

Recent News

ANU Climate Update 2021

As mentioned in last month's newsletter here is the link to the recording of the Victorian Climate Update 2021 put on by the ANU Climate Change Institute.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbPSsY-AhWc>

Sun Cable submits plans for gigawatt-scale solar manufacturing plant in Darwin

Sun Cable has submitted plans for a massive solar manufacturing plant to be built in Darwin.

It's part of the company's plans to export renewable energy to South-East Asia.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/sun-cable-submits-plans-for-gigawatt-scale-solar-manufacturing-plant-in-darwin/>

Macedon Ranges Shire declares climate emergency

Congratulations to Macedon Ranges Shire Council.

It's the latest Australian council to declare a climate emergency.

<https://www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au/story/7185625/macedon-ranges-shire-declares-climate-emergency/>

Victorian Government rejects floating gas terminal proposal at Crib Point

A proposal for a new gas export terminal in Victoria has been rejected by the state government. The Crib Point terminal would have had severe environmental effects.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-30/crib-point-agl-floating-gas-terminal-rejected/100036926>

Should solar owners pay to supply the grid, or are there other options? Here's what you need to know

Are there better options for managing the impact of solar on the grid than charging households for the export of renewable energy? Smart solar might be one answer.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2021-03-30/solar-power-electricity-should-owners-pay-to-supply-grid/100035198>

Positive outlook for investing in Australian renewables

A new study forecasts strong growth in investment in renewables in Australia in 2021. The Minter Ellison report shows Covid has had little impact on investment plans.

<https://www.minterellison.com/articles/positive-outlook-for-investing-in-australian-renewables>

Renewables plus batteries offer Australia the same energy security as coal, research finds

The Australia Institute has called for a new rule change to provide greater security for the grid. Renewables and batteries would replace a reliance on coal and gas.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/mar/29/renewables-plus-batteries-offer-australia-the-same-energy-security-as-coal-research-finds>

Leading the charge: how the hospitality sector is building Australia's EV network

Australia is getting an EV charging network, but it's being led by the hospitality sector rather than government.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/28/leading-the-charge-how-the-hospitality-sector-is-building-australias-ev-network>

Is rooftop solar really causing a network bottleneck?

Is the proposed tax of solar power exported to the grid built on faulty assumptions?

And what will be the impact on different households?

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/is-rooftop-solar-really-causing-a-network-bottleneck/>

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/modelling-how-the-proposed-rooftop-solar-tax-will-affect-solar-households/>

Australians with rooftop solar panels could soon be charged for exporting power into the grid, under proposed changes

Houses with solar may soon be charged for exporting power back into the grid.

Regulators are concerned about exports overwhelming the grid.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-25/australians-with-rooftop-solar-charged-export-electricity-grid/100026336>

One of Earth's giant carbon sinks may have been overestimated - study

New research has found that the potential of soils to store carbon may have been overestimated.

It has found that rising CO2 levels may not be automatically taken up by soil storage.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/24/soils-ability-to-absorb-carbon-emissions-may-be-overestimated-study>

Australia's first offshore wind project reveals underground transmission route

Australia's first proposed offshore wind farm, the Star of the South, has set out its transmission line through Gippsland. The project would feed renewable energy into the grid at the Latrobe Valley.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/australias-first-offshore-wind-project-reveals-underground-transmission-route/>

Net zero in UK "impossible unless urgent action taken on energy efficiency"

A UK parliamentary report says the country has little chance of hitting net zero emissions targets without massive investment in energy efficiency.

<https://thefifthestate.com.au/articles/net-zero-in-uk-impossible-unless-urgent-action-taken-on-energy-efficiency/>

Will Australia's states save the day on climate and the clean energy transition?

A new WWF report shows how the states are picking up the slack where the federal Government is lagging on driving a transition to renewable energy.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/will-australias-states-save-the-day-on-climate-and-the-clean-energy-transition/>

Tackling hidden energy vulnerability through housing, energy and health collaborations

This online Research Workshop to be held online on April 29, 2021 from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM AEST will present the findings of the project Tackling hidden energy vulnerability through housing, energy and

health collaboration, which is funded by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation.

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/research-workshop-webinar-tackling-hidden-energy-vulnerability-registration-141767886565>

Coles snubs coal and gas and commits to 100 pct renewables by 2025

Coles has committed to being 100% renewables powered by 2025. It's part of a big shift in climate policy by the company.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/coles-snubs-coal-and-gas-and-commits-to-100-pct-renewables-by-2025/>

Australia's miners urge Europe to define nuclear power and fossil fuels with carbon capture as 'sustainable'

The Minerals Council of Australia is pushing Europe to consider nuclear and carbon capture storage as sustainable energy sources. They're unlikely to succeed with the EU.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/mar/21/australias-miners-urge-europe-to-define-nuclear-power-and-fossil-fuels-with-carbon-capture-as-sustainable>

Australia's first community energy retailer expands to Queensland

Australia's first community energy retailer has expanded to Queensland.

Enova already has close to 10,000 customers in NSW.

<https://onestepoffthegrid.com.au/australias-first-community-energy-retailer-extends-offer-to-south-east-queensland/>

Green infrastructure could help cities fight heatwaves

A new study from Monash University makes the case for Australian cities to substantially increase their investments in green infrastructure, alleviate the urban heat island effect.

