

22 August 2024

Newstead Community Energy Project opens to bring power to the people

Innovative community-led battery and solar farm switches on

A community battery and solar farm, initiated by Renewable Newstead and built and operated by Flow Power, has officially opened today.

The landmark Newstead Community Energy Project, unique for its community / company co-development, will generate enough energy to power the local community and beyond.

Victoria's Minister for Climate Action, Energy and Resources, the Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio, officially opened the 3MW generating facility and 5MWh battery energy storage system, completing a decade-long commitment to the project.

Flow Power joined project leaders, Newstead residents and representatives of the Djaara Traditional Owners group at the opening.

Minister D'Ambrosio commented on the launch: "We're supporting regional Victoria to make the most out of the renewable energy transition. We are backing lower power bills and more reliable energy with projects like this one."

"We're empowering the Newstead community – and other communities like it – to fully harness the benefits of locally generated and stored renewable energy".

The collaborative project is a powerful blueprint for how communities can be powered by renewables in their own backyard. First conceived in 2008, the Newstead Community Energy Project was led by Renewable Newstead, a committee of local residents determined to make good on their community's dream to generate renewable energy locally and cut their carbon footprint.

Renewable Newstead Convenor Geoff Park said: "This is a great day for our small community that's taken the reins and worked so hard for so long to shape our collective future. Newstead can rightly take a bow. We are grateful for Flow Power's invaluable collaboration and the Victorian Government's support, especially from our local MP Maree Edwards and Minister D'Ambrosio."

In 2021 after a national search, Renewable Newstead engaged fast-growing renewable energy company Flow Power to build, own and operate the battery and solar farm and retail the electricity it generates.

The local community finalised the site, about 5km from Newstead (140 km north-west of Melbourne) and in 2019 Renewable Newstead secured a \$1.1 million grant from the Victorian State Government, after earlier receiving support to investigate the most suitable renewable energy source for the area.

The battery and solar farm will feed renewable electricity directly to the grid, generating enough clean energy for up to 1,000 homes, about double Newstead's current requirements. To maintain the farm's connection with the community, Flow Power will then make available 100% GreenPower

accredited electricity directly to Newstead homes and businesses that sign up to its Flow Home residential energy plan. For every unit of electricity used on this plan, the Newstead Community Energy Project will send clean energy into Victoria's grid on behalf of that home. Under the Flow Home energy plan, the retail tariff is structured to reward customers for using energy during peak renewable generation periods and discourage use during peak demand periods when it costs more.

Flow Power CEO Matthew van der Linden, said: "Newstead is a community of passionate, forward-thinking, engaged individuals who are demonstrating the change that is necessary for a successful energy transition. This requires not just the support, but the active participation of energy literate communities and households. Critically, when energy is cheapest is when the grid is most powered by renewables and by linking the two through their retail plan, Newstead residents will be playing their part in actively driving Australia's energy transition.

"The Newstead Energy Project is the first of its kind for Victoria and a powerful template for how community, government and industry can work together to propel the energy transition forward. We are proud to be empowering the Newstead community to reach their 100% renewables goals and provide the infrastructure and energy education needed to make that vision a reality. Collaboration has been critical to getting us to where we are today, and on behalf of the Flow Power team I would like to firstly acknowledge the vision and tenacity of Renewable Newstead, and the significant support and ongoing collaboration with Renewable Newstead and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) team in bringing this project to life".

Newstead residents Vanessa Pidwell and Ryan Hale said: "This project was one of the reasons we chose to move to Newstead. We're excited to live in a community that values self-sufficiency, environmental sustainability and action from the ground up."

The newly completed facility consists of a 3 MW solar farm and a 5 MWh battery energy storage system, which utilises Flow Power's proprietary kWatch Controller, smart technology that enables the Newstead Community Energy Project to respond to real time market price signals. This allows the combined renewable generator (solar + battery) to more efficiently meet the Newstead community's energy needs by optimising and automating when it feeds into the grid, including during times of low sunshine and outside daylight hours. The Newstead facility also helps regulate and stabilise the region's network through frequency control and ancillary services (FCAS), which provides a fast injection (or reduction) of power into the network as required.

The 6.2-hectare site boasts 72 rows of panels, each over 80m long, 6m apart and includes a tracking system to follow the sun and provide maximum energy production. The site has been established to allow for agricultural sheep grazing during operations.

To learn more about the Newstead Energy Project visit: <https://flowpower.com.au/newstead-energy-project/>

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Notes to Editors

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About Renewable Newstead

Renewable Newstead is a project operating under the umbrella of Newstead 2021 Inc., an overarching, volunteer, community group. Originating with household energy audits and workshops, the community wanted to further explore renewable energy solutions.

Encouraged by a 2011 feasibility study and supported by a 2018 business case, the community set its goal to develop, document and implement a plan for switching to 100% locally generated, renewable energy in a commercially viable way, that would benefit everyone in the Newstead area. The model, advised by Energy for the People with funding grants from the Victorian Government, is unique in that it does not require initial community up-front investment and will allow any Newstead business and household the choice to purchase renewable energy from the Newstead Community Energy Project by simply switching to the power retailer partner, Flow Power.

About Flow Power

Flow Power is an electricity, technology and engineering company that has been reshaping energy for Australia since 2008. Flow Power's renewable energy portfolio encompasses wind, solar and storage – while its innovative approach uncovers new and better ways to deliver reliable, renewable energy that brings costs down and puts the power back in customers' hands.

One of Australia's fastest-growing energy retailers, Flow Power serves some of our best-loved organisations including Asahi Beverages, Sydney Opera House, Snack Brands, Westpac, City of Sydney, The University of Melbourne, RM Williams, Newcastle Airport and Pernod Ricard Winemakers

The Newstead Community Energy Project is Flow Power's seventh clean energy project since 2021, creating jobs, employing local contractors and delivering additional community benefits through a community fund.

A long-term industry leader in the renewable energy transition, Flow Power has recently launched its innovative residential electricity plan, Flow Home, which empowers Australians to make their homes a force for good in the renewable energy transition.

Flow Power: creating Australia's renewable energy future, together.

For more information: www.flowpower.com.au/residential