2026 Windfarm Forum
Response to Questions

Shire of West Arthur
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This document provides responses to questions asked at the Shire hosted wind farm forum on 8th September 2026. A total of 47 questions were asked and there was insufficient time at the event to answer all of the questions posed. The responses below have been largely provided by Western Power or Department of Energy and Economic Diversification (DEED). There are a few occasions where the Shire has responded to the questions asked and these answers are clearly identified as Shire responses and are highlighted in red.

Community Sentiment, Trust and Social Impacts

If Government is committed, then why the concern that Government, developers and communities need to trust the project?

The energy transition is a generational shift - an energy, economic and infrastructure transformation. It requires new energy projects, including wind and solar farms, transmission connections, and battery energy storage systems, to be delivered at a scale and pace that is unprecedented in Western Australia (WA).

All new projects must progress through an extensive process of assessments and approvals to proceed. These include environmental, heritage, planning, and grid connection approvals. This means it takes time to develop a new renewable or transmission project - for example, a wind farm takes between five to ten years to go from initial scoping to operation.
Public trust can help smooth this journey. The term 'social license' refers to the ongoing trust, approval, and acceptance granted to a project by the local community, or to a policy direction or program by the broader public. Social license helps to streamline project delivery, which is crucial when we need to deliver new infrastructure at such a scale. This is one of the reasons most project developers will actively engage with the local community as they develop their project.

The State Government is also working to build social license for the energy transition more broadly. This helps to support the delivery of new energy infrastructure. At the same time, it also ensures communities better understand, and can really benefit from, the transition. We are working to deliver increased public understanding and trust by:

- Growing public understanding
  Our research shows that understanding the reasons behind the energy transition are linked to higher levels of support. However, it also shows that only one in ten Western Australians feel knowledgeable about this transition. The 'State of Energy' campaign has been developed to help build public knowledge. This in turn will help people understand developments in their local area.

- Making sure impacted communities get meaningful local benefits
  'Community benefits' are payments made by a project developer to the local

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community. They make sure host communities get positive local outcomes from hosting new infrastructure. The Department of Energy and Economic Diversification (DEED) released the Community Benefits Guideline in March this year to make sure regional communities receive meaningful benefits, shaped by local people and for local people, from eligible new renewable projects. The Guideline is currently being piloted in four Wheatbelt Shires, including West Arthur.

- Making sure planning frameworks are fit-for-purpose
  As previously mentioned, new renewable projects are now being developed at a pace and scale that is unprecedented. Planning frameworks need to be fit-for-purpose to make sure local residents and developers know there are clear and transparent standards on what is and is not acceptable. The draft Renewable Energy Planning Code provides a centralised framework for assessing new renewable projects, accounting for factors like electromagnetic interference, setbacks from turbines, shadow flicker, and visual impact. By providing clear and consistent guidance, the Code will help improve outcomes for all.

At what point do we consider that perhaps the best long-term outcome for our community is not to go down this path at the scale being proposed?

At a State-wide level, WA is fully committed to modernising its energy infrastructure, shifting to an energy mix underpinned by renewables backed by batteries and gas, and keeping energy affordable and reliable for the long term. We have already made considerable progress. In 2017, renewables were only 14 per cent of the total energy on our main grid: in 2025, this figure was just over 40 per cent.

While the State Government is committed to this path, it also remains committed to ensuring that this is a fair and equitable transition - particularly for communities most affected by new infrastructure developments. This commitment is reflected in the development of the Community Benefits Guideline to support real benefits for host communities, the draft Renewable Energy Planning Code, which will support transparent planning regulations for renewable projects once finalised, and in DEED's ongoing work to proactively identify and address issues in regional communities like West Arthur through bespoke solutions, like the cross-Government West Arthur Energy Transition Working Group.

Shire response: The Community Benefit Guidelines are available to read at the following website - Community Benefits Guideline

It seems that a lot of this is too little, too late. How do we catch up and make sure it's not rushed and wrong?

The energy transition is not just changing how we generate energy by shifting from coal to wind and solar. It also means changing from an electricity system based on 'firm' (meaning it

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can be turned on or off on demand) energy generation based at a few central locations (like Collie, where our coal power plants are) to one based on intermittent generation, spread across a range of technologies and locations.

We have not made the decision to change our energy system overnight. Research by the State Government and CSIRO shows that renewable energy, backed by batteries and gas, is the best way to keep WA's energy affordable and reliable for the long term. The transition is the product of years of iterative modelling and planning, through exercises like the Whole of System Plan, SWIS Demand Assessment and SWIS Transmission Plan.

