Smart Energy Council & Sustainable Energy Now
WA Renewable Energy Target Roundtable
Thursday 3rd July 2025 12-1.30pm

Meeting Summary and Learnings - Final 12th July 2025

Organisers
The event was jointly organised by The Smart Energy Council (SEN) and Sustainable Energy Now (SEN) and hosted by Hon Brad Pettit, MLC at Parliament House.

What follows below is a digest of the original 7 pages of notes from the meeting, combining similar themes and ideas.

Attendees
Representatives from the following organisations participated in the roundtable discussion:

1. Green Wind Renewables
2. Wind With Purpose
3. NHOA Energy
4. Zenith Energy
5. Vestas
6. NOMAD Energy
7. Alinta
8. Change Energy
9. RATCH Australia
10. Western Power
11. Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)
12. Energy Policy WA (EPWA)
13. Climate Action Network Australia

Policy discussion

- The current pipeline of RE generation projects on the SWIS was presented using data from industry intelligence provider RenewMap, along with a summary of the RET policies of SA, Vic, NSW and Qld. (see Appendix 1)
- The group was in agreement that a RET for WA would be a positive development (with Western Power, AEMO and EPWA abstaining) with the following provisos made:
    - No additional cost to end users
    - Unintended consequences are addressed such as the need for additional firming and back-up gas generation capacity
    - There is a customer base / offtake agreements to support the target and associated investment
    - SWIS only initially given the different nature of the energy transition pathways in Pilbara and off-grid generation
    - Legislated targets

- As always, we need to keep the Energy Trilemma in mind (cost, security, environmental impacts / decarbonisation)
- One participant suggested that deregulating the electricity retail market would help get PPAs signed, but this was not supported by the majority of the group; this would not create new demand, just shift it between participants.
- State and Federal governments are cognizant that voters are strongly in favor of RE, as demonstrated by the last two election results.
- The government does find transmission appealing to voters and is confident it can sell this to the community as a means of supporting RE projects and the clean energy transition.
- Environmental groups understand the urgency and several groups, such as CANA, are happy to help facilitate land use and environmental impact discussions

Market Demand

- Electricity wise across the state, the SWIS is 40% (37% RE), NWIS is 40% (2% RE) and isolated grids are 20% (4% RE); Overall blend of RE in the state is 20%
- It's not inconceivable that we could get the SWIS to 70% RE by 2030, or a doubling of the current 37% (which is 74%).
- Latest 2025 ESoO[1] says that demand is growing and that generation is being retired, there is room for more generation in the system, provided it can be connected
- WA uses around 1200 TJ of gas per day; NSW uses 300 TJ. There is a lot of opportunity in converting that gas demand into electrical demand, albeit there seems little interest from big industrial users.
- Currently there is a shallow offtake market – lack of volume from big industrial users.
- More demand, in particular from large customers, would help a lot. This could be in the form of them signing PPAs to cover existing electrical demand, but also by getting off gas and moving that demand to the electricity market.
- The PPAs need bankable customers; the CIS helps but it's not enough (only addresses 15-20% of RE nameplate capacity). Nothing currently forces large customers to back a PPA and commit to electrification. They want to do it on their own timeline, which is 'sometime later' as they are "hard to decarbonise".
- This is evidenced by the lack of big industry users approaching the market for Power Purchase Agreements nor talking to Western Power. Safeguarding Mechanism does not engage adequately to drive large users to decarbonise.
- 1200 TJ/day is a lot to electrify [This is 7 GW of OCGT generation if running 24/7, but probably 10 GW+ in practice] The split of 1200 TJ of gas is 900 industrial, 300 households.

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1 https://aemo.com.au/-/media/files/electricity/wem/planning_and_forecasting/esoo/2025/2025-wem-eso-industry-stakeholder-webinar---25-june-2025_web.pdf?la=en&hash=99FE19CCC0343F04019330708BA11D52

None are really planning their move yet, they're not getting forced, we're short of legislative tools.

- What incentives are there for customers to move from gas to electricity? Tax credits? Carbon Tax? How do we attract demand to justify the electricity generation build out beyond coal exit?
- Emissions Intensive Trade Exposed industries (EITE) continually getting a free pass is a real problem in WA, as they represent most of the demand we need to electrify.

Transmission

- A RET would catalyze action on more ambitious transmission build out to help support typical government statements such as " … powers our transformation to renewable energy and delivers on our commitment to make more things in Western Australia" [2].
- There's nowhere left on the grid today to plug in a Wind Farm; developers feel they are entirely hostage to the CEL built out schedule which is uncertain beyond CEL-North.
- Wherever transmission is built, developers will use it, don't worry about white elephants - WP are approaching it in a phased manner which reduces stranded asset risk
- If transmission plans are transparent, that will help us all get our HQs excited about investing in WA. If not, large developers just sit on land and don't spend real money to progress the projects (through design and approvals stages)
- Transmission in the North West will be built by 2030-ish, not before
- When the SWISDA was released, transmission expansions (Clean Energy Links CELs) allowed for a blend of wind projects in different locations, which created a quasi flat generation profile. But for this to happen, all the CELs (North, East and South) need to be delivered, not just the North.
- Currently 70% of wind generation is located in the North and once CEL North is commissioned this will increase.
- No coal exit without additional and timely transmission (over and above that supplied by CEL-N which provides around 1GW of additional network capacity) and associated RE projects.
- Why CEL North first? Because it's the easiest to execute.
- Western Power's CEL program is a good program as it is targeting incremental build out of the grid, but more effort is needed to roll these CEL plans out in parallel rather than sequentially (CEL-N alone is not enough to allow the planned coal exit).

