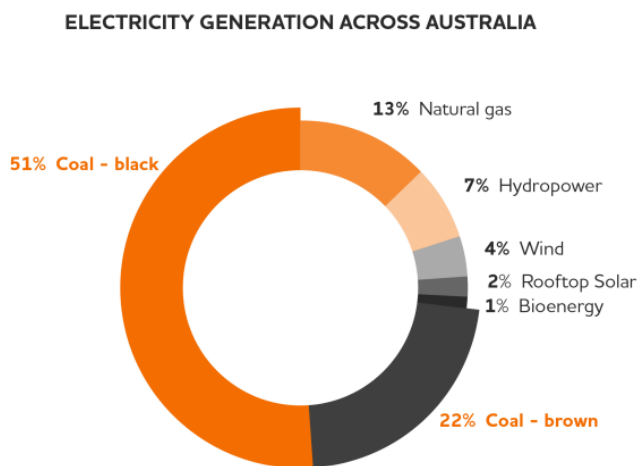


# Coal in Australia

Source <https://www.originenergy.com.au/blog/about-energy/coal-in-australia.html> (15/7.2018)  
2 March 2015

Did you know that Australia is the world's fourth largest coal producer?<sup>1</sup>



Right now, coal is Australia's primary fuel source for generating electricity at around 73 percent. Of this, black coal is used to generate around half of all our electricity (51 percent), while Victoria mainly uses brown coal (22 percent) because it's mined in the state.<sup>2</sup>

Black coal is found across Australia. It gets its name from its colour and it has higher energy and lower moisture content than brown coal.<sup>3</sup> The majority of Australia's black coal resources are located in Queensland and New South Wales in the Bowen, Surat and Sydney basins.<sup>4</sup>

Electricity generation across Australia<sup>5</sup>

Brown coal, sometimes called lignite, is a relatively soft material, which has a heating value of about one-quarter of black coal. It has much lower organic carbon content, higher moisture content, and is of lower quality than black coal.

Take a look at how the percentage of Australia's coal-powered electricity generation compares with the rest of the world:<sup>6</sup>

Mongolia	98%	Israel	59%
South Africa	94%	Indonesia	44%
Poland	86%	USA	43%
China	81%	Germany	43%
Australia	69%	United Kingdom	29%
India	68%	Japan	27%

## Australia is a major coal exporter

Coal is Australia's second largest export commodity, accounting for about 13 percent of Australia's total exports in 2012-2013 and worth about \$38 billion.<sup>7</sup>

## Coal and climate change

Burning coal to generate electricity produces greenhouse gases, which cause climate change. Brown coal is not as efficient at burning as black coal (because of its high moisture and low carbon content) and therefore it produces up to 30 percent more greenhouse gas emissions than black coal when used to generate electricity.

While coal remains one of the cheapest sources of electricity in Australia, and across the world, there's a global movement towards a greater use of [natural gas](#) and [renewable energy](#) as communities realise the impacts of climate change.<sup>8</sup>