



Pre-Budget Submission 2022-23

Submission to the Hon. Stephen Mullighan MP
Treasurer

April, 2022

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1. Introduction

The South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy (SACOME) is the leading industry association representing resource and energy companies, including those who provide services to them.

The South Australian resources sector is the cornerstone of the South Australian economy.

SACOME's previous Pre-Budget submissions have emphasised the well-known economic contribution of SACOME member companies to the State, in terms of production value, exports, capital expenditure, employment and royalties.

In 2020, SACOME commissioned an Economic Contribution Study to analyse the expenditure patterns of 12 major operating member companies throughout 2019/20 and determine their contribution to the South Australian economy.

The Study found that these companies contributed \$5.9 billion in direct and indirect spending to South Australia, equivalent to 5.3% of Gross State Product, or one dollar in every twenty.

Further, these member companies achieved the following economic outcomes for the State:

- Directly employed 5,489 people; and supported the employment of 24,895 people in total, or 1 in every 33 jobs are supported by the resources sector.
- Paid \$747.3 million in wages and salaries to 5,489 direct full-time residing employees, representing an average salary of \$136,152 per annum.
- Made \$1.7 billion in purchases of goods and services from 1,951 South Australian businesses.
- Paid \$435.8 million in State Government payments, incorporating royalties, stamp duty, payroll tax, and land tax.

(All data sourced from SACOME 2019/20 Economic Contribution Study)¹

In the 2022-23 Pre-Budget Submission, SACOME builds on the sectors Pre-Election priorities. These initiatives maintain a focus on impactful, strategic and long-term outcomes that remove impediments to growth, address structural challenges and improve regulatory outcomes.

¹ [Economic Contribution \(sacome.org.au\)](https://www.sacome.org.au)

Summary of SACOME's 2022-23 Pre-Budget Calls

- 1. Northern South Australian Productive Water Security project**
SACOME calls for continued financial support from the South Australian Government for the Northern South Australia Productive Water Security project.
- 2. Resources Sector Economic Heatmap**
SACOME calls for the completion of a South Australian Resources Sector Economic Heatmap.
- 3. Resources Infrastructure Corridors**
SACOME calls on the State Government for full implementation of the 'Resources Infrastructure Corridors' initiative to catalyse resources project development in South Australia and as an investment attraction measure for the State.
- 4. Maintenance and Expansion of Accelerated Discovery Initiative**
SACOME calls for ongoing funding of the Accelerated Discovery Initiative (ADI); and expansion of the ADI to encourage greater levels of exploration activity in South Australia.
- 5. Critical Minerals Strategy**
SACOME calls for the development of a South Australian Critical Minerals Strategy to aid the development of critical mineral projects; and capture the value from extraction of these minerals to manufacture higher value goods.
- 6. Regional & Remote Road Maintenance**
SACOME calls on the State Government to continue to prioritise maintenance funding for regional and remote roads which are critical to the operation of South Australian resource projects.
- 7. Duplication of the National Highway Network in SA**
SACOME calls for funding to upgrade the Augusta, Sturt and Dukes highways by 2050 with Port Pirie to Crystal Brook being a high priority section.
- 8. Upgrade of the Lincoln / Eyre Highway between Port Augusta & Whyalla**
SACOME calls for funding of a business case to upgrade the Lincoln/Eyre Highway between Port Augusta and Whyalla.
- 9. Hydrogen Export Capability**
SACOME supports the continued investigation of a South Australian Hydrogen Export Industry. SACOME calls for funding of a business case to quantify the cost of upgrading Port Bonython for the purposes of a future hydrogen export industry.
- 10. Energy Transition Roundtable and Roadmap**
SACOME calls on the State Government to urgently host an Energy Transition Roundtable as a precursor to the development of an Energy Transition Roadmap that considers the impact of energy policy across the whole of the SA economy.

11. Carbon Capture Storage Support

SACOME calls on the State Government to implement policies and incentives to support the development of commercial Carbon Capture Storage (CCS).

12. South Australia Nuclear Roadmap

SACOME calls on the State Government to fund the development of a Nuclear Energy Roadmap to progress the development of a South Australian nuclear industry.

13. Future Workforce Framework

SACOME calls for the development of a South Australian Future Workforce Framework that maps requirements across key industry sectors; and implements measures to best meet immediate and future workforce needs.

14. STEM Digital Technology Pilot

SACOME calls for funding to be allocated to the Department of Education for the implementation of a new Digital Technology pilot to support STEM development in regional schools.

