

Pilbara Industry Roundtable Communique – 26 July 2023

The Pilbara is rich in natural resources, generating considerable wealth for both Western Australia and the nation from an economy dominated by the extraction, processing and export of minerals and hydrocarbons.

The Minister for Energy, the Hon. Bill Johnston MLA established the Pilbara Industry Roundtable (Roundtable) in August 2022. The membership of the Roundtable has been broad and representative.

Its purpose has been to discuss the unique opportunities and challenges of a clean energy transformation in the Pilbara and, in recognising the collective challenge that decarbonisation presents, to explore the opportunities of developing new common use electricity infrastructure to underpin renewable energy development.

The Roundtable has now met four times and has overseen a work program that has modelled future electricity demand scenarios, assessed the current regulatory framework, examined land tenure arrangements and explored social licence with a focus on the empowerment of First Nations people.

The Roundtable's work program has now reached its goal with consensus among participants that:

- new common use electricity infrastructure has an important role to play in supporting increased levels of renewable energy and decarbonisation in the Pilbara, and future modelling, on an annual basis if there are material changes, should inform its development.
- there is support for the Pilbara electricity regulatory regime to evolve to support the energy transition and agreement to participate in the consultation process which will support the implementation of further reforms as required;
- as a priority first step, key Government agencies will work together to update existing land tenure guidance for common use electricity infrastructure and renewable energy development; and
- any electricity infrastructure development should support rights to self-determination and empower Aboriginal people to realise opportunities from the clean energy transformation.

In supporting these objectives, participants acknowledged that the shift to common use electricity infrastructure would be complex, take time to fully implement, and require individual commercial consideration. It was also noted this work must coexist with continued individual company projects and progress towards decarbonisation.

The Minister for Energy will now use the findings of the Roundtable to design the next phase of work in consultation with industry stakeholders, engage with Traditional Owners and promote the need for Commonwealth investment in the Pilbara via the Rewiring the Nation initiative. All parties are committed to continue participating in the process for this next phase.

Pilbara Industry Roundtable participants

The Hon. Bill Johnston MLA, Minister for Energy

Alinta Energy
ATCO
BHP
bp
The Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia
FMG
Horizon Power
Macquarie Group
Pilbara Independent System Operator Company
Rio Tinto
Roy Hill
Woodside