

UNDER EMBARGO: 12.01AM (AEDT) MONDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2017



13 February 2017

NO ROOM FOR PARTISAN POLITICS IN ENERGY

Representatives of Australian communities, including civil society, households, workers, investors, business energy users and energy suppliers today challenged all political leaders to stop partisan antics and work together to reform Australia's energy systems and markets to deliver the reliable, affordable and clean energy that is critical to wellbeing, employment and prosperity.

There is simply no room for partisan politics when the reliability, affordability and sustainability of Australia's energy system is at stake.

The status quo of policy uncertainty, lack of coordination and unreformed markets is increasing costs, undermining investment and worsening reliability risks. This impacts all Australians, including vulnerable low-income households, workers, regional communities and trade-exposed industries.

The finger pointing will not solve our energy challenges. More than a decade of this has made most energy investments impossibly risky. This has pushed prices higher while hindering transformational change of our energy system. The result is enduring dysfunction in the electricity sector.

We need mature, considered debate. Market reform can't happen unless the Commonwealth and States agree, and policies can't last and motivate investment without broad cross-party support. Politicians from all sides of politics and all levels of government need to come together to work through the necessary solutions to our

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energy market challenges. COAG has already established a strong policy process for this – the **Finkel Review**. Politicians need to back it and work with it.

As energy stakeholders we must also play a key role in resolving these issues. All Australians have a stake in success and we must and will provide our politicians with leadership, guidance and support to advance the long-term interests of a prosperous economy, environment and society.

As the Preliminary Report of the Finkel Review correctly notes, many of the technological, economic and consumer trends transforming our energy systems are irreversible. Policy and market designs need to evolve if investors are to deliver the energy services Australians require at a price they can afford. A raft of reforms are needed to encourage and support flexibility throughout the system. The next stage of the Finkel Review should be an opportunity to explore these possibilities and develop a comprehensive and integrated suite of reforms. Policy should be implemented promptly with broad based political support.

There is broad agreement across Australia’s energy users and suppliers on the urgency of fixing the situation. All sides of politics and all levels of government share responsibility for the current state of our energy systems – and for taking action with the energy industry and its customers to improve it. A collective failure to act would come at a cost to all Australians.

Statement made by:

Australian Aluminium Council	Chemistry Australia
Australian Conservation Foundation	Clean Energy Council
Australian Council of Social Services	Energy Efficiency Council
Australian Council of Trade Unions	Energy Networks Australia
Australian Energy Council	Energy Users Association of Australia
The Australian Industry Group	Investor Group on Climate Change
Australian Steel Institute	St Vincent de Paul Society National Council
Business Council of Australia	The Climate Institute
Cement Industry Federation	WWF Australia

Please contact the respective organisations for media comment.

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