

Shoalhaven Solar Farm Project Update

A team of six Repower volunteers convened by Bob Hayward has been working diligently over the past two years to plan and implement a community-based Solar Farm in the Shoalhaven. A meeting to brief Repower members on progress was held in December 2018, and second briefing was held on 25 July 2019

At the 2018 briefing session, members were told about the involvement of Repower, with Shoalhaven City Council support, in an ARENA funding study, managed by Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS to explore the requirements to develop social access solar farm. At that stage, the essence of the project was a not for profit community-owned scheme, developed and operated for the benefit of the Shoalhaven community. The old North Nowra tip site was identified as a potential site for the proposed solar farm

At the recent July 2019 briefing session, Bob Hayward made a presentation about the substantial progress that has been made during 2019 and the slide pack he used can be found on the Repower website <https://www.repower.net.au/>

The key developments have been:

- The proposed lodgement of an application for grant funding from an NSW Government \$30 Million “Regional Community Energy Fund.” Our application will be lodged for phase two of the grant process later this year – providing the fund is still open at that stage.
- Support from Council to utilise a different site at BTU Road in Nowra because, at this time, the North Nowra site is not available due to an existing Native Title claim. This new site can accommodate a 4 MW (DC) solar farm on roughly 4ha of the land and is close to suitable power lines. Details of the proposed installation are shown in the slide pack.
- The capital cost for the solar farm is now estimated at \$4.5 Million.
- Endeavour Energy, as the relevant Energy Wholesaler, has agreed in principle to connect the Solar Farm to the grid at the new location although significant planning and expense is required to finalise arrangements.
- We are in detailed discussions with a reputable Energy Retailer to establish a partnership to help with project planning; to support our grant application; to buy and distribute the output from the Solar Farm, and potentially invest in the Solar Farm.
- The July Strategy and Assets meeting of Shoalhaven City Council resolved to endorse the proposed Solar Farm funding model that contemplates a possible investment by the energy retailer and to lease the BTU Road land for the Solar Farm.
- There are continuing discussions about various funding models as cost-effective funding is obviously critical to the success of the Solar Farm project. The Repower community will be approached about possible investment opportunities associated with the Solar Farm as the project model is further developed.

If you have any queries about the project after reading this material, please contact Bob via bob.hayward@repower.net.au The team welcomes any feedback about the approach and status.

