



Yack01 Community Battery Launch

TRY and the journey

I'm Dr Juliette Milbank and I'm the President of Totally Renewable Yackandandah or TRY. We, alongside Indigo Power, have brought this community battery to fruition after two years of planning, fundraising, and implementation.

But the journey started much earlier than that. When TRY was formed in 2014, it was born out of a knowledge that technology was providing new, accessible solutions. Climate change was weighing heavily on some people's minds and others knew that new technologies could provide transformative opportunities. There was a yearning to do something, to be proactive in a world that was seemingly not.

The Yackandandah community had already shown their mettle in other projects, starting a community owned petrol station, YCDCo, the Yackandandah Folk Festival, and restoring the town museum, a heritage building that had been burnt out by fire.

There was a desperate desire to tackle the issue of climate change but also a realisation that this could provide opportunities for the town.

Electricity is so important to our lives that we cannot imagine life without it, and reducing costs, increasing reliability and providing resilience in times of disaster is extremely valuable.

The local utility provider, AusNet Services also saw the improving technology changing the way that people viewed their power. They saw the challenges that was going to cause. They knew that to stay relevant they had to be proactive. And when a small group of Yackandandah locals came knocking on their door, they didn't shut it in their faces but instead they listened. And their subsidiary Mondo has been instrumental in our success.

So a small, highly motivated group of individuals with fire in their bellies, took a town of less than 2,000 people, that was courageous, ambitious and ready, and a utility provider with an open mind, on a journey that many thought was fanciful.

It was a synchronicity of factors that has fuelled the success that TRY has had. It has born 3 microgrids, a network of community buildings with solar and some batteries, a community energy retailer Indigo Power, a rooftop solar installation density of almost 60%, and now a community battery.

That is an enormous achievement by any standard. And we give heartfelt thanks to Indigo Power, the Victorian Government, and the many hugely supportive people who have donated both time and money to our cause.

This moment is pivotal, where we move beyond individual household installations. A community battery enables anyone to participate in the renewable energy transition, even if they can't afford solar panels themselves. Our journey's path has shown that this is doable and we hope that other communities will be inspired and helped to follow their own paths too.