Going forward, we have to keep working to make sure our transition is well planned, reacting to new challenges as they come up. That is why we are continuing to deliver modelling exercises like Western Power's annual Transmission System Plan and Energy Policy WA's upcoming Future Energy System Outlook. Furthermore, we are working to react to new issues - like making sure there are consistent benefits arrangements for all projects that host new projects by developing the Community Guideline and finding new ways to support specific Local Governments, like the Shire of West Arthur, to work across Government to deal with local issues.

The energy transition is not like flicking a switch - it is an ongoing process. The State Government must keep listening to communities, proactively identifying potential challenges, and delivering solutions. While the task before us is significant, we have made strong progress to date and are committed to delivering an energy transition that is equitable and fair.

Why are we destroying the Shire with renewable projects after seeing how they are unfolding over east?

It is clear other jurisdictions - both elsewhere in Australia and overseas - have had trouble delivering their own energy transitions. However, our State's energy ecosystem is unique in three ways - and this gives us more power to make sure our transition works for everyone. Firstly, we have the advantage of seeing what has and has not worked elsewhere and applying these learnings to our own transition.

Secondly, our main energy system (the South West Interconnected System, or SWIS) is unique. It is geographically isolated - completely separated from the National Electricity Market in the eastern states. This means we are able to develop WA-specific regulations, market settings, planning frameworks and initiatives, like the Wholesale Electricity Market Rules, Reserve Capacity Mechanism, draft Renewable Energy Planning Code and Community Benefits Guideline, so that they work for our unique circumstances, without being beholden to decisionmakers in Canberra or the eastern states.

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Thirdly, the main generator and network operator on the SWIS (Synergy and Western Power respectively) are owned by the State Government - meaning they must work for the benefit of the people of WA, not just for profit. This means we can do things like leverage Synergy's buying power to use 'Power Purchase Agreements' to support new clean energy projects and make sure Western Power works closely with other Government agencies and Local Governments when it develops new transmission, supporting better outcomes for both local communities and the system as a whole.

By taking lessons from elsewhere, using our unique independence, and leveraging our State-owned energy retailer and network operator, we can avoid the pitfalls other areas have experienced and make sure our own energy transition is both fair and effective.

Shire response: The Shire is continuously monitoring other states through its participation in the RE-Alliance Regional Leaders Network and participation in National conferences. This forum allows us to hear what is happening in other states and local governments and apply this to our engagement with the State Government and renewable energy proponents.

After talking to people from Kojonup there has been no benefit from the Flat Rocks Wind Farm, just division.

Landholders are compensated for hosting wind turbines on their property. Neighbour Agreements, which are increasingly common in WA, provide payments to nearby landholders based on their proximity to turbines.

But we know the impact of new wind projects can extend well beyond landholders and immediate neighbours, affecting the broader community. That is why projects can cause division in communities when there is inadequate community engagement by the developer, local people's feedback does not inform project design, and effective community benefits sharing is not delivered.

To build real buy-in for a project and prevent spreading division, developers should seek to engage actively with the broader community. This includes working with local people to proactively address any concerns (for example, concerns around issues like turbine noise or shadow flicker) by adapting project-design elements, like the specific placement of certain turbines.

To help encourage positive engagement practices, the new Commonwealth Government Developer Rating Scheme provides independent, data-driven assessments of renewable energy project developers. Companies that receive a positive rating can choose to be listed on a public register - creating transparency for local communities around developers past practice. Furthermore, DEED is continuing to actively engage with people and Local Government in regional communities like West Arthur so that issues around poor engagement can be identified early and proactively addressed.

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Meaningful, locally led community benefits arrangements are also an important part of ensuring projects do not divide communities. That is why DEED has developed the Community Benefits Guideline to support consistent benefits sharing arrangements, shaped by local people. By empowering local people to shape how funds are distributed, the Guideline will ensure new projects deliver against real local priorities, to the benefit of all.

Shire response: The Developer Rating Scheme has only recently been released. It is available at this website - Developer Rating Scheme (DRS) | iCIRT from Equifax. At the time of publication there were only a few companies listed. We will continue to monitor this website for the addition of companies that are operating in our shire. Council will continue to ask developers if they have applied to be listed.

Our questions are being heard but we are not getting any action.

We understand this concern.

Collecting public feedback alone is not enough - community members need to have visibility over how their feedback then informs decisions and shapes practical outcomes.

Community feedback has already helped shape several important actions being taken by the State Government. This includes the development of the draft Renewable Energy Planning Code, which responds to concerns about the planning and assessment of renewable energy projects, work underway to reform Noise Regulations to ensure they are fit-for-purpose in the context of wind farm developments, and the Community Benefits Guideline, which was developed to ensure host communities receive ongoing benefits from renewable energy developments.

