

Community Solar Reference Group

Guidelines

December 2020

1. Introduction

Council's Large-Scale Solar Program aims to reduce carbon emissions through direct action. The first stage of the program will install solar panels on more than 40 Council buildings by the end of 2021. Solar energy will be distributed across Council-owned assets as part of a Virtual Energy Network (VEN) to reduce Council's carbon emissions.

The second stage of the project will allow the community to participate in a Hobsons Bay Community Solar network. Community members will be able to contribute energy into the network, or to buy low cost locally produced solar energy, or both.

The Community Solar Program is key action to support the community to achieve a goal of zero net community emissions by 2030.

2. Purpose

The Community Solar Reference Group will shape the development of Council's Community Solar Program. The Reference Group will have a small number of participants representing different types of energy users in Hobsons Bay. The group will provide input and guidance to Council on options for community access to the VEN to ensure the benefits meet the needs of the community.

3. Membership and Attendance

The Reference Group will be a small group representing potential participants in the community solar network providing insights from a diversity of perspectives and experiences. The group will help design a program to maximise community benefit and participation in the program. Therefore, the focus will be on forming a group that reflects key potential users and contributors from the community. Knowledge of solar is not required.

An Expression of Interest (EOI) process will help identify members, with anticipated representation summarised in the table below and likely to be eight members.

Background	Potential stakeholder groups:	Community diversity
General residential representatives	Tenant Homeowner Landlord Real estate/tenant representative	Representation that reflects a diversity of stakeholders; i.e. different ages, cultural backgrounds, gender, geographic location
Business representatives	Small Business Large Business Industrial Business	
Community representatives	Community / Not for Profit Neighbourhood House Church/Faith group Youth group	

Time commitment

During February/March 2021 we expect there will be three to four meetings of approximately two hours with further meetings of a maximum of two hours once per month during the remainder of 2021.

Meetings will be facilitated by council officers. Meetings will include guest speakers ensuring group members are provided with project information. Hobsons Bay councillors may attend some meetings, and the Reference Group will be invited to speak with councillors at a briefing session or workshop, to provide feedback on the direction of the Community Solar project.

4. Code of conduct

Some simple ground rules will apply for Reference Group members, to support good robust discussions and respectful community engagement. These include:

- Interacting respectfully with other members and officers in attendance.
- Exercising reasonable care and diligence.
- Treat information received as confidential unless otherwise advised.
- Not publicly commenting on behalf of the group or Council.

5. Conflict of Interest and Privacy

Reference Group members are expected to declare and appropriately manage any actual or perceived conflicts of interest. This includes disclosing the interest before a matter is considered or discussed by the reference group. Disclosure must include the nature of the relevant interest and be recorded in the minutes of any meeting it is raised at.

All members of the Reference Group are required to observe the Hobsons Bay City Council Privacy Policy relating to their access to personal information. Privacy legislation governs the collection, holding, use, correction, disclosure and transfer of personal information. Should a member become aware of any breach of the security, or misuses, of Council's confidential or personal information, please contact Council's Privacy Officer.

6. Operations

The Reference Group has no budgetary responsibilities, decision-making powers or delegated authority but serves to make recommendations for Council's consideration.

A quorum of at least 60 per cent of members must be present in order for a meeting to proceed.