



Future Made in Australia

26 JULY 2024

Senate Standing Committees on Economics
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: economics.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

Future Made in Australia

As the primary union representing Australian Public Service employees (APS), the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) is committed to providing a strong voice for our members in key public policy and political debates.

The CPSU welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to this Senate inquiry into the Future Made in Australia Bill 2024 [Provisions] and the Future Made in Australia (Omnibus Amendments No. 1) Bill 2024 [Provisions] (the Omnibus Bill).

The CPSU also endorses the ACTU's submission to this inquiry and supports its recommendations.

The Omnibus Bill proposes a range of amendments to the current Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) Act 2011. Specifically, it proposes amending Section 63 which governs ARENA's use of consultants. Proposed amendments include:

- changing 63(1) to remove current limitations on the use of consultants to those that *'provide technical and specialist advisory services'*, and
- deleting 63(3) which states *'a person must not be engaged as a consultant to perform operational or administrative duties of a kind that are performed, or are capable of being performed, by the staff referred to in section 62.'*

3.22 of the Explanatory Memorandum states these changes would allow the engagement of consultants *'with expertise in areas such as administration, media communications or knowledge-sharing to assist in the expansion of its functions and capabilities.'*

The CPSU opposes these specific amendments to Section 63 as it is unclear why these changes are necessary. Consultants are already allowed to be engaged if they provide specialist expertise under the current legislation. Amendments to Section 62 of the ARENA Act in the Omnibus Bill will also remove current staffing restrictions on ARENA, allowing ARENA to directly employ Australian Public Service (APS) staff on its own terms to fill gaps.

[Future Made in Australia]: CPSU submission

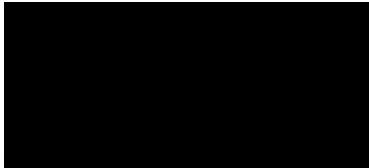
Furthermore, the Government's own Strategic Commissioning Framework (Framework) makes it clear there should be a reduced reliance on an external workforce and the prioritising of APS employment and capability.¹ It is difficult to understand how operational and administrative duties are not core APS work that cannot be filled through recruitment or sourced from within the APS. Removing these restrictions runs counter to the intent of the Framework to limit the use of consultants.

The Omnibus Bill should be amended to remove these proposed changes to Section 63 of the ARENA Act 2011 with the current restrictions on the use of consultants maintained.

The CPSU is happy to provide further information regarding any of the matters raised in this submission and supplementary information on other relevant issues.

If you require further information, please contact Osmond Chiu, Senior Policy and Research Officer, via email at [REDACTED] or on [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Melissa Donnelly
National Secretary
CPSU-PSU Group

¹ Australian Public Service Commission. Strategic Commissioning Framework. 23 October 2023.
<https://www.apsc.gov.au/publication/aps-strategic-commissioning-framework>