WA Clean Energy, Jobs & Industry Plan

FULL DETAILED VERSION

Creating Jobs.
Powering Industry.
For a Clean Energy Future.

A practical roadmap to build the jobs, industries and affordable energy of the green energy transition here in Western Australia.

Executive Summary

Creating Jobs. Powering Industry. For a Clean Energy Future.

Western Australia is at a crossroads: lead the clean energy economy or watch investment, industries and jobs go elsewhere.

Governments and businesses worldwide are pouring money into clean energy, new manufacturing, and low-emissions supply chains. The places that land that investment will grow the jobs and export markets that come with it well into the future.

WA should be an obvious choice. The state has world-class renewable energy resources, significant mineral reserves, established industrial centres and a highly skilled workforce. With the right policy settings, WA can become a leading producer of renewable energy, green iron, and other future export commodities, creating thousands of secure local jobs along the way, and ensuring Country, water and communities are better off.

But investment follows certainty, and competing states and countries are moving fast to lock in renewable projects and skilled workers. Without a clear plan, WA risks losing that race.

This plan outlines how WA will lead the global energy transition. It rests on three goals:

1. Create and secure WA jobs

Solar and battery deployment alone could support up to 8,800 jobs by 2050. A green iron industry could support approximately 24,000 ongoing jobs and 11,000 construction jobs, while major industrial decarbonisation projects are already driving unprecedented demand for skilled workers, from electricians and apprentices to engineers, manufacturing workers, planners and environmental specialists. Fortescue alone expects to need around 1,800 electricians at the peak of its Pilbara program, roughly one in every 21 working in the state.

2. Keep WA industry globally competitive

Rising energy costs and tougher export standards are squeezing energy-intensive industries. Electrification, renewable energy and shared infrastructure can keep existing industries in business and open new export opportunities in green iron, green ammonia and renewable energy supply chains.

3. Lower energy costs and improve energy security

Renewable energy, storage, and modern transmission infrastructure can cut WA's exposure to volatile oil and gas prices while keeping the lights on.

And it focuses on four priorities:

- **Build the industries of the future:** Set clear renewable energy and industry development targets, support industrial electrification, build shared infrastructure and position WA as a leading exporter of green commodities.
- **Build the workforce to deliver them:** Develop a coordinated Clean Energy Jobs Plan, expand training in regional WA, support apprenticeships and attract the skilled workers major projects need.
- **Protect environmental, cultural and water resources:** Plan renewable energy and industry to avoid areas of high biodiversity and cultural value, protect scarce water resources, and hold large projects to the highest environmental standards.
- **Share the benefits:** Support First Nations groups with equity and employment opportunities and help households cut their bills through electrification and efficiency standards, ensuring the people most affected by the transition gain from it.

The jobs opportunity:

8,800
Potential solar and battery jobs

24,000
Potential ongoing green iron jobs

11,000
Potential green iron construction jobs

1,800
Electricians required by Fortescue

3
New regional training hubs proposed

1
Coordinated WA Clean Energy Jobs Plan

Major investments are underway, and the demand for cleaner commodities is growing. The question is where the jobs, investment and industries land. The four sections that follow set out what it will take to make sure they land in WA and stay here.

Summary of recommendations

The following is a consolidated list of the main recommendations set out in this plan for quick reference.

A renewable energy target WA can bank on

- Legislate a Renewable Energy Target of at least 82% by 2030 for the South West Interconnected System (SWIS), the grid that powers Perth and the South West.
- Legislate a statewide Renewable Energy Target to encourage broader investment and position WA to become a green commodity exporter.
- Maintain and expand existing state and federal incentives and rebates for solar and battery installation, for both households and businesses.

Keep our energy companies working for the public

- Keep Synergy, Horizon Power and Western Power in full public ownership and strengthen their role across generation, long-term storage, transmission, distribution and retail.
- Commit to turning state-owned buildings and facilities like schools, hospitals, and public housing, into solar and battery hubs.
- Invest in affordable EV (Electric Vehicle) charging at government facilities, particularly workplaces to encourage daytime charging.

Electrify existing industry to create ongoing competitiveness

- Provide decarbonisation incentives and support for industry, scaled for business size.
- Create grants or subsidies for heat pumps, solar and batteries so businesses can electrify heat-based processes and reduce costs.
- Require large gas users to commit to clear and timely electrification timetables, backed by support and incentives for research and technology development.
- Establish a state entity to help large industry access cost competitive renewable energy, modelled on the Tomago financing scheme.
- Introduce a standardised WA commercial green lease framework to resolve landlord/tenant split incentives.

Turn WA's advantage into an export industry

- Commit to hosting a decommissioning industry in WA, ensuring oil and gas companies fully clean up their operations and that the steel is processed and recycled in WA.
- Invest in common-user infrastructure to attract green iron and other green commodity projects.
- Establish a Green Commodity Export Target via a tripartite oversight committee.

Build the grid to carry the power

- Bring forward extensions of the SWIS Transmission Plan and reform system processes for faster connection and assessment of renewable energy and transmission infrastructure projects.
- Negotiate more federal funding support for SWIS transmission and grid infrastructure.
- Establish a NWIS task force to coordinate the building of common-user grid infrastructure, minimising cultural and environmental impacts, and maximising First Nations benefit.

Winning export partners before competitors do

- Direct Invest and Trade Western Australia to use its trade promotion network to build decarbonisation partnerships in green commodities.

Build the workforce to deliver them

- Create a WA Government Clean Energy Jobs Plan 2050 to map workforce demand, training and job transition support, and the range of industry attraction needed.
- Establish new regional training hubs in the Pilbara, the Mid West and the South West.
- Establish a WA Renewable Jobs Advocate to advise on the future skills, opportunities and training pathways.
- Offer worker attraction and apprenticeship incentives to meet demand for key skills.
- Require large employers of trades to commit to apprentice targets, including sub-targets for under-represented groups.

Protect what the economy depends on

- Legislate a statewide net zero target, with five-yearly interim targets aligned to a 1.5°C pathway to incentivise renewable energy and green commodity investments.
- Take a strategic regional planning approach to renewable energy that identifies high biodiversity and cultural value areas and avoids them where possible, drawing on biodiversity and cultural heritage data compiled by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and other conservation agencies. The mechanism for this could be a State Planning Policy that embeds that data into the WAPC's own planning framework, so that when assessing Priority Projects and State Development Area declarations, the WAPC is applying its own zoning and land-use policy rather than making an independent judgement about biodiversity impact, which remains the EPA's role through the separate environmental approval process for each project.
- Recognise the importance of high-value biodiversity areas as an underpinning consideration for this plan and ensure appropriate steps are taken to protect high-value habitats.
- Ensure maintenance of high biodiversity standards around all major developments in WA. Maintaining social license requires that habitat protection be central to government planning.
- Fund and support renewable energy and biodiversity mapping tools, such as those being developed by the University of Melbourne, that give developers critical information about biodiversity risk and help to avoid environmental regulatory friction.
- Encourage any new large energy-using or large renewable energy projects to meet the highest biodiversity protection and management standards that are reasonably achievable for that proponent, given their scale, resources and project circumstances.

- Require any new data centres to be fully powered by new renewable energy.
- Ensure that any new large energy-using projects do not draw from or create impacts on freshwater or groundwater sources.

Share the benefits

- Embed community benefit requirements and environmental protections for renewable energy and green commodity projects, including for First Nations groups.
- Provide incentives and support for households to convert to electric appliances.
- Legislate minimum rental energy efficiency requirements.
- Properly fund the Community Disaster Resilience Strategy and emergency services preparedness.
- Support projects that include First Nations groups in ownership structures and prioritise employment opportunities.

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

A condensed public edition of this plan is also available separately.

PART ONE:

Build the industries of the future

Western Australia is at a pivotal moment as the global economy undergoes its biggest shift since the Industrial Revolution. WA is uniquely positioned to play an important part in global decarbonisation efforts and new green industrial growth. Maximising this opportunity would deliver significant and ongoing economic benefits for the state and its people.

WA has world-leading renewable energy resources at a scale sufficient to produce exportable volumes of green products, like green iron and green ammonia. This is a major opportunity to diversify the state's export industry into clean energy products and remain competitive in a decarbonised market.

With locally produced materials being refined into higher-value products by WA workers employed in secure, well-paid jobs, and powered by its abundant sun and wind power, the economic multiplier effect for the state would be transformative.

The WA Government must act to seize this opportunity by setting clear targets for renewable energy deployment and strong policy settings to accelerate electrification and green industry attraction.

This plan sets out six fronts on which the state government needs to act:

1. **Setting renewable energy targets**
2. **Keeping public energy assets working for the public**
3. **Helping existing industry electrify to create ongoing competitiveness**
4. **Turning WA's advantage into an export industry**
5. **Building the grid and shared infrastructure new green industries need**
6. **Winning export partners before competitors do**

This plan recognises the importance of both the public and private sectors in delivering the jobs that flow from the transition.

A renewable energy target WA can bank on

- Legislate a Renewable Energy Target of at least 82% by 2030 for the South West Interconnected System (SWIS), the grid that powers Perth and the South West.
- Legislate a statewide Renewable Energy Target to encourage broader investment and position WA to become a green commodity exporter.
- Maintain and expand existing state and federal incentives and rebates for solar and battery installation, for both households and businesses.

A legislated Renewable Energy Target is this plan's foundation because it is the strongest lever available to reduce the cost of capital for renewable energy projects. A legislated target is the most cost-effective way for WA to increase the number of renewable projects, and jobs because it helps lower the cost of capital for every project competing for finance. Investors price policy risk directly into the return they demand; remove that risk and more marginal projects clear the finance bar and proceed to construction.

A RET gives industry, investors and the training pipeline a fixed point to plan against and determines how much of WA's own solar and wind resource gets built rather than remaining untapped potential.

A plan for renewable energy is a plan for jobs. Continued solar and battery deployment alone could support up to around 8,800 WA jobs in installation, construction and operations by 2050, small-scale solar and battery installation and maintenance (up to ~3,400), utility-scale construction (up to ~3,200) and ongoing operations and maintenance (up to ~2,200), before counting the industrial electrification, transmission and green commodity jobs.

