

Title	→	Flinders Community Battery Community Reference Group meeting
Purpose	→	Agenda & Minutes
Meeting date	→	23/11/2023
Meeting #	→	#1

Flinders Community Battery – Community Reference Group

A Community Reference Group (CRG) established as part of the community consultation process for a Flinders community battery project.

Agenda

#	Item	Lead	Time (mins)
1	Welcome, apologies and governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any new conflicts of interest Previous minutes confirmation 	Chair	5
2	CRG overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose, responsibilities, term, negotiables (as per ToR) 	Chair	10
3	Project introduction & overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project purpose, inception, drivers, funding, key stakeholders 	MPSC / YEF	20
4	Site identification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site selection process Criteria for site selection Why the King Lea network 	MPSC	15
5	Q&A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open discussion 	All	20
6	Next steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Information event 25 Nov Next CRG meeting Relevant project deadlines/milestones 	MPSC / YEF	5
7	Other business	Chair	5
8	Close	Chair	

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Attachments

- Meeting agenda
- Terms of Reference (updated)
- Background brief
- Engagement timeline
- FAQs

Action register

#	Details	Owner	Date	Status
1				
2	ACTION: MPSC/YEF to explore feasibility of area near St John's church as potential site.	MPSC/YEF	ASAP	
3	ACTION: MPSC/YEF to explore feasibility of NM's address/area as a potential site.	MPSC/YEF	ASAP	
4				
5				
6				

Questions and issues register

#	Details	Raised by	Response	Action required (Y/N)
1				
2				
3				

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Minutes

Meeting number: #1

Date: 23 November 2023

Time: 2 PM – 3:30 PM

Format/location: Online (video recorded)

Other attendees:

Marie Lakey (Chair)

Timothy Shue (Minute-taker)

Stephanie Delaney (MPSC)

CRG attendees:

Nadine Lecocq – Flinders resident

Lisa Carew – Flinders resident

Stephen Hare – FZCC rep

Naomi Murray – FCA rep

Warwick Beard – Repower MP rep

Apologies:

Jacquie May – Flinders resident

Martin Heskett – Flinders resident

Meeting commenced 2:01pm

Welcome, apologies and governance

- Stephen Hare (SH) – representing FZCC. Has electrified his home. Has been involved in local community projects.
- Nadine Lecocq (NL) – her and husband are owners of property (heritage listed home) near shortlisted site. Quite disappointed in the short lead time and lack of information provided about the project thus far. Want to ensure transparent process and clear messages about the project.
- Warwick Beard (WB) - President of Repower Mornington Peninsula, FZCC are a satellite group of Repower. *Noting Repower have been nominated by Council to administer the 'Community Benefits Fund' where any profits from the operation of the battery may go.*
- Lisa Carew (LC) – lives near corner of King and Lea. Would like to know where it will be placed, if it will be safe, what the fire risk will be, concerned about noise. Not keen on four large fridge sized infrastructure and keen to understand if there are better options.
- Naomi Murray (NM) – *noting Naomi had some technical issues connecting but joined about 15 minutes in.*

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- Stephanie Delaney (SD) – provided some background/context on Council's strategic priorities including executing on the climate emergency plan and reducing emissions.
- Tim Shue (TS), Chief Operating Officer / Marie Lakey (ML), Communications & Engagement Officer – from Yarra Energy Foundation (YEF). YEF engaged by Council to support this project's community consultation and project coordination.

CRG overview

- ML: Summarised purpose and scope of the CRG, including key negotiable areas the CRG will be able to influence, and expectations and responsibilities.
- ML: Noted that CRG members can cease involvement by emailing marie.lakey@yef.org.au

Project introduction & overview

- ML: Provided overview of timeline of project thus far and key dates upcoming, including community information session on 25 November 2023. This project is funded by a grant from the Federal Government (\$500k), awarded to Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC).
- *Meeting recording started 2:26pm*
- ML: Provided overview of the project, funding, stakeholders, site selection considerations. Solar penetration noted as one key indicator for the type of low-voltage network which could suit a battery (refer to PowerPoint presentation).

Site identification

- ML: Presented on some of the key selection criteria which were considered in identifying potential sites for a neighbourhood battery in Flinders.

Q&A

- LC: What is electric vehicle (EV) charging potential? How does the NB work?
- LC: How much does it cost to charge EVs?
- TS: Explained background information about the project scope, design and intention for the Battery Energy Storage System (also referred to as BESS) to be "EV-charger capable and ready". Although EV charging is *not* within scope of this project nor eligible expenditure under the grant conditions, the project team and Council wanted to see how this BESS could support future preparedness for the electric vehicle uptake in Flinders. YEF's modelling also showed an EV charger could be a significant revenue stream which could improve the profits that could flow to a 'community benefits fund'.

