

23 MAY 2024

## **ERARING COAL DEAL WILL HELP BUSINESS CONFIDENCE**

Hundreds of thousands of businesses that rely on access to cheaper and more reliable energy can draw some comfort from a decision to extend the life of the Eraring Power Station until August 2027.

The state's peak business advocacy group, Business NSW, has acknowledged the NSW Government's decision to strike a deal with coal plant operators Origin Energy as a necessary move.

Business NSW CEO Daniel Hunter said NSW businesses have seen their energy bills skyrocket over the past two years as energy market uncertainty has grown.

"Getting to net zero is a vitally important goal for the state, but that must be done through a sensible pathway that keeps investment flowing into vital energy infrastructure, and while holding prices in line with our regional competition," Mr Hunter said.

"Having blackouts and avoidable energy cost blowouts was never realistic option for Australia's most important economy. Premier Chris Minns must be commended for taking practical steps to ensure businesses can get on with serving their communities.

"Keeping Eraring open will buy NSW more time to build the renewable energy infrastructure required to account for some of that shortfall, while also assisting market confidence to maintain a vital domestic gas supply.

"As both the state and federal government well know, there is no way we can stop the loss of our manufacturing capability without access to affordable and reliable energy."

Closing the Lake Macquarie facility, which accounts for about 25 per cent of NSW's total power needs, would drive up the wholesale cost of electricity and potentially increase the chances of blackouts.

"While Business NSW was glad to see the Federal Government offer \$325 annual rebate to small businesses in the Federal Budget, our members tell us energy remain one of their top three cost concerns," Mr Hunter said.

“Our members are also desperate to see future investment (public or private) prioritise energy reliability and cost.”

Business NSW is again calling on the NSW Government to:

- Ensure that energy consumers don't carry the cost of keeping Eraring open in their bills;
- Accelerate the delivery of new energy infrastructure;
- Introduce a simple and accessible energy advice program for small businesses to help them reduce their costs and support them to get to net zero; and
- Ensure that gas supplies are brought online promptly to provide cleaner alternatives to burning coal.

### **About Business NSW**

Formerly the NSW Business Chamber, **Business NSW** is the peak policy and advocacy body which has been representing businesses in NSW since 1826. We represent almost 50,000 businesses.

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