

A time to celebrate!

A message from the President

We are so excited here at RAW Energy with a couple of great announcements in this newsletter. Firstly, we celebrated our Energy Benefits program which has seen 10 4kW systems installed on social housing in Wodonga. We are incredibly proud of this project and really look forward to going back in a year's time to do the 'before and after' analysis to see the difference it is making to peoples' lives. Secondly, we have a fantastic hot water bulk buy to launch. This is made possible through a partnership with Indigo Power and Solar Integrity.

Read on for more details of both and more....

2 THE BORDER MAIL Wednesday October 16, 2019

NEWS

Tenants take charge through solar switch

BY ELLEN EBSARY

BEYOND Housing client Katie "feels human" knowing she has control over her energy costs through a partnership between the agency and Renewable Albury-Wodonga Energy.

The Wodonga mum, who wanted to use only her first name, lives in one of 10 BeyondHousing properties in the city that now have solar systems.

"I got a phone call from a property manager asking if I'd like to be involved in the program, and I jumped for joy," she said.

"They came and did a maintenance check to see where they could put the box and panels up, and it was all installed about two months ago.

"It makes me feel human; it gives me that equal opportunity with someone else who has been working and owns their own home and can get solar panels put on."

Katie said early indications were savings of \$3 a day on her bill through a 4 kW system linked to an Ubi energy-monitoring device.

"You can see how your energy is being used and when the solar kicks in," she said.



SWITCH ON: Renewable Albury-Wodonga Energy president Bobbi McKibbin, BeyondHousing clients Katie and Jackie, and BeyondHousing's Leisa Makszin celebrated the project putting solar on social housing properties.

"I actually went and bought a kettle that I put on my gas stove now, as it was chewing through electricity."

"It makes you more aware of the power you're using."

Mum-of-five Jackie has spent thousands of dollars on bills in the past, having to maintain a healthy temperature for her asthmatic child.

"I have a chance to make some practical changes," she said.

BeyondHousing hous-

ing services manager Leisa Makszin said the organisation aimed to install solar wherever possible and this partnership added to that.

"A lot of this is happening in metro areas, and I'm really happy it's happening now in regional Victoria," she said.

Renewable Albury-Wodonga Energy received \$54,000 from the Victorian government's renewable communities grant program for the micro-grid and work

to install the systems took place from May to July.

President Bobbi McKibbin launched the program during Anti Poverty Week, which runs until Saturday.

"We know there's a 10 to 15 per cent saving rate on electricity bills through behavioural change and they'll have the added bonus where the panels will producing solar - they might be able to save 50 per cent depending on how they use it," she said.

"Cost of living is the biggest hurdle anybody has to overcome, and even more so for people at risk of becoming homeless."

"We're hoping to bring down that barrier and we'll go back again in 12 months' time to see what it's meant."

"This is one of the first projects of this kind, but we want to extend it out to other housing stock and communities that will see benefit in this as well."

Energy Benefits Program launch

Energy Benefits Program launch at The Cube, Wodonga,

It was a proud moment for us on Monday October 14th. We have partnered with [BeyondHousing](#) to install 10 solar systems to families struggling with the high cost of powering their homes who rent or can't afford to install a solar system. The launch came during Anti-Poverty week and energy costs are making up an ever-increasing proportion of low-income household expenses, often called "energy poverty". We want to thank everyone involved in the project.

A key vision of RAW Energy's is that everyone in our community should benefit from a Renewable Energy Future and this small project is making a big change to how families can generate, use and control their own household energy! With thanks to funding from the Victorian Government, our Energy Benefits Program is literally helping to ease energy poverty and put the "power" literally back into our local hands!

Want to know more? See the media release on our website:

<http://renewablealburywodonga.com.au/renewable-energy-fights-poverty/>



Energy Benefits Program Video

Special thanks to Simon Duncan from Green Energy Videos who has created a video about the project, including some compelling testimonials from households. View the video here, on our website and Facebook page and please feel free to share it!

You can also sign up to Simon's newsletter where he will share what he is up to with his community energy videos for not only RAW Energy but other community energy groups and organisations. <https://www.facebook.com/Green-Energy-Videos-1750498451901221/>

Wodonga collaboration powers up' – Helen Haines, Member for Indi

Here's a short excerpt from Helen's most recent newsletter:

'I spoke in Parliament on October 23 about a great collaboration in Wodonga that brings together two passions of mine - renewable energy and affordable housing.

