

## Energy crisis puts the wind up Jay Weatherill



Premier Jay Weatherill insists 'there hasn't been a blackout as a consequence of the increase in renewable energy'. Picture: Matt Loxton

Michael Owen, The Australian, 12:00AM March 21, 2017

South Australian Premier Jay Weatherill has lashed out over the state's energy crisis, claiming Labor's relentless pursuit of renewables had no impact on the power grid and independent advice to government in 2009 warning of destabilisation from increased wind power had been proven wrong.

Mr Weatherill, seeking re-election in a year, maintained South Australia's more than 40 per cent mix of wind and solar generation had not played any role in blackouts since the state's last coal-fired baseload power station closed in May. "There hasn't been a blackout as a consequence of the increase in renewable energy," he said. "Renewables are a given; they are the future. What is at error here is the absence of a national price on carbon."

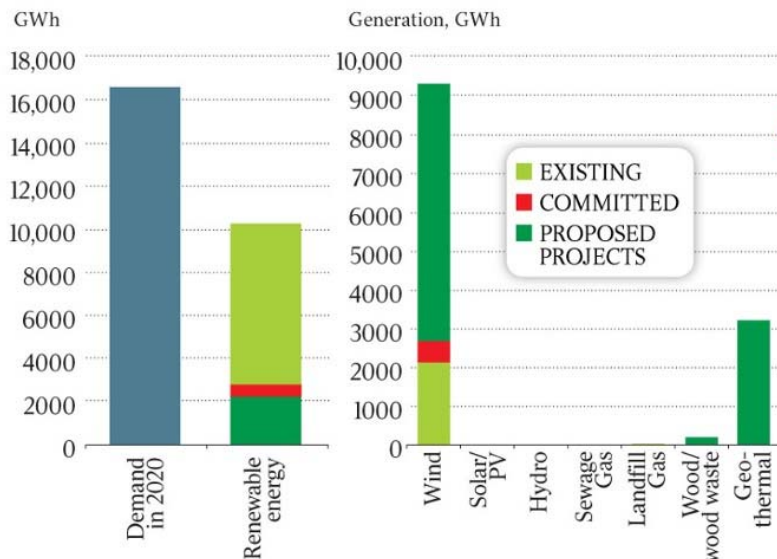
When challenged by journalists from both the ABC and The Australian yesterday about the veracity of his claims, given the role of wind farms in last year's statewide blackout, the Premier said, "I've just said it", before lashing out at The Australian. "I know that's inconvenient for The Australian and I know that they're wanting to continue their jihad against renewable energy but all of the evidence is to the contrary," the Premier said.

However, the Australian Energy Market Operator yesterday revealed it had recommended new wind farms in South Australia have tougher technical standards because of the state's unstable energy mix, which leaves the grid prone to collapse. AEMO's recommendation to an inquiry by the Essential Services Commission of SA into the licence conditions for wind farms states: "The high proportion of non-synchronous intermittent generation in South

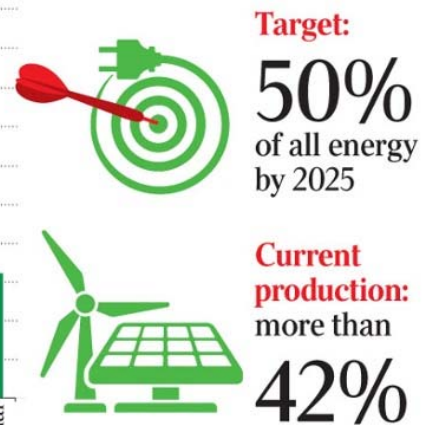
Australia justifies having additional or tighter technical standards than those that currently apply”.

## OF THE GRID

What the report showed about renewable energy capacity



South Australia's renewable energy



Source: McLennan Magasanik Associates

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AEMO found a failure of wind farms to ride through voltage disturbances contributed to a statewide blackout in South Australia in September.

Federal Energy Minister Josh Frydenberg yesterday said the South Australian government had ignored warnings eight years ago that increasing the uptake of intermittent sources of power beyond 20 per cent would have negative consequences. He said poor planning and a lack of back-up systems to deal with increased wind and solar generation created South Australia's power problems. Labor has been in office in South Australia since 2002.

Clear warnings were given to the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 2009 that the power grid could cope with only 20 per cent of wind generation before it became unstable. A report by McLennan Magasanik Associates said: "A level of 20 per cent wind capacity is proposed as a level that can be achieved without compromising grid stability." The 2009 report also suggested South Australia invest in "energy storage to maximise potential for its renewable energy resources", while noting "renewable energy generation has typically a higher cost of generation that conventional forms of generation".

A separate 2009 report from the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research said: "Limitations on wind power output to ensure South Australian grid stability is estimated to be associated with about a 20 per cent limit on wind capacity."