

# TRY TALKING



Oct 2019

## 100% persistence

I am amazed by how much goes on behind the scenes at TRY. Just when I think I've got a handle on everything, something else pops up. It shows how committed the members and committee are in constantly working towards 100% renewables for Yack. And in making sure that it benefits the whole community.

One longstanding project recently came to fruition with the launch of the Virtual Power Plant with solar panels on 10 public buildings and batteries at three of them. This project started five years ago and has taken solid determination to see it come to fruition, overcoming many obstacles. While other projects were front and centre, this one was still humming away in the background, never abandoned just because it was challenging.



*Denis Ginnivan and golden yak, standing in front of the Fronius inverter and 13 kWh of batteries at the Virtual Power Plant launch, Yack Public Hall*

The benefits that it will bring to the community are significant, with a reduction in running costs for community groups and resilience for services such as the CFA in times of emergency. For a regional town in a bushfire-prone area, that's a great outcome and a testament to the power of persistence.

— Juliette Milbank

## AGM wrap up

Just like that, the year is rushing to a close and the TRY AGM was held on the 18 September in the Old Court House. The venerable building hosted 19 people to listen to Matt Grogan's speech as outgoing TRY Chairperson, along with Donna Jones' introduction of the Energy Coaches program, Matt Charles-Jones' wrap up of the year's projects and Ben McGowan's tantalising update of Indigo Power's imminent retail offer.



*Matt Grogan giving his speech as outgoing Chairperson at the AGM in the Yack Courthouse*

There was a feeling of sadness with Matt Grogan stepping down after his insightful leadership and commitment to the role, but he's not going far and will still be active on the committee. Matt Charles-Jones was unanimously supported in his return as the replacement Chairperson and the committee will be well supported with the addition of Simone Engdahl to join the other remaining members.

Matt Grogan's speech touched on the importance of community-scale projects, especially storage, to the ongoing work of achieving the 100% goal and de-carbonising, de-centralising and democratising our energy supply. Donna Jones introduced TRY's exciting new Energy Coaches program, partly a response to feedback at last year's AGM but also an integral part of achieving the 5-stage plan. Matt Charles-Jones relayed the fantastic news of a third microgrid going ahead on the Twist Creek, Kirby's Flat and Bells Flat Rd area, as well as the completion of several other projects (see below for



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info on them) in a busy year. The pace isn't slowing though, with just over two years until 2022, TRY is focussed on the deadline and even starting to think beyond it.

Finally Ben McGowan gave a run down of where the community energy retailer Indigo Power is at. With months of solid work behind them, the retailer is close to having everything in place for a retail offer before the end of the year which will allow Yack residents to buy, trade and share locally generated power. It sounds such a simple thing, but in Australia's utility landscape it is an enormous achievement and a crucial part of the 5-stage plan. We look forward with great anticipation to what 2020 will bring!

## Committee members for 2020

*Chairperson*                      *Deputy Chair*  
Matt Charles-Jones              Denis Ginnivan

*Secretary*                          *Treasurer/Public Officer*  
Kim McConchie                  Bernard Wilson

### General Committee

Neil Padbury, Ron Boulton, Ali Pockley, Donna Jones, Ben Gilbert, Diane Shepheard, Cambell Klose, Matt Grogan, Juliette Milbank, Simone Engdahl

— Kim McConchie/Juliette Milbank

## HWS Bulk Buy update

Yackandandah has been leading the way with the hot water system Bulk Buy – of the 150 expressions of interest across the region, 31 of them are from Yack! There are currently 13 confirmed system purchases, but there are only a few days left to go!

If you've been thinking about it, this is your last chance. Hop onto the Indigo Power website and register your interest:

<https://www.indigopower.com.au/water/>

And keep an eye open for the Indigo Power community energy retail launch in Yackandandah – it's coming soon!

