

Electricity Infrastructure Jobs Advocate's first report to the Minister for Energy

November 2022





Acknowledgement of Country

The Electricity Infrastructure Jobs Advocate and secretariat acknowledge that we stand on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

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Cover image: Workers during set up at Moree Solar Farm. Moree, NSW. NSW Department of Planning and Environment/Neil Fenelon

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The Electricity Infrastructure Jobs Advocate's role in the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap

The NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap (the Roadmap) is the NSW Government's plan to transform our electricity system into one that is cheap, clean and reliable.

The Electricity Infrastructure Jobs Advocate (Jobs Advocate) is an independent statutory office established under section 10 of the *Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020* (the Act). The Jobs Advocate's role is to advise the Minister for Energy on:

- strategies and incentives to encourage investment, development, workforce development, employment and education and training opportunities in the energy sector in NSW including in the Hunter, Central Coast, Illawarra, Far West, South West, New England and the Central West regions of NSW
- rail, road and port infrastructure that is needed in NSW and the regions specified above to promote export opportunities for generation, storage and network technology
- other matters requested by the Minister.

The Jobs Advocate may also:

- support implementation of actions in the Renewable Energy Sector Board's plan, especially those relating to skills development and training
- sit on boards, committees and working groups as relevant to the role.

The Jobs Advocate will work alongside other key Roadmap entities such as the NSW Consumer Trustee, Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) and the Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Regional Reference Groups.

About the Electricity Infrastructure Jobs Advocate

The Minister for Energy, the Hon. Matt Kean, MP, appointed Dr Mark Apthorpe as the first NSW Electricity Infrastructure Jobs Advocate on 14 February 2022.

Dr Apthorpe is based in the Hunter and is the current chair of the Hunter Plant Operator Training School Ltd and the Hunter section of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. He has also held senior executive roles in energy and logistics businesses.

Dr Apthorpe's most recent role was as a lecturer in management at the University of Newcastle. He brings to the role strong networks in industry, education, vocational training, unions and a range of relevant industry groups.



Introduction

The Jobs Advocate must provide the Minister for Energy with a report on his activities as soon as practicable after being appointed. The Jobs Advocate must then provide reports once a year. This is the first report on the Jobs Advocate's activities.

Since commencing in the role, the Jobs Advocate has engaged widely with stakeholders in the government, business, union and community sectors to understand the opportunities and barriers to creating meaningful employment opportunities in the energy sector and to identify infrastructure investment to support export opportunities for generation, storage and network technology. This has allowed the Jobs Advocate to gather a wide variety of views on the energy sector that will inform focus areas in providing advice to the Minister for Energy.

This engagement has included visits to the New England and Central-West Orana REZs as well as extensive meetings with stakeholders in the Hunter-Central Coast region on an ongoing basis.

The anticipated scale and geographic spread of investment in the energy sector creates significant opportunities for NSW, particularly in the regions. However, there are challenges to ensure that meaningful employment outcomes are achieved, that NSW realises its potential as an exporter of electricity technology and the REZs are delivered smoothly and for the benefit of local communities and NSW electricity customers.

Some of these challenges apply across the REZs but others are location-specific and will require more nuanced responses. The initial findings, below, outline the major considerations at a NSW-wide level and in the three REZs the Jobs Advocate has extensively consulted: New England, Central-West Orana and Hunter-Central Coast.

Observations

Overarching observations

Workforce supply

Across NSW, and particularly in the REZs where the Jobs Advocate has consulted, there is currently a shortage of workers. Infrastructure projects with similar timing and skills requirements to the REZ, such as housing construction, transport infrastructure and natural disaster recovery are expected to exacerbate this problem. These worker shortages are diverse and span the sector, from professional workers such as engineers and project developers through to construction workers, riggers, electricians and truck drivers. Workforce shortages could inflate costs and cause delays for REZ projects, leading to worse outcomes for the electricity grid and NSW electricity customers.

Workforce shortages are not unique to the REZs and will need a coordinated approach across all levels of government. Stakeholders identified upskilling of existing workers in the region, greater participation from underrepresented groups and underemployed people, and internal as well as international migration as potential ways to alleviate workforce shortages.

