

Candidate Information Pack

Organisation: Australian Renewable Energy Agency
(ARENA)

Position: General Counsel

Consultant: Andrew McEncroe

May 2026

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About us

Purpose

ARENA is the Australian Renewable Energy Agency.

We were established by the Australian Government on 1 July 2012.

We support the global transition to net zero emissions by accelerating the pace of pre-commercial innovation, to the benefit of Australian consumers, businesses and workers.

Our purpose is to support improvements in the competitiveness and supply of renewable energy and the uptake of energy efficiency and electrification by providing financial assistance and sharing knowledge, to accelerate innovation that benefits all Australians, and facilitates the achievement of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions targets.

View Investment Priorities <https://arena.gov.au/about/investment-priorities/>

Expertise

Since 2012, we have supported more than 800 projects with over \$3 billion in grant funding, unlocking a total investment of almost \$15 billion in Australia's renewable energy industry.

Our expertise, deep understanding of the renewable energy sector and willingness to fund innovative and ground-breaking projects mean we provide a pathway to commercialisation for many new technologies and businesses that would otherwise struggle to get off the ground or be potentially lost to overseas markets. We help them get on with the business of renewables.

Enabling legislation

ARENA's enabling legislation is the [ARENA Act](#).

The main object of the ARENA Act is to improve the competitiveness of renewable energy technologies, increase the supply of renewable energy in Australia, facilitate the achievement of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, and contribute to the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the Paris Agreement.

ARENA has a unique role in the transition to a net zero economy. We provide funding support for projects spanning the innovation chain, from research to early-stage deployment, bridging the gap between innovators and investment to help push emerging and early-stage technologies towards commercialisation. We focus on finding and demonstrating first-of-a-kind renewable energy technologies and business models that can reduce technical and commercial risks and grow Australia's renewable energy supply, knowledge and expertise.

ARENA's functions are to:

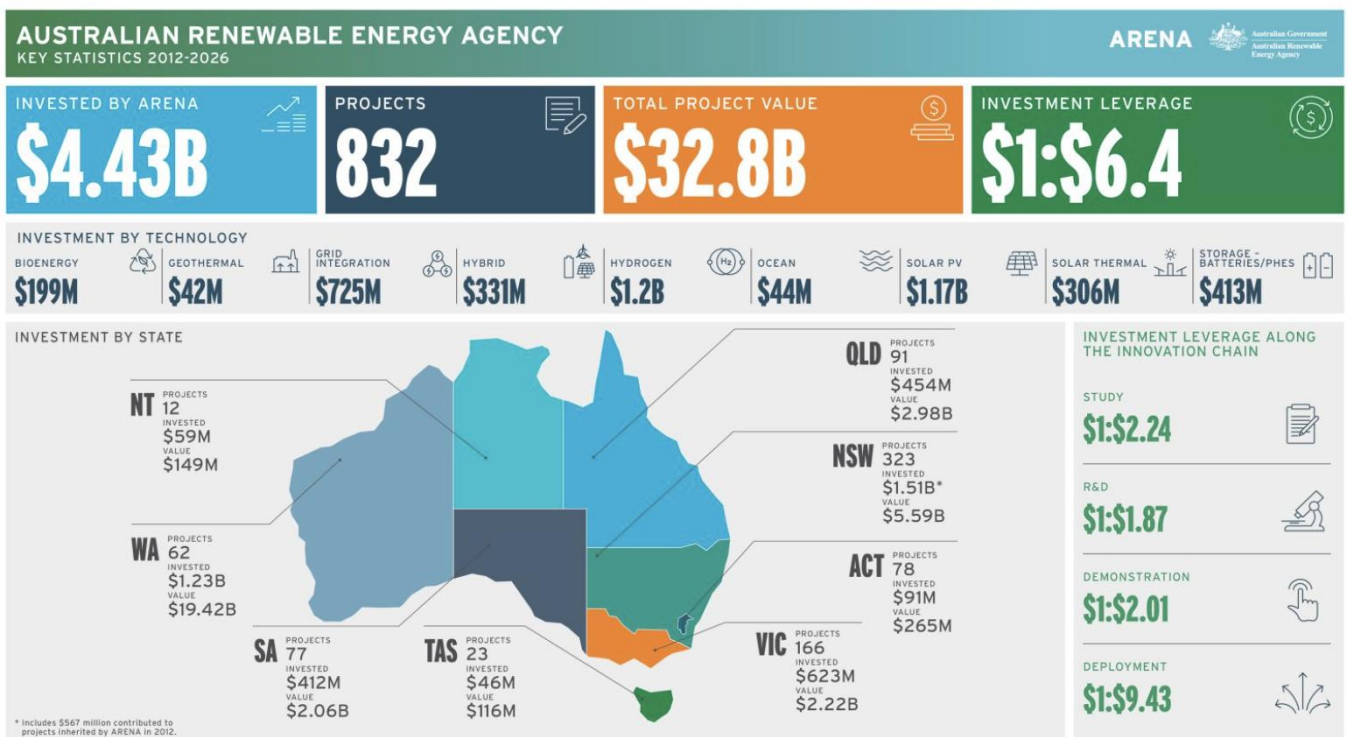
- Provide financial assistance for:
 - research into renewable energy technologies, electrification technologies and energy efficiency technologies
 - the development, manufacture, demonstration, commercialisation or deployment of renewable energy technologies, electrification technologies and energy efficiency technologies
 - the storage and sharing of information and knowledge about renewable energy technologies, electrification technologies and energy efficiency technologies.
- Enter into agreements for the purpose of providing financial assistance, and to administer such agreements.
- Collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate information and knowledge relating to renewable energy technologies, electrification technologies and energy efficiency technologies, and projects relating to such technologies.