- WA is currently the outlier: it has committed to an 80% government-operations emissions reduction target by 2030 and an aspirational net zero by 2050 goal, but, unlike most other states and territories, it does not have a distinct, legislated Renewable Energy Target.
- Victoria's experience shows what a target can do: lifting its legislated target to 50% by 2030 is projected to create around 24,000 jobs and $5.8 billion in economic activity; a single VRET auction round (600 megawatts) was projected to deliver more than 2,000 jobs and $1 billion of investment. Victoria's energy minister was explicit that the point of legislating the target was "restoring the confidence needed to invest."[1]
- Queensland, previously 50% by 2030, and South Australia, which reached and then exceeded an early 50%-by-2025 target, followed the same pattern: a legislated number gave financiers a fixed point to underwrite against, and investment followed.
- The Clean Energy Investor Group's 2026 outlook found that policy uncertainty and grid connection delays are now the biggest barriers to new investment nationally. A state with no target starts from a much weaker position.[2]
- Encouragingly, WA has already climbed to third in investor rankings, on the back of improved transmission certainty alone (see 'Build the grid to carry the power'), evidence that WA responds to certainty signals the same way every other state does, and that a legislated RET would be expected to compound that improvement rather than sit apart from it.[3]

Delay means higher costs for consumers

Certainty on transmission matters because delay is expensive, and households and businesses pay for it. Baringa estimates that a one-year delay to the Clean Energy Link transmission build-out could add $1.4 billion to consumer costs between 2028 and 2033. A three-year delay adds $3.9 billion.[4]

Around 60 per cent of that increase would come from higher wholesale energy prices, with annual baseload prices rising by roughly $3 to $12/MWh. The reason is straightforward. Delayed transmission stops renewable and storage projects from connecting, increases curtailment, and leaves the system relying on expensive coal and gas.

Consumers also pay for firm capacity through the Reserve Capacity Mechanism. If transmission constraints delay storage and other firming

resources, fewer are available to meet the Reserve Capacity Target, and capacity costs can rise. Delay therefore exposes consumers to both higher wholesale prices and higher reliability costs.

A legislated RET for the SWIS is one of the most effective ways to avoid these risks and keep transmission and utility-scale connections on schedule.

No renewables target is a missed opportunity

A common objection to calls for a WA-specific RET is that Australia already has momentum toward renewables nationally. This does not hold for WA, for a structural reason that does not apply to the eastern states: the SWIS and North West Interconnected System (NWIS, covering the Pilbara and North West) are electrically isolated from the National Electricity Market (NEM). Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia share a single interconnected grid, so investment, capacity and policy confidence spill across state borders within it. WA shares none of that. When Victoria legislates a 50% target and attracts $5.8 billion of investment, none of that capital, and the confidence effect behind it, flows to Perth, Karratha or Collie, because there is no wire connecting them and no shared target for a WA project to be measured against.

Setting a WA Renewable Energy Target is a plan for local jobs

The call for a legislated 82% SWIS target and a statewide renewable energy target should be read as a jobs and investment policy, as well as an environmental commitment. The jobs benefit of a RET is concrete, is shown by other states' experience and is entirely within WA's own legislative power to act on.

The third ask above, maintaining and expanding state and federal rebates for solar and battery installation, is addressed by the data immediately below: it shows the growth already happening, and therefore what continued support would build on.

The power of the sun: solar's rapid growth in WA

The rhetoric of a WA renewables boom is backed by real, measurable growth, but the scale of the opportunity ahead is larger than what has already been achieved and shows exactly what a legislated target would do.

Residential rooftop solar

- Total rooftop solar installations connected to WA's Wholesale Electricity Market (WEM) grew from around 0.4 million at the end of 2020 to 0.6 million at the end of 2025, a 50% increase in five years.[5]
- Installed rooftop solar capacity in WA (Clean Energy Regulator data) grew from 1.6GW to 3.0GW over the same period, nearly doubling.[6]
- In late 2025, WA's renewable and storage generation supplied a record 52.4% of the state's energy needs in a single quarter, with renewable output peaking at 91.1%, both records driven by rooftop solar and wind.[7]
- Nationally, rooftop solar is now installed on around 40% of Australian homes, with the average system size rising to 11kW as households increasingly size systems to support batteries and Electric Vehicle (EV) charging.[8]

No WA-specific jobs count exists yet for the solar growth described above*. However, the figures below extrapolate from the two most recent published national baselines: the Institute for Sustainable Futures' (ISF) employment-factor modelling for large-scale solar, and the ISF and University of Technology Sydney (UTS) 2024 electricity workforce projections for small-scale solar and batteries, applying WA's roughly 10.6% share of national population and small-scale solar capacity. These two independent figures closely match, which gives confidence in using population share as the extrapolation method.[9]

Rooftop solar and battery jobs

- Nationally, small-scale solar design, installation and maintenance employs around 11,000 workers today, projected by the ISF/UTS to grow to 18,000 by 2050; the household battery workforce is separately projected to grow from 2,000 to 14,000 over the same period.[10]
- Applying WA's ~10.6% share of national population and installed small-scale solar capacity, this equates to roughly 1,400 WA jobs today in small-scale solar and battery design, installation and maintenance, growing to approximately 3,400 WA jobs by 2050 if WA's share of the national small-scale market holds steady.[11]

Utility-scale and mining-sector solar jobs

- The ISF's Australian employment-factor study calculates 2.32 job-years of construction employment per MW of large-scale solar built, a job-year being one full-time-equivalent position sustained for one year, so this measures total labour input over a project's build, not an ongoing headcount.[12]
- Applying that factor to Fortescue's committed 1.2GW Green Grid solar target alone gives an illustrative estimate of around 2,780 job-years of construction employment across the life of that build, before counting Rio Tinto's, BHP's or any third-party Pilbara solar commitments, or any of the ongoing operations and maintenance roles once built.
- Nationally, large-scale construction jobs are projected to grow from 6,000 to a peak of 30,000 towards the end of this decade, with large-scale operations and maintenance jobs growing from 4,000 to 21,000 by 2050; applying WA's ~10.6% share extrapolates to roughly 600 to 3,200 WA construction jobs and 400 to 2,200 WA operations and maintenance jobs across that same window.[13]

* *These figures are not WA-specific modelling and should be treated as indicative ranges rather than forecasts. They are presented because no state-specific figure exists, which strengthens the call for WA-specific workforce modelling under the WA Government Clean Energy Jobs Plan 2050.*

The case for solar and battery hubs on government buildings

Schools and hospitals sit on some of the largest underused roof space in the state, with other jurisdictions already showing how turning that space into a solar and battery hub can largely pay for itself.

- Victoria's Greener Government School Buildings program now covers 415 schools and is expected to reach 17,400kW of installed capacity once fully implemented. Government funds the system upfront, and schools repay the cost over five years, after which they retain half of the ongoing savings, a model that recovers its own capital cost rather than requiring a permanent subsidy.[14]
- A single-site example shows the scale of saving available: Camberwell Grammar School's 888kW, 2,600-panel system has cut annual energy costs by 25% and produced more than 885,000 kilowatt-hours in 2025 alone.[15]
- NSW sets a government-wide target of 126,000 megawatt-hours a year of rooftop solar on government buildings and offers agencies a choice between direct purchase and a hosted Power Purchase Agreement with no upfront cost, paying a discounted rate over a fixed term instead. This plan's ask is for WA to adopt an equivalent program and financing choice for its own schools and hospitals, rather than each site negotiating solar access on its own.[16]

The same logic applies to public and social housing. These are state-owned assets; their tenants are among the households least able to keep their homes at a safe temperature, and they cannot install solar themselves because they do not own the roof. WA has already trialed rooftop solar on public housing, and existing social housing energy upgrade programs provide a strong foundation to build on. This plan's ask is for public and social housing to be included in the same solar and battery hub program as schools and hospitals.

Keep our energy companies working for the public

The public sector's role in energy delivery is fundamental to WA's renewable energy present and essential for its future. This plan should not be read as accepting that the public sector's role in generation, retail or network delivery has reached its limit; the immediate priorities below are a floor. This section sets out that role for the SWIS and metropolitan WA, and looks at the role of government as a participant and catalyst specifically in the North West in this chapter, where the balance between public and private delivery looks different again.

- Keep Synergy, Horizon Power and Western Power in full public ownership and strengthen their role across generation, long-term storage, transmission, distribution and retail.
- Commit to turning state-owned buildings and facilities like schools, hospitals, and public housing, into solar and battery hubs.
- Invest in affordable EV (Electric Vehicle) charging at government facilities, particularly workplaces to encourage daytime charging.

A tale of two systems

WA's clean energy transition is not one story, but two. In the SWIS, NWIS and for many regional towns and remote communities across WA, the state is a direct market participant through Synergy, Western Power and Horizon Power who own and operate a large share of the generation, network and retail stack. In other areas, like much of the Pilbara, the state's role currently looks different: outside of Horizon Power's networks and assets, it instead operates more to facilitate, enable and direct the private sector, whether through state and Commonwealth project grant funding and concessional loans, land use and strategic planning, or regulation setting. As such, most of the renewable energy capital, construction activity and direct job creation in the North West is being delivered by private companies (miners, energy majors and, increasingly, Traditional Owner corporations partnering with private capital), rather than by the state.

What this means for the North West

- Fortescue is building 1.2GW of solar, 600MW of wind and 4 to 5GWh of battery storage across five Pilbara sites (the "Green Grid"), backed by $3.56 billion in committed capital, entirely company funded.[17]
- Yara Pilbara is developing the Yuri Renewable Hydrogen to Ammonia Project on the Burrup Peninsula, a private-capital green manufacturing project layered on top of renewable generation, backed by Commonwealth and State funding, including $47.5 million from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).[18]
- The proposed Australian Renewable Energy Hub, at up to 26GW of solar and wind (built in phases) targeting electricity and hydrogen production for local industry and export, is a private project currently supported by ARENA funding of $21.54 million for the project's pre-front end engineering design.[19]
- Traditional Owner corporations are increasingly the equity partners and developers, not just consultees: the Yindjibarndi Energy Corporation (with ACEN) is developing up to 3GW of wind, solar and battery projects with 25 to 50% Yindjibarndi equity, and the Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation has proposed up to 5GW of "Green Energy Parks" near Karratha.[20]

The public sector's role in the North West today

Because the private sector is funding and building almost all of this today, the state's current role in the North West is different from that in the SWIS. This reflects where investment stands right now, not a ceiling on what the public sector's role in the North West should become; Horizon Power's existing regional footprint, and any future unification of the NWIS, are viable platforms for a larger direct public role. In the immediate term, government action can remove coordination failures that private company cannot solve alone:

- **Common-user infrastructure:** the WA Government's Pilbara Energy Transition (PET) Plan and its priority transmission corridors (including Maitland to Karratha to Burrup) reduce the need for every company to build duplicate private transmission lines on Country, pooling costs and cutting approval timelines.

