



## **RAW Energy update – January 2019**

### **A message from the President**

Happy New Year!! We hope all had a lovely festive season.

### **Membership**

We held our general meeting in early December and it was well attended by many of the community with a thirst for knowing more. This year we want to expand our reach within the community and increase our membership. If you are interested in participating or have great ideas as to how we might do this, we would love to hear from you.

### **Committee and AGM**

2018 saw a couple of committee members move on. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Guy Rowson and Tas Davies for their time, support and input which was greatly appreciated. We will be sending a message in February with a date for our AGM in April. All members are welcome to attend in order to nominate office bearers and committee members. We have space for ten and have a couple of vacancies available. Again, if this is of interest please make contact.

### **Victorian Renewable Communities Program**

It was with great excitement and I must admit surprise that I can advise that RAW has been successful in obtaining funding via the Victorian Renewable Communities Program, announced towards the end of 2018. Ours is one of only nine projects to be selected. Further details of the North East Solar Benefits Program below.

### **Elections**

The Victorian Election saw the introduction of new renewable energy rebates with more coming later this year. We stay on high alert to see what may come out of the NSW and Federal Elections. Just prior to Christmas we received a message from the NSW Energy Minister's office requesting a meeting with RAW. It's most encouraging to note that we are being invited to meet with people such as Minister Don Harwin. He was able to shed some light on restraints within the NSW network for solar farms but was also alluded to some promising announcements pre-election. After four years we feel that RAW has established itself as a key organisation within the community.

## North East Solar Benefits program

The Victorian Renewable Communities Program (RCP) has provided grant funding to support the delivery of implementation-ready community-led renewable energy projects. The Victorian Government announced \$1.139 million to successful grant recipients on 18 December 2018. Funding has been awarded to projects that:

- increase the uptake of renewable energy generation;
- consider energy justice and social benefit;
- promote community participation; and
- reduce greenhouse emissions.

RAW Energy is partnering with Beyond Housing on this project. \$54,256 will provide for the installation of micro-grid enabled solar energy systems on Beyond Housing (social housing) homes for residents at risk of homelessness. The crux of the project will be installing a 4kW solar system on 10 houses. The system will include an UBI where the residents will have full visuals of their energy usage and the production of the solar systems. These installations will address energy poverty, providing residents with constant and affordable electricity supply. The project will also assist residents with the development of an energy efficiency plan.

This is an exciting project and sits parallel with our Wodonga Community Solar Project that targets those in the community that are at great risk of being left behind. Beyond Housing have 700-900 homes and, if this project is successful, this will hopefully be an inspiration to expand and roll out into their broader network.

This funding was applied for by Ben McGowan not long after starting his role with RAW so a massive thank you and congratulations, Ben, on the success of your application. We would also like to thank Robyn Nicholas for her valuable input in the application.

Watch Bobbi and Ben speak about the project on Prime News:

[https://m.facebook.com/story/graphql\\_permalink/?](https://m.facebook.com/story/graphql_permalink/)

## Wodonga Community Solar Project (WCSP)

RAW Energy and Wodonga Council have begun to implement the Wodonga Community Solar Project (WCSP) business plan. The plan was prepared by the Moreland Energy Foundation (MEFL), as a part of a DELWP grant awarded in 2016. The current implementation phase of the Project is funded through a Climate Change Innovation Grant awarded by DELWP in 2018.

### Progress to date

Ben McGowan is now employed as the WCSP Project Officer with Cam Klose supporting with media, communications and engagement. Both have significant experience working in the community energy sector. A WCSP Project Control Group has been established to oversee the project, which

includes members from RAW and the Wodonga Council. A WCSP reference group has been established with members from the electricity industry, and the local social service provider sector. The first meeting of the Reference Group was held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Meetings will be held bi-annually.

