

ARENA Insights Spotlight: The Cities Power Partnership

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ABOUT THE CITIES POWER PARTNERSHIP

The Cities Power Partnership is a free national program that brings together Australian towns and cities making the switch to clean energy.



David Craven,
Cities Power Partnership
Director



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Deputy Director

INTERVIEWEES: DAVID CRAVEN, DIRECTOR AND TRACIE ARMSTRONG, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE CITIES POWER PARTNERSHIP

ARENA: How does the Cities Power Partnership get councils on board with the program?

Tracie: Councils come to us through a number of different ways. When we started out two years ago, we actively identified and invited trailblazing councils to join the program. But as momentum builds and word gets out about the support we can provide for councils working on clean energy/emission reducing projects, we're increasingly seeing councils approaching us wanting to get involved. Joining is free of charge, and we welcome councils of all shapes and sizes, from tiny rural shires through to the largest cities. [Become a Power Partner](#).

ARENA: What have been your lessons to date on this?

Tracie: We've seen that there are regional 'hotspots' for the Cities Power Partnership - clusters of councils in the same area joining the program and using it to further regional clean energy solutions. This shows how important it is to develop local, region-specific partnerships - councils are stronger together on regional emission reduction and clean energy projects.

ARENA: David, as the newly instated Director of the Cities Power Partnership what experience do you bring to the role?

David: Prior to joining the Cities Power Partnership, I was the lead Australian representative of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group. While at C40 I worked closely with the City of Melbourne, while also directing the Climate Positive Development Program globally. Prior to that, I've held leadership positions across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, including roles with Sustainability Victoria and the Green Building Councils of Australia and New Zealand.

ARENA: What plans are there to help increase Cities Power Partnership's impact?

David: The Cities Power Partnership is growing, and we're currently seeking new councils to [join](#) the program. At the same time, we're deepening our engagement with existing members and giving them new tools to further their work on climate change. One of these tools, the [Knowledge Sharing hub](#), was developed in [partnership](#) with the emissions and energy tracking platform Aziliy. This tool enables member councils to measure and report on the impact of their Cities Power Partnership projects.

ARENA: What were the key drivers behind the design of the new Cities Power Partnership members Knowledge Sharing hub?

Tracie: Our member councils have been telling us since the start of the program that the ability to connect and share information and knowledge with other councils working on similar projects is one of the most useful aspects of the Cities Power Partnership. The [Knowledge Sharing hub](#) has been designed to give them a dedicated online space to ask questions, share insights and connect. As well as sharing knowledge with each other, we also have experts who can jump in to answer council energy and climate questions.

ARENA: What are the early results coming out of the Knowledge Sharing hub discussions?

Tracie: Councils are really keen to share information, and there's been a great response from our members to the hub since it launched a few weeks ago. We're developing some interesting ways to use the hub to share knowledge, including AMAs (Ask Me Anything) sessions with subject-matter experts.

ARENA: Do you have some case studies demonstrating the impact/success of the program?

David: The [Strathbogie Shire](#), in regional Victoria, is a great example of how the Cities Power Partnership can support a council to reach further with its clean energy projects. Strathbogie is a tiny shire, with limited resources and big ambitions for the clean energy transition.

We helped to promote and celebrate the Bogie Bulk Buy, the council's solar bulk buy initiative, with media and communications support including shooting a [video](#) on the program which was viewed by hundreds of thousands of people across Australia and internationally. This profiling helped Strathbogie Shire increase local support for the solar bulk buy, which they then leveraged to take the model for the solar bulk buy to surrounding councils. So far six other Victorian councils have adopted the Bogie Bulk Buy model, and similar ideas, including a battery bulk buy, are on the horizon.

ARENA: What is unique in the way the Cities Power Partnership uses its ARENA funding to accelerate the clean energy transition?

David: Many ARENA funded clean energy transition projects build tangible, first-of-its-kind assets. The Cities Power Partnership is different as it is building an intangible asset - an educated network of communities which share and create knowledge. Our program is set up so that councils interested in a new clean energy project can easily connect with other councils who have spearheaded a similar project. From supporting communities to adopt sustainable transport, solar energy bulk buys to street lighting upgrades, our members have access to information that prevents them from having to reinvent the wheel.

