



Voices for Power Roadmap for Clean and Affordable Energy for All: Summary Document

Prepared by the Voices for Power Research Action Team

Syed Mansoor (Water Democracy), Shani Tager (Solar Citizens), Kerri Major (Earth Hour-WWF), Richard Maguire (Greater Western Sydney Energy Alliance), Leah Emmanuel (Voices for Power), Dave Nguyen (Voices for Power), Thuy Linh Nguyen (Voices for Power)

FIXING THE SYSTEM: PUTTING ENERGY AFFORDABILITY BACK ON THE GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Community Energy Hubs

Too often communities and households are unsure of the best way to deal with rising power prices and independent, unbiased advice on power bills and renewable energy is hard to get.

Community Energy Hubs can fill this gap by connecting communities with the services that they need to take back control of their power bills, as well as providing the coordination, experts and funding for clean energy programs. And they'll do it all in the language of the people who need it.

Solutions for Renters

It is harder for renters and people who live in apartments to access the benefits of rooftop solar and energy efficiency measures. This means they have far fewer options when it comes to reducing their power bills and generating clean energy.

This can be fixed if the government sets standards for rental properties and provides incentives to help landlords to meet them. This includes financing solar through property rates, grant schemes to help apartment blocks put on solar and mandatory rental standards that take into account energy efficiency and rooftop solar.

Solutions for People Living in Public and Community Housing

People living in public and community housing are disproportionately affected by increases in power bills and aren't able to install solar or make energy efficiency upgrades to decrease their costs. All social housing tenants should be able to access clean and affordable energy.

Many social homes, both those owned by the government or by private organisations, could be upgraded to relieve stress on families. A program is needed to retrofit and upgrade existing, dated social housing and provide financing to ensure that new properties meet energy efficiency standards and are powered by cheap, renewable energy.

Reform of Government Assistance Programs

Government programs exist to assist households with their bills, but far too often the people who need them the most don't know about them, struggle to access them or the assistance is not enough.

A reform package can make sure that the electricity bill rebates are proportional to a bill, making sure they work for all households, large and small. It can change how the assistance programs are promoted to ensure that they are reaching the people that need them. These short-term assistance measures will be accompanied by programs that will reduce households energy bills in the long-term, including discounts for swapping old appliances and heaters that use lots of energy for more energy efficient ones.

Government owned not-for-profit Retailers

Electricity is an essential service but big electricity retail companies are making billions of dollars at the expense of low-income households.

A government-owned, non-profit retailer that is available for low-income households can push down power bills. It's aim is to make sure that low-income customers are able to access electricity at an affordable price, so that no one has to choose between paying the electricity bill and turning on the heater. As much of that electricity would be supplied by renewable energy as possible - a win-win approach.

BUILDING A CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE NOW

Financing community solar

Households who want to go solar should be able to access quality technology at affordable prices that is best suited to their roof.

The community energy hub can coordinate bulk-buying of solar panels and other equipment to lower the price, making them more affordable and enabling more people to benefit from cost-cutting rooftop solar.