

Community-Scale Battery Working Group – Monthly Meeting

Meeting Date/Time: August 1st 3-4:30pm 2023

Location: Teams

Number of Attendees: 38

Chair: Marnie Shaw

Topic: SA approach to community batteries and insurances for community batteries

Minutes Taker: Louise

Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome / introduction of any new attendees
2. Acknowledgement of Country
3. Insurance for batteries presentation from YEF
4. South Australia's approach to community batteries
5. Roundtable discussion on the question: ***What is the biggest barrier you see for the deployment of community-scale batteries or what is the biggest barrier you are currently facing with your CSB project?***

Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item/s: Chris Wallin, Insurance for batteries presentation from YEF

Minutes:

- As DNSP, relative risk for adding NB is small compared to existing account of assets
- If smaller organisation, like YEF, that doesn't have a lot of assets, going to be difficult to find insurer
- Need insurance for:
 - Property damage
 - Third party liability and property liability
- Propose pooling together as community battery proponents to make case to insurers for better premium that they offer for such projects
- Chris Wallin asks to be contacted at chris.wallin@yef.org.au if you are interested in working with them to come up with industry solution to insurance to this first major wave of CBs
- Could look at pitching it in relation to small-scale generators versus storage (which currently is quoted at grid-scale storage capacity)
- Some government organisations and DNSPs self-insure

Agenda Item/s: Emily Dunstan, South Australia's approach to community batteries

Minutes:

- SA has over 34,000 (household) batteries already installed
- Looking to install two additional community batteries – were committed to SA in Magill and Edwardstown through DCCEEW process

- First wave of community batteries will join the SA VPP (running since 2018) – hope to further share benefits with ‘value share’ customers
 - Two CBs will allow additional 600 ‘value share’ customers. These customers benefit from best retail tariff in the state (i.e. will see savings on their energy bills)
- Energy retailer is Energy Locals
- SA VPP provides grid services to help stabilise grid (through frequency and load shifting)
- Community battery ‘value share’ customers will have no hardware installed at their home but will enjoy the same lowest electricity rate as those households with VPP hardware
- Currently are:
 - Working through procurement progress to engage supplier for two CBs (want turnkey end-to-end solution)
 - Council partners undertaking community consultation for leases over community land
- CBs presenting avenue for renters and low-income households to participate in clean energy transition which they are otherwise excluded from
- Communication to eligible households needs to be simple, clear with upfront benefits
- Working closely with SA Power Networks
- Q&A
 - Went with government ownership via VPP due to time restraints of DCCEEW funding and knowing that they could provide benefits. Will be operated in not-for-profit model with any revenues returned directly to increasing number of people that can be involved
 - CB locations based off DCCEEW promises and so not necessarily based off areas with existing grid violations or constraints
 - Households in VPPs not receiving same benefits as they would owning the solar panels and batteries themselves. Weren’t aware of this necessarily at beginning but are now

Agenda Item/s: Roundtable discussion: ***What is the biggest barrier you see for the deployment of community-scale batteries or what is the biggest barrier you are currently facing with your CSB project?***

Minutes:

- Wider issue of government setting targets versus how going to get this massive amount of storage in and what being done to implement this. I.e. disconnect between high level policy and distribution and community group level approach
- Finding locations for CBs that are palatable for the community and time you have to find these locations in grant lead times
- Community engagement and knowledge for this technology is one of biggest barriers we are facing
- CBs chasing reliability for LV network and DNSPs may be working with far behind being ready for this stage (e.g. microgrid feasibility, tariffs)
- Limited network data to cleverly identify where to locate the batteries
- Site availability in urban areas, a key barrier being Council policies which are not supportive and/or ambiguous, complex approval processes (this is before even engaging the community).
 - Relatedly, the double requirement of finding suitable network infrastructure and available land means if a site is not nearby a pole or suitable connection point, it may not be feasible.
- The development of affordable BESS with leaner form factors that are more suitable and can be deployed in a range of locations, e.g. a single panel system adjacent to a utility pole on a nature strip.
- Access to network data regarding solar generation capacity and load profiles to understand where NBs would be supported by the DNSP, and would defer network augmentation or enable additional solar/electrification.

- Monetisation of all functions a BESS can provide to better reflect their contribution, and enable greater commercial viability (and potentially graduate from grant funding to equity funding).
- Scheduling of NBs to achieve better financial and environmental outcomes.