

# Engineers Australia Media Release



14/05/24

## **Engineers Australia 2024 Budget Response: Is this the blueprint for a smarter, greener Australia?**

*All quotes attributable to Engineers Australia CEO Romilly Madew AO*

"The Federal Budget sets an ambitious and forward-thinking plan that focuses on skills, innovation, sovereign capability, and the global energy transition—a direction supported by Engineers Australia. Engineers will be instrumental in advancing an agenda designed to tackle the financial, workforce, environmental, and global challenges we currently face."

"Unleashing the engineering workforce right across industry, boosting engineering skills in government, and investing in more engineering research and development are the keys to creating the innovation and value-add that the government is seeking."

### **A Future Made in Australia:**

"The Future Made in Australia framework is our first true generational plan to tackle the energy transition head-on. We're moving from market-led decisions to strategic investments, leveraging our natural advantages keep competitive and sustainable. This isn't just about going green; it's about making it economically viable on a global scale."

"Engineers Australia supports Federal Budget funding announcements to accelerate the transition to net zero through support for solar, hydrogen, critical minerals, and batteries. Clean hydrogen is the Swiss Army Knife of energy transition, thanks to its versatility across the transport, industry, and power sectors. By establishing a robust regulatory and policy framework, and by securing necessary funding for research, development, and commercialisation, we can fully unlock and leverage hydrogen's vast potential within Australia's economy."

"With the new Commonwealth Prac Payment, students in key fields like teaching, midwifery, and social work now get \$319.50 a week during their practical placements. Given our shortage of engineers, the Government must extend this support to engineering students too. If we truly want a smarter future, we need to make it easier for aspiring engineers to support themselves and their families as they prepare to drive Australia's progress."

"We are pleased with the budget's focus on tackling workforce shortages, implementing initiatives from the Universities Accord, boosting STEM skills, and supporting women. It's clear we urgently need to upskill our workforce to handle the energy transition, enhance our manufacturing, and beef up our digital capabilities. To stay competitive globally, we must embrace a future where continuous learning and quick adaptation are key to Australian engineering."

### **Sustainable Future:**

"The transition to clean energy is one of the most critical issues we face. While we appreciate the climate-focused initiatives in the budget, we need to significantly boost engineering innovation to fast-track our shift towards a sustainable economy. It's crucial we develop a detailed, collaborative plan for long-term infrastructure to ensure our economic prosperity. We urge governments at all levels to commit to continuous improvement through best-practice governance, planning, procurement, and delivery."

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### **Defence:**

"Engineers Australia supports the strategic investments in Defence in line with the priorities outlined in the 2024 National Defence Strategy. The investment in the Defence Industry Development strategy is crucial to support the skills essential for the successful implementation of AUKUS, including specialised funding for the School Pathways Program. Engineers play a pivotal role in embedding robust defence measures to safeguard national security. For the success of Australia's Defence Force and to deliver on AUKUS, it is crucial we have the engineers we need and consistently integrate the engineering perspective throughout project lifecycles."

### **Innovative Future:**

"This new funding boost is a significant step forward for AI in Australia, reinforcing industry confidence through enhanced policies and regulations. It is encouraging to see investments not only in the adoption of AI but also in the establishment of an AI advisory body. Engineers Australia has advocated for such a body, which will foster collaboration between industry, academia, and government to drive the research and development of AI technologies that are both ethical and responsible."

**Note to editors: Romilly Madew is in Canberra and available for further comment.**

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