

CORENA (Citizens Own Renewable Energy Network Australia Inc) was established in early 2013 to give everyone who desperately wants effective climate action a chance to collectively fund practical renewable energy projects themselves.

At the time Australia had a carbon price, the Climate Commission, the Climate Change Authority, government funding for the Environmental Defenders Offices and Conservation Councils, protection for Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Areas, and effective CEFC and ARENA projects, and the Renewable Energy Target had bipartisan support. In hindsight that all sounds relatively good, but in practice even those measures were a woefully inadequate response to the climate emergency. Climate science tells us we need to make rapid and very deep cuts to Australia's carbon emissions if we want to have half a chance of a safe climate.

CORENA is not a campaigning group. Plenty of others have spent years lobbying for a rapid transition to 100% renewable energy. Instead we have set up a funding mechanism to enable everyone who wants climate action to make a start by putting their hands in their own pockets to help fund practical renewable energy projects.

So far donations have funded two solar installations for non-profit community organisations, one in NSW and one in SA, and we're currently raising money for a third one in Victoria. We've also recently launched an ambitious crowd-funding strategy to fund a citizen-owned solar thermal plant. Altogether the public has contributed \$42,000 to our projects so far, with donations received from well over 1,000 people.

CORENA has set up a revolving fund model. As renewable energy installations 'pay for themselves', all resultant income is spent on subsequent similar projects. We have no paid staff, and nobody receives any personal financial gain. Our donors are simply trying to 'buy' a safer climate for the sake of the common good. After all, it is our lives, the lives of our families, and the future of humanity that is on the line.

We are under no illusion that our achievements so far will give us a safe climate. It would be wildly optimistic to think that private philanthropy is enough unless governments also take effective action. However, as our funds revolve and snowball, and as support for our model grows, we hope to engage and empower a sufficiently large proportion of the public that we can collectively reduce Australia's carbon emissions enough to make some difference.

CORENA does not expect contributions from people who have no money or people who don't believe we are facing a climate crisis. In an emergency scenario like the current climate crisis it is up to those who are aware of the danger and who are able to act to do so. Plenty of people are willing to do more than their 'fair share' in reducing emissions, and with some helpful government policies we could make rapid headway in reducing carbon emissions. However, the Abbott government is knowingly attacking the few climate measures we had and actively encouraging fossil fuel expansion.

The efforts of the public to tackle climate change could be much more effective if the Abbott government were working with the climate-concerned public rather than against us. As a

minimum, we hope the government will reinstate a price on carbon, maintain (or strengthen) the RET, reinstate funding for climate advisory bodies, prevent expansion of fossil fuel extraction, phase out use of fossil fuels for electricity by facilitating renewable energy projects, and protect our remaining areas of native forests for their carbon sink value.