

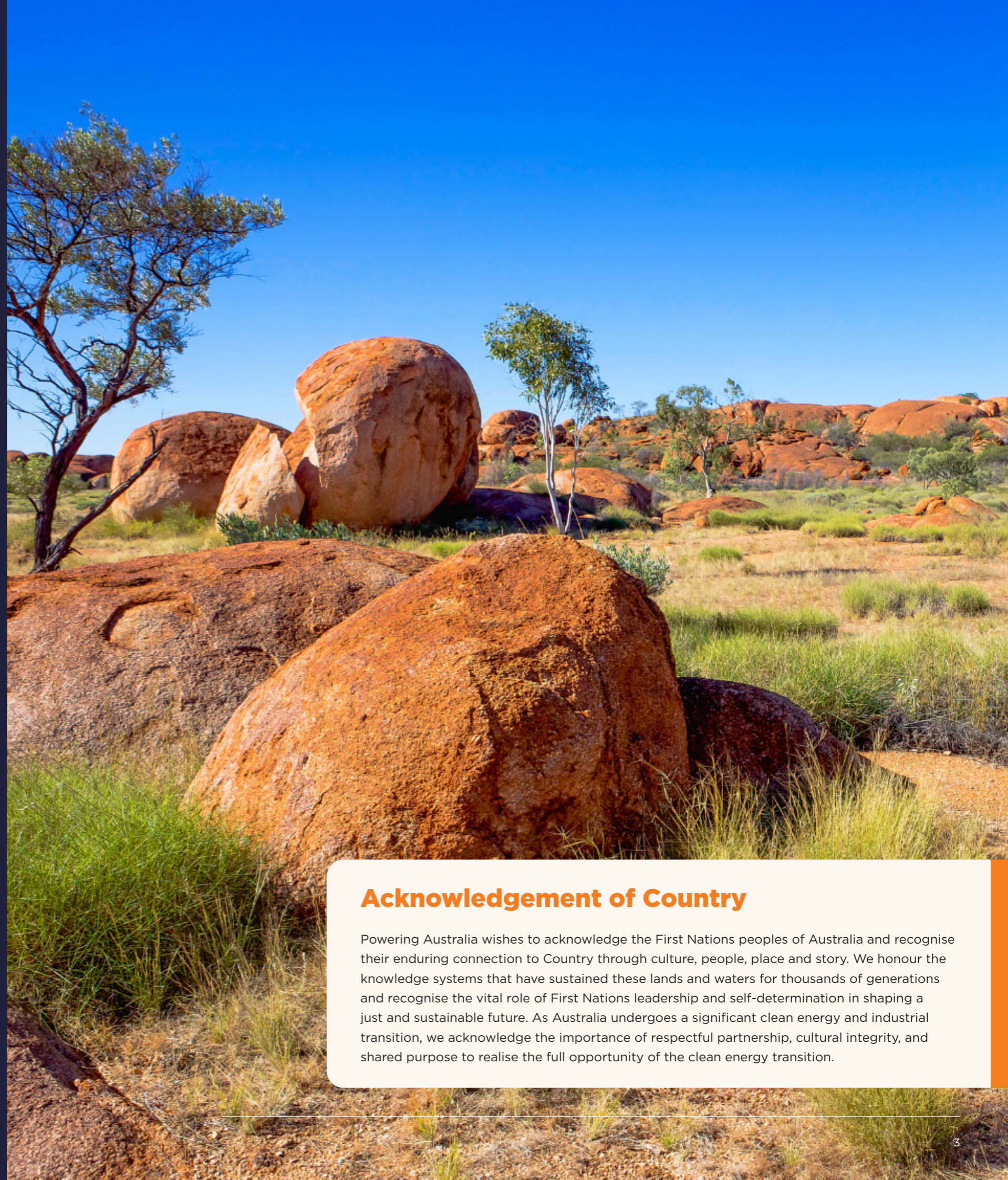


**END-OF-LIFE  
DECOMMISSIONING**

**First Nations  
Business Resources**

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### Acknowledgement of Country

Powering Australia wishes to acknowledge the First Nations peoples of Australia and recognise their enduring connection to Country through culture, people, place and story. We honour the knowledge systems that have sustained these lands and waters for thousands of generations and recognise the vital role of First Nations leadership and self-determination in shaping a just and sustainable future. As Australia undergoes a significant clean energy and industrial transition, we acknowledge the importance of respectful partnership, cultural integrity, and shared purpose to realise the full opportunity of the clean energy transition.



