

# Australia Has Serious Problems With Green Energy Triggering Blackouts

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South Australia is still struggling to figure out how to keep green energy from triggering blackouts and crashing the electric grid, according to an article published by Inverse Tuesday.

The Australian state invested heavily in solar and wind power, but those power sources' inherent reliability issues place a massive strain on the state's power grid, [according to the article](#).

[Australia's Energy Council noted in early September](#) that increasing use of solar and wind power in the state “has not only led to a series of technical challenges” but “also increased wholesale price volatility as the state rebalances its supply from dispatchable plant to intermittent generation.” Roughly [25 percent of homes in South Australia](#) currently have solar panels installed, and the state gets 41 percent of its power from wind, solar and other green sources.

Officials concluded that [“violent fluctuations” in the supply of wind power](#) caused a blackout affecting 1.7 million people in South Australia later that September. Australian Energy Market Operator, the country's utility, [blamed the blackout](#) on a wind farm in Snowtown, which suddenly stopped providing 200 megawatts of power, causing the state power grid to become extremely unstable.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull blamed South Australia's state government for putting too much emphasis on generating electricity from wind farms, placing the country's power grid and energy security at risk by “distorting the

national energy market.”

“This has been very much a Labor obsession, to set these heroic renewable energy targets,” [Turnbull told a radio station in October](#). “They assume that they can change the composition of the energy mix and that energy security will always be there and the lights will stay on, and that has been brought into question.”

This instability likely caused other Australian power grids to shut off their links to South Australia, causing the state’s power grid to collapse entirely. This made the entire state look a lot like [North Korea](#).

South Australia’s head of government, a member of the progressive Labor party, blamed the massive blackout on the weather. However, the state has [experienced a green energy-caused power crisis since July](#), when its last reliable coal power plants were shuttered in favor of wind. Hugh Saddler, a professor of climate economics at Australian National University, warned that South Australia’s green energy policy [would lead to blackouts due to a lack of reliable base-load coal or natural gas powers](#).

Independent experts believe that the ability of an electrical grid to absorb unreliable green energy [becomes increasingly more difficult at scale](#). South Australia’s reliance on wind power makes blackouts more likely because the amount of electricity generated by a wind turbine is very intermittent and [doesn’t coincide with the times of day when power is most needed](#). This poses an enormous safety challenge to grid operators and [makes power grids more fragile](#).

The power crisis in South Australia has caused the price of electricity to spike to 200 cents per kilowatt-hour of power. The average Australian currently pays about 25 cents per kilowatt-hour of electricity, [according to research by the country’s parliament](#). To put that in some perspective, the average

American [only spends 10.4 cents](#) per kilowatt-hour of power, roughly half the cost. Major businesses in South Australia have already threatened to suspend operations entirely until the price of power comes down.

Household electricity prices in Australia have risen by more than 40 percent between 2007 and 2012, the same period when the government offered lucrative wind subsidies. Power prices in Australian states with a lot of wind power are almost double the rates in other states.

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