

First Nations Clean Energy Strategy Northern Territory Roundtable

Location: Alice Springs, Northern Territory

Dates: 16 and 17 May 2023

Participants: 110 over two days

** A full list of organisations is available below.*

What is the purpose of the Roundtables?

The First Nations Clean Energy Strategy (the Strategy) roundtables provide an opportunity for First Nations people to discuss what is important from their perspective and to outline the barriers and opportunities so they can share in the benefits of the clean energy transition.

The roundtables also provide a forum for government and industry to better understand First Nations perspectives and collaborate on actions, policies, and programs that could be implemented as part of the Strategy.

Key Themes from the Northern Territory Roundtable

1. Affordable and reliable energy for First Nations people:

- a) A lack of access to affordable and reliable energy in remote communities, town camps and towns was highlighted as a driver of serious economic and social issues experienced by First Nations communities.
- b) The prevalence of prepayment meters (and associated disconnections) in First Nations communities was raised repeatedly, with the installation of residential solar (and batteries) specifically highlighted as one way to mitigate these issues.
- c) Community members also described the linkages between poverty, housing, energy access, and health in First Nations communities - highlighting that inadequate and / or poorly maintained housing drives up energy usage, results in higher costs and more frequent disconnections and can drive poor health outcomes through reduced access to heating, cooling and refrigeration.

2. Community-led projects supported by education and communication

- a) Community and utility scale renewable energy projects, owned / co-owned by First Nations communities, were highlighted as ambitions by attendees.
- b) Improving community knowledge and understanding regarding the benefits and use cases of renewable energy was flagged as vitally important – both to ensure communities have the capacity to engage with proposed projects, but also to ensure that projects can continue to operate successfully once implemented.
- c) Large distances make it difficult for qualified maintenance workers to respond quickly to issues. Improving community education and understanding of renewable projects

can help to ensure minor maintenance can be undertaken locally (where appropriate). The [Bushlight Program](#) was highlighted as a particularly successful example of this.

3. Capacity building – for engaging communities and securing employment opportunities

- a) Improving the capacity of First Nations community representative bodies to understand and engage with energy system requirements and the interplay of renewable energy requirements.
- b) The improvement in education and training for community – so that communities may upskill locally so they can operate and maintain their local renewable energy systems, was suggested as one way to mitigate the issues the NT faces in relation to long distance, remote communities and lack of skilled workers.

4. Transparency and free, prior and informed consent

- a) Industry and governments engaging with communities in line with the requirements of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), including community's right to withhold consent, was highlighted as critically important.
- b) Community representatives highlighted that First Nations people feel disempowered when it comes to the operation of energy systems in the Northern Territory, with little sense they can influence government decisions regarding their design and operation. Improved transparency and communication from government was noted as one way to solve this issue.

Attendee Organisations

Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory	Electrical Trades Union
Australian Energy Market Operator	First Nations Clean Energy Network
Anindilyakwa Housing Aboriginal Corporation	Fortescue Future Industries
Antonia Burke Consultancy	GHD
Arid Lands Environment Centre	Griffith University
Atyenhenge Atherre Aboriginal Corporation	GTNT Group
Australian Renewable Energy Agency (Cwlth)	Hardy Fencing Australia
Baniyala Garrangali Aboriginal Corporation	HDF Energy
Beyond Now Sustainability Pty Ltd	Impact Investment Partners
Clean Energy Finance Corporation (Cwlth)	Indigenous Business Australia
Central Desert Regional Council	Ingkerreke Services Aboriginal Corporation
Central Land Council	Investment Territory (WA)
Centre For Aboriginal Economic Policy Research	Jobs And Skills Australia (Cwlth)
Climate Change Authority (Cwlth)	Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation
CSIRO (Cwlth)	Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Indigenous Corporation
Department of Climate Change, Energy, The Environment & Water (Cwlth)	Marlinja Community
Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (NT)	Mutitjulu Community Aboriginal Corporation
Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet (NT)	Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (Cwlth)
Desert Knowledge Australia	National Indigenous Australians Agency (Cwlth)
Desert Springs Octopus	Net Zero Economy Taskforce (Cwlth)
DICE Aust Pty Ltd	Ngardara Cooperative
Dynamic Solutions NT	Ngurratjuta/Pmara Ntjarra Aboriginal Corporation
Ekistica	Northern Land Council
	Northern Territory Council of Social Services

Original Power

Penangke Collaborative Cultural
Consultancy

Penske Australia Pty Ltd

Pollination Group

Power and Water Corporation (NT)

Rio Tinto

Tangentyere Council

Territory Families, Housing and
Communities (NT)

West Arnhem Regional Council

Yalu Marnggithinyaraw Indigenous
Corporation

Yuelamu Solar Project Steering
Committee