

ARENA Insights Spotlight

Corporations making the shift to renewables

JUNE 2019



Developed by the Business Renewables Centre Australia



Australian Government
Australian Renewable
Energy Agency

ARENA

ABOUT THE BUSINESS RENEWABLES CENTRE AUSTRALIA

The Business Renewables Centre Australia (BRC-A) is a member-based platform streamlining and accelerating corporate purchasing of large-scale wind, solar energy, and storage.

The Centre was launched in October 2018 with [\\$500k of ARENA funding](#) in partnership from Climate-KIC Australia, WWF-Australia's Renewable Energy Buyers Forum and the Institute for Sustainable Futures (University of Technology Sydney) to address market barriers identified in Australia and to provide independent advice to industry on renewable energy purchase power agreements (PPAs).

Since launching in 2018, the BRC-A has helped connect renewable energy buyers and sellers with more than 13.3 GW of renewable energy across 91 projects.

INTERVIEW WITH CHARLIE HANCOCK, PROJECT MANAGER - REAL UTILITIES AT FRASERS PROPERTY AUSTRALIA

Charlie is the Project Manager - Embedded Networks, Real Utilities at Frasers Property Australia, focussing on the electrical, gas and thermal infrastructure inside a development across residential and commercial communities. In this interview, Charlie discusses the benefits the BRC-A membership has had at Frasers Property.

BRC-A: Why is your organisation seeking to transition to renewable energy?

CH: Let me just step back and give you some context first.

The property industry is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse emissions. As part of that industry, Frasers Property has set itself an ambitious goal of being carbon neutral by 2028. This goal is one of many we have set under our 'A Different Way' strategy launched in 2015, and is the foundation to our vision for a more sustainable future. In a business of our scale, as you can imagine, there are many different initiatives that are in place to work toward this goal. There is no one-size-fits-all approach - we're coming at it from many different directions. This includes validating our carbon reduction strategy in line with the Science-Based Targets initiative that was approved earlier this year. This includes taking responsibility for how our organisation manages greenhouse gas emissions across all our operations.

BRC-A: You are in the Real Utilities business at Frasers Property. What does this business do?

CH: Despite its many challenges, we're taking a positive view on energy. Energy has been identified as a key competitive advantage for us from a customer service perspective, particularly in terms of being able to offer cheaper and greener power.

We recently established Real Utilities as a stand-alone business and a licenced Australian energy retailer in NSW and QLD, operating under the Frasers Property Australia umbrella. Real Utilities owns and manages energy infrastructure within many Frasers Property developments and uses a combination of renewable energy, often generated through solar on the sites of our master planned communities, as well as certified carbon offsets to provide carbon neutral energy to its customers.

BRC-A: What were the key drivers for your organisation to join the BRC-A?

CH: When we initially established Real Utilities the driver was to utilise the infrastructure that we built servicing our residential homes, shopping centres, office and industrial warehouse communities to deliver greener, cheaper energy to our customers. Most of this so far though has been done through carbon offsets but we have to move quicker to reach our targets.

Where we landed is a drive toward establishing a more effective and efficient approach to accessing renewable energy throughout the business. Currently, the majority of coal and gas fired plants etc. are owned by retailers but the renewables sector is operated by a significantly wider group of private sector investors so it's a bit tricky to navigate.

In making our decision to join the BRC-A, we wanted to better understand the opportunity and

a pathway to achieve our aspirations. Energy is a significant cost to a business so it's important the investment and its impact is well considered.

BRC-A: What has been the most valuable learning with your organisation's energy transition so far?

CH: We all understand the importance of transitioning to renewables and Real Utilities enables us to quickly get into using 100% renewable energy as a vehicle for change within Frasers Property. The BRC-A is a valuable resource that helps businesses understand the options available and demonstrate that it's not quite as hard as we first thought.

The BRC-A helped pull back the curtain so to speak on navigating the process to enter a PPA and joined prospective PPA buyers with representatives of businesses who have already been on this journey. There is great comfort in sharing knowledge in an open forum that you otherwise generally would not be able to share.

BRC-A: Would you recommend other organisations join the BRC-A?

CH: I absolutely recommend businesses to join the BRC-A, I mean it is free after all [for corporate buyers]! And take full advantage of the resources they have developed. Certainly the BRC-A's bootcamps are very useful and a great starting point.

Regardless of industry every business has an opportunity to speed the transition to higher renewable take up, it will take all of us to get there and I mean when I say that you need buy in from the entirety of your business to commit to this journey.

BRC-A: Most important learning?

CH: Traditional energy retailers are developing low risk PPA products to offer their customers traditional and renewable energy options, these are more accessible to the everyday, potentially less energy experienced businesses.

INTERVIEW WITH GERALDINE TAN, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND POLICY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Geraldine is a Senior Engineer and Manager in Energy and Sustainability at the University of Western Australia, involved in the Capital Projects team responsible for the \$10 million minor works and construction projects at the university. Interviewed here, Geraldine provides insights on how being a BRC-A member has benefitted and contributed to the university's energy transition.

BRC-A: Why is your organisation seeking to transition to renewable energy?

GT: The University of Western Australia recognises the role of renewable energy in addressing the grand challenges facing humanity. In fact, it is one of the focus areas of our teaching and research ambitions articulated in UWA's 2020-25 Strategic Plan. This recognition needs to be reflected in how we operate and in our goal to be energy neutral by 2025.

BRC-A: What has been the most valuable learning with your organisation's energy transition so far?

GT: Leadership and commitment is key to an organisation's transition to renewable energy. It is the first step to enable opportunities and collaborations to be pursued. It is underpinned by fundamentally societal and business decisions of carbon emissions reduction and energy price security.

BRC-A: What were the key drivers for your organisation to join the BRC-A?

GT: Access to developers who may be operating in the energy market; access to expertise to assist

with understanding the energy market; access to online resources to assist with renewable energy procurement.

BRC-A: Of the services and resources that BRC-A provides, what have been the most valuable to you so far?

GT: The most valuable service at this stage of our process has been the training provided and the lessons learnt from other renewable energy buyers.

BRC-A: What was your organisation's key takeaway from the BRC-A Buyers Bootcamp?

GT: Key takeaway is that there are several types of PPAs which can be adopted depending on the organisation's motivations, risk appetite and financial accounting.

BRC-A: What advice or learnings would you pass on to organisations considering joining the BRC-A?

GT: The BRC-A has access to expertise in the energy market, both nationally and globally. Being able to utilise this expertise, as well as the support of the network of like-minded buyers or developers that are motivated to transition Australia to a renewable energy future will be invaluable.

