



Media Release

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Shared solar and storage could deliver more for households

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) is providing \$112,400 support for Moreland Energy Foundation Limited (MEFL) to investigate a model for shared solar photovoltaic (PV) generation and energy storage capacity in metropolitan suburbs.

ARENA CEO Ivor Frischknecht said the project would look at how communities can draw on renewable energy and storage for cheaper power and greater control over their energy.

“Pooling solar PV generation and storage across a number of households using a neighbourhood ‘micro-grid’ could address certain challenges and allow residential customers to generate, store and use more of their own solar PV,” Mr Frischknecht said.

“Although record numbers of Australian households already have rooftop solar systems, there is a limit on how much grid-connected solar PV individual households can install and how much solar power they can generate.

“This is because our networks were designed to facilitate power flowing in one direction – from the grid to customers – and the system can run into technical problems if too much solar power is fed back into the grid at any one time.

“In addition to working with networks to look at ways to better manage the integration of renewable energy and two-way traffic, ARENA is supporting projects like this one to explore the logistical, regulatory and financial challenges involved in adopting micro-grids in existing suburbs.”

MEFL and project partners GreenSync and Jemena will undertake a virtual trial based on historical power consumption data from medium-density Melbourne suburbs. They will examine how PV and storage systems could provide ‘behind the meter’ power needs of users and potentially show how networks could be used differently to allow more grid-connected solar.

Mr Frischknecht said adopting solar PV and battery storage at a community level can decrease installation and maintenance costs by leveraging the purchasing power of multiple residences.

“Micro-grids could enable more solar energy to be shared between neighbours at peak times when grid power is most expensive, increasing the value to participating residences,” Mr Frischknecht said.

“In addition, the ability to reduce peak demand through such a system could actively assist network utilities to manage challenging periods of variable power production and overall activity on the grid.”

The results of the \$225,800 project are due in May 2016.

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About ARENA

ARENA was established by the Australian Government to make renewable energy technologies more affordable and increase the amount of renewable energy used in Australia. ARENA invests in renewable energy projects, supports research and development activities, boosts job creation and industry development, and increases knowledge about renewable energy. ARENA is currently supporting more than 200 projects and is actively seeking new projects to support.

About Moreland Energy Foundation Limited

Moreland Energy Foundation Ltd (MEFL) is a not-for-profit organisation established by the Moreland City Council to work with communities, partners and governments to implement sustainable energy projects. The organisation works to support the community of Moreland achieve its goal to be carbon neutral by 2030. Through its social enterprise Positive Charge, MEFL supports 20 Councils help households and businesses become more energy efficient and install solar PV. MEFL also provides consulting services to governments and corporations on technical and strategic factors in the deployment of distributed renewable energy.