Shire response: Council and the Shire continue to raise community concerns with the State Government departments through the cross-Government West Arthur Energy Transition Working Group.

Improving information and support available to communities through the Community Support Line and State of Energy website.

The energy transition touches on almost every arm of Government - it involves planning, heritage, logistics, road and transport, environmental, local community, and energy system-level considerations. This means that finding solutions to issues often requires coordinating across multiple State Government agencies, along with external stakeholders.

Because of this, solutions can often take time, and it can seem like nothing is being done to address issues - even when issues are being actively progressed behind the scenes.

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Community feedback to both DEED and our partner Agencies has shown that people understand these facts. They do not expect instant results but would like to have better visibility and transparency around work underway.

To improve visibility of progress, DEED will work to improve the regularity of updates delivered via the State of Energy website. Furthermore, we are working to grow a centralised, 'one stop shop' community-focussed web ecosystem on the site, which will provide easy access to news and bespoke resources designed for host communities.

Is the Shire of West Arthur going to be an industrial waste land once these projects reach end of life?

No. Wind farms are often spread across large areas, however the actual wind turbines take up a small amount of land compared to other types of energy generation. For example, at Yandin Wind Farm near Dandaragan only 0.3 per cent of the project site is occupied by wind turbines.

At the end of their operational life approximately 85-94 per cent of a modern wind turbine (by mass) are recyclable and, importantly, can be recycled in Australia.

Project proponents are responsible for the decommissioning of project infrastructure (and subsequent rehabilitation). Furthermore, landowners who host turbines on their property can include provisions in their agreement with developers that outline clear expectations around recycling and disposal.

This can involve collaboration between developers and the community to identify the most appropriate methods for reusing or recycling all parts of the wind turbine. For example, decommissioned wind turbine blades can be repurposed into bike shelters or play equipment, as seen in Denmark in WA, or donated for educational purposes, like Synergy did with Australia's first ever wind farm in Esperance, WA.

Further information around decommissioning can be found here: When renewables approach end of life - RE-Alliance

Environmental Offsets and Council Rates

The environmental impacts to Haddleton Nature Reserve have been massively overlooked.

Environmental planning and assessment, through the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), alongside the draft Renewable Energy Planning Code and, where applicable, referral to or assessment by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) or Commonwealth National Protection Agency, help ensure potential environmental impacts are assessed and considered before wind energy projects are approved to be constructed.

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The EPA and DWER considers the significance of impacts on environmental values, including conservation reserves, on a case-by-case basis. These assessments consider both the proposal's impacts and the cumulative impacts of other proposals in the local and regional area.

The Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 also require the local government to give due regard to a number of matters (Schedule 2 Deemed Provisions Clause 67(2)), including the environmental impacts of the development and the likely effect of the development on the natural environment or water resources, and any means proposed to protect or mitigate these impacts.

What happens to residents directly affected by turbine infrasound impacts?

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) regulates environmental noise under the *Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997* (Noise Regulations). Under the Noise Regulations, renewable energy project proponents are required to undertake noise assessments and follow the relevant standards. This framework also provides pathways for community members to raise concerns about noise, which can be investigated and, where needed, addressed through proper management and mitigation measures.

If all organisations are working together, then how do you explain the loss of rates to our Shire with the Western Power purchase of land for offsets?

Environmental offsets are sometimes needed as part of environmental approvals and may involve land being purchased by Western Power or another Government agency. Offset requirements are determined through the environmental approvals process and are assessed on a case-by-case basis. As a Government Trading Enterprise, Western Power is exempt from local government rates under legislation. Where land is acquired by Western Power for environmental offsets, this may reduce the rates revenue received by the Shire from those properties.

Feedback from local governments and communities is being shared across government to help inform ongoing policy discussions and future consideration of these matters.

Shire response: Council considers this to be a considerably costly issue for our rate payers. Council and Shire staff continue to advocate for change to the legislation to mitigate this issue in small local governments like West Arthur.

The State Government must legislate for the Shire to rate wind farms independently, such as payment in lieu of rates used in the eastern states.

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The rating of wind farms and other renewable energy infrastructure is an issue that has been raised by a number of local governments and communities. DEED is aware of these concerns and is working with relevant government agencies to ensure they are considered as renewable energy development progresses.

Shire response: Council and Shire staff continue to advocate for change to ensure that wind farms are appropriately rated minimising financial implications for rate payers. Programs such as Payment in Lieu of Rates (PiLORs) are used in other states in Australia.

Community Benefits

Community Benefits Administration

Beyond years 1 and 2, will community benefit funds be available for maintenance or ongoing operational costs, for example staffing for a health care centre?