- Provide advice to the Minister relating to renewable energy technologies, electrification technologies and energy efficiency technologies, including advice about the following:
 - improving the competitiveness of renewable energy technologies
 - increasing the supply of renewable energy in Australia
 - improving the development of skills in the renewable energy technology sector
 - increasing the use of renewable energy technologies, electrification technologies and energy efficiency technologies.
- Liaise with state and territory governments and other authorities for the purpose of facilitating projects relating to renewable energy technologies, electrification technologies or energy efficiency technologies for which financial assistance is, or is proposed to be, provided.
- Fulfil any other functions prescribed by regulations or conferred on ARENA by the ARENA Act or any other Commonwealth law.
- Do anything incidental to, or conducive to, the performance of the above functions.

The [Australian Renewable Energy Agency Regulations 2025](#) additionally provide a function to assist the Clean Energy Finance Corporation in the governance, management and administration of the Clean Energy Innovation Fund in relation to clean energy technologies.

ARENA at a Glance



Vision, Mission and Values

Vision – Our vision is a prosperous Australia that is a renewable energy superpower in a net zero world.

Mission – Our mission is to support the global transition to net zero emissions by accelerating the pace of pre-commercial innovation, to the benefit of Australia.

Values – We aim to embody and uphold these core values in the way we work:

- **Respectful of people:** We support and respect each other. We cultivate a diverse team to access the best talent, broaden our thinking and foster a culture of innovation.
- **Collaborative:** We collaborate across teams and with our partners to achieve our goals.
- **Stakeholder-focused:** We deliver excellent service. Our approach is marked by responsiveness, clarity and flexibility.
- **Accountable:** We are accountable to each other and, in following our processes, to the Minister, the Parliament and the Australian public. We work transparently to ensure public funds are spent in a responsible and efficient manner.
- **Impact-driven:** We make a significant positive impact on Australia’s energy sector, economy, environment and society. We take a bold, innovative approach to give us the best chance of achieving our goals.

Why ARENA

ARENA is at the forefront of Australia’s renewable energy transition, funding and supporting innovative solutions that make real impact. By investing in cutting edge technologies, sharing insights with the market and collaborating with industry leaders, we’re accelerating progress towards a cleaner, more sustainable future. Every role here contributes to meaningful change and shapes Australia’s transition to renewable energy.

Join our purpose-driven team where innovation thrives and your work matters. With a values-driven culture built on knowledge sharing and impact, we offer an advancing environment where you can grow your skills, expand your expertise in the renewable energy sector and make a lasting positive impact. If you’re ready to be part of something bigger—transforming the future of energy for a sustainable future—explore our opportunities today.

At ARENA, we are committed to providing an inclusive culture so our employees can bring their whole selves to work and have a sense of belonging.

In addition to the above:

- We have Flexible working arrangements.
- You will have front row tickets to leading edge technology in the sector.
- Work in an impactful and evolving environment
- Be part of a team that collaborates and makes a difference.

We encourage applications from diverse backgrounds and experiences. We strongly believe that diversity of experience, perspectives, and background will lead to a better environment for our workers and better outcomes for Australia.

Position Description

The Role

Job Title:	General Counsel
Department:	Corporate Operations, Relations and Enablement/ Legal, Governance and Secretariat
Location:	Sydney
Reports to:	Chief Operating Officer
Type:	Permanent
Eligibility:	Australian Citizenship

About the team

The Legal, Governance and Secretariat team is responsible for ensuring that ARENA's legal and regulatory requirements are met, while also maintaining good governance practices. The team works closely with the Board and executive management to provide legal and regulatory advice, manage legal risks, and support compliance.

Position Overview

The General Counsel will serve as ARENA's chief legal adviser, providing authoritative advice and counsel to the Board, CEO and SLT across commercial, public and administrative legal issues. This role is responsible for leading ARENA's legal and governance functions and overseeing secretariat functions to ensure high quality secretariat services to the Chair, the Board, the Board committees and the business. It is also responsible for establishing and maintaining systems and processes that align with corporate strategy and ensure compliance with legislative and regulatory frameworks. It is critical to ARENA's integrity, risk management, and decision-making processes.

