gas death spiral” where fixed gas network costs are spread over a decreasing number of customers, causing bills to skyrocket.
- Introduce new household electrification incentives such as rebates and concessional finance, similar to Victoria and the ACT. These must prioritise supporting low-income, and difficult to electrify households including renters.
- Deliver energy performance upgrades to all NSW social housing stock and First Nations community-controlled housing by 2030, including appliance electrification and, where possible, solar and batteries.
- Fund educational Mobile Community Energy Hubs to engage communities and assist households that face barriers to accessing energy information due to cultural and linguistic diversity. These communities, especially in Western Sydney are also facing the highest cost of living pressure and extreme temperature impacts of climate change³.
- Introduce minimum energy efficiency standards and mandatory disclosure for rental properties by 2025. [Similar to Victoria](#), these standards should mandate requirements for insulation and appliances to be replaced with efficient electric appliances at end of life.
- New multi-dwelling constructions should be mandated to install on-site electric vehicle charging facilities for residents from 2025.
- Ensure best-practice electrical safety standards that will protect workers and give consumers peace of mind by establishing a dedicated electrical safety regulator.

¹ See '[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Best Practice Principles for Clean Energy Projects](#)', FNCEN, 2022.

² See '[Eight ways NSW could cut energy bills during the cost-of-living crisis, and beyond](#)', IEEFA, 2024.

³ See '[Insight Report](#)', Energy Consumers Australia, 2024.

3. Provide leadership to dramatically scale clean industry and manufacturing opportunities, creating high-quality and secure jobs across the regions.

The global clean energy transformation is opening significant opportunities for NSW to create new jobs in the clean energy, materials and manufacturing sectors. However, the window to capture this opportunity is also closing fast as other global jurisdictions invest to capture supply chains. The Commonwealth's recent Future Made in Australia (FMiA) policy agenda is crucial, and it must be supported by policy and enablement at a state level. NSW has opportunities in green metals, green hydrogen, solar supply chain expansion, high voltage cable manufacturing, electric heavy vehicle manufacturing, offshore wind ports and manufacturing, electric appliance manufacturing, and battery supply chain expansion⁴. Accelerating the build out of renewable energy generation and firming capacity underpins all these opportunities. There is also a role for NSW to provide industry policy support to facilitate private sector investment.

- NSW should develop a **Clean Industry Superpower Strategy** to guide state support for new opportunities. NSW is well placed to compete but so are other states and nations. A rigorous assessment of competitive advantages and how to leverage them with policy and public investment is essential.
- State government has a clear role in building skills and providing pathways for workers. Establishing new advanced training centres for new advanced industries with TAFE and industry peak bodies across NSW in key transition regions, would provide a clear point of entry for young workers and support the formation of a deep skills base to attract private capital⁵.
- NSW should work with industry to develop **Clean Energy Industrial Precincts** and common user facilities. The state can provide direct planning support and provision of catalyst infrastructure to bring together supply chain partners and circular economy networks.
- **Public procurement and offtake agreements** can be better utilised to support domestic manufacturing. In particular, NSW has existing supply chain capabilities that should be supported by government: electric busses for the state transport fleet; and electric heat pump hot water appliances for social housing upgrades.
- Introduce **state-based incentives for local content use**. NSW has a variety of tax, incentive and regulatory schemes that can further facilitate local content use by both industry and consumers. There are opportunities for local content in offshore wind secondary steel (e.g. ladders, internal platforms and ship access platforms), household heat pump systems, and electric heavy vehicles.

This moment presents our state with a generational economic opportunity to develop new industry and secure our economic prosperity in a low-emissions world. Climate change is already costing the people of NSW dearly as natural disasters become more frequent and severe. The measures listed above will both open the door to a new era of economic opportunities, and ensure NSW plays our part in the global effort to limit warming below 1.5 degrees.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you.

⁴ See '[Towards an energy superpower: Industry opportunities for Australia to embrace the clean energy revolution](#)', UTS ISF, for CANA & AMWU, 2023.

⁵ See '[A TAFE New Industries Training Centre for the Hunter](#)', Hunter Jobs Alliance, 2022.

