

# Renewables leading the way

## Clare Power

A recent report has shown that renewables powered a third of Australia's biggest energy grid in 2021 and provided five times more electricity than gas. In NSW alone, gas provided only 1.5% of the state's power. At the same time the federal government has approved the Kurri Kurri gas-fired power station, and will spend \$600 million of public money on what could quickly become a stranded asset. Among the many objections to the power stations are claims that there are no sound energy-based or economic reasons for this investment and it will actually raise electricity prices rather than lower them. Dr Madeline Taylor from the Climate Council explains that the rapid increase in renewable energy and storage technologies enables transformation of our electricity system.

Gas is not a commercially viable option as it is "often expensive, inefficient, and not commercially viable". Dr Taylor suggests that Australia has the capacity to "rapidly decarbonise and become a renewable energy superpower" but instead the government is investing in a polluting plant which, according to its environmental impact statement will only operate at just 2% of its full capacity across the year.

The increase in renewable energy is driving down electricity prices and Greg Bourne, ex-BP president and Climate Councillor, points out that this is due to State and Territory governments' commitment to renewable energy projects. He claims that "gas is expensive, polluting, and diminishing in

importance and relevance as the rest of the world moves towards net zero, and our own states and territories rapidly roll-out large-scale renewable energy and storage." The role of State and Territory governments in the accelerated pace of the transition to renewables can't be underestimated. Also, the cost of these technologies is reducing and many major corporations have embraced greener power and substantial cuts to their emissions.

The World Wide Fund for Nature's scorecard on Australian governments' transition to renewables ranked the Federal government last behind all Australia's States and Territories. Their report listed Tasmania, New South Wales and South Australia as leading the switch to clean energy. Important opportunities are being squandered while the Federal government fails to move with the momentum of renewables. For example, Beyond Zero Emissions suggests that Australia could grow a new green export mix worth \$333 billion per annum, almost triple the value of existing fossil fuel exports.

If you want to ensure that you are part of the renewable energy revolution, you might want to check your energy provider's rankings at Greenpeace's updated Green Electricity guide - <https://www.greenelectricityguide.org.au>

**Are you concerned about environmental damage or a development activity in your neighbourhood but don't know who to contact?**

The Society's Planning & Development Resource Kit may help you.

<https://www.bluemountains.org.au/>

## **Gardens of Stone Visitors Map**

The Visitors Map is full of suggested walks and trips. It is in full colour, 60 by 85 cm in size, and covers the entire Gardens of Stone region at a 1:100,000 scale, making it ideal for planning your next trip to the area. You can buy a map on the society's website at <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/sales-map.shtml>