2. State Economic Development

SACOME calls for funding commitments in the 2022-23 State Budget that encourage growth of and investment in the resources sector.

The initiatives advanced by SACOME over the last term of government have sought to resolve structural impediments to the development of the State's resources provinces, recognising that access to water, power and suitable transport and logistics options continue to operate against greater levels of investment in South Australia.

The 'whole of State' impact demonstrated by SACOME's 2021 Economic Contribution Study supports the argument that resources sector growth results in benefits to both metropolitan and regional communities.

2.1 Northern South Australian Productive Water Security project

SACOME calls for continued financial support from the South Australian Government for the Northern South Australia Productive Water Security project.

- SACOME welcomed bipartisan support for \$10million of state funding to progress the Northern Water Project business case to compliment \$5million of Commonwealth funding confirmed in the recent Federal Budget.
- This major state economic development initiative aims to resolve a long-standing roadblock to the State's economic development through the construction of a new desalination plant and delivery of sustainable water to the Gawler Craton – a globally significant mineral province.
- Investment in a high-capacity pipeline has potential to align with Department of Defence requirements in the Woomera Prohibited Area, meet the domestic and industrial water needs of communities in the Upper Spencer Gulf, and support the development of green steel and hydrogen production.
- It is estimated that the Business Case will be completed in mid-2023
- SACOME calls for requisite funding of \$100 million to undertake early works such as geotechnical and environmental investigations following the completion of the business case to ensure the project momentum is maintained.
- SACOME seeks continued South Australian Government financial support for this important economic development initiative as a key priority.

2.2 Resources Sector Economic Heatmap

SACOME calls for the completion of a South Australian Resources Sector Economic Heatmap.

- South Australia has significant known mineral and petroleum reserves that represent yet-unrealised wealth for South Australia.
- Realising growth targets for the resources sector will be materially assisted by aligning requisite regulatory, development and investment attraction activity against South Australian resources projects capable of delivering State growth targets, such as those outlined in the Copper Strategy.
- SACOME acknowledges that work has commenced on a Resources Sector Economic Heatmap by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to quantify and consolidate understanding of the value of South Australian mineral and petroleum reserves and facilitate informed strategic decision on investment and targeted support necessary to facilitate their development.
- SACOME seeks to further elevate this work through sustained funding in the 2022-23 State Budget.

2.3 Resources Infrastructure Corridors

SACOME calls on the State Government for full implementation of the 'Resources Infrastructure Corridors' initiative to catalyse resources project development in South Australia and as an investment attraction measure for the State.

- SACOME reiterates its calls to the State Government to implement regulatory settings that act as a key infrastructure investment attraction tool to facilitate faster project development times through demarcating infrastructure project pathways to major South Australian resources provinces.
- SACOME calls for the development of 'Resources Infrastructure Corridors,' dovetailing with the 'Resources Sector Economic Heatmap' and to facilitate infrastructure investment by holistically resolving land access, approvals and logistics issues; and to operate as a jurisdictional advantage by providing operators with a de-risked and expedited path to project development.
- Once implemented, these regulatory corridors can provide the State with a competitive advantage by reducing the time and cost associated with developing resources projects in South Australia.
- SACOME acknowledges that some funds were apportioned to this item in the 20/21 and 21/22 State budgets to enable preliminary scoping and business case development led by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

- SACOME calls for funding to fully implement the Resources Infrastructure Corridors initiative to deliver a meaningful outcome.

2.4 Maintenance and Expansion of Accelerated Discovery Initiative

SACOME calls for ongoing funding of the Accelerated Discovery Initiative (ADI); and expansion of the ADI to encourage greater levels of exploration activity in South Australia.

- Exploration is critical for ensuring a future pipeline of resources projects in South Australia.
- In South Australia, exploration incentive programmes have been responsible for catalysing an extra \$700million in mineral exploration investment between 2002 and 2014 and have contributed to an increase in State mining revenue of \$2.4billion over that time.
- Exploration incentives have a proven economic multiplier – for every \$1million invested, an additional \$23million in benefits is returned.
- The Accelerated Discovery Initiative (ADI) is an important contributor to the State’s economic objectives given exploration activity is fundamental to growing the State’s mineral wealth.
- Recognising the subdued exploration expenditure that resulted from the 2018 cessation of the highly successful Plan for Accelerated Exploration (PACE), the scheme was rebadged and reinstated in the 2019/20 budget.
- South Australia’s mineral exploration expenditure reached a 7-year high of \$91.8 million in 2020/21. This is an increase of \$6.5 million from \$85.3 million in 2019/20.
- SACOME submits that ongoing funding of the ADI should be paramount as a means of maintaining these expenditure trends and to assist in the State’s post COVID-19 economic recovery.
- SACOME also calls for expansion of the ADI to fund a targeted critical minerals component, noting the increasing importance of critical minerals to the manufacturing supply chain, opportunities presented by the national [Resources Technology and Critical Minerals Processing Roadmap](#) and the potential to further diversify the State’s mineral production.

