

The Energy Innovation Coop will lead the local community towards energy self-reliance and zero carbon emissions



October 2016 Newsletter

Keeping you up to date with current information in relation to anything energy. We would love to hear from you with any ideas for community energy projects, energy facts, or products you think are essential in our transition to cleaner, more efficient technologies.



Did you know....

If taken advantage of to its fullest extent, sunlight that beams on the earth for one hour could meet world energy demands for an entire year.

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About the Energy Innovation Co-operative

The Co-operative's primary activities:

1. To inform members plus the broader community about renewable energy systems and the emerging renewable energy market
2. To facilitate the establishment of renewable energy systems
3. To support community and business action towards a carbon neutral future



Co-op Event Calendar

Annual General Meeting

Where: The State Coal Mine Wonthaggi (in WTG hall adjacent to car-park)

When: Sunday 6th November 11 am- 12.15 pm

Followed by BBQ lunch

(RSVP to info@eico-op.com.au or Ph:5657 3108!)

Members and guests are all Welcome!

As per the rules of the Co-op, half the board will retire at this AGM and if they want to, renominate for a new term. Other members are able to nominate for any vacancies. They are asked to submit a letter explaining their interest and expertise, a brief CV and a completed nomination form by 30th Oct 2016.

Nomination forms are available on request.

Launch of the 2017 Community Energy Congress

Where: Melbourne Town Hall

When: Monday 27 & Tuesday 28 February, 2017

With side events on Sunday 26 and Wednesday 1 March.

The premier event on Australia's community energy calendar, the Community Energy Congress 2017 will bring together over 500 people to strengthen this budding sector. Together we will share information, develop skills, foster new networks, celebrate success and plan for action.

[Click here for more details](#)

Reminders

Don't forget to Vote!

Please don't forget to submit your vote on the special resolution. You should have received a hard copy voting paper and supporting information. If you did not receive a letter from the Co-op please ring Susan ph 5657 3108

Green Guide Advertising

HURRY the deadline is approaching!!! Promote your business by placing an advertisement in the Energy Innovation Co-operative's Green Guide!

<http://www.eico-op.com.au/shop-locally>

Free Energy Efficiency Speaker

Take advantage of an offer to community groups to provide them with a speaker to discuss energy efficiency in the home, reading power bills or other related issues. Just call 5657 3108 and we'll make a time.

From the Chair

Hello fellow travellers and welcome to our October eNews. I am writing to you from Fantastic Fremantle, where sustainability is high on their agenda - check it out [here](#) – it's inspirational!

The Energy Innovation Co-op Board is excited to announce the Southern CORE Fund, which will be launched by Bass Coast's out-going Mayor Jordan Crugnale, at our Annual General Meeting on November 6th at the State Coal Mine Wonthaggi. The Fund is designed to receive donations and make them available to communities to purchase their own renewable energy systems. Funding will be made available through a combination of donations and no interest loans. Creating this Fund is a huge step forward for Community Owned Renewable Energy (CORE) in our region. The EICo-op Board and no doubt our members are very pleased to support communities in this way. Please come along to the AGM to hear all about how the fund will work and how members can help. In the meantime you could look up the [CORENA Fund](#) for some ideas about how the Southern CORE Fund will work.

At the AGM we will also be presenting the proposal – “Old Energy – New Energy”. This exciting initiative is a partnership between the Energy Innovation Co-op and Parks Victoria and aims to install 80kw of renewable energy to generate power for the State Coal Mine among many other exciting developments, such as an Energy Innovation Centre and interactive displays on energy use in the Mine Museum. Come along to hear all about where we hope we can go with this partnership.

We will also formalise the motion to change our constitution at the AGM. This change will mean we can apply for DGR status and enable donations to the Southern CORE Fund to be tax-deductable. As the application for DGR status takes some time, we are exploring a partnership with the Bass Coast Community Foundation where they will manage the fund in the immediate term. We will explain these arrangements in the presentation on the Fund.

Wow, the debate over renewables has been interesting since the storms in South Australia. I think it's great when these conversations get going, because we can really see where people's thinking is at.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the AGM, 11 am on November 6th. Lunch will be provided, so please RSVP with any dietary requirements. After lunch we will take a walk around the Mine site to see where we are hoping to install the 80 kw solar array. You might like to go down the Mine for a tour while you are there – there is a 2pm tour or we can arrange an extra one if there are lots of people interested. See you on the 6th!

Moragh Mackay
Chair – Energy Innovation Co-operative

Active Hope Day a Great Success



It was a day of activism at its best. Forty-one like-minded and passionate people travelled from Warragul, Phillip Island, Wonthaggi and surrounds to gather at the Outtrim Recreation reserve on 5 June to discuss ways in which our community can band together to play our part in keeping to below an increase of 1.5 degrees C in global temperatures.

The day was an initiative of the Energy Innovation Co-op and was facilitated by the current chair Moragh Mackay. “The Active Hope Day was about members and friends of the Co-op sharing ideas and spreading news of innovations in the community renewable energy sector and associated community initiatives, such as Bass Coast Waste Watch. Innovative ideas can take a long time – 10 to 25 years – to become widespread. We hope to reduce that time by promoting and supporting innovations across our community.” says Moragh.

With a presentation from Manny Pasqualini from the Community Power Agency, there was a lot of discussion about the potential of community solar gardens and what our community can do to open the eyes of our politicians in regards to investment into renewable energy and the concept of Community Powerhouses and the benefits they offer to the environment, creating local jobs and keeping more revenues in Australia.

