

19th September 2024

See Distribution List (Appendix 1 below)

Subject: The Clean Energy Transition in Western Australia

Dear

Sustainable Energy Now (SEN) recognises and supports the progress that the WA State Government, the various government trading entities and other agencies are making in the clean energy transition. This is a huge task and much more work is required.

After broad consultation with stakeholder groups (Appendix 2 below) we have identified the following key recommendations that we urge the WA government to adopt:

1. Introduce a legislated target of 43% emissions reduction by 2035 as part of the provisions in the Western Australia 2023 Climate Change Bill.
2. Announce a target of 82% renewable energy by 2030 for the South-West Interconnected System (SWIS) noting that this aligns with the Commonwealth target.
3. Commit to funding and implementing the SWIS transmission upgrades currently being planned under the \$324 million budget allocation to Western Power to support expansion of the State's main electricity network to drive industry growth and clean energy.
4. Unlock the pipeline of priority renewable energy projects, and in conjunction with bio-regional planning, fast track their approvals and accelerate Western Power's transmission planning and execution. This will help phase out coal and phase down fossil gas in electricity generation and in industry more broadly.
5. Commit to supporting and funding the systematic roll-out of the Distributed Energy Resources Roadmap, with a focus on solar and batteries on homes and businesses. This is with a view to phasing out domestic fossil gas via home and business electrification and simultaneously alleviating cost of living pressures for all West Australians.
6. Commit to energy efficiency and electrification programs across the state and to enabling technologies such as demand side management and energy integration in the residential, commercial and industrial sectors.
7. Empower and support Powering WA to become an effective clean energy Transition Authority.
8. Carefully scrutinise public funding of high risk projects such as Carbon Capture and Storage and green hydrogen for use as a fuel (domestic or export) - especially where these are promoted to justify further fossil fuel development.
9. Challenge new mines and processing plants, including those for 'critical minerals', that intend using fossil fuels (diesel and gas) as the primary energy source to instead electrify and use renewable energy.
10. Support the major existing industries to decarbonise by phasing down the use of fossil gas and integrating their electrification plans with the State's common user transmission infrastructure plans. Fund those transmission plans and seek a return on investment through established system-use charges and fees.
11. Communicate an integrated energy transition plan effectively with industry and the broader community.

We request that the State Government urgently acts on implementing the above recommendations so that the energy transition can meet the timelines set by the Federal Government.

The rationale behind each recommendation and the benefits to the state are briefly outlined below, noting these are in addition to developing a competitive economy, creating jobs, attracting new industry and building community support. We are happy to meet and expand on these recommendations as required:

Targets: Setting targets provides clear measurable goals and also helps develop confidence with all stakeholders that the State Government is committed to the clean energy transition. We recognise that there is more power generated outside of the SWIS than on the SWIS: this generation could also be covered by separate targets as required.

Funding deep transmission augmentation: Further State funding of common user infrastructure such as transmission, strategic industrial areas, ports, road, rail etc are a necessity that can be de-risked with careful integrated planning. Clear planning to indicate Renewable Energy zones and supporting infrastructure gives investors confidence to proceed with large projects. It also helps to minimise environmental impacts.

Fossil fuel phase out, phase down: The coal exit is already in hand. The terms of reference of the recent domestic gas inquiry looked at whether the “domgas” policy was still fit for purpose, but not at what alternative energy sources are more appropriate. The inquiry produced some good findings but also displayed an unquestioned assumption that more gas is required with no provision for a pathway out of fossil gas reliance (this was outside of the terms of reference). Electrification of industry would substantially reduce gas demand, ease supply concerns and eliminate the need for unpopular large scale gas development. It would also reduce our emissions.

Existing industry support: While they provide current jobs and economic prosperity, mining-related industries in particular need help to decarbonise via electrification. Some of this is straightforward replacement of fossil electricity generation with renewable energy.

Decarbonisation of industrial heat is more complicated and targeted support is required. This topic is noticeably absent in government policy and local academic energy research.

