



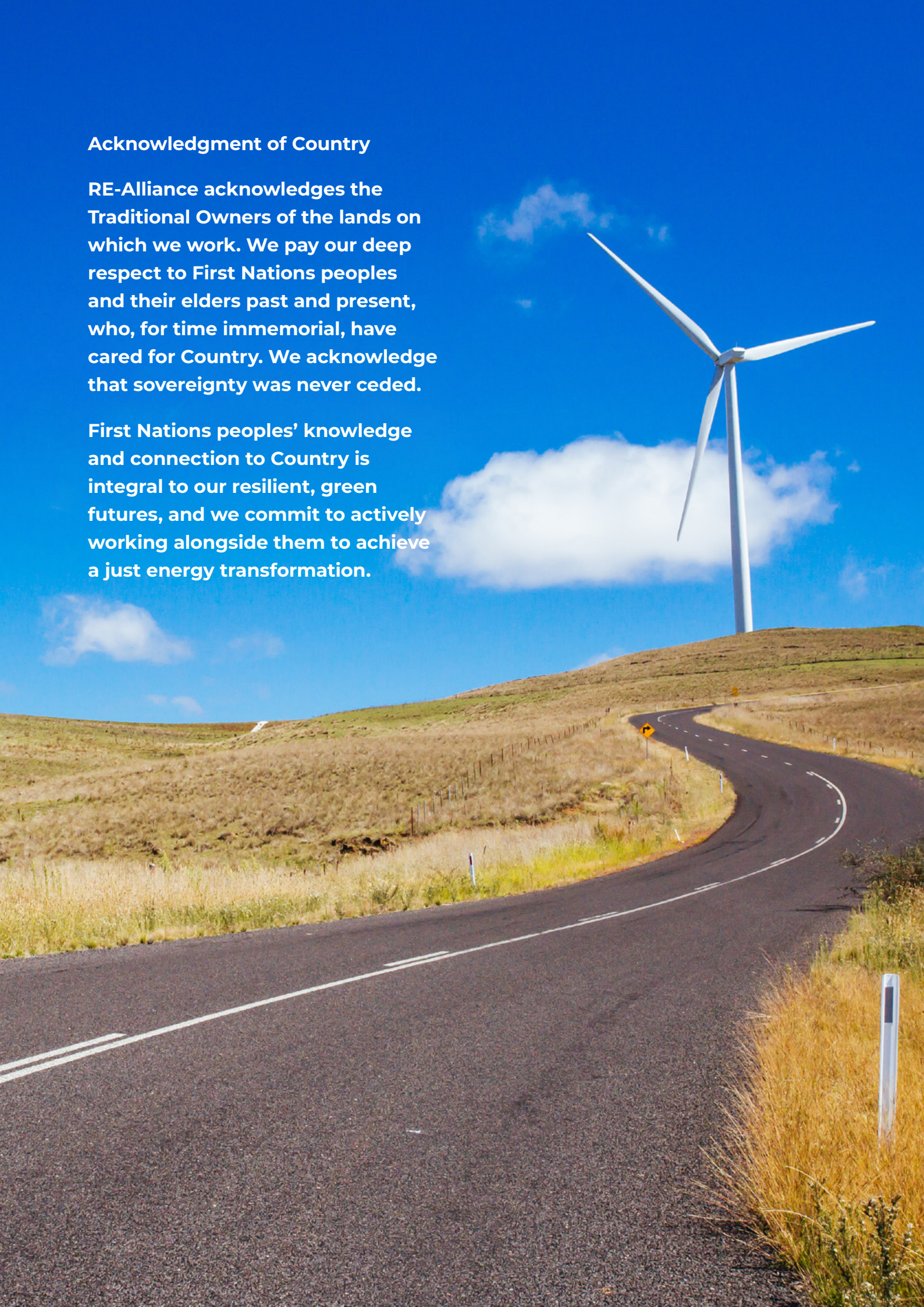
RE-ALLIANCE

Annual Report

Acknowledgment of Country

RE-Alliance acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work. We pay our deep respect to First Nations peoples and their elders past and present, who, for time immemorial, have cared for Country. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

First Nations peoples' knowledge and connection to Country is integral to our resilient, green futures, and we commit to actively working alongside them to achieve a just energy transformation.



