



2023 Annual Report



RE-ALLIANCE

Acknowledgement 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, since 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 and with Indigenous people to achieve a just energy transformation.



Contents

Message from the Director	2
About RE-Alliance	4
Highlights	6
Our community engagement	8
Spotlight on Rosemary Hadaway	11
Our advocacy and engagement	12
Renewables and nature	14
Our work on transmission	16
Spotlight on Sabiene Heindl	17
Media	18
Our people	20
Spotlight on Carolyn Ingvarson	21
Thank you	22
What's next	23

Message from the Director



Renewable energy's share of overall energy generated in Australia is increasing year-on-year. According to the Clean Energy Council, renewable energy accounted for 39% of Australian energy generation in 2022. Most of this development is taking place in communities that have historically relied on agriculture and farming and expect to do so into the future. This brings with it a unique set of challenges and opportunities.

We believe that, done well, the transition to renewable energy can be a source of social, economic and environmental good.

Delivering this potential involves understanding the opportunities and mitigating the challenges with creativity, community and collaboration. This approach is the cornerstone of our work.

In the last year, RE-Alliance has doubled our staff as well as extended our geographic presence. We now have an on-the-ground presence in every state on Australia's eastern seaboard, grounding our work through direct community engagement, and supporting the growing number of hosts and host communities in Renewable Energy Zones across states.

We continued engaging with community stakeholders to understand how new energy infrastructure should be incorporated in communities in a way that both embraces the opportunities and appropriately addresses the challenges. We base all our policy and advocacy work on this understanding. The New South Wales, Victorian and Queensland governments announced transmission host payments in the last year – a big win for our policy team who advocated for this crucial policy for eighteen months.

We collaborated with government and industry partners to ensure that renewable energy developments protect our unique natural and cultural heritage. Born out of this collaboration, we have launched Australia's first Guidelines for Nature Positive Renewables. In the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), we created opportunities for community leaders to speak directly with government, Council and industry on issues such as regional community benefit sharing, housing, environment and social outcomes.

Even as the roll-out of renewable energy accelerates, challenges in the form of supply chain pressures, skilled workforce shortages and issues related to planning pipelines for projects are coming to the fore. To address these challenges, we seek to be a catalysing agent, promoting conversations and working practically to identify solutions.

In addition to our work with local communities and councils, we also contributed to high level discussions around solutions with energy and government bodies. Recognising our contribution in such forums, we are now part of the Australian Energy Market Operator's (AEMO) Advisory Council on Social Licence: an 11-member group appointed by AEMO to represent the interests of landholders, communities, First Nations peoples, environmental groups and consumers.

We were part of an expert advisory panel to the New South Wales independent check up on whether the right policy settings are in place to deliver New South Wales' energy transition. We also provided expert advice to the Federal Government's research initiative on transmission and social licence.

RE-Alliance is now ten years old. In this time, we have seen the support for renewable energy grow even as the need to decarbonise our energy system becomes more urgent. We are committed to supporting regional Australian communities who are stakeholders in this historic transition.

Andrew Bray.



Andrew Bray
National Director
RE-Alliance



About RE-Alliance



The RE-Alliance staff team in July 2023.

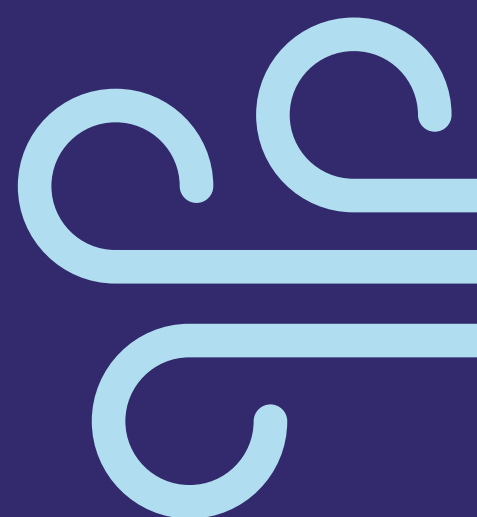
RE-Alliance, or the Renewable Energy Alliance, is an independent not-for-profit working to secure an energy transformation that delivers long-term benefits and prosperity for regional Australia.

