



Australia selects four decarbonisation-gearred projects for investment fast-track pilot

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The Australian government on Thursday announced the first four projects under its Investor Front Door pilot, all aimed at helping the shift out of fossil fuels and shore up energy security, it said.

The four projects are in low carbon liquid fuels (LCLF), critical minerals, zero-emissions freight, and green hydrogen.

“We have long said that boosting productivity and navigating global economic volatility are two of our key economic priorities and the Investor Front Door is addressing both,” the government said in a press release.

“The supply chain disruptions we are seeing as a consequence of the conflict in the Middle East demonstrate just how important it is to build up our sovereign capability in these essential areas.”

Investor Front Door was launched in September last year, aiming to streamline the approvals process and fast-track projects of national significance.

Tim Buckley, director of Climate Energy Finance (CEF), told Carbon Pulse he was supportive of the initiative and hoped that it became permanent, noting “it’s taking a long time to get from announcement to substance”.

“We’ve got to move at double the speed” to decarbonise, he said.

CLEAN FUELS

Hamr Energy’s LCLF projects in Victoria and South Australia – which will convert biomass to liquid fuels – will help shipping and aviation to decarbonise, the government said.

“This support comes at a pivotal moment as the nation looks to safeguard its long-term energy resilience,” said Hamr co-founder David Strbley in a press release Thursday.

“Hamr Energy can play a significant role in bolstering domestic fuel production and today’s announcement is an important milestone in achieving this objective.”

In February, the company announced it had [raised A\\$10 mln](#) (\$7 mln) in a Series A funding round backed by Airbus and Qantas.

Buckley from CEF noted that Hamr is aiming to leverage the government's [A\\$1.1 billion clean fuels fund](#) for further development. However, he added, sustainable aviation fuel is “decades and decades away from commercial viability”.

EMISSIONS-FREE FREIGHT

In the freight sector, New Energy Transport's Wilton project is aiming to electrify shipping from Sydney. The company said the Wilton site “will be the first in a network of strategically located charging depots along the Australian eastern seaboard” and able to support up to 50 electric freight carriers.

The selection of the project for the pilot “confirms that electrifying Australia's road freight infrastructure is a national economic and security priority”, said New Energy Transport Co-CEO Daniel Bleakley in a press release.

“Electric trucks offer a pathway to decouple Australia's freight system from volatile global energy markets, dramatically improving supply chain resilience and national energy security.”

CEF's Buckley noted that electrification of freight is moving fast in China, and with Australia “precariously placed” with refineries approaching the end of their lifetimes and dependent on imported fuels, there is an imperative to transition away from fossil fuels.

HYDROGEN HEADSTART?

Also selected was Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners' green hydrogen project in Murchison, Western Australia, which is aiming to produce large-scale green ammonia.

Specifically, the project will create green hydrogen from solar- and wind-powered electrolyzers splitting water, and then turn the gas into green ammonia for export to places like Japan and Taiwan.

It will reduce around 4.4 mln tonnes of CO₂e per year, CIP said on its website.

The project last year was [awarded A\\$814 mln](#) under the government's Hydrogen Headstart programme, to be distributed at key milestones.

However, Buckley said he does not think this project will make it to final investment decision, as it is still missing offtake agreements, has no carbon price incentive, and is facing community opposition.

Finally, tapping into growing global demand for critical minerals for batteries [amid the renewables boom](#), the government has selected Ardea Resources' Kalgoorlie Nickel project in Western Australia for the pilot.

The development could potentially produce 30,000 tonnes of nickel and 2,000 tonnes of cobalt a year for 40 years, the government said.

The government said the pilot will run until mid-2027.

“These first Investor Front Door projects are focussed in the right areas: emerging industries that will grow the economy, build transport security and resilience in a changing world,” said Francesca Muskovic, executive director of policy at the Sydney-based Investor Group on Climate Change, in a press release.

"We need to help these businesses navigate complex regulation and fix bottlenecks that make it hard for projects to be delivered at speed and scale."

She added that the next step is also to get the "right macroeconomic signals to scale investment more broadly", including via tax settings that attract investment into future industries.

Further, the planned Safeguard Mechanism review should proceed, she said, noting that covered sectors such as mining "are obvious potential sources of demand" for the products from the companies in the pilot.

Read more: [FEATURE - 2026 a critical year for the ACCU market, as all eyes are on the Safeguard Mechanism review](#)

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