A WCSP Pathways Report has been prepared that outlines a plan to secure a community energy project for community investment. The project officer will analyse five options for community return from local solar development:

- a. Community developed solar farm
- b. Co-developed solar farm
- c. Behind the meter solar farm
- d. Small scale behind the meter installations
- e. Developer direct community payment

Analysis has begun on each of the five pathways, with the Project Control Group to make a decision on the preferred option in the first quarter of 2019.

## **Thurgoona Solar and Battery Information sessions**

Following on from the successful 2017 Community Renewable Energy Forum, Michelle Wilkinson and Katrina Passey from RAW Energy partnered with the Thurgoona Community Action Group (TCAG) and Mondo Power to bring the Thurgoona community a solar power and battery offer.

Two sessions were held on the 7<sup>th</sup> November, one in the afternoon and one at night, and a total of 70 people attended. So far there have been around 20 enquiries, resulting in 12 site inspections. Further publicity with regard to the Mondo Power offer is planned and the offer will be available up until March next year. Members of RAW and the TCAG are encouraging people to spread the word about this ongoing offer. Anyone who is interested can contact Mondo Power direct on [mcj@mondopower.com.au](mailto:mcj@mondopower.com.au)

## **Green Energy video**

This video was produced by Simon Duncan who is a RAW committee member. Bobbi, Michelle and Jenny reflect on the RAW Energy journey during the past four years. Thanks Simon!

<https://vimeo.com/303763752>

## **Other news**

### **New Victorian Rebates**

There are two new Victorian Government rebates available which were announced in August. One is for new solar power up to \$2225 and the other is \$1000 for solar hot water or a heat pump. For more information head to <https://www.solar.vic.gov.au/Apply-for-a-rebate>

The Labor Government's election promise made mention of another two rebates to be launched mid-year. One will be for batteries but may be targeted to specific areas. The second will be for tenants and landlords. This is great news as we have been lobbying for a long time for a solution for renters. Hopefully this will be it but we will have to wait for further details to be released.

### **Yackandandah Public Virtual Power Plant**

Totally Renewable Yackandandah was also successful in receiving funding through the Renewable Communities Program. TRY will install solar PV and battery systems on community buildings in and around the township of Yackandandah. This will provide low cost, behind the meter, electricity to the mostly volunteer groups housed in the buildings, helping to cut costs, reduce emissions and join the whole of town 100 per cent renewable energy target

Go to this link and click on Renewable Communities Program for all the successful projects:

<https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/renewable-energy/community-energy>

### **Work starts on solar array - AlburyCity**

<https://www.alburycity.nsw.gov.au/news/2018/november/work-starts-on-solar-array>

And here is more on these interesting developments at Albury's landfill site in this Prime 7 video:

<https://www.prime7.com.au/news/4951-solar-tip>

### **Solar panels at pension prices sees regional city taking energy into its own hands**

Low-income residents of a regional South Australian city are using an innovative solar scheme to shave money off their power bills. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-12-07/solar-panels-pension-prices/10590772?f>

## **Useful links for up-to-date information**

**Renew Economy - news and analysis for the clean energy economy**

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/>

**Eco-generation - the voice for Australia's clean energy industry**

[www.ecogeneration.com.au](http://www.ecogeneration.com.au)

## Membership

Our small membership fee supports volunteer work to promote renewable energy in our community. Becoming a member formalises your support for renewable energy projects locally and connects you with volunteers working to achieve our goals. Any community member can join Renewable Albury Wodonga Energy Inc (even if you don't live in Albury-Wodonga) \$5 per annum – payable each January. Our membership form is here [[download PDF](#)]

## Stay in touch!

Contact us at: [renewablealburywodonga@gmail.com](mailto:renewablealburywodonga@gmail.com)

RAW website: [www.renewablealburywodonga.com.au](http://www.renewablealburywodonga.com.au)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/rawenergyinc/>

Warm regards

### RAW Energy Committee

**President:** Bobbi McKibbin

**Vice President:** Michelle Wilkinson

**Secretary:** Katrina Passey

**Treasurer:** Michelle Wilkinson

**Committee Members:** Jenny Davies (newsletter editor), Narelle Martin, Simon Duncan