

Responsible Officer: EA

In reply, please quote: UO/25/3160

2 September 2025

Australian Energy Regulator

AERringfencing@er.gov.au

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam

Letter of Support – Essential Energy Training Waiver

Council is in full 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.

Areas seen to be addressed by Essential Energy's application include:

- **Addressing Skills Shortages in Regional Communities:** Noting the challenge of developing a skilled workforce in regional NSW, the academy will provide local residents with access to high-quality, industry-relevant training, reducing reliance on external labour markets.
- **Economic Benefits of Local Training:** Training hubs in regional centres will stimulate local economies by attracting trainees who spend on local businesses (eg accommodation and dining), and creating jobs related to academy operations (eg trainers and support staff).
- **Confidence in Essential Energy's Regional Expertise:** Essential Energy is a trusted regional employer and network operator, ensuring training will be tailored to the specific needs of the electricity sector and local infrastructure, benefiting both residents and employers.
- **Bridging Education and Employment Gaps:** There is limited availability of accredited vocational training in regional areas. 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.
- **Job Creation and Unemployment Reduction:** 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.
- **Support for the Renewable Energy Transition:** By training workers in skills relevant to renewable energy projects (eg. solar, wind, or grid infrastructure), the academy will position regional NSW as a hub for clean energy development, attracting investment and supporting state and national decarbonisation goals.
- **Strengthening Community Resilience:** Upskilling local residents enhances community resilience by providing stable, well-paid employment opportunities, reducing out-migration of young people and fostering long-term economic stability.

- **Enhancing Regional Education Infrastructure:** The academy will expand access to vocational education in regional areas, addressing education gaps and providing pathways for school leavers, career changers, and disadvantaged groups to enter high-skill industries.
- **Boosting Regional Attractiveness for Businesses:** A skilled local workforce makes regional NSW more appealing to businesses, particularly in energy and infrastructure, encouraging new investments and supporting existing employers in sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism.
- **Support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs):** The academy will provide affordable, local training options for SMEs, which often lack the resources to send workers to urban centres, enabling them to upskill employees and compete more effectively.
- **Alignment with Regional Development Strategies:** The academy supports state and regional development priorities, such as those outlined in NSW Government plans (eg. Regional Economic Development Strategies), by fostering workforce development and economic diversification.
- **Community and Social Benefits:** Training programs can include pathways for underrepresented groups (eg. Indigenous communities, women in trades), promoting inclusivity and addressing social inequities in regional labour markets.

All of the above identified areas work within our Community Strategic Plan 2025 - 2034.

PILLAR	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE
Community Minded	We have an accessible, inclusive, and sustainable community.
Prosperous	A sustainable economy that supports prosperity.
Good Custodians	Good custodianship of our natural and built environment.

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.

Yours Sincerely,



Robert Bell

Mayor, Uralla Shire