***REB Action Group***

**MINUTES**

**Monday 10 December 2018, 7:30pm Benalla Uniting Church**

1. **Present:**

Kevin Smith, Larissa Montgomery, John Lloyd, Adrian Howden, Peter Maddock, Frank Dunin

1. **Apologies:** Cath Botta
2. **Review of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

*Motion: That the minutes of the meeting of 10 September 2018 be accepted*

Moved: Kevin Smith 2nd: Larissa Montgomery All in favour

1. **Business Arising**
   1. REB Website – Committee needs to keep reviewing and providing input. Getting quite a few people looking at it. Peter is updating with anything relevant coming through.
   2. BZE Electrifying Industry forum postponed due to lack of registrations. Will reschedule for next year, probably February.
   3. Solar Gardens – Kevin has done some investigation into several different types of solar garden models. Enova in QLD is one example, has retail arrangement with a community energy retailer. Would be potential for Indigo Power to do similar. Another option is to fund a solar farm and work with a retailer to sell the power. Will keep an eye on the situation, especially in relation to progress of Indigo Power and future opportunity to partner. Also solar farms and whether could incorporate locally owned aspect.
2. **Correspondence**
   1. None. General correspondence in regards to organising the BZE Electrifying Industry launch.
3. **Action Groups – report on action plan to implement key strategies**

6.1 Buildings and Efficiency – report from John

Look at survey from last session and need to start thinking about how and when to run the sessions next year. James Bramwell from SV was involved in the BZE Energy Freedom Home project and may be able to provide some advice / assistance. James is also looking at how to encourage more local regional businesses to become accredited under the VEET scheme.

6.2 Sustainable Builders / Tradies

No report. Cath is hoping to return to the group next year.

6.3 Solar and Community Energy – report from John

John received the kindergartens energy data and got Fronteir Impact to analyse the data. Only a small system would be required and low usage so returns may not make it financially feasible as a community energy project (if administration costs outweigh income from power purchase). Insurance may also be an issue to consider. Have registered an EOI with Mondo to get quotes.

6.4 Utility Scale and Storage

Adrian had another meeting with Council. Have set up a phone meeting with FastOx early next year to discuss. Interested to talk more once have set up a process in US for whole package (not just the vessel) and gain better idea of costs. One system running and two pilots in US. Adrian has access to documents that would help with the feasibility study process, EPA approvals etc.

1. **SPARK Conference**

REB were given two tickets to the two day SPARK conference by the Community Energy Roadshow. John and Larissa attended in September and gave a verbal report on some of the key messages which included:

* Tackling energy poverty important
* Need to ensure vulnerable people are not left behind during the transition to renewables
* Community energy opportunities
* Get local governments to offer more than lip service, need financial commitment
* Social housing upgrades
* Lack of understanding about energy bills
* Need to challenge electricity retailers
* Packing messages, the way the message is delivered is just as important as the message
* Powershop Community Energy Projects funding available
* Darebin have declared a climate emergency

1. **Check back to Transition Strategy**
   1. List of achievements to date and unfinished actions distributed.
   2. Next steps – have a workshop meeting in February next year to detail and prioritise actions to work on for the next 6 months. Promoting and raising the profile of REB important. Should also meet with the new CEO and present to Council next year. Also presentation to the Community Plan Implementation Committee may be helpful. Also need to think about/prioritise what REB could approach FRV for. Need to consider approaching Powershop for funding of a community energy project.
   3. John will distribute some reading and research in preparation for the workshop meeting - Renew articles on TRY Yak and Uralla. Uralla website also worth a look.
2. **Mondo Bulk Buy**

John, Kevin and Sandy organised a street stall over two weekends at the end of November. Had to pay fee for the Permit but Mondo will pay. Didn’t get a lot of interest, may have only had 10-12. John will get an update from Matt on how many registrations were received before the cut-off date. There was an article in the Ensign last week.

1. **Community Energy Retailer**

Still progressing with all of the background work. Was talk of solar on the Old Beechworth Gaol. Still aiming to start operating early next year. Once we know what is happening we can start publicising.

1. **General Business**

11.1 John attended the BZE AGM in Melbourne as an invited guest speaker and gave a overview of REB. BZE are wanting to get more involved in regional areas. Transurban are using zero carbon concrete for their operations. May be an opportunity for Benalla concrete factory.

11.2 Kevin, Peter and John met with South Energy, developers of proposed Goorambat solar farm. Looking at a 75MW farm, don’t have connection approval yet. Indicated that a certain % of profits would be given back to community. Was suggested that they should consider PPA with Henderson’s, Concrete Factory and Schneider’s.

11.3 John attended a SV workshop in Melbourne on batteries and microgrids.

11.4 EV charging stations – Council needs to be proactive in regards to getting EV charge stations in the municipality. Some reluctance for free service. Council involved in project looking at a Hume touring route which would include the install of charging stations at strategic locations. Larissa to continue to follow up.

1. **Next Meeting**

Suggested 11th or 12th February 2019

Possibility of day time meetings was discussed. Will look at next year.