



Business Council of Australia

26 June 2025

Mr David Shankey  
Chief Executive Officer  
Net Zero Economy Authority

Via digital upload to: <https://app.converlens.com/netzero/eraring-power-station>

Dear Mr Shankey

### Energy Industry Jobs Plan consultation paper – Eraring Power Station

The Business Council of Australia (BCA) strives for a stronger Australia. We represent over 130 of Australia's leading businesses. These include a range of organisations that are or will potentially be impacted by community of interest determinations (CIDs) undertaken by the Net Zero Economy Authority (NZEA), such as AGL, Origin, Energy Australia, as well as a range of maintenance service contracting businesses and coal mining companies.

The BCA has consistently advocated for a national independent transition authority to manage the country's shift to net zero. We welcomed the creation of the NZEA in 2024 and have long supported coordination mechanisms to support a fair and orderly energy transition for workers and communities affected by the closure of emissions-intensive facilities. The BCA is engaged with the NZEA and other bodies established under the *Net Zero Economy Authority Act 2024 (Cth) (Act)*, with one BCA representative on the NZEA Stakeholder Panel, and another appointed to the Energy Industry Workers Redeployment Advisory Group.

The closure of the Eraring Power Station is an important part of the energy transition in Australia. There has been significant planning already undertaken in preparation for this event. Following consultation with our member, Origin, we do not believe that Origin should be named in a CID and subject to the requirements of the Energy Industry Jobs Plan (EIJP) in the Act. Origin has taken significant, industry-leading proactive steps to support its workforce through this transition. A change in these programs at this stage would be disruptive and risks the perverse outcome of undermining the positive work which has already occurred. It may also discourage other operators from undertaking similarly proactive, voluntary transition initiatives in the future.

### Origin should not be specified in any CID concerning Eraring

Origin has implemented a comprehensive transition support program called 'Future Directions'. The program includes:

- 1:1 career coaching
- Individual Support Plans (ISPs)

- Career learning and resources
- Setting up a small business training
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Redeployment opportunities
- External career opportunities
- Getting job-market ready
- Wellbeing support
- Superannuation, financial planning and retirement support.

The Future Directions program provides transitioning workers with extensive career and redeployment support, including funding for entire university degrees in fields such as nursing and accounting. They create ISPs with and for employees, detailing skills, reskilling needs, and development activities. Earing employees can pursue university or vocational education and receive support for starting small businesses, as well as assistance with retirement transitions. To date, 463 training courses have been funded, covering various fields including property development, business administration, aviation, and teaching. Origin reports that 98 per cent of eligible employees have engaged in the Future Directions program. Origin has done this while still effectively and safely operating the Earing power station, which supplies approximately a quarter of NSW's electricity needs.

The Earing Future Directions program is comprehensive and represents a best-in-class transition program. In addition to career and retraining support, Earing employees are entitled to redundancy provisions well in excess of the amounts prescribed by the National Employment Standards under their enterprise agreement and Origin's Leaving Origin Directive.

In our view, these actions exemplify what a responsible and proactive transition plan looks like. Origin has gone well beyond its minimum obligations, and its early and voluntary initiatives have already delivered tangible support to affected workers and communities and will continue to do so.

While the BCA appreciates that the EIJP offers a regulatory framework that includes government-funded incentives for receiving employers to hire transitioning workers, we consider that the NZEA should offer the same incentives to receiving employers of any transition worker, regardless of whether or not they are specified in a CID.

## Conclusion

Origin's proactive approach to supporting its workforce during the transition to a net-zero economy should be recognised, and Origin exempted from the stipulations of the EIJP. The comprehensive measures implemented through the Future Directions program not only demonstrate Origin's commitment to its employees but also set a valuable precedent for responsible corporate behaviour in the face of significant changes in the journey to Net Zero. Subjecting Origin to additional duplicative requirements could undermine their efforts and deter future initiatives by other companies, particularly when those efforts are discretionary and well beyond the minimums prescribed by the Act. There is a real risk that in subsuming an employer who has already put in place comprehensive transition supports to the framework under the Act, that it will detract from discretionary efforts and budgets for extra-legislative transition supports, as well as diluting the focus

from these efforts by diverting employer attention to potentially numerous FWC consultations and applications.

We urge the NZEA to acknowledge the substantial contributions made by Origin and to carefully consider the necessity and impact of specifying Origin in a CID related to Eraring. By doing so, we can foster a more supportive environment that encourages future closing employers to embark on proactive transition strategies that benefit workers and communities alike.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bran Black', written in a cursive style.

**Bran Black**

Chief Executive

Business Council of Australia