



Jan 26, 2022

Acceptance Speech from President of Healesville CoRE as Recipient of the 'Environmental Achiever of the Year' Award at the Yarra Ranges Council Australia Day Awards 2022

Mayor, Cr Jim Child, Councillors, Council Officers, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen!

It is with great pleasure that I accept this award from the Yarra Ranges Council on behalf of Healesville Core as the 'Environmental Achiever of the Year'.

This is indeed a great honour for our small not-for-profit association, our members, our volunteers and our community supporters, all of whom are the backbone of the hard work being done by our organization, making our contribution to the enormous challenge of the Climate Emergency. Through running events informing our community about transitioning to renewable energy, to organizing community offers for solar panels, batteries, heat pumps and other devices powered by the sun, to supporting the installation of community owned solar farms and micro grids to create greater energy resilience in the face of emergencies, we are doing whatever we can in the face of this challenge.

The award is valued, however, not only because it is a recognition by our Council for the work we have done over the past 4.5 years, but also because we know we are only one organization amongst many others in our region. These groups are doing outstanding work tackling the challenge of the climate emergency. Many of these groups are also worthy of receiving this award today and on behalf of Healesville CoRE I would like to acknowledge their dedication and hard work over many years.

As the founding President of Healesville CoRE, I have been privileged and deeply humbled in leading our group of committed volunteers, who work tirelessly to achieve our goal of increasing the uptake of renewable energy and reducing the consumption of fossil fuel produced electricity in our region. It has been my honour to work closely with, and to provide the leadership for, this dedicated band of climate change warriors!

In the process of working towards reaching our vision of achieving a Net Zero town by 2027, we have learned from each other, shared the successes and pleasures and also the pain and the disappointments. The journey has not been easy. Volunteers have busy lives, and finding a way to add volunteer work into already busy work lives and family commitments is sometimes quite a struggle. We know that for every volunteer who works with us there is a family in the background providing further support. We thank those families for their understanding and commitment!

We could not do our work without considerable financial and moral support from our broader community. We thank our committed financial members for their ongoing support. We also thank all the local

community members and businesses and other agencies for donating money and goods or for providing grant funding, thus enabling us to continue our work. And we thank the Yarra Ranges Council for its significant financial and staff support since our inception. And, finally, we thank Sustainability Victoria and the Victorian Government for their faith in us to provide the necessary support to other community energy groups in our region, with a grant of \$428,500 to form, and to administer, the Yarra Valley Community Power Hub.

I know that all our volunteers are deeply aware that the carbon abatement work we do today will have an impact on the planet that we hand on to our children, our grandchildren and to all future generations. The impact might be infinitesimally small from our relatively tiny contribution, but we also know that if every town in Australia and internationally did what we are doing that the impact would be significantly multiplied. We work locally but we think globally. We encourage and welcome others deeply concerned with global warming and the Climate Emergency to join us in our work.

Once again, Mayor Child, thank you for this award and for the public acknowledgement of the work Healesville CoRE is doing for our community and for our planet! I am very pleased to receive this award on behalf of Healesville CoRE.

Kind regards



Jeff Barlow

Healesville CoRE President