2.5 Critical Minerals Strategy

SACOME calls for the development of a South Australian Critical Minerals Strategy to aid the development of critical mineral projects; and capture the value from extraction of these minerals to manufacture higher value goods.

- Global demand for critical minerals is increasing and driven by significant growth in markets for complex technologies such as defence, space and renewables.
- Sovereign risks surround the control of the critical minerals supply chain. The ability to discover, mine and process critical minerals in regional jurisdictions such as SA are of interest to nations seeking to reduce sovereign risk and provide an opportunity for South Australia.
- South Australia hosts 80% of Australia's battery grade graphite resources and large quantities of lithium and cobalt in addition to manganese & nickel.
- While global critical mineral demand is growing, the occurrence of critical minerals in South Australia are not uniformly understood. This is a key gap in the State's understanding of the potential for economic critical mineral deposits and a significant gap in existing public geoscience data.
- In March 2022, the Federal Government released its *2022 Critical Minerals Strategy*² to leverage mining and processing of Australia's significant reserves of critical minerals to build resilience and reduce our reliance on overseas supply chains.
- SACOME acknowledges the Commonwealth Government's recent \$243 million boost for manufacturing of rare earths and battery projects in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland. The critical minerals projects will form part of the federal government's \$1.3 billion modern manufacturing initiative.
- The convergence of South Australia's abundant critical mineral wealth and the national impetus for development of critical mineral projects provides an opportunity to move existing projects to production and encourage greater levels of exploration for new resources.
- To support this, SACOME calls for funding in the 2022-23 State Budget to expediate the development of a South Australian Critical Minerals Strategy to align opportunities in critical minerals project development, research and development activity, advanced manufacturing and relating upstream processing activity.
- As a first step in developing a Critical Minerals Strategy SACOME calls for funding to address the existing geoscience data gap.

² [2022 CRITICAL MINERALS STRATEGY \(industry.gov.au\)](https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/2022-critical-minerals-strategy)

3. Infrastructure

SACOME's infrastructure calls address the need for regulatory structures to catalyse investment in the infrastructure necessary for development of the next tranche of South Australian resources projects, and the maintenance requirements for transport routes across the State's key resources provinces.

Infrastructure development is critical to the enabling of resource sector growth and the State's wealth.

3.1 Regional & Remote Road Maintenance

SACOME calls on the State Government to continue to prioritise maintenance funding for regional and remote roads which are critical to the operation of South Australian resource projects.

- South Australia has a road network comprising some 10,000km of road. Maintenance of these roads, and particularly regional roads with economic significance to the State, must be undertaken in a strategic manner that reflects their economic importance.
- While this is a safety and efficiency issue for mineral and petroleum operators and their service industries, the impact is cross-sectoral, affecting freight operators, pastoralists and tourists also using regional and remote roads.
- SACOME acknowledges the inclusion of 'South Australian road network maintenance' as a high priority initiative on the Infrastructure Australia Priority List in February 2021 and supports all endeavours by State and Commonwealth Governments to resolve the significant road maintenance backlog across the State.
- The ISA 20-year strategy (May 2020) stated the estimated road maintenance backlog in SA was \$780million and growing by \$100million per year. The report also found that SA currently spends proportionately less on road maintenance compared with NSW and WA.
- SACOME acknowledges the increase to road maintenance funding of \$283 million in 2021-22 Budget as a result of significant Commonwealth and State COVID-19 stimulus packages.
- It is vital that the momentum of this maintenance funding is continued. SACOME supports the joint calls to establish a 4-year road maintenance fund with a minimum value of \$600million to improve road safety and address the backlog of road maintenance across South Australia's road network. A four-year fund would assist with planning forward maintenance.
- SACOME acknowledges the allocation of State and Federal funds to the Strezlecki Track, with \$64m provided in the 2021-22 Federal Budget to finalise the project.