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Message from the Director

As Australia continues to transform our energy system from fossil fuels to renewables and storage, regions must become core stakeholders and beneficiaries in the process. This is the key to avoiding missed opportunities for regional and rural Australians, and essential if industry and government are to gain the level of community acceptance required to successfully develop at the scale and pace we need.

How can we build the infrastructure we need in a way that more meaningfully engages and shares benefits with the local communities who will host it?

What knowledge and capacity do communities need to be equal partners in this discussion?

Will regional communities see rejuvenation and social benefits that make their homes better places to live? How can our state and federal energy plans integrate social and environmental constraints in order to build a better grid for our regions and the industry?

Being an active part of the solutions to these questions is RE-Alliance's key mission, a mission that guided our unique program of work throughout 2021/22.

Transmission lines are the foundational assets that will connect the new wind, solar and storage plants, and community acceptance of new projects has not been uniformly secured. Our [Building Trust for Transmission report](#) was a landmark document, drawing on community perspectives and translating them into actions for industry, regulators and government.

Our on-the-ground work in Australia's first centrally-designed Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), in NSW's Central-West Orana region, saw us undertake an extensive community outreach program, providing information and hearing views of the local community about the REZ through a series of in-person and online conversations and events.

Importantly, we brought these views directly to a roundtable of industry proponents in the region to ensure these views were reflected in local development plans.

We were active participants in policy processes as different states and territories developed their Renewable Energy Zone plans, always ensuring that community outcomes were prioritised.

Noting the potential challenges to nature and biodiversity as renewable energy projects proceed, RE-Alliance has played a central role in convening cross-sector discussions that bring together nature organisations with

industry and government. We are identifying regulatory gaps and improving practice to see biodiversity protected at the same time as the climate.

2021/22 was also a year of consolidation for RE-Alliance as it marked the first full financial year of operation under the RE-Alliance banner, having expanded from our previous wind energy-focused role as the Australian Wind Alliance in late 2020. This broadened focus has allowed us to address the full range of issues that communities face.

The election of a new federal government in May 2022 sees all state and federal governments fully committed to transforming our energy system and already we are seeing significant plans being announced. But the challenge of bringing regional communities into the discussion is only beginning to be grappled with. RE-Alliance will remain committed to promoting the interests of regional Australia in the transformation and being a practical contributor to the solutions.

Andrew Bray.



Andrew Bray
National Director
RE-Alliance

About RE-Alliance



RE-Alliance, or the Renewable Energy Alliance, is an independent not-for-profit working to secure an energy transformation that delivers long-term benefits and prosperity for regional Australia.

We start with the needs of local communities, collaborate with industry to deliver social outcomes, and advocate for meaningful benefits for regions through government policy.

Formerly the Australian Wind Alliance, in December 2020 we pivoted, recognising that a more holistic and collaborative approach to regional development was needed

with the emergence of Renewable Energy Zones. To meet this challenge we broadened our mandate to include all forms of renewable energy, along with transmission and storage.

We are passionate about leveraging the renewable energy boom to deliver the best possible outcomes for regional farmers, landholders and locals.

Our Mission

Placing needs and aspirations of regional Australia at the centre, RE-Alliance works with the electricity industry to mitigate local impacts and deliver lasting benefits; and advocates for government policies and systems to deliver a just energy transformation in line with a safe climate.

Our Vision

A swift renewable energy transformation in Australia that actively contributes to the strength and resilience of our regions.



