



**EnergyAustralia**

LIGHT THE WAY

Mr David Shankey, CEO  
Net Zero Economy Authority  
Australian Government

Submitted via email: EIJP@pmc.gov.au  
20 February 2026

Dear Mr Shankey,

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## **Energy Industry Jobs Plan Consultation Paper**

EnergyAustralia welcomes the opportunity to make a submission in response to the Net Zero Economy Authority's (**NZEA**) consultation paper on the Energy Industry Jobs Plan (**EIJP**) in the context of Yallourn Power Station.

### **About EnergyAustralia**

EnergyAustralia is one of Australia's largest integrated energy businesses, supplying approximately 2.2 million electricity and gas accounts across eastern Australia. We own, operate and contract a diversified national generation portfolio spanning coal, gas, battery storage, demand response, wind and solar assets, with operational control of more than 5,000 MW of capacity.

Our organisational purpose is to lead and accelerate the clean energy transformation, for all. This includes ensuring customers continue to receive reliable, secure and competitively priced energy while we transition our portfolio to lower-emissions technologies.

EnergyAustralia recognises that no single company—or government—can, in isolation, deliver a seamless transition of the national energy system. A successful transition requires coordinated action, shared responsibility and long-term planning.

In this spirit, EnergyAustralia supports the role of NZEA in promoting an orderly and positive economic transformation for impacted regions and workers. NZEA has a key role in guiding co-investment between government and industry in the regions doing the "heavy lifting" of Australia's decarbonisation to create jobs, economic growth and achieve a just transition.

### **About Yallourn Power Station**

Yallourn Power Station (**Yallourn**) is a coal fired power station in Victoria's Latrobe Valley on the traditional lands of the Braiakaulung people of the Gunaikurnai nation – approximately 148km southeast of Melbourne.

Yallourn is powered by brown coal from Australia's second largest open cut mine adjacent the power station. Each year approximately 13 million tonnes of brown coal is mined and sent to the power station, generating around 20 per cent of Victoria's electricity.

The Yallourn site has over a one-hundred-year history in mining and power generation. Since 1924, Yallourn has been home to a succession of coal-fired power stations and expansions. The current Yallourn W station, operating since 1974, consists of four generating units with a combined capacity of 1,450 MW.

Yallourn A was Victoria's first large-scale power station, and its legacy—along with the intergenerational role of power generation in the Latrobe Valley—remains deeply embedded in the community's identity and collective memory. This transition is not EnergyAustralia's – it belongs to the people of the Latrobe Valley. It is Latrobe Valley's economic future that requires help once some of the region's highest paid workers no longer take-home an income from Yallourn.

Since 2021, EnergyAustralia has invested over \$750 million in capex at Yallourn conducting major outages and injected approximately \$200 million per annum in opex, which has flowed through to the local economy.

At present, the Yallourn power station and mine is estimated to be home to around 500 permanent workers onsite, including more than 330 EnergyAustralia employees and a mix of Alliance Partners (RTL, Ventia and Fire Safety Australia). Actual worker numbers fluctuate day-to-day due to major outages, rostering or other work carried out on site. In 2025, around 350 workers engaged by supply chain contract businesses also regularly undertook work at Yallourn<sup>1</sup>.

### Closure of Yallourn

EnergyAustralia approached the Victorian Government with a plan to retire Yallourn and transition to cleaner energy in a way that gives workers time to prepare, retrain and plan for the change. In March 2021, EnergyAustralia announced its plans to close the Yallourn power station – providing 7 years advance notice – and committing to a \$10 million support package to upskill our workforce.

EnergyAustralia's plans centred on demonstrating that coal-fired power can exit the market in a responsible way that supports our people and provides time for new investment in replacement capacity.

### Regional Investment

The retirement of the Yallourn power station marks not an ending, but the beginning of a potential new chapter for the site as we shape its future opportunities. The proposed Yallourn Energy Security Precinct (YESP) is exploring the development of clean-energy technologies and infrastructure to support Victoria's energy transition, including options to develop solar generation, battery storage, gas peaking capacity, synchronous condensers, and data centres.

