



Chair's report for 2012-13.

This year, CROW launched into the field of grants and by these means had access to larger amounts of funding than it has had before. For the record, here's what CROW achieved during the year:

- With our council community grant for the project "Investing in Solar in Wagga", we held an information day on 10th Nov 2012 on the Wollundry lagoon and in the civic library. Our stall displayed a model of a solar thermal power plant for supply of base-load renewable power, other materials and the Riverina TAFE "Turn Your Place Green" display trailer was on hand. Well attended talks in the library were given by Nigel Hancock on the Beyond Zero Emissions, Rob Sheather on how and why to choose a solar deal and Jarra Hicks on community renewables in Australia and Europe. The event received repeated positive coverage on Prime and Win TV and the rest of the Wagga media.
- CROW launched further into the area of grant funding with a successful application to the NSW government, Office of Environment and Heritage, for \$26,000 to establish community-owned solar farm(s) in the Riverina. Starting on a tight time-line in February 2013, we:
 - completed the two-stage application process,
 - held a workshop on 18 May lead by our project partners Starfish Enterprises from New England,
 - met requirements to invoice for and bank all three instalments of the grant,
 - met with a number of organisations who may potentially host community-owned solar farms,
 - spent about half the funds.
- On 9th September 2012, CROW hosted the Wagga contingent of the National Sustainable House day. We arranged for three houses to be open, had good coverage in the media and about 80 people visited the houses.
- In February 2013, Viscount Monckton visited Wagga. CROW issued a press release and as far as we know, thankfully the Viscount received no media coverage.

In 2013-14, we plan to continue promoting solar in the Riverina. Using the remainder of the council community grant, we plan two features in the Daily Advertiser. Also, work continues on establishing community-owned solar farms under the grant from the Office of Environment and Heritage. Three organisations have either signed our Memorandum of Understanding or written equivalent letters expressing an interest to investigate the possibilities in detail. Technical and financial studies have established that a number of sites are feasible. We are continuing work on the legal and financial aspects of the entity that is to be created to raise the capital and build the solar systems.

Stephen James
12 August 2013