Customer-owned energy resources and electrification: The government should enable a democratisation of energy program that builds on the success of Project Symphony, the DER Roadmap, Rewiring Australia’s Electrify My Community campaign, the rapid uptake and large installed base of rooftop solar in WA, EV uptake, home and business electrification, cost of living pressures and public support for action on climate change. This program would help build climate resilience, optimise the transmission and distribution network upgrade budget, improve energy reliability, help reduce energy bills and improve home health and safety for all West Australians.

Communication: The transition is a complex and complicated process and the information sphere is polluted with misinformation and deliberate disinformation from bad faith actors. Government energy-related policies and plans are not robust nor integrated. Trust in governments generally is low. A robust communications plan is required that embraces civil society and the broader community in its formulation and implementation.

The State Government is doing some good work in the energy transition, but it is moving too slowly. SEN suggests that the energy transition will proceed at the required pace only if there is an active champion in the senior ministry, supported by a funded plan, like in other states.

Yours sincerely



Fraser Maywood

Chair, Sustainable Energy Now Inc

Position endorsed by the SEN Committee on 18th September 2024

About SEN

Sustainable Energy Now (www.sen.asn.au) formed in 2006 is a grass-roots not-for-profit member-based advocacy group promoting renewable energy and decarbonisation. Supported by the best science and our own modelling and simulation, we advocate on how Western Australia can make a swift and orderly transition to clean renewable electricity safely, reliably, and affordably with commercially proven technologies.

Appendix 1: Distribution List

Hon. Roger Cook	Western Australian Premier
Hon. Jessica Shaw	Parliamentary Secretary to Premier
Hon. Reece Whitby	Energy Minister
Hon. Darren West	Parliamentary Secretary to Energy Minister
Ms. Rachele Gill	Senior Policy Advisor, Energy Ministry
Hon. Stephen Thomas	Shadow Minister for Energy; Industrial Relations
Hon. Brad Pettitt	South Metropolitan MLC
Hon. Chris Bowen	Federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy
Hon. Josh Wilson	Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy
Mr Jai Thomas	Deputy Director General – Coordinator of Energy
Mr Sam Barbaro	CEO - Western Power
Mr David Fyfe	CEO - Synergy
Mr Steve Edwell	Chair Economic Regulation Authority
Ms. Kate Ryan	Executive General Manager WA & Strategy - AEMO
Mr Anthony Sutton	Executive Director, Energy Transition Strategies Division, JTSI
Professor Peter Klinken	WA Chief Scientist
Mr Matt Kean	Chair of the Climate Change Authority

Appendix 2: SEN / Stakeholder* Meeting Register as at September 2024

Agency / Company / Individual	Date
Energy Policy WA	8 th March 2022
Western Power	1 st April 2022
AEMO	26 th May 2022

Agency / Company / Individual	Date
Economic Regulation Authority	18 th July 2022
Energy Policy WA	29 th August 2022
Synergy	5 th August 2022
Alinta	25 th October 2022
AEMO	8 th Feb 2023
Hon Steve Thomas	1 st March 2023
State Energy Advisor and EPWA	28 th March 2023
Energy Policy WA	25 th July 2023
AEMO	17 th August 2023
Energy Policy WA	10 th October 2023
Hon Bill Johnston	17 th October 2023
Hon Brad Pettitt	31 st October 2023
Hon Steve Thomas	7 th November 2023
Professor Peter Klinken WA Chief Scientist	4 th December 2023
Hon Stephen Dawson	17 th January 2024
Hon Jessica Shaw	4 th April 2024
Synergy	17 th April 2024
Professor Peter Klinken WA Chief Scientist	17 th April 2024
Hon Darren West	18 th April 2024
JTSI	23 rd April 2024
Energy Policy WA	16 th May 2024
Western Power	17 th May 2024
JTSI Green Energy Group	22 nd May 2024
Hon Reece Whitby	16 th July 2024
Jai Thomas, Energy Policy WA	5 th September 2024

* Excludes meetings with eNGOs and allies