

Ms Kathie Standen  
Executive General Manager  
Australian Energy Regulator

Dear Ms Standen,

My name is Peter Youll. I am a retired engineer, and a volunteer representative for the activist group Solar Citizens on the Ausgrid NIAC (New Innovation Advisory Committee). I have had a solar system installed on my townhouse roof for the last decade, which has been upgraded several times. It now consists of 5kW of modules with optimisers connected to a SolarEdge inverter and a 13.5kWh Tesla PW2 battery. I have owned an EV (Renault ZOE) for the last 3+ years, which is largely run using the solar system, and have recently replaced a gas boosted solar hot water system with a heat pump HWS. I intend to disconnect from the gas distribution system after replacing the existing gas cooktop. Suffice to say I am a strong supporter of renewable energy, and advocate for it at every opportunity.

Although I have a domestic battery, I am strongly in favour of the installation of community batteries, given the advantages they offer to home owners who are not able to emulate what I have done. I have participated in meetings of the NIAC group, and partially understand the detailed explanation of the economic investigation by Ausgrid into feasibility and benefits offered by these batteries – it is complicated! These range from providing a partial solution to the problems caused by the occasional and increasingly likely excess of solar generation from domestic installations, to the benefits available to those who cannot install solar of their own. They also offer a significantly more economical option to installing domestic batteries of a similar total capacity. In general, community batteries provide benefits to all involved in supply and use of electricity, as has been proved in WA. In the suburb where I live, the idea is strongly supported by environmentally aware members of the community. I well understand that the regulation of the ownership, location and operation of community batteries will be complex, but surely this can be managed given the long term benefits for the community. The ring-fencing rules must not be allowed to delay the rollout of a large number of community batteries.

From what I understand, DNSPs such as Ausgrid are the only logical option for financing, installing and running these batteries in the medium term, with other options such as local councils or residents groups being given the opportunity to take over once the economic benefits to those who chose to participate in their use has been proved. I would however suggest that electricity retailers and other private companies not be given the opportunity, unless the risk of monopolistic activity can be prevented.

Thanks for your attention.

Peter Youll  
[REDACTED]