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Dr Fern Beavis  
Senior Research and Policy Officer  
Australian Council of Learned Academies

By email: [fern@acola.org.au](mailto:fern@acola.org.au)

Dear Dr Beavis

**Victoria University submission to Australian Energy Transition Research Plan Design Issues Paper**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission in response to your invitation to respond to Australian Energy Transition Research Plan Design Issues Paper.

Victoria University is active in energy research in Australia particularly in the fields of engineering, technology, policy and economics and your proposals are of considerable interest to us.

We strongly support ACOLA's initiative to establish an Australian Energy Transition Research Plan that "(will) ensure a long-term focus on independent, transparent, robust evidence-based and multidisciplinary advice". We agree with ACOLA's analysis that such a plan is missing and would be valuable as a guide to "advocacy and applications for research funding by interested parties".

We also think a research plan along the lines proposed would have much value beyond this, in providing an up-to-date inventory of relevant research and as a mechanism for the valuable transfer of knowledge between the producers and consumers of that knowledge. In the rest of this submission we respond to your request for responses in the order you asked them.

**Question 1:** We would be pleased to contribute in-kind to the development of the research plan.

**Question 2:** We agree with the broad approach you suggest to the definitions of research, transition and energy. Such breadth is highly desirable and indeed it would be inappropriate to start an initiative such as this with narrow definitions. However breadth comes at the

price of the very great deal of effort that will be needed to develop a plan that meets your laudable but demanding objectives.

**Question 3:** We agree with the processes you envisage but again point to the very great effort that achieving these will require. For example, even the relatively routine aspect of developing an inventory of contemporary and recent research related to the energy transition will require taxonomy, description and often also a considerable amount of analysis. We find it difficult to imagine that this will be accomplished adequately without dedicated resources.

**Question 4:** We do not have specific suggestions on models and inputs that would be useful in the design of the research plan. The development of the plan will require the best possible resolution of conflicting objectives in the context of imperfect knowledge and resource constraints. This is hard work and organisational capacity i.e. the establishment of an executive office will, we suggest, be needed to undertake the work.

**Question 5:** We would be pleased to be involved in consultations and we could possibly contribute in-kind resources to contribute to the completion of some tasks.

**Question 6:** Ideally, the research plan will comprehensively characterise the wishes of the consumers of the research. We suggest effective governance will include representation of both the consumers and producers of research. Since the majority of the research contemplated under this plan will be in the nature of public goods, we would be concerned if private interests (whether producers or consumers of research) had a role in governance. We think it will also be valuable to ensure that supply-side participants (essentially universities) are represented as a college and not in their individual capacities. With respect to funding, we think it is inevitable (and desirable) that funding for this initiative is provided by Australia's governments collectively, perhaps as a proportionate subscription orchestrated through the Council of Australian Government's Energy Council.

**Question 7:** At this stage we do not contemplate risks beyond those we have already alluded to in our response to the previous questions.

We thank you again for the opportunity to respond to your Issues Paper and wish you continued success in the development of your proposals.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Corinne Reid  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research