

Hello all,  
thanks for the opportunity to present today.

Given that we ran short of time, here is some follow up information that the committee needs:

- I am available to answer follow up questions
- In the discussion about returns, it is important to focus on why the following elements exist in the community energy sector and are not provided by markets:
  - zero interest loans from a revolving fund
  - donations and fundraising - CORENA's fund has recently hit the \$0.5m mark
  - Patient capital. Many communities around the world use this term
  - funds applied to initiatives that are not yet considered commercial by markets (and this might not be the returns on capital, the hard work in developing each project also makes some projects unviable)
  - climate generosity. Many communities offer their time and money in the interest of something much larger - flourishing communities in a safe climate for future generations
- The Coalition for Community Energy has 100 community energy groups directly involved with the organisation and we know of over 200 groups that exist in communities all around Australia
- The limits on time, resources, the legal ability and internal capacity community energy groups have, are non-trivial barriers. We can't apply for, or sign up to funds and grants when the threshold is too high. Here is an example:
  - I was recently successful in a grant application for the remote and reliable microgrids program.
  - The remote tourism business we were serving was too small to be the lead proponent on the contract and it lacked the technical capacity
  - The community organisation I represented cannot commit itself to a project of this size
  - The lead contractor we have partnered with was able to offer some support to the application - I estimate they spent 1 week FTE because we brought a fully formed project
  - The project could have made good progress with ~\$60,000 for feasibility, but the grant program lends itself to projects of over \$1m so we had to do all the pre-feasibility work for free
  - The remote business offered a few thousand for an energy audit and our auditor did \$20,000 worth of work, partly because of his support for CORENA
  - Over three years, I estimate that CORENA has spent 2 months FTE to undertake pre-feasibility and grant application work on this remote grid (which spends over \$100,000 on diesel each year) and to rework the project into something that would give benefits to the federal government and therefore be worthy of the grant.
  - It is rare that a community organisation would have the time, relationships, technical capacity and levels of motivation to risk this much time on a grant opportunity or funding arrangement with this federal program. I understand ARENA programs and CEFC funding present a similar threshold/barrier to accessing their support.

thank you  
Heather

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