Stakeholders also expressed concerns about overreliance on itinerant labour for past renewable energy projects. While this approach addresses immediate labour shortages, there is a perception that local workers are not being given adequate opportunities to participate. Stakeholders argued that direct employment of local workers would increase community support as the economic benefits of renewable energy projects would be more visible. It was also argued that local workers are more likely than itinerant labour to spend money in the local economy, leading to a higher multiplier effect.

Where local workers are not available, stakeholders suggested that new arrivals be encouraged to live in the region long-term. The large pipeline of infrastructure planned in many regions indicates there are sufficient employment opportunities for new arrivals to stay beyond the length of a single project. Stakeholders believed this approach would encourage new arrivals to actively participate in the local community and it would be less disruptive than a churn of itinerant labour.

Coordinating the infrastructure pipeline

Many renewable energy projects need a large number of workers during the construction stage and relatively few during operations and maintenance. If several projects in a REZ all begin around a similar time, it is likely that demand for skilled labour will exceed local supply during construction, before dropping back to a lower baseline.

This creates challenges for training an appropriate number of workers in the right skills. If too few workers are trained, this could inflate project costs and encourage the excessive use of itinerant labour to fill gaps. If too many workers are trained, there is a risk that workers are only able to apply their skills for a relatively short period of time before opportunities evaporate. This would undermine long-term workforce development and could lead to workers disengaging from the labour market.

To smooth demand for labour, stakeholders recommended that REZ projects be centrally coordinated. Coordinating the commencement of projects would reduce the risk of projects competing with one another for the same workers. It would also give a stronger guarantee to workers, particularly trainees and apprentices, that there is a pipeline of work into the future. Some stakeholders suggested that the coordination principle could be extended to other projects needing similar skill sets in a region, such as transport and water infrastructure.

On the supply side, stakeholders suggested the creation of local workforce pools for both qualified workers and apprentices and trainees. This could be supported by a regional skills coordinator whose role would be to connect REZ proponents with local workers and students. Local workforce pools could also make it easier for REZ proponents to find local workers and meet any requirements for local content and workers in Roadmap tenders. Together, a coordinated pipeline of projects and local workforce pools could ensure that the REZs were contributing to workforce development and long-term employment opportunities for the regions.

While a smoother pipeline of REZ infrastructure would lead to better outcomes for proponents and workers, any effort to coordinate the infrastructure pipeline would need to be balanced against the scheduled closure of coal-fired power stations and anticipated shortfalls in electricity generation.

Skills gaps

While it is widely acknowledged that the REZs will need more skilled workers, there is not yet a clear picture of what precisely this means. At the highest level, it is unclear whether existing training packages and units of competency are appropriate for the renewable energy sector. Building this understanding is complicated by the fact that renewable energy projects rely on a range of different workers, including electricians, construction labourers and truck drivers, not all of whom will need specialised skill sets to participate. Gaps in training will also vary according to whether the project relates to transmission infrastructure, solar, wind, batteries or pumped hydro.

At a more detailed level, more clarity is needed on the volume of skills needed for each project, how skills demand aligns with the existing workforce in each region and the timing for when these skills will be needed. This more granular information is critical for properly preparing the local workforce for the opportunities arising from the REZ. Much of this information will become available over time as:

- project proponents provide more information through tender documentation about the types of jobs and skills that will feature in their projects and delivery timeframes
- investigative studies on the types of jobs and skills required in the renewable energy industry are completed at the regional level
- EnergyCo develops industry skills studies for the REZs.

Accessibility of training

There is great variability in access to training across the REZs. In the New England and Central-West Orana (CWO) REZs, stakeholders pointed out that courses offered by TAFEs and regional universities are limited in scope and have not been adapted to meet industry needs. While the University of Newcastle is highly engaged with the renewable energy sector and related industries, stakeholders said that TAFEs in the Hunter-Central Coast region lacked basic trade qualification courses, were difficult to enrol in and unable to teach cutting-edge skills.

To expand the range of courses relevant to the REZs in each region, stakeholders also suggested establishing specialised training centres in those regions. These would be able to work with employers to directly address skills gaps for each region, reducing the need for students to travel further afield.

Stakeholders suggested that students from smaller regional centres have even fewer course options, limiting their opportunities for participating in the REZs. Additionally, the travel and accommodation costs associated with studying in metropolitan or larger regional hubs, away from both students' homes and REZ sites, can make this option prohibitive. Stakeholders believed this would deter people in smaller regional centres from training, or it could increase the likelihood of them leaving the region permanently. For businesses training apprentices and trainees, these costs act as a deterrent to investing in the regional workforce.

