



Australian Government
**Department of Industry, Science,
Energy and Resources**

Opening statement | DISER Submission to France Inquiry

Thank you for the opportunity to elaborate on our portfolio engagement with the Republic of France.

The Australian Government established early and successful measures to reduce transmission of the COVID 19 virus. The department is continuing to support government, industry and the community through the pandemic. We are providing support to the business, energy and resources sectors by sourcing and distributing essential items, particularly personal protective equipment, critical medical supplies, and invasive ventilators.

The department's submission has been delayed during COVID, and I would like to thank the committee for its patience. Many of my colleagues are still working on COVID-19 taskforces, and we are only able to have a small group here today to represent the Department. We hope the Committee understands that we may need to take some questions on notice. However, we would be delighted to answer any of your questions

As the committee may be aware, the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources' (DISER's) broad vision is to support economic growth and job creation for all Australians by:

- supporting science and commercialisation,
- growing business investment and improving business capability, and
- simplifying doing business.

The department also has responsibility for energy, climate change and small business matters.

The Australian economy is dependent on international engagement for business, technology, science, trade and foreign investment. The department plays a key role in this engagement, and France is an important country in this regard.

The breadth of the department's engagement with France reflects the coverage of the portfolio across a wide range of issues. This includes resources, energy, digital economy, space, climate change, manufacturing, industry, science and innovation.

In line with the terms of reference, the department has identified a number of opportunities for strengthening Australia's relations with the Republic of France, along with providing background on current department engagement. As outlined in our submission, future opportunities in the sectors covered by our portfolio include:

- (1) expanding bilateral trade and investment, including under the **EU FTA** currently being negotiated
- (2) **critical minerals** investment, technology cooperation and further integrated supply chains
- (3) further cooperation on **hydrogen** and **renewable energy** technologies as we move to a decarbonised world
- (4) growing the Australian **space** sector through industry collaboration with France and the EU, and
- (5) supporting France's growing mining sector through Australian industry-led engagement on the provision of Mining Equipment, Technology and Services (or **METS**).

Reflecting the region's importance, we have two (of a total of seven globally) departmental counsellors in Europe – one in Paris focused on energy and the IEA, and one in Brussels covering the

EU, including the OECD. Counsellors also engage with key partner countries, businesses, peak bodies and research organisations.

Thank you.