[BeyondHousing](#) is the largest social housing organisation in North East Victoria. It helps people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It works at the frontline to give them a hand in a constructive, grounded way. People who cannot afford to pay for power are at risk of homelessness. In an inspired collaboration between BeyondHousing and [Renewable Albury Wodonga Energy](#), a community group advocating for renewables uptake on the border, four-kilowatt solar systems supplied by **Solar Integrity** have been installed at 10 BeyondHousing properties. The systems include digital monitors so, for the first time, householders can see their energy use: when and how they're using it.

I salute the householders, BeyondHousing, Solar Integrity and the Victorian government for taking the lead on this important initiative, and I look forward to the program's ongoing development in Wodonga and its rollout in Wangaratta - my home town.'

RAW Energy - 2019 Sustainable Living Festival

As part of this year's Albury Wodonga Sustainable Living Festival RAW Energy participated in the Elmwood estate launch of the regions first 10 star rated display home. Large crowds wandered through the new display home and listened to talks on energy efficiency and products available to make your home more efficient.

The BEST renewable energy is the energy you don't use in the first place!

Our stand fielded enquiries about Solar Hot Water bulk buys, rebates available in both states, energy efficiency and how the community can get involved with RAW!





Congratulations!

On October 23rd in Melbourne, Bobbi McKibbin was recognised within the solar industry as “Solar Cutter” of the Year! This is an incredible recognition amongst all solar and renewable industry professionals for her tireless involvement this year to better and help all fellow renewable businesses and installers where possible. **Congratulations** to our President on this wonderful recognition within the renewable energy industry. You have given tirelessly to our group and the industry itself and your passion for renewable energy, women in this industry and supporting regional communities is so valued. Your knowledge, networks and enthusiasm are amazing, and we would not have achieved so much without that. Enjoy your time in the "sunshine"!

Energy Benefits Program - report by Ben McGowan – project officer

Wodonga has the highest rate of disconnections in Victoria. We're using renewable energy to help low income families manage their energy bills. RAW Energy Inc has recently installed ten solar power systems on social housing homes. Each of the ten solar power systems includes a Mondo Ubi energy management system, which gives households real time visibility of their energy generation and consumption. The solar power systems are reducing overall electricity costs, and the Ubi display is giving households visibility and control over their energy costs.

Research and demonstration

The project includes a research and demonstration component and RAW members have collected electricity meter data and retail bills to monitor energy cost savings

and have conducted a short survey to determine the impact on families. The research will be used to demonstrate the value of solar power for social housing. If the impact is significant, as we expect, we'll be using this report to argue for an expansion of the program. RAW members also demonstrated the use of the Mondo Ubi, and households are already taking control of their energy consumption, making changes that maximise the use of their new solar system.

Future funding of the Program

The project has been funded by the Victorian Government and has been delivered in partnership with social housing provider BeyondHousing. The ten solar power systems are the first step in our Energy Benefits Program. In the midterm, the Program will be funded through funds generated through Wodonga based solar power systems that supply local business with clean energy. RAW Energy Inc has been running a tender process to install our first solar power system at a local site. We're looking forward to working with local business to reduce their energy costs and fund the Program. We're proud to be making progress on our vision of having the benefits of renewable energy accessible to everyone.

Community hot water offering

This offering provides a great price on a new efficient and intelligent heat pump that is manufactured by Reclaim Energy and designed for the Australian climate. The heat pump uses 1/4 to 1/3 of the power that a conventional electric hot water system uses, saving customers greatly on their electricity bills. We know that Albury Wodonga is predominantly a natural gas town but there are pockets that are not. We also know that, with gas prices rising, people are starting to transition to electric homes supplemented by solar power.

This offer will be open to expressions of interest until early December and forms part of a regional project undertaken by the North East Community Energy Network. So far across 10 areas there have been nearly 200 enquiries with installations rolling out across the region.

To register your interest head to www.indigopower.com.au/water

Launch of Virtual Power Plant in Yackandandah

Congratulations to Totally Renewable Yackandandah with the completion of 10 solar installations on public buildings! Here's the beginnings of their virtual power plant which includes 11kW of solar panels, 13 kWh of battery storage and a Mondo Ubi smart energy controller installed at the town's public hall. The public buildings project has added an additional 74 kW of solar to the town and is expected to generate 102 MWh annually.

Read more on our [news page](#)

Have your say on Solar Farms

You may have noticed increasing numbers of proposals for solar farms in this region. A community feedback survey is currently being conducted about a proposal for the Walla/Culcairn areas.

Have your say vis [this link](#)

Thank you to everyone in the community and partner organisations for your support this year. We hope to continue to support and develop more community renewable energy in our region in 2020!
On behalf of the RAW Energy Inc. board we wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



[Stay up to date!](#)