To address training accessibility for students in smaller centres, stakeholders suggested the provision of mobile training courses, with Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) visiting smaller urban centres to deliver specific courses. This could be supported by online training where appropriate. These approaches may also help to retain young people in regional areas long-term.

Awareness of the REZs and career opportunities

Stakeholders observed that general community awareness of the REZs is low. However, knowledge of the REZs is higher in the business community, the government sector and among landholders where REZ infrastructure may be built.

There is also a general lack of understanding of the career opportunities in the renewable energy sector, especially among young people. This is partly because the renewable energy sector, at this stage, does not function as a unified industry. Instead, people are more likely to train in a specific trade and work on a variety of infrastructure projects, not just renewable energy. While this transferability aids labour market flexibility, it makes it challenging to promote the industry to young people. The lack of clear, long-term career pathways in the renewable energy sector is also a deterrent.

Stakeholders suggested a key opportunity to address skills gaps, increase community awareness of REZ projects and facilitate more youth participation in the REZs is to directly promote renewable energy career pathways to local high school students. Proactively promoting these opportunities to high school students could align with the timelines for REZ construction and help to build a pipeline of workers. This would also help to address current feedback that school children are interested in the green economy but are unaware of how to participate in it.

Housing

Stakeholders frequently cited regional housing supply and affordability as a critical barrier to delivering the REZs on time and within budget. Many regional areas are already experiencing extremely low rental stock and steep increases in rental and house prices. The increased demand for accommodation during the construction stage of the REZs is expected to exacerbate these shortages, limiting proponents' ability to access adequate labour and increasing the cost of living for existing residents. The short-term nature of many REZ projects also creates the risk of a housing 'boom-bust' cycle, displacing local communities.

Worker accommodation can alleviate some of these pressures. However, stakeholders have a strong preference for worker accommodation to create lasting benefits for the region. Ideas suggested include:

- requiring utilities and all standard housing estate infrastructure to be established where temporary worker accommodation is set up so those lots can be readily converted into new housing stock after REZ construction activities have concluded
- building higher quality worker accommodation to be readily converted into social housing when it is no longer needed
- locating worker accommodation on the edge of regional towns and cities rather than on-site, encouraging workers to spend money in the regions and, ideally, choosing to become part of the community long-term.

It should be noted that issues relating to regional housing extend beyond the REZs and will need a coordinated, whole-of-government response. The NSW Government has already established a Regional Housing Taskforce and is developing Regional Housing Delivery Plans for targeted areas. EnergyCo is also undertaking studies into workforce accommodation requirements and challenges in the REZs.

Region-specific observations

Regional NSW is diverse. There are not only great differences between each REZ but, in some cases, significant differences between the sub-regions of a REZ. This includes differences in economic profile, workforce composition, housing availability, access to training, community attitudes and the infrastructure pipeline. As the rollout of the REZs progresses, these differences will need nuanced advice to achieve the greatest impact on the ground. In addition to the overarching observations above, this section describes region-specific opportunities and challenges for New England, Central-West Orana and Hunter-Central Coast.

New England

The Jobs Advocate travelled to the New England REZ from 4 to 6 April 2022 to meet with businesses, local government representatives and First Nations groups.

In terms of the local workforce, a reported shortage of workers will likely mean REZ projects will compete with other nearby infrastructure projects such as the Moree Special Activation Precinct for skilled workers. Also, stakeholders reported that local workers currently lack the skills required for the REZ buildout. A tight labour market and a lack of local skills encourages the use of itinerant labour. This conflicts with local councils' aspirations to attract new permanent residents that could contribute to the region's economy over the long-term.

Local training in renewable energy is generally not available, forcing students to travel to Tamworth, Newcastle or Sydney and causing businesses to establish in-house solutions. This creates barriers to participation in the REZ and equity issues for those who are unable to leave the region. In places where government initiatives exist to support training, stakeholders either lack awareness of the support available or find the spread of programs confusing.

There is a reported 'vocal minority' who oppose renewables in New England, particularly in and around Walcha, and this opposition may make the New England REZ one of the hardest to establish. Concerns

about the REZ include potential impacts on prime agricultural land, loss of amenity and the decommissioning and remediation process.

