



# Australian Government

## Office of the National Wind Farm Commissioner

17 March 2021

The Hon Angus Taylor MP  
Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
via email to: [angus.taylor.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:angus.taylor.mp@aph.gov.au)

Dear Minister

**RE: Role Expansion – Letter Reference: MB20-003985**

Thank you for your letter, which I received on 12 March 2021, regarding the ongoing role of the National Wind Farm Commissioner.

I agree to the proposed revised Terms of Reference that were included in your letter.

I also agree that the effective deployment of new large-scale transmission infrastructure will play an increasingly important role in connecting and managing the integration of renewable generation into the National Electricity Market. I am delighted to be invited to assist with these significant developments, utilising and leveraging expertise and experience gained from our work in the wind, solar and energy storage sectors.

In closing, I look forward to formal confirmation of commencement of the expanded role and to continuing to work with you and the Australian Government on our current and additional duties.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy'.

Andrew Dyer  
National Wind Farm Commissioner



**THE HON ANGUS TAYLOR MP  
MINISTER FOR ENERGY AND EMISSIONS REDUCTION**

MB20-003985

Mr Andrew Dyer  
National Wind Farm Commissioner  
PO Box 24434  
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Mr Dyer

*Andrew*

I am writing to propose a revision to your Terms of Reference as the National Wind Farm Commissioner. The revised terms enclosed expand your role to include giving consideration to complaints regarding new major transmission projects.

Transmission will play an increasingly important role in managing the intermittency of renewables and sharing reliable generation across the National Electricity Market (NEM). The Australian Government is actively encouraging these developments through the establishment of a Grid Reliability Fund administered by the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, and working with state governments to support early works on transmission projects, including Marinus Link, project EnergyConnect and VNI West interconnectors.

However, I am aware of an increasing number of complaints from residents along the route of a number of planned transmission projects, and I expect these concerns to be given adequate consideration.

Operating within the new Terms of Reference, I would expect you to work collaboratively with both residents and developers to resolve concerns, as well as with relevant State and Territory government officials to facilitate successful project outcomes. Your role should not be seen as regulatory in nature, and any advice or recommendations you provide should give appropriate consideration to the regulatory and commercial framework in which these projects are being delivered, and in particular the costs imposed on electricity consumers.

My intention is to evaluate the potential ongoing benefits of the National Wind Farm Commissioner's role as part of the evaluation set out in the Terms of Reference. I would like you to undertake these additional duties as part of your existing resourcing.

I would appreciate confirmation of your agreement to the revised Terms of Reference in writing.

Yours sincerely

*Angus Taylor*

ANGUS TAYLOR

Enc

## **National Wind Farm Commissioner Terms of Reference 2018-21 (Revised)**

The National Wind Farm Commissioner was reappointed for three years in 2018 due to the ongoing growth in renewable energy and the Government's continued commitment to ensure community concerns are acknowledged and addressed. The Government has also agreed to expand the role to include new major transmission projects.

The Commissioner will work collaboratively with all levels of government, scientists, experts, industry and the community to resolve complaints from community members about proposed and operational wind farms, large scale solar farms (5 MW or more), storage facilities, such as large scale batteries (1 MW or more) and new major transmission projects.

The Commissioner will refer complaints about wind farms, large scale solar farms, storage facilities and new major transmission projects to relevant authorities and help ensure that they are properly addressed.

The Commissioner will lead efforts to promote best practices, information availability, and provide a central, trusted source for dissemination of information.

The Commissioner, supported by the Australian Government Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources will report to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction and provide an Annual Report to the Australian Parliament on delivering against these Terms of Reference.

The Commissioner's role will not duplicate or override the important statutory responsibilities of other jurisdictions, such as those relating to the planning and approval of wind farms, large scale solar farms, storage facilities and new major transmission projects.

The Commissioner is to draw on the work of the Independent Scientific Committee on Wind Turbines.

In 2018, the role of the National Wind Farm Commissioner was extended for a period of three years, until October 2021. The role will be re-evaluated by the Australian Government prior to that date.



**THE HON ANGUS TAYLOR MP  
MINISTER FOR ENERGY AND EMISSIONS REDUCTION**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

Friday, 26 March 2021

**NATIONAL WIND FARM COMMISSIONER ROLE TO BE EXPANDED**

The role of the National Wind Farm Commissioner will be further expanded to cover new major transmission projects, as the Morrison Government maintains its priority on delivering cheap and reliable power to households and businesses.

To reflect the expanded role, the National Wind Farm Commissioner will now be known as the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner.

Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction Angus Taylor said the Government is committed to ensuring community concerns about transmission projects are acknowledged and addressed throughout the design, planning, construction and operational phases of deployment.

"Transmission investment is crucial to the security and affordability of our grid," Minister Taylor said.

"As these critically important transmission projects take shape, we want to ensure that any concerns community members have are heard and resolved in the appropriate way, and the Commissioner's expanded role will facilitate this.