Community benefits funding will be allocated against the priorities identified in the Community Benefits Plan developed by local community members. This might include things such as subsidies for health care centre staffing - if it is identified as a community priority in the Plan. Clear information about how community funding can and cannot be spent will be shared before the workshops start.

Community benefits funding is not to be used to replace Government (State or Local) funding requirements.

Shire Response: The Shire is actively encouraging local community members to be involved in the development of the Community Benefits Plan through the workshops that will be undertaken in early 2027. This will ensure that the Plan reflects the wants and needs of our community and will enable funding to be directed to appropriate projects.

How many layers of government will the community funds have to go through?

Community Benefits Funds (the Fund or Funds) will be held and administered by the relevant Regional Development Commission (the Wheatbelt Development Commission in the case of West Arthur). To avoid unnecessary administration, the Regional Development Commission will be the only administrator of a local communities Fund, and each Regional Development Commission will use consistent approach to administration, reporting, auditing, and compliance.

The process of releasing money from the Fund to spend against priorities identified in the Community Benefits Plan is being designed to be as simple and practical as possible - while still being transparent and providing clear accountability. The assessment and approval requirements will be similar to those used for other Government grant programs. Smaller,

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lower-risk grants are expected to have a simpler application and assessment process than larger amounts or more complex projects. This will streamline the release of funding as much as possible – ensuring there is not unnecessary complexity in spending funds on small projects that deliver real value. This aspect of the approach to releasing funds will be confirmed when the Community Benefits Funding Framework is released.

If the community money is going to be held by the State, what percentage of our money will be tied up in unnecessary administration?

DEED is providing all the resources required to administer the Pilot program. This means developer contributions to the Community Benefits Fund will not be used to cover administration costs from the Pilot.

Arrangements for administering Community Benefits Funds beyond the Pilot are currently being considered. These considerations are informed by the need to make sure Fund management is efficient, transparent and delivers the maximum possible benefit to local communities. Further details regarding Fund management, reporting and governance arrangements, and administration costs will be provided once the Community Benefits Funding Framework is released.

What happens to the interest on money held?

The treatment of interest earned by Community Benefits Funds will be determined through the final Fund governance arrangements. The expectation is that Fund management is transparent, with communities able to see how funds, including any interest earned, are managed and used. Further details regarding fund management, reporting and governance arrangements and the treatment of interest will be provided once the Community Benefits Fund Framework is finalised.

Is the Community Benefit Fund going to be paid to the shire and then distributed?

No. Community benefits funding will be held and administered by the relevant Regional Development Commission (RDC), which will act as the fund custodian. Funding will be distributed to recipients based on priorities identified by the community in their Community Benefits Plan, with delivery directed and overseen by the Community Advisory Group.
The RDC will establish appropriate governance and accountability arrangements to ensure that the funding process is transparent and efficient. Further information on this process will be available once the Community Benefits Funding Framework is finalised.

Why do RDCs need to be involved when our shire is proactive and set up to manage our community benefit fund? And:

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Why is the community benefit fund going to be held by the State especially after 40 LGs recommended otherwise?

During the development of the Community Benefits Guideline, there were a range of views as to the appropriate organisation to administer the Community Benefits Funds. Following stakeholder consultation and a thorough assessment of the different models, it was decided that Regional Development Commissions would function as custodians of Community Benefits Funds.

In this role they will provide a single, region-wide point of administration for reporting, auditing, monitoring, and compliance, reducing duplication of effort across multiple Local Governments and projects.

Regional Development Commissions (RDCs) were chosen for this role because their nature and function, as statutory bodies operating under a strong and established financial oversight model, will help ensure the management of funds is transparent and efficient. Furthermore, they are overseen by a Board consisting of community and Local Government representation.

The Regional Development Commission's role as Fund custodians is purely administrative. They will not determine how funds are spent.

Shire response: At the wind farm forum held in November 2024, the Shire asked participants who they wanted to manage community benefit funds. Seventy six percent of respondents indicated that they would like the fund managed by the community via a board or community structure. Council has always maintained that the Shire or the community should manage the funds and have continued to advocate for this to occur.

Now that the State's Community Benefit Guidelines have been released, this is unlikely to be possible and the Shire has worked with DEED over the last six months as part of the pilot program to develop a CBF program maximises the benefits to our community.

Other Community Benefits Questions

Are the community benefit funds linked to project capacity, generation, or CPI? And:

How is the contribution to the Community Benefit Fund calculated? Is it calculated by the towers working 100% of the time?

Community benefits contributions are linked to a project's installed (nameplate) capacity. Contribution rates are also indexed to CPI, helping to ensure the value of funding keeps pace with inflation over time.

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Is the community benefit fund mandatory, or is it up to developers to do the right thing?

