

# TRY TALKING



Totally Renewable  
Yackandandah

Dec 2019

## Wrapping 2019

This year has seen Yackandandah take some big steps in the quest toward 2022. So a massive thanks to all those who supported progress whether that be reducing your energy use, adding solar or batteries, or even opening your mind to the vision of a clean energy transition. Certainly the advantages are massive for our town.

We have been in the fortunate position to ease in a second solar and battery offering to help those who missed out on the first offering of 2017. This was closely followed by a solar hot water and CO<sub>2</sub> heat pump offering, with a total of 24 installations underway and some folk still finalising plans. TRY was also fortunate to receive a little over \$104,000 to couple with local funds to install solar systems on 10 public buildings – three with batteries. This will form a bedrock of public generation as we strive for energy to share amongst the town and include a suite of microgrids.



*TRY committee members and their families celebrate the end of a busy year in Ben Gilbert's big shed.*

Also of massive note, is the first offering of Indigo Power! A pivotal linkage between clean energy, local benefit and local trading. Moreover, the community owned retailer will provide a platform for community owned solar and battery systems to ensure we can meet the energy demand when the

sun is not shining. This represents a huge effort by many – and therefore massive congratulations.

More internally, a huge thanks to the TRY executive and committee members for their unstinting volunteer focus. This includes a huge amount of work by Donna Jones to launch the terrific Energy Coaching program and Juliette Milbank for her work with others in focussing on more reliable communication!!

Special note to the Yackandandah Folk Festival for their enduring financial support to TRY. Likewise, big thanks to Into Our Hands Foundation, FRRR and a diverse range of funders supporting projects by Indigo Power.

And finally, wishing all a calm and safe Christmas and summer break. May you not be too affected by the forecast extreme heat and omnipresent threat of fire. The summer helps to underline the importance of an intentional and urgent transition to clean energy. And the best news, Yack has helped demonstrate this transition can be hopeful, effective, affordable and achievable.

— Matthew Charles-Jones

## Yack Community Energy Hub launch

Great excitement was afoot on November 28 as the Yackandandah Community Energy Hub was launched with 130 people filling the Yack Public Hall.

An attentive crowd listened to Cathy McGowan AO, Cr Jenny O'Connor (Mayor of Indigo Shire), Matthew Charles-Jones (TRY Chairperson), Rod Jones (Manager, Distributed Energy Resources, Mondo) and Ben McGowan (Managing Director of Indigo Power) speak about the energy hub. Matt, Rod and Ben then took questions from the audience to further explain how it all worked.



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In the intervening two weeks over 50 people have now signed up to the Yack Hub, which is the product of three years of hard work by TRY, Mondo and the newly formed Indigo Power. These residents will now be able to trade locally generated renewable energy.



*An enthusiastic full house attended the Community Energy Hub launch at Yack Public Hall on November 28.*

Power that can't be supplied locally is imported from the grid and is fully carbon offset. As community-scale storage and generation projects are added to the local mini-grid, more local energy will be available for trading, and it all contributes to the 2022 goal – 100% local renewable energy!

Updates to the Mondo Portal in January will allow people to keep track of how much power has come from other members of the hub, and the grid.

In February of next year Indigo Power will be holding an equity crowd funding campaign, allowing people to become shareholders of Indigo Power. At that time, it will also be rolling out community energy hubs in other towns across the region.

TRY and Indigo Power are also working hard on a community *big* battery to be installed at Ben Gilbert's new workshop, and recently christened *Yack 01!* We'll keep you updated but we expect it to be complete by May next year.

TRY are very pleased to have a very diverse range of contributors, ranging from business, state and local government, to make the energy hub a reality. If you're a Yackandandah resident, you can

get further information and sign up by going to [www.indigopower.com.au](http://www.indigopower.com.au).

— Ben McGowan/Juliette Milbank

## Third microgrid update

December marks a big leap in progress on the Twist Creek / Bells Flat Road microgrid as the installations near completion. This third Yackandandah microgrid is located on the south western edge of the town. In total nine solar and battery systems will be installed representing a high proportion of the 33 eligible households.

Those that have elected to purchase the subsidised batteries will pair them with solar panels and a Mondo Ubi, a smart energy management system. Additionally, five households are replacing old electric storage hot water systems with smart and highly efficient CO<sub>2</sub> heat pumps. Already households are getting a huge kick out of knowing that most of the power they are using is all crafted on their own home! Hooray!

Totally Renewable Yackandandah is managing the program with funds provided by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning – plus the residential investments. Mondo has been contracted to deliver the microgrid control platform and conduct the testing. Long time partner, Solar Integrity is completing the technical installs and ensuring systems are operating at their peak performance throughout the trial.

This project follows the national award winning (Clean Energy Council) microgrid project on another Single Wire Earth Return (SWER) system on the edge of Yackandandah. This work seeks to understand how our existing electricity network can more effectively manage increasing volumes of renewable energy and very uneven power demands. At the same time residents will enjoy the benefit of much lower power bills and the added confidence of knowing they have a back-up



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power supply during outages and emergency events.

Huge thanks go out to all the participating households and we expect they will be rewarded with a great insight to the new energy future.

— Matthew Charles-Jones

## 2040 screening

TRY was present at the screening of the uplifting *2040* on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December during the Yack Arts Festival. With a section of the film devoted to distributed energy resources, the TRY 5-stage plan and ethos was a perfect match. Denis Ginnivan, Matt Charles-Jones and I chatted to local residents and even got a few expressions of interest in the Yack Community Energy Hub retail offer.

The film was a stunning illustration of the strategies and technologies that can change the way we live and address climate change all at once. Many people left feeling uplifted that solutions are out there – we just need to use them!

— Juliette Milbank



*Denis Ginnivan talks to Jack and Ali Pockley at the 2040 screening at the Yackandandah Public Hall.*

## Looking to 2020

With the Virtual Power Plant established on 10 Yack buildings, Indigo Power trading electricity, and the community-scale battery, now known as *Yack 01*, to be installed in the next few months, TRY and Yackandandah are scaling the 5-stage plan with the summit of 2022 in sight. As we leave stage 4 and start the last hike through stage 5, we're busily marshalling resources for the final trek.

Grant applications have been submitted to map out the path for a mixture of a 1 MWh battery and a 4 MWh pumped hydro storage facility. Smaller grants are also being gathered to expand the Virtual Power Plant by adding solar panels to another 5 public buildings in the township. And the energy coaches program is helping locals to save money and energy, reducing their bills and making better use of their power, whether from the grid or their own solar generation. Yackandandah is humming along in that quiet, no fuss, clean solar-charged motivation that powers without polluting.

There's still a lot to be done but the end is tantalisingly in sight. So as the year draws to a close and 2020 entices and scares us with possibilities, have a think about what else you could do to embrace a cleaner, more community-minded form of power and the best way of bringing your friends and family along too. Our future is a communal one as we support each other through times that are concerning but reach out and grab the opportunities that will lead us in a better direction.

— Juliette Milbank

## Hot tips and links

Some tips for keeping cool this week!

<https://www.choice.com.au/home-and-living/cooling/home-cooling/articles/top-ten-cooling-tips>

<https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/goodliving/posts/2018/01/keeping-cool-efficiently>



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