

## MINUTES

Monday 17 February 2020, 10:00am Benalla Council Offices

**1. Present:**

John Lloyd, Adrian Howden, Kevin Smith, Frank Dunin, Larissa Montgomery, David Blore

**2. Apologies:**

Peter Maddock, Punarji Gunaratne

**3. Review of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

*Motion: That the minutes of the meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020 be accepted*

Moved: Adrian Howden      2<sup>nd</sup>: Frank Dunin      All in favour

**4. Business Arising**

Will be discussed under other agenda items.

**5. Correspondence**

Will be discussed under other agenda items.

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

6.1 Waste to Energy – report from Adrian.

Waiting to have Skype call with plastics recycling company in next two weeks. Waste to energy company needs fairly detailed information about the type of waste, calorific values, contamination rates etc. Adrian might need to present to Council to get support. Need to know what the residues and emissions will be and amounts expected (per 100T). Katunga facility processing organics to heat and energy, neighbouring tomato glasshouse going to use the outputs.

6.2 Community Energy Project – report from John and David.

David raised concerns about the Incorporation status of REB if the group is going to start receiving funds from the community. Model rules need to be followed which includes having an AGM and setting up bank account, funds management. Issues need to be dealt with before start going into a business mode. David suggested that financial set up would need to be separate from BSFG.

Puna is going to review the CORENA loan agreement.

6.3 Energy Efficiency sessions – general discussion

How to encourage greater energy efficiency? Trying to get more information from TRY Yak regarding energy coaches. Adrian's son is working on developing a virtual tour of a house which could be used for a shorter information session.

**7. Grants for Micro-grid Feasibility Studies**

Notes from the phone meeting held on 14 January were distributed to the group. John, Adrian, Peter, Frank and Larissa attended the phone meeting – Puna was in Melbourne with the consultants. Concerns about Tango's involvement – both without knowing what the offer is and previous experience with a bulk buy. Also eligibility is still unclear, will need to clarify with funding body. Puna thought he could source some electricity bill for the information of Tango. Kevin suggested that the solar industry may experience a down turn due to supply issues from China.

**8. North East Community Energy Network**

8.1. Launch of Indigo Power

John and Larissa joined the roadshow briefing on 11/2. Were quite a few questions raised which Indigo Power will clarify and provide a better response at NECEM meeting this week. It is assumed that the

same retailer rules will apply to Indigo Power, i.e. don't have to commit to Indigo Power for any amount of time, can change retailer at any point. But to be part of a hub need to be a customer of Indigo Power. Need to clarify how long the launch will go for and therefore decide on catering options, probably finger food would be best and within budget of \$200.

#### 8.2. Revolving fund discussions

Community benefit from solar developers has moved to a different angle looking at the potential of a revolving fund.

#### 9. **Community Engagement Strategy**

Adrian will follow up with Real Estate agents and has started working on article for Ensign. Really need a volunteer specifically to look after community engagement.

#### 10. **General Business**

David and Kay presented to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities on the BSGF submission in Mooroopna on 12 February which urged the Victorian Government to adopt the most ambitious interim targets recommended by the government's independent expert panel as a minimum. Other points raised included funding for local projects, legislative changes needed for ESD principles to be implemented, Council action. Some of the questions from the panel were around what young people's opinions are. Larissa presented to the Inquiry in Wangaratta the following day on a panel of local government representatives. Discussion covered many topics including the impacts of recent bushfires and storms, health and well being, active community groups in the region, resource constraints.

Geoff Lodge GVCE approached David about his interest in discussing a potential pilot project with REB – involving large commercial solar install (approx. 100kW, 600m<sup>2</sup> roof space), no up front cost to business as they would not own the system for ~15 years but benefit from renewable energy (at lower cost?). All supportive of project. David, Kevin and Adrian to coordinate discussions with Geoff.

#### 11. **Next Meeting**

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 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