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.

Since the emergence of Renewable Energy Zones in 2020, our mandate has included all forms of renewable energy, along with transmission and energy storage, as we recognise that a more holistic and collaborative approach to regional development is needed.

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

RE-Alliance operates across Australia's eastern seaboard, from northern Queensland to southern Tasmania. We play a unique role, advocating for renewable energy host communities and assisting renewable energy developers seeking to deliver best practice community engagement, community funds and to build social licence. We are recognised as a leading voice on community engagement and social licence in Australia.



Our Mission

Placing the 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.



Highlights

We're pleased to mark a few significant highlights in our work over the last year.

Payment schemes for transmission hosts

We have advocated for appropriate compensation for landholders hosting transmission lines, and welcome the new payment schemes announced by the [New South Wales](#), [Victorian](#) and [Queensland](#) governments.

In addition to established arrangements for purchase of easements, landholders in NSW and Victoria will receive a standard payment of \$200,000 per kilometre for all new large-scale transmission lines built on their properties. Queensland has taken a different approach, under which landholders will receive a particular amount based on a comprehensive evaluation of their property, and payments will also be offered to neighbours or adjacent landholders.

These payment schemes are a crucial first step in acknowledging the critical role that landholders and neighbours play in our energy transformation.

RE-Alliance's 10th anniversary celebration

In November 2022, we gathered in Melbourne to celebrate RE-Alliance's 10th anniversary.

In 2012, Leigh Ewbank, Taryn Lane and Steve Garner stood in front of the Keppel Prince factory in Portland, Victoria to launch VicWind, which later became the Australian Wind Alliance, and then RE-Alliance.

We were pleased to have friends old and new attend, including our current board as well as founding members. The energy landscape has seen massive change in the last 10 years, but we are proud to have been continuously advocating for communities in the energy transition through it all.



Andrew Bray speaking at our 10th anniversary event.

Authentic community voices panel at the Australian Clean Energy Summit

In July 2023, RE-Alliance helped bring authentic community voices to the Clean Energy Council's Australian Clean Energy Summit. The panel was made up of community leaders with first-hand experience in the energy transition, and they brought crucial perspectives into a space where they are too often absent.

Our deep thanks to the panel chair and members (left to right in photo):

- Sally Hunter, Managing Director, Geni.Energy
- Annette Deveson, Chief Project Officer, RES
- Olivia Thorn, Landowner, Flat Rocks Wind Farm (WA) / Community Liaison Officer Enel
- Rosemary Hadaway, Chair, Mudgee District Environment Group
- Andrew Dyer, Commissioner, Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner
- Lee Kingma, Director, Wunelli
- Councillor Neil Westcott, Deputy Mayor, Parkes Shire Council



RE-Alliance's founding members and current board at our 10th anniversary event.



The authentic community voices panel at the Australian Clean Energy Summit.

Our community engagement



Kate Hook speaks with a stall visitor at Mudgee Small Farm Field Day in July 2023.

With our community engagement team previously in New South Wales and Victoria, at the start of 2023 we welcomed Brent in Queensland and Toby in Tasmania as well. We are now officially a “NEM-wide” organisation!

Our team had more than a hundred meetings and interactions with local stakeholders and members of the local communities.

We kicked off our Queensland work in Biloela, helping local farmers, rangers and rotary clubs digest the State Government’s Energy and Jobs Plan and what it means for their community.

Down south in Tasmania, we launched a youth network to begin to combat the lack of young people included in decisions about climate and energy in the state.

In New South Wales, we hosted a community workshop to bring Councillors, community leaders, First Nations leaders and environmentalists together to understand the community benefit framework that could be possible in the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone.

