

SA-NSW Interconnector — a 'new super highway between two states' — promises to open up export markets

ABC Riverland / By Anita Ward

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The SA-NSW interconnector will open renewable energy export opportunities. *(Supplied: ElectraNet)*

On days where the sun is shining and the wind is blowing, South Australia produces more than enough renewable energy to meet the state's demand.

But with only two interconnector electricity transmission lines that link SA to Victoria's energy grid, SA is constrained by where it can export energy to.

This includes its excess renewable energy, which is limited beyond the Victorian market.

Now, a large-scale interconnector to link SA to New South Wales is under construction, with the aim of having power flowing between the first leg of the

Key points:

- A new interconnector is being built between SA and NSW
- A regional electrical contractor says it will help export renewable power
- Around 70 per cent of SA's energy was generated by renewable sources in the last financial year

line, from Robertstown in SA's Mid North region, to Buronga, on the NSW side of the border with Victoria, by the end of 2023.

"It will allow a lot more of the generation assets, and especially SA's renewable generation assets to be exported to other states like NSW in the national electricity market," regional electrical contractor Mark Yates said.

"It's like opening up a new super highway between the two states."



Mark Yates says securing Australia's energy market will require more interconnectors to be built. *(Supplied: Mark Yates)*

Known as [Project EnergyConnect](#), the 900km high-voltage transmission line will link its next leg, from Buronga to Wagga Wagga in 2024, with a total line capacity of 800 megawatts — equivalent to powering an additional 240,000 households.

ElectraNet is responsible for managing the SA side of the interconnector and chief executive Simon Emms says there is already large demand for transferring power, particularly at a time when the nation is experiencing a [fluctuating energy market](#).

"It will allow a greater flow of energy from the generators to where it's needed and many people want to connect in from SA already," Mr Emms said.

"A lot of it depends on the second part of the line being built to actually exploit the full capacity of the interconnector."

Opportunity for regional renewables



Mr Yates says new renewable energy developments are likely to be built along the SA-NSW interconnector route. *(ABC News: Michael Franchi)*

Mr Yates, the managing director of YES Group SA, based in the Riverland region, says the interconnector will create new opportunities for renewable developments in regional areas.

"I think a lot of larger projects will start to follow the backbone of the new interconnector as it moves from SA to NSW," he said.

"It will also assist in streamlining some of these projects that have been talked about in the past but were put on hold until the transmission risk had been addressed."



The first leg of the interconnector will be powered up by the end of 2023, with the last leg set to link up in 2024. *(Supplied: ElectraNet)*

Mr Yates, an attendee at this week's SA Energy summit, says there is a need for more interconnectors across Australia to stabilise the nation's power supply.

He says conversations are happening between transmission network service providers in states like Queensland, NSW and Victoria, but [projects like this are complex](#) and take time to get off the ground.

"Transmission and interconnectivity between all states is a key enabler to unlock the real value of renewables and other forms of generation,"
Mr Yates said.

"The more connectivity we have between each state, the more reliable our power source will become and the more opportunities that will open, especially across regional Australia."

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