



*Local energy solutions.*

# CENTRAL VICTORIA SOLAR CITY ANNUAL REPORT 2010-11 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the 2010/11 Financial Year, Central Victoria Solar City (CVSC) engaged over 2,000 households in our region in energy saving activities. We delivered 1780 Home Energy Assessments, engaged 810 participants in a retrofit package, 528 participants in residential solar PV and 242 participants in solar hot water. This financial year, Central Victoria Solar City presented information on energy saving opportunities to more than 60 community groups.

We partnered with 14 local governments to install energy use displays in community buildings, assisting members of our community to take control of their energy use. We involved 20 local small businesses in a trial to design energy efficiency programs that best met their needs. Our team grew to employ 23 local people, contributing to economic growth within our region. Our revised Home Energy Assessment process hit the mark, with CVSC selling out of places in some of the sub-trials within three months of launching the offer.

Our first annual report tells the story of how we engaged participants in the research trial, the lessons we've learnt about what drives people to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy products and services, and an overview of the lessons learnt through the development of our Solar Parks in Bendigo and Ballarat. Later reports will highlight the findings from the research program itself.

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Part of the Australian Government's Solar Cities initiative



**Australian Government**  
**Solar Cities**





### **The Worsfold Family: Kate, Will, Lucy and Duncan. Home Energy Assessment, Campaspe Shire**

*You can't make informed decisions if you don't have the information, and this project gave us access to unbiased professional advice for free. We learnt simple ways to improve heating and cooling of the home and the value of solar energy."*

**Duncan Worsfold, Campaspe Shire**

## **Central Victoria Solar City designed a Home Energy Assessment offering and associated product suite for local customers.**

The Assessment focuses on solutions that are suited to the customer's house, budget and requirement for comfort. Almost 2,000 Home Energy Assessments in the 2010/2011 Financial Year, across 14 municipalities, were delivered. We are well equipped to provide a national solution to household energy efficiency.

Central Victoria Solar City's Home Energy Assessment process could be redesigned to form a generic home energy assessment process. The booklet, which contains, "public good characteristics" could be made available to electricity distributors, retailers, governments and communities online. Central Victoria Solar Cities training and ongoing development program for the Energy Efficiency Team involved the following: A module from Victoria's accredited Home Sustainability Assessor Course; Business Energy Efficiency Training and development; Customer service training; and Community engagement and facilitation.

CVSC can provide data on the numbers of owners vs renters and examine the specific barriers associated with split incentives and make recommendations to government about specific solutions to incentivise energy efficiency for both landlords and tenants.



### **Clive Martin C.R. Martin Real Estate, City of Greater Bendigo Business Energy Assessment Pilot Program**

*"I now know what questions to ask next time my electrician is around.*

*Other businesses should do this to save money, because, really, no one knows, until it's pointed out to you, how much money you can actually save."*

## **Central Victoria Solar City also designed a business energy assessment for small to medium 'high street businesses'.**

The 20 businesses involved in the pilot program reported "an increased sense of control" over their energy consumption and "understanding actions I can take to reduce my consumption." CVSC's business energy assessment will be made available to 350 small businesses between July and December 2011.

The CVSC business energy efficiency trial includes the collection of energy use data for small businesses in Central Victoria. The data will be analysed along with the University's survey of appliances, values and beliefs of the business operators to provide modelling for government on the energy efficiency measures that work best in reducing energy use in small business. Reports on the findings from the business trial will be made available from December 2011, with a final report released in June 2013.



**Bendigo Solar Park**



**Ballarat Solar Park**

## **Central Victoria Solar City demonstrated the effectiveness of medium scale solar parks in generating clean, green energy.**

Both parks located in Bendigo and Ballarat produced more energy than originally estimated. Community appetite for community-owned medium scale solar parks has remained very high in the first year of the parks' operations.

CVSC receives regular enquiries from local governments, sustainability groups and economic development groups interested in raising capital to develop a solar park of their own. The policy settings required to facilitate further take up of community-owned medium-scale solar parks include the introduction of a feed-in tariff or other form of financial incentive to attract investment.

Bendigo and Ballarat Solar Parks provide a sound basis for the viability of community-owned medium-scale solar when considering the generation capability of the parks. If the price of solar panels continues to reduce at the current rate, (from \$12 per watt of installed capacity in 2009 to between \$6 and \$7 per watt of installed capacity in 2011), the case for investment in medium scale solar will become attractive by 2014/15.

## **100% Renewable Communities**

This financial year included the introduction of an innovative community partnership between Central Victoria Solar City and the town of Newstead. Our project, "100% Renewable Communities" has successfully engaged 80% of residents in Newstead in CVSC's Home Energy Assessments. We partnered with the community to focus on collective action to reducing energy consumption.



**Young Newstead residents celebrate their energy saving on popular breakfast television show Sunrise, Channel 7, in April this year.**

CVSC and Newstead are currently assessing the feasibility of a range of renewable energy solutions to generate 100% of the town's stationary energy needs locally and renewably. 100% Renewable Newstead is led by a passionate group of local volunteers and captures the spirit of the Central Victoria Solar City trial well. This community is taking charge of their energy use through simple and pragmatic actions that save them money. This saving can then be channelled into the development of community owned and managed renewable energy infrastructure. This sort of innovative thinking can help shape the way energy is generated in Australia in the future.

That's really the role of the seven Solar Cities around Australia, to trial innovative solutions that help residents use less energy, generate their energy renewably, work together to achieve both and enjoy the strong economic and social benefits that occur as a result.

Central Victoria Solar City is now in a position to help shape the way in which Central Victoria's future energy needs are met. We work in partnership with the University of Ballarat to analyse the energy use behaviour of residents involved in our research trial. Later in 2011 we will begin releasing interim reports on the findings from our trial and make recommendations to government and the energy sector to support greater energy saving in our region.

I encourage all stakeholders within the Central Victoria Solar City to read our first Annual Report and offer feedback. I believe the report reflects twelve months of hard work by the CVSC consortium, other funding partners and team and look forward to discussing how we can continue to share the lessons learnt from the trial with stakeholders involved in the project over the coming months.

Finally, the Annual Report is released following the Australian Government's Clean Energy Futures announcement. CVSC will continue to work closely with the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency to ensure that the lessons learnt from the CVSC trial inform policy design relating to the uptake of energy efficiency measures. We are also in dialogue with the Department regarding opportunities for regional and rural communities to follow in Newstead's footsteps and plan for a clean energy future of their own. I believe the Central Victoria Solar City initiative is helping shape a clean energy future agenda that will strengthen regional communities. I look forward to discussing our Annual Report with you.

Leah Sertori



**Project Director**  
**Chief Executive Officer, Sustainable Regional Australia Ltd**



**CVSC Staff**

L to R: Neriman Kemal, Media and PR; Simon Kingdon, Sustainability Consultant; Leah Sertori, Project Director; David Woodgrove, Operations Manager; Jill Bryan, Administration Manager; Hugh Martin, Communications and Marketing Manager; Julia Gilchrist, Data; Suzie Ryan, Finance Manager.



**Home Energy Assessment Team Members**

L to R: Keith Fankhauser, Nicola Delahunty, Shaun Church, Lisa Booth, Aiden Leahy, Kristen Noles, John Davey, Sue Harling, Elise Zouck, Sonny Neale (Project Manager, Business Energy Assessments), Ross Egleton, Sally Van Rooden (absent), Bruce Hordern (absent).