The Community Benefits Guideline, including the contribution values, represent the State Government's expectation for renewable projects - they are not mandatory requirements. However, developers that choose not to align with the Guideline may find it more difficult to demonstrate community value, build local support and access mechanisms designed to accelerate high-quality projects.

There are also incentives to align with the Guideline. The Federal Capacity Investment Scheme and the Developer Rating Scheme both require proponents to meet the relevant state's minimum community benefits expectations to demonstrate leading practice. While participation is voluntary, these mechanisms provide a strong incentive for proponents to align with the Community Benefits Guideline.

Shire response: The Community Benefit Guidelines are available to read at the following website - Community Benefits Guideline

Why doesn't a certain percentage of wind turbine funds go directly to the community instead of host landowners?

Community benefits funding and payments to host landowners serve different purposes and are separate arrangements. Host landowners receive commercial payments from project developers because renewable energy infrastructure is located on their private property. These agreements are privately negotiated and compensate landowners for hosting turbines, transmission infrastructure, access roads, and other project-related assets.

Community benefits funding is separate from these commercial arrangements. Under the Community Benefits Guideline, community benefits contributions are calculated based on a project's installed (nameplate) capacity and provided as annual payments to support community priorities. The purpose of community benefits funding is to ensure that the broader community also shares in the benefits of hosting renewable energy infrastructure, including people who do not receive direct payments from a project.

Regional Investment

The Collie region has received in excess of $750 million to transition out of coal. What expenditure is expected in the West Arthur community to transition into renewables? And;

West Arthur needs financial assistance to transition into renewables. Why has the State Government only funded Collie to transition away from coal?

The funding provided to Collie reflects a specific policy response to the closure of coal-fired power stations and coal mining operations that have historically been major employers in that region. The investment is intended to address the direct economic impacts of industry

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closure and to support the development of new large industries who can take advantage of the highly skilled workforce in the town.

West Arthur is in a different position. While the region is experiencing change associated with the energy transition, it is not facing the planned closure of a major local industry in the same way as Collie. As a result, the policy rationale for government transition funding is different.

At the same time, West Arthur could potentially host a number of new energy infrastructure projects. There are several wind projects proposed for the Shire and parts of Western Power's Clean Energy Link – East transmission project will pass through West Arthur.

Renewable energy projects can provide economic benefits through local procurement opportunities, construction employment, and landholder and community payments. At the same time, the State Government acknowledges that projects can have an impact on the communities that host them. Furthermore, these impacts can be particularly pronounced in smaller communities that have not previously hosted large-scale energy infrastructure projects, like the Shire of West Arthur. They must be managed proactively.

That is why the State Government is working with the Shire of West Arthur in several ways. These include the Community Benefits Pilot, in which the Shire of West Arthur is one of four Wheatbelt Shire's working with DEED to pilot the Community Benefits Guideline and Community Benefits Plan model to deliver locally led benefits from new projects. It also includes the cross-Government West Arthur Energy Transition Working Group, which brings together Shire representatives and several different Government agencies to work together to help the Shire navigate challenges and fully realise opportunities associated with the energy transition in the region.

Shire response: Our Shire has undergone a level of change that impacts businesses and the local community. Changes to the sheep trade in recent years through the Federal Government's Live Sheep Export phase out have occurred and many farmers have felt unsupported through this process. There are valid concerns that the transition to renewable energy will similarly be foisted on the community without adequate consideration of the issues associated with the industrialisation of farmland. The Shire has advocated heavily to the State Government for funding support to transition from being a purely agricultural community into an area that supports substantial renewable energy development.

Whilst West Arthur is very different from Collie, it is expected that some level of support is provided to the community. A small shire such as West Arthur is unable to absorb the costs without impact to the rate payers. Council and the Shire will continue to advocate for this support.

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What are some of the legacy assets that West Arthur can hope to gain from wind farms?

The Community Workshops element of the Community Benefits Plan Pilot will bring local people together to develop a Community Benefits Plan, which will map out priorities and projects they would like to see benefits spending directed toward. Rather than the State of Local Government prescribing specific projects, the Community Workshops will empower community members to identify and prioritise the investments that would deliver the greatest local value.

Shire response: The Shire does not consider the Community Benefits program as a legacy program or asset. Instead, the Shire has advocated for the wind farm proponents to base their operational workforce in the Shire to build our population and add housing to our community. This could be done through wind farms purchasing housing and incentivising their work force to be based in the town.

