

Bullawah wind:

submission from Dr Alan Moran, Australian Environment Foundation.

The Bullawah project is a major impost on the Australian taxpayer and the Australian energy consumer. The project will offer no value, indeed, negative value to the communities as a whole.

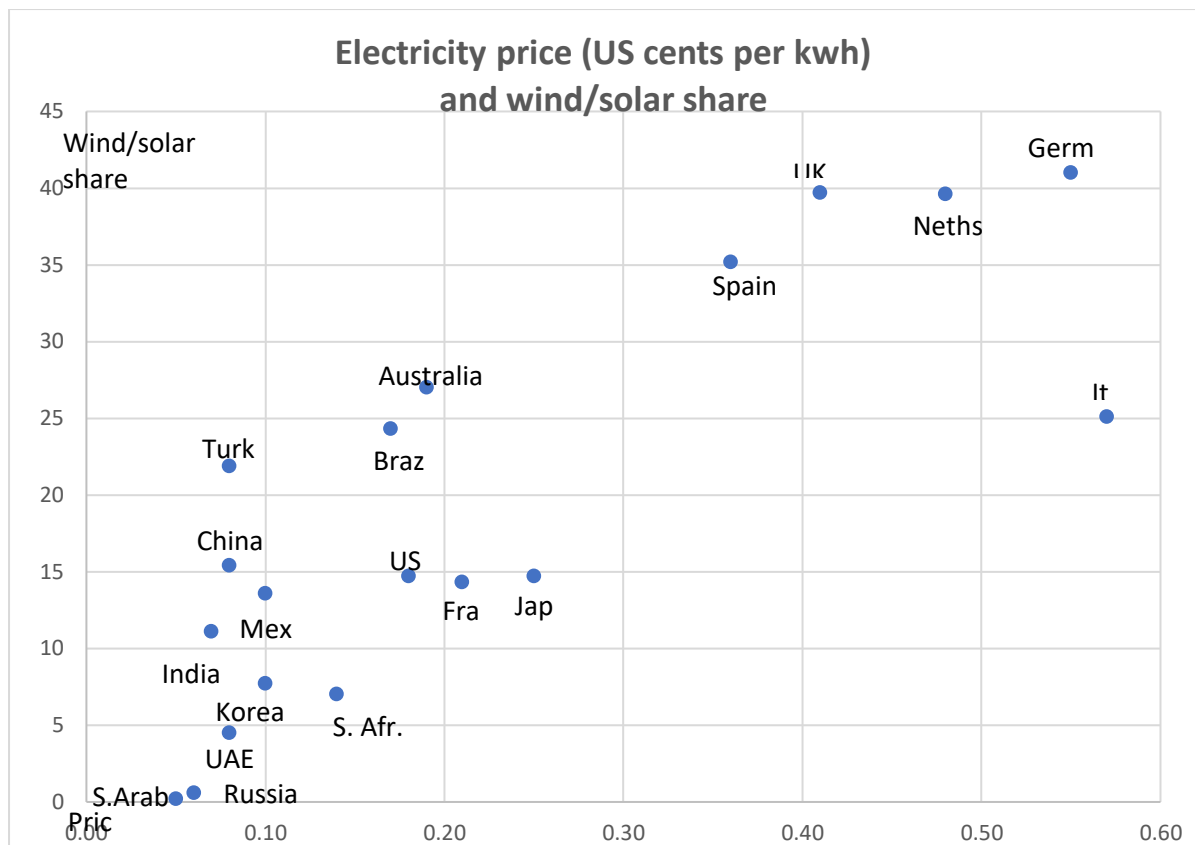
This is not a commercial project. It depends entirely on government assistance, either directly or indirectly, through requirements for suppliers to increasingly include renewable energy in the aggregate supply.

The total cost of that kind of assistance is at least \$19 billion per year in Australia. That assistance or subsidy comes in several forms, notably through the LRET and the Capacity Investment Scheme. The latter is Orwellian Newspeak because the contracted wind facilities offer no capacity. They are the opposite of capacity-producing and require capacity from other sources to operate reliably, even in their high-cost, inefficient form. Snowy 2, a proposal originally costed at \$2 billion, exists solely to offset the unreliability of wind and solar; its costs will likely exceed \$30 billion and may reach \$40 billion.

Wind provides electricity only when the wind is blowing; at other times, it must be backed up by reliable, controllable generation. And because these facilities enjoy subsidies, they can bid into the supply system at negative prices, driving out more competitive energy sources, principally coal and gas. The batteries proposed to accompany the facility provide at best some 2 hours of coverage, but “wind droughts” can last for days.

