

Estimates Opening Statement

The Australian Government's Budget 2023-24 reinforces the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR) as central to building a better future for all Australians through a productive, resilient and sustainable economy, enriched by science and technology.

The Department is implementing measures to help diversify and transform Australian industry, boost sovereign capability, support the nation's scientific and technological capabilities, and ensure a stronger resources sector. Measures include:

- funding to establish and operate the National Reconstruction Fund (NRF) Corporation;
- a new Industry Growth Program to support small and medium enterprises and start-ups to commercialise; and
- investment in quantum and artificial intelligence to grow local capacity and capability.

There are new measures that help support the whole-of-government priority to transition to net zero emissions while creating secure and well-paying jobs. Measures include:

- funding to develop a Future Gas Strategy; and
- international partnerships to develop critical minerals processing in Australia.

The Department also continues its role in maintaining efficient and effective regulatory regimes across our areas of responsibilities.

To support greater transparency of funding, new programs have been created for Commonwealth agencies that have received funding to support the nuclear-powered submarine program. This is reported as Program 1.4 – Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program for the Australian Radioactive Waste Agency (ARWA, a division in the Department) and Program 2 for the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO). Both of these entities are providing expert advice to the Department of Defence.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge that this will be Dr Larry Marshall's final Budget Estimates appearance as Chief Executive Officer of the CSIRO. I thank him for his leadership and dedicated service. Dr Marshall will leave a strong legacy, having established CSIRO's Missions program, innovation fund and national science accelerator, and overseeing CSIRO's contribution to Australia's resilience during the COVID pandemic.

Thank you.