DISR Estimates Opening Statement - 5 June 2024

This year's Budget once again reinforces the central role of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR) in the Government's agenda to build a better future for all Australians.

This portfolio will be working collaboratively across government and with stakeholders to design and implement important elements of the Government's Future Made in Australia agenda. Measures are spread across the department's remit:

- On the industry side, we have new initiatives such as the Battery Breakthrough part of the Battery Strategy, Green Metals and the Future Made in Australia Innovation Fund. These build on existing measures including the Industry Growth Program and the National Reconstruction Fund.

- For science, we are supporting a thriving, skilled and diverse science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce and ensuring the continued operations of the National Measurement Institute.

- In technology, we are taking action to support the safe and responsible use of AI in Australia and making strategic investments under the quantum strategy.

- In resources, we are advancing implementation of the Critical Minerals Strategy, including through the design of tax production credits.

- We will support Geoscience Australia to deliver enhanced precompetitive geoscience and geospatial data through the Resourcing Australia's Prosperity program and their collaboration with the United States's Landsat Next program.

- The Future Gas Strategy sets out the role gas will play in the transition to net zero and supports decisions on gas supply and production being based on credible and detailed analysis.

In short, the department is part of the whole of government focus on realising the opportunities in the transition to net zero emissions and supporting the creation of internationally competitive industries and new sources of economic growth.

We continue to focus on recognising the opportunities that come with new technologies and exploring ways in which we can harness Australian know how. Technologies of particular focus include quantum, artificial intelligence and robotics as they have the power to unlock and underpin large economic and social benefits.

I am proud of the department's work, in collaboration with a range of other organisations, to undertake a comprehensive due diligence process to support the government's decision making in relation to the world-leading company PsiQuantum – which aims to build and operate a world first utility-scale fault tolerant quantum computer in Queensland.

The National Robotics Strategy released in May 2024 sets a vision for Australia's robotics ecosystem to excel in developing, manufacturing and using responsible robotics and automation technologies.

Australia needs to maximise the impact and value from our investment in research and development and to strengthen our innovation ecosystem. As such, the department will be supporting a strategic examination of Australia's research and development system.

On departmental administrative matters, since the previous senate estimates hearings, we have created a dedicated Legal and Integrity Division that brings together assurance functions previously in the department under one division.

Staff in my diverse department are committed to public service and passionate about the work they do. For example, earlier this year John Fiander retired after 62 years of service in the National Measurement Institute and its predecessors.

I would like to thank the staff in my department, those in the broader portfolio and our many collaborators across industry, academia and the public service for their professionalism and expertise over what has been a busy period of activity.

We look forward to sharing information about our work with the committee over coming days.