

[REDACTED]

From: Rebecca Campbell, Director [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

To the Australian Energy Regulator,

I am writing on behalf of Seek+Deploy in support of Essential Energy's application for a Ring-Fencing Waiver to establish a Training Academy to offer accredited training courses critical for regional economic development.

Since starting our consultancy business in 2020, we have worked with several clients and stakeholders in the renewable energy sector and believe this Training Academy will be beneficial for a number of reasons:

- As outlined in the *Jobs and Skills Roadmap for Regional Australia Phase 1, 3 July 2025*, regional NSW faces skills shortages and challenges in developing a skilled workforce. The Academy will provide local residents with access to high-quality, industry-relevant training, reducing reliance on external labour markets.
- Establishing training hubs, such as this Academy, in regional centres will stimulate local economies by attracting trainees who spend on local businesses (e.g. accommodation, dining) and creating jobs related to academy operations (e.g. trainers, support staff).
- We are confident in the credibility of Essential Energy as a trusted regional employer and network operator, which will ensure training is tailored to the specific needs of the electricity sector and local infrastructure, benefiting both residents and employers.
- There is limited availability for accredited vocational training in regional areas, and even where courses are offered, delivery is not always reliable, as evidenced by TAFE NSW's recent 'capacity crisis' and the freezing of electrical apprentice enrolments at five campuses. This comes as the nation faces a critical shortage of electricians, with Jobs and Skills Australia forecasting a need for another 85,000 electricians by 2050. The 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. The Academy will also expand access to vocational education in regional areas, providing pathways for school leavers, career changers, and disadvantaged groups to enter high-skill industries.

- The Academy will create direct and indirect employment opportunities, including roles for trainers, administrative staff, and facility maintenance, while upskilling residents for jobs in the electricity and renewable energy sectors, reducing regional unemployment rates. Furthermore, upskilling local residents will enhance community resilience by providing stable, well-paid employment opportunities, reducing out-migration of young people and fostering long-term economic stability. By skilling workers for renewable energy projects, the Academy will position regional NSW as a hub for clean energy development, attracting investment and supporting state and national decarbonisation goals. Additionally, a skilled local workforce makes regional NSW more attractive to businesses, particularly in energy and infrastructure, encouraging new investments and supporting existing employers in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism. The Academy will also provide affordable, local training options for small and medium-sized enterprises, which often lack the resources to send their workers to urban centres, enabling them to upskill their employees and compete more effectively.
- The Academy supports regional priorities, such as those outlined in Workforce Australia's Local Jobs Plan for the New England and North West, by offering community and social benefits, such as training program pathways for underrepresented groups (e.g. youth, First Nations people, women in trades), promoting inclusivity and addressing social inequities in regional labour markets.

We 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.

Kind regards, Rebecca.

—

Rebecca Campbell
Director of Operations | Seek+Deploy
[REDACTED] | www.seekdeploy.com