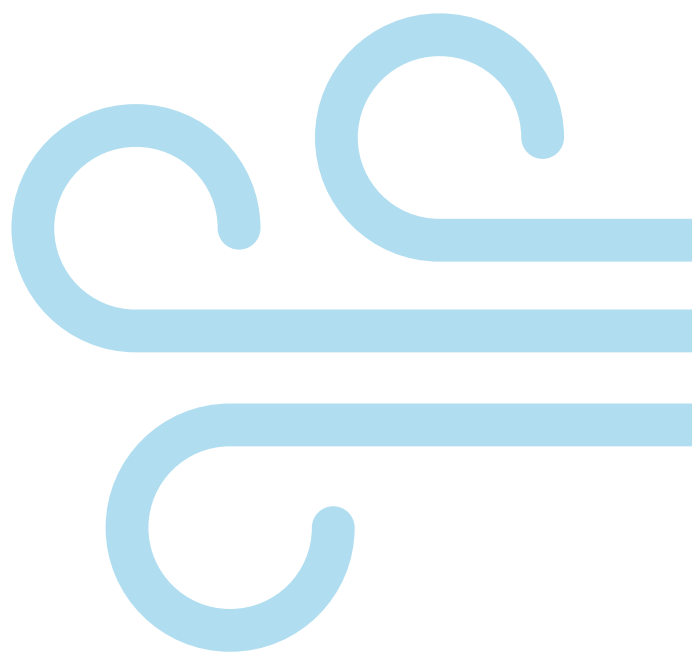
In Victoria, we worked with community leaders in Western Victoria to help build public support for the necessity of and potential benefits from transmission lines, and met with councils and Traditional Owners to achieve better outcomes from projects.

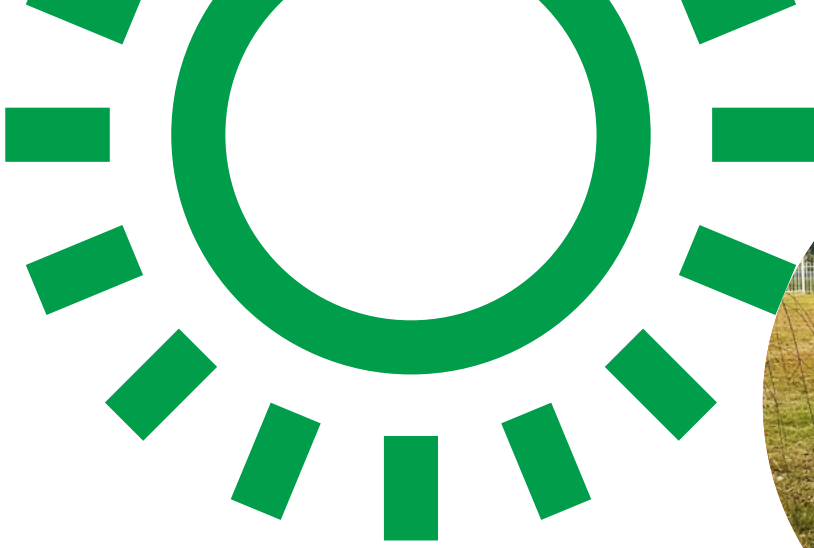
Another key part of our community engagement is keeping the community informed about developments in the sector. Throughout the year we sent a total of 28 email blasts to our list of 3500 supporters. These are designed to be as informative as possible and covered a variety of issues such as relevant energy news and announcements, examples of best practice, consultation opportunities, and information about relevant events. We also sent 8 emails to members of the community in the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone, which had more specific information including local consultation opportunities and relevant local energy news.



Top: Community meeting with government in Dubbo, February 2023.

Bottom: Neville Mattick at Wellington Show in May 2023.





Spotlight on Rosemary Hadaway

Rosemary Hadaway lives in the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone and has been collaborating with RE-Alliance in our work there. She is a keen advocate for the local environment.

Rosemary has a background in environmental education and project management. In the last 10 years, she and her husband have built an off-grid straw-bale house utilising solar passive principles and established a hobby-farm in an effort to be as self-reliant as possible.

Rosemary says that moving to renewable energy is the most straightforward part of achieving net zero emissions. "It needs to happen quickly to allow time for the difficult tasks of eliminating emissions associated with food production, transport, manufacturing, building and construction, etc."

"The task of increasing renewables has been greatly complicated by the politicisation of the issue, ongoing political support for fossil fuels, media misinformation and a lack of central planning for energy generation and transmission. As a consequence, many in the community still need to be convinced the switch to renewables is even necessary. Those who believe in renewable energy need to be assured the planning has been done carefully, considering the needs of stakeholders and the environment."