- **Grid unification:** the NWIS remains a patchwork of largely unconnected private and Horizon Power networks; the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) and industry analysts agree a unified NWIS would improve reliability and accelerate renewable uptake beyond what any single miner can achieve alone, this is the rationale for the NWIS taskforce recommended. [21]
- **Land allocation and precinct planning:** state allocation of Strategic Industrial Area (SIA) land (e.g. the Maitland SIA and the Pilbara Hydrogen Hub) is what let Fortescue Future Industries, Yara, Hexagon and Perdaman co-locate ammonia, hydrogen and renewable projects in the first place.[22]
- **Training infrastructure and standards:** the Clean Energy Skills National Centre of Excellence's MOU with Yara Pilbara, and the state-funded Clean Energy Training and Research Institute proposed for the Pilbara Hydrogen Hub, exist specifically to make sure the jobs created above go to Pilbara locals, with an explicit focus on Aboriginal people and women, who remain under-represented in the sector.[23]
- **Setting the terms of community and First Nations benefit:** government-set eligibility criteria for "Priority Project" status already require proponents to show they will deliver positive outcomes for Traditional Owners and the community. This plan's ask is for that same expectation to apply to every renewable energy and green commodity project, not only the subset that seek Priority Project status, turning equity and local-employment models like Yindjibarndi's and Ngarluma's from best-practice exceptions into a baseline expectation across the whole Pilbara pipeline.

This is what the plan's "participant and catalyst" language means in practice, and neither role is fixed as the transition proceeds. In the SWIS, and in regional towns and remote communities Horizon Power serves, the state is a participant: it owns Synergy, Western Power and Horizon Power directly today, and this plan asks for that ownership to be kept or expanded. In the North West, the state is currently more of a catalyst: it coordinates infrastructure, provides funding and sets regulations, while private capital does most of the building. This plan also wants a larger direct public role there to facilitate and fund coordinated investment.

The case for public ownership

State ownership has a measurable case behind it, not just a policy preference. Direct state investment and ownership can mean that the value created by this investment can be captured by the public across the entire energy supply chain. Public ownership enables essential services to be delivered and operated for broader socio-economic benefits. Public ownership of Synergy, Western Power and Horizon Power is central to funding WA's Uniform Tariff Policy, so regional and remote customers pay the same rate as Perth despite far higher supply costs, a cross-subsidy unlikely to survive intact under a privatised, profit-maximising ownership structure with no equivalent statewide equity obligation.[24]

State-owned entities have historically trained more apprentices, fostering the future workforce required to deliver a clean energy future. Public ownership is crucial for accelerating the adoption of socially desirable technologies, including where low or uncertain profitability would otherwise hamper the scale and pace of development. It can also deliver those services and infrastructure at a high environmental standard that plans biodiversity outcomes rather than profits.

Photo: Photon Photos

Electrify existing industry to create ongoing competitiveness

Industrial electrification is where WA's competitiveness, jobs and emissions arguments converge. Heat and gas use make up a large share of the industry's operating costs, and the pace at which businesses can switch to electricity determines both how many new jobs this creates and whether existing manufacturing jobs are retained rather than lost because businesses that stay on gas or diesel face rising energy costs that electrification would have avoided.

- Provide decarbonisation incentives and support for industry, scaled for business size.
- Create grants or subsidies for heat pumps, solar and batteries so businesses can electrify heat-based processes and reduce costs.
- Require large gas users to commit to clear and timely electrification timetables, backed by support and incentives for research and technology development.
- Establish a state entity to help large industry access cost competitive renewable energy, modelled on the Tomago financing scheme.
- Introduce a standardised WA commercial green lease framework to resolve landlord/tenant split incentives.

Industrial electrification is not primarily an emissions measure that happens to have jobs attached: for WA specifically, it is a competitiveness and supply security measure as much as an emissions one.

- WA's domestic gas market is forecast to face shortfalls from as early as 2030, even with the state's existing 15% domestic reservation policy on new LNG projects, meaning industrial gas users who don't electrify are exposed to both price and supply risk, not just cost.[25]
- Electricity and gas routinely account for 30 to 40% of operating costs for energy-intensive manufacturers (alumina, food processing, chemicals). Australian business electricity prices sat at around 165% of the global average for commercial users in late 2025, and BHP's own chief executive has said Australian electricity costs run two to three times higher than competitor nations. That cost gap is a direct driver of jobs moving offshore: Qenos, Australia's last major polymers producer, closed in 2024; Oceania Glass, the country's only architectural glass manufacturer, closed in March 2025 after 169 years; Incitec Pivot wound down domestic fertiliser manufacturing; and Orica and BlueScope have both openly canvassed shifting investment to the United States.[26]

- Heat pumps and electric process-heat equipment are routinely three to five times more efficient than the gas boilers they replace, so electrification lowers energy cost per unit of output permanently, not just while a subsidy is running.[27]
- Every business that electrifies its process heat also frees up scarce domestic gas for the hard-to-abate industries that have no near-term electric alternative, making this an enabling measure for the rest of WA's industrial base, not only a benefit to the business that switches.

How electrification creates jobs

- Retrofit projects directly employ electricians, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and refrigeration trades, control-systems technicians, and the engineers who run the feasibility studies beforehand. This is a different, more geographically dispersed job base than large-scale generation construction, because it happens at every factory, cannery and processing plant rather than a handful of Pilbara sites.
- Real examples from ARENA's Industrial Transformation Stream show the pattern at a business level: McCain Foods received $7.38 million to install advanced heat recovery at its Ballarat plant, cutting steam and heat needs by over 22%; Sugar Australia received $4.1 million to switch from gas evaporators to an electric mechanical vapour recompression system at its Yarraville refinery; Blackmores received $723,900 to replace a gas boiler with a heat pump, cutting gas use by around 25%. Each of these retained an existing manufacturing workforce that a higher-cost energy bill would otherwise have put at risk.
- The risk of higher energy costs is not hypothetical: the Tomago Aluminium smelter in NSW, which produces 590,000 tonnes a year (around 40% of Australia's aluminium output) and has more than 1,000 direct jobs, warned in October 2025 that it had no commercially viable path to keep operating once its current electricity contract expires in 2028. The federal and NSW governments announced in December 2025 that they would work with Tomago on a long-term, fixed-price renewable power purchase agreement backed by concessional finance. This is the clearest illustration available of why this plan treats industrial electrification as a jobs-protection measure, not only a jobs-creation one, and of how a genuine switch to renewable electrification directly lowers the cost of energy a business like Tomago actually pays.[28]

Commercial and Industrial (C&I) Solar

- Australia has installed only 5.6GW of commercial and industrial rooftop solar nationally, against a technical potential of up to 85.6GW.[29]

The Smart Energy Council's report, "Unlocking the Missing Middle: Commercial and Industrial Distributed Energy Resources in Australia", explains why this gap persists for C&I businesses specifically a "missing middle" of systems between 100 kilowatts and 30 megawatts too large for residential support and too small for utility-scale mechanisms. The Federal Government has already acted on the report's leading recommendation: in August 2026, the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES) eligibility cap rose tenfold, from 100 kilowatts to 1 megawatt, a change expected to cut C&I solar costs by around 20% and unlock exactly the segment this plan is targeting.[30]

Connection times for these businesses, currently 9 to 19 months for medium commercial connections under Western Power's own December 2025 figures, reflect a workforce capacity issue affecting network connections nationwide, not something unique to WA.[31] It is therefore critical that industry works alongside the government to address this connection timeline challenge as part of the workforce investment described in 'Build the grid to carry the power', below.[32]

Photo: Schwartstock

Why a binding timetable matters, not just support

This plan calls for the government to require large gas users to agree to a published electrification timetable, a set date by which they commit to a specific pathway off gas, rather than leaving the timing open-ended. The case for this is not just about having support available, it mirrors the certainty argument this plan makes for a Renewable Energy Target above: a known date drives planning to happen years in advance, while open-ended support without a deadline lets a business simply keep renewing short-term gas contracts until a crisis point is reached.

- The Tomago case above is exactly the kind of arrangement the WA Government should model its own approach on a long-term, fixed-price renewable power purchase agreement backed by concessional finance, giving a large energy user the cost certainty that makes continued operation commercially viable. The lesson for WA is to put this structure in place years ahead of any similar contract cliff, rather than waiting until a smelter or refinery is already at risk, so government and industry can agree the timetable and financing well in advance.
- A published timetable also gives the trades and jobs pipeline something to plan against. Part Two of this plan sets out why the electrician and trades pipeline cannot respond overnight, apprenticeships take three to four years to produce a qualified worker, so unpredictable, all-at-once retrofit demand triggered by a looming contract deadline is exactly the pattern this plan's training measures are least able to absorb. A known timetable lets TAFEs, group training organisations and equipment suppliers size capacity against real, forward-dated demand instead.
- It also lets government sequence the two financing tools described below against actual need: small and medium business grants can be sized to a known volume of expected retrofit activity, and the Tomago-style concessional finance entity can be resourced ahead of the specific large gas users approaching their own contract cliffs, rather than standing up a financing response after a smelter or refinery is already at risk.

What the grants do

The grants and concessional finance called for above are not equivalent tools, they are matched to two different scales of problem.

