

6.2 CITIES POWER PARTNERSHIP – SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RENEWABLES ROAD TRIP REPORT

Submitting Councillor: Cr Fergeus

MOTION

That Council notes the report on the Cities Power Partnership's South Australian Renewables Road Trip attended by Cr Josh Fergeus.

BACKGROUND

City of Monash is a member of the national program, Cities Power Partnership (CPP). The CPP program provides a platform for Council to promote and share its commitments and achievements in the delivery of the actions under the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2016-2026 (ESS). The Cities Power Partnership is a free national program that exists to celebrate and accelerate the emission reduction/clean energy future. It's a coalition of mayors, councillors and communities who are committed to a sustainable, non-polluting energy future.

ABOUT THE SA RENEWABLES ROAD TRIP

The Cities Power Partnership's SA Renewables Road Trip provided a key opportunity to witness first-hand the renewable energy revolution taking place in South Australia. Australia is currently in the midst of a renewable energy boom. Over the 3 days, Cr Fergeus attended a range of site visits to large-scale renewable projects in and around Port Augusta, South Australia, and presentations from world-class climate and energy experts who will share their extensive knowledge.

These included visits to:

- Snowtown Wind Farm, the largest wind farm in South Australia. The Farm can generate enough electricity to power more than 230,000 homes, offsetting over 1 million tonnes of greenhouse gas pollution from coal fire power stations every year. Plans to build a 21MW battery on site are progressing;
- Bungala Solar Farm, the first grid-scale facility in South Australia and currently the largest solar facility producing energy across Australia, delivering 220MW of power to the national grid;
- Lincoln Gap Wind Farm and Battery, featuring 60 turbines generating 212 MW of electricity and the first unsubsidised battery to be built in South Australia;
- Hornsdale Wind Farm, featuring around 100 turbines which can generate more than 1 million MWh each year, the equivalent of planting 1.9 million trees or taking 290,000 cars off the road;
- The Tesla Big Battery, taking just 6 months to build, the most powerful lithium ion battery in the world. In its first full year of operation it saved consumers \$40 million.

Local Government Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA)

The Victorian Greenhouse Alliances have established a Local Government Electricity Contract Working Group to help Victorian councils save money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through their electricity contracting. The Working Group is developing a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for Victorian councils to procure low cost renewable energy from 2020/21, at the conclusion of their current retail contracts.

The Working Group has initiated the first stage of this process – a formal business case, which includes testing the project model's viability with energy retailers, and establishing a clear procurement pathway (if viable). Darebin City Council will lead this first stage and is now seeking formal commitments from individual councils to participate in the sector-wide collaborative process.

This Agreement mirrors similar processes which have enabled local governments in South Australia to harness the benefits of the transition to renewable energy for their communities.

Key messages for the City of Monash

The participation of local governments has been critical to realising each of the South Australian projects featured as part of the Roadshow. These have gone on to create local jobs, reduce emissions, and to save consumers money through the increasingly affordable harvesting of free renewable energy resources.

Opportunities exist to shift Monash's power purchasing arrangements to 100% cheap, renewable energy and to become a local government leader on climate change while reducing our expenditure and freeing up valuable funds to pursue other projects. Council is a party to the Local Government Power Purchasing Agreement through our work with the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA), but a substantial percentage of Council's energy usage remains able to be drawn from other renewable energy projects.

Based on the experience of other local government authorities who have pursued these opportunities, I believe that Council should continue to actively investigate and pursue opportunities to take part in Power Purchasing Agreements for renewable energy in order to realise the financial, social and environmental benefits of early adoption while they still exist.