

TRY TALKING



June 2019

Welcome

A warm welcome to everyone – it's been a while since the last newsletter but a lot has been happening despite the lack of news! TRY has in fact been forging ahead with the five-step plan and as a newcomer I am impressed with what they have achieved. My name is Juliette Milbank and I am an engineer, writer and now, a newsletter editor. I've volunteered to help with communications, so we can keep you up-to-date every few months. And firstly the TRY committee would like to acknowledge our partners and all the people across the Yackandandah area for their courage and ambition to reach 100% renewables and own their energy future. Read on to see TRY's progress towards the 2022 end goal.



One of the recent milestones: Yack CFA volunteers with their new 13kWh LG Chem Resu battery

Donate to help build Australia's first community- owned big battery and receive a tax deduction!

June is tax time. Make a deductible gift to TRY to supercharge our 100% renewable future.

TRY is currently working hard to make Australia's first community-owned medium-scale battery become a reality. The 250 kWh battery will be charged by the sun during the day, and will power up to 30 Yackandandah homes during the evening. But batteries are expensive, and the system will not pay for itself unless the cost of the battery is subsidised by \$150,000.

The good news is that \$40,000 has already been pledged (Hooray!)

Can you help us raise the rest?

Into Our Hands Foundation has set-up a tax-deductible fund just for TRY members to donate to this project. You can donate by visiting this link:

<http://intourhandsfoundation.com.au/totally-renewable-yackandandah-fund/>

The donation platform issues a tax receipt immediately.

This battery will be the first of its kind, and perhaps our most important step yet toward 100% renewable Yack. Let's dig deep to make it happen!

Questions? Give Matt Grogan a call on 0428 529 705.

Stage 5 on the way

Totally Renewable Yackandandah (TRY) and Mondo have worked together over the past 3 years to develop a 5-stage roadmap to reach Yackandandah's 100% renewable goal.

Stage 5 focusses on community-scale generation and storage, such as a small to medium-scale solar farm with storage, or a pumped hydro facility.

Matt Grogan and Mark McKenzie-McHarg have been engaged by TRY courtesy of a grant from the *Into Our Hands Foundation* to do some pre-feasibility and, if appropriate, feasibility work on stage 5.



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Over the course of the work undertaken by Matt and Mark, it has become evident that 5 key preliminary components are needed to justify developing a business case for a project:

1. a suitable site;
2. planning/ environmental approvals;
3. the right asset mix;
4. grid connectivity; and
5. a PPA*/ finance.

A crucial part of this is identifying suitable sites that may be available on favourable (sub-commercial) terms.

Two preferred sites have been identified. The project that looks the most promising is a solar and battery facility at the old Yackandandah Sawmill site, owned by the indefatigable TRY member, Ben Gilbert.

Matt and Mark are working hard to fit the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle together so that Yack locals can soon rely on local, renewable electricity at all times of the day and night. The only thing stopping this project going ahead is... YOUR DONATION.

[Please give generously](#) to this project (see link on first page) so that we can build Australia's first community-owned battery.

— Matt Grogan

* Power purchase agreement

Public virtual power plant

In April TRY was successful in securing \$104,000 to match \$80,000 of local funding for the Halls project. The funds will be used to install solar panels on ten community buildings in and around Yackandandah, including batteries at the Yack CFA and the Yack Public Hall. Since the grant was allocated, the Sports Park Committee have also had a big boost from Indigo Shire and

YCDCo, allowing the addition of 10 kWh of LG batteries.

After a long process this project will be complete in the next two months. At that time extensive media coverage will be offered and we can celebrate cheap bills for local voluntary groups and a great energy system that will join the mini-grid – with the functionality of the Mondo Ubi.

Huge shout out to the relevant committees, the Into Our Hands Foundation, Yackandandah Folk Festival, Solar Integrity, Selectronic Australia and Indigo Power.

— Matt Charles-Jones



Osbornes Flat Hall during the recent installation of its new solar system

Indigo Power

TRY, Indigo Power and our industry partners, have been working towards an electricity retail offer to be launched initially in Yack. The offer aims to facilitate electricity sharing (solar to solar, and solar to non-solar). There are two things that have been slowing us down:

1. changes to the electricity retail code;
2. high wholesale electricity prices.



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These are now close to being resolved and we hope to have a retail offer in the third quarter of this year.

In the meantime, we've launched north east Victoria's first community owned solar power system at the Old Beechworth Gaol. The system has a capacity of 30 kW (89 panels) and is expected to generate up to 50% of the site's electricity needs, saving over \$1000 pa in costs. We're expecting to be able to roll out this business energy solution at other sites in the near future.

On behalf of the North East Community Energy Network, Indigo Power is also coordinating an energy efficiency hot water bulk buy, offering best price Apricus Evacuator Tube hot water systems, and Reclaim Energy heat pump solutions. TRY will be taking this offer to Yack residents in the coming months.

To stay up to date with Indigo Power news sign on through our website www.indigopower.com.au.

— Ben McGowan

New membership fees (Hint: they've gone down!)

After some thought we have decided to change the levying of membership fees to both reduce administration overheads and better reflect the egalitarian nature of TRY benefits.

Membership of TRY will commence on receipt of a one-off joining fee, and each year TRY will contact members to confirm whether they wish to maintain the membership of the organisation. Upon confirmation this will be maintained for the following 12 months, and there will be no ongoing membership fees. Membership also ceases if a member advises they do not wish to continue, or TRY is disbanded as a volunteer organisation.

We have made this change as it was felt the time and cost involved in recovering renewal fees – which had been set at \$5 – did not reflect the monetary value, but of course you can still make a donation to TRY at any time!

Expect a confirmation email each year one month prior to the AGM, which will be held during September this year – the date will be confirmed shortly.

— Kim McConchie

Hot tips and links

Check out Mondo Power's website on energy hubs, microgrids and Ubi's. There's even a section about TRY under Energy hubs:

<https://mondo.com.au/community>

A few TRY members are currently testing the UBCO utility EV bike to see how it performs in north east Victoria. With two electric motors, one for each wheel, it doesn't need a clutch or drivetrain and has a top speed of 50 kph and weighs 65 kg. It is suitable for off-road and on-road purposes. Check out the bike specs here:

<http://www.ubcobikes.com/au/>



This UBCO EV bike from New Zealand is currently on loan to TRY.