The Yallourn site is uniquely positioned to host these future industries, creating pathways for today's workforce to continue contributing at the same site—this time in new roles

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<sup>1</sup> The Yallourn workforce fluctuates day-to-day to meet the operation and maintenance requirements of the power station and mine. Actual job numbers should be obtained direct from employers.

within a net-zero economy. Realising this opportunity will require a strong partnership approach with government, including co-investment, to ensure Yallourn remains a critical power base in Victoria's clean-energy future.

EnergyAustralia is also investing in the Latrobe Valley's next chapter in energy. The \$700 million 350 MW Wooreen Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) requires 80 jobs during construction and will output power to 230,000 homes over a four-hour period once operating in 2027.

The proposed future development of YESP together with developments like the Wooreen Energy Storage System, already underway, build on the region's strong energy heritage while helping to create new opportunities for skills, jobs and reliable power. Together, these initiatives reflect the opportunities available to deliver a people-focused transition toward a prosperous, low-emissions future for the region.

### Supporting the Community

As the Latrobe Valley region navigates this transition, EnergyAustralia's commitment remains unchanged: to stand with the community and help shape a strong, future-focused local economy.

Since 2021, we have invested over \$800,000 in community sponsorship in schools, local sport, neighbourhood groups, emergency services and environmental restoration. These partnerships reflect a shared ambition to build opportunity for the next generation and ensure the region thrives beyond coal.

Our collaborations with Federation University and the Morwell Tech School are helping young people develop skills for the future, while employee-led giving continues to support families in need, including through the annual Gippsland Motorcyclists Toy Run.

### Community & Stakeholder Engagement

Since announcing Yallourn's closure in 2021, EnergyAustralia has prioritised open, ongoing and accessible engagement. This occurs through community information sessions and the establishment of our Morwell Community Hub, a welcoming drop in space where residents can speak directly with EnergyAustralia staff about Yallourn's closure, mine rehabilitation, and future energy projects.

EnergyAustralia maintains constructive engagement with union representatives to ensure workers' perspectives meaningfully shape an effective transition. Following the 2021 closure announcement, we initially met with unions monthly to share plans, work through emerging issues, and consult on the development of a Transition Program. As the Transition Program matured, we continue to engage with unions in relation to transition.

EnergyAustralia actively contributes to research projects and forums to share our learnings and help support workers, the region and Australia's transition. We've assisted an MEU research project by RMIT that seeks to match worker skills to suitable occupations in the region. We have also partnered with TAFE Gippsland, Federation University and Star of the South to develop the *Transition Opportunities: Coal to Offshore Wind* guide<sup>2</sup>—helping interested workers identify skills transferability and steps to move into the potential sector.

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<sup>2</sup> [Transition Opportunities Coal to Offshore Wind \(007\).pdf](#)

These long-standing relationships demonstrate EnergyAustralia's commitment to doing transition well—by listening to the community, strengthening local capability and helping lay the foundations for a resilient and prosperous Latrobe Valley.

### About the Yallourn Transition Program

EnergyAustralia has committed up to \$10 million to the Yallourn Transition Program (**Transition Program**). The Transition Program launched in 2022, provides workers with structured opportunities to reskill, retrain and plan for their future—whether that future involves a new career, retirement or self-employment. The Transition Program offers a coordinated suite of services designed to enable a timely, orderly and worker-led transition.

The Transition Program applies to regular workers who work predominantly at the Yallourn site—including employees engaged by EnergyAustralia, Alliance Partners (RTL, Ventia and Fire Services Australia) and participating contractors—and is funded by EnergyAustralia.

EnergyAustralia makes available training, career coaching, outplacement services and financial advice/plans for our workforce and Alliance Partner employees and through a co-contribution model for participating contractors.

The design of the Transition Program was shaped through a year of consultation directly with the workforce and unions over 2021-22. 516 employees participated in early consultation, where workers were guided through a kick-start workshop with a facilitator in groups of 20 and responded to a series of questions detailing what they wanted from a transition program, identifying their skills and goals for the future.

The input of unions and employees is reflected throughout the Transition Program's design and implementation.

Based on this feedback, key services identified and included in the Transition Program were:

- Training and reskilling support
- One-on-one career coaching
- Financial advice and planning
- Small business planning
- Mental health and wellbeing support
- Job application and interview coaching
- Links to employment opportunities in emerging sectors

The Transition Program has operated for four years and has already provided a range of support to workers.