- However, recent unprecedented rains have highlighted the need for a further \$40million of funding to ensure upgrades have longer term resilience. Additionally, the weather events have identified the need for rest areas in the event of flood closures.
- SACOME acknowledges state funding of the Joy Baluch Bridge Duplication and looks forward to welcoming the opening of this important road transportation link later in the year.

3.2 Duplication of the National Highway network in SA

SACOME calls for funding to upgrade the Augusta, Sturt and Dukes highways by 2050 with Port Pirie to Crystal Brook being a high priority section.

- A long-term commitment to fully duplicate the Augusta, Dukes and Sturt Highway will support economic recovery, greatly improve road safety, and enhance freight productivity.
- SACOME calls for a commitment to stage two of the duplication between Port Wakefield and Lochiel and the \$5m commitment to a business case for stage three of the duplication between Port Pirie and Crystal Brook.
- Augusta Highway is the principal route to the north of the state carrying an average of more than 4,000 vehicles per day, 27% of which is commercial traffic including road trains and b-triples. This highway is a critical supply chain route for the resources sector.

3.3 Upgrade of the Lincoln/Eyre Highway between Port Augusta & Whyalla

SACOME calls for funding of a business case to upgrade the Lincoln/Eyre Highway between Port Augusta and Whyalla.

- Upgrade Lincoln/Eyre Highway between Port Augusta to Whyalla from single lane to dual carriageway would significantly improve the safety of what is a notorious, stretch of road.
- This is a key route for transport of commodities to and from Whyalla, making upgrade of the road a priority for resources operators in the region and for the wider Upper Spencer Gulf community.
- SACOME calls for funding to ensure the efficient and safe transport of product along this route is prioritised, especially as production at the Whyalla steelworks and the Carapateena mine increases over the coming years and increasing volumes of goods transit through Whyalla.
- If the State is to achieve its plan for the delivery of a hydrogen hub in the City of Whyalla, duplication of this carriageway is paramount, recognising the importance of the Upper Spencer Gulf as part of this equation.

3.4 Hydrogen Export Capability

SACOME supports the continued investigation of a South Australian Hydrogen Export Industry. SACOME calls for funding of a business case to quantify the cost of upgrading Port Bonython for the purposes of a future hydrogen export industry.

Discussion

- The Council of Australian Governments Energy Council's [National Hydrogen Strategy Working Group](#) has identified hydrogen as Australia's next multi-billion export opportunity.
- A [South Australia Green Hydrogen Study](#) was released in August 2017 and found that two pathways, production of niche fertiliser products and hydrogen for local buses, were attractive at that time. Five or ten years in the future hydrogen export and value add products may also be viable projects
- Released in 2019, [South Australia's Hydrogen Action plan](#) sets out twenty actions across five key areas to help scale-up renewable hydrogen production for export and domestic consumption.
- In October 2020, the South Australian Government's [Hydrogen Export Prospectus](#) identified Port Bonython as having the potential to host:
 - A large-scale hydrogen export terminal harnessing wind and solar resources in the Upper Spencer Gulf for green hydrogen production.
 - A Green-Blue hub using the gas reserves located in the Cooper Basin at Moomba to produce blue hydrogen.
- In March 2021, as part of the broader [Hydrogen Jobs Plan](#), SA Labor announced a commitment to build a \$593million 200MW hydrogen power plant and storage facility for domestic use, to be located in Whyalla, with the exact location to be determined within the first 90 days of formation of the Malinauskas government following the State Election.
- In March 2022, the Marshall Government announced an investment of \$67 million into the [Port Bonython Hydrogen Hub](#), with additional funding anticipated to be provided by the Commonwealth Government's \$464 million Hydrogen Hub funding program. The intent is for this \$67million to be invested in common user infrastructure.
- The 2020-21 State Budget provided an allocation of \$32 million for the repair and ongoing maintenance of the existing Port Bonython Jetty.
- South Australia does not currently have the infrastructure required to enable hydrogen exports. This is a key constraint to the development of a clean hydrogen export industry

in South Australia and by addressing this barrier, South Australia has the potential to become the first state in Australia to export clean hydrogen internationally.

- SACOME calls for funding of a business case to quantify the cost of upgrading Port Bonython for the purposes of a future hydrogen export industry.

4. Energy

Energy is an area of vital policy importance to the resources sector. Energy affordability and reliability have a direct impact on business viability, new project development and investment decisions for resources sector operators.

