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STATEMENT ON THE NEED FOR CLIMATE AND ENERGY POLICY CERTAINTY

As Australia's energy and climate ministers prepare to meet this week, our organisations reinforce the importance of a certain, credible and consistent policy framework to business, industry and investors; the community sector; consumers; advocates for the environment; farmers; people and communities experiencing disadvantage; property and the built environment; and workers.

Australia's energy systems provide an essential service crucial to achieving a competitive economy, a just society and a fair contribution to the global fight against climate change. We need long-term investments towards net zero emissions and the emergence of new industries. But ensuring reliable, competitively priced and ever lower emissions energy also requires urgent heavy lifting this decade to upgrade and extend our electricity systems. Thermal power stations are retiring soon and power demand will grow with the electrification of more industries, cars and buildings.

Significant investments are required from and across all sectors, starting now and continuing for decades. Both government and private money will be critical to support these efforts.

The commitment of governments, regulators and stakeholders to a credible and consistent energy framework is essential to attract finance at the lowest cost of capital and enable all our sectors to efficiently plan, resource and deliver just and timely transition to net zero emissions.

Australia's existing national emissions and energy targets for 2030 are critical foundations for the investments we need to deliver reliable, affordable and clean energy. Achieving them and the deeper targets that must follow on the road to net zero will take further and sustained effort.

Planning for our energy future needs to be evidence-based, transparent, and founded in wide consultation. It must deliver a cost-efficient, practical and equitable response that suits Australia's context and meets our immediate and longer-term energy needs. And it has to be resilient to a changing climate.

The Integrated System Plan (ISP) continues to evolve, but is the best roadmap we have for the National Electricity Market. The ISP and planning for Australia’s other energy systems provide robust evidence that Australia requires more renewable energy at all scales, a cost efficient mix of firming resources, growing and well-coordinated consumer energy resources, more efficient buildings, and stronger smarter transmission and distribution networks to connect it all up.

With cost of living an ongoing concern for Australian households and businesses, a transition that minimises cost to consumers and allocates it equitably is fundamental to maintaining public support. Australia can efficiently deliver the ISP and similar plans for our other energy systems if we work together. The greatest challenges to solve include:

- ensuring an equitable share in the benefits for, and active mitigation of undesirable impacts on, the landholders, traditional owners and communities closest to the new energy infrastructure all Australians need;
- swifter and more predictable assessment processes that are effective both in protecting nature and facilitating essential projects; and
- ensuring all Australians, prioritising people and communities experiencing disadvantage, are able to benefit from consumer energy resources such as solar, thermal efficiency, electrification and batteries.

Time is short before ageing generators retire. By working with and refining the tools at hand now, Australia can efficiently meet its existing and future targets to help the world limit climate change, improve affordability and build a new advantage in energy.

SUPPORTED BY

Ai Group	Australian Aluminium Council	Australian Conservation Foundation
Australian Council of Social Service	Australian Energy Council	Australian Steel Institute
Carbon Market Institute	Cement Industry Federation	Clean Energy Council
Energy Efficiency Council	Energy Networks Australia	Energy Users’ Association of Australia
Environment Victoria	Investor Group on Climate Change	National Farmers’ Federation
Property Council of Australia	Smart Energy Council	WWF-Australia

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