Being the Chair of the Mudgee District Environment Group gave Rosemary an early introduction to other local groups concerned about supporting the community through this transition.

"I have worked with RE-Alliance since before the declaration of the Renewable Energy Zone. I am glad they have the contacts and resources to facilitate the necessary communication and consultation opportunities. Building awareness, sharing concerns, and collaborating to produce solutions among communities and individuals, are priority matters."

"The importance of independent organisations to provide an outlet for community unease and receive unbiased, transparent, plain-English and timely responses cannot be underestimated. RE-Alliance currently serves the role of this facilitator and information exchange. It also provides an opportunity for communities and individuals to give constructive feedback in an unbiased, receptive setting."



Our advocacy and engagement

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 the renewable energy transformation. This year, we have been involved in a breadth of work to this end.



Top: Toby Thorpe speaking at the Tasmanian Energy Development Conference.

Bottom: Andrew Bray at the Policy Roundtable with Senator David Pocock.

Submissions

We made 17 submissions to government and institutional consultations and enquiries on renewable energy, and were pleased to see our impact on improved policies.

8

Submissions to state policy and program consultations across QLD, TAS, NSW and VIC

4

Submissions to national energy institutions

4

Submissions to the Federal Government

1

Submission to Parliamentary Inquiries



Andrew Bray speaking at Powerlink's Transmission Network Forum.

Advisory bodies

We were part of AEMO's Advisory Council on Social Licence: an 11-member group appointed by AEMO to represent the interests of landholders, communities, First Nations peoples, environmental groups and consumers.

Industry engagement and initiatives

We convened a Central-West Orana REZ Industry Round Table meeting with 12 industry participants, 3 council representatives and 2 community representatives.

We participated in and had input into the Energy Charter #bettertogether initiatives:

- Guidelines for Nature Positive Renewables
- Landholder + Community and Social Licence Guideline

External presentations

We presented at a number of conferences and forums, keeping community issues at the forefront of industry discussions.

- Clean Energy Council's Wind Summit
- First Nations Clean Energy Network Summit
- Gippsland Community Benefit Sharing Working Group
- Gippsland New Energy Conference
- Mining and Energy Related Councils Meeting
- Policy Roundtable with Senator David Pocock
- REZ Conference
- Renewables in Agriculture Conference
- Tasmanian Energy Development Conference
- WWEA Wind Power Around the World

Renewables and nature

The climate crisis and the biodiversity crisis are inextricably intertwined. We can't solve one without the other. Therefore, solutions to solve the climate crisis, including building lots of renewable energy projects, should not create significant additional problems for our ecosystems.

Over the last few years we have seen a welcome explosion in the number of renewable energy projects in development across the country. However, this has also come with an increase in local conflict where the community sees an unusually large potential impact on the environment.

We've been working with climate and environmental movement leaders to articulate what they want to see when it comes to renewable energy projects that respect biodiversity. Over the last year, we've run workshops and spoken at environment and renewable energy industry events on this topic. Our mission in these spaces is to help bridge the gap between environmentalists and the renewable energy industry to tackle challenges at this critical intersection together.

Crucially, we've also been leading a co-design process to publish a best-practice guideline for renewable energy developers in Queensland, to help meet the gap between environmental compliance and local community expectations. We will publish this guideline in late 2023.



Lucy Allan convenes discussion between industry and environmental groups, August 2022.



Our work on transmission



As transmission becomes one of the biggest challenges to building a clean energy future, it is more important than ever to ensure communities are actively participating, their voices are heard and they have the opportunity of long-term benefits from this infrastructure.

In the last year, RE-Alliance has continued our work around renewable transmission and connecting communities, with a focus in Victoria.

We have seen a number of changes in transmission policy – many of which we have advocated for, notably in our seminal report [Building Trust for Transmission](#).

We welcome the announcement of new payment schemes for transmission hosts announced by the New South Wales, Victorian and Queensland governments.

We also welcome the AER clarifying that social licence costs can be recovered under the investment rules, and the AEMC making an amendment to be more clear on what constitutes community and stakeholder engagement for transmission in the National Electricity Rules.