— Ben McGowan



Sefton manning the promotion stall for the HWS Bulk Buy in Yackandandah last weekend

## Project launches

Committee representatives from 10 public buildings in and around Yackandandah thronged into the Yack Public Hall on the 25<sup>th</sup> September to watch Bernard Gaffney, Indigo Shire Mayor, officially open the Virtual Power Plant (VPP). TRY, with the help of \$104,000 from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and \$84,000 raised from local organisations, has installed a total 74 kW of solar panels onto 10 public buildings, along with 36 kWh of batteries at three of them.

Importantly, this reduces costs for the community groups that often run those facilities and makes others, such as the CFA which has a battery installation, more resilient in times of emergency (and capable of off-grid functionality – a definite plus during a bushfire).



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The project involved many partnerships with diverse partners and contributors, including: Yackandandah Health, Into Our Hands, YCDCo, Indigo Shire, Selectronic Australia, the CFA and Solar Integrity.



*Hall committee representatives, TRY members, Bernard Gaffney and Trevor Ierino at the VPP launch*

Later that day, a more intimate but no less auspicious launch took place at the Kangaloola Wildlife Shelter in the bush outside Yackandandah. Chris Lehmann hosted a small group of sponsors and talked about the profound difference that the recent upsizing of their battery installation has made to the shelter's operations.

The extra 17 kWh of battery storage means that they no longer need to run the generator, removing the constant drone that used to background the shelter's operations each day and cost more than \$9000 each year to run.

Demands on the shelter's services have increased, due to human population growth and the changing climate impacting more wildlife. The upgrade means that they can now host the increased number of volunteers required to care for the animals without running the generator.



*Chris Lehmann checking the read out from the new battery system at Kangaloola Wildlife Shelter*

Thanks was given to TRY, Indigo Speakers, YCDCo, the Yackandandah Community Centre, Solar Integrity and many other contributors for giving so generously of time, expertise and money to make the project a reality.

— Matt Charles-Jones/Juliette Milbank

## Energy coaching service

As you may have seen we recently launched our Energy Coaching service to residents of Yackandandah.



*An energy coach can help you look at energy efficiency strategies appropriate to your situation*

An Energy Coach can come and visit your home to chat about ways that you may be able to live more comfortably and reduce your energy consumption. They will help you to understand where and why



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the bulk of your energy consumption occurs, and what you may be able to do to change that.

The benefits are not only reduced energy use and cost, but also lower emissions – and every bit helps to reach our goal by 2022! For further information go to our website to find out more:

<http://totallyrenewableyack.org.au/resources/energy-coaching-service/>

— Donna Jones

## New bank details

Late last year TRY decided to change its banking arrangements from the Hume Bank to WAW. An account was opened with WAW and is now fully operational.

Over the next month online information and membership forms will be updated to reflect this change and the Hume Bank account will be closed in December.

The new details are:

Bank: WAW  
BSB: 803-070  
Account number: 100121193  
Account name: TRY

Donations and fees can now be deposited in the WAW account. Please add a reference with your last name and deposit purpose, e.g. "Smith, donation".

If you would like a receipt please contact our treasurer, Bernie Wilson, [bernardcwilson@gmail.com](mailto:bernardcwilson@gmail.com).

## Hot tips and links

With all the activity in the last year, TRY has received some great press. Check out some of the articles below:

- ♦ 1 July 2018: 'TRYing to get to 100% renewable', *Renew* magazine, issue 145 <https://renew.org.au/renew-magazine/community/totally-renewable-yackandandah/>
- ♦ 11 February, 2019: 'Community Power Project Celebrates Energy Milestone', *ProBono Australia* website <https://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2019/02/community-power-project-celebrates-energy-milestone/>
- ♦ 3 October, 2019: 'Yackandandah takes one step closer to 100% renewable energy', *One Step Off The Grid* website <https://onestepoffthegrid.com.au/yackandandah-takes-one-step-closer-to-100-renewable-energy/>



Ron Boulton checking out the Selectronic SP-Pro battery inverter at the VPP launch, Yack Public Hall

