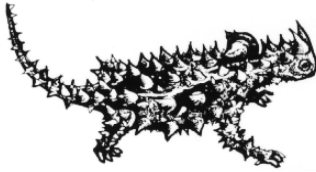


Arid Lands Environment Centre, Inc.



Office 18 Warburton St, East Side
Mail PO Box 2796 Alice Springs
NT 0871 Australia
Phone +61 (08) 8952 2497
Fax +61 (08) 8953 2988
E-mail info@alec.org.au

Healthy Futures for Arid Lands and People

Submission to the CEFC Review Panel

The Arid Lands Environment Centre's (ALEC) submission focuses on our community's participation in renewable energy.

The Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC) is the peak regional environmental organisation servicing Central Australia. Based in Alice Springs since 1980 and the region's leader in developing and scaling up sustainability initiatives, ALEC is exploring the feasibility of a community solar farm in Alice Springs and the potential in other remote towns in arid Australia. ALEC's interest in this sector has spanned more than a decade as the Alice Solar City concept was explored in early 2001. The success of the Alice Solar City project is based on the growing awareness of renewable energy and energy efficiency. ALEC is hoping to develop a community-owned solar farm that would generate a peak load of up to 1MW.

Locally there is much interest to invest in renewable energy projects. The development of medium-scale solar power plants at both the Alice Springs Airport and Uterne Power Station has generated interest in community solar farms. ALEC sees the potential of this exciting project as proceeding under the Clean Energy Future policy package and specifically with investment from the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC).

In summary, we would like the CEFC to:

1. specifically include community projects as a part of the package
2. not rule out community sized projects in the design of the scheme, for example, by having minimum investment amounts for the fund beyond community scale
3. make provision for and allocate funds to early stage equity investment in community project

We assert that the community energy sector warrants specific attention in the construction of the CEFC as it will underpin community understanding of and support for both clean energy policy and the roll out of clean energy infrastructure.

The economic and social benefits of these projects will play a vital role in building the broad social licence for renewables. A vibrant community energy sector is an economically efficient and socially desirable solution for building the social licence required to dramatically drive towards a clean energy future in Australia.

Kind regards

Jimmy Cocking
Coordinator