## Business opportunities in end-of-life decommissioning

### Starting your business journey

First Nations businesses are stepping into one of the biggest economic shifts Australia has seen and the opportunity is real, immediate, and growing rapidly.

“The businesses that achieve sustained success are the ones preparing early, **investing in the right equipment, and aligning with projects before they hit the ground.**”

It starts by pinpointing where you fit across renewable energy projects and the supply chains that support them. From there, it's about understanding what work is coming, what's required and when it's happening.

#### Your practical guide

**This resource cuts through the noise.** Real opportunities. The work involved. A clear direction to build a sustainable business on Country.

### What are solar and general mechanical services?

Every solar farm, wind turbine and battery project has an end date. What happens to them when they reach this point is quickly becoming one of the biggest opportunities in the clean energy transition. As these projects reach the end of their life they don't just disappear. Equipment needs to be safely dismantled, removed and managed properly.

All renewable energy projects will eventually reach the end of their operating life. When this happens, the equipment must be taken down safely, moved and either recycled (see Renewable Generation Recycling for more information), fixed or replaced. This is referred to as end-of-life decommissioning and the project owner is responsible for it.

Many renewable energy projects across Australia are expected to reach this stage within the next decade. This creates new business opportunities in disassembling, transporting equipment, recycling materials and restoring landscapes.

### Why it matters

Old solar panels, wind turbines, and batteries can be recycled instead of going to a landfill, helping to keep our land, waterways and air clean. Decommissioning is greater than a compliance matter. Host communities expect that renewable projects are managed effectively once they reach the end of their operating life.

It is the project developer's responsibility to ensure their project sites are decommissioned in a safe and responsible manner. Restoring landscapes helps to care for Country by returning it to a healthy state. The expertise to deliver this work often aligns with local knowledge and skills in caring for Country while also providing potential to build new skills in dismantling, transportation and recycling. As more projects age, there will be work supporting local projects and communities for many years to come.





## Renewable energy project life cycle

From idea to impact, business opportunities exist across all stages, both direct and indirect:

01



### Development

(Years 0-4)

Site selection, planning, approvals, and securing funding

02



### Construction

(Years 2-4)

Building and installing infrastructure

03



### Operations & maintenance

(Years 4-6 onward)

Generating electricity and ongoing maintenance

04



### Decommissioning

(Years 29-30)

Removing equipment and restoring the land

## Understanding the industry structure

Developer > EPC Contractor > Subcontractors > Decommissioning Crews.

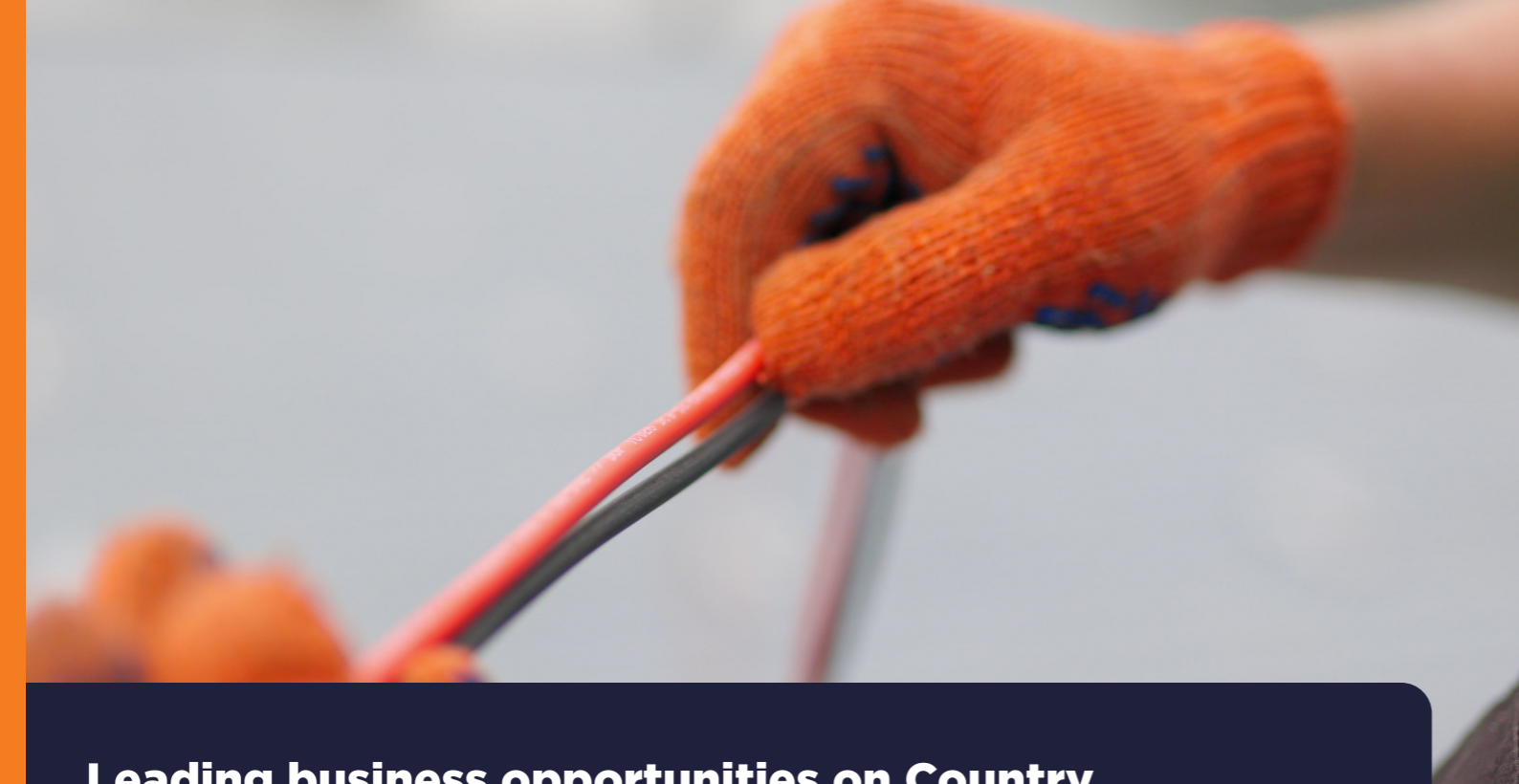
Some First Nations businesses enter by subcontracting or forming joint ventures with majority ownership and controlling rights.

