



8 July 2021

Mr Mark Feather
General Manager
Australian Energy Regulator
GPO Box 520
Melbourne, Victoria, 3001

Submission via email: AERringfencing@aer.gov.au

Dear Mr Feather,

Council's Climate & Renewables Strategy was adopted in 2019 and sets out ambitions for increased renewable energy uptake both across council operations and within the community. Our newly established Office of Renewable Energy Innovation has been created to work with sectors of the community who have previously been locked out of solar. Inner West Council supports the rollout of community batteries including by electricity networks such as Ausgrid in the Sydney Metro area.

Our challenge as an inner metropolitan area is to increase the 7% of our listed dwellings that have installed rooftop solar, which is well below the average of 25% for NSW. This lower uptake is due to constraints such as 44% of our 200,000 residents living in apartments and a further 40% renting.

Council is running solar support programs for local schools, residential strata committees and businesses. We see the opportunity for community batteries to offer renewable energy access to residents who are renting, living in multi-unit dwellings or homeowners who cannot afford behind-the-meter storage devices and solar. This is because community batteries do not require rooftop solar panels and batteries to be installed at the resident's own property.

As household solar batteries are still not cost effective in most circumstances, Council is supportive of providing an option for residents to store excess solar in a way that is more cost effective than purchasing their own battery outright.

Council is supportive of full and open market access to all contestable services and also notes that electricity networks are leading community battery pilots and trials. Other commercial players have mostly focused on commercial grid scale batteries that are either



located on large energy consuming sites, such as university campuses, or in remote areas close to renewable energy generators, electrical and transmission infrastructure. The focus has been on enabling wholesale market arbitrage, rather than community batteries hosted in residential areas sharing stored solar energy with neighbouring households.

Council encourages the AER to ensure that new policy outcomes encourage expanded access to community batteries for all metropolitan communities and new technologies for solar energy sharing and storage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jon Stiebel'.

Jon Stiebel
Urban Sustainability Manager