We sought better transmission planning to include environmental and social factors in route selection, which was applied for the first time with VNI West.

We organised for regional leaders from Western Victoria to meet with Energy Minister Lily D'Ambrosio to discuss some of the issues and opportunities from their first hand experience.

We have had input into a number of federal and state inquiries and also state-based processes, such as the [Land Access Code of Practice](#) that's being developed in Victoria. We've continued pushing to make sure community voices are present at industry conferences.

To help build public support for the necessity of and potential benefits from transmission lines, we had an op-ed published in *RenewEconomy*: 'Why Western Victoria needs – and wants – new transmission lines.'

Image: Community leaders meeting with Energy Minister Lily D'Ambrosio.





Spotlight on Sabiene Heindl



Sabiene Heindl is the Executive Director at the Energy Charter. RE-Alliance joined with the Energy Charter in a Collaboration Memorandum of Understanding in March, to apply our experience with local communities to help improve industry practice.

Sabiene loves bringing people together to inspire them to do better. She has held a range of senior leadership roles across the energy, telco, music, media and legal sectors focused on transformational change. With a background as a corporate lawyer, she holds an Executive MBA Brown University (USA)/IE Business School (Spain), law and international business degrees.


Sabiene values collaboration between different organisations and sectors in the renewable energy transition because it harnesses mutually beneficial opportunities and creates a platform for genuine co-design.

Of the Energy Charter's joint work with RE-Alliance, she says, "Through collaboration, we foster a culture of listening and learning from each other, including understanding the lived experiences of regional communities and showcasing examples of better practice across the energy sector and beyond."

"The success of initiatives such as the [Energy Charter's Better Practice Social Licence Guideline](#) has relied on passionate input and guidance from RE-Alliance, as part of a broader Community Outcomes Group, to ensure the needs of local communities are understood and prioritised so that meaningful benefits can be delivered.

Collaboration on the [#BetterTogether Biodiversity + Renewables](#) initiative has allowed for a safe discussion and genuine relationships between conservation and environmental groups, energy businesses and renewable developers in Queensland.

The RE-Alliance team, regardless of their individual roles or projects, are fiercely passionate advocates for the delivery of long-term benefits and prosperity to regional Australia."



Media

Over the past year, we featured in at least:

23
online stories

7
radio stories

1
TV story

The Monthly
NOVEMBER 2022 THE NATION REVIEWED

Renewable energy's power-lines problem


By Zacharias Szumer



Protests against new transmission lines may prove the real challenge for renewables


“There’s been lots of confusing information spreading around because of the lack of leadership and proactive communication and engagement,” says Tony Goodfellow, a Ballarat resident and the Victoria coordinator for renewable energy transition advocacy group RE-Alliance. “This also occurred with wind energy in the past. For example, there was a lot of misinformation around wind and health in the early days that confused local communities and was one of the biggest threats to social licence.”

RE-Alliance also says that consultation with local communities about transmission lines has often been lacking. When a refinement to the proposed WRL corridor was announced mid last year, some local landowners said the media was informed about the route before they were.



Victorian landholders win \$8000/km for new power lines

Sheep Central, February 24, 2023



Power transmission lines. Image – Australian Renewable Energy Agency.

RE-Alliance national director Andrew Bray said at this stage only Victoria and NSW have announced payment schemes, but understood all the other states are giving similar schemes “active consideration.”

“We’re pleased to see that Victorian landholders will now enjoy the benefits of hosting transmission lines, like their counterparts in NSW.

“We have advocated for increased landholder payments because everyone should benefit from the renewable energy transformation, especially communities that host the infrastructure for it,” he said.



Supergrids sound great for renewables, but they must be fair and sustainable too

[Kate Healey & Lu Allan](#) 5 October 2022 46



Image: Iberdrola Australia.

It’s official. We’re now in a “renewable energy industrial revolution.” Those four words came out of Queensland’s Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk’s mouth last week as she unveiled the landmark [Queensland Power Plan](#), including a \$700 million “supergrid” in the state’s north.



Image: Andrew Bray being interviewed on ABC Landline.