## Finding the opportunities and what's coming next

A wave of renewable energy projects across Australia are moving closer to end of life and with it comes a surge of new business opportunities. Start by mapping the projects in your region: the type of energy generation, how many megawatts it produces and when it was built. This gives you a clear picture of what recycling will be needed, how much material to expect and when your services will be required, helping you understand the real viability of your business.




Decommissioning contractors are already looking for reliable partners and existing operators often can't deliver end-to-end alone. Partnering with established players is one of the fastest ways to get in the game.





## Leading business opportunities on Country

Wind and solar decommissioning creates strong opportunities for First Nations businesses to lead and grow in essential infrastructure services. End of life projects require local capability across civil works, foundation removal, electrical isolation and testing, transport, logistics, procurement and supply. By targeting these decommissioning activities, First Nations businesses can secure ongoing contracts, build skilled on Country workforces and play a leading role in Australia's circular clean energy economy.

Business segment	Description
 <p><b>Electrical testing services</b></p>	Testing and verification services during wind and solar decommissioning to confirm electrical systems are safely isolated and de-energised prior to dismantling. Includes insulation resistance testing, continuity checks, earthing assessments, thermal imaging, fault-finding, and compliance reporting.
 <p><b>Electrical works (trenching, cabling, lighting, power connections, solar, battery)</b></p>	Electrical works associated with the safe isolation, disconnection, and removal of wind and solar electrical infrastructure. Includes trenching and excavation to access underground cables, removal of LV and HV cabling, lighting systems, substations, inverters, turbines, solar arrays, and batteries, and preparation of systems for dismantling, recycling, or disposal.
 <p><b>Solar Dismantle PV panels from mounting structures</b></p>	PV modules are unbolted or unclipped from the mounting frames and removed. Panels are then stacked, packaged, or prepared for transport or recycling. Racking, tracking systems, and structural supports are disassembled. All components are sorted for reuse, recycling, or disposal.





