

# Statements of Support



*Community owned renewable energy is a fantastic opportunity for all of us to participate in developing clean energy. Not only is community owned renewable energy a great way for us to improve our environment, but it is also an opportunity for regional communities to come together and benefit economically.*

**Rob Stokes, NSW Minister for the Environment**



*ARENA recognizes the importance and potential of community energy in Australia. We are pleased to have funded the development of the National Community Energy Strategy which has informed this set of strategic priorities, as well as the Community Energy Congress where the Coalition for Community Energy (C4CE) was launched. C4CE has been a driving force for community energy in Australia. ARENA looks forward to supporting the growth of a vibrant community energy sector in Australia.*

**Ivor Frischknecht, CEO of ARENA.**



*C4CE is an important new initiative to advance the community energy sector. With a commitment to deep collaboration, building strong relationships, sharing knowledge, ideas and energy, the activities they undertake will have nation-wide benefits. They will help to change a system owned and operated by a few dominant private entities to one owned and operated by the people. The results of their work will have long-lasting impact.*

**Lindsay Soutar, Founder and National Director, Solar Citizens**



*The NSW Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH) is a strong supporter of the community energy sector. OEH's Regional Clean Energy Program has provided more than \$500,000 in grants and other initiatives to date to help grow this sector with more funding allocated for 2014/15. The establishment of C4CE has been a critical milestone in bringing together the skills and experience of dedicated individuals while also providing a voice for the sector as a whole. OEH was proud to be a major sponsor of the inaugural C4CE congress in Canberra in June and looks forward to continuing to work with the Coalition over the coming years.*

**Mark Squires, Senior Team Leader, Clean Energy, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage**



*The Moreland Energy Foundation Ltd stands on the shoulders of 100 years of community based energy supply. Our organisation is proudly the first not for profit organisation in Australia dedicated to supporting its community shift to a renewable energy future but we excited by many communities across Australia undertaking the same journey. C4CE is such an important initiative, bringing together communities, organisations, government and the private sector to explore and establish community energy initiatives. C4CE has a clear and coherent strategy to build a strong national movement. We're proud to support such an initiative and look forward to contributing to the shared vision.*

**Bruce Thompson, Moreland Energy Foundation**



## GROWING the Australian community energy sector



[www.c4ce.net.au](http://www.c4ce.net.au)



# The Context...

**Across the world communities are playing a pivotal role in the transition to a sustainable energy future.**

In Germany over half of all the renewable energy installed is **now owned by communities and individuals**; in Scotland there are now over **500 community energy projects**; and in Denmark more than **200,000 people own shares** in community renewables cooperatives.

**Indeed the countries with the strongest renewable energy policy have the largest community energy sectors.**

## So what is community energy?

Community energy projects are those where communities are involved in and benefit from any or all aspects of the energy system, including project development, implementation, ownership, sale or saving of energy. This could be through a small-scale solar PV installation, a community-owned electricity retailer, a community-run energy efficiency program, a community partnering in a large renewable energy development or a mid-scale community owned wind farm.

## Why community energy?

Community energy projects help to decarbonise, decentralise and democratise our energy system and demonstrate that a clean energy future is possible. Further, community energy projects ensure thousands of citizens have a direct stake in a clean energy future. These citizens become connected with other citizens through the shared ownership in a community energy project and can then be mobilised to defend and advocate for changes we need to support this clean energy transition.

**Community energy is a win, win, win, win, win – bringing environmental, economic, technological, social and political benefits to communities and the broader clean energy movement.**

## What's happening in Australia?

Here in Australia, there are now 11 operating community energy projects and a further 60 in development. However, the community energy approach is still new to Australia. As such there are many challenges that need to be overcome before we can realise the vision of a vibrant community energy sector with hundreds of projects benefiting communities across the length and breadth of Australia.

That's why, this year, ten organisations came together to launch the Coalition for Community Energy (C4CE) using a collective impact framework. Since launching, the membership of C4CE has now grown to over 30 organisations in less than two weeks, with many, many more anticipated to join in the upcoming month. C4CE has also launched a National Community Energy Strategy, outlining a series of objectives and priority initiatives to grow a vibrant community energy sector.

We also held the inaugural Community Energy Congress in Canberra, which brought together 340 community energy stakeholders from every state and territory across Australia.

## Our vision

C4CE's vision is for community energy to become mainstream, enabling residents, business, industry and government to better collaborate and more easily build community energy projects for the benefit of all communities across Australia.

Community energy creates community cohesion, empowerment and sustainability. The community energy sector is characterised by its collaborative ethos and a commitment to meeting energy needs in ways that are fair, inclusive, empowering and sustainable.



2014 Community Energy Congress

# What needs to be done?

**Building on the great work done as part of the National Strategy, the C4CE Steering Group has identified a program of work for the next 12 to 18 months. This program of work includes the most urgent and important initiatives we need to realise this shared vision of hundreds of community energy projects across Australia.**

With your help, **C4CE aims to achieve** the following outcomes in the next 12-18 months:

1. Replicate proven and viable community solar power models to at least 20 communities across Australia.
2. Grow the Coalition for Community Energy to have over 100 members from right across the community energy sector, creating a powerful voice and platform for information sharing and collaboration.
3. Put community energy at the centre of the Australian energy policy debate, including:
  - a. Defending the RET to the benefit of all community energy projects
  - b. Establishing a federal government grant program for community renewable energy projects
  - c. Expand the existing NSW and ACT Government support for community energy
  - d. See the establishment of at least one more dedicated state government (Victoria and/or South Australia) program to support community energy.
  - e. Create new regulation to enable community energy projects to have more than 20 non-sophisticated investors
4. Build a business case for a new town-based model of community energy
5. Increase the cost-efficiencies of community energy projects through shared administration services.
6. Build the community energy knowledge and leadership of at least 10 local governments across Australia.
7. Develop and initiate a community energy communications campaign with the aim of mainstreaming community energy
8. Expand the functionality and knowledge of the Embark Wiki as the central repository of community energy information and project templates.
9. See at least two pilot off-grid community renewables projects in development



## ABOUT C4CE

C4CE is governed by a Steering Group of member elected representatives and its program of work is coordinated by a Secretariat. This Secretariat function is conducted by the Community Power Agency ([www.cpagency.org.au](http://www.cpagency.org.au)), who has been a driving force behind the establishment of C4CE for the past two and a half years.

C4CE uses a collaborative collective impact [governance model](#). This means that C4CE will coordinate the implementation of these [strategic initiatives](#) through the collaboration of member and other organisations (being those with the best expertise, experience and interest for each strategic initiative).

## What we need from YOU is ...

A conversation to understand your potential interest in the community energy sector. Based on this conversation we will then tailor a funding proposal for you.

We are seeking 2-3 years of funding to continue the work of building a viable and vibrant Australian community energy sector, leverage significant government funding and private investment and deliver on at least the 9 stated priority outcomes.



Image from Hepburn Wind