

North Epping Community Battery

Engagement Summary February 2024

Empowering communities for a resilient,
affordable and net-zero future.



What are we doing?

Ausgrid, in partnership with the Australian Government, will install a new community battery in North Epping bringing the benefits of local energy storage to the community.

Community batteries are an innovative solution to help use more solar energy locally, allow more solar onto the local network, support wider renewable energy adoption

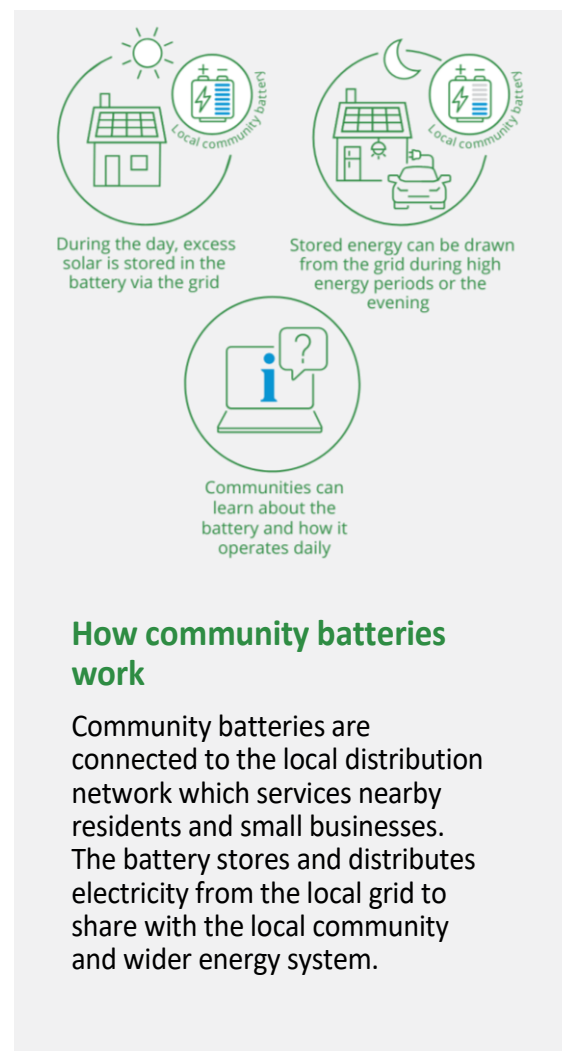
Benefits of community batteries

Batteries are key to supporting the energy system as we rely on more renewable energy sources such as solar and wind. Community batteries in particular can further provide benefits in the local area they are connected to, allowing more rooftop solar and more electric devices such as electric vehicle chargers to be connected.

- A stronger grid will reduce the need to limit (curtail) solar exports and help customers maximise their solar investment.
- Helps share more solar within the local area, including with non-solar households.
- Creates a positive impact on wholesale electricity prices that could eventually flow through to reduced retail customer offers.
- Helps to regulate voltage on the network and improves network quality in the local area.
- Offers a flexible alternative to traditional poles and wires investment and helps lower network costs

and prepare for increasing electricity use from electric vehicle charging.

Ausgrid is committed to proactive engagement with the community. We asked you for feedback on location, visual design, an online information hub and a public EV charger to further enable the transition to renewable energy for the North Epping community.



How community batteries work

Community batteries are connected to the local distribution network which services nearby residents and small businesses. The battery stores and distributes electricity from the local grid to share with the local community and wider energy system.

How we engaged



What we heard



While the majority of the community supported the North Epping community battery, many were concerned about an EV charger at this location.





Ausgrid will proceed with the community battery and continue exploring alternatives to supporting the local community’s transition to net zero.

Key themes: Community battery

Most community members supported the community battery and the proposed location at North Epping Oval on Beck Street, North Epping.

The following key themes were received from the community feedback:



 <p>Net Zero</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members were excited to support more storage of renewable energy and wanted to know more on how the stored energy can be used throughout the area. Community batteries support more rooftop solar connections, greater exporting of solar into the network and increases the renewable energy used by the local community, including with non-solar households.
 <p>Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some community members asked how safe the battery is and its proximity to local homes. Community batteries are safe. Ausgrid ensures assets are assessed for safety during procurement and will maintain and monitor the battery, including through our 24/7 control room.
 <p>Appearance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members asked about the size of the battery and the visual impact on the park. Overall community members welcomed a design by a local First Nation artist and encouraged artwork that reflected the local birdlife and nature. Community batteries are similar in size to our green electricity kiosks or a 4WD. Ausgrid will engage a local artist on a design for the battery.
 <p>Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members asked about the proximity to bushland. Ausgrid does not take the placement of our assets lightly. Proximity to bushland, flood zones, and local wildlife have been carefully considered in determining a location for the battery. All our assets come with specific controls and procedures in the event of an emergency.




Key themes: Electric Vehicle Charging

Ausgrid offered to install an EV charging station in addition to the community battery. Stored electricity from the community battery can support increased electricity demand in the local area from electric vehicles.

Ausgrid sought community feedback on a public electric vehicle charger adjacent to the community battery.

From the responses received, most of the community were concerned about an EV charger in this location and asked us to explore alternative locations.

Ausgrid will not proceed with the EV charging station at Beck Street, North Epping.

 <p>Traffic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most community members were concerned about the potential increase in traffic on a residential street. • Local residents were also concerned about increased traffic noise. • EV owners can check the availability of the EV charger on the app or website before travelling to the location. • EVs are quieter than internal combustion vehicles and the EV charging station does not emit noise.
 <p>Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some community members asked how safe the EV charger is and whether it would impede access to the Oval. • Ausgrid considers all aspects of safety in the placement of our assets. The proposed location is adjacent to the existing road and would not impede access to the Oval.
 <p>Location</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members preferred locations closer to retail hubs, existing car parks or closer to apartments. • This location met our technical and safety criteria for an EV charger. • Alternative locations explored such as the North Epping Shopping Village, Epping Oval and behind the North Epping Men's Shed did not meet this criteria or required significant upgrades to the local area.

Thank you for your feedback!

For enquiries about this report please contact:

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