

# Business warns Cook's 75pc green grid target leaves industry exposed

Tom Rabe WA Political correspondent Oct 27, 2026

Western Australia will rely on major new wind projects to underpin an ambitious green energy target for its main power grid, but business has warned that the plan will not reduce power prices enough to save manufacturing and minerals processing in the state.

The Cook Labor government on Tuesday announced a 75% renewable energy generation target for the South West Interconnected System by 2031, blaming the state's ageing coal-fired energy system for growing cost pressures hitting businesses.



## ***The WA government is banking on big wind projects to underpin a new green energy target***

The Western Australia government has for years championed the gas sector and railed against federal environmental protection policies that encroached on its massive resources sector. But it now insists a new green target is necessary to prevent a near doubling in energy prices by the early 2030s.

Energy Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson said that a handful of major new wind projects were expected to propel the grid's renewable energy production from 40% to 60% ahead of the first major state-owned coal-fired power plant closure in 2027.

The government will then bank on yet-to-be specified wind, solar and BESS projects to bridge the remaining 15% of green generation by 2031, although gas will continue to play a major role in firming the grid.

The announcement came almost six months after a Deloitte report had warned Western Australia was on track to [miss its 2050 net zero target](#) by decades. Sanderson said that government analysis, backed by **Boston Consulting Group**, suggested prices would increase by 89% by 2032 without immediate action.



***Amber-Jade Sanderson cited research that showed power prices would increase by 89% by 2032 without immediate action.***

“We have to make decisions on our energy systems based on facts, not feelings. The fact is that the factors that are causing energy rises or cost rises is coal,” she said. “It’s a credible pathway, and we know exactly which projects need to succeed when and where in order to meet that target. So it is ambitious, but it’s credible and achievable.”

The move by the Cook government to boost green energy production came two years after it [abandoned state-based policing](#) of GHG emissions, arguing that the Commonwealth was already assessing big polluting projects via the federal safeguard mechanism.

The state’s EPA is also currently assessing an application by energy infrastructure company **APA Group** to construct Western Australia’s largest gas-fired power station south of Perth.

The government predicted its move to boost renewable generation in the state’s south-west would hold energy prices for business at about \$200 a MWh over coming years. But the mining lobby warned that such a price trajectory would likely end Western Australia’s downstream processing ambitions.

**Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia** chief Aaron Morey said that the lobby group’s members said they needed energy prices at about \$100 /MWh to continue operating. He said that the government must consider energy subsidies for businesses, and watering down the green energy commitment if power prices climb faster than expected. “WA will struggle to attract new processing and manufacturing industries or keep the ones it already has. Industry understands the transition takes time and money. But some businesses can’t wait until 2032 for competitive power.”

WA governments have long touted the state’s minerals processing potential, though high energy costs are among a handful of factors that have curtailed the sector from flourishing.

US **Albemarle** shut down lithium processing facilities in the state’s south-west earlier this year, while BHP mothballed its nickel refining operations south of Perth in 2024.

As part of its new energy policy, the state government announced a \$150m program providing businesses low-interest loans of up to \$15m to install solar and battery systems.

Green groups welcomed the move to boost renewable generation on the west coast, but urged the government to put pressure on the big iron ore miners to improve their decarbonisation programs.

“This must now be matched by similarly ambitious accelerated action towards a renewable energy future in the Pilbara,” Climate Energy Finance director Tim Buckley said.

Sanderson had earlier this year [cautioned the big miners](#) against retreating further on their decarbonisation commitments in the Pilbara.

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