Business segment	Description
 <p><b>Wind Dismantle blades, nacelles, and tower</b></p>	Wind turbines are safely dismantled by disconnecting and removing blades, nacelles, and tower sections using cranes. Foundations and associated infrastructure are exposed and prepared for removal or remediation as required. All components are then segmented, handled, and sorted for reuse, recycling, or disposal in accordance with safety and environmental requirements.
 <p><b>Civil Works (site clearing, fencing, access roads, drainage, concreting, earthmoving)</b></p>	Civil works include site clearing, removal of fencing, reinstating access roads, drainage remediation, excavation, earthmoving, and removal of concrete foundations which include cutting, breaking, partial or full removal of piles, footings, and piers.
 <p><b>Transport &amp; Logistics (moving materials, machinery, equipment)</b></p>	Transport and logistics services supporting wind and solar decommissioning, including movement of turbines, towers, blades, nacelles, panels, foundations, cabling, machinery, and waste materials. Includes managing documentation for recycling, reuse, or disposal.
 <p><b>Land rehabilitation, erosion control and soil stabilisation</b></p>	The site is regraded, compacted, and rehabilitated to match the surrounding landscape or landholder expectations. Native vegetation or ground cover is reinstated to support long-term environmental recovery.

Table 1: What's involved in the decommissioning stage



## Training and skills for success

Building a successful business starts with knowing what is required to deliver on the ground. That means understanding the skills and training required to operate a successful business. Below are examples of some of the qualifications, training and experience needed for recycling services.

### Dismantling / removal teams

#### Training/qualifications needed:

- White Card
- Driver's licence
- Machinery tickets
- TAFE Cert-II and III
- Working at height
- First Aid, Safety courses\*

#### Useful job experience/skills that fit this business:

- Construction
- Electrical, or heavy machinery work



### Transport / logistics

#### Training/qualifications needed:

- Vehicle Licence (MR/HR/HC)
- Forklift licence
- Load Restraint Certificate

#### Useful job experience/skills that fit this business:

- Driving trucks
- Moving equipment
- Logistics coordination



### Materials handling (recovery / recycling / disposal) \*\*

#### Training/qualifications needed:

- Hazardous waste handling
- Environmental awareness

#### Useful job experience/skills that fit this business:

- Recycling centres
- Scrap metal
- Battery processing



### Site restoration / land care

#### Training/qualifications needed:

- Environmental science
- Land management
- First aid

#### Useful job experience/skills that fit this business:

- Planting
- Soil restoration
- Weed control
- Cultural land care



\*See the separate business opportunity Construction Services EPC for complementary business with similar training requirements

\*\*See the separate business opportunity, Renewable Generation Recycling, for more information

## Major equipment needed

The businesses that get ahead are the ones that prepare early, matching capability to opportunity and setting themselves up to deliver with confidence.

This is an indicative list of equipment you will need to start your business for the relevant "Business Activity". Equipment costs for clean-technology businesses can vary significantly across Australia due to factors such as transport and freight distances, regional supply availability, import costs, and differences in local labour, installation, and compliance requirements.

The equipment list in this resource represents items typically needed but this may differ depending on region, availability and specific sector needs.

01

### Dismantling / removal teams

Trucks-tipper

Bulldozer

Excavator attachments- hydraulic impact drills, shears, mulchers

Handheld power tools (Impact drivers, grinders)

Elevated work platforms \*\* (telescopic booms)