NSW unveils Australian-first scheme to compensate landholders for hosting new high-voltage powerlines

ABC Central West / By Hugh Hogan

Posted Tue 25 Oct 2022 at 3:30pm, updated Tue 25 Oct 2022 at 4:30pm



Thousands of kilometres of new transmission lines are needed to connect renewable energy to the grid. (ABC News: Hugh Hogan)

Renewable energy advocacy group RE-Alliance national director Andrew Bray welcomed the proposal, which it said would more adequately reflect the important role landholders played in the renewable energy transition.

"This is a big announcement. Really, it's the first step into making sure that regional Australians are partners in the energy transformation that's going ahead," Mr Bray said.



Why western Victoria needs – and wants – new transmission lines

[Tom Quinn & Tony Goodfellow](#) 11 May 2023 94



In the midst of the cost of living crisis and high inflation, the expansion of renewable energy is a unique good news story for Australia as it continues to place downward pressure on wholesale power prices.

Our People (as of 30 June 2023)

Staff

Our staff are spread across Australia's east coast in mostly regional areas, from northern Queensland to southern Tasmania. They are passionate about seeing regional Australia benefit from our renewable energy transition.



Andrew Bray
National Director



Lu Allan
Advocacy Director



Tony Goodfellow
Advocacy Manager



Kate Hook
Community Engagement
Manager, Central-West Orana
Renewable Energy Zone



Neville Mattick
Community Engagement
Manager, Central-West Orana
Renewable Energy Zone



Brent Smith
Community Engagement
Manager, Queensland



Toby Thorpe
Community Engagement
Manager, Tasmania



Padmapriya Muralidharan
Communications Manager



Cait Coffey-Wong
Digital Communications Officer



Kuda Nyenwa
Donor Relations Manager



Bridget Ryan
Policy and Industry
Engagement Manager

Board

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



Susan Findlay Tickner



Peter Dreher



Richard Mackie



Luke Osborne



Dimity Taylor



Madeline Taylor



Jonathan Upson



Thank you

Our work is delivered in collaboration with many organisations, individuals and communities – our partners, other NGOs, industry bodies, experts and community groups. We thank all of them for their expertise and passion.

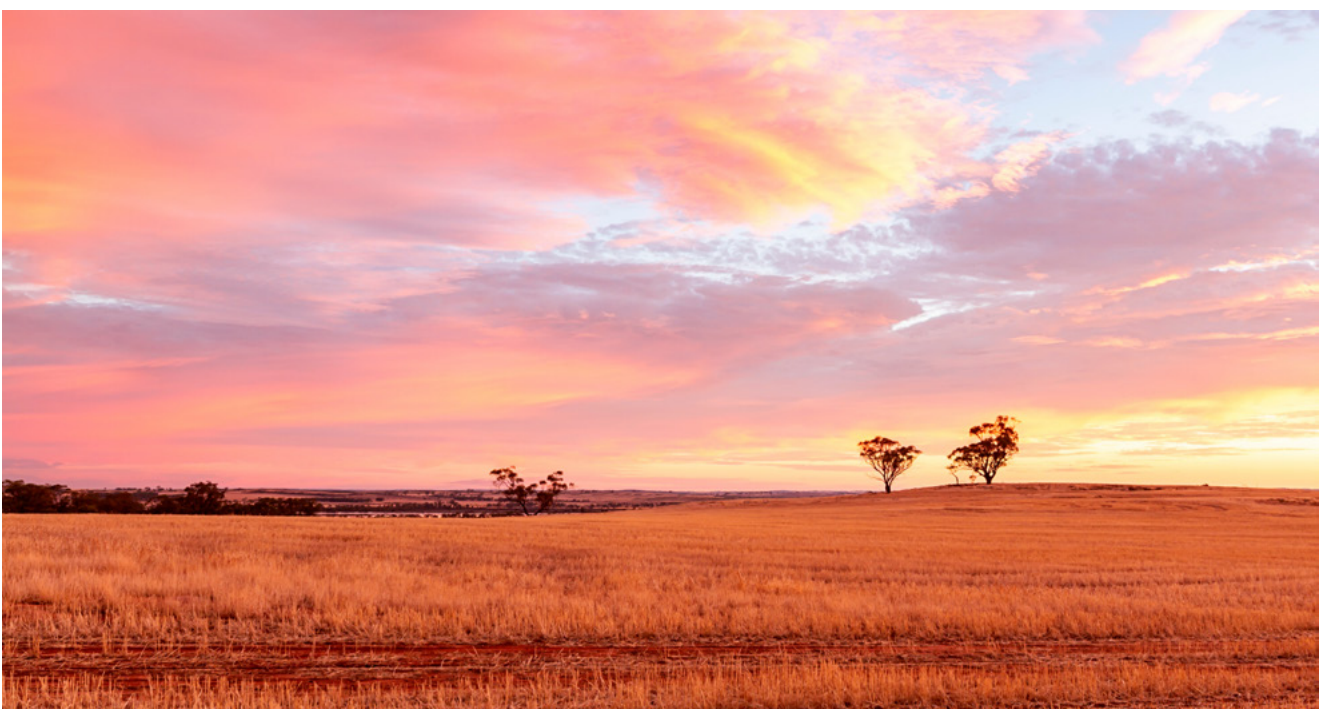
Our MoU with the Energy Charter has led to initiatives supporting an energy transition that works for everyone. We have continued collaborating with the Community Power Agency on the ground in Renewable Energy Zones as well on key submissions and reports we have delivered. Working with our partners towards our shared goals offers a supportive and safe environment for all of us, and we thank them for this.

