



CROW Newsletter

Making a noise about climate change

June, 2021

It can be done – South Australia shows how

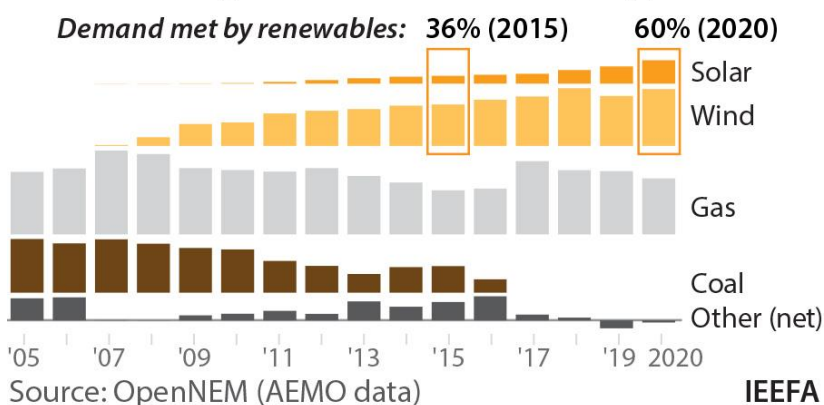
[Zero to 60% in 14 years – South Australia's success in transitioning to renewables.](#)

They will reach 100% by 2025, five years ahead of their 2030 target and are aiming for 500% by 2050, which will make them a super renewable energy exporter to other states and internationally through green hydrogen and other low emissions products. This plan is driving new investment, jobs and economic growth in the state.

If you would like to follow through in detail a full report can be reached by following this link: [A Grid Dominated by Wind and Solar Is Possible.](#)

South Australia's Rapid Uptake of Renewables

Wind and solar gained traction while coal dropped to zero



Also in South Australia an expanded home battery scheme will allow low-income South Australian residents without solar panels to participate through a virtual power plant – [details here.](#)

MONEY

[The fossil fuel industry giveth and it taketh away](#)

It appears that federal and state governments pay billions of dollars more in subsidies to multinational fossil fuel miners than the miners pay in royalties to the governments.

In 2019-20, the fossil fuel industry earned \$115 billion from selling Australia's petroleum and coal resources and paid state and federal governments an estimated \$7.3 billion in royalties. One year later (in 2020-21) the industry received more than \$10.7 billion in subsidies, according to a report released by The Australia Institute based on state budget papers.

In a research report for the *Neroli Storytelling Colvin Foundation* published last week, *Michael West Media* calculated that the powerful mining lobby Minerals Council of Australia and its experts from Deloitte had exaggerated tax and royalties payments by \$45 billion over ten years. The report found a return of less than 10% to the owners of the minerals – the Australian public – on \$2.1 trillion in mining exports.

[Project Energy Connect on its way to Wagga](#)

The South Australian transmission company ElectraNet said on Monday it had given final approval for its share of the \$2.3 billion Project EnergyConnect, meaning that the new high-voltage electricity transmission link between South Australia and New South Wales will be built.

ElectraNet will invest \$457.4 million to deliver the South Australian section of the interconnector – from Robertstown to the New South Wales border – while Transgrid will spend \$1.83 billion on its share of the link from the border to Wagga Wagga.

“Project EnergyConnect is landmark project that will drive competition in the wholesale electricity market by connecting more, low-cost generation to the national electricity grid.”

ElectraNet says that South Australian consumers can expect an average saving of around \$100 a year on their electricity bills because of the new low cost wind and solar projects that this new link will unlock, along with additional storage.

Things are stirring in fossil fuel management boards

[Chevron Corp shareholders voted in favor of a proposal to cut](#) emissions generated by the use of the company's products, a move that underscores growing investor push at energy companies to reduce their carbon footprint.

Shareholders voted 61% in favor of the proposal to cut so called "Scope 3" emissions. Although the proposal does not require Chevron to set a target of how much it needs to cut emissions or by when, the overwhelming support for it shows growing investor frustration with companies which, they believe, are not doing enough to tackle climate change.

[Meanwhile, over at Exxon](#)

Activist investors who [dealt a stunning defeat to Exxon Mobil](#) last week secured a third seat on the company's board on Wednesday when the oil giant announced updated results of a shareholder vote.

While the first two new dissident board members were oil company veterans, the newest member, Alexander A. Karsner, has strong environmental credentials and is expected to pose more of a challenge to senior management.

POLITICS AND POLICIES

[Gas lobbies keep pushing governments to promote global heating](#)

Wealthy nations are breaking their climate commitments by funding a new dash for gas in the global south, according to a study.

A week before the G7 summit begins in Cornwall, the report reveals low and middle-income nations received nearly \$16bn a year between 2017 and 2019 to fund projects related to gas, a fossil fuel that worsens global heating.

This was nearly four times more than international public finance for wind or solar projects, raising concerns that poorer nations are being locked into the old fossil fuel economy even though cleaner and increasingly cheap alternatives are available.

Many of these gas projects are likely to become stranded assets before the end of their 30-year terms because the International [Energy](#) Agency said last month that no new oil, gas or coal fields should be tapped if the world is to stay within 1.5C of warming above pre-industrial levels.

See you in court

[Eight high school students have won a landmark climate case](#), which asked the court to recognise that Federal Environment Minister Sussan Ley has a duty to protect young people around Australia from foreseeable future climate change harms.

