

SHASA Submission on the Australian Local Power Agency Bills to *The House Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy*

The Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance is a non-for-profit incorporated community organisation operating in the Eurobodalla, NSW. SHASA has a mailing list of over 650 members. SHASA has installed solar on 12 community facilities in the Eurobodalla and runs a solar bulk buy scheme which has already installed 1.5MW of rooftop solar.

We strongly support the Australian Local Power Agency Bills because this legislation would result in a new \$467 million Australian Local Power Agency which would provide organisations like SHASA with the key support and resources required to go ahead with community renewable energy projects. This includes:

- A Local Power Scheme to establish 50 Local Power Hubs across regional Australia to support communities to develop their own renewable energy projects
- Underwrite new community investment scheme to provide financial certainty to mid scale generation (up to 5MW) and storage projects that are at least 51% community owned
- Community Renewable Investment Scheme to require local communities to be able to invest in 20% of the project value of any new large scale renewable developments in regional Australia.

A Local Power Plan Expert Panel which was set up to design and lead a community co-design process with community energy groups across the Nation. The Local Power Plan was developed through a six-month co-design process, involving 14 workshops and 100 submissions. SHASA made a detailed submission to the Expert Panel. SHASA also participated in a day of media and meetings with MPs at Parliament House, to promote the Local Power Plan and observe the tabling of the bills in the House of Representatives.

Currently the Eurobodalla has no solar farms or community batteries. The largest solar system is a 340 kW roof top system on the Bunnings Store in Bateman's Bay. SHASA has found it too difficult and expensive to develop a shovel ready business case so that it can access grants and go ahead with building a community owned solar farm. The three elements of the Australian Local Power Agency would enable SHASA to overcome the current high barriers to entry. We need significantly more funding and local technical support to get community projects off the ground.

A solar farm owned by the local community would ensure the economic returns are returned to the community. Local businesses would be employed to build and manage the solar farm generating economic well-being for our region.

SHASA believes this modest investment will result in much greater investment in regional areas and will be a key driver of growth and prosperity in regional Australia.