

# Factsheet – Gladstone needs Renewable Energy NOW

Vs 2– 12 Dec 2020

## Introduction

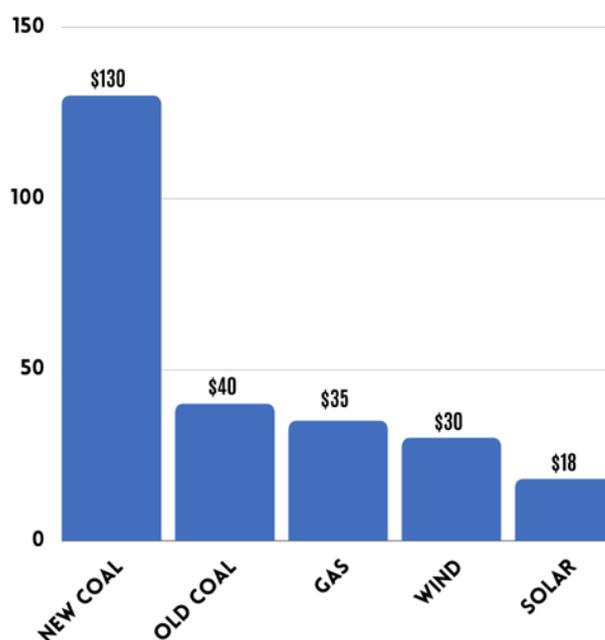


The high cost of power from fossil fuels is making major industries in Gladstone uncompetitive on the world's markets. We may lose those jobs if we don't act soon. They need to be made secure by a fast transition to Renewable Energy<sup>1</sup>. Yet leading politicians keep on promoting coal, oil and gas and ridiculing Renewables. These huge and well-heeled vested interests naturally support them in every way possible.<sup>2</sup>



This Factsheet lists some of the economic reasons why they are dangerously wrong.

**Table 1: Cost per Megawatt/hour in 2020 (\$AU).<sup>1, 3</sup>**  
**The costs for wind and solar are from recent prices as quoted for large projects.**



## The latest developments in Renewable Energy<sup>1, 3</sup>

- Solar and wind are now the cheapest forms of electricity and are getting cheaper still.
- Combinations of solar, wind and storage are proving more reliable in providing 24 hr supplies than coal-fired stations, which suffer more breakdowns as they get older.
- Batteries are much faster than gas to react to sudden interruptions in supply and have no cost while standing by. Gas turbines have to be kept running at 30% capacity.
- Combinations of solar, wind, and batteries can be used at any scale, from households to gigantic projects. Pumped Hydro is a large-scale back-up.
- Australia has some of the best solar and wind conditions in the world.
- Australia has plenty of space for world-scale projects.
- Australia has all the rare minerals needed to make batteries and other equipment for Renewable Energy.

<sup>1</sup> Based on a report by Clark Butler, Institute for Energy Economics and Finance, [https://ieefa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Aluminium-Led-Energy-Renewal-for-Central-Queensland\\_September-2020-.pdf](https://ieefa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Aluminium-Led-Energy-Renewal-for-Central-Queensland_September-2020-.pdf), page 3.

<sup>2</sup> <https://reneweconomy.com.au/canavan-leads-caravan-for-coal-urging-nationals-to-bury-future-in-fossil-fuels-22525/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://reneweconomy.com.au> Various articles.

## **Financial forces supporting Renewable Energy**

- Financial institutions such as insurance companies, pension funds and investment companies naturally avoid lending to industries with declining markets.
- Finance for coal is already very hard to obtain. Funding gas is getting more difficult.
- Finance for new large renewable projects is regularly oversubscribed 4 or 5 times.
- Growing demand from many countries for 'Green Products', such as green aluminium, steel and cement, has already led to international trade centres for these products.

## **Benefits from low-cost electricity from Renewable Energy**

- Low-cost electricity will allow Australia to process and add value to its abundant mineral and agricultural assets.
- This will allow combining high technology with good wages, similar to Germany.
- Regional areas, remote farms and mines are starting to produce their own local power, thus saving cost and reducing risk of outages due to storm-damage to lines.
- Renewables are job-rich and attract new industries, thus creating more jobs.
- Larger regional centres such as Gladstone can become internationally competitive power houses, provided we act soon. Overseas competition does not wait for us.
- Smaller regional centres can start local services and enterprises such processing and specialised manufacturing, provided they have good Internet connections.

## **Who is investing in Renewable Energy? <sup>3</sup>**

- Households. Australia has one of the world's highest uptakes of roof top solar.
- Businesses, from small to very large. They are investing in roof top solar and batteries to improve their security of supply and gain additional income from their buildings.
- All State and Territory governments are now committed to Renewable Energy.
- The governments of all major OECD countries are now committed to Renewable Energy. Europe, Japan, India, China, the USA have in the last few months set policies that spell the end of thermal coal.
- Australia's main renewable competitors such as Middle Eastern countries have similar good conditions for solar, wind and space. They are racing ahead while we do too little.

## **Who are the beneficiaries from fossil fuel that oppose a fast transition?**

- The fossil-fuel companies themselves, trying to extend their productive lives.
- The Federal Government, to protect votes and big donations to campaign funds.
- Some unions, which fear the loss of jobs for their members.
- Some media, which sell more papers when reporting on conflicts and strife.

## **Conclusion**

The politicians and vested interests are putting the future of Gladstone at risk. By favouring declining industries and ignoring the fast developments in Renewable Energy they are sacrificing jobs in Gladstone and throughout Regional Australia.

Ironically, they refuse to see that they also put the future of the people working in the thermal coal industry at risk. Cobb & Co<sup>4</sup> got out of horses because something better came along that the market preferred. Thermal coal is now at that point. We need to start preparing new jobs for its workers and start doing that now.

Gladstone doesn't need people blocking those new jobs just to protect their own interests. What we need is keeping the jobs we have. And we need all decision makers to support new industries, new opportunities and new jobs with prospects of new prosperity.

For a 2-page summary of Clark Butler's report see Factsheet 'Gladstone's Future – Jobs based on Renewable Energy' at <https://www.repowergladstone.com.au/factsheets/>

For a wider context by Clarke Butler see <sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>4</sup> Stagecoach, mail and transport companies from 1853 to 1924. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cobb\\_%26\\_Co](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cobb_%26_Co)