Thank you to our donors who value the work we do and see the importance of bringing regional communities to the centre 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. We would particularly like to thank Susan Findlay-Tickner who has taken on the role of Chair.

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 make RE-Alliance the strong advocate that we are. 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.





Spotlight on Carolyn Ingvarson



Carolyn Ingvarson is a long-time monthly donor to RE-Alliance. She is a founder of Lighter Footprints, a local climate action group in the Victorian electorate of Kooyong.

Carolyn is now into her eighties, but she has known since she was a teenager that our planet would have to face the impacts of climate change. “In my university degree, I learnt that pumping greenhouse gas into our atmosphere would alter our climate. As a biology teacher for 20 years, I found many compelling environmental issues that engaged students – but assessing the impact that increasing levels of CO2 might have did not form part of the syllabus, and I simply parked it.”

It was not until Carolyn retired and watched Al Gore’s ‘An Inconvenient Truth’ in 2006 that she was jolted by that suppressed knowledge. She gathered a group of like-minded locals and started the group [Lighter Footprints](#), to research the issues and talk about what they learnt to anyone willing to listen – chiefly, their local community and their politicians. Over 17 years the group has grown to nearly 4000 supporters, who are focused both on making life changes themselves, as well as pressing widely for action to reduce carbon emissions quickly and effectively.

Their work to shift government policy includes many personal interactions with their local state and federal elected members. At the 2022 federal election, Kooyong elected a federal member who stood on climate change action, and Carolyn says they were elected by a concerned, informed community.

“Lighter Footprints has always supported groups like the Australian Wind Alliance and now RE-Alliance, who advocate for a swift and fair renewable energy transition. I have personally contributed regularly since being part of the early work to establish this group, and I will continue to do so as we see the fruition of the dogged work over the years: the development of a resilient renewable energy system that underpins the climate action we know we must have.”





What's next

While the renewable energy landscape is changing constantly, regional and rural communities' desires for the energy transition remain consistent. Communities want to derive benefits from, and be able to have a meaningful say in, what the new energy future brings to their region.

Our work will continue to focus on supporting communities to make this happen through local capacity building, industry and civil society collaborations, and policy and advocacy activities.

At the local level, we will continue to support rural and regional leaders' knowledge and understanding of the implications of the energy transition and to equip them with the tools to be proactive partners.

We are progressing a number of collaborations with industry, researchers and civil society partners on areas ranging from biodiversity and regenerative environmental management to community and regional benefit funding model evolutions. We are also working on other projects that address the biodiversity crisis, support community empowerment and facilitate the energy transition.

In the advocacy arena, we will continue to advocate for government and decision-maker choices that can empower and deliver more meaningful outcomes with and for local communities.

We are eager to continue building 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 Renewable Energy Zones and navigating the impacts, [please get in touch](#).

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