



JOINT STATEMENT ENERGY CHALLENGES NEED COOPERATION

Embargoed until 12.01am Thursday 6 October 2016

Organisations representing Australia's energy industry and consumers of all sizes have united in calling for a cooperative and strategic response to Australia's energy transition and challenges, as Australia's energy ministers gather in the aftermath of South Australia's electricity blackout.

Australia is undergoing a major transition towards a lower carbon emissions economy and new technologies for generation, supply, storage, and use of energy. The storm and subsequent blackout in South Australia underline the vital importance of energy security, and the vulnerability of our increasingly complex electricity system to natural disasters. Before the storm and blackout, South Australia also experienced significant energy price rises and volatility, shaped by: interconnector limitations; gas supply issues; the exit of coal-fired generation; and an increase in renewable energy generation.

While these events and challenges are distinct, a successful response in each case requires Australia's leaders to work together. Both sides of politics at the federal and state levels share responsibility for the current state of the national energy system and for developing effective solutions to it. Those solutions need to be strategic, efficient, nationally coordinated, and consistent.

Steps intended to achieve reliable, affordable and sustainable energy will inevitably come at a cost. These costs can be minimised through careful long-term planning and cooperation between all stakeholders. Effective and enduring policy will ensure Australia can leverage significant private sector investment to deliver the necessary infrastructure.

Our organisations will continue to participate in robust public debate over these issues. Absent a bipartisan approach to the tightly connected issues of energy and climate change, uncertainty will cause essential energy investments to be deferred or distorted, to the ultimate cost of us all. Australia's energy ministers must work together.