First Nations stakeholders were concerned about managing impacts on culturally significant sites, culturally sensitive engagement and maximising the economic and employment benefits for their communities. First Nations stakeholders recommended leveraging an existing network of local knowledge holders to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage, including significant sites, through the REZ buildout process. They also suggested having a local Aboriginal engagement coordinator to manage contact between project proponents and Aboriginal communities to make sure that approaches are collaborative and culturally appropriate. As projects begin construction, this role could transition to a mentoring role to provide culturally appropriate, independent support for First Nations workers. More than one coordinator may be needed across the region due to the different communities and needs.

First Nations stakeholders emphasised the importance of doing more than providing training to First Nations communities. Extra assistance could include finding ways to deliver training by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people, supporting the establishment of Aboriginal-owned businesses to participate directly or indirectly in the REZ, and setting up wraparound supports such as free bus services to worksites and providing basic safety supplies for loan.

Stakeholders identified initiatives related to housing, transport and infrastructure that could support REZ employment outcomes. They frequently cited housing supply and affordability as a critical barrier to ensuring that REZ projects can be delivered. Transport to and from training schools and construction sites was also identified as a challenge. Many young people lack access to private transport, which undermines equitable participation and exacerbates local labour demand issues. Stakeholders suggested assistance with transportation, such as minibuses from town centres, could help improve access.

There are several infrastructure endowments the REZ could benefit from, such as the currently underutilised industrial precinct near Armidale Airport. The rail line from Sydney currently terminates at Armidale, which could potentially be used for future exports and also help the REZ supply chain. Currently it is generally not used for freight and has low passenger usage. Stakeholders felt that New England had good road transport connection to major centres through the New England highway.

Central-West Orana

The Jobs Advocate travelled to the Central-West Orana REZ from 2 to 4 May to meet with community organisations, businesses, local government representatives and the Central-West Orana Regional Reference Group.

Stakeholders expressed scepticism that the construction and operation of REZ projects will result in high-paying, high-skilled, long-term job opportunities in the region. Instead, stakeholders viewed the biggest opportunities as not coming from direct employment from the REZ but rather from attracting new long-term residents to the region, particularly professionals. Stakeholders also considered related industries to have greater potential for ongoing employment, such as critical minerals processing.

Workforce shortages in the region are expected to be exacerbated by competition with other projects with similar schedules, including the Inland Rail near Narromine, water infrastructure projects and the New Dubbo Bridge. Stakeholders suggested several approaches to addressing these shortages. For example, some businesses have established partnerships with schools to encourage career pathways in their industries. This approach could be built upon for the renewable energy sector and expanded to high

schools across the region. Stakeholders also suggested the region could benefit from improved, local course offerings and a local renewable energy training centre, either by using existing underutilised infrastructure or by building a bespoke new facility. This centre could be supported by a regional skills coordinator to manage the flow of workers across projects, helping contractors to find local workers and to meet their contracted industry participation commitments.

Stakeholders want to make sure that hosting REZ infrastructure will lead to a net benefit for their region. To date, community benefit funds from renewable energy projects have been highly variable in application and size. Stakeholders expressed a desire for these funds to be consistently applied across all project types and with money pooled to enable larger, more strategic investments. Although still in development, the community and employment purpose funds to be established with a portion of REZ access scheme fees appear to be working towards this model. Lastly, where energy infrastructure is installed, stakeholders suggested preferencing disturbed mining land over prime agriculture land, national parks and urban areas.

In terms of First Nations perspectives, there is concern about a lack of long-term REZ opportunities, and gaps between projects, which may see workers become disengaged. One suggestion for addressing these gaps is to develop work programs to supplement downtimes, ensuring a continuity across projects and programs. Additionally, participants recommended not just providing initial training, but also looking at opportunities to continue upskilling First Nations people already in the workforce to develop a strong local skills base.

There are existing issues with housing supply and affordability which, unless addressed, may worsen during REZ construction. There is a local desire for worker accommodation to be situated closer to local towns and also that it be readily convertible to long-term housing. Local roads were reported to be underprepared for the transport of large, heavy machinery such as wind turbine blades, presenting safety risks and potential freight delays. Improvements in connectivity between the Central West and Hunter regions were considered to benefit not only the REZs but the economy more broadly.