Other legacy infrastructure could include:

- The addition of cabins or work force accommodation to the caravan park which could then be used for tourism or contractor accommodation in future years.
- Upgraded road network
- Upgraded telecommunications network
- The development of local businesses through local content programs where local businesses are prioritised over larger companies not based in the community
- Improved water infrastructure throughout the Shire
- Upgraded emergency response infrastructure

All of these assets will need to be developed for the renewable energy projects and if they are developed in consultation with the Shire and the community, then these assets could remain and benefit our community into the future.

Electricity Subsidies

If I am paying 2% more on my rates and the shire receives community benefit funds, should ratepayers receive subsidised power? And;

To what degree does the government subsidise our electricity?

Western Australia has a Uniform Tariff Policy, which means households and small businesses connected to the South West Interconnected System pay the same regulated electricity price regardless of where they live. In many areas, the actual cost of supplying electricity is higher than the price customers pay, with the State Government covering the difference. Community Benefits Funds are separate from electricity pricing and local government rates.

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Energy Policy, Reliability and Electricity Costs

How can renewable energy be cheaper than coal when we export coal for other countries to make cheap energy?

Western Australian coal is not exported. Instead, it is primarily used domestically for electricity generation and industrial processes. Most of Australia's coal exports come from Queensland and New South Wales.

Coal-fired power stations require ongoing fuel, transport, maintenance, and operating costs. Furthermore, our State's remaining coal power plants in Collie are approaching the end of their operational life, making them increasingly expensive to run, and causing them to spend more time on outage while maintenance is conducted. While wind and solar projects are expensive to build (like all large-scale infrastructure projects), they do not require fuel and have lower operating costs once they are running. We know from State Government and independent modelling conducted by the CSIRO that the most cost-effective and reliable energy mix for WA is renewables backed by gas and energy storage. This mix will help us keep our energy affordable and reliable for the long term once we phase out coal.

Can you please explain why nuclear power is so expensive and not being considered?

Nuclear power stations are costly and time-consuming to build. They require specialised facilities, extensive safety systems, and complex regulation, and can take many years to become operational.

Conversely, Western Australia has excellent wind and solar resources – which is why we are seeing more of our energy generated by renewable sources like wind and solar farms. State Government and independent modelling conducted by the CSIRO demonstrate that the most cost-effective and reliable energy mix for WA is renewables backed by gas and energy storage. This mix will help us keep our energy affordable and reliable for the long term once we phase out coal.

If there is a change in State Government leadership, will there be an impact on this transition and all the benefits outlined?

The Community Benefits Guideline is designed so that community benefits payments are linked to renewable energy projects, rather than a particular government. The Guideline proposes that developers make annual payments over the operational life of their projects, based on the project's installed capacity. Once a project is operating and the developer has committed to the Guideline, a change in Government would not automatically affect those payment commitments.

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More broadly, Western Australia's energy transition is being driven by a combination of ageing energy infrastructure, growing energy demand, private sector investment, and long-term energy planning. While governments may take different approaches to energy policy, these broader drivers are expected to continue.

West Australia's highest grid power usage was 4.2 GW. The proposed six wind farms in West Arthur will output approximately 4.4 GW. We are powering the state.

West Arthur has a significant pipeline of projects and will play a key role in our State's energy future. However, it is important to understand that the 'nameplate capacity' of a wind farm is not the same as the amount of electricity it produces at any given time. Wind farms only generate electricity when the wind is blowing, so a project's maximum generation capacity does not mean it is producing that amount of power all the time.
Many developers will initially select bigger areas of land and then refine the final project site and size, considering social, physical, and regulatory constraints. Developers may also seek approvals for larger, maximum size footprint and equipment to provide flexibility as projects progress to feasibility and then development. This is because it can take years from gaining land for a project, through planning approval to final construction.

As electricity demand continues to grow, Western Australia will need a pipeline of renewable energy projects in a range of locations. It is expected that peak demand will continue to rise and we will experience more days at or near peak demand. If developed, the proposed projects in West Arthur would contribute to the State's electricity supply alongside other wind, solar, battery and energy infrastructure projects across the South West Interconnected System.

If you aren't retiring gas wouldn't it be easier to put a gas turbine at Collie where the infrastructure already exists?

Modelling by the State Government and Australia's national science agency, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), has shown that renewables, backed by energy storage and WA gas, make up the most effective energy mix for WA. Gas-fired generation gives us a flexible backup that can be turned on quickly if renewable generation slows due to the weather or energy demand suddenly increases. This helps keep our energy system stable and secure, providing an essential back-up as coal is phased out and new generation and storage capacity connects to the grid. This makes gas an important tool for ensuring a reliable and sustainable energy supply for WA.

Most gas-fired generation projects on our main grid, the South West Connected System (SWIS), are developed and owned by private proponents. Siting decisions for private projects are made by the proponent, not the State Government. Proponents will consider a range of factors when they choose a site for their project, including proximity to gas pipeline and

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transmission infrastructure, land types and availability, proximity to industrial loads and potential customers, and water access.