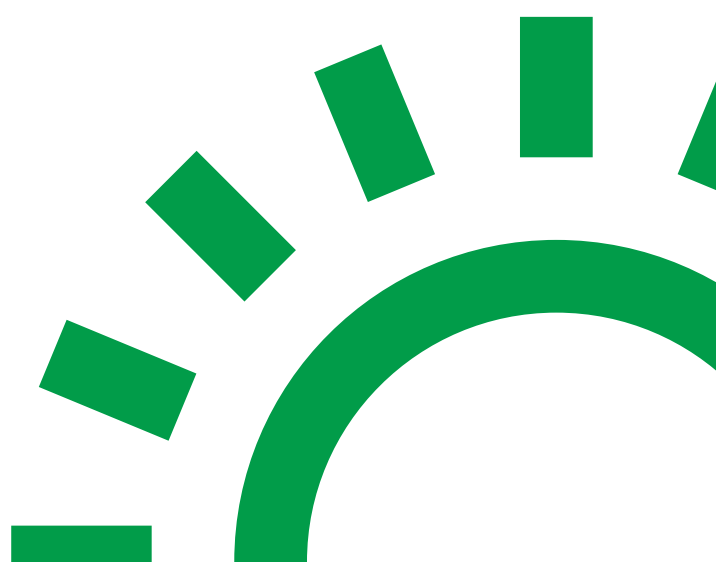
Our work in the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone



This year we continued our on-the-ground presence in the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), the pilot REZ for New South Wales. Our hope is that this REZ is a big success, not just in delivering NSW's energy needs but also for locals living and working inside the REZ.

At the start of 2022, we ran a series of workshops for the local community about the REZ and heard from a whole range of folks about their questions, hopes for and worries about the development.

There are many challenges to overcome to make sure the REZ is a success for the region. The local community is anticipating housing stress from the increase in workers to the region in coming years. Skill shortages are also a concern in some parts of the REZ where it's already difficult to find skilled tradespeople. Landholders are still finding it difficult to find the information they need to participate in decision making about hosting a project or contributing to planning applications.



We're building a community network of local leaders from different parts of the REZ who can keep each other informed and engaged in the work of pursuing opportunities for the region, which will make a real and lasting difference in the lives of people who live there.



Our Central-West Orana Industry Roundtable concluded its first year of work. We used this forum to bring community voices straight to developers working in their region and to kickstart important conversations about overcoming the challenges of the REZ.

A huge thank you to our staff members Karin Stark, Alana West and Fiona Luckhurst for their work listening to the region, and highlighting the most pressing issues and opportunities in the rollout of the REZ.

While every region has its own unique challenges and opportunities, our presence on the ground in the Central-West REZ also informs our work more broadly – specifically, our policy and advocacy work to government and industry about the challenges and opportunities faced by people living in areas of high renewables investment across the country.

Our advocacy and engagement

For our renewable energy transformation to be successful, industry and government must earn trust and respect from the communities they are operating in.

92

meetings with industry

87

meetings with community or movement stakeholders

64

meetings with government departments

13

submissions

11

webinars

08

industry presentations

They need to develop renewable energy projects and transmission lines with communities, and make sure the infrastructure delivers local benefits. Of course, this is more easily said than done.

RE-Alliance's mission in working with industry and government departments is to ensure that community interests are brought to the centre of policy and decision making around how Renewable Energy Zones are rolled out across the country. Primarily, we seek to maximise the benefits of renewables for local communities and work practically to seek solutions to the challenges of development, especially where they are geographically concentrated in REZs. By making sure communities are part of the process, we can identify better local outcomes earlier and avoid disputes and costly delays.

This past year, we have been involved in a breadth of work to this end.

Research

We produced research that sought to reflect the issues we hear in our broad community consultation and combine them with policy to recommend improved industry practice and government regulation. One example is our [Building Trust for Transmission report](#), the recommendations of which have been reflected in transmission and REZ planning frameworks released since then in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland.

Conference Presentations

We shared insights in a range of forums, including presenting at peak industry conferences run by the Clean Energy Council, Energy Networks Australia and the Energy Charter, as well as at international gatherings such as World Wind Energy Association Conference. This keeps community issues at the forefront of industry discussions.

As the year progressed, we began to facilitate the presence of regional community members at these forums to ensure that these communities were genuinely involved as discussion about their futures was taking place.



Andrew Bray at the Au Wind Energy Conference



Kate Healey at the Wind Industry Forum



Andrew Bray at the Large Scale Solar Forum

Forums

We also participated in a range of industry or company-specific stakeholder forums, providing advice, reviewing company approaches and suggesting improvements where appropriate. Some of these forums included the Clean Energy Council's Community Engagement and Social Licence Working Group and their First Nations Best Practice Guide for Renewable Energy Projects, as well as the Energy Charter's Landholder and Community Better Practice Engagement Guide. We also contributed to AusNet Services' Western Victoria Transmission Network Project External Stakeholder Group and their Energy Regional Advisory Panel.