We can readily see the effects of this in Australia’s energy development. Electricity prices have more than doubled over the past eight or 10 years as a result of government interventions to subsidise wind and solar.

Those countries which have done less of this than Australia: China, India, and Korea, now enjoy prices roughly half of those of Australia. Those countries that have done more to subsidise renewable energy than Australia, including UK, Spain, Germany have even higher costs than Australia.



The resultant loss of competitiveness of Australian suppliers has also brought additional costs from government bailouts of energy-intensive industries, especially smelters. The government is also contemplating compounding these costs with yet another tax: one on the carbon content of imported goods that compete with those made uncompetitive by its greenhouse gas policies.

The higher the level of wind and solar, the greater the risk of blackouts; we have already seen those blackouts in Australia, with an extensive outage in South Australia and also on a smaller scale in Broken Hill. In Europe last year, an even more serious blackout covering Spain and Portugal and southern France resulted from the failure of wind and solar, a failure that will inevitably occur unless we fully cover the supply of wind and solar with more dependable energy and of course to do that you simply doubled your capital cost and incur all the additional cost of transmission and balancing that inevitably accompanies wind and solar.

These commercial costs of renewable energy are compounded by the environmental costs entailed in the additional transmission lines required to collect this highly dispersed form of energy and the death of wildlife from windfarms.

Finally, the rationale for providing the proposed source of energy is to achieve net zero emissions of greenhouse gases on a global scale; it is pointless for Australia achieving that locally since Australia has only slightly more than 1% of global emissions and the countries that have more than half of emissions: India, China other developing countries, are doing very little to actually replace coal with non-emitting sources. There is no possibility that Australia can do anything about global warming - if in fact it is occurring - on its own. And the major heavy hitters, in terms of power supply and the associated greenhouse gas

emissions: China, India, etc., have been joined by the United States, which has pulled out of the Paris Agreement and dismantled its own restrictions on coal and gas and its subsidies to wind and solar.

The EIS mentions the Government's commitments and implies that the Opposition shares them. It states

The Paris Accord is a comprehensive international climate agreement to which Australia is a party. The Accord provides a framework for participating nations to set themselves nationally determined contributions (NDCs) beginning in 2020, with review at five-year intervals. It sets out a global consensus to limit temperature increases to below two degrees Celsius when compared to pre-industrial levels. An additional goal is to maintain this increase at less than one and a half degrees Celsius. NDCs do not have any set lower limit but are required to progress over time (beginning with the intended NDC pledged during the Paris conference), and to be 'ambitious.'

Australia's previous target was to achieve a reduction of emissions by 5% from 2000 levels by 2020 and the previous Liberal Federal Government committed to a reduction of 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. In July 2022, an updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) was submitted by the Federal Government and reflected a pre-election promised by the incoming Labor Party to fulfill Australia's obligations under the Paris Agreement. The updated NDC includes a commitment to a reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 43% by 2030 and reaffirms the previous commitment to net zero emissions by 2050.

The Panel should be aware that the current position on the Paris Agreement is no longer one of consensus. The two leading Parties: the Coalition and One Nation have rejected the Agreement's goals: One Nation pledges to actually leave the Agreement (and wind down any subsidised projects like this proposal) the Coalition says it will remain in the Paris Agreement but only because it is irrelevant.

The Liberal Party pledges to scrap net zero mandates and their costs, including Labour's carbon taxes, and the Safeguard Mechanism that is driving industry offshore. The Queensland Government has already cancelled that state's targets. Without the subsidies to wind and solar, this hearing and the costs and anguish it is causing would have no place.

BayWA cites the AEMO Integrated Plan, which says, "as coal retires, investment is needed to meet significantly increased electricity demand requiring a significant increase in large - scale variable renewable energy generation (wind and solar)". But that Plan is a political document designed to accommodate the preferences of the government of the day, and major political parties likely to win office federally within the next year and a half now recognise the destructive nature of wind and solar to the energy market.

BayWA has suggested it hopes to commence building the 141 turbines and the 359 MW/718 MWh battery in 2026, with completion within three years. Australian governments do not renege on undertakings and agreements, but the applicant should be aware that an alternative Government will not afford support (e.g. for transmission connections), may require bonds for rehabilitation and is unlikely to permit installations on prime agricultural land.

The Australian Environment Foundation (AEF) is a non-profit advocacy organization focused on environmental issues, emphasizing evidence-based policies, property rights, and individual freedoms, while often challenging mainstream environmental positions.