AUSTRALIAN ALUMINIUM COUNCIL LTD

Climate Change Authority
https://consult.climatechangeauthority.gov.au/evidence-platform-issues-paper

30 April 2026

Dear Chair

Re: 2026 Evidence Platform Issues Paper

The Australian Aluminium Council (the Council) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Climate Change Authority's consultation on an Evidence Platform to monitor Australia's progress towards a prosperous, resilient, net zero future via its 2026 Evidence Platform Issues Paper (the Paper). Given the overlapping nature of many consultations, the Council welcomes the consideration by the Authority to reference submissions made to other processes, or any related research and data. The Council has made submissions to many related inquiries which are publicly available, and additionally would be more than happy to provide the Authority with responses to any sector specific questions.

The Council has many overlapping Members with the Australian Industry Greenhouse Network (AIGN). AIGN's submission to the Authority addresses many broader considerations the Council and its Members have with regard to the design and implementation of the Evidence Platform; and should be read in conjunction with this short submission.

Aluminium is one of the commodities most widely used in the global transition to a clean energy future[1]. It is also recognised for its importance to both economic development and low emissions transition. Aluminium use is highly correlated with GDP, so as countries urbanise, per capita use of aluminium increases. It is expected that by 2050, global demand for aluminium is expected to nearly double[2]. While an increasing proportion will be met through recycled aluminium, there will still be a need for increased production of primary aluminium requiring a comparable increase in global bauxite mining and alumina refining rates. Further background on the sector and its role in Australia's decarbonisation in recent submissions to the Productivity Commission[3].

The single biggest opportunity to decarbonise the energy intensive, vertically integrated Australian aluminium industry is through the combination of electrification or conversion to low emissions fuels for existing industrial processes and decarbonisation of the national electricity supply. The Council notes that the Paper includes a number of leading indicators on the energy transition, including:

- Annual wind, solar and storage capacity additions;
- Annual rate of wind, solar and storage project approvals; and
- Transmission project commencement and anticipated completion dates.

However, the Council believes that this set of indicators fails to address other approvals which are delaying Australia's decarbonisation. Without mining, the world cannot reach net zero by 2050, and the minerals required to achieve our decarbonisation goals are of such magnitude that to reach net zero, we will need more mining, not less. While seeking to maintain Australia's highest standards for ESG, it is also worth considering that global demand will continue to be met from elsewhere if not provided by Australia.

[1] https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/extractiveindustries/brief/climate-smart-mining-minerals-for-climate-action

[2] International Aluminium Institute High Substitution Scenario

[3] https://aluminium.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/250605-Aluminium-PC-Net-Zero-Review.pdf and https://aluminium.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/250915-Aluminium-PC-inc-Net-Zero-Review.pdf.

Australia's historic advantage in the aluminium industry stemmed principally from its substantial high quality bauxite reserves combined with access to competitively priced energy at scale. The success of Australia's green metals industry requires an integrated system of policies, including those which support ongoing approval to mine Australia's bauxite reserves. This is impeding transformational investment – for example investment in alumina refineries also needs to be supported by access to bauxite environmental approvals on commensurate time scales. For example, investment in a transformational abatement project at an alumina refinery would need to be supported by surety of bauxite supply over the same long term period.

The Council therefore believes that the Evidence Platform would be strengthened with the inclusion of two additional leading indicators:

1. Average environmental approval time (days) for energy projects including generation and transmission; and
2. Average environmental approval time (days) for critical and strategic minerals.

These approval times could also be benchmarked against global peers with whom Australia competes.

For example, in 2024, the Council undertook a comparison of costs and delays impacting Australia's upstream bauxite and alumina sectors[4] due to increased geopolitical risk combined with rising costs and prolonged regulatory approvals. This found that one of the greatest cost increases expected over the next five years will come from delays in environmental approvals, limiting access to bauxite for our alumina refineries. Indonesia can approve and build an integrated bauxite mine and alumina refinery faster than Australia can approve a bauxite mine.

Australia has the opportunity to shape its future, including its energy transition and industrial transformation, in a manner which is consistent with not only its net zero ambitions, but which maximises the social and economic potential of its resources, and maximises productivity. The Council supports the development of the Evidence Base as part of the tracking of Australia's progress in this ambition. The Council is happy to provide further information on any of the issues raised in this submission.

Kind regards,

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The Australian Aluminium Council represents Australia's bauxite mining, alumina refining, aluminium smelting and downstream processing industries. The aluminium industry has been operating in Australia since 1955, and over the decades has been a significant contributor to the nation's economy. The Department of Industry, Science and Resources has recently forecast[5] that earnings for Australian exports of aluminium, alumina and bauxite are expected to rise from $18 billion in 2025–26 to $19 billion in 2026–27. More than $14B of this comes from the alumina and aluminium industries, as value adding mineral processing sectors. The industry includes six bauxite mines which collectively produce over 100 Mt per annum making Australia one of the world's largest producers of bauxite. Australia is the world's largest exporter of alumina with five alumina refineries producing around 20 Mt per annum of alumina. Australia is the seventh largest producer of aluminium, with four aluminium smelters and additional downstream processing industries including more than 20 extrusion presses. Aluminium is Australia's top manufacturing export. The industry directly employs more than 21,000 people, including 6,600 full time equivalent contractors. It also indirectly supports a further 55,000 families predominantly in regional Australia. The integrated industry contributes around $18 B to Australia's GDP.

[4] https://aluminium.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/241010-AAC-Upstream-Vulterabilities-Report-FINAL.pdf
[5] https://www.industry.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-06/resources-and-energy-quarterly-june-2025.pdf