

NEWS



Powering small communities with renewable energy is becoming increasingly attractive.

Regen ag Massy pod cast out now

A NEW podcast, produced by the Regenerative Agriculture Alliance and Southern Cross University, is set to ignite a much-needed national conversation about resilient farming practices in the face of climate change and drought.

The series begins with an episode from author of *Call of The Reed Warbler*, Dr Charles Massy.

Hosted by the veteran voice of agriculture, Kerry Cochrane, 'Ground Cover' is a podcast for farmers by farmers and a uniquely Australian series, exploring stories of land managers who have undertaken the transition from conventional farming to regenerative agriculture.

Each week the alliance will share a unique and honest conversation about the challenges and opportunities of regenerative agriculture so farmers can make informed decisions about how best to manage their land.

In this Australia-first podcast you will hear from nine leaders in this space.

They speak about the technical changes in their landscape but you will also hear them speak about deeper unexpected changes - in their values, in their connection to land and their economic, environmental and social wellbeing.

Hay looking to Lockhart

BY MIKE FOLEY

LOOKING to duplicate the bid to make Lockhart powered by renewable energy, Hay Shire Council on Tuesday passed a motion to investigate grant options for a feasibility study.

Council's new general manager David Webb was formerly an engineer at Lockhart and is sold on the idea of creating a microgrid that could be fed on solar, a waste digester, and wind

towers and backed up by batteries. The target for Hay shire is the newly created federal Regional and Remote Communities Reliability Fund, a \$20-million bank of money set aside for communities looking to create their own renewable energy.

Some simply want to get off the grid and reduce electricity costs for local residents.

The first round of the regional and remote communities reliability fund is open to applications for

feasibility studies on micro-grid projects.

Micro-grids are local power supply networks.

In their simplest form, a micro-grid could mean a small-scale solar farm located near a town that supplies electricity only to the adjacent community.

A more ambitious micro-grid project could go beyond purely local supply by constructing a connection to the established power supply network so it make a

financial return from selling excess energy production which isn't required locally.

That is what both Lockhart and Hay hope to do.

The cost of electricity remains a concern, particularly in regional and remote Australia, and one of the most attractive features for regional towns is the ability to get off the main grid.

That means they avoid paying high network charges to support expansive poles and wires infrastructure

which is servicing small rural populations.

Micro-grid construction is also becoming increasingly financially attractive, as the cost of renewable power generation falls.

Micro-grids would be an especially attractive proposition for the remote communities that rely on diesel generators for their power.

Round one applications close on November 21. For more information, visit: www.grants.gov.au

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