Since its launch in 2022, the Transition Program has approved funding for 229 training requests, spanning a diversity of courses including project management, education, nursing, real estate, environmental science and other fields.

A key strength of the Transition Program is its early accessibility— The Transition Program became available six years before closure—giving workers the time and funding support to retrain for entirely new careers.

Additionally, the Transition Program has delivered 743 individual career coaching sessions on-site at Yallourn with professional coaches and funded 156 financial services (advice or planning), ensuring workers are well-prepared for their next steps.

The Transition Program was deliberately designed to deliver a genuine just transition— informed by lessons from the closure of the Victorian automotive sector and Hazelwood power station. By commencing support six years ahead of closure, EnergyAustralia has enabled workers to retrain early and take control of their future. This leadership has been recognised internationally: the Program was identified by the World Bank for Sustainable Development as a leading example of a just transition and was presented at COP27<sup>3</sup>.

The following sections of this submission outline how each component of the Transition Program operates and how it supports the workforce. EnergyAustralia would welcome providing further detailed information on the program’s coverage and offering, including a copy of our Yallourn Transition Program Guidelines on request to NZEA.

### **Individual Transition Plans**

Every Yallourn worker is encouraged to develop an Individual Transition Plan (ITP)—a tailored roadmap outlining their goals, redeployment aspirations and the activities they wish to undertake as they prepare for life beyond Yallourn. The ITP is intentionally flexible, evolving with each employee as their circumstances and aspirations change. It can include reskilling and qualifications, coaching, financial advice, small-business support, retirement planning and on-the-job development.

The ITP process prompts employees to explore a range of future opportunities, including roles in mine rehabilitation, redeployment to other EnergyAustralia sites, or employment in their preferred geographic region. Because each plan is employee-led, it supports meaningful conversations between workers, their leaders and the Training and Transition Team, helping individuals identify and move towards their preferred future pathway.

All workers are encouraged to develop an ITP. To date, almost 70 per cent of EnergyAustralia Yallourn employees have created an ITP. Many ITPs are now in their second or third iteration as employees refine their goals and progress through their transition. Participation is voluntary. According to a 2021 workplace survey, it is estimated that around 30 per cent of employees intend to retire when Yallourn closes.

### **Training & Reskilling**

Training and reskilling are central pillars of the Yallourn Transition Program, supporting workers to prepare for life beyond Yallourn—whether they are pursuing a major career change or transitioning gradually toward retirement.

229 requests for training courses have been approved and supported through funding since 2022.

To meet the diverse needs of the workforce, the Transition Program offers a broad suite of learning pathways, with employees able to combine multiple options. These include:

- Licences and tickets
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL)
- Adult apprenticeships

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<sup>3</sup> [Achieving a just transition in the energy system | WBCSD](#)

- Short courses and micro credentials-credentials
- Certificate, diploma and tertiary qualifications
- On-the-job development opportunities

The diverse range of pathways that participants are now pursuing include:

- An operator studying a Bachelor of Education to become a primary school teacher
- A rigger completing a Master of Environmental Science to pursue ecology
- A logistics worker training in Nursing and Midwifery
- A boilermaker retraining through an Electrical & Instrumentation apprenticeship
- An operator completing distilling and licensing qualifications to launch a small business
- A fitter completing a Diploma of Project Management
- An environmental professional training in Kinesiology

EnergyAustralia funds any reasonable training delivered by a registered training organisation, ensuring that development remains aligned with each employee's Individual Transition Plan (ITP). Employees may complete multiple training courses. To preserve fairness and equity employees may be asked to make a co-contribution to the cost of training in very limited circumstances where training exceeds the cost of a standard degree. To date, EnergyAustralia has only had one request fit this criterion where an employee completed a Master of Business Administration at Melbourne University. All other training has been fully funded by EnergyAustralia.

The level of training support provided under the Transition Program goes well beyond the provisions of the *EnergyAustralia Yallourn Enterprise Agreement 2023*, which provides that permanent EnergyAustralia employees can access financial assistance for a Bachelor's Degrees, Diplomas and Certificate-level study, capped at \$15,000 across a three-year full-time study period (or up to six years part-time), with a reimbursement limit of \$5,000 per year.

