

NORTH EAST REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY ALLIANCE (NERSA)

BSFG members have again been represented at the bi-monthly meetings of NERSA during the year. Kevin has been joined by David and Kay this year.

NERSA, an alliance of numerous groups throughout the North East, is a forum that enables everyone to keep up with all the sustainability-related going-ons within the region. While BSFG finds it difficult to get traction with Benalla Rural City Council, it is really encouraging to hear just how much is going with other groups, Councils and Authorities. NERSA co-ordinators Jenny and Rowan produce an amazing set of minutes (about 14 pages!) with all the links and contacts. I distribute these minutes to interested BSFG members.

Since Kay has been attending, the Region response to Wastewise has been very enthusiastic and many other groups are participating (see Wastewise Report).

Kevin Smith

RENEWABLE ENERGY BENALLA [REB]

Both Kevin and David have been attending Community Energy Network bi-monthly meetings - these are an excellent information source on this fast moving topic.

One of our main interests is Community Batteries. While the engineering need is straight forward, sadly the politics of our totally privatised system make it impossible for Community Batteries to actually benefit the Community - they are, of course very beneficial to the likes of Ausnet! There is much movement to change the rules and tariff structures to enable a fairer system - strongly opposed by those benefitting from the current system!

REB organised an electric vehicle for Benalla drivers to have access to an extended driving experience which was enthusiastically taken up. We know of at least one local EV recently purchased. Benalla will need more EV charging points.

We have also been looking at ways to encourage more and better use of PV and Batteries. We hope to expand a current pilot trial to Benalla for more economical use of Heat Pump hot water and PV.

There is currently strong pressure to start subsidising behind the meter Batteries (perhaps drop the PV subsidy seeing they are now so cheap), which would be very beneficial to everyone.

There is a proposal to extend our revolving fund (kindergartens) PV installation to the new Men's Shed complex if we can sort out the metering complexity.

Kevin Smith