

About us

The Community Power Agency was set up to support community groups in navigating the complex process of setting up a community owned renewable energy (CORE) project. We believe that democratically controlled, distributed CORE projects will bring social, environmental and economic benefits to communities across Australia.

The Community Power Agency brings:

- ⤴ Knowledge of CORE projects and best-practice from across the world;
- ⤴ Years of experience in group facilitation and community organising;
- ⤴ Extensive research into the organisational, technical, environmental and social dimensions of CORE;
- ⤴ Sophisticated policy analysis; and
- ⤴ Connection to the wider renewable energy and climate change sectors.

The Community Power Agency works alongside grassroots community groups to ensure that their project best meets their shared vision and community's needs. We run workshops, undertake research, share knowledge and provide context-appropriate advice to help advance your project.

What we offer

The Community Power Agency works to support community groups in two main ways. We offer either once-off support or ongoing partnerships. We will work with you to develop processes and content that suits your needs. Below is an overview of the types of services and support this could include. However, if this list doesn't include the support you are seeking, please get in touch and we'll see what we can do!

Once-off Support

- ⤴ **CRE project Inception Workshop.** With any community energy project there can be multiple motivations and purposes, these impact on the processes employed, technical plan, organisational structure and fundraising strategy. This workshop will clarify your group's vision and objectives and develop plans for action. It will also ensure everyone is on the same page so your project can move forward with cohesion.
- ⤴ **CRE information sharing workshops.** These workshops introduce key ideas and concepts of CORE, share success (and failure!) stories and strategies from CORE projects worldwide and relate them to your community's context.
- ⤴ **Skills based workshops.** A range of participatory workshops are available to increase the capacity of your group. They will introduce key frameworks and tools for your group to use in the development of your CORE project. Examples include group facilitation and decision making, strategy development, stakeholder mapping and engagement, engaging your community and basic media skills.
- ⤴ **Public speaking on the power and benefit of CRE projects.** Our presentations will share inspiring stories and strategies of CRE projects worldwide and would be suitable for local forums, conferences etc.
- ⤴ **CRE Research.** Drawing on our past CRE research and knowledge of the sector, we can undertake research to meet your needs and fill your knowledge gaps.
- ⤴ **Initial advice** on renewable energy technologies, criteria for technology choice and organisational structures.

Partnerships

The Community Power Agency enjoys partnering with community groups and sharing the joys and challenges of developing a CRE project. Ongoing partnerships will be developed on a case-by-case basis, in which the Community Power Agency can develop context specific programs. These will likely include some combination of the above.

Case Study: New England Wind

Currently the Community Power Agency is part of a consortium of groups involved in the development of a Community Wind Farm in New England, NSW. Our role in this group includes:

- ⤴ A research report into different possible organisational models/structures.
- ⤴ Best practice CRE case-studies, highlighting different features.
- ⤴ Analysis of different definitions of community and their implications for CORE projects.
- ⤴ Policy analysis and recommendations.
- ⤴ Community attitudes and investor profile analysis.
- ⤴ Designing and facilitating a Strategy Development Workshop.

Costs

The Community Power Agency is committed to the growth of a vibrant and effective Australian CORE sector and specifically supporting grassroots groups. We recognise that particularly in the early stages of projects, groups do not always have much money. As such, we have a sliding scale of costs negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

Who is the Community Power Agency?

Nicky Ison [B. Eng (Environ) Hons; BA Env'tl Studies]

Director

Nicky has recently returned from a study tour of 30 community renewable energy projects and organisations across Europe. She has a double degree in Environmental Engineering and Environmental Studies (Hons 1) from UNSW. As well as working for the Community Power Agency, Nicky currently works as a Research Consultant on climate change and energy at the Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology, Sydney. Nicky has been involved in the grassroots climate movement for the past decade. Some of her roles have included: founding member of the 100% Renewable Campaign; part of the organising collective for the inaugural Climate Action Summit in Canberra in 2009 and National Convenor of the Australian Student Environment Network.

Jarra Hicks [BA Dev Studies Hons]

Director

Jarra has a professional background in community development, campaigning and renewable energy. She studied Development Studies at the University of Newcastle and in 2009 completed Honors research that focused on grassroots renewable energy projects as effective responses to climate change using innovative economic practices. She is a co-founder and Director of the Community Power Agency, motivated by the power that everyday people are engaging to make real contributions to the sustainability of their communities. Jarra spent two years as the Project Coordinator of Mount Alexander Community Wind in Central Victoria. She has also co-founded and worked for a range of community organisations and social enterprises, from food to energy, advocacy to banking. In 2010 and again in 2012 Jarra completed study tours of community renewable energy initiatives in North America and Europe and spent time as a volunteer renewable energy policy advisor in Delhi, India.

Jarra is also currently a PhD Candidate at the University of New South Wales. She is researching the potential for community energy projects to contribute positive social, economic and environmental outcomes for regional communities in Australia. Her research focuses on community engagement, social enterprise models and diverse economic arrangements that community energy projects use.