Licence and Ticket training is coordinated by the Training and Transition team for most courses at Yallourn and scheduling in with teams' rosters where possible. The high-risk licence and ticket group-training program will launch in 2026, allowing EnergyAustralia employees, and employees of Alliance Partners and participating contractors to obtain additional licences and tickets funded by the Transition Program to improve employability post-closure.

In 2024, four employees commenced funded adult apprenticeships to complete the Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician, followed by Certificate III in Instrumentation. For Operations employees, EnergyAustralia facilitated and funded RPL processes enabling workers to attain nationally recognised qualifications from Certificate II through Diploma levels in ESI Generation.

Funding for offsite training through a Registered Training Organisation is provided through a reimbursement model—employees pay upfront and are reimbursed upon evidence of successful completion. This supports informed course selection and accountability to attend and complete training.

To further support learning, EnergyAustralia increased Study Leave for employees from five to ten days per year upon the commencement of the Transition Program. Study Leave has already enabled workers to attend training courses, complete assessments, work placements, coursework and will be accessible for job-readiness activities, including résumé preparation, interview practice and application support as workers approach closure.

In addition, employees can request flexible working arrangements and use other leave to support their studies.

### **Individual Career Coaching**

Employees can access confidential, professional 1:1 career coaching sessions throughout the Transition Program.

743 sessions have been delivered to date by highly qualified career and training coaches, including specialists in career transition and outplacement services, a local TAFE Gippsland coach offering tailored training and course guidance, and an offshore wind industry coach for those considering opportunities with a potential major future employer in the Gippsland region.

During these sessions, employees are supported to explore:

- their strengths, interests, and career goals
- their existing skills and experience
- potential future career pathways
- training or qualifications that may be required
- retirement planning (where applicable)
- current labour market trends
- roles that align with their background
- strategies for managing themselves through periods of change

In addition to professional career coaching sessions, an Employee Transition Lead joined the EnergyAustralia Training and Transition Team in May 2025. Their primary function is to advise and coach individuals through the transition. They have had over 282 check-in conversations with individuals to guide their development, training and plans since May 2025.

### **Financial Advice & Planning**

Supporting a successful transition for the Yallourn workforce goes beyond training and future employment opportunities. Financial security is also a key part of preparing for the future.

The Yallourn workforce can access 1:1 financial advice and planning. EnergyAustralia employees can access financial advice and planning services up to the value of \$4,500 through accredited providers.

EnergyAustralia employees can use paid time off (e.g., annual leave or time in lieu) and flexible work arrangements to attend financial appointments, subject to Leader approval and operational requirements.

The Transition Program was intentionally designed to build on and significantly expand the support provided in the *EnergyAustralia Yallourn Enterprise Agreement 2023*. Under the agreement, the company funds three sessions of independent financial advice, at a cost of around \$300 per session.

The Transition Program greatly enhances the level of support available so that employees of EnergyAustralia can access a comprehensive, tailored and fully funded Financial Plan also known as a Statement of Advice (SoA) to help employees confidently prepare for life beyond Yallourn.

EnergyAustralia also provides a contribution of up to \$800 towards developing a personalised financial plan with an accredited provider for Alliance Partners and participating contractor employees.

In addition, superannuation and retirement planning sessions have been provided at Yallourn and will continue onsite throughout the transition period—delivered by Equip Super and CBUS. These sessions provide direct access to expert support as employees prepare for their financial future.

### **Small Business Plan Development**

As part of the Transition Program, EnergyAustralia is developing an initiative to support employees interested in starting their own business. This program will provide practical guidance and resources, including assistance to develop a business plan, workshops on small-business operations, mentorship and industry connections, and access to seed funding.

### **Mental Health & Wellbeing Support**

Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of employees is a core priority for EnergyAustralia and is embedded throughout the Transition Program. Experience from closing the Wallerawang power station, along with insights from other large industrial closures, has reinforced how critical it is to proactively support our workforce's wellbeing through this time.

EnergyAustralia employees have access to our Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Sonder, while Alliance Partners provide their own wellbeing services. EnergyAustralia has also successfully implemented the MATES in Energy and MATES in Mining program at Yallourn. Through these initiatives, 227 employees have participated in general awareness sessions and 35 employees have trained as Connectors—trusted peers who can support colleagues and link them with appropriate help. Several employees also hold Mental Health First Aid qualifications, providing further onsite support.