- Small and medium business grants (heat pumps, solar, batteries): these exist because the barrier for smaller manufacturers is upfront capital, not the underlying economics, a heat pump or battery typically pays for itself over its working life, but many businesses cannot fund the initial outlay or clear the high internal rate of return smaller firms require. A grant or low-interest loan closes that gap without needing to subsidise the technology forever. WA already has a live example of this exact mechanism: the $153.3 million Made in WA Energy Affordability Investment Program (MEAIP) offers manufacturers low-interest loans of up to $15 million for commercial solar, industrial batteries and energy-efficient equipment, this plan's ask is to expand and lock in funding of this kind, not invent it from scratch.[33]
- Large gas user concessional finance: this is a different tool for a different problem. Large energy users need a long-term, fixed-price renewable electricity contract, and the renewable projects that would supply them are cheaper to build the lower their cost of capital is. Analysis of the Tomago model found that dropping the cost of capital on a renewable project from an unsupported 11% to a government-backed 5% cuts the cost of the electricity it generates by around 42%, because a government-backed counterparty is more bankable than the industrial user itself. The Tomago deal achieves this using the Commonwealth's own credit standing, through a federally owned intermediary (Snowy Hydro) and Commonwealth concessional finance. Key elements of the deals were that the companies were not only committing to offtake from large renewable energy sources; but they were also expected to commit resources to their own decarbonisation, electrification and energy efficiency. This creates a major win-win scenario by protecting local manufacturing and the associated jobs while driving support for renewable energy and reducing carbon emissions.

This plan's ask is a lighter-touch version of the same idea: a WA entity that facilitates large gas users' access to existing federal concessional finance, such as the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC), rather than a body that lends against WA's own balance sheet. This model already has a genuine WA precedent: in 2023 the CEFC provided WA with $3 billion in concessional loans and equity investments for SWIS and NWIS transmission expansion, channelled through the WA Government and Western Power. A dedicated entity for large gas users would extend that same channel to industrial electrification specifically, by establishing a state entity to help large industry access cost competitive renewable energy, modelled on the Tomago financing scheme. This could be linked to requirements that users engage in industrial electrification.

How many jobs?

Industrial electrification produces jobs in two distinct ways:

1. **New installation, construction and ongoing maintenance jobs**

   Every retrofit, heat pump, battery, solar array, and electric boiler must be engineered, installed and commissioned, then serviced and maintained for the life of the equipment.

   - The best available Australian benchmark for this kind of public investment, developed by the Centre for Policy Development from Clean Energy Council and Climate Council/ Alpha Beta modelling, finds that transition-aligned public investment (spanning clean energy, retrofits and related regional stimulus) directly creates around 8 jobs per $1 million invested.[34]
   - Applied to WA's own $153.3 million MEAIP, that benchmark gives an illustrative estimate of roughly 1,200 direct WA jobs across the life of the program: electricians, refrigeration and HVAC trades, control-system technicians and the engineers running feasibility studies beforehand. This is a broad public-investment multiplier, not a program-specific modelled figure, so it should be treated as an order-of-magnitude estimate pending the government's own evaluation now that MEAIP applications have opened (July 2026).
   - Government should publish an actual jobs count against MEAIP once it is underway, rather than leaving the 8-per-$1-million figure as the only public estimate.

2. **Protected existing jobs**

   Separately, and just as importantly, electrification secures jobs that already exist by removing the energy-cost or energy-supply risk that would otherwise put them at risk of closure. This is not a per-dollar calculation, it is the entire workforce of a facility that would not otherwise be commercially viable.

   - The Tomago case above is the clearest example, but the same logic applies at smaller scale to every WA manufacturer for whom electricity is 30 to 40% of operating cost: the jobs "created" by electrification, in this category, are actually the jobs that continue to exist.

The jobs outcome from industrial electrification under this plan is therefore two figures, not one: an illustrative ~1,200 new WA installation and trades jobs from the current $153.3 million MEAIP program alone (to be confirmed against actual program data), plus an unquantified and potentially larger number of existing manufacturing jobs kept in WA because electrification removed an energy cost or supply risk that would otherwise have closed the business. Both are legitimate answers to "how many jobs," but need to stay distinct.

Because the 8-jobs-per-$1-million relationship is roughly linear, this plan's ask is for government to expand MEAIP's funding beyond its current scale, not just maintain it, as a larger program would be expected to deliver proportionally more jobs on the same basis.

Case Study: company-level renewable investment in the Pilbara

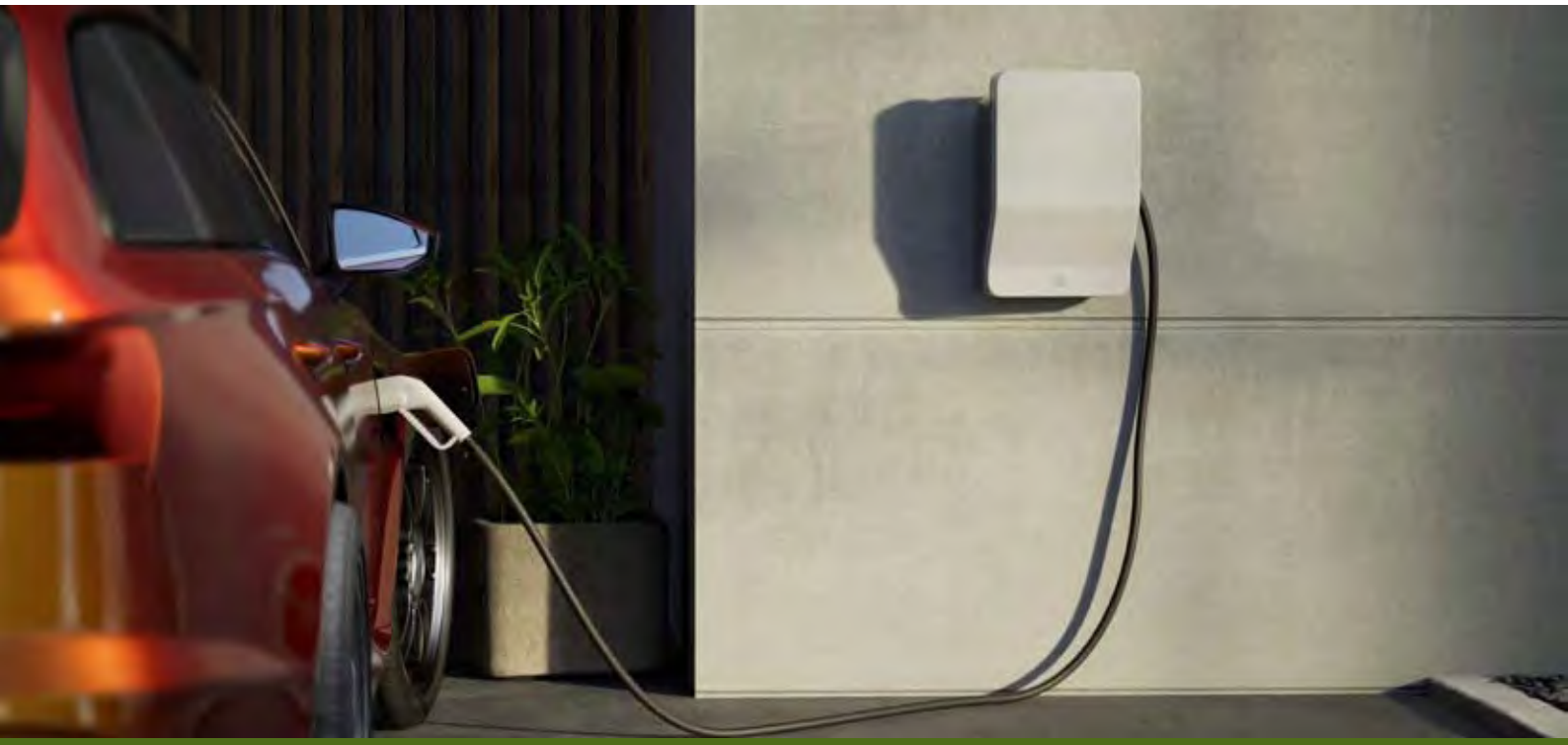
The plan calls for large gas users to commit to "clear and timely electrification timetables" describes what is already happening at Fortescue, one of WA's largest iron ore producers.[35]

COMPANY	COMMITTED RENEWABLES	INVESTMENT	STATUS (MID-2026)
Fortescue	1.2GW solar, 600MW wind, 4 to 5GWh battery, 620km transmission ("Pilbara Green Grid"); plus a further 200MW off-grid project for third-party industrial customers	$3.56bn committed (Green Grid) + $952m (Pilbara Green Energy Project)	Under construction. 690MW Turner River solar farm and 650MWh Cloudbreak battery both broke ground in May 2026; 133MW Nullagine wind farm underway; three solar farms already operating (730MW combined)

Rolling out EVs at the workplace

Workplace charging during the day is a genuinely different proposition to charging at home overnight: it lines up with when rooftop solar is actually generating, rather than adding to evening peak demand, and it gives employees without off-street parking at home a practical way to justify upgrading to an EV. The following costs need to be included in budget measures for a public sector rollout but should also have their overall benefits calculated and communicated, so the real value of the investment is clear alongside its cost.

- Standard AC Level 2 chargers (7 to 22kW), the right specification for an all-day workplace charging model, cost around $2,000 to $7,000 per unit in hardware, with total commercial site costs of around $5,000 to $75,000 once switchboard upgrades, cabling and site works are included. DC fast chargers cost far more again, $30,000 to $150,000 or more per unit, and are the wrong tool for a workplace "charge while you work" model where vehicles are parked for hours, not minutes.[36]



- Prioritise AC Level 2 chargers at government workplaces rather than DC fast chargers, since the cheaper technology is also the better fit for daytime workplace charging, and cost a staged rollout against the site-by-site cost ranges above rather than a single blanket figure.
- To prevent overuse of the charging stations and ensure staff pay a fair price for the energy, install both load-management tools and user-pays software. This also ensures fair cost recovery for government.
- People without off-street parking cannot charge at home, and these are disproportionately renters, people living in apartments and people in social housing. Charging at government workplaces can help widen access to electric vehicles for households who cannot charge at home, and this should be counted among the benefits when the costs of a rollout are assessed.
- Existing co-funding models elsewhere show how to bring the state's own cost down: the federal DRIVEN Program offers up to $3,000 per charger for automotive dealerships, and NSW's own scheme covers 50% of cost per charger port installed, up to $60,000, depending on charger and vehicle type. WA should seek equivalent federal co-funding for its own government facility rollout rather than meeting the full cost from the state budget alone.[37]

Turn WA's advantage into an export industry

Beyond generating and using clean energy domestically, WA has a distinct opportunity to become an exporter of green commodities and services, turning its renewable energy and mineral resource base into new export industries rather than only decarbonising the ones it already has.

