

Venus Bay Resilient Community Energy - Governance

Terms of Reference

Community-led and collaboratively designed are the two key operating principles of the Venus Bay Resilient Community Energy Feasibility Study. As we progress this study, Venus Bay residents, business owners and technical advisors will be asked to inform, guide, provide feedback and support development of the work we want to do together. This Terms of Reference outlines how we can do this whilst putting our two key principles into practice.

Venus Bay Community Centre received the funding and wish to facilitate the study in partnership with a diversity of people who can bring knowledge and expertise for the benefit of the project. Collaborative governance arrangements are proposed to sit around this study including three groups that have specific roles and contributions to help this work evolve in the best way possible. The three groups that collectively form the governance are:

- an Advisory Group
- an Accountability Group and,
- the Project Team.

These three groups are illustrated in the diagram on page 2.

The primary role of the Advisory Group is to participate in and contribute to the community-led co-design process. It is desired that the Advisory Group will have a dominant number of Venus Bay residents, business owners and holiday makers, because after all, the resilient energy system we plan on designing needs to work first and foremost for these people. In addition, people with technical, financial and institutional knowledge relevant to our transitioning energy system will round out the underpinning skills base.

In practice this looks like:

- Bi-monthly meetings to inform and contribute to the co-design
- Learning about resilient energy options at meetings and workshops
- Helping evaluate what's possible and what's likely to work best for Venus Bay
- Reading shared information and reports to enable your best contributions
- Explaining the purpose of the study and how it evolves to people from Venus Bay

The primary role of the Accountability Group is to ensure the Project Team are facilitating and delivering the study as intended. The study has a well-researched project plan, developed to support the funding submission. It forms the basis of our funding obligations, and gets us off to a great start, but it's possible that it will need nuancing and adapting as we progress. Whilst the Project Team has primary responsibility for delivering the plan, a few steady hands and keen eyes supporting them in this role are needed. The Accountability Group is a sub-committee of the Venus Bay Community Centre Board.

In practice this looks like:

- Bi-monthly 1.5 hr meetings with the Project Team
- Reading the Project Plan and reports prior to meetings
- Inquiring about outputs and outcomes along the way, to check they are meeting the requirements of the study and funding agreement with the Australian Government.
- Helpfully informing any nuances or adaptations to the plan in ways that are consistent with the study's intent and the funding agreement conditions

The Project Team is made up of the partner organisations that have been working with VBCC on the study proposal and comprise of the following:

- Alyson Skinner and Henry O'Clery on behalf of the Venus Bay Community
- Heather Smith, Changing Weather – Electrical Engineer and Project Manager
- Moragh Mackay, Mycelia Renewables – facilitator of community-led co-design
- Rakib Shah, Federation University – Microgrid research specialist
- Yet to be determined - Financial analysis and business modelling

The Project Team meet weekly to plan, deliver and reflect on the study as it transpires. The Team will produce periodic reports to enable the Advisory and Accountability Groups to fulfill their roles and make their best contributions. Additional members of the organisations listed above will, from time-to-time, also contribute to Project Team processes and activities.

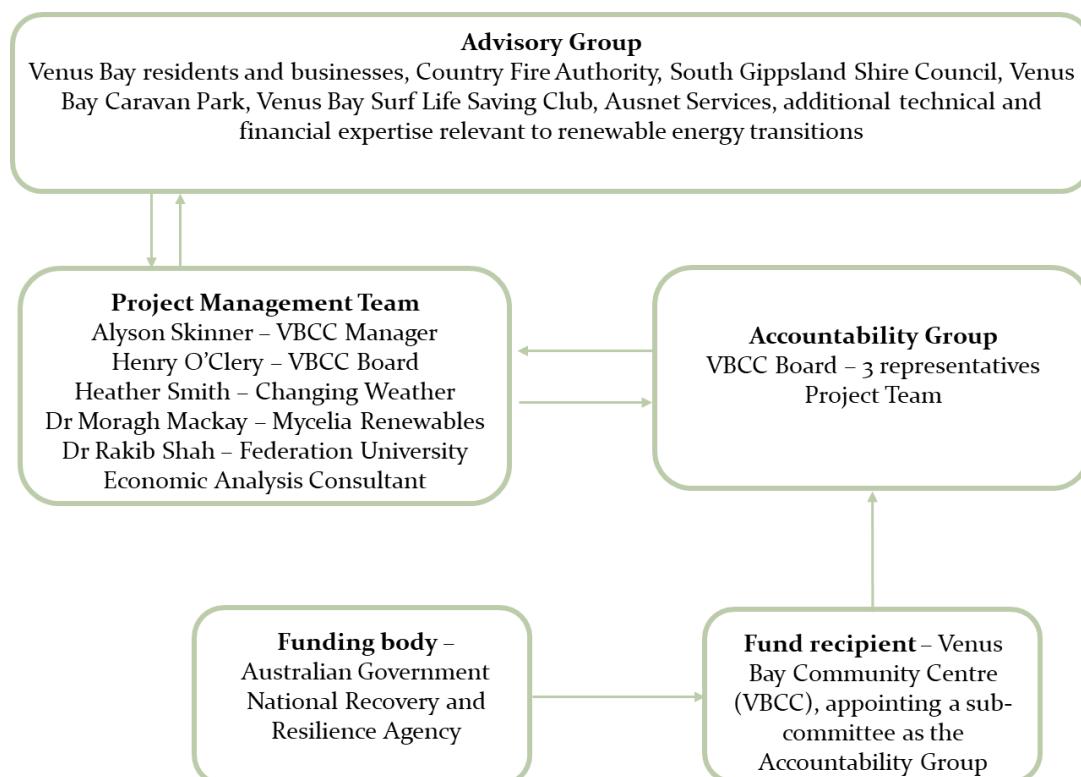


Figure 1. A system of governance for the Community Resilience and Reliable Energy for Venus Bay Feasibility Study.

In participating in any and all of these Groups, members are asked to:

- Bring a collaborative mindset to the time we spend, and the work we do, together
- Engage in open, respectful and honest communication
- Understand that the study involves learning along the way and is best informed by building our collective knowledge
- Show empathy and be tolerant of different ways of learning and knowing
- Share knowledge of existing and relevant research or projects that can enhance our understanding
- Contribute and connect relevant expertise to strengthen study outcomes
- Be mindful of the wider conditions that enable innovation and collaboration, including:
 - stepping out of our silos,
 - recognising collaboration is a way of moving forward in situations of uncertainty and risk,
 - actively building trust and collective responsibility and,
 - sharing a vision for our future.
- Evaluate study options and recommendations based on evidence that is:
 - Substantiated by independent research or advice
 - Technically and financially defensible
 - Socially and environmentally responsible
- Participate in consensus decision making
- Declare any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest
- Contribute time to the study, envisaged to be a 2 - 4-hour meeting every two months during July 2022 to June 2023 for the Advisory and Accountability Groups, and including reading materials before and after (approximately 1-2 hours). Additional participation in Community workshops is desired.