



RE-ALLIANCE  
**2020-21  
ANNUAL  
REPORT**



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## Acknowledgement of Country

RE-Alliance acknowledges and pays our respect to the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

We commit to actively working alongside Indigenous peoples whose knowledge and connection to Country is integral to our resilient, green futures.

# Director's Report

What a year!

December saw us make a strategic shift and a name change from the Australian Wind Alliance to RE-Alliance, tripling our size and increasing our arena of influence from only wind, to all renewable energy, transmission and storage.

The Renewable Energy Zone model led by NSW and employed by other states is fantastic because it allows communities, governments and industry to come together and plan how they can channel a portion of the billions of private investment into programs that will benefit regions in a significant and lasting way. Now is the time for local community leaders in these renewable energy zones to dream big about what renewables can deliver for them.

Drawing on our position as advocates and experts on community benefit sharing in the wind industry, we have shifted focus to Renewable Energy Zones as a whole, and what they can achieve for the local communities hosting them.

We've also been tackling the challenges of building renewable energy transmission lines to carry renewable electricity generation to our schools, homes and workplaces. Our first report since our reorientation as RE-Alliance was *Building Trust for Transmission*. It outlines the problems in transmission regulations and industry practice that prevent local communities influencing how and where lines are built, and receiving fair value for land use and proposed measures to fix them.

We're pleased to say the report has already driven many important conversations, changes to industry practice and state government planning.

I would like to thank our members, donors, industry partners, staff and board for contributing to this fantastic new organisation that has found its feet working to ensure our energy transition delivers regional and rural revitalisation along with the clean energy we desperately need.

*Andrew Bray*



Andrew Bray  
National Director  
RE-Alliance



# December 2020 Pivot

The emergence of Renewable Energy Zones as the primary mechanism through which the energy transformation will be delivered demands a more holistic and collaborative approach to regional development and delivery of community benefits.

To adapt to this change, we strategised, redefined and rebranded ourselves from the Australian Wind Alliance, broadening our mandate to include all forms of renewable energy, along with transmission and storage.



## *Introducing* **RE-ALLIANCE** CONNECTING PEOPLE AND POWER

RE-Alliance is a community-driven organisation.

We work to ensure our energy transformation delivers sustainable, long-term prosperity for regional Australia.

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



# Community Benefits Handbook

## *How Regional Australia can Prosper from the Clean Energy Boom*



Renewable Energy Zones, (REZs) will be the power stations of the future. Distributed over a region, solar, wind, pumped hydro and battery projects will collectively provide a steady supply of clean power that can be delivered to the National Electricity Market.

Local communities themselves can, if they choose, play a massive role in determining what each REZ will look like and what local benefits they will deliver. The next couple of years will be critical for REZ communities in articulating what they would each like to see come out of the influx of renewable energy investment in their region.

Companies should be striving to outdo each other in terms of community engagement practice, especially as the market becomes crowded and as they jockey for positions in a REZ.

Drawing on our experience, we put together a framework for community benefits in the energy transformation. We compiled best-practice case studies to act as a benchmark for companies and to equip local community leaders with information and ideas. We hope these will drive discussions around how local communities can leverage the renewables boom into opportunities that address their needs and desires.

It covers the kinds of benefits regional communities are already seeing in different parts of the country and begins to picture what these might look like on a bigger scale with industry investment concentrated across a region.

The handbook has been successful in making community benefit frameworks accessible for local communities and setting a benchmark for industry best-practice.

# RE-Alliance in the Central-West Orana

## OUR WORK IN THE CENTRAL WEST ORANA REZ



Listen to needs and concerns of local residents and landholders



Facilitate collaboration across industry to achieve social outcomes



Advise government & inform regulatory settings

The emergence of Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) as the central way in which state governments will deliver the energy transformation demands careful consideration of the social and long-term implications for large amounts of renewables investment concentrated in selected regions.

The Central-West Orana REZ, as the first intentionally created REZ in Australia, is central to the success of the REZ model. We are working in the region to ensure its early success.

We are taking three complementary strategic approaches:

- Listen to needs and concerns of local residents and landholders
- Facilitate collaboration across industry to achieve social outcomes
- Advise government and inform regulatory settings

We have two community engagement staff working in the region who have met with over 40 individuals for "kitchen table conversations". These meetings help us feed community ideas and concerns into government and industry practice.

We regularly advise and advocate to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment (DPIE) as they develop the REZ. In June, we developed a comprehensive submission for the department which advocated for the use of merit criteria to prioritise renewable projects that were committed to community outcomes.

We have also convened an Industry Roundtable for renewable companies with projects in the region to collaborate on solutions to problems such as engaging the community about multiple concurrent projects in one area.

# Building Trust for Transmission

## *Earning the social licence needed to plug in Australia's Renewable Energy Zones*

The concentration of large-scale wind and solar in Renewable Energy Zones will bring new jobs and breathe new life into many regional communities.