The students claimed that approving a major extension to the Vickery coal mine in northern NSW would breach the Minister's duty. Though the court did not order an injunction against the expansion, it is the first time a court of law, anywhere in the world, has ordered a government to specifically protect young people from the catastrophic harms of climate change.

In other news [a landmark judgment in The Hague has ruled that the oil giant Shell and its suppliers must cut emissions by 45% by 2030](#) from 2019 levels, as mandated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The court found Shell's current commitment to reduce emissions intensity by 20% by 2030 was insufficient. Claimants had argued the reduction would come too late to meet the Paris target of limiting global heating to 1.5 degree Celsius (2.7 F) by the end of the century. In the words of the court, Shell should follow the "worldwide agreement" that a 45% net reduction in 2030 is necessary to limit global heating. "This applies to the entire world, so also to Shell," the judge said.

How a four day week saves carbon pollution

The introduction of a four-day working week with no loss of pay would dramatically reduce the UK's carbon footprint and help the country meet its binding climate targets, according to a report.

[The study](#) found that moving to a four-day week by 2025 would shrink the UK's emissions by 127m tonnes, a reduction of more than 20% and equivalent to taking the country's entire private car fleet off the road.

The shorter working week has gained traction among economists, businesses and some politicians in the past few years. The consumer goods company Unilever announced [a year-long trial in New Zealand](#) starting last December and the governments [of Spain](#) and [Scotland](#) launched national level pilot schemes.

Why stop at 100% renewables – ARENA boss goes for 1000%

Australia could grow to become a global renewable energy giant, producing as much as ten times more electricity than is currently consumed, all from renewable sources, according to the CEO of the Australian Renewable Energy Agency.

In 2019, Miller told [RenewEconomy's Energy Insiders podcast](#) that Australia could aim to produce much more electricity from renewable energy sources than is currently consumed in total in Australia – as much as 700 per cent renewable electricity, with the excess used to produce zero emissions fuels.

In a more recent speech to Australian Energy Week, and a [subsequent post to LinkedIn](#), Miller upped the ante, saying Australia could be producing as much as ten times more renewable energy that is needed to meet local demand.

Darlington Point battery will power our schools and hospitals

As part of the \$3.2 billion 10 year contract, awarded to Shell Energy and Edify, a 100-megawatt battery will be built alongside the Darlington Point Solar Farm in the Riverina, providing critical dispatchable electricity prior to the closure of the Liddell Power Station. Energy Minister Matt Kean said the deal delivers great value for money and electricity security for the people of NSW.

“The NSW Government is the second biggest energy customer in the state and we are using our purchasing power to leverage new dispatchable capacity to help power our schools, hospitals, traffic lights and tunnels,” Mr Kean said.

“This battery will help to keep the lights on and keep costs down during peak energy periods, and support more renewable energy to come online.”

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Goodbye Liddell coal – hello Liddell thermal solar.

(H/T Grant Adams)

A renewable solar-hydro energy plant to be built on the Liddell coal-fired power station site in the NSW Upper Hunter is being hailed as an investment in economic opportunity and liveability in the region.

Key points:

- AGL will use technologies developed by Melbourne company RayGen to construct a renewable power plant on the site
- A peak body representing 10 Hunter councils says the investment is both an economic and environmental benefit
- The nearby Kurri Kurri gas-fired power plant will still go ahead alongside the renewable Liddell replacement

AGL, which operates the soon-to-close Liddell site, has engaged Australian energy firm RayGen to develop the new plant, which will harness mirror-style, solar-charging technologies to store energy in water reservoirs.

The plant will run in conjunction with a battery storage facility, which AGL also intends to build on the Liddell site.

Hands free farming

Australia's first "hands-free farm" will be created at Wagga Wagga. Charles Sturt University will create the "hands-free farm" on a 1,900-hectare property to demonstrate what robots and artificial intelligence can do without workers in the paddock.

The farm will use robotic tractors, harvesters, survey equipment and drones, artificial intelligence that will handle sowing, dressing and harvesting, new sensors to measure plants, soils and animals and carbon management tools to minimise the carbon footprint.

The farm is already operated commercially and grows a range of broadacre crops, including wheat, canola and barley, as well as a vineyard, cattle and sheep

Scomo keeps saying that Australia is reducing its emissions ... but

An [analysis](#) by the Australia Institute found the reduction in emissions over the past 15 years was largely due to two major shocks beyond government control – the drought and the pandemic – and mostly historical changes in the amount of CO2 released from the land and forests.

Fossil fuel and other emissions not linked to the land or agriculture sectors – those from electricity, industry, mining, transport and landfill – actually increased by 7% prior to Covid-19. The institute found on this basis Australia had done much less to reduce emissions than several comparable countries, including the US, UK and members of the European Union.

According to the Australian Institute “**the harsh truth is that the Australian economy has not decarbonised over the last 15 years.** This might explain why the Australian government has been so reluctant to commit to a net zero target when the economy is headed in the wrong direction.”

A question of probabilities – who is hoaxing who?

Just recently the local paper has carried some opinion pieces and letters that still maintain that somehow there is a conspiracy by scientists and others to create a climate hoax to ... well something.

This is just a little graphic to help distinguish the possibility of that happening against other possibilities.

