

AIMS AND SOURCES. by John Beale, Feb 2021

This document aims to serve two purposes. Firstly to summarise a suggested approach for community renewable energy projects in NSW and secondly to provide an overview of projects already undertaken or planned in NSW.

The Community Power Agency was formed in 2011, incorporated as a not-for-profit worker's cooperative in 2015 (see <https://cpagency.org.au/about/our-story/>). They have written "community-owned renewable energy, a how to guide"¹ which lays out the steps involved in getting a CORE (community owned renewable energy) project going as well as examples of such projects in NSW and around the globe.

SUGGESTED APPROACH.

1. Engage your community
2. Define your vision
3. Choose a technology
4. Develop the detail of the project
 - a. community organisation to which people donate or a new legal entity in which community invests?
 - b. Identify partners needed such as Bendigo Bank, an electricity retailer, QPRC, engineering consultant?
 - c. who will make decisions?
5. Develop the business model
 - a. Project cost, how money will be raised and timing
 - b. How electricity will be sold and income
 - c. return on investment and its distribution within community
 - d. operating, maintenance and decommissioning costs
6. Project management
 - a. Hire a coordinator?

- b. Fundraising, how to manage this, reaching the target
- c. Keeping key stakeholders happy
- d. technical expertise including project management

Three resources are recommended:

1. C4CE at <http://www.c4ce.org.au/node/48>
2. PlanLoCal at [http:// www.planlocal.org.uk/pages/renewable-energy](http://www.planlocal.org.uk/pages/renewable-energy) a very diverse website covering a wide range of topics via PDF and video
3. Community Energy Scotland at <https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/3000/https://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/917/0115761.pdf>

Items 2 and 3 in this list may be useful for ideas. Of greater interest the first specifically covers, inter alia, solar projects, wind farms, investment models and mini hydro projects. There is sufficient detail in this document and the "community-owned renewable energy" document to guide BCE in taking the first steps towards implementation.

CORE PROJECTS IN NSW

In 2014 there were over 45 communities setting up CORE projects in NSW. The NSW government was actively supporting CORE projects through the Regional Clean Energy Program (RCEP) which employed six Regional Clean Energy Coordinators.

1. Recently RCEP released \$411k as short term funding for pre-feasibility and assessment activities for nine projects in NSW
2. Project facilitation support was available from the Regional Clean Energy Coordinators
3. Other resources were provided including research into community attitudes to wind, the challenges and opportunities facing CORE projects etc.



CORE projects in Australia in 2019.

Solar CORE projects in NSW¹ p. 19.

These include:

1. Cleanas (Newcastle, <http://www.cleanas.org.au/>)
2. Central Coast Community Renewable Energy Association (Woy Woy, <https://cccommunityenergy.org/>)
3. Repower Shoalhaven (Nowra, <https://www.repower.net.au/>)

4. Farming the Sun (Lismore/North Coast, <https://farmingthesun.net/>)
5. Pingala: Community Renewables for Sydney (<https://pingala.org.au/>, see below)
6. Embark (Sydney, <https://c4ce.net.au/>, see above under recommended resources)
7. Portland Community Solar

More recently (2020) the Regional Community Energy Fund² has granted funds to 7 projects:

Recipient	Project Title	Primary technology and capability	Location (closest town)
Byron Bay Solar Farm Holdings	Byron Bay Solar Farm + Battery Storage Facility	5 MW Solar PV 5 MW / 10MWh battery	Ewingsdale
Energise Gloucester	Gloucester Community Solar Farm	0.5 MW Solar PV	Gloucester
Community Energy for Goulburn	Goulburn Community Dispatchable Solar Farm	1.2 MW Solar PV 0.4 MW / 0.8MWh battery	Goulburn
Pingala - Community Renewables for Sydney	Haystacks Solar Garden	1 MW Solar PV	Grong Grong
Manilla Community Renewable Energy	Manilla Community Solar	4.5MW Solar PV 4.5 MW / 4.5MWh battery 2 MW /17MWh hydrogen energy storage system	Manilla
ITP-NHT DevCo	Orange Community Renewable Energy Park	5 MW Solar PV Up to 5 MW / 5 MWh battery	Orange
Enova Community Energy Ltd	Shared Community Battery Scheme	1 MW / 2MWh battery	Regional NSW

My research to date indicates that none of projects listed above (13 in total) is directly comparable with BCE's plans, namely none have a pumped hydro component.

I have recently (12/2/2021) spoken to Zarak (0282292874 or 0458966168) regarding the Regional Community Energy Fund. He confirms that there are no funds so far this year and no Regional Clean Energy Coordinators. He recommended that BCE talk to the seven projects listed above, contact the Community Power Agency (<https://cpagency.org.au/>), I have summarised their suggestions above under **SUGGESTED APPROACH**) as well as Frontier Impact Group (<https://www.frontierimpact.com.au/>). He is also looking for any other resources and promised to let me know what he finds.

¹ <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/communities/cpa-community-energy-how-to.pdf> (2014)

² <https://energy.nsw.gov.au/renewables/clean-energy-initiatives/regional-community-energy>