

Media Release



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Essential Energy disputes union misinformation

Essential Energy employs approximately 3,100 people across regional and rural NSW and is reforming its business to meet changing customer expectations and an evolving energy sector, while keeping downward pressure on network charges.

Chief Executive Officer, John Cleland, said: "Rumours about future workforce reductions and depot closures are purely speculation at this stage and do not help our employees as we address the challenges our business faces and the opportunities that lie ahead.

"On the day the Fair Work Commission's Workplace Determination was delivered, Essential Energy had 31 redeployees who had remained employed without a substantive role for more than 12 months.

"The Commission's decision, which was effective immediately, directed that redeployees had the option to leave the business in the next four weeks and receive up to 72 weeks' payment plus entitlements, or stay on and continue to be paid for the next six months with an option to take a maximum 44-week exit payment at any time."

Unrelated to the Fair Work Commission's decision, Essential Energy notified ten senior contract managers and eight employees under a separate Enterprise Agreement that their roles were redundant as part of ongoing reforms that began in 2012.

"We recognise that organisational change can be challenging, particularly during a workforce reduction," John said.

"Our priority is always the safety, health and well-being of our employees and we have a range of initiatives and support programs available, including a free, confidential counselling service, ongoing mental health awareness programs and partnerships with BeyondBlue and *R U OK? Day*."

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Essential Energy is the operator of Australia's largest electricity network spanning 95 per cent of New South Wales' land mass. Owned by the New South Wales Government, Essential Energy also provides water and sewerage services to customers in far western New South Wales.