Responsibilities for the General Counsel include:

- Provide strategic legal and governance advice to the Board, the CEO and the SLT across commercial, public and administrative legal issues
- Overall responsibility for corporate governance, working with the Company Secretary to ensure best practice across Board and Committee operations
- Manage high-value or complex commercial transactions and funding agreements for grants, structured project finance and recoupable grants
- Maintain systems that provide legal sign off for funding agreement to execution including developing corporate understanding, 'best practice' use, of key contracting term and clauses
- Assist the CEO, Board and senior leadership team in meeting ARENA's corporate governance obligations
- Monitor legal and professional practice developments and apply best practice to support ARENA's operations and the effectiveness of the in-house legal function
- Ensure compliance with ARENA's responsibilities for managing and reporting against the Commonwealth's legal requirements for an in-house legal services function, including Legal Services Directions
- Maintain best practice compliance with Commonwealth corporate legal obligations to help maintain ARENA's reputation with public and government stakeholders, including privacy, WH&S, data protection and FOI obligations
- Lead the in-house legal function and strategic outsourcing, ensuring value-for-money, effective governance document management, and compliance with risk, and public sector compliance obligations

- Deliver ARENA's Business Plan KPIs with regards to provision of high quality, timely and cost-effective legal services to meet ARENA's strategic and operational needs
- Seek and deliver on continuous improvement opportunities across the legal function, with a focus on speeding up the time to negotiate funding agreements
- Oversee dispute resolution and litigation, including managing external legal counsel, advising on contractual commitments, and supporting negotiations and settlement outcomes.
- Implement systems to monitor cost and performance of legal services, ensuring that these are cost effective and adding value
- Build collaborative and productive working relationships and communication processes across the organisation and with key external stakeholders
- Represent ARENA at external forums and assist ARENA in meeting its objectives
- Provide legal advice in relation to the ARENA Act and PGPA Act, ensuring compliance with both and liaise with the portfolio department and the Department of Finance respectively regarding any amendments to the ARENA Act or Regulations or the PGPA Act or Rules
- Work with the portfolio department in relation to managing Freedom of Information requests and privacy obligations
- Govern the application of ARENA's delegations framework
- Partner with the head of Risk and Assurance to implement a compliance framework.
- Maintain governance documentation including charters and policies
- Own and oversee ARENA's governance framework.
- Monitor changes in corporate law and ensure compliance across legal entities
- Ensure whistle-blower protections are understood and policies are adequate, and support relevant officers to undertake their duties under the Public Interest Disclosure scheme.
- Provide governance advice to support commercially acceptable and legally compliant outcomes.

Candidate Profile

Skills, capabilities and experience

- 15+ years of post-admission experience including leading in-house legal functions
- Deep knowledge of public law, administrative law, contract law, corporate governance, and Commonwealth legal frameworks.
- Ability to align legal advice with agency strategic goals and risk appetite.
- Experience managing board operations and maintaining governance documentation.
- Skilled in building trusted relationships across internal and external stakeholders.
- Proven ability to develop and implement compliance frameworks.
- Experience leading legal and governance teams, mentoring staff, and managing succession planning.
- Ability to convey complex legal concepts clearly to non-legal audiences.
- Familiarity with digital governance tools and secure document management systems.

Qualifications

- Tertiary qualifications: Bachelor of Laws (LLB) or Juris Doctor (JD) from a recognised Australian university.
- Admission as a legal practitioner in an Australian jurisdiction.
- Postgraduate qualifications in corporate governance, business administration, or public policy are highly regarded but not mandatory.

The Application and Selection Process

Applications

Closing date: Sunday, 24 May 2026.

Applications:

All applications are to be received by Derwent. To apply, please go to www.derwentsearch.com.au and “Search Jobs” where you will find links to submit your application. Your application should include a resume and a cover letter highlighting your suitability.

Inquiries:

Please contact Derwent by email publicsector@derwentsearch.com.au and we will reply with appropriate information and/or arrange a convenient time to speak. You may also contact Andrew McEncroe, Managing Partner Derwent on 0416 018 860.

Merit based selection process

The selection panel will assess applicants against the selection criteria to select a short list of applicants to be invited to attend an interview with the section panel. Candidates may also be invited to attend a pre-screening interview with Derwent to support the panel’s decision making.

Candidates may be required to attend additional interviews and or complete additional assessments such as presentation task, or psychometric assessments.

Reference Checks

Candidates at an advanced stage of consideration will be requested to provide at least two referees who may be contacted before an offer is made. Any written references provided will also be checked.

Pre-employment verification and background checks

Before an offer of employment is made the following checks will be undertaken:

- Academic Qualification Check
- Professional Membership Check
- Criminal History Check
- Financial Regulatory Check
- Bankruptcy Check
- Media and public commentary searches.

Candidate Care

We are committed to ensuring that potential applicants and candidates are treated respectfully and fairly. Derwent consultants are available to field inquiries and ensure that applicants are informed about developments as they become available. Candidates who are shortlisted and complete assessments including interviews will be offered a feedback session to discuss their experience and the assessment results.

Candidates with a Disability

Derwent aims to ensure people with disability can access secure and sustainable employment opportunities and are respected for their skills and capabilities. If required, we will provide reasonable adjustments such as access, equipment or other practical support at relevant stages of the recruitment process. You can specify in the application if you have necessary adjustments, or please inform us at any stage, and we can arrange reasonable adjustments on your behalf. If you need to contact us about reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process, please contact publicsector@derwentsearch.com.au

Thank you for your interest in ARENA