

## Autumn Newsletter Sustainable Upper Ovens Inc- Community Energy and EV group

15<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Community energy, the all-electric home and becoming carbon neutral are the flavour of this year! Thanks to all of you who have been actively involved in the activities and commitments this has demanded of us.

### 1. Cosy homes, cheaper bills, climate ready! April 30<sup>th</sup>.

Graham Barrow and Brian Edwards led this project.

- a. The Alpine Shire's Bronwyn Westbrook and Michelle Stokes environmental team launched their Home Energy Test Kits, that are now available to borrow at all three Alpine Shire Libraries.
- b. SUO's free Home Energy Assessment builds on this and is now available. Book by registering your request at [info@sustainableupperovens.org.au](mailto:info@sustainableupperovens.org.au)
- c. Lucinda Flynn gave excellent advice and tips on making home more cosy, healthy and cheaper to run. Her tips on zoning homes and links to cost effective useful products were very valuable
- d. Nick Mason -Smith from Indigo Power shared some of his finding from the Aggregated Community Battery feasibility study that the Alpine Shire is part of.
- e. Dennis Lambert discussed the low -income household grant study to put \$10K of solar PV panels and a CO2 heat pump hot water system on four homes. The stumbling block is that it involves a 10-year interest free loan, sharing the savings generated by the system. We are talking to a bank to help us manage this.  
Dennis also mentioned the all-electric home staircase model of replacing end of life appliance and how by 2030, these homes should be saving \$5-7K in annual energy bills and greatly decrease their carbon footprint.

### 2. Dr Helen Haynes invitation to go to Canberra

Brian Edwards has been invited by Dr Helen Haines MP to go to her office Canberra for a week where amongst others he will have an opportunity to meet with Hon Jenny McAlister, Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy who has asked to be kept updated on an issue he has been advocating. This is for people who cannot host solar PV panels on their homes, in particular renters, homes with shading, heritage issues, etc. to host them in a solar PV garden. An ideal location in the Upper Ovens is the Freeburgh NE water storage with its large north, east and west-facing banks or floating panels on the storage which would also help reduce algae growth.

The power generated would be virtual electricity, which would be credited to the solar farm panels owner's homes. This is possible on a large scale and for business projects, but not residential. The ACT government does this 100% of its electricity

from large-scale solar and wind farms in South Australia.

### **3. Alpine Shire Council Community Climate Action Plan Roadmap Tuesday May 23<sup>rd</sup>.**

Thank you to all of those that attended this meeting. Your contributions are much appreciated and it will be interesting to see the final roadmap. If you have not yet had your say please do so. Use the link it is open to all residents to comment

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/8L3ZMBG](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8L3ZMBG)

### **4. Community Energy Network (CEN) Zoom meeting**

Brian Edwards and Dennis Lambert attended

a. Updates from a few community energy groups were presented

b. Indigo Foundation launched

Kirsten Seeto from Bright is the new CEO. Congratulations Kirsten. The foundation will look at raising philanthropic funds to help support the CEN member groups.

We look forward to working closely with the Foundation as it evolves.

c. Mondo gave a very informative update on Project Edge, which 10 Upper Ovens residents participated in. Participants were given an \$1000 towards a battery and solar PV purchase and to participate in a scientific Virtual Power Plant study.

Please contact us if you would like to join these bimonthly CEN Zoom meetings.

### **5. Aggregated Community Battery feasibility study**

Bronwyn Westbrook, Michelle Stark represented the Alpine Shire Council  
Dennis Lambert attended

Ben McGowan, Nick Mason-Smith and Heath Shakespeare from Indigo Power gave a very informative update on this study and a detailed assessment of the Wangaratta Show ground. This study is due to be completed in February 2024. The knowledge from this study has been a great asset in helping prepare for Australian Renewable Energy Authorities (ARENA), Community Battery Round 1, Expression Of Interest (EOI) on behalf of the federal government, which is due at the end of this month, June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Indigo Power will be the lead organisation for a number of ARENA community batteries in the Alpine Shire. Let's keep our fingers crossed and see what transpires over the next 6-9 months.

### **6. Health collective for ARENA Community Battery EOI**

Mike Clarke – Myrtleford Community Energy Group

Keith Pike- Towards Renewable Energy Kiewa

Dennis Lambert – SUO Community Energy and EV

Mike coordinated meetings with Nick Shaw from Alpine Health and the CEOs of Beechworth and Tallangatta Health and I think Omeo as well. Sound progress is being made here and a submission will go in for the ARENA EOI by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **7. Dr Helen Haines meeting: Wangaratta**

Vince Humphries and Dennis Lambert were present

We raised issues related to the ARENA Community Battery allocation and the ownership model. We are interested in the Dr Helen Haines's Local Power Plan model <https://www.localpowerplan.com/> which contains 50 community hubs around Australia. Unfortunately, she informed us the Federal Government will not be supporting the plan. But she encouraged us to take up the issue with ARENA. We sent a letter to ARENA requesting an interview a week or so ago. We have just received a reply requesting we organize a meeting with them.

**Our monthly meeting is Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June at 7pm**

**In person – Bright Uniting Church, Ireland Street Bright, 3741**

**7-8pm**

Meeting Organiser is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87852259458?pwd=QkxnejBCNmhQT3RWRVhlc0VWYmNqZz>

Meeting ID: 878 5225 9458

Passcode: 544677