Where do you see Western Australia's energy coming from after ~2070 when this generation of Windfarms are decommissioned?

Ongoing planning and modelling are crucial to understanding our future energy needs and how they might shape the evolution of our energy system.

For example, work is currently underway on the Future Energy System Outlook (FESO) 2027. FESO provides an informed view on what Western Australia's principal electricity system, the South West Interconnected System (SWIS), might look like over the coming decades through to 2050.

The FESO will fulfil the system planning requirements of a 'Whole of System Plan' under the Electricity System and Market (ESM) Rules, section 4.5A. These outline that the State Government is obliged to deliver a 'Whole of System Plan' for the SWIS, with a 20-year planning horizon, every five years.

This means that, going forward, modelling and planning exercises will continue to help map out the future of the SWIS. This obligation means that planning and modelling exercises that account for the 2070s, including the potential need to replace retiring renewable generation on the system, may begin to take place in the 2050s.

Housing, Workforce Accommodation and Population Growth

How are housing workers in Collie going to benefit West Arthur? There should be housing built in Darkan for the future of our community.

Housing workers in Collie for the initial stages of the Western Power transmission works reflect the timing and workforce needs of those projects. Western Power is considering locally based accommodation going forward and will look to actively engage with the Shire of West Arthur on local options. As new renewable generation projects progress in and around West Arthur, there may also be opportunities for project proponents to contribute to investment in local housing and accommodation solutions to support both construction and long-term community needs. There are examples of these arrangements elsewhere in WA, including in Narrogin.

In the more immediate term, both the State and Federal Governments are working with the Shire to support the delivery of new local housing stock. Earlier this year, the 4WDL organisation of councils, made up of Shire of West Arthur and the Shires of Wagin, Williams, Woodanilling, Dumbleyung and Lake Grace, was awarded $4.5 million from the State Government's Regional Housing Support Fund, with this funding going toward the delivery of

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20 new dwellings across the six Shires. Furthermore, the State recently announced the discounted sale of a parcel of Crown land in Darkan to the Shire of West Arthur, with the discounted sale price linked to an agreement to build new accommodation for older residents on the block. The Federal Government is also providing support for new housing in the Shire. West Arthur was one of six Wheatbelt Shires that will share in just under $900,000 in funding, awarded through the Federal Housing Support Program.

Furthermore, taking part in the Community Benefits Plan Pilot means that West Arthur could choose to redirect funding from new renewables projects toward housing development. Community members can identify housing as a priority through the Community Benefits Plan process. This means that, if supported by the community and eligible under the relevant funding arrangements, housing-related initiatives could be considered as part of future community benefit investments.

Shire response: The Shire has received two rounds of funding through the Housing Support Program. We have received a total of $3.1M to develop lots at 309 Burrowes Street Darkan (Kulbardi Estate) and 186 Burrowes St (the old bowling green). In addition, funding has been awarded by the State Government for the construction of three new Shire houses at Kulbardi estate.

The town of Darkan is struggling without these projects forcing people to leave the community.

Shifting to a new form of industry is challenging. However, by supplementing agriculture with new energy projects and growing its local economy, Darkan will become more attractive for new industries and businesses. At the same time, housing is an important part of growth. Both the State and Federal Governments are working together with the Shire of West Arthur to increase local housing stock. Furthermore, DEED is actively engaging with the Shire to ensure the energy transition is managed effectively in West Arthur.

Headworks issues are something government can solve and prioritise. Over a 30-year cycle shouldn't this be considered alongside the transition?

Yes. Infrastructure requirements such as water, sewerage, power connections, and other headworks are important considerations in supporting communities that host significant renewable energy development.

DEED is working across Government agencies to identify and implement solutions to these issues as planning for future development progresses. Cumulative infrastructure needs and potential pressure on local services are being considered alongside the energy transition. Federal support is also being provided, including just under $900,000 in housing funding committed toward West Arthur, along with several other Wheatbelt Shires, as part of the

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Federal Housing Support Program's support for the Wheatbelt Regional Housing Initiative. This money will be invested to help enable progress on priority housing projects.

Roads and Other Impacts on Local Government

These projects are years into investigation but issues such as road safety have had zero work put into them. How will PoweringWA expedite solutions such as transport of turbine parts traveling through our Shire – it's happening NOW.

PoweringWA is working with the Shire of West Arthur and other State Government agencies, including the Departments of Transport and Major Infrastructure and Planning, Lands, and Heritage, Main Roads WA and Western Power, to identify and address issues through the 'West Arthur Energy Transition Working Group'. This includes finding immediate solutions for key issues raised by the Shire.

