

TRY TALKING

Mar 2020



Challenging times

It has been a tumultuous few months here in north-east Victoria, as it has for many parts of Australia this year. We were lucky that Yackandandah and nearby towns were not directly affected by the bushfires, but many in our region were and the recovery efforts will take months and years to play out.

Members of TRY have been volunteering in some of the bushfire areas, passing on their experiences with resilient power systems that can give communities a little more independence and aid quick recovery in times of disaster. As we work towards making Yack 100% renewable by 2022 and giving our own community assets resilient power systems, we hope that our experiences will help others too.



Victorian legislative committee for the Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change, pictured here with TRY committee members, visited Yack in February

There have been some brighter spots in amongst the challenges though. The Victorian government's Climate Change Inquiry visited

Yack and were impressed at our progress and plans.

We were thrilled to be able to present our efforts to them and believe that they took away some important points to add to future government initiatives.

A fantastic podcast on north-east Victorian community energy groups was also launched and both TRY and Indigo Power each scored an episode. Check it out if you can – further details below – the other episodes are also excellent.

As we navigate the strange landscape of corona virus restrictions and social distancing, the Indigo Power Community Energy Roadshow has been converted to online webinars for the moment until we can gather in large groups once again. But Yackandandah has hit the 2 GW energy generation milestone last month and is about to hit the 100 customer mark with Indigo Power. So there is every sign that our small community will power through these challenges and forge its own path.

— Juliette Milbank

Indigo Power roadshow update

What a momentous summer we're having. Due to first the bushfires and now the corona virus outbreak, the Community Energy Hub Roadshow was first delayed and has now been converted to webinar events for the immediate future.

Last weeks launch in the King Valley on March 12 went ahead as planned, and the



Yackandandah Investor launch proceeded in a highly modified format on March 16.

TRY and Indigo Power hosted the Yackandandah Investor launch (following on from the Community Energy Hub launch last November), with a shortened format with no supper, to minimise time and contact between participants. A dedicated 35 people turned out to find out more about buying shares in our home grown energy retailer.

However, with the ongoing escalation of measures to prevent corona virus spread, it was clear that we needed to cancel the public version of the Roadshow. This is obviously disappointing, and puts pressure on our plans, but we know communities in our region will be ready to support projects that create local benefit once the recovery begins.

If you were thinking of attending the roadshow or would like to hear more about joining Indigo Power as a customer, or the opportunity to become an Indigo Power shareholder, you can find information on the Indigo Power Roadshow page:

<http://indigopower.com.au/roadshow>

At this stage there are webinars for:

- Beechworth, 24 March, 6 pm
- Wangaratta, 25 March, 6 pm
- Bright & Upper Ovens, 26 March
- Whole north-east region, 1 April

There will also be two webinars specifically for those interested in becoming a shareholder.

- Shareholder info #1, 22 April
- Shareholder info #2, 30 April

RSVP on the Roadshow page, or for general information, go to the Indigo Power website.

So far there are 154 shareholder expressions of interest, with many selecting a minimum share

purchase of \$100. The low minimum amount means that you don't need a big income to participate. It is hoped to reach 300 expressions of interest before the offer closes by the Easter long weekend.

In another milestone, Yackandandah is approaching the magical number of 100 residents that have signed up as customers for Indigo Power!



Indigo Power

— Ben McGowan/Juliette Milbank



Matt Grogan addressing the crowd at the Indigo Power Roadshow launch in the King Valley on March 12

Vic government Climate Inquiry visits Yack

As a result of the diverse efforts with renewables across Yackandandah, last year TRY submitted a paper to the Victorian Government's Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities. Subsequently TRY was fortunate to host the Inquiry committee in Yack on February 13.

This gave the opportunity to draw together Yackandandah groups that are focusing on creating a healthier environment. This included Arts Yackandandah, the Folk Festival, Plastic



Wise Yackandandah, Yack Community Centre and the Indigo Shire Council.

After we told the story of TRY in the gallery of the Yackandandah Public Hall, we visited buildings in the main street to show some of the simple yet profound change underway: bubblers in the main street, the museum, YCC, supermarket and the CFA.

Arriving back at the hall, Plastic Wise and Indigo Power offered an inspiring insight to their effort to tread more softly. Thanks to all involved! It's so good the Victorian Government are examining how communities are already working hard to reinvigorate local community and reduce emissions.

— Matthew Charles-Jones



Matt Charles-Jones shows the legislative committee the solar and battery system at the Yackandandah CFA station

Voices from the North East podcast

Green Energy Videos has now released the fourth episode of *Voices from the North East*.

The podcast series looks at community energy groups, including TRY, and examines the amazing things that community energy groups are doing with economic revitalisation and energy localisation and asks how non-experts can achieve so much!

The indefatigable Simon Duncan has produced the series with the help of some background research from TRY member Juliette Milbank.



TRY's episode is coming up soon, but with other episodes on Indigo Power, Totally Renewable Beechworth, Sustainable Upper Ovens, RAW Energy and Beyond Housing, we highly recommend it. You can check it out here:

<https://www.greenenergyvideos.com/podcasts>

Solar Homes program

Have you been thinking about your next steps in renewable energy and the inevitable shift to clean energy and storage?

In particular for Victorians, now is a great time to look closely at the rebates available. The Victorian Solar Homes program is offering strong rebates for eligible residential properties and awesome battery subsidies for people with 5 kW solar systems in eligible postcodes.

Access to the program does require that your combined household income is under \$180,000 and that the property is worth less than \$3M. For more information please refer to the link below.

<https://www.solar.vic.gov.au/>

TRY is offering to work with people within the Yackandandah area to assist planning through the steps. Please email us at:

info@totallyrenewableyack.org.au



Try TRY!

To give you a little more insight into TRY, we've started a series on member perspectives. It details the experiences of members and the relevance that being part of TRY brings to them.

The first one is by the TRY secretary, Kim McConchie, who moved to Yack three years ago and was quickly introduced to TRY by one of his neighbours.

He's never looked back! You can find his thoughts on the TRY website at:

- <http://totallyrenewableyack.org.au/2020/03/blog-member-profile-kim-mcconchie/>



Kim McConchie at his property outside Yackandandah

Hot tips and links

Another new feature on the TRY website is a blog on our renewable energy journey. The first post was by Matt Grogan on the resilience that community-owned energy projects can give small communities in times of natural disasters. Check it out here:

<http://totallyrenewableyack.org.au/2020/01/the-power-to-rebuild/>

And Matt Grogan also found himself in the local paper recently:

"TRY wants to be the model for bushfire areas", *The Border Mail*, 23 January 2020, <<https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/6592963/solar-energy-supply-could-prevent-fire-victims-going-without-power/>>.

For exciting developments on renting a solar installation on your roof, read this:

"Tindo Solar prepares move into solar rental market", *Renew Economy*, 20 March 2020, <<https://reneweconomy.com.au/module-manufacturer-tindo-solar-prepares-move-into-solar-rental-market-86945/>>.

And for those with an interest in technology, look at this article on an innovative solar thermal generation and storage facility with fully dispatchable power near Mildura:

"World first solar power plant in western Vic", *ARENA Wire*, 19 March 2020, <<https://arena.gov.au/news/plans-for-world-first-solar-power-plant-in-western-victoria/>>.



Will Fowles MP, Danielle Green MP, Paul Hamer MP and Darren Cheeseman MP, part of the Climate Change Inquiry, enjoyed their tour of Yackandandah on Feb 13