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- The group discussed some of the existing EV chargers in Flinders and estimated costs to charge.
- SD: Explained another benefit of the NB to reduce risks of solar curtailments, that is, limits placed on properties from how much they are allowed to export to the grid.
- LC: How safe are they?
- WB: Sees these batteries as having incredibly smart management systems, which can respond to the slightest fluctuation in temperature.
- TS: Explained that the BESS procured for this project is from a battery supplier called Pixii. This model was also deployed for YEF's Fitzroy North battery (although the older model). Explained the battery system is extremely sophisticated and has very stringent safety protocols, including monitoring and responses to temperature changes. Essentially the battery modules will auto-shutdown before any 'thermal runaway' events occurring within the cells. Explained the battery chemistry is lithium-ion based, so the same technology as in your laptops and mobile phones – so overall extremely safe and commonly used. YEF sees neighbourhood batteries as safer than an EV because it's the same technology but not moving through traffic or at high speeds. *Concerns around electric golf buggies was raised.*
- SH: Mentioned that the batteries from the golf buggies were not managed, which compares to the proposed NB which will be monitored and managed. Golf clubs now going through setting up monitoring.
- NL: How noisy would it be?
- TS: Explained that the Fitzroy North system (same model) was factory tested at 63dB at 1m from the system, with sound degrading exponentially over distance – roughly equivalent (if standing next to the system) as a dishwasher. The two sources of noise are: 1) inverters/converters when the battery charges or discharges, and the loudest source is 2) the air conditioning units which operate to ensure the battery modules can operate efficiently within certain temperature ranges. Noted the air conditioning units are the same that you would find in a residential property. Experience from the Fitzroy North system which is installed in an inner-urban residential area is that noise is a non-issue, even though it was the highest concern from those local residents. The Pixii systems was the quietest BESS YEF could find, and hence was one of the main reasons why it was selected.
- NL: What are the options for other sites?
- NL: Also noted that there has not been the governance, transparency, or the consultation they would expect. Keen to understand on the place in particular, what is the consultation to get views over a significant period of time so that everyone feels heard and informed.

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- SD: We're now turning to the CRG for knowledge and input, it has been a learning process. We're talking about this NB as being located somewhere in Flinders – the initial two sites were Council's preference based on the environmental conditions, site preparations that would have been needed. These sites are not welcomed based on the initial feedback, so Council is exploring other potential site options within the same low-voltage network and if needed elsewhere in Flinders. Noted the network (DNSP) is United Energy. The feasibility study was done over 12 months ago so Council has gone back to United Energy to see if there has been any change in the solar penetration in the network to inform any other potential sites. This data changes regularly.
- SD: Noted very little land in Flinders is owned by MPSC, most of it is owned by the State Government (or state bodies). Council is restricted by the timeline and mandate that the battery needs to be installed in Flinders. There are other considerations that Council is considering about other potential sites, which also includes the type of consumption on the low-voltage network, to allow it to function as a 'solar soaker', which is one of the core aims of the project and that it aligns with the needs of the network manager (United Energy). United Energy must provide approval for battery connection, therefore the battery must not impinge or cause issues (like significant additional demand/load).
- NL: Has found it incredibly difficult to find information on the project and that it has not been transparent.
- NM: Highlighted some information has been provided on the FCA website.
- ML: Shared the upcoming timeline and explained the process moving forward will provide many opportunities to share information about the project and take feedback from the community.
- SD: Highlighted over 64% don't live in Flinders permanently, hoping to potentially organise some drop-in sessions over the December-January period. FZCC volunteers have offered to attend to share information and gather community feedback.
- SD: Highlighted the FZCC website will be the main source of up to date information.
- NL: You don't know what you don't know, so various channels including drop-in, website, meetings, FCA etc. If you are a resident who comes and goes in Flinders it can be hard to get that information. Every resident in Flinders should receive direct communication informing them on the project. Observed some mixed messages out in the community.
- SD: Clarified that MPSC had sent a letter to all residents in Flinders, over 1,200 properties both physical letters and digital letters. Acknowledged it is tricky and took steps to try to inform all Flinders residents. After this distribution Council also felt it was necessary to supply an extra communication to local residents (the second letter for nearby residents, which may have caused

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some confusion and inconsistency of information being received). Council trying to cover as many channels as possible.

- *Nadine left the meeting 3:08pm*
- SH: Acknowledged Nadine's comments, that lots of people don't know what they don't know. Even though FZCC has done their best to disseminate information – and next step is to go to the next level with more detail. This needs to be supported by activities to distribute that information.
- NM: Noted FCA has been in Flinders for 50 years and had a different experience to others in receiving information on the project so far.
- NM: Noted that the hall's solar could be exported during the day, which may not have been picked up in the original feasibility study. Who owns the land behind the kinder?
SD: State government, and State also owns the land on the hall. Explained that getting State Government onboard within the timeframe of the project is unrealistic. This feedback has been provided to the Federal Government as well about the impacts of constraints like this (given the timeframe constraints).
- NM: Her and her husband would be happy to have the battery in front of their property.
- SD: Thanked Naomi for the invitation.
- **ACTION**: MPSC/YEF to explore feasibility of NM's address/area as a potential site.
- WB: Noted that FZCC in collaboration with FCA have done an incredible amount of work to date on this project, including doing their best to host meetings and early consultations on neighbourhood batteries. Hoping to see this project as a model that could be rolled out in other communities across the Peninsula, and sees this work (project) as really important.
- LC: Who owns the hopper (land)?
- SD: State Government. Also noted the battery system can't be too close to the sea.
- *Stephen Hare left the meeting ~3:10pm*
- SD: Thanked the CRG for their time, acknowledged contributions are really important.
- LC: Highlighted the proposed sites are part of a tourist route.
- NM: Have you considered approaching St John's church?
- SD: Not yet – something to consider.
- **ACTION**: MPSC/YEF to explore feasibility of area near St John's church as potential site.
- NM: Highlighted the possibility of new solar install. Likely to get support for emissions reductions activities.

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Next steps

- ML: Explained next steps, including opportunity to fill out an online survey, participate in the information session on Saturday. YEF will be in touch about the next CRG meeting.

Other business

- No other business.

Close

- Meeting closed 3:26pm