CWO Industry Roundtables

In the Central West Orana REZ, RE-Alliance ran a series of quarterly Industry Roundtable meetings that brought together renewable energy proponents who were active in the REZ. The roundtable meetings were well attended and sought ways in which proponents could cooperate to deliver better community outcomes. Each meeting featured speakers from the local REZ communities, discussing a range of issues that were important to them and identifying opportunities for social programs that REZ developers could support, such as the Wellington arts scene, improved modes of community outreach, better coordination of biodiversity offsets, and accommodation in key towns such as Dunedoo and Coolah during project construction.

Our experience of these activities was that proponents are keen to keep developing how they engage with communities and stay abreast of the latest in community benefit sharing programs. RE-Alliance can play a role in ensuring that community interests remain at the forefront of these processes.



Central-West Orana community engagement workshop

Webinars

We used webinars to widely publicise the ideas in our work and encourage debate and feedback from stakeholders. Of course, it also served to keep in touch with people throughout the various COVID lockdown periods. We held two webinars to present our Building Trust for Transmission report and two webinars to present our Community Benefits Handbook.

Submissions

We made 13 submissions to both state and federal government renewable energy frameworks, and were pleased to see our impact on improved policies.

At a federal level, we called for a greater focus on social licence in our submissions to the Australian Energy Market Operator's (AEMO) draft Integrated System Plan and the Australian Energy Market Commission's (AEMC) Transmission Planning and Investment Review. We were pleased to see the AEMC recognise social licence as a key concern in their response, and to see AEMO establish a landholder advisory committee, which RE-Alliance specifically requested and on which we will be represented.

Additionally, early consultation with landowners during the Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) process has been adopted by at least three transmission companies.

At a state level, recommendations from our submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Renewable Energy were quoted extensively in the final report. In Tasmania, the Tasmanian Renewable Energy Coordination Framework contained seven action points that deliver recommendations RE-Alliance made both in our submission and in meetings with the department.



Kate Healey at Mudgee Field Day



Working towards a regenerative renewables industry

The last year has seen RE-Alliance take a more active role working with climate and environment organisations and the energy industry on the relationship between renewable projects and our precious places.



This work was born out of community concerns about wind farms building on the borders of World Heritage rainforest in Far North Queensland.

Tensions over renewable projects that benefit our climate but that also have impacts on nature are common, and there's not a great deal of information for communities or developers about what is an acceptable level of environmental impact for a renewable project, or the cumulative impact of multiple projects within a region.

RE-Alliance has been leading conversations between peak climate and conservation organisations, energy companies and developers about this issue.

Through our facilitation, climate and environment organisations have established a shared vision for a regenerative renewables industry that adds to the strength of the ecosystems in which they operate, rather than simply bearing impacts.

A massive thank you to Lucy Graham, Director at the Cairns And Far North Environment Centre, and Sabiene Heindl, Director of the Energy Charter, for co-leading this important work with us.

14

meetings

06

presentations

01

all-day
workshop

01

all-day
field trip

Spotlight on Lucy Graham



Lucy Graham is the Director at the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC). She has recently worked with RE-Alliance on the intersection between renewable energy and nature.

Lucy is a Far North Queensland (FNQ) local and grew up on the Atherton Tablelands. She has “a deep love for FNQ’s World Heritage Areas and the wide ranging nature that our region has.”

Prior to her appointment at CAFNEC in August 2019, Lucy has been actively involved with CAFNEC for more than five years, as a volunteer, management committee member and representative. She has strong networks with a wide range of organisations and community groups in Far North Queensland, as well as in State and National spheres. Lucy has a BA Sustainability from JCU, and has trained with The Change Agency. She is currently a board member of the Queensland Conservation Council.

