

ARENA Insights Spotlight:
Local Champions in the
Cities Power Partnership
An interview with the Strathbogie Shire Council

AUGUST 2019



Carole Hammond

ABOUT THE STRATHBOGIE SHIRE COUNCIL

The Strathbogie Shire is a rural municipality located approximately two hours from the Melbourne CBD along the Hume Highway with a population of approximately 10,000.

INTERVIEWEE: CAROLE HAMMOND, SUSTAINABILITY TEAM LEADER, STRATHBOGIE SHIRE COUNCIL

ARENA: What has been the most valuable learning with your community transition so far?

Carole: There have been two main learnings so far. Number one is to not delay action. If it's clearly a 'no brainer' then go for it. We did this with the [Bogie Bulk Buy](#). As I already had the experience of running a solar bulk buy and the community were clearly telling us they were in need of impartial renewables advice, we wasted no time getting this project off the ground.

The second learning is to involve the community. Put them front and centre, and give them the tools to act. In rural Australia, it's amazing to feel the community behind what you're doing, and when you work in a small council you really benefit from the support they bring.

ARENA: What were the key drivers for your community to join the Cities Power Partnership?

Carole: Strathbogie Shire Council is a rural Victorian municipality with a small population and a large, diverse land-mass. Our residents are already grappling with the realities of climate change - transitioning their farming techniques and businesses, advocating for the environment, and above all, volunteering their time to sustainable endeavours.

We are only two hours from Melbourne, but in many ways we are light-years apart when it comes to comparing metro and rural Council resources, and the diversity of issues we deal with across the clean energy transition. Joining the Climate Council's Cities Power Partnership provides expert support, and through working with the team, we have had the opportunity to articulate these differences and appropriate solutions, like the [Bogie Bulk Buy](#).

ARENA: What are the biggest benefits you're seeing so far?

Carole: We're already benefiting from the Cities Power Partnership's support as seen through a variety of climate projects in Strathbogie. We have recently delivered the Sustainable Strathbogie 2030 Strategy, an overarching blueprint for our shire based around the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Our council is also focusing on our greenhouse gas mitigation targets, leading an organisational and community cultural change and designing a 2030 strategy as our tool for action.

One of the biggest benefits though, is how being a member has engaged our Mayor and Councillors, and helped grow Council support for clean energy projects as a way to take action on climate change. Our Councillors were even invited to road test electric vehicles in Bathurst (of which they are now staunch supporters!) The confidence the Cities Power Partnership has inspired in our Council has in no small way helped lead us here, and we hope, will continue to help us inspire others to follow.

ARENA: What key learning or lessons would you pass on to others considering joining the Cities Power Partnership?

Carole: Take advantage of the opportunities to connect with other councils and attend the program's roundtables and networking events. Let the media team know about your plans and projects, they will be able to help you share your achievements in a magical way. And, above all, know that being classed 'small rural' is a licence to think big!