Premier Dan Andrews is copying South Australia's energy policy. The Premier aims to lift wind and solar's share of the state's electricity supply from its current 8 per cent to 40 per cent.

Wind is unreliable and, in Australia costs three times as much as coal; solar is even more expensive.

Wind and solar facilities receive a subsidy whenever they run. This has forced unsubsidised coal power stations to close causing prices to double and reliability to deteriorate.

Few expected this catastrophe. The nation’s abundant low cost energy resources should, of themselves, been an antidote to political idiocy.

In the decade prior to the year 2000, throughout Australia electricity supply was commercialised and partially privatised and became just about the cheapest in the world.

The first two decades of the twenty first century saw a transformation - Australia’s electricity supply become among the world’s most expensive.

The 1990-2000 reform era’s lower electricity prices stemmed from a massive shedding of surplus labour. In Victoria, modernisation beginning with the ALP Kirner Government, slashed the numbers employed in generation to under one sixth of those in 1990. At the same time operational improvements increased plant availability from around 70 per cent to over 90 per cent.

Other sectors of the industry and other states also showed impressive productivity improvements. In those days getting more output using fewer workers was recognised as providing economic benefits.

Nowadays, bereft of any economic expertise, Mr Andrews favours creating more jobs to produce less output.

In fact, jobs created in constructing and maintaining high cost renewables are more than offset by the lost jobs from the resulting higher taxes and energy costs that drag down overall living standards.

The seeds to the deterioration of the Australian electricity industry were being planted even as it achieved leadership in global efficiency. In the 1990s energy ministers' predispositions towards imposing harmful costs onto the industry were tempered by core advisers who, as energy experts, were able to demonstrate the damage this would cause. Gradually those experts were replaced by environmentalists who fed interventionary measures to receptive politicians.

Compounding the problem, Premiers and Prime Ministers became more actively involved. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Commonwealth where Energy Minister Frydenberg is supervised by a Cabinet Committee chaired by the Prime Minister. Mr Turnbull is himself a green advocate who, on assuming office, appointed Martin Parkinson, former head of the ALP’s Climate Change Department, as his Departmental head.

Like Premier Andrews, Mr Turnbull’s solution to the power price crisis is to double down on the subsidised renewable energy programs that created the tragedy. He is promoting more wind and similarly costly measures including the Snowy Hydro $2.2 billion pump storage, a measure that itself uses up 20 per cent of the Snowy’s potential output. Mr Turnbull shares the Dan Andrews view that bad investments actually create jobs!

This week the PM again met with major energy retailers to jawbone them into reducing their prices.

But the high prices are created by wind subsidy policies and can only be lowered by abandoning the renewable program. Yet the PM says there are “no plans” for coal, the lowest cost technology. Unless he swallows his ideological antipathy to commercially generated electricity the energy crisis will intensify.