

MINUTES

Monday 13 January 2020, 10:00am Benalla Council Offices

1. Present:

John Lloyd, Adrian Howden, Kevin Smith, Sandy Campbell, Frank Dunin, Larissa Montgomery, Punarji Gunaratne

2. Apologies:

Peter Maddock

3. Review of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Motion: That the minutes of the meeting of 18th November 2019 be accepted

Moved: Adrian Howden 2nd: Frank Dunin All in favour

4. Business Arising

4.1. Screening of '2040' film was held on 11 December, approximately 160 people attended and were supportive of the themes of the film. Brian from DELWP, John and Peter Holmes took part in the Q&A following the film. A few younger people showed interest in getting involved.

5. Correspondence

No correspondence received, or will be discussed under other items in the agenda.

6. Action Groups – report on action plan to implement key strategies

6.1 Waste to Energy – report from Adrian.

Response from DELWP, on behalf of Minister Lily D'Ambrosio, circulated to group. Adrian is organising a Skype conference with companies. Adrian hoping to have more information for next meeting.

6.2 Community Energy Project – report from John

John met with David Blore and Trish Brooks who have joined the action group. Looking at a project management proforma. Comparing a few different models, still think donation/Corena type model is easiest. Will try to get a few more to join the group. Will discuss with kinder as progress occurs. Sandy commented that we need to ensure the highest quality Teir 1 panels are used, John confirmed this will be a requirement of the loan.

6.3 Energy Efficiency sessions – general discussion

How can we encourage greater energy efficiency across the community? The sessions were not very well attended so need to look at a different approach. TRY Yak have energy efficiency coaches. John is trying to get some more information on this. Sandy suggested talking to younger people and get their thoughts. Rather than a climate strike, could have an information session for young people. Puna suggested we could have a model house with a virtual house tour that could be done in one session. A few people attended most of the sessions so will follow up with them to see if they have implemented any of the suggested actions.

7. Grants for Micro-grid Feasibility Studies

The email received from TNO Consultants regarding virtual power plants vs microgrids was circulated to the group. John asked whether a virtual power plant would fit into the grant guidelines. Puna believes it would, it would just be a step above. Puna has been in conversation with consultants, who have suggested we work with Tango, need to check what's in it for them / what is the catch. Waiting and preparing for an application in the next round of funding. Consultants want profile of REB to inform application. Consultants don't want any payment to develop application, will recover costs through the project if successful.

Have phone meeting with Tango and TNO Consulting tomorrow, January 14, @ 12:30 to 2pm, all welcome to attend.

See notes from phone meeting at end of minutes.

8. Community Engagement Strategy

8.1. Distribution of communication materials

Adrian will follow up with the real estate agents to see how many pamphlets have been taken and replenish the stands.

8.2. Influencers and informal network

Adrian will draft an article for the Ensign seeking interested people wanting to help. Another previous suggestion was to have sustainability drinks, need to consider.

9. North East Community Energy Network

9.1. Hot water bulk buy

Eight enquiries were received from Benalla, one has gone ahead and six are still active. One decided not to go ahead and stay on gas. A few of the enquiries were because they wanted to move away from gas.

9.2. Community benefit from solar farm developers

Ongoing, still in discussion.

AEMO has decreased the feed in capacity of some solar farms after the projects have been completed – potential to jeopardise the viability of some farms.

Indigo Power launched in Beechworth in November. Expecting to launch in Benalla early in 2020.

10. General Business

None

11. Next Meeting

Monday 17th February, 10am, Council offices

Tuesday 14 January 2020, 12:30pm

Benalla Council Offices

Present:

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

In Melbourne - Punarji Gunaratne, Kathy Trayling (TNO Consulting), Joshua Mutch (TNO Consulting), Paul Idzes (Tango)

- John gave an overview of REB – will email to Kathy. Kathy has a copy of the transition strategy.
- Kathy suggested in house meters are a good way to engage with people and get them thinking about energy efficiency. Though most people should have access to Ausnet's My Home Energy portal. Ausnet probably have relatively high network charges.
- Solar and storage likely to make more sense at these rates.
- Within the Benalla LGA there is approximately 26% solar installation rate
- Community energy retailer establishing in the area, Indigo Power
- There are a lot of community energy groups across NE Vic
- Tango is an integrated retailer and could provide solar and battery capability. Part of Pacific Hydro, a generator and retailer. Generates a lot through wind and hydro.
- Tango have strategic procurement with solar providers, no frills marketing, competitive rates.
- Hybrid invertors can disconnect from the grid and be an 'island', continuing to control battery and solar if there is a power outage.
- Where are the current constraints in the community? Mt Bruno / Warby Ranges. Cherry farm with 20kW system had previously considered micro grid. Also many SWER lines in the municipality.
- Demand response – virtual power plant, would work in tandem with mini grid.
- Waste to energy could also be incorporated.
- New battery standards and installation requirements, will they impact? Paul didn't think so but there may be situations where battery installation is not possible as won't be able to meet the requirements.
- Tango offer – would it require people to use Tango as retailer? Yes, for zero up front costs and system paid off over approximately 7 years. Then owned.
- Any potential for larger / central battery? Can get expensive with network tariffs.
- A device similar to Ubi would be part of the system
- Enterprise Park could be a potential solar garden and mini grid
- REB would need to carefully consider any offer made to the community after last experience with Mondo.
- Paul asked whether some invoices could be sourced to get an idea of network charges and tariffs