

Friday, 3 November 2023

Ausgrid installs Central Coast's first community battery

Following Ausgrid's successful installation of Australia's first community battery under the Federal Government's Community Batteries for Household Solar Program in Cabarita, it has moved ahead and installed the second in record time.

This community battery, installed in Narara on the Central Coast, marks Ausgrid's fifth community battery installation and a first for the Central Coast.

Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen joined Ausgrid CEO, Marc England and Member for Robertson, Dr Gordon Reid, to unveil the 412kWh battery to the community.

Delivered in partnership with Central Coast Council, the battery will allow customers in Narara to more efficiently utilise their solar energy. Community batteries support power quality and voltage in local areas by harnessing and storing excess solar from local homes, so more customers can install rooftop solar systems and charge their electric vehicles.

These batteries are uniquely placed to allow more renewable energy into the grid while delivering services to the wider energy market, applying downward pressure on energy bills.

In turning it on, Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen said community batteries would help both households and the broader energy transformation.

"Delivering more storage like we're doing today – enables more households to reliably access the cost-of-living relief offered by solar.

"We committed to deploy 400 community batteries to help households access cheaper, cleaner energy, and that's exactly what we're doing with the fantastic local member for Robertson, Dr Gordon Reid today" Minister Bowen said.

"Community batteries store locally generated, clean, excess solar energy for later use, putting downward pressure on household electricity costs and easing pressure on the grid."

Local MP for Robertson Dr Gordon Reid welcomed today's activation.

"The Narara Community Battery will help residents in Narara harness and store excess rooftop solar power, which the whole community will benefit from.

"Community batteries help our suburbs transition to renewable energy, reducing our carbon footprint and helping with the cost of energy.

"I look forward to continuing to be a part of a Federal Government that is committed to rolling out community batteries across Australia", Dr Reid said.

Ausgrid Chief Executive Officer Marc England said, “At Ausgrid, we are confident community batteries of all sizes attached to the distribution network will play a vital role in supporting our energy transition to 100 per cent renewables. Ultimately, as we continue to work toward making these batteries a viable storage as a service solution, the community will receive greater benefit, while greening the grid.”

He continued, “We have already received positive community feedback from Narara residents about this battery being a visible symbol of the transition towards net zero, and their desire for more across the Central Coast.”

As a result of being connected to the distribution network, both small community size and medium scale (<5MW) batteries address the local challenges of higher peak demand and the hollowing out of system demand during the day; supporting the network during peak times and avoiding the need for network augmentation that would otherwise be necessary to address grid constraints while significantly accelerating installation time.

To support its community battery roll out under the Community Batteries for Household Solar Program, Ausgrid is installing community-based renewable energy projects to further increase access to the renewable energy transition. In addition to the community battery in Narara, Ausgrid will be installing a 30.36kW solar array on the Narara Community Centre, lowering energy costs for the hub, and increasing renewable energy generation in the community.

In addition, the battery has been wrapped in custom artwork created by local first nations artist Emma Peel, titled Travelling across Country. The artwork represents the journey across Ausgrid’s network area, from Oatley to Scone, and the unique landscapes the areas encompass.

For more information on community batteries visit www.ausgrid.com.au/sharedbattery

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