To prepare the grid for the massive influx of new energy projects that will be built over the next decade, we need to build large transmission lines to carry all that power.

It's been over 40 years since our country has seen this kind of infrastructure rollout.

While these projects will deliver clean and cheap energy across the country, regional Australians living where these lines will be built should benefit from the projects as well.

Our report *Building Trust for Transmission*, released in July and compiled by RE-Alliance Transmission

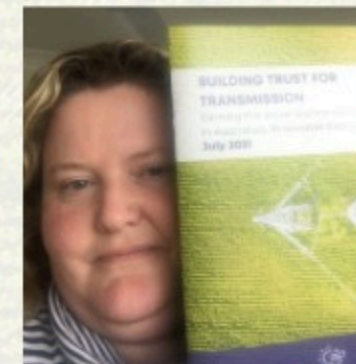
Advocate Kate Healey, outlines the actions governments, energy regulators and transmission companies need to take to ensure impacted communities can benefit from, not simply tolerate, new grid projects.

Recommendations in the report include a fairer and more transparent payment system for landholders that includes an option for annual payments, grant programs for local community groups and neighbourhood improvement schemes that could focus on planting trees and upgrading roads.

Changes to regulations at state and federal levels outlined in the report, would bring about earlier and more effective community engagement and improved landholder payments into the infrastructure pipeline outlined in the Australian Energy Market Operator's 2020 Integrated System Plan.

Our report was well received, with over 100 RSVPs to our transmission industry briefings. We have already seen some of our recommendations begin to be implemented with transmission companies taking more responsibility to make the case for renewable energy transmission, and state governments demonstrating to us they are working on the issue of landholder compensation.

We will continue our work facilitating big-picture policy thinking in this space and working with other environmental organisations to make the case for why this infrastructure is essential for our climate.



Report Author, Kate Healey, receiving the first copies of her report from the printer

# Industry Engagement



84 meetings with industry



11 presentations at conferences and industry events



1 Industry Award

Our longstanding work around community benefits was recognised formally by the industry in July when our National Director, Andrew Bray, received the Clean Energy Council's 'Outstanding Contribution to Industry' Award for 2021. Big congrats to Andrew for his dedication over the last seven years directing this organisation!

May saw peak conference season, and RE-Alliance was invited to speak at the second-ever Renewables in Agriculture conference held in Dubbo, the Smart Energy Council Conference, the Wind Industry Forum, the Energy Networks Conference, the Australian Renewable Energy Zones Conference and the Tasmanian Energy Development Conference.

We used our opportunities at these events to highlight best practice community engagement and benefit-sharing as well as discuss emerging issues and trends in the industry, including the need to coordinate social outcomes across Renewable Energy Zones, and resolve problems that arise during the construction phase.

The highlight was hands-down the Renewables in Agriculture Conference, put together by Karin Stark who also works as our community engagement manager in the Central-West. We participated in a meaty panel discussion on social licence for large-scale renewable projects.

Karin Stark  
opening the  
Renewables in  
Agriculture  
Conference

# Government Engagement



59 meetings with government departments or members of parliament



10 Government Submissions

With states roaring ahead in our energy transformation, we have been there to make sure community issues and concerns are addressed in government programs.

NSW is leading the country in the development of Renewable Energy Zones and legislating measures to attract billions in renewables investment to regions.

We've been working closely with NSW as they finalise details of the Central West Orana REZ. We developed a comprehensive policy framework for them to ensure only companies proposing better-practice community engagement and benefit sharing will be granted connection to the REZ.

Federally, we made a submission into the development of Australia's first offshore wind legislation. Our Director, Andrew Bray also appeared at a public hearing into Helen Haines's Australian Local Power Agency Bill.

In Victoria, we made submissions that helped shape new regulations around wind farm noise and broilga protection. We also engaged our supporters to make submissions in support of the Delburn wind farm, the first wind farm in the Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone.

# Media

Over the past year, we featured in:



14 Print stories



22 radio stories



3 TV stories



23 online stories



## Federal Nationals' leadership squabbles risk real renewables opportunities

Karin Stark Latest News



Sheep and solar panels make for quite the rural tableau. Picture: Shutterstock

For farmers who have taken up renewable technology, it doesn't matter if it is Barnaby Joyce or Michael McCormack in the top job - the federal Nationals



## Award-winner powers Dubbo region forward

By JOHN RYAN

STEERING Dubbo and Wellington through a brave new future of renewable power as the state's first Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) is a tough task, but one that's been given to experienced hands.

RE-Alliance, formerly the Australian Wind Alliance, has expanded its team and is now working in the country's first planned Renewable Energy Zone in the Central West Orana region and the organisation's national director Andrew Bray says it's not always an easy position sitting between large scale renewable energy developers and regional communities.