Longer-term planning is also underway across multiple Government agencies to collaboratively assess the need for future port and road infrastructure upgrades to support port-to-site delivery of components of renewable energy projects. PoweringWA is committed to its continued engagement with the Shire to understand and address issues raised that pertain to the State's renewable energy transition.

How can PWA work to minimise the repetition of concerns and seek answers to ongoing questions. Can there be staff funding for LGAs dealing with this transition. If not, why not.

Regional Local Governments - like the Shire of West Arthur - are at the frontline of the energy transition, and the State Government recognises that they can bear increased administrative and staffing burden as a result. The State Government continues to engage with regional Local Governments around supporting them to navigate the energy transition.

Western Power Questions

The following questions have all been answered by Western Power. Once again responses in red have been provided by the Shire where appropriate.

Will the Shire of West Arthur have more reliable power, or will it all go through to the cities?

Western Power is continuing to invest in improving reliability for customers in the region. More than $2.3 million was invested in FY26 and more than $2.6 million is forecast for FY27 for pole replacement, maintenance and fire mitigation activities around West Arthur. Clean Energy Link is a transmission project that supports the broader network, while reliability improvements continue to be delivered through targeted investment in the local distribution network.

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What procedures and processes do Western Power and wind farm companies have in place to ensure that local businesses are assisted with the projects?

Western Power has a Local Content Advisor working with the Wheatbelt Development Commission to identify local suppliers and connect them with contractors once appointed. Contractors will also be expected to deliver local jobs, local business opportunities and skills development as part of project delivery. Specific opportunities will become clearer once contractors are appointed and procurement plans are confirmed.

Shire response: The Shire is working with Western Power, Wheatbelt Development Commission and wind farm proponents to connect local businesses to those developers that could use services provided by local businesses. The Shire will host "meet and greet" events to ensure that relationship building between the various organisation can occur. If a business is interested in being part of these conversations, send an email to projects@westarthur.wa.gov.au and you will be included on the contact list.

Can I find out about the Hillman buffer zone and whether it is being negotiated, as Acciona has cancelled contracts with residents in the zone?

Western Power is unable to comment on commercial arrangements or negotiations between renewable energy developers and individual landholders.

DEED and working with the Department of Defence and the Shire to provide clarity on what activities can be undertaken in the Hillman buffer zone.

How many houses does Western Power own in Darkan or any of the Regional Clean Energy Link locations, such as Moora or Three Springs?

Western Power does not own housing for employees working on Clean Energy Link projects.

What happens if cultural heritage values or sites are identified during investigations?

Western Power is committed to protecting cultural heritage values. Heritage surveys and assessments are undertaken to identify and avoid impacts wherever possible. Projects are subject to consultation and approval processes and can only proceed once the relevant approvals have been obtained and conditions met.

Will there be batteries located at the Western Power substations (Stage 1,2 & 3?)

No decision has been made regarding battery infrastructure at future terminal locations. Stage 2 and 3 remain in the early planning phase, with infrastructure requirements, staging and timing yet to be confirmed.

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Can all transmission lines owned by Western Power be located on farms hosting turbines? If not, will compensation be a private contract between Western Power and third-party landowners?

The location of transmission infrastructure is determined by technical requirements, environmental and heritage considerations, landholder feedback and the location of renewable generation projects. No final decisions have been made for Stage 2 and 3. Compensation arrangements are governed by legislation and independently valued.

How will the issues of offsets and the loss of rates be rectified so as not to punish or harm Shire of West Arthur rate income?

Western Power recognises concerns regarding offsets, productive farmland and impacts on local rates. Work is continuing with the Shires of West Arthur and Williams to identify solutions that minimise local impacts and investigate alternative offset approaches where possible.

Shire Questions

The following question has been answered by the Shire only.

If West Arthur had three wishes to support it to prepare for and capture the opportunity from the energy transition, what would they wish for?

There are many things that the Shire would like to see happen as part of the energy transition. However the biggest impact is currently being felt by rate payers through rate rises. The Shire would like to see the following issues addressed as this would help to alleviate the issues currently being experienced:

- A change in legislation that allows the Shire to collect rates for freehold land owned by Government Trading Enterprises such as Western Power and Forest Products Commission. In addition land that is currently privately owned and that will eventually be handed to Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions as part of an environmental offset programs should also contribute to Shire rates.
- A rating system that enables the Shire to rate farmland hosting wind farms in a different way to standard farmland (UV based)
- Funding to cover a position at the Shire that deals specifically with issues associated with the renewable energy transition. In a small shire such as ours, we do not have sufficient funds to absorb the costs associated with the additional work generated as a result of the energy transition.