



**ARENA Opening Statement – Additional Senate Estimates**

Darren Miller, ARENA CEO

24 February 2025

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

I would like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we are meeting today, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people. I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here today.

**ARENA Act**

Since ARENA's last appearance at Senate Estimates on 4 November 2024, much has changed for the agency. Amendments to the ARENA Act passed both houses on the 29 November 2024. These were the first substantive changes to the ARENA Act since the agency was established in 2012.

Notably, this included reinstatement of ARENA statutory funding into our legislation, allowing ARENA to make long-term project investments, and signalling to the market that there is certainty of public funding for ARENA-funded projects over the long-term. This will support ARENA to administer and maximise the \$7.1 billion funding package for programs announced in the 2024-25 Budget.

**Right to Employ**

Under the amendments, ARENA was given the general right to employ its own staff, ensuring we can provide secure employment to our workforce, including the current and sizeable cohort of contractors. The right to employ enables ARENA to achieve greater workforce stability and supports our object of contributing to Australia's transition to a net zero economy.

ARENA has commenced work on implementation of the right to employ and we are committed to building a strong employment framework that will meet our future workforce needs.

These legislative changes for ARENA, together with the significant vote of confidence from the Government in the last Federal Budget, cement the Agency's position as a key figure in the energy transition, and we remain grateful for the opportunity to help realise Australia's net zero ambitions.

Thank you.