Telehandlers\*\*

All-terrain crane\*\*

02

### Major equipment needed

Tilt tray trucks

Prime mover trucks

Crane truck

Flatbed trailers

Forklifts

03

### Materials handling (recovery / recycling / disposal)

Excavators trucks-tipper

Skid steers

Wheel loaders

Crushers/shredders

Screening plants

04

### Site restoration / land care

Handheld landscaping tools

Trucks-tipper

Skid steers

Water trucks

Mulchers\*

Land leveller\*

Land roller\*

Tractors\*

\*Equipment use in Solar farm

\*\*Equipment use in Wind farm

Key terms	Definitions
<b>Battery storage system</b>	A facility that stores electricity generated by solar or wind projects for later use. Battery systems contain hazardous materials and require specialist handling during decommissioning and disposal.
<b>Biosecurity</b>	Measures taken to prevent the spread of invasive weeds, pests and diseases during site works. Decommissioning crews working across regional properties must comply with biosecurity requirements to protect surrounding land.
<b>Circular economy</b>	An economic model that aims to eliminate waste by keeping materials in use for as long as possible through reuse, repair and recycling. Decommissioning feeds directly into the circular economy by recovering materials from end-of-life renewable energy infrastructure.
<b>Civil works</b>	Ground-level construction and engineering activities on a project site, including site clearing, excavation, earthmoving, removal of concrete foundations, drainage works and reinstating access roads during decommissioning.
<b>Decommissioning</b>	The planned process of safely shutting down, dismantling and removing a renewable energy facility at the end of its operational life, followed by rehabilitation of the site to an agreed condition.
<b>De-energisation</b>	The process of safely disconnecting and isolating electrical systems from the power supply before dismantling work begins. A mandatory safety step in any decommissioning project to protect workers from electrical hazards.
<b>EPC contractor</b>	Engineering, Procurement and Construction contractor. The company engaged to manage and deliver a decommissioning project. First Nations subcontractors and crews often work under an EPC contractor on large-scale decommissioning jobs.
<b>End-of-life</b>	The point at which a renewable energy asset – such as a solar farm, wind turbine or battery system – reaches the end of its operational lifespan and can no longer generate electricity efficiently. This typically occurs after 25-30 years.
<b>Expression of interest (EOI)</b>	A formal submission made by a business to register its interest in providing services for an upcoming project or contract. Often the first step in a procurement process before a full tender is issued by the project developer.
<b>HV / LV cabling</b>	High Voltage (HV) and Low Voltage (LV) electrical cables that carry power across a renewable energy site. Safe removal of HV and LV cabling is a specialist electrical task and a key part of decommissioning.
<b>Insulation resistance testing</b>	An electrical test used to verify that cables and equipment are properly insulated and safe before and after decommissioning works. Part of the electrical testing and compliance process required on all decommissioning projects.
<b>Joint venture</b>	A business arrangement where two or more companies partner to deliver a specific project or contract, sharing resources, responsibilities and profits. A common pathway for First Nations businesses to enter decommissioning by partnering with established contractors.
<b>Load restraint certificate</b>	A qualification that certifies a person understands how to safely secure loads on vehicles for transport. Required for personnel involved in transporting decommissioned equipment such as panels, cables and structural components.
<b>Nacelle</b>	The housing unit at the top of a wind turbine tower that contains the generator, gearbox and other mechanical components. Nacelles must be carefully dismantled and lowered using cranes during wind turbine decommissioning.
<b>Procurement</b>	The process of sourcing and contracting goods or services for a project. In decommissioning, this includes engaging subcontractors, sourcing equipment and managing supply chains for materials handling and transport.
<b>PV module (solar panel)</b>	A photovoltaic panel that converts sunlight into electricity. During decommissioning, PV modules are unbolted from their mounting frames, stacked and prepared for transport to recycling or disposal facilities.
<b>Rehabilitation</b>	The process of restoring a decommissioned project site to a stable and environmentally appropriate condition – including regrading the land, replacing topsoil, controlling erosion and replanting native vegetation.
<b>Subcontractor</b>	A business engaged by a principal contractor to carry out a specific scope of work within a larger project. Many First Nations businesses enter decommissioning as subcontractors before growing into larger contracting roles.
<b>Thermal imaging</b>	A diagnostic technique using infrared cameras to detect heat variations in electrical equipment. Used during decommissioning inspections to identify faults or hazards in electrical systems before dismantling begins.
<b>White card</b>	A nationally recognised construction induction certificate required before any person can work on a construction or decommissioning site in Australia. Also known as the General Construction Induction Card.

Table 2: Key terms & definitions



## Discover trusted guidance and support to turn your ideas into opportunities on Country

You don't have to start from scratch. A strong network of support is ready to help you turn ideas into real business outcomes.

### WHERE TO START

- First Nations business hubs and chambers
- First Nations business directories
- Industry networks
- Training providers
- Government business support programs

### FINANCE AND BUSINESS PLANNING

- Indigenous Business Australia — finance and business planning support
- Australian Government Business Portal — online hub for business support and information
- Clean Energy Finance Corporation — clean-tech project investment
- Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) — supports First Nations communities with finance to build and take part in renewable energy and local infrastructure projects
- Grant Connect — provides information about Australian grant opportunities

### NETWORKS AND PROCUREMENT

- Supply Nation — national procurement networks and business opportunities
- NIAA Indigenous Procurement Policy — government tender opportunities
- Local Aboriginal Business Directories — connects and promotes Aboriginal-owned businesses across Australia

### REGULATION AND INNOVATION

- National and state level Circular Economy hubs — recycling innovation and collaboration (e.g. Australian Circular Economy Hub, Circular Economy WA)
- State and National Environmental Regulation — for waste licensing and compliance requirements

### PROJECT MAPPING

- RE-Alliance, 2025: 'Retirement age renewables: Delivering for Australian communities' — breakdown of when and where to look for decommissioning opportunities
- Large-scale solar farm map: [reneweconomy.com.au](https://reneweconomy.com.au)
- Large-scale wind farm map: [reneweconomy.com.au](https://reneweconomy.com.au)



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