Lucy thinks that collaboration with climate and environment groups in the rollout of renewable energy is essential. “The rollout of renewable energy is globally driven by the need to secure a safe climate. Climate change however, is a multifaceted wicked problem, where many of the solutions can have perverse, unseen impacts.”

“We need a collaborative approach from climate, environment and so many more sectors of society so that we have the benefit of many perspectives on the transition. Diversity in perspectives and approaches to the issues, working in collaboration, is essential when solving wicked problems like climate change – it is our greatest strength.”

Lucy has spearheaded conversations with conservationists and the energy industry across Queensland and Australia. She has led numerous workshops alongside RE-Alliance and other partners about how we start to reshape our energy system to have a net positive environmental impact, at the same time as supplying reliable renewable energy to where it’s needed.

“Collaboration with RE-Alliance has been incredible. The team at RE-Alliance are able to form successful collaborations because they are able to both empower and learn from partners in one moment. I, and CAFNEC, have gained so much knowledge, expanded our networks and created real, tangible change together by working with RE-Alliance. It’s been a real pleasure.”



Media

Over the past year,
we featured in at least

26

online stories

12

print stories

10

radio stories

02

TV stories

The Canberra Times

Regions will thrive if we become a renewables-exporting nation

By Andrew Bray

October 17 2021 - 5:25am



Wind turbines or solar panels offer alternative sources of income for farmers impacted by drought or other environmental factors. Picture: Shutterstock

Over years working with regional communities to secure benefits from large-scale renewables, family farmers have told me how lease payments received for hosting wind turbines have helped their farms.

Having the flexibility to lower flock sizes during drought allowed one farmer to preserve his precious soils. Another family were able to expand their sheep and potato farm to include pyrethrum and poppies to diversify their future income sources.



Warning for renewable energy zones: Don't repeat mistakes of early wind and solar

Michael Mazengarb 9 July 2021



State governments and transmission companies have been warned to not repeat the early mistakes of wind and solar farms as they seek the social licence to build major transmission zone to support the massive amounts of new generation planned for new Renewable Energy Zones.

A [new report from the RE-Alliance](#) says securing community support for new transmission projects will be essential to the success of REZs, and it explains how governments system planners and network companies can build trust.

"Local rural communities affected by new transmission infrastructure, and other stakeholders, deserve to be able to participate in how these projects are deployed and derive benefits from this new infrastructure and not just bear its costs and localised impacts," the report says.

Farmers, renewable energy advocates call for more compensation for hosting transmission lines

ABC Central West / By Hugh Hogan
Posted Sun 12 Jun 2022 at 9:05am



Christine Hughes does not support another transmission line crossing her property. (ABC News/ Hugh Hogan)

To reach net-zero and bring down power bills, state and federal governments have promised to fast-track the delivery of high voltage transmission lines to incorporate more renewable energy into the grid.

But with thousands of kilometres and billions of dollars in investment needed, the farmers in the firing line are calling for a rethink on how the spoils of the transition are spread across the land.

Grazier Christine Hughes already has existing transmission lines running through her property.

Key points:

- Thousands of kilometres of transmission lines need to be built across Australia to transition to renewable energy

A group of residents met to talk about the Renewable Energy Zone in Western NSW

Updated February 18 2022 - 12:19pm, first published February 17 2022 - 11:09am



LOCALS: Narramine's Karin Stark with her daughter Noa in front of their solar panels. Picture: CONTRIBUTED

A group of local residents has met online to talk about the future of the Renewable Energy Zone in Western NSW.

The Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone, was declared for the region by the state government and will help bring new wind and solar farms to towns around the area.

The Daily Liberal's article on the community engagement workshops we ran in the Central-West Orana REZ

RE-Alliance Response to Labor 43% target: solid foundation, more ambition needed

RE-Alliance

On Friday, the Federal Labor party released a 43% emissions reduction target to take to the next election.

RE-Alliance, a community-based organisation that advocates for stronger regional outcomes from the energy transformation, say this is a step in the right direction, but further ambition is needed.

National Director Andrew Bray says, "We welcome that Labor have finally differentiated themselves from the Coalition by announcing a 43% 2030 target.

"However, it doesn't quite line up with what is needed to meet international obligations and reduce the harm climate change will bring to regional Australia if we don't act."