“Community Powerhouses are designed to unlock the potential of community energy in Australia. The aim of these powerhouses is to support and scale up the existing grassroots movement to increase local community clean energy access, affordability and innovation” (Fund Community Energy, 2016). What is

meant by community energy? “Community energy is where a community develops, delivers and benefits from sustainable energy projects. This can include supply-side projects such as renewable energy installations and storage and demand-side projects such as energy efficiency and demand management. Community energy can even include community-based approaches to selling or distributing energy” (Fund Community Energy, 2016). Should you want to learn more about Community Powerhouses, please visit <http://www.fundcommunityenergy.org> which has a wealth of information and tips on how you can become involved.

Greens Candidate Donna Lancaster, Labor Candidate Chris Buckingham and the Bass Coast Shire Council Mayor Jordan Crugnale were also present and participated in valuable discussions about the importance of collaboration to achieve common goals. Current Macmillan Liberal MP Russell Broadbent sent his apologies although will meet with Co-op representatives soon. The Community Power Agency have approached the State Government to secure its support for field trials of the Solar Gardens initiative and the EI Co-op and Bass Coast Council are keen to host one of those trials in this region. “We will work with Council and the Community Power Agency to determine how we can make this happen” said Moragh.

There was great energy in the room with a lot of passion and ideas being discussed, not to mention the local food banquet. When asked about the success of the day, Moragh commented that “it was great to see so many people ready for this type of gathering. Over 40 people listened to and advanced their collective thinking about community energy, Solar Gardens, battery storage, a locally-based revolving fund and waste minimisation. They will spread these ideas further through their networks and hopefully spark enthusiasm and activity for these great initiatives.”

There was a strong appetite for groups and organisations collaborating to pool their collective knowledge and resources and avoid duplicating each others’ efforts, such as the Communities Making Energy Together or ComMET initiative. There was also great support for the EI Co-op setting up a physical location where renewable energy system demonstrations could be accessible to the public, to get hands on with the technology and access impartial information.

We can co-design a hopeful future. To do so requires a collective effort, so if you are inspired to participate please contact the Energy Innovation Coop via info@eico-op.com.au to discuss ways in which you can get involved and find out about upcoming events.

200 attend the Battery Storage Night



The partnership between South Gippsland Shire's Sustainability Team, Mirboo North Community Energy Hub and Energy Innovation Co-op led to a packed hall in Leongatha on the evening of Tuesday 23 August.

200 people were given more facts about solar PV and the battery storage technology which is creating so much interest as power prices rise and energy suppliers continue to confuse and annoy their customers.

The focus of the night was on providing sound factual information. Speakers wanted to encourage community interest, but also warn of the need to do proper and careful research before acting.

Craig Hunter from Selectronic Australia, which is the only Australian manufacturer of inverters, advised on many issues and questions which potential battery customers should consider, including understanding their particular household requirements, how essential it is to research products and companies rather than blindly accepting over-blown claims, and obtaining written product guarantees (including carefully checking the fine print).

John Ballis, CEO of Grid Edge and a member of the Ranges Energy Co-op which operates from the Dandenong Ranges, listed the different types of batteries available, providing advantages and disadvantages of each type, including the familiar flooded lead acid, through improved lead acid (Gel, AGM), nickel iron, lithium ion, flow (zinc bromide), salt water and sodium nickel chloride batteries.

No battery is perfect for everyone's needs or requirements, hence the importance of carefully weighing up individual circumstances. Some are more expensive, more dangerous to handle, more environmentally damaging or less proven technology than others. Some require more maintenance, are bulkier, but may last longer and give better quality power "draw-down".

He advised listeners to "beware misinformation, use a CEC accredited installer and consider the cost to the environment before making a purchase".

Andy McCarthy runs Gippsland Solar, a Mirboo North and Traralgon based

company which has installed 2,500 PV systems, including 30 battery systems. He spoke of the ways his company calculates, from the customer's own power usage and lifestyle, whether and what kind of system would best meet a particular householder's needs. He warned of the advertising "hype" that can sometimes take over the market.

But Andy also discussed the oft-expressed notion of waiting for prices to come down, saying that an extra couple of years of waiting for prices to come down also means an extra couple of years of paying high power bills- and that the two just might cancel each other out.

At various stages both Ian Southall from Mirboo North CE Hub, and Susan Davies from the Energy Innovation Co-op as well as others, emphasised the priority for all households and businesses to "pick the low hanging fruit", ensuring the essential first step is to reduce energy wastage.

"Energy efficiency measures, sometimes very simple ones, directly reduce energy bills. They also reduce the size and cost of any solar PV or battery system which you might install, leading to big savings." said Susan.

"The Co-op has an open offer to come to any community group gathering to provide ideas and advice on energy efficiency, and we have contact with qualified energy auditors who can (for a price) do more detailed home and business energy audits. We will also, with others, continue to investigate renewable energy, batteries, and to develop community owned renewable energy projects in this region." She said.

Heidi Hamm, South Gippsland Shire's Sustainability Officer, reported "We were thrilled with the night. It is fantastic to see so much interest from the local community in sustainable energy production. The night went off without a hitch thanks to the great cooperation and work from the Energy Innovation Co-operative and the Mirboo North Community Energy Hub. The three presentations were fantastic and very relevant to our local community."

Responding to suggestions of the need for such events, Mirboo North's Ian Southall pointed out that "The thirst for knowledge on battery storage for households and business around Gippsland is growing and the reason why these nights are so popular. This was our 5th event of the nature across Gippsland, with nearly 1000 residents attending so far. So more nights are planned."



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