Hearing from people with lived experience of closure or major life challenges has also been valuable. Regular guest speakers share their stories and insights, helping employees connect with the human side of transition and prepare for the changes ahead.

In 2025, a comprehensive Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy to support employees as the site progresses towards closure was developed. The Strategy was informed by a workforce survey, evidence-based research and benchmarking against comparable industrial closures both in Australia and internationally. It is designed around four key pillars:

- Protect – Prevent psychosocial risks and create a safe environment
- Respond – Provide early support and compassionate response
- Promote – Strengthen positive experience and engagement
- Transition – Prepare employees for life beyond closure

The strategy aligns with leading frameworks, including the Blueprint for Mentally Healthy Workplaces (National Workplace Initiative) and WorkSafe Victoria’s WorkWell Toolkit, ensuring our approach reflects best practice and contemporary insights.

Building on the strong foundation already in place at Yallourn, the strategy introduces additional measures to increase engagement with EAP services (including Sonder’s online portal), enhances communication through a detailed closure roadmap, strengthens leadership capability through targeted training, and expands access to information about redeployment opportunities.

### **Job Application Assistance**

As Yallourn progresses toward closure, job application support will become increasingly important for redundant workers preparing for their next career step.

To assist with this transition, EnergyAustralia is funding a comprehensive suite of job readiness services for the extended Yallourn workforce, including employees of EnergyAustralia, Alliance Partners, and participating contractors (including regular casuals). Support includes:

- Résumé and cover letter writing
- Job application guidance
- Working with recruiters
- Interview preparation and skills development
- Networking support
- Using LinkedIn and other professional platforms

EnergyAustralia employees can access flexible working arrangements and study leave to attend this training.

### **Redeployment & Links to Employment Opportunities**

A key focus of the Transition Program is to continually identify and explore potential employment opportunities within EnergyAustralia, regional businesses and national industries that may be suitable for Yallourn employees as they prepare for life beyond closure.

EnergyAustralia actively promotes transfer opportunities within our Latrobe Valley operations at our Jeeralang gas-fired power station and the Wooreen BESS, noting the workforce requirements in operations are small (<20 roles combined). By way of example, two redeployments for Yallourn workers, alongside planned apprentice placements, to the construction and project facilitation of the Wooreen BESS have been assisted, providing direct experience in the clean energy sector. EnergyAustralia’s Energy Projects Team are actively seeking Yallourn workers to fulfil roles in our BESS projects around Australia due to the strong transferability of skills and experience.

To support redeployment opportunities to the wider EnergyAustralia operations including our power stations, internal vacancies are promoted at Yallourn with qualified Yallourn applicants encouraged to apply and, where successful, relocation expenses covered.

Since 2021, 13 employees from Yallourn have been successfully redeployed into roles across EnergyAustralia's operations. One example is an employee that started at Yallourn on placement while completing an Environmental Science degree at Federation University, before securing a permanent role at Yallourn as a Graduate Environmental Advisor. With a desire to further develop their career, EnergyAustralia supported the application and transition of the individual as an Environmental Officer to our Mt Piper power station, relocating to New South Wales.

The *EnergyAustralia Yallourn Enterprise Agreement 2023* provides for generous redundancy pay (up to a maximum of 130 weeks' pay).

The redundancy entitlement can mean that employees are less inclined to transfer to new roles within EnergyAustralia. A 2025 survey found 65% of EnergyAustralia Yallourn employees would not forego a redundancy payment at closure to transfer internally (or were unsure as to whether they would do so).

Outside of EnergyAustralia, connections with a range of local and national employers eager for referrals to our experienced workers are in place and growing. A Training and Career Fair organised by EnergyAustralia was held at Yallourn in August 2024 with over 20 stallholders from a variety of organisations (TAFE Gippsland, Defence Forces etc) making connections with the 300+ Yallourn workers in attendance on potential employment and training prospects. A Jobs Fair will also be held before closure, when timing is appropriate to make connections to potential future employers.