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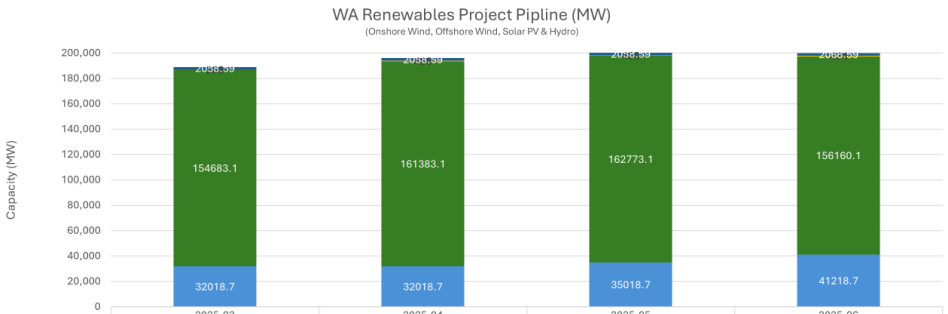
2 https://www.wa.gov.au/government/media-statements/Cook%20Labor%20Government/Budget-boost-to-build-workforce-and-secure-WA's-economic-future-20250619

- How much will it cost to extend coal beyond 2030? Surely that's the comparison that needs to be made, versus the cost of building more transmission - this is an investment as the money will be recovered via system use charges.
- WA has the $3B from Federal Rewiring the Nation for the NWIS, but this is concessional finance (not a grant) so in reality this capital is more expensive than what they can source from state treasury).
- Reality is that RE can build out far faster than the transmission, which is part of the problem. Our planning process is designed for conventional power stations which take far longer to plan and build.
- Need to be a better, higher bar to get projects eligible for grid connection. In the UK it takes 90 days to get a response; here it's 2 years. UK model is presenting a signed letter from the land owner than the project has secured land access before the network connection application process can start
- Only 5% of enquiries to WP ever get built. Hard for them to focus on the right projects, lots of work goes into low probability projects. They had 104 enquiries, and have reduced this down to 34 critical projects
- There is an inordinate amount of time being taken by WP to allow a new generation project to connect to the grid. An example that was cited was a large hybrid (renewables and thermal generation) connection that has Priority Project Status with Western Power but will still take 4 years for WP to complete design and then up to another 2 years to implement.
- Post meeting: the Premier said at a CEDA breakfast 10th July that the govt. has identified 8.5GW of new renewable generation that will connect to the SWIS by 2030. Where are all these projects? and how will they connect in time to the network?
- The latest ESoO points to more transmission augmentation. We need to keep pushing the Minister to prioritise this work, including with Treasury.
- The NEM discloses better information; In WA there is lots of double and triple handling of information, we need to do better!

Appendix 1

The Opportunity



	2025-03	2025-04	2025-05	2025-06
Operating	2058.59	2058.59	2058.59	2066.59
Commissioning	0	0	0	24
Construction	268	466	466	434
Development	154683.1	161383.1	162773.1	156160.1
Decommissioned	16.23	16.23	16.23	16.23
Abandoned	32018.7	32018.7	35018.7	41218.7

Data sourced from RenewMap (© 2025 RenewMap Pty Ltd, renewmap.com.au)

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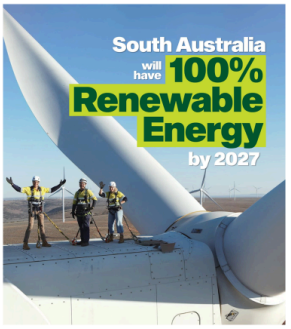
What can we learn from other states?

South Australia	Legislated in 2007
	Attracted over $6B in investment to date, with $20B in the pipeline
	Original target of 100% by 2030 now bought forward to 2027
Victoria	Legislated in 2017, updated targets in 2022 after modelling from PwC and Jacobs
	Aspires to deliver $9.5B of investment and 59,000 2 year jobs
	Includes roadmap with targets for 2020, 2025, 2030 & 2035
New South Wales	20 year roadmap released in 2020 along with *The Electricity Infrastructure & Investment Act*.
	Created EnergyCo, which is responsible for 5 Renewable Energy Zones
	Target of 12GW of renewable energy by 2030
Queensland	Legislation introduced in 2024
	Includes roadmap with targets for 2030, 2032 & 2035
	Cancelled by incoming LNP government, who is now also obstructing further projects



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