

MINING AND ENERGY UNION
QUEENSLAND DISTRICT

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30 October 2025

Committee Secretary
Governance, Energy and Finance Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Email: gefc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

Re: *Energy Roadmap Amendment Bill 2025*

The Mining and Energy Union Queensland District (MEU) is the principal union representing workers across all roles in Queensland's coal mining and coal-fired power generation industries, with a proud history in the state of more than 115 years. We welcome the opportunity to make a submission on the *Energy Roadmap Amendment Bill 2025* (the Bill), which amends the *Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Act 2024* to deliver the new Queensland Energy Roadmap.

MEU members and their communities have been powering Queensland and fuelling the state's economy for generations. Decisions taken by the Queensland Government under the new Roadmap will have a direct impact on the livelihoods and futures of workers across the coal power sector. The Roadmap will also shape the future for communities in the Gladstone, Bowen Basin, and Surat Basin regions, with coal-fired power stations critical for local economic wellbeing, providing local employment, and as reliable customers for local small businesses.

MEU members understand that the energy transition will bring change and fundamentally reshape the industries in which they work. Governments have a responsibility to ensure that the transition unfolds in an orderly way that protects the jobs of energy workers and ensures no person or community is left behind. With strong public ownership across the state, the Queensland Government is in a better position than most other Australian states to achieve this. Unfortunately, the Roadmap fails to provide the certainty, support, and representation that Queensland energy workers need.

Our submission highlights key concerns with the Bill and the Roadmap more broadly.

We welcome much-needed investment in power station maintenance

We welcome the Government's decision to extend the life of Queensland's state-owned coal power stations. Queensland's coal power stations are some of the youngest in the National Electricity Market

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and should play a continued role in providing energy security and grid stability during a period of rapid change, and with numerous coal closures in New South Wales and Victoria scheduled over the years to 2040.

With ongoing reliance on coal power assets, a safe working environment is critical. The Brady Heywood Report into the May 2021 explosion at Callide C power station drew attention to shocking safety failures, unsafe working environments, and inadequate maintenance.¹ MEU members frequently raise concerns about safety at ageing power stations where maintenance has been neglected. The Roadmap's proposed \$1.6 billion Electricity Maintenance Guarantee is an important initiative and we welcome this commitment. Workers and unions must continue to have a direct voice to Government to raise safety and maintenance concerns.

The lack of certainty on coal power closure timeframes is deeply concerning

While we are pleased to see the indicative closure schedule for Queensland's state-owned coal power stations reset to technical lifespans, we are deeply concerned by the lack of certainty offered by the Roadmap, which will make it near impossible for workers and communities to plan for their futures.

Though the Roadmap extends the timelines, the overarching trajectory for coal-fired power in Australia is towards closure, and the Roadmap does little to create certainty for the coal power sector and its workers. There are currently no credible proposals for new coal-fired power generation and, indeed, the Roadmap does not propose the construction of new coal-fired generation capacity. In this context, we find that the Roadmap is subjective, opaque, vague, and non-committal with regard to the new closure dates for state-owned coal power stations. According to the Roadmap, coal is to operate for 'as long as needed in Queensland's electricity system and supported by the market',² with closure decisions based on a matrix of considerations that leave open the possibility of early closures and provide little indication of actual closure years. There is also no indication that there will be any transparency around the closure decisions reached by the Minister.

The mandatory minimum of 42 months' notice of closure for grid-connected generation under the National Electricity Rules is not long enough to adequately plan for a workforce and community transition. Queensland energy workers and communities deserve a carefully managed, consultative, and orderly transition, not a bare minimum plan that leaves decisions to the last minute. Clear timeframes are essential to ensure that investment in new quality jobs can take place in energy regions, and redeployment pathways that include skills recognition and retraining or upskilling opportunities can be developed for workers. Without a carefully planned transition, coal workers and communities face significant distress and may risk long-term unemployment.

The Bill and Roadmap repeal important worker protections and representation

The Bill repeals important elements of the *Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Act 2024* that ensure that communities and workers have a voice and a say in significant changes to the state's energy system. The abolition of the Energy Industry Council via the Bill's repeal of Part 9 of the Act, alongside the abandonment of the Queensland Energy Workers Charter, is extremely disappointing.

The Bill's explanatory notes paint the Energy Industry Council as an administrative burden, and suggest that the Government can instead seek 'independent' advice on its own accord regardless of the Council's existence. This is a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of tripartite consultation and governance in building policy that serves government, industry, community, and workers, and

¹ Brady Heywood, July 2024, *Technical and Organisational Investigation of the Callide Unit C4 Incident*.

² Queensland Government, 2025, *Energy Roadmap*, p. 5.

leaves the energy workers who power the state with no guaranteed avenue to shape their futures and raise concerns about issues including closure timelines and – critically – safety and maintenance.

The Bill's amendment to Section 3(c) alters the language of the Act so that it no longer provides for 'advocacy' for workers as one of its main purposes. Meanwhile, the Bill's changes to Sections 4 and 89 of the Act dilute the purpose of the Job Security Guarantee Fund away from its original role in advocating for and protecting the job security of energy workers. Unions signed onto the Queensland Energy Workers' Charter in good faith three years ago, securing important commitments like guaranteed future work in the government-owned energy sector for workers displaced by coal power closures.³ If the Government reneges on Workers' Charter commitments, workers will suffer as a direct result.

Queensland needs majority public ownership of electricity generation

Public ownership of energy generation assets ensures that these essential services are run for the benefit of ordinary people. Though we appreciate the Government's commitment to keeping existing state-owned generation assets in public hands, we are disappointed by the Bill's changes to Section 13(1)(a) which repeal the previous government's target of at least 54 per cent public ownership of all energy generation assets in Queensland. The Roadmap describes this change as a 'clear invitation for private sector investment into new generation',⁴ but a key strength of Queensland's energy system, especially compared to other Eastern states, has been its refusal to bow to pressure for privatisation – the energy transition must not become a vehicle for undermining majority public ownership of generation in Queensland.

Regards



Mitch Hughes
District President
MINING AND ENERGY UNION
Queensland District

³ Queensland Energy Workers Charter, September 2022.

⁴ Queensland Government, 2025, *Energy Roadmap*, p. 47.