EnergyAustralia has also collaborated with the growing clean energy sector in Gippsland. In 2024, EnergyAustralia partnered with Star of the South, Federation University and TAFE Gippsland—supported by Victorian Government and private sector co-investment—to assess the skills needed for offshore wind construction and operations. The project mapped the Yallourn workforce's existing skills, identified transferable capabilities and training gaps, and outlined training pathways for employees interested in opportunities in this emerging industry. These findings informed the *Transition Opportunities: Coal to Offshore Wind Guide*<sup>4</sup>, endorsed by Victorian Energy Minister Lily D'Ambrosio and Australian Energy Minister Chris Bowen.

Another practical example of collaboration across the Latrobe Valley is the exchange placements EnergyAustralia makes available for its apprentices to work at Alinta's Loy Yang B and O&M Electrical a local contractor. These experiences enable apprentices to build confidence, strengthen their trade skills, and develop professional networks that will be invaluable as they seek alternative employment. At present, 18 employees are undertaking an apprenticeship at Yallourn and are expected to graduate before closure.

EnergyAustralia is doing what we can to provide for redeployment opportunities, however we cannot solve this problem alone. Local businesses in the Latrobe Valley, require the flexibility to create vacancies and incentives to employ Yallourn workers as canvassed in our submission to the Redeployment Grants Program. These incentives should apply irrespective of whether workers are covered by an Energy Industry Jobs Plan. Furthermore, support through dedicated Jobs and Investment Coordination roles in the

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<sup>4</sup> [Transition-opportunities-coal-to-offshore-wind.pdf](#)

Latrobe Valley would greatly assist to deliver outcomes on the ground to connect workers to jobs and facilitate investment in the region to ultimately deliver more jobs.

### **Dedicated Training and Transition Team**

EnergyAustralia has established a dedicated team to design, implement and continually refine the Transition Program. The team includes a Training Coordinator, Transition Program Administrators, Apprenticeship Program Lead, Employee Transition Lead and Team Leader.

The on-site team is visible and accessible to the Yallourn workforce and is responsible for managing training and financial support approvals and reimbursements and driving continuous improvement, including updates to the Transition Program guidelines to ensure alignment to workforce needs and evolving circumstances.

The Employee Transition Lead has a strong rapport with the workforce to help guide individuals' personal journeys through transition, assisting EnergyAustralia employees in updating their Individual Transition Plans and striking up conversations for those less inclined to reach out for help. The role acts as an on-site coach, has held over 282 individual check-ins to date, alongside regularly attending pre-start meetings across all Yallourn teams to share updates and remains available afterwards for questions.

As closure is nearing, a key responsibility of the Training and Transition Team is building connections with potential future employers across the region and coordinating internal redeployment opportunities within EnergyAustralia.

### **Transition Website**

To support the rollout of the Transition Program, EnergyAustralia developed a dedicated Transition Website to give employees streamlined access to an online portal detailing program information and services. Through the website, employees can apply for training, submit reimbursement requests, book 1:1 coaching sessions, and register for events.

The website hosts the full suite of Transition Program resources, including program guidelines, how-to guides, news and updates, event details and other key materials. It also serves as the central repository for transition-related content such as offshore wind job guides, labour-market insights, information on future roles at Yallourn post-closure, and a comprehensive set of FAQs. Access is provided upon request to the Training and Transition Team.

### **Employee Reference Group**

Following the launch of the Transition Program, a group of 11 employees from across Yallourn—representing both EnergyAustralia and Alliance Partners—nominated to form an Employee Reference Group. This group provides an important channel for collaboration between the Training and Transition Team and workers as the program continues to evolve. Its key functions include:

- Receiving early insights into upcoming initiatives
- Testing ideas and proposed improvements
- Providing feedback from a workforce perspective
- Working collaboratively with the Training & Transition Team

- Sharing information with their respective work groups
- Acting as advocates for the Transition Program

The group typically meets quarterly, ensuring ongoing engagement and strong two-way communication as the program evolves.

## Responses to EIJP Discussion Questions

### 1. Impacts of the closure

Based on a 2021 workforce survey, around 30% of EnergyAustralia employees at Yallourn indicated they would retire or semi-retire at closure, 14% were considering self-employment, and 55% expected to seek alternative employment.

Without new industry investment to create replacement jobs, the closure of Yallourn power station and mine is likely to have socioeconomic impacts across the Latrobe Valley. For more than five decades, Yallourn has been a major employer, a key customer for local suppliers, and an economic anchor for surrounding communities.

