

Council Plan 2021-2025, Section 3.1.8 Advocate to Federal and State governments for investment in reliable power supply infrastructure with a focus on renewable energy.

Reliable power supply infrastructure





The opportunity:

Power failures during peak demand periods is a common occurrence throughout Strathbogrie Shire.

In January 2019, Nagambie, Avenel, Longwood, Euroa and surrounds experienced an extended power outage lasting up to three days.

During the height of summer the heat was consistently reaching 40 degrees Celsius (Koob and Latimer, 2019, theage.com.au) and our power supply did not cope.

Outages occurred again in January and February 2020 at intermittent periods.

These repeated outages result in economic loss to retail and local industry providers and cause severe inconvenience and hardship for our residents and vulnerable citizens.

The reason: A single Ausnet electricity supply connecting Benalla to Euroa via Violet Town is the only infrastructure to service the surrounding localities.

The electricity source connecting Nagambie from Seymour is also struggling. Growing tourism, residential and commercial investment use will continue to place severe strain on the power supply along with other utilities into the future.

The lack of energy security is one of the most significant barriers to attracting new small to medium businesses to Strathbogrie Shire.

1. From left: Glen Burnside (local business owner), Shirley Saywell (EEG chairperson and local business owner) and David Mawson (Mawsons Bakery owner).



The benefits:

With a moderate climate and proximity to Melbourne and major regional areas, Strathbogrie Shire is well located to provide renewable energy generation import into the grid.

However, the lack of a secure and stable grid system prevents investment in large scale renewable energy in the region.

Council is keen to work with our communities with the view to implementing micro-grids (with battery storage and generator backup) as a sustainable means for energy security.

Council seeks funding to develop the feasibility and business case to work towards building a net zero renewable and resilient energy future over a three-stage project.

2. BD North East Electrics install solar panels on the Brady & Kibble truck wash as part of the Euroa Business Microgrid Demonstration Initiative.

3. Euroa Energy and Mondo sponsored truck trailer curtain promoting the Euroa Microgrid project

4. Microgrid stakeholders: Bruce Thompson, Shirley Saywell, The Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP, Rob Morphet, Matt Charles-Jones (Mondo Power), Charlie Brydon, Luke Scott (Globird), Tom Brown (DELWP).

This will ensure residents and businesses have independence and island-able capacity for townships on the Benalla AusNet line and the Seymour AusNet line.

This project provides for future renewables integration for the town and as AusNet advises, increases the potential for new small-medium businesses to connect to the grid that have previously been restricted due to this micro grid providing additional band width.



The ask:

One.

We ask the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) takes into consideration rural community populations and land mass in an equitable measure to densely populated areas, when applying the Regulatory Investment Test for Distribution (RIT-D) process to determine upgrade approvals.

Two.

That the Victorian Government continues to support renewable energy programs to deliver microgrids and stand-alone power systems in the regions that will ensure energy security and emergency resilience.

Three.

That the Australian Government supports renewable energy programs for our rural communities along the Seymour to Nagambie line and Benalla to Euroa line to support sustainable solutions such as microgrids and stand-alone energy systems.

Four.

We urge that the Australian Energy Regulator reviews an Ausnet line upgrade from Seymour to Benalla in the vicinity of \$20 Million, in line with current development increases in Nagambie and Avenel, particularly if renewable funding is not provided.

Profile:

“On a sunny day in Euroa the six tenanted apartments above the bakery are now making their own clean energy.

Euroa Connect, with partner Mondo Power, has installed large arrays on six business premises and linked the energy production of five of them with batteries.

These businesses are now enjoying the co-benefits of cheaper power, better energy management, sharing knowledge and being part of the change.”

“Blue sky thinking delivered this possibility.

A good bit of lateral thinking about contract renegotiation and smart sparkies did the structural orchestration.

But beyond all of that it was the commitment AND imagination of dedicated community members which made it happen!

Change is not just possible but do-able.”

Charlie Brydon
Euroa Connect



Cover image and 1.
Community renewable
energy advocate,
Charlie Brydon

2. The rear of the Euroa
Microgrid building
that houses residential
apartments and
Mawson's Bakery