- Commit to hosting a decommissioning industry in WA, ensuring oil and gas companies fully clean up their operations and that the steel is processed and recycled in WA.
- Invest in common-user infrastructure to attract green iron and other green commodity projects.
- Establish a Green Commodity Export Target via a tripartite oversight committee.

Green industry development in WA can start as existing industries wind down through the establishment of a local decommissioning industry. This responds to a liability that already exists and is growing. National Energy Resources Australia forecasts decommissioning costs for the nationwide offshore oil and gas industry at around $55 billion over the next 50 years, with almost half of that work concentrated in the Northern Carnarvon Basin off the WA coast; more recent federal modelling puts the national bill as high as $60 billion. Around 136 fixed facilities, including pipelines, are expected to begin decommissioning in the coming decade, and the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) now requires structures to be decommissioned within five years of production ceasing and wells plugged within three.[38]

Approximately 60% of the material that needs to be decommissioned is highly valuable steel that WA currently has no ability to recycle. This means the state exports almost all of its scrap steel for the benefit of other economies. Establishing a local decommissioning hub and associated green scrap steel recycling facilities, like the Generation Steel mill proposed for Collie, will generate jobs and properly capture the full value of the material sitting off the WA coast.[39]

- The Federal Government has already released a roadmap explicitly aimed at maximising the share of this work done domestically and building Australia's own decommissioning industrial capability, rather than exporting the work and the jobs that come with it. WA, hosting the largest share of the liability, is the obvious place for that capability to be built.[40]
- When Northern Oil and Gas Australia went into liquidation in 2019, its decommissioning liability was initially left to fall on Australian taxpayers by default, precisely the outcome this plan's call for oil and gas companies to clean up their operations is designed to prevent.
- Setting up a WA decommissioning industry now to deal with offshore oil and gas infrastructure will also allow for future local offshore wind decommissioning to occur, creating a steady pipeline of work well into the future.

Green iron's rapidly growing potential

WA already has a live example of the common-user model working: the Pilbara Hydrogen Hub, backed by $70 million from the WA Government matched by $70 million from the Commonwealth, is building shared pipeline and port infrastructure (Lumsden Point) with planned capacity of around 492,000 tonnes of hydrogen a year, due to become operational around 2028.[41]

- A 2024 Mandala report found WA has the potential to produce at least 4.5 million tonnes of green iron a year by 2030 under supportive policy settings, requiring around $37.5 billion of investment, of which roughly $23 billion would be renewable energy generation, storage and transmission infrastructure.[42]
- Separate analysis from Springmount Advisory estimates WA's green iron potential could support around 24,000 ongoing jobs and a further 11,000 construction jobs.[43]
- Pilbara hematite ore is lower grade and higher impurity than the ore most green iron production technologies are currently designed around, which is why WA's major producers have been asking government for support with port and road infrastructure, R&D tax settings and production incentives.[44]

What a Green Commodity Export Target will do

A target serves three distinct purposes:

- It gives investors a measurable point of government commitment to underwrite decisions against.
- It gives government a benchmark to track whether WA is capturing its share of the global green commodity opportunity.
- And it creates a shared reference point that ties the common-user infrastructure investment set out above to the export outcomes it is meant to deliver, so the two are measured against the same goal instead of running on separate, unconnected timelines.

No WA-specific green commodity export target currently exists, and work will be required to establish targets that sufficiently balance ambition with achievability and are appropriately tailored for different green commodities. Global markets, technology development, renewable energy availability, ore types and workforce capability are examples of key variables that would need to be considered when crafting any target. This plan asks that targets be developed in close consultation with a breadth of stakeholders, via a tripartite oversight committee made up of government, industry, and civil society representatives. This will make sure that any target is informed by the relevant expertise, is realistic, and is supported by mechanisms and investments that enable success.

The case for green iron alone is large enough to make a green commodity target worthwhile. The Superpower Institute estimates Australia could export 10 million tonnes of green iron a year by 2030, worth up to $295 billion annually, roughly three times the current export value of conventional iron ore, while Accenture separately estimates a broader green metals industry could generate up to $122 billion a year in export earnings nationally by 2040. The Federal Government's own $500 million Green Iron Investment Fund is targeting commercial-scale green iron production nationally by 2031.[45]

WA holds the largest share of the iron ore reserves and renewable energy resource behind this opportunity but has not yet set its own measurable target to underwrite investment against, leaving the state exposed to losing early-mover green commodity investment to other governments or countries chasing the same $295 billion prize with a clearer target already in place.

Setting a Green Commodity Export Target complements the Renewable Energy Target and net zero target as all three push in the same direction. Progress on one target creates progress on the other targets, driving flow on effects for economic resilience, emissions reduction, and job creation.

A green commodity is a raw material or traded good that is produced, recycled or manufactured using renewable energy. Common examples include green steel and green ammonia.

Build the grid to carry the power

None of the renewable energy, industrial electrification or green export ambitions can be delivered without the transmission and grid capacity to carry the power, making this section a precondition for the rest of the plan.

- Bring forward extensions of the SWIS Transmission Plan and reform system processes for faster connection and assessment of renewable energy and transmission infrastructure projects.
- Negotiate more federal funding support for SWIS transmission and grid infrastructure.
- Establish a NWIS taskforce to coordinate the building of common-user grid infrastructure, minimising cultural and environmental impacts, and maximising First Nations benefit.

Transmission is often treated as a background enabler for "real" clean energy jobs in generation. The build-out itself is a direct source of construction employment, and WA already has real, project-level numbers to draw on:

- The Clean Energy Link North project, the first tranche of the SWIS Transmission Plan's Phase One, is a $1.2 billion investment (including $584 million allocated in the 2025-26 State Budget) that the WA Government has said will create more than 400 jobs during construction, a real, project-specific figure, not an extrapolation.[46]

- That single project unlocks 400MW of existing stranded wind capacity plus up to 1GW of new renewable generation; Phase One as a whole unlocks 2.6GW (1GW in the north, 1.6GW in the east) ahead of the retirement of 1.4GW of state-owned coal by 2030, meaning the next grid expansion should carry broadly comparable, and likely larger, construction workforces as the network expands further into Collie, Chittering and Moora.[47]
- The State Government has attached a local content requirement to this pipeline: Western Power, Synergy and Horizon Power have been directed to design tenders so WA businesses have a genuine chance to win the work, the mechanism by which transmission spending converts into WA jobs rather than jobs elsewhere.
- This also closes the loop back to the C&I connection delays, a symptom of under-resourcing in technical occupations including electrical engineers, connections assessors, network planners and commissioning specialists. Funding those roles as real, ongoing WA jobs inside Western Power and Horizon Power is as much a part of making this transition work as the jobs on the transmission lines themselves.

The national benchmark, and why it understates WA's opportunity

For scale, the AEMO's Integrated System Plan (ISP) workforce modelling (covering the NEM only) projects transmission construction employment peaking at between 4,000 and 7,000 workers nationally in the late 2020s, out of a total east-coast electricity sector workforce forecast to grow from around 32,000 to over 60,000 by 2050. Transmission construction is a small but persistent share of that total (3 to 5%) and is dominated by occupations already in national shortage: transmission lineworkers, substation specialists, commissioning specialists, construction managers and electrical engineers.[48]

- Critically, this NEM-wide modelling structurally excludes Western Australia (the SWIS and NWIS are entirely separate electricity markets) and explicitly excludes the very large off-grid transmission networks being built in the Pilbara. This means any extrapolation from national figures using WA's population share understates the true WA opportunity, because it leaves out an entire category of WA-specific transmission employment that has no national equivalent to scale from.
- Fortescue alone has already constructed more than 480 kilometres of high-voltage private transmission line across the Pilbara, with a further expansion to beyond 620 kilometres underway. That is transmission construction and maintenance employment that sits entirely outside both the SWIS Transmission Plan figures above and the national ISP benchmark and is not currently counted anywhere in WA workforce planning.[49]
- The Department of Training and Workforce Development should be given an explicit mandate to produce a public, WA-specific transmission workforce estimate covering both the SWIS Transmission Plan and Pilbara private networks together, otherwise WA policy will keep relying on NEM figures that were never designed to describe Western Australia in the first place.

Why federal funding support matters

WA has already won support from Rewiring the Nation financing but has yet to see it used. In 2023, the CEFC provided WA with $3 billion in concessional loans and equity investments for SWIS and NWIS transmission expansion, channelled through the WA Government and Western Power (see 'Electrify existing industry before it's priced out'). Every dollar of federal concessional finance negotiated for transmission reduces the amount WA needs to fund from its own budget or recover through network tariffs, directly affecting how many transmission projects, and the construction jobs attached to them, can be brought forward rather than deferred. The challenge is getting an agreed coordinated approach across the relevant government bodies, Traditional Owner groups, and corporate interests in the area to activate the funding. What's needed is an entity that can bring these parties together, with the powers to deliver outcomes.[50]

Why a NWIS taskforce matters

The NWIS is not one grid, but a patchwork of largely unconnected private and Horizon Power networks, so no single mining company or Traditional Owner corporation building its own renewable project has the mandate or the incentive to unify it on their own. A dedicated taskforce is the coordination mechanism that turns individually built private networks into a single, more reliable system, the same coordination logic already driving the Pilbara Energy Transition Plan's common-user transmission corridors. Without it, WA risks ending up with several well-built but disconnected private grids in the North West rather than one that maximises the jobs and reliability benefit of the investment already happening there.

Winning export partners before competitors do

WA has strong existing international trade relationships that can be pivoted towards green commodities. This is part of remaining a reliable trading partner and an attractive investment destination, while growing relationships that assist in decarbonisation and economic stability.

- Direct Invest and Trade Western Australia to use its trade promotion network to build decarbonisation partnerships in green commodities.

Securing a confirmed buyer is often what converts a proposed WA green commodity project into a financial investment decision and a construction start. Trade facilitation is therefore a direct jobs function, not a separate marketing exercise.

