

# State owned water utility to build new wind farm to provide power for desalination

[Sophie Vorrath \(https://reneweconomy.com.au/author/sophie-vorrath/\)](https://reneweconomy.com.au/author/sophie-vorrath/)


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Image: Water Corporation


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Western Australia's state-owned water utility is set to build one of the state's biggest wind projects, to date, after securing the development rights for the Flat Rocks Wind Farm Stage 2 from Moonies Hill Energy.

The 100MW project, which has the potential for a capacity upgrade to more than 150MW, will be used to green up the Water Corporation's power supply, as one of the highest electricity consumers on Western Australia's main grid.

In particular, the wind farm will be used to help power Perth's two existing desalination plants and the proposed Alkimos Seawater Desalination Plant, as demand for drinking water from this energy intensive source increases in the face of climate change.

Water Corporation says that the wind farm's up to 24, 200m high turbines are expected to generate a quarter of the total renewable energy it needs to achieve its target of net zero emissions across all its operations by 2035.

For WA's government, Flat Rocks Wind Farm Stage 2 marks part of its \$3.8 billion investment in green power infrastructure to decarbonise the SWIS (South West Interconnected System) and secure electricity supply.

The McGowan government has pledged to slash its own greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent below 2020 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050.

For the Water Corporation's part in this plan, it aims to secure up to 400MW of additional wind power, to add to the 65MW of wind and solar it is already sourcing.

The utility has also installed 5,400 on-site solar panels, is using electric and hybrid passenger vehicles in its fleet, and captures and uses biogas to power wastewater treatment processes.

"WA has led the world in securing public drinking water despite climate change dramatically reducing the amount of streamflow into Perth's dams," said WA water minister Dave Kelly.

"Today's announcement is a significant step towards our goal for every drop of water used in homes, businesses and communities across WA being supplied using renewable energy.

"That includes powering our existing desalination plants and a future plant proposed in Alkimos, with renewable energy," Kelly said.

The sale of the Flat Rocks Wind Farm Stage 2 to the Water Corporation follows [the sale of the Stage 1 project to Enel Green Power \(https://reneweconomy.com.au/italian-energy-giant-to-build-first-wind-farm-in-australia-to-supply-bhp-nickel-smelter/\)](https://reneweconomy.com.au/italian-energy-giant-to-build-first-wind-farm-in-australia-to-supply-bhp-nickel-smelter/), the renewables subsidiary of Italian energy giant Enel Group.

Enel, in April, announced it was going ahead with the 76MW Flat Rocks Wind Farm Stage 1 – its first in Australia – off the back of a 12-year deal with BHP to help take the miner’s WA nickel operations to 100% renewables.


Both Flat Rocks projects were initially developed by local landowners who formed a group called Moonies Hill Energy, that began planning in 2007 and brought in Enel Green Power in 2016, giving it the option to buy the first stage.

At the time of the deal with Enel, Moonies Hill Energy managing director Sarah Rankin said she was confident about the prospects for the Stage 2 project, due to the site’s “excellent wind resource.”

Rankin says the two wind farms provide a strong coincidence to peak demand, and offer a complementary profile to expanding solar generation in the WA energy market.

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Sophie is editor of [One Step Off The Grid](https://onestepoffthegrid.com.au/) (<https://onestepoffthegrid.com.au/>) and deputy editor of its sister site, [Renew Economy](https://reneweconomy.wpengine.com/) (<https://reneweconomy.wpengine.com/>). Sophie has been writing about clean energy for more than a decade.

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