"I thank Mr Andrew Dyer for taking on these additional responsibilities, his ongoing commitment to this important role and for his achievements since commencing the role in 2015".

Since 2015, the National Wind Farm Commissioner has played a key role in helping community members and stakeholders work through issues related to wind farm development and operations. In 2018, the Government expanded the Commissioner's role to also include managing concerns relating to large scale solar and storage installation.

The Commissioner will now also facilitate the resolution of complaints and community concerns about new major transmission projects, as well as assist industry and governments to identify and adopt best practices for deploying these projects.

The Morrison Government is advancing all major priority transmission projects identified in the Australian Energy Market Operator's [2020 Integrated System Plan](#).

The Government is working with state governments to support early works on transmission projects including Marinus Link, Project EnergyConnect, HumeLink, and VNI West.

The Government is also actively encouraging the development of new transmission projects through the establishment of a \$1 billion Grid Reliability Fund to be administered by the Clean Energy Finance Corporation.

These critical transmission investments will bring new generation into the energy system while shoring up the reliability and affordability of the system across state borders.

The Government is continuing to deliver a more affordable and reliable electricity system for Australians through measures that will lower bills, secure our grid and drive investment in new energy infrastructure.

Further information including the Commissioner's role can be viewed [here](#).

**ENDS**

**Minister Taylor's office:**

Liam O'Neil, 0428 113 617

# MEDIA RELEASE



29 March 2021

MR/21/21

## **New energy role must power up farmer consultation**

NSW Farmers has welcomed news that the role of the National Wind Farm Commissioner will be further expanded to cover new major transmission projects.

Federal Energy Minister Angus Taylor says the new role will now be known as the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner.

NSW Farmers President James Jackson said renewable and transmission energy infrastructure is growing at a rapid rate across the state.

“It is important that proponents of these developments are held accountable to their obligations throughout the planning and commissioning of these projects,” Mr Jackson said.

“The process of development of transmission line across NSW has been poorly handled to date, with many members despairing at the poor consultation and lack of regard for the operation of farming businesses.”

“There is widespread anger in many areas of the state where transmission line corridors seem to be set in stone prior to entering into consultation with those affected.”

“The Commissioner will need to hit the ground running as these projects proceed with haste and without an understanding of what constitutes important and strategic agricultural land.”

“NSW Farmers recognises that renewable energy is an important component in our energy production framework, however, there must be robust processes and accountabilities to

ensure we are protecting surrounding agricultural land and ensuring our most productive regions are able to continue to produce the fibre we need.”

While there are significant opportunities to partner with agriculture and regional communities, there are areas of our state where energy infrastructure can go which will not impact our most productive land and government needs to be aware and willing to act to protect our important agricultural assets.”

Mr Jackson said the important relationship between renewable energy generators, and location of transmission lines must not be blind to the need to protect and enhance our agricultural businesses.

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# CLEAN ENERGY COUNCIL WELCOMES AUSTRALIAN ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSIONER

[Media release \(https://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/news?categories\[0\]=54768\)](https://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/news?categories[0]=54768)

**26 MARCH, 2021**



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**The expansion of the role of the National Wind Farm Commissioner's to that of Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner is a welcome step to ensure the significant investment in Australia's electricity network is well planned, managed and has strong community engagement and support.**

The Commissioner has played a valuable role in the renewable energy sector by sharing information, promoting best practice and working with



industry and communities.

Clean Energy Council Chief Executive, Kane Thornton, said wind developers recognised that community support was essential to the industry's success as a whole. As a result, the industry has made this a significant focus in how it goes about planning and developing projects.

"The wind industry has made a concerted effort in recent years to lift the quality of its community engagement practices, and this focus is reflected in a reduction in complaints made by community members over time, despite increasing levels of activity," said Thornton.

In 2019, the Commissioner's role was expanded to include large-scale solar and storage. In that year, the Commissioner received 75 new complaints nationwide, a number of which related to construction matters in a year with substantial construction activity. The vast majority of complaints received during the year concerned proposed wind farms (including projects under construction), with only five complaints relating to operating wind farms.

"While we must continuously strive for excellence, it's clear that these levels of complaints are fairly low considering that the industry has deployed or committed to 17.6 GW of generation worth \$32.7 billion since 2017," said Thornton.

"The Commissioner has played an important role in supporting this continuous improvement effort, and we look forward to his contribution to best practice within the transmission sector, which is a vital partner of the electricity generation sector.

"A 21st-century economy needs a modern electricity network that supports reliability, security and lower emissions technologies and delivers low-cost energy to consumers.

"Upgrades in our transmission network are required urgently. Planning and development must take place in consultation with local communities to deliver outcomes that are both fair and equitable."

ENDS

**For more information or to arrange an interview, contact:**

Jane Aubrey

Clean Energy Council Media Manager

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Media release

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