- The Murchison Green Hydrogen Project, backed by $814 million in federal Hydrogen Headstart funding and 1.2GW of solar plus 1.7GW of wind, is targeting ammonia exports to Japan and Korea in the early 2030s, with a final investment decision expected in 2027, a decision that depends on confirmed offtake as much as confirmed finance.[51]
- A Samsung, Komipo and Progressive Green Solutions consortium has already brokered a land deal with DevelopmentWA for a proposed $10 billion hydrogen and ammonia project near Geraldton for the South Korean market.[52]
- WA has also started building the physical trade infrastructure this requires: the Pilbara Clean Fuels Bunkering Hub, launched in 2025, is positioning Pilbara ports as an ammonia refuelling point for the WA-East Asia iron ore shipping corridor itself, linking the green commodity trade ask directly to WA's existing bulk export trade.[53]

The window is time limited. The European Union's (EU) Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism begins charging importers for embedded carbon in traded iron, steel and fertilisers from 2026, and Japan and Korea are separately investing billions in their own hydrogen-based steelmaking, Korea's HyREX process among them, meaning WA is competing for the same offtake relationships against other suppliers and against buyers developing their own alternatives. Active trade facilitation now determines whether WA converts its pipeline into jobs before competitors do.

Photo: Big Sister Program

PART TWO:

Build the workforce to deliver them

None of this works without the right people to build a world-class green industrial economy. If WA gets this right, economic diversification will generate tens of thousands of secure, well-paid jobs, and new career paths for apprentices and trainees.

To meet the expected workforce demand and create strong employment outcomes for Western Australians, the following measures are required:

- Create a WA Government Clean Energy Jobs Plan 2050 to map workforce demand, training and job transition support, and the range of industry attraction needed.
- Establish new regional training hubs in the Pilbara, the Mid West and the South West.
- Establish a WA Renewable Jobs Advocate to advise on the future skills, opportunities and training pathways.
- Offer worker attraction and apprenticeship incentives to meet demand for key skills.
- Require large employers of trades to commit to apprentice targets, including sub-targets for under-represented groups.

The scale of the task

The most authoritative national baseline is Jobs and Skills Australia's capacity study, "The Clean Energy Generation: workforce needs for a net zero economy" (2023), commissioned by the Federal Government and built with the Clean Energy Council, unions, TAFE and industry. It projects 450,000 jobs nationally in clean energy construction by 2030, roughly one third of all job growth in Australia over that period, a shortfall of 72,500 electricians nationwide by 2030 if the 82% renewable electricity target is to be met and a clean energy workforce growing from 53,000 to 84,000 workers by 2050.

Close to 2 million builders and engineers will be needed nationally by 2050, a 40% increase on today, with the fastest-growing occupations including electricians, electronics trades workers, structural steel workers, construction managers and plumbers.[54] Half of Australia's electrical engineers are currently born overseas, reflecting a long-standing domestic training shortfall.[55]

WA does not have its own version of this modelling, and the gap shows at a company level:

- Fortescue alone expects to need around 1,800 electricians at the peak of its Pilbara decarbonisation program, equivalent to one in every 21 electricians currently working in Western Australia.
- Fortescue is transitioning more than 800 pieces of heavy mobile equipment and 3,000 light vehicles to electric power, alongside its renewable generation build, a scale of electrification with workforce implications well beyond the energy sector alone.[56]

Given that a single company's workforce needs already equal nearly 5% of WA's entire electrician workforce, commissioning state-specific modelling should be the first task of the Clean Energy Jobs Plan 2050. It should cover the SWIS build-out, Pilbara industrial electrification, and green commodity projects together.

Every one of these actions converts into a different type of job, on a different timeline, requiring different skills and training pathways.

Clean energy job opportunities for WA

JOB CATEGORY	NATURE OF WORK	DURATION
Construction (renewables build)	Civil works, transmission lines, panel and turbine installation, electrical connection	Temporary, 2 to 4 years per project
Operations and maintenance	Ongoing electrical, mechanical and technical roles	Long-term, ongoing, once assets are commissioned
Trades and apprenticeships	Electricians, battery-electric vehicle technicians, fitters, the pipeline feeding both construction and operations	Multi-year training, then career-length employment
Downstream manufacturing	Process operators, chemical and process engineers for green iron and ammonia	Long-term, plant-operating
First Nations equity, contracting and employment	Equity stakes, preferred contracting and, dedicated training pathways	Ongoing, plus construction and operations

Construction jobs are large but temporary. A genuine boom requires mobility and short-term housing rather than permanent infrastructure. Operational and downstream manufacturing jobs are smaller but secure and long-term, which is where sustained regional economic diversification comes from. Leveraging the potential of these projects to create the jobs and skills WA needs means ensuring that apprentices and trainees make up a meaningful proportion of the workforce, whenever feasible, both during the construction phases of the projects and throughout their operational lifespan.

Skills shortfall and training needs

Every jobs projection above depends on training capacity that does not currently exist at the scale required. National forecasts show a shortfall of 72,500 electricians by 2030. 42,000 will be required to deliver clean energy targets alone – or 18,000 new apprentice electricians needed to commence annually until 2030.

- The Powering Skills Organisation's 2024 Workforce Plan separately projects a shortfall of 17,400 energy sector workers nationally by 2030.[57]
- Free TAFE has driven an 80.6% increase in commencements in critical shortage areas, including electrical, since 2019: evidence that fee-free training settings work, though scale still lags demand.[58]
- In WA, a $300,000 State Government upgrade to North Metropolitan TAFE's Capstone testing facility at Balga (the mandatory final licensing assessment for all WA electricians, including skilled migrants) has nearly doubled assessment capacity, a useful but comparatively modest investment against the scale of demand described above.[59]
- Regional training gaps remain acute: Esperance's TAFE campus, built for $18 million in 2021, still offers no local electrical courses, forcing apprentices to travel almost 700km for training, highlighting the rationale for the plan's call for regional training hubs.[60]
- Fortescue's newly opened Power Up Training Centre, delivered in partnership with South Metropolitan TAFE (electrical apprenticeships) and North Metropolitan TAFE (battery-electric vehicle post-trade training), is a live model of employer-co-funded training capacity: the company has doubled its apprentice intake for two consecutive years and now trains 120 electrical apprentices.[61]

The skills pipeline is leaking

The shortfall numbers above assume the apprentices who start actually complete their training. The Powering Skills Organisation's Foundation for Energy project, a multi-stage study into literacy and numeracy readiness for energy careers, shows this assumption doesn't hold, and identifies a specific, addressable cause rather than a vague skills gap.

- One in three secondary students nationally fail to meet minimum literacy and numeracy benchmarks, and the mismatch is concentrated in numeracy specifically: many school pathways develop numeracy skills only slightly above Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) Level 3, while Certificate III in Electrotechnology, the qualification behind most apprentice electricians, requires ACSF Level 4 or higher.
- The consequence shows up directly in completion data: 85% of electrotechnology apprenticeship cancellations occur within the first two years of training (59% in Year 1, 26% in Year 2), coinciding with a sharp increase in numeracy demands late in Year 1 and early Year 2 of the qualification.
- Pathway and timing matter: apprentices who start after completing Year 12 have a 75% completion rate, the highest of any entry pathway, while among Year 10 and 11 leavers, apprentices employed by small businesses account for 60% of cancellations, pointing to an equity and support-access gap rather than a capability gap alone.
- The Powering Skills Organisation's own recommendations are actionable for WA's training hubs and apprenticeship measures: clearer subject selection guidance so students understand numeracy expectations before choosing energy pathways, early literacy and numeracy benchmarking at or before vocational education and training (VET) entry, bridging support embedded within defined pathways rather than offered as a standalone fix, and better sequencing of numeracy content within VET curricula so demand doesn't spike unmanageably in Year 1.[62]

This sharpens what this plan's training measures need to do beyond adding seats and facilities: the WA Renewable Jobs Advocate and regional training hubs proposed should build in early numeracy benchmarking and embedded bridging support as a standard feature of WA apprenticeship pathways, not an optional add-on, given the completion data shows this is where the pipeline is failing.

The pay and work conditions for apprentices and trainees are also critical for completion rates. Low rates of pay are a significant barrier to entering an apprenticeship or traineeship and to completing training. In turn, this makes it harder to address skills shortages and sustain a pipeline of skilled workers.

The Commonwealth Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System determined that low training wages are a significant reason why apprentices do not complete their training, as well as acting as an important barrier to entering an apprenticeship in the first place. The gap between training wages and entry-level wages creates a strong incentive to leave training for a higher-paid, lower-skilled job to gain short-term financial stability. Notably, the review reported that apprentices may be required to take a second job or do more overtime than they would prefer to cover their basic living costs.[63]

Where the pay and conditions for an apprentice are set through a union-negotiated enterprise agreement rather than relying on the minimum set under awards or the National Employment Standards, completion rates for apprenticeships are significantly higher. In addition, exploitation at work and unsafe work conditions undermine a worker's engagement in an apprenticeship or traineeship and have been directly linked to workers not continuing their apprenticeships. Strong, enforced standards are essential to improving completion rates.[64]

Further, the current shortage of trade training places and qualified trainers in Western Australia is limiting the state's ability to deliver a future workforce. In 2025, the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) surveyed electrical apprentices and found that 9% of apprentices surveyed were waiting over 12 months from the time of employment to accessing training. National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) members report similar waits to enrol their employees in training. These delays mean that apprentices begin work without critical safety training - with almost a quarter of apprentices who were delayed in starting training reporting that they had received electric shocks at work.

Photo: Big Sister Program

Opening the door to women and under-represented workers

Only 2% of electricians nationally are women. New pathways into these trades for under-represented groups are essential to meeting WA's climate and jobs targets, and a way to deliver secure, well-paid careers to people that have historically been excluded.[65] As one electrician who retrained through an all-female pre-apprenticeship program after years of insecure work put it:

"I started my working life working in hospitality wanting to follow in my mother's career, it wasn't the glamorous career choice I thought it was going to be and was mainly cleaning hotel rooms. After a couple of goes I moved into the retail sector working on checkouts in supermarkets and in the service deli. From there I went on to drive a lunch van until I went on maternity leave. When I came back into the workforce I moved into the early childcare sector until I had my second child. None of these jobs were a career for me and none of them lasted more than a couple of years.

