



RAW Energy update – April 2019

Message from the President

We are edging towards the middle of the year already, hard to believe. We are eagerly watching to see what offerings may be promised during the Federal Election Campaign. The two state elections in the past 6 months were certainly kind to the renewable energy industry. See below for more detail. There are also new requirements in Victoria coming into play mid-year for companies selling solar so be sure to pass the word around for people to ask: “Are you an Approved Solar Retailer?”

Great news from our friends over at Indigo Power as they launched their first solar installation on the Old Beechworth Gaol. They are getting ready to do a soft launch of their retailer product which we will hear more about in the second half the year.

We are looking for some more volunteers to join our committee. We know that joining our committee might seem daunting, but everyone has to start somewhere, as we did. We would also really like to increase our membership base. So, please pass the word around.

AGM

You are cordially invited to attend our AGM.

When: Tuesday 28th May, 5.30 – 7pm

Where: Robert Brown Room, Albury City Council building, Kiewa Street, Albury

RSVP to renewablealburywodonga@gmail.com

Membership

Annual memberships are now due at the AGM and have increased to \$10 annually to support our efforts to increase local community renewable energy projects. We are now required to be insured for public liability as an incorporated association, so the membership fees assist us to continue serving our community. Current members will receive an email and membership renewal request and a call will be made for new members.

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.

Who can join? Any community member can join Renewable Albury Wodonga Energy Inc (even if you don't live in Albury-Wodonga)

Membership Fee: \$10 per annum – payable each AGM.

Our membership application form is here: [\[download membership PDF\]](#)

Our membership renewal form is here: [\[download renewal PDF\]](#)

Grants

RAW recently submitted an application to Bank Australia to install a small solar system on a community organisation in Albury and start a revolving fund where we can obtain 'solar panel sponsorship' and keep funding new systems on other community buildings. If successful, the grant will help fund the first installation.

We are interested to hear about suitable host organisations that serve our community (eg. volunteer groups, not for profits etc) that could benefit from the installation of a solar system and benefit from reduced energy bills. Please get in touch if you have ideas for us!

Wodonga Community Solar Project

Update from Ben McGowan

Wodonga Council has received a Climate Change Innovation Grant from the Victorian Government for the Wodonga Community Solar project, and RAW Energy is the key delivery partner for this grant. The project responds to climate change by implementing a working example of a community renewable energy model, which provides ongoing funding to support an Energy Benefits Program (EBP). The EBP's objective is to support those experiencing energy poverty in the Wodonga local government area.

The Community Renewable Energy Model

The Project Control Group, comprised of RAW volunteers and Wodonga Council staff, has looked at many different possible options for a community renewable energy model over the last six months. The model that has been selected pursues opportunities to supply large electricity users with solar power, through community owned rooftop solar power systems. Under this model, RAW has been working with Wodonga Council, and distributed energy specialists Mondo. RAW has approached businesses in the Moloney Dr industrial estate, offering them on site renewable energy, at a competitive tariff. The price of this electricity can be as much as three times cheaper than electricity purchased from an electricity

retailer. Included in the price of this electricity cost will be a small amount that contributes to the Energy Benefits Program.

RAW is now working with Mondo to prepare final offers for interested businesses. A community investment model will be used to fund and then own one of these rooftop solar power systems. The next stage of this project is to determine how best to coordinate this investment opportunity.

The Energy Benefits Program

RAW was successful in a further grant application to the Victorian Government's Renewable Communities program. This grant is helping to fund a pilot study that will inform the full Energy Benefits Program. RAW has partnered with social housing service provider BeyondHousing to deliver the program. RAW will install ten solar power systems on BeyondHousing houses and carefully measure the impact for social housing clients, on their electricity bills and household budgets. This program seeks to ensure that the benefits of renewable energy are available to all, and it is hoped that demonstrating these benefits to BeyondHousing will help them work towards renewable energy solutions for their entire housing stock. Installation of the ten solar power systems is expected to occur in April.



How it works

Businesses participate in the Energy Benefits Program by hosting a solar power system and agreeing to purchase low cost renewable electricity for a dedicated time period. There are no upfront costs and the price of the renewable electricity purchased from the onsite system is

typically more competitive than commercial retail rates. Included in the cost of the electricity is a small levy to fund the Energy Benefits Program. In the mid-term, businesses will receive further benefit through energy sharing across the hub. If you would like to know more, get in touch with Ben McGowan mobile 0400826236 or email renewablealburywodonga@gmail.com

Indigo Power

Community owned solar for Old Beechworth Gaol

The North East is a step closer to its hundred-percent renewable energy goal, with the launch of the region's first community-owned solar power system. On April 12th, Indigo Power switched on its first community owned solar system, which will supply low cost, renewable energy to the Old Beechworth Gaol site. The panels at the Old Beechworth Gaol allow businesses to access the energy without buying the infrastructure.

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2104776866244283&id=181929308529058

New solar energy source for Old Beechworth Gaol site | The Border Mail

<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6037901/new-solar-energy-source-for-old-beechworth-gaol-site/?cs=9680>

Indigo Power Retail

Indigo Power is working towards a launch of its retail offering. We are planning to go live in May 2019 with a 'soft launch' in Yackandandah. Those within a 10 km radius of Yackandandah will be the first participants in our Indigo Power retail offering, with the soft launch focused on trialling our electricity sharing mechanism. A full launch of the retail offering across the Hume and Murray Regions will occur early in the new financial year. Indigo Power is planning a capital raise at this time, using equity crowdfunding to secure widespread community ownership.

What's to come?

Over the next few months, a new website will be launched where you will be able to sign up to be an Indigo Power customer. Indigo Power is also looking to partner with more local businesses for community owned rooftop solar installations

NSW update

The NSW Government is introducing interest free loans for battery or solar and battery installations. Details are not yet known although the loans will not be available for solar only installations. A commencement date is expected in the latter half of the year.

Victorian Rebate update

In the next financial year, we will see some new rebates launching in Victoria to accompany their solar power and hot water rebates. There will be the launch of a battery rebate of up to \$4838 plus the introduction of other changes. Solar companies will now be able to offer rebates as a point of sale discount. Customers will be required to use a Clean Energy Council Approved Solar Retailer in order to claim the rebates. For more information you can head over to www.solar.vic.gov.au website.

Congratulations!

We are super excited to announce that our very own Bobbi McKibbin was offered and has accepted a position on the solar industries peak body the Clean Energy Council's Installer Reference Group. It is a volunteer-based group that consists of 23 representatives from around Australia and 1 from NZ. The aim is one of seeing our industry thrive with quality and safety at the fore.

The installer group will feed back to the CEC concerns raised from all/any installers, and the CEC will consult with the IRG regarding updates or changes to regulations to gain industry feedback.

Although Bobbi is not an installer, she was selected due to her years in the industry, her experience as a small business owner & administrator and her involvement in the community energy sector & advocacy. Congratulations Bobbi!

Other news

Totally Renewable Yackandandah solar energy project reaches big landmark

In less than 18 months, Yackandandah homes have generated solar energy that would have been able to run the MCG light towers for almost three years.

<http://renewablealburywodonga.com.au/totally-renewable-yackandandah-solar-energy-project-reaches-big-landmark/>

TAKE2: Zero-Net Masterplan launches in Victoria

<https://mailchi.mp/9041af46de8c/take2-hepburn-launches-zero-net-plan-60235?e=f9d4128414>

Stay in touch!

Contact us at: renewablealburywodonga@gmail.com

RAW website: 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: Kate Sleeman

Committee Members: Narelle Martin, Janet Gillespie, Simon Duncan,

Newsletter editor: Jenny Davies