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Not enough fuel in the tank warns Business Hunter

The region's peak business group, **Business Hunter** will continue to push for faster commissioning of renewables, with the closure of Liddell power station today.

Business Hunter CEO, Bob Hawes, said the closure represented the start of an uncertain period in the energy market, a reality at odds with forecasts at the time the closure was determined in 2017.

"The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO), the National Productivity Commission and the CSIRO have all recently indicated we face energy insecurity across the period to 2027 due to insufficient replacement firming generation at the rate required to meet the current and forecast energy demands," said Mr Hawes.

"There's an urgent need for additional large-scale commitments to occur. We'll continue to work at the intersection of government, business and investment to support the supply of reliable and affordable energy as we journey towards a renewable energy future."

Mr Hawes said the Hunter had a key role to play in achieving the energy ambitions of the state and the nation, which was simultaneously one of its greatest opportunities and challenges.

"Here in the Hunter, we'll be at the epicentre of activity for the energy transition. The future in this context is extremely bright. However, energy reliability and affordability will be further tested as our demand curve leaps upward to forge new industries in green hydrogen, offshore wind and battery manufacturing, all hungry for vast amounts of renewable energy," said Mr Hawes.

"We're confident Federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen MP and State Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage Penny Sharp MLC are well aware of the current circumstances, all we ask is for continued honesty and transparency in the conversations if we're to limit the downside to 2027."

Mr Hawes noted Chris Bowen had made it clear that to achieve net zero targets to 2030 of a 43% reduction in carbon, the energy sector needed to be commissioning 40 turbines per month, 22,000 solar panels daily and 10,000 km of transmission line.

"This is a massive task and we'd like to see the ledger as to how we're performing to meet this target. Locally, skills shortages and supply chain pressures threaten to slow construction and the delivery of large scale of renewable projects. The energy transition has become

increasingly time sensitive as accelerating closures of older infrastructure combine with delays and cost blowouts on new infrastructure,” said Mr Hawes.

“We have our work cut out to deliver the next components of the energy transition in a timely manner”.

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