EnergyAustralia recognises these challenges and has invested early in a comprehensive \$10 million Transition Program to support workers, alongside new clean energy projects in the region such as the \$700 million Wooreen BESS and plans for the Yallourn Energy Security Precinct. EnergyAustralia welcomes NZEA's role in guiding federal government investment to support regional development and new employment opportunities.

### 2. Existing support for workers

Workers currently have access to a comprehensive, well-resourced and mature transition program that supports skill development, career planning, wellbeing and financial preparedness.

The extensive program is outlined in detail early in the submission. Key elements include:

- **Individual Transition Plans**
- **Extensive funded training and reskilling options**, including RPL, apprenticeships, licences/tickets, tertiary study and on the job development
- **Study Leave**, 10 days
- **1:1 professional career coaching** delivered by Directioneering, TAFE Gippsland, Offshore Wind Specialist and a dedicated Employee Transition Lead
- **Financial advice and planning** (up to \$4,500 for EA employees and \$800 for regular Yallourn employees), plus onsite superannuation sessions
- **Wellbeing services**, including EA's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) via Sonder, MATES programs, Mental Health First Aid and a site-specific Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- **Planned job-readiness support** (résumés, interview skills, networking, recruiter engagement) timed to align with hiring windows

- **Redeployment and industry pathways**, including coordinated EnergyAustralia redeployment and secondment opportunities and job matching to our network of local and national businesses seeking access to Yallourn workers skills.

Each year, EnergyAustralia surveys employees to understand their experience with the Transition Program and evolve the program and its guidelines. In 2025, the workforce rated the program 7 out of 10, demonstrating strong confidence in the support it provides. Feedback highlighted the program’s value, and the positive comments include:

- “I appreciate the efforts that EnergyAustralia are providing and the approachable people assisting spreading the Transition services”.
- “Thank you for the help you have provided so far”.
- “Continue the good work that Yallourn are providing”.
- “Thanks for taking the time to help us through the transition”.

The Yallourn Transition Program goes well beyond the transition support requirements set out in the *Net Zero Economy Authority Act 2024*.

NZEA should consider the benefits in preserving the incentive for employers to proactively deliver high-quality transition programs (beyond the legislative obligations) in assessing whether it is reasonable for an employer to be included in an application to the Fair Work Commission for a community of interest determination.

Absent this, future power-station closures may expect a determination is inevitable and seek only to meet the minimum standards set out in the Act, rather than investing in a leading transition program such as that delivered at Yallourn.

### **3. Additional support required**

While EnergyAustralia’s \$10 million Yallourn Transition Program is extensive in its coverage of the workforce and opportunities, the energy transition is complex. Engagement with employees, contractors, unions, industry and community indicates that additional support would be beneficial in the following areas:

- **Employer-side support**
  - Redeployment grants to encourage the hiring of transitioning workers within multi-site operations of dependent employers
  - Locality incentives to retain skilled workers in the Latrobe Valley
  - Additional support for contractors, sole operators and small businesses who are not actively supporting their workers (or themselves) through transition
- **Worker-side mobility and transition**
  - Tax concessions for early retirement pathways for eligible employees
  - Relocation assistance where roles exist outside the region
  - Creation of Latrobe Valley based Jobs and Investment Coordination roles to be on the ground to respond to the needs of the region

These enhancements would complement the existing Transition Program and help ensure smooth, timely workforce transitions. Proactive action by NZEA to generate economic opportunities and job creation in the Latrobe Valley should also be a priority.

#### 4. Views on the EIJP

EnergyAustralia has outlined in this submission the comprehensive level of support already in place through the Yallourn Transition Program, both for its employees and other regular workers.

EnergyAustralia is already delivering a well-designed, well governed Transition Program that goes beyond the minimum obligations set out in the *Net Zero Economy Authority Act 2024*.

On this basis, EnergyAustralia's view is that an EIJP is not necessary for Yallourn as the existing Transition program has delivered for 4 years, and will continue to deliver, a leading Transition Program for workers.

If an application for a Community of Interest Determination is made by NZEA, EnergyAustralia considers it is not necessary for it to be included as a closing employer, noting the Transition Program already in place.

