

MEDIA RELEASE

Goulburn Community Owned Solar Farm \$2.1 million Grant Success – Just add batteries!

16th December 2019 - Community Energy for Goulburn (CE4G) has secured a \$2.1M grant from the NSW Government which will enable the addition of battery storage to the community owned solar farm project on the outskirts of Goulburn.

The grant is part of the NSW Government's Regional Community Energy program.

President of CE4G, Ed Suttle, said that the planned battery storage is believed to be the first for a community solar farm anywhere in Australia. He said that the grant will give certainty to local people who want to invest in the project, now that it's been backed by the NSW government.

"This shows that regional, community-led groups can lead the way in supporting innovation," he said.

"It gives a terrific boost to Goulburn's image as a 21st century city, playing its part in addressing global warming," said Mr Suttle, a local farmer.

"Since we started this project, the technology has improved so rapidly that we are now able to build a 1.8 MW farm instead of 1 MW at less than the original cost. And because batteries are now an important part in stabilizing the grid, the NSW Government has seen the advantage of batteries and are supporting the project with this substantial grant."

"We are very grateful to the NSW Government for supporting the project. We simply would not have been able to include a battery component without the assistance of the NSW Government," said Mr Suttle.

CE4G was set up four years ago to build a 1MW solar farm that would be owned by Goulburn residents, who could invest as little as \$500 to become a part owner of the project.

Mr Suttle said that one of the main benefits of community energy is that the profits from the sale of the energy stay in the community and assist to diversify the income profile of Goulburn, which until now has been mainly primary industry.

"The project has had a few twists and turns along the way, adjusting through a tumultuous time in the Australian energy market. The grant validates the project, and now we have a clear path for approvals then fund raising. The hard work really starts now," said Mr Suttle.

Development partner, Komo Energy, who have been engaged to bring the project through its approval stages and secure a contractor to build and connect to the grid, were instrumental in securing the project.

"We have seen communities around the world take it into their own hands to make change happen. The addition of a battery will showcase the newest technology, allow the solar farm to tap into better pricing, and operate as a solar stabilizer that will increase reliability in the grid. We hope this will encourage more community renewable projects to include storage to help meet peak demand," said Jonathan Prendergast, from Komo Energy.

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