He's improved outcomes for locals over the past eight years and last week his work was recognised through a prestigious award provided by the Clean Energy Council for his 'Outstanding Contribution to Industry'.

"I've seen a lot of positive change over the years in the way wind developers work with local communities. We want to see the same with solar developers and transmission. It's our role to keep pushing them to a higher standard," Mr Bray said.

"Not all developers like the advice we provide, but most do, because in the end, a strong social licence is good for business and good for the clean energy rollout. We want to see local employment, neighbour payments and Community Enhancement Funds. All these help build thriving regional communities.

"We're really excited to be working in the Central West Orana region given the large amounts of solar, wind, batteries and transmission to be built in coming years. We've keen to speak to as many people as possible about their views on the Renewable Energy Zone and what benefits they want to see for the region from the influx of investment coming their way."

Mr Bray said Renewable Energy Zones will necessarily create impacts in communities and believes that also creates new opportunities if locals are engaged early and in meaningful ways.

"It's really all about ensuring impacted communities are informed and empowered to participate in decision-making where they can, and lead the conversation rather than be led by it," he said.

RE-Alliance works with communities and industry by bringing solar and wind developers together to understand the local region, encourage collaboration, address issues early and co what types of benefits the community wants.

One of the ideas RE-A



RE-Alliance national director Andrew Bray believes the nation's first Renewable Energy Zone which encompasses Dubbo and Wellington will open a vast number of future opportunities. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

## Coverage of Andrew's Clean Energy Council Award



# Online Engagement



Our facebook page reached 17,567 people



853 tweets reached people 812,600 times



Our website was visited 9,200 times



## Website Redevelopment

To bring our online presence in line with our new focus and brand, we redeveloped our site with a new look and feel, as well as gave our back-end systems a tidy up.

**RE-Alliance** @reallianceaus

Wind turbine neighbours of @NEOEN\_AU 's Thunderbolt Energy Hub in New England will be paid by distance from turbine.

Along with their community fund, this is one of the better practice community benefit programs we've seen! Well done 🙌

Some of our top performing social posts

**Top Tweet** earned 8,030 impressions

Great to hear @simonahac calling on developers of large-scale renewables to be more generous in local community benefits.

If you're a developer interested in innovative ideas for community benefits - we've got plenty! #RenewablesInAg

**RE-Alliance**  
7 December 2020 · 🌐

We have some big news to share – today, we are re-launching as RE-Alliance.

Over the past 7 years, our work as the Australian Wind Alliance has brought together communities, businesses and individuals to support more wind energy for Australia.

Today we are excited to announce that we are expanding our mission to include not just wind but all renewable energies and rebranding as RE-Alliance.

Find out more by reading this blog post from our National Director Andrew Bray: <https://bit.ly/reallianceaus>



# Our People

## STAFF

Our staff are based in regional Victoria and NSW and are passionate about seeing regional Australia thrive from the renewable energy transition



**Andrew Bray**  
National  
Director



**Karin Stark**  
Community  
Engagement  
Manager



**Tony Goodfellow**  
Vic/Tas  
Coordinator



**Kate Healey**  
Transmission  
Advocate



**Alana West**  
Community  
Engagement  
Officer



**Lu Allan**  
Communications  
Manager

## BOARD

Our Board is made up of people who generously give their time to govern and guide the work of RE-Alliance. Board members bring to the organisation a wide range of skill, expertise and experience.



**Luke  
Osborne**



**Jonathan  
Upton**



**Taryn Lane**



**Peter Dreher**



**Susan  
Findlay  
Tickner**



**Richard  
Mackie**



**Dimity  
Taylor**

# Stay tuned...

We're really excited about some of the projects we have in store. In the Central-West Orana, we'll be convening a Community Alliance and collaborating with local businesses, farmers and volunteer groups on a plan for what the REZ will deliver for locals. We'll be watching closely as state governments continue to develop and rollout their REZ frameworks.

On the transmission front, we're working closely with industry to develop a more comprehensive and transparent system of payments to landholders that more closely resemble payments for hosting other renewable energy infrastructure.

We'll continue sharing stories where renewables are making fantastic contributions to regional communities.

There are so many local projects as well as state and federal policy development processes in the works right now. We try our best to stay across all of it and use our power to make those systems work for regional Australians.

If you agree our work is important and strategic, join us as a [member](#). Or, [drop us a line](#) and share your thoughts.



# Thank You!

We would like to thank the many partner organisations who collaborate with us on campaigns and policy work, strengthening both our strategy and message. We are proud to undertake our work in collaboration with many other established NGOs, peak bodies, experts and community groups.

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 board members contribute their time voluntarily because they understand deeply the challenges and opportunities facing farmers and local communities as we complete our energy transformation. Thank you for your support, experience and wisdom that has been a pillar over the last seven years.

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. You are what make RE-Alliance the strong advocate 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.







RE-ALLIANCE

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO POWER



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