In September 2009, I found myself needing to completely restart my life and after spending 2010 studying at TAFE I discovered an all-female electrical pre-apprenticeship program being offered. I had nothing to lose so signed up. From the first day of the course I was hooked, and every day just got better. I had found myself and my career. I started my electrical apprenticeship in 2012 and I haven't looked back. I went from not being able to pay bills, skipping meals to feed my kids and not being able to afford nappies to a career with promotions. I have continued to excel in my electrical career and never could have guessed where this opportunity could have taken me. The mental load of trying to find money for bills and food no longer exists. I couldn't be prouder of myself and the choices I have made and the opportunities that I have created for myself and my two boys."

– Female Electrician, Electrical Trades Union, 2026.

The 2026 Beyond the Boys' Club report by the UnionsWA Workplace Gender Equality project, which examined the lives of women in WA's construction, energy and transport industries, found that inflexibility around caring responsibilities, pay inequality, a lack of support for reproductive health needs, job insecurity, and gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment remain the main barriers for women in these industries.[66]

From skills shortage to higher prices

The skills shortage is not just a training problem. It threatens the price and investment case the rest of this plan is built on. The chain runs in four links, and WA policy needs to intervene at more than one of them.

1. **Competing demand is intensifying, not easing:** electricians are simultaneously being pulled toward renewable generation and transmission build-out, WA's own housing construction pipeline, and an emerging data centre construction sector. Data centres are a genuinely new and significant claim on the same trades, and the ETU has warned nationally that data centres risk "siphoning" skilled electricians away from "important national priorities like housing and energy transition" unless they are required to train their own workforce rather than draw down the existing one.[67]
2. **Skills shortages are already a named cause of project delay:** the Clean Energy Council has warned that skills shortages could cause "project delays and compromising the [Integrated System Plan's] optimal development path," and AEMO's own 2026 ISP attributes part of the two-year slippage in the national transmission construction peak (now pushed from 2028 to 2030) directly to workforce shortages compounding supply chain and planning constraints.[68]
3. **Delay converts directly into higher prices:** AEMO's 2026 ISP modelling of a slower, labour-and-supply-constrained "Constrained Delivery" pathway found that "overall costs would increase by even more than the assumed 30% increase in capital costs," because a grid that misses its renewable build schedule has no choice but to keep relying on ageing, more expensive gas and coal generation for longer. This is a NEM-wide (east-coast) finding, but the underlying mechanism, slower delivery of the cheapest new generation forces longer reliance on the most expensive existing generation, applies just as directly to the SWIS and broader WA renewable energy and transmission build out.[69]

This is the missing link in this plan's industrial electrification argument. Energy costs represent 30 to 40% of operating costs for energy-intensive WA manufacturers, and that this cost gap is a direct driver of investment and jobs moving offshore. If workforce shortages delay the SWIS and NWIS renewable and transmission build, WA industry faces exactly the higher-for-longer energy prices that make the state less attractive to new industrial investment, undermining the jobs and investment case. A Renewable Energy Target that cannot be delivered on schedule because a workforce bottleneck actively damages the price and investment certainty argument this plan uses to justify legislating it in the first place.

- The practical implication is that workforce delivery risk should be tracked as an energy price and investment risk, not filed separately under training policy. The WA Government Clean Energy Jobs Plan 2050 and the WA Renewable Jobs Advocate proposed in this plan should be explicitly tasked with monitoring the electrician and trades pipeline against the SWIS delivery schedule, and flagging to government when the workforce trajectory is at risk of slipping, in the same way AEMO now tracks workforce risk as a named input to its own delivery modelling.
- Any future WA framework for data centres, building on the Federal Government's 2026 Expectations of data centres and Standards for AI infrastructure developers, should include a requirement that large data centre developments train and certify a number of local apprentices proportional to the electricians they employ, so that WA's own energy transition and housing pipelines are not left short-staffed by a sector with the financial firepower to outbid them for the same trades.[70]

The WA Renewable Jobs Advocate should be tasked with identifying which large energy users can replicate the Fortescue co-funded training model, and regional training hub investment should be conditional on the actual courses in demand being delivered locally, not just on facility construction.

Photo: Donna Chapman

PART THREE:

Protect what the economy depends on

The shift to a renewable energy-powered WA economy has the potential to contribute to globally significant reductions in carbon pollution, but this cannot come at the cost of WA's fragile ecosystems. Emissions reduction targets must be implemented to align with national and global commitments, accompanied by clear planning and assessment processes to ensure minimal impacts on cultural and ecological values.

Why a strategic approach matters now

The WA Government is actively centralising renewable energy decision-making in the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC), through the State Development Act 2025 and a mandatory WAPC assessment pathway for renewable projects over $20 million under the draft Renewable Energy Planning Code. From October 2026, all projects above $20 million are now required to use the 11b pathway. Faster, more centralised decisions make the quality of the strategic map guiding them matter even more. Clear mapping indicating which areas proponents should avoid will make for a clearer and faster process, while also helping to build and maintain social licence for renewable energy projects. If the parameters are clear from the beginning, the sector can avoid unnecessary environmental impacts, avoid lengthy and costly community criticism, and build greater community trust for future project implementation.[71]

- Legislate a statewide net zero target, with five-yearly interim targets aligned to a 1.5°C pathway to incentivise renewable energy and green commodity investments.
- Take a strategic regional planning approach to renewable energy that identifies high biodiversity and cultural value areas and avoids them where possible, drawing on biodiversity and cultural heritage data compiled by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and other conservation agencies. The mechanism for this could be a State Planning Policy that embeds that data into the WAPC's own planning framework, so that when assessing Priority Projects and State Development Area declarations, the WAPC is applying its own zoning and land-use policy rather than making an independent judgement about biodiversity impact, which remains the EPA's role through the separate environmental approval process for each project.
- Recognise the importance of high-value biodiversity areas as an underpinning consideration for this plan and ensure appropriate steps are taken to protect high-value habitats.
- Ensure maintenance of high biodiversity standards around all major developments in WA. Maintaining social license requires that habitat protection be central to government planning.
- Fund and support renewable energy and biodiversity mapping tools, such as those being developed by the University of Melbourne, that give developers critical information about biodiversity risk and help to avoid environmental regulatory friction.
- Encourage any new large energy-using or large renewable energy projects to meet the highest biodiversity protection and management standards that are reasonably achievable for that proponent, given their scale, resources and project circumstances.

- Require any new data centres to be fully powered by new renewable energy.
- Ensure that any new large energy-using projects do not draw from or create impacts on freshwater or groundwater sources.

A legislated net zero target creates jobs

This mirrors the certainty argument this plan makes for the Renewable Energy Target in Part One: a legislated, economy-wide target gives investors a fixed point to underwrite projects against, across land use, agriculture and resources as well as electricity. Without it, WA carries the same investment risk premium described in Part One, with capital and jobs simply going to jurisdictions that have already legislated their targets.

Interim targets set out the pathway to net zero by 2050

In addition to a legislated net zero emissions by 2050 target, it is imperative that the WA Government sets ambitious, five-yearly interim targets to ensure the state's economy is on track to achieve its net zero commitment. This would also bring the state in-line with best practice target-setting arrangements as established by the Paris Agreement and in alignment with the Federal Government's Nationally Determined Contribution. Without ambitious interim targets, Western Australia risks delaying the essential emissions reduction which must occur in the immediate future to have any chance of achieving net zero.[72]

Strategic regional planning creates jobs

Part One shows what happens when projects proceed without a clear, upfront map to plan against: connection queues blow out, costs escalate late in the process, and the jobs those projects would create are delayed for years rather than months. A strategic map that tells proponents in advance where development can and cannot go removes exactly this kind of uncertainty, letting well-sited projects reach construction and start hiring faster, while avoiding the sunk cost and delay of poorly sited projects being redesigned or relocated partway through approval.

Funding biodiversity management creates jobs

This is not only an environmental ask, it is a jobs one. WA's own Aboriginal Ranger Program, run by the DBCA, is funded at $69.5 million for its 2026 to 2030 phase and directly employs Aboriginal rangers to manage Country, on top of the $83 million committed to its 2021 to 2026 phase. Nationally, the equivalent Indigenous Rangers Program is investing $1.3 billion to 2028 to double the ranger workforce from 1,900 to 3,800 by 2030, with a single recent funding round alone creating more than 900 new ranger jobs. Properly funding biodiversity management in WA is a direct way to grow this same category of real, ongoing regional employment, not just a cost of doing business.[73]

Why consistent, ambitious biodiversity standards for large projects matter

Holding every proponent to their highest achievable level, rather than the lowest common standard, matters for jobs as well as environmental outcomes. Delivering ambitious offset and rehabilitation commitments is itself an employment-generating activity, environmental scientists, offset site managers and monitoring technicians, and is frequently delivered in partnership with Aboriginal ranger organisations of exactly the kind described above, so a higher standard consistently applied means more of this work happening in WA, not less.[74]

New renewable energy for data centres creates jobs

The word "new" in this ask is deliberate and matters for jobs. Ireland's energy regulator now requires large data centres to meet at least 80% of their annual demand from additional renewable generation, brought onto the system specifically for them rather than existing green power redirected from other customers, demonstrated through a corporate power purchase agreement or directly developed assets. Without an equivalent

"new capacity" requirement, a data centre could simply absorb renewable electricity that would otherwise have gone to other WA businesses or households, creating no additional construction jobs at all, and worsening exactly the competition for skilled trades and connection capacity described in Part Two. Requiring genuinely new renewable capacity turns every data centre approval into a trigger for new construction employment, rather than a zero-sum reshuffling of the renewable power WA has already built.[75]

The Commonwealth has indicated that it will legislate nationally consistent requirements for large data centres to run on 100% renewables backed by firming, with draft legislation due by the end of 2026 and the bill before federal parliament in early 2027.[76] However, uncertainty followed the National Cabinet in August 2026 over the process to introduce these changes. A deal was struck that government-owned utilities can argue for fossil fuel generation where they can show it would deliver lower bills and better reliability than renewables. The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) will assess each case. The Federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen, said such a claim would need substantial evidence and would face intense scrutiny, and that the threshold will be set very high.