Mirage News, 3/12/21

Plan for transmission

A renewable energy advocacy leader with a focus on a western Victorian transmission to renewables has highlighted communication as integral to winning opportunities. RE-Alliance Victoria and Tassara coordinator Tony Goodfellow attended a Greenpeace New Energy 'backbone forum' at Ararat, which brought together leaders in western Victoria to discuss a net zero by 2050 target in the region's agricultural industry.

Speakers at the Ararat forum included representatives from ThinkAgri, Toyota, COVEMiner, Regen Farmers Mutual and Western Development Association, WDA.

Mr Goodfellow said communication of renewable energy and transmission-line opportunities in the Wimmera remained integral to the capture of any economic and environmental potential.

He submitted a statement to The Weekly Advertiser about his view of western Victoria being a 'powerhouse' of a Victorian renewable transition.

This is his statement - Western Victoria is not to be the powerhouse of the state.

Australian are feeling the pressure of cost of living increases, with super-market staples and petrol prices rising, and now, the Australian Energy Market Operator, AEMO, says we should also expect our power prices to increase.

In its latest snapshot of the National Electricity Market, AEMO said households should brace for rising energy costs, which are partly the result of power supply shortages from outages at and closures of coal-fired power stations.

Plans that are more dependent on coal - NSW and Queensland - will be hit particularly hard by these increased

prices. Without renewable energy generation and, crucially, the transmission infrastructure to send the electricity where it is needed, communities will pay the price.

Western Victoria is fortunate to have plentiful sun and wind resources. We already have operational wind and solar farms - 32.5 percent of Australia's energy comes from renewable sources in 2021 - and even more are planned.

The solid ground is all this clean energy without a means to transport it to our communities, where it is needed. That's why transmission infrastructure is crucial - and a local project is already underway.

The Western Victoria Transmission Line is a critical element in Australia's energy transition. Not only will it reduce Victorian power prices, but it will also unlock opportunities for Western Victoria and play a key part in decarbonising our country.

Billions of dollars of investment in solar and wind farms throughout Western Victoria rely on this project to carry electricity to Melbourne consumers. With so much benefit for the region, it's important to plan for how the community can make the most of these opportunities - opportunities that can help build thriving regional communities.

The cost of not acting on climate change is great. The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report has reinforced the urgency of reducing emissions. It's a race against time.

Jim Skea, co-chair of the IPCC working group that produced the report, says it is 'late or never if we want to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Without immediate and deep emissions reductions

across all sectors, it will be impossible'. The transmission line will help keep our communities and environment safe by reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. The quicker we can switch to renewable energy, the more likely we are to limit global heating and mitigate the harmful impacts of climate change.

A closer, greener future with cheaper power is possible if transmission infrastructure projects, like the Western Victoria, have widespread support. But consulting with and compensating affected communities, as well as addressing environmental issues of projects, is paramount.

Community and environmental issues need to be addressed through the consent process and the company needs to ensure it abides by the code of conduct in relation to landowners and community.

Permits around the section of the line closer to Melbourne suggest there is room for improvement in how the project works with the community. We also need strong leadership from government.

Director of Monash Energy Institute Aislin Lafferty said the most important reform the government can take right now is to ensure investment in electricity grid transformation and its market policy support.

Leadership is also needed to train the workforce needed for the transition. We're already seeing the consequences of a lack of preparation in our energy transition, in the form of rising energy prices for households.

We need a plan for our renewable infrastructure, and soon, because there's no transition without transmission.

Tony Goodfellow talks about transmission line opportunities in Victoria, The Weekly Advertiser, 18/5/22

Our people

As of 30 June 2022

Staff

Our staff are spread across Australia's east coast in mostly regional areas, and are passionate about seeing regional Australia benefit from more renewable energy projects.



