



**Colleen Fuller** | Mayor

[www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)

Australian Energy Regulator  
[AERringfencing@aer.gov.au](mailto:AERringfencing@aer.gov.au)

4 September 2025

Dear Sir/Madam/AER,

I am writing on behalf of Gunnedah Shire Council in support of Essential Energy's application to establish a Training Academy to offer accredited training courses and establish a regional training academy delivering accredited training critical for regional economic development.

The Essential Energy Training Academy will provide targeted training in Tamworth as its closest hub to Gunnedah. At about an hour's travel, this would easily allow locals to train and upskill, providing an important cost-effective option rather than requiring travel to Sydney or Brisbane.

Lack of opportunities for industry relevant skills training supporting retention of skilled workers create a handbrake in our Shire. Gunnedah Shire's population is growing, bucking regional trends, and we have the workers available for the Academy to be successful in our region.

Council has continually lobbied for accredited vocational training in our Shire, but options for local employers, women, First Nations and young people to be trained and upgrade skills remain limited. The Essential Energy Training Academy will address education gaps by offering accessible, industry-aligned programs that prepare residents for high-demand roles in the electricity and renewable energy sectors and include pathways for all these groups.

It is vital for businesses and residents across our 5,000 km2 Shire that Essential Energy is a trusted employer and network operator, maintaining quality infrastructure. Having locals trained will reduce travel time to outages and issues, supporting economic and social outcomes.

Secure power will boost regional attractiveness for businesses supporting new investment and existing businesses in agriculture, manufacturing and tourism. Fostering workforce development and economic diversification meets many of our strategic imperatives and regional priorities.

I trust that our submission meets all the requirements for consideration and we are available to provide any further information should it be required. This submission contains no confidential material and may be published by the AER.

Yours faithfully

Councillor Colleen Fuller  
MAYOR

