

## Healesville CoRE Announces 1<sup>st</sup> Healesville Community Solar Bulk Buy!!

Healesville CoRE is very excited to announce it will run a Community Solar Bulk Buy for anyone residing in the 3777 post code area, **commencing in February 2019**. This is for homes, businesses, not for profits, schools and other community buildings!

Previously it had been announced that the Yarra Ranges Council would run a bulk buy but that decision has now been deferred to 2019 some time, and Healesville CoRE has decided that we do not want to wait!

We have an agreement with **Mondo Power**, an organization that has run bulk buys for other community groups and which also installed the Yackandandah micro grid. Mondo Power will organize the technical side of the project and Healesville CoRE will manage the promotion with Mondo Power's support. See here for info about Mondo Power: <https://mondopower.com.au/>

The decision to partner with Mondo Power was voted on at the Central Committee meeting on 18 October 2018. Working with Mondo Power will assist Healesville CoRE in working towards our long-term goal of transitioning Healesville into a Net Zero town by 2027. The detail of this Community Solar Bulk Buy has not yet been worked out but there will be a lot of promotion leading up to the launch date in February next year including community information sessions which will be announced in due course.

Healesville CoRE is also very excited to announce that the **Healesville Community Bank** is supporting this Community Bulk Buy and we will have information available at a later date on some attractive interest rates for loans to enable as many community members as possible to participate.

At this stage it is planned to offer solar panels at three price points together with an option of batteries, plus a Fronius inverter and an electronic monitoring device called, wait for it - **Ubi**. It will be a condition of the offer that those who participate will be required to purchase the **Ubi**.

The reason for this is that we all need to know how our panels and batteries are functioning, when the panels need cleaning, which electrical appliances are using the most energy when power is at its most expensive point in the day, how much energy is being produced by our panels from the sun and when, and much more. But more importantly, the Ubi will allow connection to the future Microgrid which Healesville will set up with Mondo Power and this will mean, **with a cooperative retailer, Healesville residents should be able to trade energy with each other and even donate energy to those in need in the community! See here for further info on the Ubi & Mini or Micro Grid: <https://mondopower.com.au/ubi/>**

The **Ubi** is a smart energy monitoring and management system that delivers accurate and timely information to your computer, tablet or smartphone. **Ubi** monitors your electricity use,

solar system and battery, providing real-time data about your energy consumption, generation and storage. You can even switch appliances on or off remotely using your smart phone.

### What is a Community Solar Bulk Buy?

Bulk Buys have in the past been equated with discounted systems where buying in bulk means cheap systems. Healesville CoRE is not aiming to provide the cheapest systems. Instead we are aiming to provide, **for a fair price, the best quality systems, with endurance, performance, long term warranty, service backup, installed safely and securely by qualified and certified installers with supervision by Mondo Power.** More importantly we are thinking of the future in transitioning Healesville to a Net Zero town ie producing more electrical energy than we consume and **the Ubi monitoring system will be a requirement to enable the Micro Grid to happen.**

***We want quality at a fair price, with a focus on whole community benefit in the longer term.***

We understand that some people will prefer to purchase the cheapest systems they can afford and we understand and respect that, but it is not in our interest, or in the community interest, for Healesville CoRE to focus on that. Those people have lots of options in the market place from which to get quotes for themselves.

Anyone who purchases a system through the Community Bulk Buy will be required to join Healesville CoRE as a member for a small fee. We have to pay for our administration expenses and this membership fee will partly fund us to do so.

### How will the Healesville Community Solar Bulk Buy Work?

Healesville CoRE will negotiate with Mondo Power on behalf of the Healesville community. We will also promote the Bulk Buy via our website, social media, newspaper, radio, market stalls, shop front advertising etc and we will also hold community gatherings where we will invite Mondo Power to provide information and answer your questions. **Healesville CoRE will essentially be a provider of information and a broker of trust.**

**Most importantly Healesville residents and businesses will be spared the angst of having to research and find a quality system with quality installation where the warranty is secure and where there is backup provided into the future AND participants will also be contributing to the long-term goal of transitioning Healesville into a Net Zero town!**

The details have not yet been finalized but essentially, when we have the online registration system set up, anyone interested in the Bulk Buy will be able express an interest, and in essence the following process will be, provisionally, what will happen:

1. Mondo Power will contact you by phone to discuss your situation and to make a time for an installer to visit to see if your roof is suitable for solar power and what configuration of panels would be suitable and whether a battery is required.
2. Pricing will be provided and you will be able to compare this with other quotations you get from your own research.

3. If you decide to purchase from the Mondo Power supported bulk buy, then they will arrange for the supply of the equipment, the provision of a qualified and solar-certified installer, who has also been trained by Mondo Power to install the Ubi. Where possible, local installers will be used as a priority, thus keeping money in the local community.
4. Your system will be installed, connected, tested, signed off, and handed over to you to produce free solar energy.
5. The cost of the system (depending on how large and whether with batteries or not) could potentially be paid off over a 5-7 year period, by the savings you make from your solar energy production (depending of course on when and how often you use electricity and how much you consume). Then, after your system has been paid off, your solar energy production will be free for the expected life of the panels which is 25+ years.

#### What if I already have Solar Panels?

Not a problem. You will be able to get advice from Mondo Power's preferred installers as to what your options are, options such as:

- Add additional solar panels
- Replace your existing solar panels with a new system (if existing panels are poor quality, degraded, damaged etc)
- Continue to use your existing inverter or purchase a new inverter
- Add a battery or not
- Add the Mondo Power Ubi at additional cost (this will be a requirement).

#### In Conclusion:

We hope you will agree that this is an exciting development in the work Healesville CoRE is doing for our community and we hope you will spread the word and that you will consider joining the scheme.

**We are not yet taking expressions of interest but will definitely let you know when you can register.**

I am very excited to be able to bring you this great news after just 16 months since we held our first community gathering at the Memo. I would also like to thank all our financial members, our supporters, our donors and volunteers, without whom this exciting community project could not have begun!

Jeff Barlow  
President, Healesville CoRE  
On behalf of the Healesville CoRE Central Committee

20 October 2018