SHASA
Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance

MEDIA RELEASE

Eurobodalla wins funds for feasibility study into 8 microgrids

"Our Eurobodalla community here on the NSW South Coast is one of many regional communities whose vulnerability to bushfires and power outages was demonstrated tragically in the Black Summer of 2019-20", says Kathryn Maxwell, President of Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance (SHASA). SHASA wanted to find a solution to this power vulnerability and have been looking at ways to do this over the past several years, even before the terrible fires. The solutions however have been limited by the complexity of the existing power grid, the commitment of key players to solve these complexities, and the funding to make it happen.

SHASA and their long term partner, Micro Energy Systems Australia (MESA) have worked hard to encourage households and businesses to install roof top solar through our solar bulk buy program. Now more than 20% of households in Eurobodalla have installed solar systems. The next step is community scale energy systems (or microgrids) comprising community batteries and solar (roof top and solar farms) that would be able to function in isolation when or if the power grid went down. Community batteries would help make the power grid more stable.

In January this year, SHASA saw a Federal Government grant opportunity where applications were invited for feasibility studies into microgrids across Australia. SHASA approached the Australian National University (ANU) to partner with us in applying for this grant to improve the reliability and resilience of our power across the Eurobodalla. ANU had done previous work in community battery storage so could bring that expertise to our partnership. Essential Energy was invited to join us as they are key players in the power grid and could ensure the feasibility study would result in effective solutions to our ongoing grid challenges. Zepben are another partner who joined up too as they can help with back end technology solutions in bringing the microgrid solution to fruition.

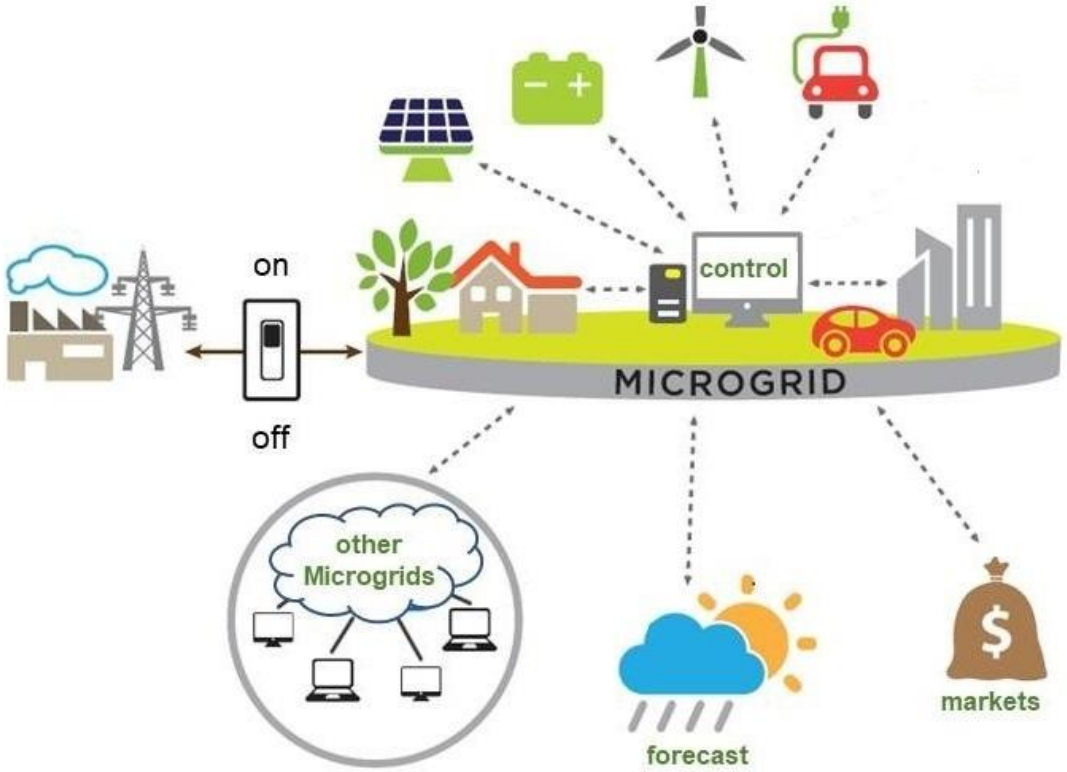
As most people know, there is a lot of work that goes into grant applications. We decided that we would focus on the towns within the Eurobodalla with the most fragile power grids. It was decided to select 16 towns as options for a feasibility study. 8 towns would then be chosen and further studied to develop the technical, social and economic business case for a microgrid for each of their situations. Within the short application timeframe, SHASA engaged with the Eurobodalla community and secured supporting letters from 5 Chambers of Commerce, 17 community organisations, and 9 businesses. 848 people also signed our online community petition to support our application for the microgrid feasibility study. So with our four partners, and this overwhelming community support, ANU submitted the microgrid feasibility application on our behalf.

The Hon Angus Taylor MP, Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction announced on 27 July 2021 that the Government will be committing $25.6 million to support 20 microgrid feasibility studies across Australia. Our partnership application led by ANU was announced as successful with $3.1 million committed over three years to run the feasibility study that will result in 8 microgrid business cases and implementation plans across the Eurobodalla. This has never been done before in Australia at this scale

although other microgrids are under development elsewhere. SHASA will liaise with other community groups working on microgrids and will share our learnings with others.

SHASA will be undertaking extensive engagement with the Eurobodalla community as part of this three year microgrid feasibility study. SHASA's long term partner MESA will be installing monitoring data on willing properties/ businesses to assist in establishing power usage data as part of the study. The following 16 towns were identified as having fragile power grids. Up to 8 towns will be selected through analyses of community engagement, technical and social aspects: Tilba Tilba, Central Tilba, Mogo, Nelligen, Bodalla, Congo/Meringo, Potato Point, Turlinjah, Nerrigundah, Moruya Heads, South Durras, Mystery Bay, Broulee, Tomakin, Mossy Point, Tuross Heads.

If you are interested in being involved in the microgrid feasibility study, please contact SHASA via our website https://shasa.com.au/about-us/contact/ or send us an email contact.shasa@gmail.com or ring us on 0467 558 645.



Project partners:

Battery Storage and Grid Integration Program, Australian National University (Project Lead, Research and knowledge sharing partner)

- LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/anu-battery-storage-and-grid-integration-program/
- Website: https://bsgip.com/
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/AnuGrid

Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance (Community Engagement partner)

- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/shasa.energy/
- Website: https://shasa.com.au/

Essential Energy (Network partner)

- Website: www.essentialenergy.com.au
- LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/essential-energy/
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/essentialenergy

Zepben (Technology and modelling partner)

- Website: https://www.zepben.com/
- LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/zepben/