Queensland and the Northern Territory have both claimed the concession as a win, and concern remains about how firm the floor really is. The other six states and territories, including WA, supported the nationally consistent framework at the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council in July, and none has sought a carve-out since. On the face of it, the State Government supports the approach the Commonwealth originally set out. That still leaves a gap locally. The rule change pathway runs through the NEM, which does not cover the SWIS, so only the Commonwealth legislated standard reaches Western Australia. This plan asks that the state gives the national floor practical effect in the Wholesale Electricity Market (WEM) and sets its own requirements above it.

Protecting water resources creates jobs

This is a live and pressing issue in WA specifically, not a general precaution. The mining industry alone already accounts for close to half of WA's total water use, drawn overwhelmingly from groundwater and largely free of charge, and the Conservation Council of WA has warned that over-allocation has brought some Pilbara water systems under serious stress. Ensuring new large energy-using projects do not add to that pressure protects existing water-dependent industries, agriculture and communities from a resource already under strain. This ultimately points to the need for reform of the Water Act to properly protect WA's limited and precious water resources. Alongside such overdue reforms, there is also a role for desalination which, if planned appropriately with thorough environmental assessment and community involvement, can provide an alternative to further groundwater extraction and become a source of jobs and community benefit. A clear example of that is Rio Tinto's $395 million Dampier Seawater Desalination Plant, built specifically to reduce reliance on Pilbara groundwater, supporting around 300 jobs at peak construction and showing that protecting water resources can also create construction jobs. The project also gives the Yindjibarndi People ownership of the desalination plant for the ongoing economic benefit of their communities and the protection of their water sources.[77]

Photo: Donna Chapman

PART FOUR:

Share the benefits

Any plan to generate economic benefit must ensure those benefits are spread across the whole community and include those most affected by change. This plan includes the following measures as core components. First Nations communities, low-income households, and regional communities all need protection from the growing impacts of climate-driven extreme weather, and access to the benefits of renewable energy development. This requires the State to use both its role in the energy system to deliver equitable outcomes for low-income households, renters and marginalised communities, and its capacity to provide targeted investment and support that directly reduces their energy costs and improves their climate resilience. The costs of the transition, including network and transmission costs recovered through tariffs, should not fall disproportionately on the households least able to pay.

Community benefit measures

- Embed community benefit requirements and environmental protections for renewable energy and green commodity projects, including for First Nations groups.
- Provide incentives and support for households to convert to electric appliances.
- Legislate minimum rental energy efficiency requirements.
- Properly fund the Community Disaster Resilience Strategy and emergency services preparedness.
- Support projects that include First Nations groups in ownership structures and prioritise employment opportunities.

WA's community benefits guideline

Through PoweringWA, the state's energy transition delivery body, the WA Government released a draft Community Benefits Guideline[78] for Large-scale Renewable Energy Projects in March 2026, developed following consultations with local governments, industry and community groups, and a companion piece to the draft Renewable Energy Planning Code consulted on over the same period. A pilot is underway in the Wheatbelt, covering the Shires of Narrogin and West Arthur.

- The Guideline currently applies only to large-scale renewable generation and standalone battery storage projects over 10MW connecting to the SWIS, leaving smaller projects and green commodity developments outside its scope.
- It is currently voluntary guidance rather than a legislated requirement, noting the government may consider mandating the standards if required. It is vital that these schemes are built around a direct link between the specific proponent and the community hosting their project, keeping the benefit connected to the development that created it, rather than becoming a generic, disconnected fund.[79]
- This plan's ask is for the government to expand the remit of the Guideline to cover not only projects within the SWIS but also renewable energy projects across WA, and to ensure it is consistent and transparent, so every proponent maintains a clear, direct relationship with the community it operates alongside.[80]

Embedding community benefit requirements, including for First Nations groups

This ask is deliberately framed against the draft PoweringWA Guideline described above, not as a separate, disconnected idea. The Guideline sets out the kind of community benefit arrangements the government wants to see, contributions to local infrastructure, employment and supply chain participation, and engagement with Traditional Owners, but currently applies only to large-scale SWIS-connected renewable and battery energy storage system (BESS) projects over 10MW. This plan's ask is for WA to expand the Guideline's coverage to the full range of renewable energy and green commodity projects this plan covers, and to ensure proponents are consistently and transparently held to it in practice, keeping community benefit tied directly to the proponent responsible for it, rather than letting that connection weaken as the number of projects grows.[81]

Household electrification incentives

Gas cooktops release nitrogen dioxide and formaldehyde into the home, pollutants the National Asthma Council Australia links to airway inflammation and worsened asthma symptoms, while modern heat pumps and induction cooktops are both more efficient and healthier than the gas appliances they replace. WA already has a scheme here, and the ask is to broaden it, not invent it: the WA Residential Battery Scheme, live since 1 July 2025, offers rebates of up to $1,300 (Synergy) or $3,800 (Horizon Power) and no-interest loans of up to $10,000, repayable over 10 years, for income-eligible households. The gap is scope, not existence: the no-interest loan can only be used for a battery, or for solar panels and inverters installed at the same time as a battery; it cannot be used to fund a heat pump, induction cooktop or hot water system on its own, and the rebate is batteries-only. This plan's ask is for WA to extend the existing loan and rebate scheme to cover the full range of household electrification, not just battery and solar-with-battery purchases, so households electrifying without also buying a battery are not left without support.[82,83]

Household electrification is a practical, immediate way for the WA government to ease cost-of-living pressure. Rewiring Australia estimates it can save each household $3500 a year, and it also creates local work.[84] Analysis by Monash University estimates that over a 10-year period, the electrification of residential gas appliances could create approximately 1,661 full-time jobs for electricians and plumbers in Western Australia.[85]

Minimum rental energy efficiency requirements

WA is the outlier here. Victoria has had mandatory minimum standards for rental properties since 2021, a 2-star heating standard since 2023, and is phasing in expanded standards covering insulation, draughtproofing and hot water and cooling efficiency from March 2027, standards the Victorian Government estimates will save renters up to $454 a year from ceiling insulation alone, $220 a year from efficient hot water, and $215 a year from efficient heating and cooling. NSW amended its regulations in 2025 to require energy efficiency measures for new leases from July 2025, extending to existing properties by July 2027, and the ACT has had mandatory ceiling insulation standards since 2023. WA has none of this: its rental laws remain, in the words of one 2026 tenant law review, "less reformed than the eastern states." Renters are the group least able to invest in their own energy efficiency, since any upgrade benefits a landlord's asset rather than a tenant's equity, exactly the split-incentive problem this plan identifies in the commercial and industrial context in Part One. Legislating minimum standards is the direct residential equivalent of the commercial green lease framework called for there.[86]

Funding the Community Disaster Resilience Strategy

WA released its Community Disaster Resilience Strategy in December 2023, and the scale of the risk it responds to is not in question: in a single recent year, communities faced Tropical Cyclone Ilsa in the North West, Tropical Cyclone Lincoln affecting Halls Creek and Carnarvon, flooding across the Pilbara, Mid West and Goldfields, further flooding across the Goldfields, Southern Interior and Eucla, the Mariginiup bushfire in Perth's northern suburbs, and damaging storms in the South West. The state's own dedicated resilience grant funding remains modest: the 2025-26 All West Australians Reducing Emergencies (AWARE) local government grants allocated just $257,241 across 21 projects, and the National Disaster Risk Reduction grant round that accompanied the strategy's launch carried an allocation of only $1.5 million. Most of the meaningful funding WA does receive comes through the Commonwealth's Disaster Ready Fund on a co-contribution basis rather than as dedicated WA Government investment. This plan asks for government to resource its own strategy as core recurrent funding, not rely on Commonwealth matching rounds to do the work.[87]

It is also essential that the emergency services WA relies on to respond to climate disasters are properly funded and resourced. With climate disasters increasing in frequency and severity, it is crucial that fire, emergency, rescue and health workers have the resources, infrastructure, and, critically, the workforce that is required to meet this need. This must include investment to train and grow this workforce so that the skills and resources required to respond to growing climate-related risks are available when needed, and to provide the coordination and support that ensures it is ready for bushfires, floods, cyclones, and other emergencies.

First Nations ownership and employment

Part One sets out what this already looks like in the Pilbara, the Yindjibarndi Energy Corporation's equity partnership with ACEN and the Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation's proposed Green Energy Parks. The national picture shows both the opportunity and how far behind Australia still is: the First Nations Clean Energy Network now tracks more than 30 First Nations clean energy equity partnerships nationally, and analysis of projects where governments mandated ownership targets found they generated $1.5 billion in Indigenous employment and contracts. Australia lags behind countries like Canada, which has around 20% of its renewable energy projects with a strong element of Indigenous ownership and nearly 200 significant projects with Indigenous involvement either operating or in advanced planning, while equivalent Australian projects remain a much smaller fraction of the pipeline despite an estimated 43% of the country's future clean energy infrastructure being sited on First Nations land. This plan asks for WA to adopt binding minimum standards for First Nations equity and employment participation, following the Commonwealth's merit criteria model, rather than leaving outcomes to individual proponents' voluntary commitments.[88]

Conclusion

The opportunity in front of Western Australia won't wait. Other states and countries are already legislating targets, funding training and locking in investment to win the jobs this plan is preparing for. Every year Western Australia delays is another year that investment and industry go elsewhere.

WA has the resources, skills and industrial capacity to become a clean energy superpower. This plan's four priorities make that real: growing the industries of the future, training the workforce to build them, protecting the resources the state depends on, and sharing the benefits, so the investment stays here, not somewhere else.

The economics point the same way. As the world's trading partners decarbonise and move away from volatile oil and gas, they will be looking for partners who can guarantee an affordable and reliable supply of clean energy and green exports. WA has everything it needs to be one of them: sun, wind, minerals, ports and a skilled workforce. The only thing missing is the policy certainty government is yet to provide.

Give investors that certainty and the rest follows. Construction starts, apprentices train for long-term, stable careers, energy costs come down, and WA's export industries stay competitive for decades to come.

This plan is the starting point, built by nine organisations representing workers, industry, conservation and community. We're ready. It's time for the WA and federal governments to build with us.

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