The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) in its State of the Energy Market 2021 report observes that: *The National Electricity Market (NEM) is undergoing a profound transformation from a centralised system of large fossil fuel (coal and gas) generation toward an array of smaller scale, widely dispersed wind and solar generators, grid scale batteries and demand response*³.

Nowhere in the country is this more pronounced than in South Australia, which continues to be at the forefront of this transformation. South Australia's experience is one of a 'disorderly' energy transition where energy policy goals have been set and pursued in relative isolation, resulting in unintended consequences elsewhere in the energy grid and associated unintended impacts on both consumers and the State's economy.

The cumulative impact of past policy decisions across multiple electoral cycles has resulted in a vastly more tenuous operating environment for industry, which now bears greater expense and greater uncertainty.

Given the extent of the energy transition, including the massive influx of intermittent renewable energy generation, SACOME calls for initiatives that will assist in stabilising the South Australian energy grid and reduce market interventions by regulatory bodies

SACOME acknowledges the State Governments intention to achieve carbon neutrality by 2025, as outlined in the Climate Action Plan. SACOME reiterates its calls for a technology neutral approach to achieving this outcome, recognising the role that diverse energy sources have to play in advancing this outcome.

4.1 Energy Transition Roadmap

SACOME calls on the State Government to urgently host an Energy Transition Roundtable as a precursor to the development of an Energy Transition Roadmap that considers the impact of energy policy across the whole of the SA economy.

- While the State continues to be at the forefront of the transition to renewable energy, it comes as significant expense to South Australia's commercial and industrial sector.
- SACOME calculates that industry has incurred [over \\$1 billion in energy market intervention and transition costs](#) since 2018⁴. A policy bridge is needed if industry is to avoid another \$1 billion in energy transition costs over the next three years.

³ Australian Energy Regulator State of the Energy Market 2021 Report, p.6

⁴ [sacome energy transition roadmap 2021 final 22.02.22.pdf](#)

- As the energy transition in South Australia continues to play out, the need for greater coordination between energy, climate and industry policy from governments and policy makers is increasingly urgent. Coordinated policy outcomes are needed to ensure that the commerciality of major economic sectors is maintained.
- SACOME welcomes the significant reduction in wholesale electricity costs across 2020 and 2021; however, this is only part of the actual operational electricity cost for heavy industry in South Australia.
- Our sector continues to bear disproportionate economic impacts as a result of the energy transition process through ongoing regulatory intervention and increasing pass-through costs. While at greater risk of emergency separation from the grid the sector is tasked with helping to drive the State's economic growth.
- Meeting a target of net-zero emissions by 2050 will require radical decarbonisation of electricity production and heavy industry; SACOME's enduring policy position is that all technologies capable of helping to achieve this goal should be part of the energy transition roadmap; coordinated policy outcomes are also needed to ensure that the commerciality of major economic sectors is maintained.
- Failure to address this issue in the near-term issue puts the State's manufacturing sector at risk and deters private sector investment.
- SACOME calls for funding to host an Energy Transition Roundtable with industry representation to help formulate a roadmap that prioritises additional voltage management measures to reduce the risk of system black events for major South Australian commercial and industrial users.

4.2 Carbon Capture & Storage Support

SACOME calls on the State Government to implement policies and incentives to support the development of commercial Carbon Capture Storage (CCS).

- SACOME notes the development of commercial CCS may provide a viable pathway to reducing emissions; position Australia to continue as a leading energy exporter and manufacturer of energy-intensive materials; and enable new industries such as hydrogen.
- SACOME member company Santos' Moomba CCS project has the potential to be a large-scale carbon sink for power generators and other industries in eastern and southern Australia.
- Santos has entered into a joint venture partnership with Beach Energy to proceed with its Moomba carbon capture and storage project, with start-up expected in 2024.

- In November 2021, Santos indicated that it plans to safely and permanently store 1.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year from the Moomba Gas Plant⁵. This decision is a critical step in decarbonising natural gas on our path to new low-emissions and clean-burning fuels such as hydrogen.
- The International Energy Agency's (IEA's) Sustainable Development Scenario requires a hundredfold increase in CCS between now and 2050 to achieve the world's climate goals – going from 40 million tonnes of CO₂ stored each year in 2021 to 5.6 billion tonnes in just 30 years' time⁶.
- SACOME calls for CCS initiatives to be afforded the same commitment as hydrogen initiatives.

4.3 South Australia Nuclear Roadmap

SACOME calls on the State Government to fund the development of a Nuclear Energy Roadmap to progress the development of a South Australian nuclear industry.

