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Nuclear dead, ambitious energy transformation mandate alive and well

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The electorate has given the Albanese government a crystal-clear mandate. It has roundly rejected the division, climate denialism and policy incompetence of the Coalition under Peter Dutton's leadership. The LNP's nuclear furphy is dead, buried and cremated. Now is the time for conviction and courage to double down and move at the speed the climate science dictates, seizing the magnitude of opportunities ahead for Australia on energy transition, domestic and export.

There are plenty of challenges, but the risks of too-slow action are clear. This is an intergenerational game-changer moment, and it is time-critical. The opportunity cost of any failure to act will fall heavily on future generations.

The Albanese government must step up into global leadership ahead of the COP31 international climate talks in 2026, as we vie to hold them here. Critically, we need to see a commitment from the ALP to no more greenfield fossil fuel project approvals if it is to honour its climate pledges, and a definitive policy and investment pivot to the zero-emissions future. This is where our national prosperity and energy security lie.

The government has already made significant strides - its Future Made in Australia program, its firmed renewables policy agenda, the Safeguard Mechanism to reduce industrial emissions and its substantial strategic public-interest investment into the transformation - and it now has the green light to build on this impressive foundation.

Domestically, we need to accelerate to 82 per cent renewables by 2030 and 95 per cent by 2035, even as we progressively electrify everything. We need to reassess and rein in the Australian Energy Market Operator's (AEMO) Rewiring the Nation program and pumped hydro plans in light of the capex blowouts and delays now evidenced in this large-scale infrastructure, and instead leverage and optimise the existing grid and upscale our battery rollout.

This starts with reaffirming and implementing the \$2.3 billion consumer battery policy announced in April, then picking up the pace on [making distributed energy work for everyone](#), including disadvantaged communities and First Nations peoples.

We need to aim for 100GW of rooftop solar by 2040, now possible given the massively improved economics of firmed solar, as prices for both batteries and solar modules have fallen dramatically in the last two years. While Australia has led the

world in rooftop solar, the challenge is on. South Africa installed a staggering 6.2GW in 2024, double Australia's run-rate. Pakistan did a staggering 15GW last year, predominantly residential and commercial rooftop solar.



The Gullen solar and wind farms in New South Wales. Picture Shutterstock

We need to leverage our New Vehicles Emissions standards and complement this with a national rollout of charging infrastructure at scale this decade - in every station car park and every Bunnings Warehouse - to ensure we embrace the huge \$60 billion annual saving of cutting our addiction to oil imports. We should be using EVs' vehicle-to-grid capacities to export energy back to the grid, further building grid resilience as we electrify everything.

Complementing this, the government must fast-track committed spending, for example from the National Reconstruction Fund, for large-scale renewable energy and innovation projects, and coordinate support nationally.

We look forward to Energy Minister Bowen implementing his 2024 decision to upscale the next round of the Capacity Investment Scheme - designed to support accelerated investment into large-scale renewables and batteries - from 6GW to 10GW, responding to the clear market momentum in the 6.6 times oversubscribed round 1 tender. This investment must be front-loaded in the years to 2030, building on the [51GW](#) of new renewable and storage projects in the advanced stage, as reported by AEMO.

Let's acknowledge and embrace the system transformation in progress, and allocate our scarce human capital to those projects that transform and prepare our country for the decades ahead.

Let's grasp this moment of policy certainty from a government committed to remaking Australia as a clean, green industrial superpower to further build investor

confidence, crowding in domestic and foreign financial capital at scale to underpin our transition - including from our Asian neighbours and the global decarbonisation leader, China, with whom we have a generational opportunity for partnership.

As our export partners decarbonise, we need to pivot with them. This involves refocusing away from exporting green hydrogen towards using hydrogen in industrial applications for decarbonisation of our world-leading mining sector. It means extending our competitive advantage in renewables, so we can process our abundant resources onshore using clean energy. This will enable us to export value-added green iron, aluminium, lithium and polysilicon - a more than \$100 billion per annum value-added uplift for our economy, as we "embody decarbonisation" in our leading commodities and energy transition resources.

The opportunities are huge; it is time for the returned Albanese government, with its historical mandate, to lift ambition and hit the accelerator on the race to the top in collaboration with our key trade partners.

Australian voters have spoken, loudly, for a positive, solutions-focused government at this time of great global uncertainty. Thankfully, this includes an emphatic endorsement of strong policies to build on the work of Labor, community independents and the Greens, and forge ahead in positioning our nation as a zero-emissions trade and investment leader in a global economy moving towards net zero.

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