



3 September 2021

MEDIA RELEASE

Planning for NSW's energy future

NSW's coal-fired power generation system is ageing, and economic, environmental and social pressures are driving a transition to sustainable energy sources. Our energy infrastructure needs modernisation to transition to renewable sources, which are now the cheapest form of power generation. The Committee on Environment and Planning has today released a report that looks at how best to manage this transition.

The Committee makes 21 recommendations and 15 findings, covering support for communities, economic and employment opportunities presented by renewable energy, transmission infrastructure, energy management, and forecasts for domestic and export use of energy. The report also outlines Government initiatives and legislation introduced during the inquiry.

"We support the work being done by the NSW Government to begin addressing energy infrastructure and transition planning. While we welcome these steps, our report highlights further areas for reform to ensure both a just transition and a strong foundation for future energy supply in NSW," said Committee Chair, Alex Greenwich MP.

"This report is a call to action and a call to honesty. Domestic and global market forces have responded to the health and environmental damage that comes from coal-fired power generation, but for far too long, we have failed to plan for the transition and provide economic security through investment and skills diversification needed in coal dependent regions."

"This report provides a roadmap to renewables through a just transition for NSW, from guaranteeing new jobs in coal dependent regions, investing in new skills development, modernising energy infrastructure, removing barriers that prevent the Port of Newcastle becoming a container terminal, mandating the rehabilitation of mines, growing new renewable energy export markets and the NSW Government partnering with the City of Sydney to empower other Local Governments to move to 100 per cent renewable energy".

"NSW must undertake locally-led, proactive, and detailed planning, to ensure the energy transition brings everyone along with it. We heard about transitions, like in Germany's Ruhr Valley, where communities participated from the early stages of transition planning. Badly-managed transitions with poorly-planned coal closures can have severe social and economic consequences, as seen in the Appalachian region in the US."

"Longstanding coal communities, like those in the Hunter and Illawarra regions, have powered our state for a long time. Lack of planning and economic diversification by government has delayed the energy transition, at a great cost to their health, and the environment. We must start planning now for our energy transition, to ensure no-one is left behind," said Mr Greenwich.

The Committee also made findings around forest biomass, which is facilitating deforestation for energy. Forest biomass is not a renewable, sustainable source of energy, and the Committee recommended that the NSW Government amends the definition of *native forest biomaterial* under the Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2009 to prevent the burning of wood from native forests to generate energy.

The Committee began the inquiry in 2019. The inquiry's terms of reference were updated in 2020 to include opportunities for economic recovery from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic provided by renewable energy. The Committee received 254 submissions, and heard from 59 witnesses during four days of hearings.

The report can be found on the Committee's [website](#).

Additional comments provided by Mr Anoulack Chanthivong MP are available in a statement published on the Committee's [website](#).

Media: Hannah Craft – 0423 377 965