<https://www.themandarin.com.au/151518-green-infrastructure-could-help-cities-fight-heatwaves/>

Cows fed small amount of seaweed burp 86 per cent less methane in trial

Feeding cows a small amount of seaweed has been found to reduce their methane output by 86%.

Supporters say if the technique was widely adopted, it would be the equivalent of removing 100 million cars from the road.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2021-03-18/cows-fed-seaweed-methane-emissions-reduced-82-per-cent/13253102>

Switching off rooftop solar will become an important feature of a renewables grid

Last weekend (13/3 -14/3) in South Australia, the energy regulator, AEMO, quietly turned off some solar systems on rooftops.

It was the first time the regulator has intervened in the market in this manner. It won't be the last.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/switching-off-rooftop-solar-will-become-a-regular-feature-of-a-renewables-grid/>

Doubling uptake of wind and solar power could set up Australia for net zero emissions by 2040

New research suggests Australia could hit net zero emissions by 2040 with comparatively little cost.

It would require a doubling of renewable energy installation each year.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/mar/17/doubling-uptake-of-wind-and-solar-power-could-set-up-australia-for-net-zero-emissions-by-2040>

How the City of Newcastle managed its transition to 100 renewables

It's been a year since the City of Newcastle switched to 100% renewables.

How did they do it?

<https://onestepoffthegrid.com.au/how-the-city-of-newcastle-managed-its-transition-to-100-renewables/>

Australia's largest community-owned solar farm begins powering homes in Canberra

Australia's largest community-owned solar farm is now operational. The farm at Majura is powering 260 Canberra homes.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-11/act-community-solar-farm-opens-in-majura/13238882>

How to convince households to offer battery storage to boost the grid

A Sydney company is researching solar and battery uptake to see how it can strengthen the grid.

UPowr is running a 13 month study, funded by ARENA.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/how-to-convince-households-to-offer-battery-storage-to-boost-the-grid/>

Outcry at Australia's coal plant closures misses the point: change is coming

Rather than complaining about the impact of the early closure of coal plants, like Yallourn, governments should be getting ready because it isn't going to stop.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/mar/12/outcry-at-australias-coal-plant-closures-misses-the-point-change-is-coming>

Europe votes in favour of carbon border tax, could hit Australian exports

Rather than complaining about the impact of the early closure of coal plants, like Yallourn, governments should be getting ready because it isn't going to stop.

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/european-votes-in-favour-of-carbon-border-tax-could-hit-australian-exports/>

Yallourn closure a 'sign of the times' for coal power's struggles

The coal-fired Yallourn power plant in Victoria is to close 4 years early and be replaced by a battery.
It's a result of more renewables in the grid.

<https://www.theage.com.au/business/the-economy/yallourn-closure-a-sign-of-the-times-for-coal-power-s-struggles-20210310-p579k2.html>

From veggie gardening to op-shopping, migrants are the quiet environmentalists

Environmental movements are often dominated by the white, middle class.

New research shows migrants are often natural environmentalists who are under-represented in the broader movement.

Meanwhile, the state's Conservation Council wants a target of 700% renewables.

<https://theconversation.com/from-veggie-gardening-to-op-shopping-migrants-are-the-quiet-environmentalists-155473>

China leads world's biggest increase in wind power capacity

China built more wind power in 2020 than the rest of the world combined in the year before.

New figures show that China built almost 100GW of wind power in 2020, despite Covid.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/mar/10/china-leads-world-increase-wind-power-capacity-windfarms>

Explainer: What is battery storage? And why is it coming to a grid near you?

Battery storage is coming to a grid near you, if it's not there already. Little ones in households and big ones like in Hornsdale, South Australia, are being deployed in support of the clean energy revolution.

But what are they doing there? What can batteries do?

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/explainer-what-is-battery-storage-and-why-is-it-coming-to-a-grid-near-you/>

The rapidly changing National Electricity Market - Webinar Recording

This is a recording of a Smart Energy Council webinar held on 23 March 2021, held in partnership with the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA).

In this webinar they covered:

- Solar and wind energy growth to 2025
- Coal plant financials, and further potential near-term closures
- Long-term planning for a post fossil fuel grid

<https://vimeo.com/528756337>

Big Batteries – Strengthening our Grid – Webinar Recording

This is a recording from the Smart Energy Council webinar 'Big Batteries – Strengthening our Grid,' held on 30 March 2021 in partnership with Sungrow.

Big Batteries are increasingly being deployed across the grid. From planned 700MW 'mega batteries' to smaller neighborhood scale batteries, as well as off grid (and microgrid) batteries.

They discussed:

1. A review of the market and drivers for Big Batteries in the Australian Market
2. A Big Battery reference case study
3. How Big Batteries can help strengthen our Grid

<https://vimeo.com/531502529>

Preview: Why the new Ioniq 5 heralds a step change in electric vehicles

Hyundai's new electric vehicle platform allows for big changes in its first specialised EV design, but the most exciting development might be its "vehicle to load" option.

<https://thedriven.io/2021/04/02/preview-why-the-new-ioniq-5-heralds-a-step-change-in-electric-vehicles/>

Electric car owners poke fun at Morrison, say EVs “ruined” their Easter weekend

Group of electric car owners join forces in new Facebook group to show how zero-emissions vehicles “ruined” their weekends.

<https://thedriven.io/2021/04/06/electric-car-owners-poke-fun-at-morrison-say-evs-ruined-their-easter-weekend/>