EnergyAustralia considers NZEA would deliver the greatest value if its focus extended beyond duplicating the Yallourn Transition Program and instead leveraged the Authority's strengths — specifically its ability to:

- Drive new industry investment and job creation into the Latrobe Valley
- Coordinate job matching in the region, such as to the clean energy transition
- Support regional economic diversification
- Support supply chain businesses and contract workers that have not engaged in the Yallourn Transition Program

In our view, NZEA's greatest contribution lies in using its national influence, networks and regulatory levers to catalyse genuine industry development and long-term job creation in the region.

Such an approach would complement the Transition Program by ensuring that, as workers prepare for the next stage of their careers, new jobs and industries are growing around them, supporting a smooth and sustainable transition for the Latrobe Valley.

#### 5. Opportunities for impacted employees

Yallourn workers bring transferable skills well matched to industries experiencing or expecting growth. Sectors best placed to hire include:

- **Thermal power stations**, especially those remaining in the Latrobe Valley
- **Renewable energy and storage** (wind, solar, BESS O&M, transmission projects)
- **Mining, construction and civil works**
- **Advanced manufacturing and heavy industry**
- **Utilities and essential services**, including transmission, data centres, water, and emergency services
- **Professional services**, including project management, health & safety, environmental management and procurement

Yallourn workers have extensive training and experience operating in high hazard environments and are strong in areas such as engineering, safety leadership, shift operations, technical trades, diagnostics, project execution, asset management and control systems.

A distinctive aspect of the Yallourn Transition Program is that it was launched six years ahead of closure, giving individuals the time and opportunity to retrain for entirely new careers. As outlined earlier in this submission, this means our people are not limited to moving into traditional heavy-industry roles as the Transition Program is supporting workers to become nurses, teachers, and other professions – so the best place for transitioning workers may be a school or hospital.

Creating a Latrobe Valley based Jobs Coordinator would assist in linking individuals to the breadth of career paths the Yallourn workforce may seek.

## **6. Proposed geographic area**

The proposed geographic area of Latrobe Valley, Wellington, and Baw Baw appropriately captures the expected labour market impacts of the Yallourn closure. These regions:

- Represent the primary workforce base, including where most employees currently live and commute from
- Reflect the supply chain footprint, including contractors, suppliers and service providers connected to Yallourn
- Align with the areas where workers are most likely to seek their next career opportunities (~60% want to stay in the Latrobe Valley area)
- Capture the likely locations for future redeployment pathways, including emerging clean energy, construction and service economy

Appendix 1 shows the geographical map of where EnergyAustralia employees reside, with the vast majority being within the Latrobe City Council boundary.

### **In summary**

EnergyAustralia considers the Yallourn Transition Program already delivers a comprehensive, well-governed, and effective suite of supports for EnergyAustralia employees, as well as employees of Alliance Partners, and participating contractors.

For this reason, an EIJF duplicating these efforts is unnecessary.

If NZEA considers it is necessary to make an application to the Fair Work Commission for a Community of Interest Determination, EnergyAustralia considers it is not necessary for it to be included as a closing employer to which any determination would apply, noting the Transition Program already in place.

NZEA has an important opportunity to help shape the Latrobe Valley's economic future.

EnergyAustralia is also committed to the Latrobe Valley's future. Through investments such as the Wooreen BESS, the Yallourn Energy Security Precinct, and continued operations at the Jeeralang gas-fired power station, we are actively contributing to the

region's next chapter. But lasting transformation requires partnership. Government and industry co-investment is essential to create the scale of new, sustainable jobs on a pathway to net zero that the region deserves.

The Latrobe Valley has many great advantages for investment, but one key strength is its people. Generations of workers trained through the former State Electricity Commission have built deep capability across engineering, civil construction, plant operations, and maintenance. This workforce is a tremendous asset—ready to power new industries and drive the region's economic renewal.

This submission demonstrates the extensive support already available to Yallourn workers. What is needed now is not duplication, but vision: major industrial investment that harnesses the Valley's existing skills, creates enduring employment, and secures long-term prosperity for future generations.

If you have any questions in relation to EnergyAustralia's submission, please contact Lisa Gooding [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

*Sue Elliott*  
*Operations & Projects Executive, EnergyAustralia*

# Appendix 1: EnergyAustralia employee residential heatmap

