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STRATHBOGIE SHIRE CHAMPIONS OF SOLAR

Strathbogie Shire Council is leading the way in all things solar, punching well above its weight heading one of the largest bulk buy solar programs in the State, and certainly the largest in rural Victoria.

Coined the 'Bogie Bulk Buy', the program has been running for 34 weeks and has now been duplicated by several other Councils in Victoria, including Murrindindi and Moira Shires, who are gearing up to imitate Strathbogie's program.

At this stage of the game, there have been 95 solar systems purchased in the shire with a whopping 479.6 kW of solar purchased, equating to almost 23,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions that our community is reducing over the lifespan of these systems.

It also means almost \$300,000 extra dollars saved on energy prices by shire residents, because they're literally saving money from the sun.

Energy professionals, Yarra Energy Foundation, manage the Bogie Bulk Buy and the program's preferred solar and battery providers Cherry Energy Solutions.

Cherry have contracted local electrical company BD North East Electrics to manage all the installations for the program.

Owner Marcus Mackrell said they have been flat out with work since the program began.

"We've put on another full-time electrician and part time admin because of the installations," Marcus explained.

Marcus is no stranger to solar himself, running his shed off the grid since he started the business three years ago.

"People are really happy about having local installers and the security of knowing Council is backing the program," he said.

Shirley Saywell, co-owner of Brady and Kibble in Euroa recently had 5kW of solar installed at the office shed through the program, having had residential and commercial solar for years.

"The earth receives more energy from the sun in an hour than is used in the entire world in one year; we're crazy not to tap this free resource," Shirley said.

"These systems are easy on the environment and easy on the pocket. Our first solar arrays (installed in 2010) have already paid for themselves."

Strathbogie Shire Mayor Amanda McClaren said the Bogie Bulk Buy is about informing and empowering the community to take control of their energy futures.

“We are focused on supporting our residents, business and producers to live better in a changing climate and to reduce their emissions, waste and income risks,” Cr McClaren explained.

“Yarra Energy Foundation and Cherry Energy will be donating a solar panel system to a community building in the Strathbogie Shire, so it really is a community-focused program.”

Residents of the Strathbogie Shire who have any questions or would like a quote for solar panels can call independent energy experts Yarra Energy Foundation on 1300 866 634, who Council have engaged to provide free advice from 9am-5pm weekdays, or visit the Bogie Bulk Buy website www.bogiebulkbuy.com.au.

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