



Media Release, 14 February 2022

The Solar Alliance launches POWERHOUSE BROOKVALE

Where: The Truck Bar, 4 Pines Brewing Company, Brookvale, NSW
When: Monday 28 February at 5pm
Who: Craig Reucassel MC's the launch of the Solar Alliance's Powerhouse Brookvale project in the presence of Zali Steggall MP, Rob Stokes MP and Michael Regan (Mayor of NBC).

Three tiers of government from across the political spectrum have thrown their support behind an ambitious community project to create Australia's first urban renewable energy zone in Brookvale on Sydney's Northern Beaches.

Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) are modern-day power stations. They combine renewable energy generation such as wind and solar, and storage such as batteries. By connecting multiple generators and storage in the same location, REZs capitalise on economies of scale to make clean, green electricity cheap and reliable.

The state government's infrastructure roadmap has identified at least five REZs across the state and has been overwhelmed by the enthusiastic response from developers of wind, solar and storage projects. To date, all REZs are in regional NSW, but now a collaboration between community groups and local businesses is hoping to create the first Urban Renewable Energy Zone.

"When you look at Brookvale Industrial Precinct from above you see masses and masses of roofs, low flat roofs with a gentle incline," says Chris Lee, retired construction engineer and volunteer. "Over one third of the area is rooftop, and about ¾ of this is suitable for PV panels in terms of slope, orientation and shading. That makes a massive 40 hectares of panels, or the equivalent of a solar farm the size of 30 Brookvale ovals, 120,000 solar panels, with a capacity of 38MWp. For comparison, the peak daily power consumption of the commercial area is a bit under half that."





Several local businesses in Brookvale – including 4 Pines Brewing Company, Colormaker, Col Crawford Cars and Hardware & General -- have already installed massive solar panel arrays, indicating how renewable energy represents a strategic business advantage. Now two local community organisations have formed the Solar Alliance to help businesses of all sizes across Brookvale make the transition to solar power and drive renewable energy uptake as the first step towards making a UREZ a reality.

The Solar Alliance is a collaboration between two award-winning not-for-profits Clean Energy for Eternity – Northern Beaches (CEFE NB) and Zero Emissions Sydney North (ZESN). Volunteers from CEFE NB and ZESN have been working throughout 2021 to develop a vision for Brookvale to be a renewable energy zone and, more importantly, how to make it happen.

“Businesses want to take advantage of new technology, and they want to do the right thing,” says Harriet Cunningham, from Zero Emissions Sydney North, ‘but it takes time and money to nut out an infrastructure project, and that’s something that small businesses are short on. The Solar Alliance puts businesses together with volunteer project managers who can help assess the roof, negotiate with the landlord, put together the finance and assess quotes from installers. These project managers -- Solar Ambassadors -- have no commercial interest, and are not attached to any particular installer. They are passionate about sustainability and just want to help with Australia’s transition away from fossil fuels.”

The Solar Alliance has partnered with a number of local businesses, including 4 Pines Brewing Company. 4 Pines will host the project launch at the Truck Bar on Monday 28 February at 5pm, MC’d by Craig Reucassel (ABC TV). Zali Steggall MP and Michael Reagan, Mayor of Northern Beaches Council, will be in attendance, and Rob Stokes MP will send a video message of support.

For interviews or further information, please contact Harriet Cunningham on 0414 813500 or harriet@solaralliance.org.au.