Hunter-Central Coast

The Hunter-Central Coast region (HCC) differs from the New England and Central-West Orana regions in terms of its social and economic conditions. Historically, HCC has provided a significant portion of the steel, aluminium and coal in NSW for both domestic consumption and export and its workforce and economy are oriented accordingly. The region also benefits from having a major port and proximity to Sydney and is less dependent on agriculture than the other REZs discussed. The region hosts four operating coal-fired power stations, all of which are scheduled to close by 2033.

There is significant interest in managing the transition away from coal-fired power towards a more diversified and environmentally sustainable economy. Community groups, unions, local councils, Government agencies and businesses are establishing a range of initiatives to this end. Local stakeholders believe that coal-fired power plant closures will significantly impact the community. The closures will affect not only permanent employees but will also have flow-on effects for contractors, maintenance workers and local coal mines that supply directly to NSW coal-fired power stations.

Unions and affiliated groups advocate establishing a statutory 'Hunter Valley Authority' to manage this process, as well as the transition away from coal mining more generally. This model is informed by Victoria's Latrobe Valley Authority and Western Australia's Collie Just Transition Working Group. There has not been general support for this concept from the Hunter business community stakeholders that

have been engaged. However, there was consensus across all stakeholders that greater coordination and collaboration across all levels of government, industry and business groups, unions and the community would help the transition, especially the larger and longer-term transition of the Hunter away from coal mining.

The operators of coal-fired power stations are working with employees, unions and NSW Government agencies to help workers during the transition. Strategies could include transfer of employees to coal-fired power stations with later close dates, moving to related industries, retraining in new fields or retirement. Operators with earlier close dates are furthest ahead in this transition planning. Local unions are concerned, however, that these transition plans have not sufficiently considered the impact closures will have on contractors because operators do not have the same level of obligation to them as for permanent employees.

Stakeholders shared enthusiasm about the emerging opportunities for the region from the transition to renewable energy, such as the HCC REZ and the hydrogen hubs. There is a growing number of businesses in the renewable energy sector and related industries exploring opportunities in storage, offshore wind, clean manufacturing and hydrogen. These are a mixture of existing businesses and a growing number of new businesses being established in the region. Additionally, the operators of the major coal-fired power stations are looking at how to repurpose their sites for new energy generation and storage opportunities after the closure of their stations to take advantage of the favourable land and network infrastructure access.

Several stakeholders raised the need for a container terminal at the Port of Newcastle, especially those looking to build an export market for generation, storage and network technologies. They stated that the cost of getting containers to the ship in Sydney is almost equivalent to the cost of shipping from Sydney to overseas destinations. The Hunter will also benefit from rail and air improvements through planned upgrades to the Newcastle Airport and a new connection to the Inland Rail at Narrabri.

HCC seems to be well provided with training facilities. There are 16 TAFE campuses, University of Newcastle campuses in both Newcastle and the Central Coast and a wide range of private and non-profit RTOs. Despite this, several stakeholders raised issues with the local training environment, citing TAFE course offerings and under-resourcing as a bottleneck. They reported difficulty getting into TAFE courses and that courses for a range of basic trades were not offered in many TAFEs, even when they had previously offered those courses and the physical facilities were available. Also raised was the need for TAFE to invest in training their trainers on the cutting-edge skills in renewable energy and the use of modern training tools such as virtual reality. Businesses were looking for short, sharp courses that provided skills that can be used straight away, but also built into recognised qualifications.

Stakeholders cited a local worker shortage in the HCC region, but to a lesser extent than in other REZs consulted. Construction of the John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct and Williamstown Special Activation Precinct will likely compete with the REZ for workers, which may exacerbate these issues.

Next steps

Priorities for the Electricity Infrastructure Jobs Advocate

The above insights, together with supporting the implementation of recommendations identified in the Renewable Energy Sector Board's plan, will form the basis for the Jobs Advocate's priorities over the coming year.

Increasing workforce supply

Increasing the number of workers able to participate in the REZs is critical to capturing local economic benefits. To this end, the Jobs Advocate plans to:

- identify opportunities to help underrepresented groups participate in the renewable energy workforce, including women and First Nations communities
- investigate strategies and incentives to maximise employment opportunities in the renewable energy workforce for underemployed workers and those who have given up looking for work.