- South Australia is a world class uranium province, host to 25% of the world's uranium resources and 80% of Australia's uranium. Olympic Dam is the single largest known uranium deposit in the world and the fourth largest copper mine.
- Uranium is a key economic contributor to the South Australian economy, bringing in \$118 million in royalties over the last 10 years over which time \$346 million dollars of uranium has been produced and exported.
- Nuclear energy offers a zero-emissions energy source with the ability to provide safe, reliable baseload power but is routinely excluded from climate change and energy policy discussions as both an emissions reduction and energy solution.
- SACOME submits that development of a Nuclear Energy Roadmap to continue discussions about the economic and energy security/reliability opportunities offered by uranium and nuclear is consistent with the South Australian Government's Climate Action Plan.
- Like hydrogen, significant regulatory reform is required to enable the use of alternative energy sources that will deliver zero emissions. A key outcome of the roadmap would be the pathway to regulatory transition. The State Government have a demonstrated track record of incorporating new energy sources such as geothermal and hydrogen in regulation.

⁵ [Santos announces FID on Moomba carbon capture and storage project | Santos](#)

⁶ [Santos announces FID on Moomba carbon capture and storage project | Santos](#)

5. Future Workforce

A suitably skilled workforce is critical to the growth of the resources sector and broader South Australian economy.

South Australia faces competition for labour from both the eastern states and Western Australia which are experiencing the same workforce shortfall issues at a much larger scale. This is being compounded with internal competition between South Australian projects, operations, and industries.

As a State, we need to be proactively planning for our future workforce needs to ensure we build labour market resilience, better align training and education to career pathways, and continue to create and fill jobs for years to come.

5.1 Future Workforce Framework

SACOME calls for the development of a South Australian Future Workforce Framework that maps requirements across key industry sectors; and implements measures to best meet immediate and future workforce needs.

- Workforce and skills shortages present an imminent economy-wide challenge made more acute by the global pandemic and restricted international movement. Economic growth in South Australia cannot occur without an appropriately skilled workforce that anticipates both immediate and future requirements.
- In response to member concerns about labour supply, SACOME commissioned reporting in late 2021 to quantify workforce requirements for the South Australian resources sector.
- Based on a combination of projects currently under construction, new projects reaching final investment decision and a consistent demand for shutdown and maintenance workers, the headline figures from this work revealed:
 - ✓ Requirement for an additional 8,000 workers between Q3 2021 and Q3 2023
 - ✓ A peak shortage of 5,100 resources sector workers in Q3 2023
- SACOME reiterates its pre-election call for the development of a 'South Australian Future Workforce Framework' that maps workforce requirements across key industry sectors.
- Long-term strategic planning is essential if we are to build labour market resilience across the South Australian economy. Strategic mapping of industry sector requirements can help to understand cross-sector workforce needs and better align training and education measures to meet them.

- Planning will also assist in coordinating worker transition across industry cycles and facilitate worker movement to new sectors in periods of downturn while ensuring they are equipped with the skills and training necessary for that transition.
- SACOME strongly encourages the State Government to continue to fund the work being undertaken by the Department for Innovation & Skills to develop a Five-Year Workforce Strategy that addresses workforce and labour supply demand challenges the State is facing now and in the future.

5.2 STEM Digital Technology Pilot

SACOME calls for funding to be allocated to the Department of Education for the implementation of a new Digital Technology pilot to support STEM development in regional schools.

- The teaching of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) in schools is vital to ensuring South Australia keeps pace with technological change to advance its economy and prosperity.
- South Australia's resources sector is continuously evolving with the emergence of new technologies and automation; the sector is also facing workforce and skills shortages.
- Industry and education both play a key role in supporting students to understand the realities and needs of the STEM workforce and to prepare students for the big career challenges and opportunities ahead.
- Aligning with the State's STEM Learning Strategy, SACOME calls for the South Australian Government through the Department of Education to implement a new Digital Technology Pilot to support STEM development in schools, with a focus on 'hands on' resources sector applications and context.
- Based on the successful 'Digital Technologies Program' implemented by the Department of Education and Chamber of Minerals and Energy (CME) in Western Australia, SACOME submits that the pilot would teach fundamental STEM skills, increase student awareness, and interest, in Digital Technology career pathways, and support the future skilled-talent pipeline crucially needed for the South Australian resources sector.
- SACOME submits that it would also offer broader application than just the resources sector, teaching fundamental skills and life-long lessons that can be applied to other important industries including agriculture, medicine, manufacturing, information technology and engineering.