



South Australian black out not the result of renewable energy



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No transmission? No power

The extreme, once-in-a-lifetime weather event in South Australia on 28 September caused unprecedented damage to businesses and households, including extensive damage to the State's vital electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure operated by ElectraNet and South Australian Power Networks, resulting in a State-wide blackout from 3PM to 8PM.

ElectraNet reported this morning that the cause of the blackout was due to gale-force winds damaging 3 of the 4 transmission lines moving power between Adelaide and the north of South Australia as well as damage to 23 towers across the network.

The damage to transmission infrastructure resulted in a frequency surge across the network, which triggered SA's isolation from the National Electricity Market. This meant that SA could not draw upon electricity generated in other states in the NEM, including NSW and VIC.

ElectraNet's transmission network supplies bulk high-voltage electricity to SA Power Network's distribution network.

A number of sources, including Nick Xenophon and Barnaby Joyce are reporting that the blackout was a result of South Australia's mix of renewable energy, however this is categorically untrue.

While Xenophon's assertion in the Sydney Morning Herald that wind turbines are feathered and cannot generate energy during such winds is true, it is not the cause for the blackouts.

The simple fact is that no energy, irrespective of its source, can be supplied to customers when transmission and distribution infrastructure, which transports that energy, is unavailable.

Bottom line

What is vitally important to remember over the coming weeks and months as the hyperbole surrounding this event undoubtedly continues, is that a responsible, portfolio approach to energy supply must be taken to support a transition away from primary reliance on fossil fuel energy generation.

This event also highlights the challenges faced by future networks, the role of distributed generation and energy storage and most importantly, the role of legislation and regulation to support this inevitable transition.

About Climate Capital

Climate Capital is a renewable energy generation developer specialising in solar, wind and energy storage, with as much as 500MW of projects currently under development on its own account in Australia.

Climate Capital delivers renewable energy solutions lead by its team of developers, who combined have originated and delivered over 1GW of projects across Australia, and leverage the experience, capability and networks of its domestic and international commercial partners.

Sources:

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