

CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE FUND — APPLICATION ROUND

Statement by Minister for Environment

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [9.02 am]: A new round of the Cook government's Clean Energy Future Fund is now open for applications. This fund is an important part of the Cook government's commitment to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The fund supports innovative projects to decarbonise existing industry, develop new renewable energy businesses and improve energy efficiency. As part of the sectoral emissions reduction strategy released in December 2023, the state government is investing an additional \$18 million to 2031 to expand the Clean Energy Future Fund to help develop the technologies necessary for the transition to net zero emissions. The expansion increases the total value of the fund to \$37 million, with \$21.7 million now available for allocation over future funding rounds.

This current funding round will enable organisations to embark on clean energy projects that provide new local renewable energy options and improve energy security and reliability, while also strengthening our economy. As the Minister for Energy; Climate Action, I have identified a number of priorities for this round, including projects that are led by First Nations people, are in regional and remote Western Australia, improve the security and resilience of our electricity networks, enhance energy efficiency, support the transition from diesel electricity generation and provide long-duration energy storage.

To date, the fund has awarded \$12 million to eight clean energy projects. Each year, these projects will save 163 000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, equivalent to taking 52 000 cars off the road. They will generate or save 133 000 megawatt hours of power—enough to power 26 000 Western Australian homes. Examples of successful projects from two previous funding rounds include a mini pumped hydro energy storage system near Walpole; a wind, solar and battery microgrid incorporating biogas for industry in Moora; and a five-megawatt re-deployable solar installation by Nomadic Energy at Northern Star's Carosue Dam mine site.

The Clean Energy Future Fund unlocks new technologies to support Western Australia's renewable energy boom. It plays an important complementary role to the Cook government's \$700 million investment in transforming the state's main electricity network, as announced at the end of last year, and the \$3 billion our government has secured in low-cost finance from the commonwealth government's Rewiring the Nation program for transmission infrastructure in the Pilbara. The Cook government is committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2050 and is establishing this target in legislation that is currently before Parliament. By working together, the Western Australian government and industry can position the state to maximise the energy transition's economic opportunities and reach net zero emissions as soon as possible.