

26 May 2026

Good news and bad news in energy announcements

Business Hunter has welcomed news that default electricity prices in New South Wales are set to fall from July 2026, while expressing concern about a reported slowdown in investment in renewable energy projects.

The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) confirmed today that electricity prices in New South Wales are set to fall from July 2026 by between 3.4 per cent and 20.9 per cent for households and small businesses on standing offer electricity plans. However, the announcement was tempered by the release of a Clean Energy Council report showing a slump in the rate of investment in renewable energy projects.

The *Clean Energy Australia 2026 Report* finds energy generation from renewables continues to climb and accounts for an increasing amount of Australia's electricity supply, but also reports that financial commitments for new generation fell 46 per cent in 2025.

"The increasing share of renewable energy in Australia's power mix is a positive step forward and demonstrates progress toward a cleaner energy system," Mr Hawes said.

"However, the reported slowdown in new investment is deeply concerning. Without sustained and confident investment, we risk delays in bringing new renewable generation online, which ultimately threatens reliability, affordability and our ability to meet Net Zero targets."

Business Hunter noted that the Clean Energy Council identified several key barriers to investment, including regulatory uncertainty, project approval delays, grid connection challenges and policy inconsistency.

"These issues are creating hesitation among investors at a critical point in the energy transition and must be addressed as a priority," Mr Hawes said.

"Investor confidence is essential to ensuring that projects move from planning to delivery. Streamlining approvals, improving grid infrastructure and delivering clear, stable policy signals is key to unlocking the investment pipeline needed to support Australia's energy transformation."

Mr Hawes said the current situation highlighted the need for a balanced and coordinated approach that delivers immediate cost relief while also ensuring long-term energy security and sustainability.

"Today's announcements highlight both the opportunity and the challenge ahead," he said.

"Lower power prices will provide welcome relief to businesses right now, but maintaining that trajectory depends on getting the policy and investment settings right for the future."

"We commend the AER for delivering price relief and commend the progress in renewable generation – but urgent action is needed to remove barriers to investment and ensure Australia stays on track to deliver the energy system businesses and communities need."

Mr Hawes said this week's Hunter New Energy Symposium would provide a good platform for further discussion on renewable energy issues and opportunities.

Media enquiries: Bob Hawes 0418 496 745