

RAY of SUNSHINE for EUSTON CLUB RESORT

The Euston Club Resort has a proud record of development. One would only have to compare its history from its humble beginnings, when the Club commenced in a tin shed decades ago, to the magnificent resort it is today. Our community can be justifiably proud to have in their midst a first class facility such as the Euston Club Resort. Tribute must also go to all past and present personnel who have been in charge. Their decision making over many years has led to great improvements.

The Club is also very fortunate to have had the expertise of Ray Jones, as their Chief Executive Officer. The list of what he, together with his board members, have achieved is endless. Lately, Ray has overseen the installation of a Solar Microgrid, which in itself is mind boggling, and is a huge milestone of achievement in the Club's illustrious history.

Despite Australia's contemporary reliance on coal energy, the advent of renewable energy had more and more Aussies embarking on the necessary shift to renewable energy. The Euston Club Resort have long held the view that the way to survive in the future would be to look to renewable energy. With this in mind, Ray Jones took up the challenge, looking into the probability and availability of installing a facility which would adequately cater for the Euston Club Resort's needs. After two years of research and planning, such a facility has now been installed and is fully operational.

Following are comments from Ray Jones and the Chief Executive of Vellocet Clean Energy, Emile Abdurahman.

Ray said, "When I arrived here in 1994, there were three hundred people in Euston. It was a very small town. We did not have filtered water, we did not have trees and we did not have grass, but I did see an opportunity to get on board with the club. I knew that they wanted to move forward. Today we have 800 people in town. It's a huge horticultural area."

Emile – "The Euston Club came to us in late 2018, with a real challenge to address the issues they were faced with: the high cost of electricity, network outages they were experiencing, and the

commitment to climate change."

Ray – "As the Club's manager, I was constantly looking at our electricity bill; our account was just going through the roof and our charges were over the top. The supply that we received was intermittent. At its best, we couldn't go through a month without losing our power. You cannot run a business like this."

Emile – "When sitting down with Ray Jones, Chief Executive Officer of the Euston Club Resort, we decided to commission a study to assess all of the suitable energy alternatives that were available, to address those issues.

"The feasibility study effectively recommended the "Behind the Meter Microgrid" as the appropriate solution. It was the integration of more than 400 kilowatts of solar systems, ground mounted solutions, as well as a carpark solar structure and a battery storage system of about 1.2 megawatts, that could see them through the entire amount of peak of the load from 5pm, when the sun goes down all the way through to 10pm, and the integration of their standby diesel generation. So that in the event of a network outage due to the battery running out of charge, the diesel generation could effectively be used to provide additional charge."

Ray – "Vellocet Clean Energy came up with exceptional technology. The solar panels on the battery enclosure run the EV charging station. This is an amazing product that they have been able to provide us with. We are all going to be winners out of this in the long run."

Emile – "With all the generation assets and storage assets that are now on site, the Club can



Farmer Ray.

supply electricity to its members and its community at a much cheaper price than what they are paying now. It is an added bonus."

Ray – "We will be the first Club in NSW to provide power for its members and community. How good is that!"

"From 1994 until 2020, who would have thought that a mere Club manager would be farming the sun. I now can join the Horticultural community that I am surrounded by.

"We have an on-going problem with our environmental issues, but for most of us, apart from the green factor, we are going to save money. That's what I am here to do, to save them money and move them in a direction that will, down the track and well into the future, after I have gone, continue to look after them".

VCE and Euston Club Deliver Renewable Energy A First for the Murray Region

After three years from first concept to final commissioning, the Euston Club is now one of the first Clubs' in Australia with its own clean energy on-site power plant (microgrid), providing almost all of its energy needs; reducing its annual power bill while being good for the environment, thanks to a partnership with Vellocet Clean Energy (VCE).

"This is an Australian-first for a registered Club, and we were delighted to partner with Euston Club on delivering this innovative \$1.9 million microgrid," said VCE CEO Mr. Emile Abdurahman.

"Microgrids are the future of renewable energy and give customers their own "on-site" power plant. They are not reliant on the main power grid, so customers don't have to worry about high prices or power outages, but they're connected to the grid so excess renewable energy can be sold back into the main power supply, in a win-win for the environment".

"We're proud and excited that Euston Club and the Murray River region are leading the way in clean energy innovation in Australia", said Ray Jones, CEO of Euston Club. "Not only do we reduce our power bill by up to \$200,000 annually, but just as importantly, we are doing our bit for the environment and for our members. Being in a regional area and on the edge of



Ray Jones and Yves Abdurahman (Chief Operating Officer for Vellocet) inspecting the solar system.

the grid, we were subject to power outages and high prices, but that is no longer the case.

"The renewable energy we are producing is even powering our two new electric vehicle charging stations. We are excited to be one of the only places offering this service in this part of the region. We look forward to seeing more visitors and members drop in to charge their electric vehicles and it's such an exciting look into the future of this industry," he said.

Mr. Abdurahman said that the true innovation however, comes with the "automated microgrid controller", which uses artificial intelligence to control the renewable energy flows between the solar panels, the battery storage, and the grid controlling of energy flows. "This is what future power systems will look like. Instead of relying on big coal-fired power stations, you will have clusters of microgrids with batteries and solar systems at commercial and residential premises".

The microgrid comprises of on-site solar installations (including a solar farm, roof top and car park mounted solar systems), battery energy storage, and electric vehicle charging stations to supply load, but also connects to the local grid to feed power back in when required by Essential Energy, or the national wholesale energy market. This is controlled by the latest energy technology in microgrid control systems.

VCE is working with other registered clubs in the Murray River and Riverina regions, to roll out more microgrids under its "Clean Energy for Clubs" programme. Work commenced in November 2020 on the Moama Bowling Club microgrid.

Moama Bowling Club has followed the lead of the Euston Club Resort and is in the process of installing a Solar Microgrid. Other clubs such as Club Mulwala, the Deniliquin RSL and the Coffs Harbour Ex-Services Club have been standing by to gauge how successful the installation of the Solar Microgrid at the Euston Club Resort is.

Sincere thanks are extended to Ray Jones and Nelle Edwards (Vellocet Clean Energy) for their co-operation in presenting this article.



Aerial view of the magnificent Euston Club Resort and the solar Microgrid.