Addressing skills gaps

Meeting the skills needs for the REZs requires a clear understanding of whether current training is fit-for-purpose, what skills are needed, where they are needed and when. To address skills gaps, the Jobs Advocate will:

- assist in the completion of the Renewable Energy Skills Audit, which aims to evaluate current and projected future employment across renewable generation, transmission and storage sectors, including both construction and ongoing operations and maintenance, to identify skills and/or training capacity shortages which may be present or emerging
- build a clearer picture of the skills needed in each REZ, including the anticipated skills needed for proposed REZ projects, opportunities for transfers from adjacent industries and the timing of when skills are needed.

Improving the coordination and accessibility of training

Beyond ensuring training is fit-for-purpose, it is important that appropriate training is available in the regions where REZs are being constructed and that this training results in good matches between employers and workers. To this end, the Jobs Advocate will:

- investigate the feasibility and usefulness of establishing local renewable energy training schools in the REZs and more flexible training delivery approaches, including mobile training delivery, to address issues with local training availability

- investigate the concept of local skills coordinators and/or an ‘entity’ that can:
 - support a pipeline of skilled workers for renewable projects across a region
 - coordinate local skills training
 - support project proponents to achieve requirements for local content and workers in Roadmap tenders
- investigate funding opportunities, including new and existing programs, to increase relevant training for REZ projects
- gain a detailed understanding of the limitations of the current TAFE system, and opportunities to leverage TAFE NSW’s significant resources across regional NSW to upskill workers in the renewable energy industry.

Creating opportunities in the electricity infrastructure supply chain

Through consulting across the REZs, the Jobs Advocate has learnt of wide-ranging opportunities for NSW businesses to contribute to the renewable energy supply chain, including in the fabrication of wind towers, transmission infrastructure, solar farm components and energy storage. The Jobs Advocate will:

- investigate opportunities for job creation in the renewable energy supply chain, especially opportunities to increase Australian-supplied goods and services, including Australian manufactured components
- investigate actions required to increase awareness of opportunities in the electricity infrastructure supply chain and mechanisms to connect REZ projects with local businesses.

Promoting renewable energy careers

To develop a strong pipeline of qualified local workers, it is necessary to raise awareness in schools of career opportunities in the renewable energy sector. Building awareness of the opportunities in the transition to renewable energy and informing students of the different pathways for participating will help to address workforce requirements. The Jobs Advocate plans to:

- map renewable energy sector career pathways
- find methods to promote renewable energy sector careers in high schools, particularly those within REZs.

Identifying infrastructure initiatives to support energy-related exports

Some infrastructure issues have been raised by stakeholders in initial consultations. The Jobs Advocate will consult with a wider range of stakeholders, including exporters, potential exporters and service providers involved in export from road, rail and port infrastructure to:

- develop a detailed understanding of infrastructure issues limiting export potential
- identify actions needed to support opportunities for the export of generation, storage and network technology.

Continuing to engage widely across the sector

As the Jobs Advocate commenced in March 2022, there is much more information to be gathered and research to be undertaken. The Jobs Advocate will continue to consult widely and collect insights and ideas including:

- undertaking consultation in the South-West and Illawarra REZs to build a local picture of employment and infrastructure opportunities relevant to each region and to fully understand issues in the rollout of the Roadmap across the five REZs
- continuing to build networks across NSW Government agencies, Commonwealth and local governments, businesses, unions and the community that will increase collaboration across all aspects of the Roadmap.

Considerations for the NSW Government

Some of the issues and ideas raised during stakeholder consultations fall outside the remit of the Jobs Advocate's role as defined in the Act. Nevertheless, they are important for ensuring that the Roadmap can deliver clean, affordable, reliable energy and that communities are able to reap the Roadmap's economic and social benefits. The Jobs Advocate will be in the position to provide more detail to these considerations in due course, some of which may evolve into detailed recommendations to Government.

The Jobs Advocate suggests that the NSW Government considers:

- advocating to the Commonwealth Government to increase skilled migration for professions linked to the REZs, including electricians and engineers
- continuing to develop mechanisms to accelerate housing supply in the REZs
- investigating opportunities to attract skilled workers and professionals to REZ regions, including possible housing-related incentives and ongoing promotion of regional liveability
- coordinating the construction of REZ transmission and generation projects to balance energy security considerations with the benefits of a smooth pipeline of projects, such as:
 - improved access to labour for employers
 - an ongoing pipeline of work for employees
 - better value for money for investment in training.