



COMMUNITY ENERGY for Venus Bay?

Community Resilience and Reliable Energy Feasibility Study at Venus Bay

let's talk about the possibilities of community owned energy!



Keep up to date with planned community consultations via the timeline on the back. For more information scan the QR code or head to: vbcc.org.au/communityenergy



Welcome to Bulletin #4 December '22

Speed-dating with energy experts

So many questions, who to ask?

A renewable energy expert, of course.

Venus Bay Community Centre recently organised a Speed-date a renewable energy expert so local people who are trying to decide about solar and batteries could ask the many questions they have.

Over 30 local people took advantage of this opportunity, moving from table to table and spending at least 20 minutes with each of the energy experts, just like a speed dating event, only with solar and batteries on their minds.

Representatives from JMC Electrics, Sunscape Solar, Grid Edge Batteries and Redback Technologies spent time

discussing solar and batteries with householders trying to choose the best solution, for their homes and to be 'microgrid ready' – that is, able to connect with any future community energy system in Venus Bay.

Maybe not every question was answered, but everyone learnt something and got much closer to understanding which equipment might meet their energy needs.



Let's talk about Energy

Look out for members of the Community Energy Project Team at markets and street stalls around Venus Bay and Tarwin Lower over summer.

We'll be the geeks having a great time chatting about all things renewable energy with anyone wanting to know what this community project is all about.



Venus Bay Voices by Marian Quartly

I am a part-time resident of Venus Bay. Like many part-timers, I would be happy to be here full-time if big city duties didn't get in the way. My interest in the Community Energy Project is both personal and social.

My partner and I are both on the wrong side of 80. A reliable power supply is crucial to our health and well-being. We need electricity for water, sewerage, heat, cooling, cooking, and communication.

Power outages, especially those that come without any warning, are potentially dangerous for us, and for other elderly residents. We are not in a position to help ourselves by installing solar panels; our roof is shaded by neighbouring trees which are rich with bird-life.

A community-owned power facility that could guarantee local supply meets our personal needs, and offers other benefits as well. Knowing that some of my elderly neighbours are isolated and vulnerable, I welcome the community energy project as a way of protecting those unable to protect themselves and, possibly, of drawing more part-timers into a rewarding commitment to our community.

Venus Bay Community Centre and Mycelia Renewables representatives are the outreach members of the Project Team

Neighbourhood batteries unpacked

Household batteries, BIG batteries, electric vehicle batteries and neighbourhood batteries are all technologies we are hearing more and more about. But how do they work, what do they look like, and how might they be part of the energy mix in Venus Bay and Tarwin Lower?

Let's focus on neighbourhood batteries first, because they are high on the list of options being considered for our Community Energy solution.

A neighbourhood battery is bigger than a household battery but smaller than the BIG batteries, like the one in South Australia. They might sit on an electricity pole, at the end of a street or near the electricity sub-station. Their job is essentially to soak up excess solar energy coming into the grid during the day and then sharing it back out at night-time. Neighbourhood batteries are anywhere from four to 50 times the size of a typical household battery.

So, neighbourhood batteries can store and share energy locally, rather than bringing it in from afar. They can also reduce the ups and downs in energy supply caused when there's lots of sun and wind, or none at all, producing too much or too little energy in the grid. The batteries do this by storing or releasing energy at a steady rate to stabilise the flow of energy through the powerlines.

Photos – Top left - pole top battery in Highett; Bottom left - Yarra Energy Foundation, Fitzroy North neighbourhood battery is 284kWh and about the size of four large fridges.



Community groups are super interested in neighbourhood batteries because of the many benefits they can provide, such as more local and reliable energy, whether you have solar or not and increasing the amount of renewable energy the grid can handle. For example, if there was a neighbourhood battery, or several, in Venus Bay and Tarwin Lower, we could have more local solar energy.

Our Community Energy Research Team is busy looking at where the best spots for neighbourhood batteries might be across our townships. They'll look at how much rooftop solar there is already and where a battery could help soak up any extra energy and increase capacity for more.

Batteries are still expensive, so we also need to consider how to fund them, who would own them and how households and businesses would put energy in and take energy out. This is the next area of research the Team will be undertaking and so we'll describe some of the options in the next Bulletin.

The Victorian Government is funding neighbourhood battery studies and installations with energy companies and community groups. Follow this [link](#) to an interactive map that includes examples of neighbourhood batteries popping up around Victoria. We have included some photos of three great examples below.

Photo - Bottom right - Yackandandah community battery is 274kWh and sits at an old sawmill with 65kW of solar. Its economics are improved by being located behind the meter at the sawmill and selling much of its energy directly to the sawmill.



Ways you can get involved in the Community Energy Project

You can share your household energy use so the research is informed by how people *actually* use energy. Please go to the [Home Energy Usage link](#) to follow step-by-step instructions on how to do this. You'll see a survey there that we hope you will fill in too. Catch up with us at Tarwin Lower Market on Jan 2nd, see us at the Venus Bay shops or Community Centre over Summer or come to Workshop #2 on Feb 11th when we'll be going through the different community energy options.