



# **National Energy Authority Bill 2022**

Latrobe City Council Submission

November 2022



*Latrobe City Council thanks the Federal Government for the opportunity to provide input to the proposed National Energy Transition Authority Bill 2022.*

## About Latrobe City

Latrobe City is one of Victoria's four major regional cities. It is home to approximately 75,000 people and is Gippsland's regional capital. Latrobe City is resource rich with abundant forests, rich agricultural land, water resources and large deposits of brown coal.

Latrobe City is home to 5,000 businesses that supports around 32,000 jobs. Latrobe City is a significant centre of Victoria's energy industry and historically it has produced approximately 85 per cent of the electricity of the entire state of Victoria.

Latrobe City has significant energy production and distribution industries and infrastructure, including an electricity grid that connects to Tasmania, South Australia and New South Wales. These assets provide Latrobe with significant opportunities to attract alternative and new energy technology investments. This leverages not only infrastructure but a skills base and engineering capabilities in the region. This places Latrobe City at an advantage as an ideal location to generate and transmit large-scale renewable energy.

## National Energy Transition Authority Bill 2022 Proposal

As a region directly impacted by the closure of coal-fired power stations, Latrobe City welcomes all support and funding from the Federal Government to assist our community and workers affected by the planned closure of Loy Yang and Yallourn. We are acutely aware that the impact of these closures will be broad reaching and will affect the entire community, not only limited to workers at the power stations.

Latrobe City has been on a long journey of transition since the closure of Hazelwood in 2016. Council continues to lead a strength-based transition working directly with our community to understand their aspirations for the future and to implement the change our community expects. Council continues to work with all levels of government and regional agencies to progress our community's aspiration through a focus on economic diversification, jobs for the future, improved health outcomes and sustainability. Our priorities reflected in our Council Plan 2021 – 2025 includes attracting new industries, workforce development, existing business support, promoting the health and wellbeing of our community, reducing inequalities and protecting our natural environment.

The core objectives of the proposed National Energy Authority align with Councils objectives.

The advice function of the National Energy Authority will enhance and support the current work that is being undertaken in Latrobe City. Latrobe City Council would like to recommend that the new Authority work in partnership with Council, the Victorian Government and regional agencies to complement the ongoing transition work in the region.

In relation to workforce pooling, it is proposed that workforce continuity, reskilling and increasing participation rates should have a greater focus in Latrobe City. The recent closure announcements for Loy Yay and Yallourn coal-fired power stations provides the necessary security to focus on employee transition to new industries and to accelerate required approvals for proposed new energy opportunism in Gippsland. This includes offshore wind, hydrogen and batteries – that will provide much needed jobs and security for the Latrobe City community.

Latrobe City Council welcomes all support to attract new investment in job-creating industries and social infrastructure that the Federal Government can provide. It is imperative that this support takes place in partnership and consultation with Latrobe City Council and represents the aspirations of our community and builds on our strengths, our history in power generation and new industries.

The region has several ongoing plans, programs and challenges that the Federal Government can support. Latrobe City Council looks forward to partnering with the proposed Authority to deliver the transition our community expects.

Latrobe City Council has a strong relationship with the Latrobe Valley Authority, we recommend any assistance the Federal Government provides be undertaken in partnership and collaboration with all levels of government.

The Latrobe Valley Authority, Latrobe City Council and leaders across Gippsland are developing a Transition Plan. Any support from the Federal Government should align with the goals, objectives and principles of the Transition Plan and align with the aspirations of the Latrobe City community.

The proposed Fund to support Latrobe's transition goals should in turn also align with the aim and objectives of the Transition Plan and Council's Plans. Latrobe City Council is fully supportive of any funding that will enable ongoing transition and improve the liveability of the region. Latrobe has seen a significant investment in liveability projects and would recommend any new funding should be directed to creating new jobs and investment as a priority

Latrobe City Council would like to ensure that any workforce modelling and planning for energy-related industries aligns with current work undertaken by both Council and the Victorian Government.

The Authority can play an integral role in enabling the proposed \$41 billion investment in offshore wind in Gippsland to be accelerated by fast-tracking the approvals process and working with industry to realise new technologies and applications in new energy sources for example hydrogen.

The production of hydrogen in Latrobe City would enable the region to continue its long history of energy generation. New technologies, new jobs and private investment will provide much needed support for our transition, our current workforce and our workforce of the future

Council recommends that the governance structures for any proposed programs, funding, workforce development and industry attraction includes Latrobe City Council to ensure the Latrobe community is best represented and delivers an equitable transition for all.

Council would also recommend that the Board include suitable representation from those regional communities directly impacted by the closure of local coal-fired power stations.

We would like to thank the Commonwealth Government for the opportunity to provide a submission to the National Energy Authority Bill.