

ARENA Opening Statement – Additional Estimates

Darren Miller, ARENA CEO

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Thank you to the Committee for this opportunity to appear on behalf of the Australian Renewable Energy Agency.

I would like to begin with acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are gathered today, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here today.

I would like to draw your attention to a number of ARENA milestones and announcements since ARENA's last appearance at Senate Estimates:

Record year for ARENA

ARENA marked the start of its second decade by approving record funding towards projects helping to accelerate the renewable energy transition.

In financial year 2022-23, ARENA approved funding of \$544.1 million to 60 projects valued at over \$3.5 billion, representing the Agency's largest value of funds approved in a single year.

This record level of funding to projects highlights that industry is increasingly ready and able to tackle the challenge of reaching net zero by 2050 with us.

Hydrogen Headstart

In December, ARENA announced the six applicants which have been shortlisted and invited to submit a full application in the next stage of our \$2 billion Hydrogen Headstart program.

Together, these applicants represent a total electrolyser capacity of over 3.5 GW across various end uses, placing them amongst the largest renewable hydrogen projects in the world.

These applicants are developing projects that involve deploying large-scale electrolysers of at least 50 MW in size, making a significant and faster impact on implementing a new renewable hydrogen industry. The shortlisted applicants are developing projects in Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia.

Shortlisted applicants have until 27 June 2024 to submit their full application, with outcomes expected to be announced in late 2024.

Industrial Transformation Stream

In November, ARENA launched the first funding round of the \$400 million Industrial Transformation Stream (ITS) to support emissions reduction at existing industrial facilities in regional Australia. The Industrial Transformation Stream is part of the Powering the Regions Fund.

Round 1 will see \$150 million of ITS funding be made available primarily for applications focusing on regional decarbonisation of industrial process heat and off-road transportation.

Accounting for ~44% of total Australian emissions, the decarbonisation of industry is critical to progressing Australia's 2030 and 2050 net zero targets. Target sectors with a high emissions abatement opportunity include agriculture, electricity, gas, water and waste, mining, manufacturing and off-road transport.

The program builds on ARENA's priority in low emissions metals and previous work under existing programs to drive innovation and support industry to reduce their emissions.

National Industrial Transformation

Also in December, ARENA launched the \$40 million National Industrial Transformation (NIT) Program aimed at supporting the reduction of scope 1 and scope 2 emissions at existing or planned industrial facilities in Australia.

The NIT Program is an update to the former Industrial Energy Transformation Studies Program (IETS) to more comprehensively support industrial decarbonisation.

The NIT Program allows a more streamlined and seamless integration with the \$400 million ITS. The revisions allow support for industrial emissions abatement across Australia, as well as helping to expand the program scope to now include applications from the pre-feasibility, feasibility and FEED stages through to trial, demonstration and deployment activities. Former IETS funding has now been reallocated to the NIT Program.

Reappointment

Finally, I would take this opportunity to acknowledge, with gratitude, that in December the Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon Chris Bowen MP, announced my reappointment as ARENA CEO for a further 3 years.

I am honoured to be reappointed as ARENA's CEO for a further three years following the end of my current term next year. We've made a lot of progress over the past five years since I've been at ARENA, however, there is still much to do on the journey to net zero and I remain passionate and committed to our work.

I'd like to thank the Australian Government and the ARENA Board for their support and confidence.