Andrew Bray

National Director



Lu Allan

Advocacy Manager



Kate Healey

Policy Manager



Tony Goodfellow

*Victoria/Tasmania
Coordinator*



Cait Coffey-Wong

*Digital Communications
Officer*



Fiona Luckhurst

*Community Engagement
Manager Central-West
Orana REZ*



Peter Dreher



Taryn Lane

Until 25 May 2022



Richard Mackie



Luke Osborne



Dimity Taylor



Madeline Taylor

Joined 16 June 2022



**Susan Findlay
Tickner**



Jonathan Upson

Board

Our board generously gives their time to govern and guide the work of RE-Alliance. Board members bring a wide range of skills, expertise and experience to the organisation.



Spotlight on Dr. Madeline Taylor

Dr. Madeline Taylor is RE-Alliance's newest board member. She is a Senior Lecturer in Energy Law at Macquarie University, and is passionate about a just transition for regional communities.

"One of the most important issues in the energy transition is ensuring both justice and commercial benefits for renewable energy and storage developments in our regional communities. RE-Alliance represents the values of collaboration and enablement for the successful and just distribution of benefits in our regions."

Madeline is a Senior Lecturer in Energy Law at [Macquarie University](#), Deputy Director of the Centre for Energy and Natural Resources Innovation and Transformation (CENRIT) at Macquarie University, and Honorary Associate at the [Sydney Environment Institute](#).

"My research focuses on how the law can shape our energy transition to enable co-benefits and establish leading regulation assuring strategic and holistic planning and striking the right balance for two of our champion industries: renewable energy and agriculture."

Madeline has published widely in energy regulatory frameworks and policy across complex and multiple land uses. She is passionate about a just and equitable transition for regional communities and has advised government, industry, and NGOs on issues relating to the energy transition, energy regulation, and policy.

We are thrilled to have Madeline on our board and have her expertise informing our work.



Thank you

We are lucky to work alongside many partner organisations on campaigns and policy work, and also to work in collaboration with many other established NGOs, peak bodies, experts and community groups. We thank all of them for their expertise and passion.

Thank you to our donors who understand the importance of placing regional communities at the heart of our energy transformation. Your support provides essential funding to make our work sustainable.

Our volunteer board continues to be a source of wisdom and guidance and an essential contributor to our work. In particular, we want to thank Taryn Lane who leaves the board this year. Taryn was a founding board member in 2012 of RE-Alliance, or VicWind as it was known then, and played an instrumental role in the creation of the organisation. Her deep knowledge of community-centred renewable energy development and passion for the empowerment of communities has had a profound impact on RE-Alliance's work over that time. We would also like to welcome Dr Madeline Taylor, who replaced Taryn on the board in June 2022.

Thank you to our staff team who work collaboratively and dynamically to ensure our work stays relevant in a rapidly evolving policy and political environment.

Finally, we would like to thank our members and supporters in the regions. You are what makes RE-Alliance the strong advocate that it is.

You are our ear to the ground as the energy transition unfolds across regional Australia. The farmers, energy workers, small business owners and environmentalists who have joined our organisation as members help us to keep it real and continuously deepen our understanding of local impacts and opportunities.





What's next

The election of the Albanese government in May 2022 marked a hugely significant moment in our path towards decarbonisation. In the short time since then, we have already seen all federal, state and territory governments align to work towards a transformation of our energy system, shifting to one based on renewable energy and storage that is connected by an augmented transmission network.

Our shared objective is now clear – but so too are the many challenges in achieving it. The challenge that guides RE-Alliance's work will continue to be how to ensure that regional communities can best harness the opportunities this transformation offers.

We see scope for the work we do in new REZs in Queensland and Tasmania, both of which have extensive plans for renewables development. We are also eager to build more capacity in the communities we're working in to help them manage the challenges that come with development. So, if you live in regional Australia and are interested in securing opportunities from the REZs and navigating the impacts, [please get in touch!](#)

Other areas of technology we haven't focused on to date, but which are becoming increasingly important, are offshore wind and pumped hydro. Both technologies promise to strengthen our future electricity system but each raise a range of challenges around social acceptance and environmental impacts.

With a strong team of passionate staff and networks throughout the country, RE-Alliance will continue to work purposefully to influence the clean energy transformation for the better.



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Connecting people and power

RE-Alliance is an independent, not-for-profit advocacy organisation working to secure an energy transformation that delivers long-term benefits and prosperity to regional Australia.

re-alliance.org.au