

Friday, 8 September 2023

Ausgrid powers up the first of 400 community batteries under new Australian Government program

Ausgrid has delivered the first of six community batteries ahead of schedule, in collaboration with the Australian Government as part of the Community Batteries for Household Solar Program.

Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen, today joined Ausgrid Chief Executive Officer, Marc England and Member for Reid, Sally Sitou to switch on the 412kWh community battery at Cabarita in Sydney.

Community batteries are flexible and scalable energy solutions that benefit both the local communities they are built within, and the wider energy system. Batteries like this support power quality and voltage in the local area, they enable residents to install more solar and feed this solar energy into the grid, and support home electrification and electric vehicle charging.

The battery will also provide system wide benefits, supporting more intermittent renewable energy generation by bridging the gap between when that energy is generated and when it is needed. This means excess solar generated by Cabarita homes can be stored locally during the day – reducing the need to buy more expensive power from the grid when the sun isn't shining. Community batteries can also help apply downward pressure on energy prices by avoiding costly network upgrades to meet peak demand.

Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen said the battery would help residents store solar energy locally and reduce emissions.

"I'm delighted to launch the Albanese Government's first Community Battery – which will help households access cleaner, cheaper energy and increase grid resilience."

Local MP for Reid Sally Sitou welcomed the announcement, saying "I'm thrilled our Cabarita community battery is up and running. It shows the commitment this Government has to sharing the benefits of clean and renewable energy with all households."

The Cabarita community battery is another important step toward retailers providing a community storage service to their customers, so everyone can access the benefit of battery storage without having to install an expensive home battery, ultimately pushing down the cost of their energy bills.

Ausgrid Chief Executive Officer, Marc England said the benefits of community batteries are immense.

“We estimate NSW consumers could save up to \$20 billion if community batteries replaced half the expected home batteries, with the added benefits of continuing to put downward pressure on peak energy prices while maintaining grid stability.”

“In addition, community batteries take advantage of our existing network infrastructure, speeding up installation time and reducing the need for expensive network augmentation.”

“By 2030, with the right regulatory arrangements, we could deliver more than one to two GW of storage, leading to increased electricity system security and reliability for our customers. We are excited and ready to make electricity accessible to everyone as we drive a net-zero future, including here in Cabarita” he said.

To support its community battery roll out under the Community Batteries for Household Solar Program, Ausgrid will also be co-installing community-based renewable energy projects to further increase access to the renewable energy transition. This starts with a 42kW solar array on the Cabarita Swimming Centre, which is more than six times the size of an average household solar system.

The six Ausgrid community batteries are being rolled out across Sydney and the Central Coast, in Bondi, Cammeray, Narara, North Epping and Warriewood over the coming months.

For more information on community batteries, visit www.ausgrid.com.au/sharedbattery

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