



**Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Asked by Ms Jo Clay on 2 March 2022:

Ref: Environment, Annual Report page number 40, Recommendation 14

In relation to:

You've made a recommendation about distributed energy storage and microgrids. Community grids and storage have benefits, as they remove conflict between land use and large wind and solar farms and give people direct access to their power source in a way that's climate resilient (ie. no power lines that can break in a storm).

1. How far advanced are we on this recommendation and what needs to happen for Canberra to progress community grids and storage?

Dr Sophie Lewis: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

Recommendation 14 of the 2019 State of the Environment Report (SoER) is as follows:

“encourage and provide incentives for the development and uptake of distributed energy storage and microgrid technology in domestic, commercial, and government buildings and infrastructure.”

This Recommendation was assessed in the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment (OCSE) 2020-21 Annual Report. The following information on progress towards these Recommendations was provided by lead agency Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate:

- The 2020-21 Budget allocated funding to establish a \$150 million fund for the Sustainable Household Scheme which will offer zero-interest loans of up to \$15,000 to help households with the upfront costs of investing in rooftop solar panels, household battery storage, zero emission vehicles and efficient electric appliances. The Scheme guidelines were publicly released on 21 June 2021. The scheme is on track to commence in July 2021.
- The Directorate, through Economic Development, supported the Distributed Energy Resources Laboratory project that was funded through a \$1.5 million Priority Investment Program grant in 2019, to support growth opportunities in the renewable energy sector.
- The new Distributed Energy Resources (DER) Laboratory is scheduled to open at the Australian National University (ANU) in July 2021, cementing Canberra's position as the national leader in renewable energy innovation and collaboration. The DER Laboratory is an Australian first, delivered in partnership between the ANU, UNSW Canberra, IT Power and Evoenergy. It builds on the significant investments that industry and the ACT Government have already made to grow Canberra's renewable energy sector. The state-of-the-art facility

mirrors the electricity grid, offering an environment that will enable manufacturers to test devices such as solar panels, batteries and wind generating units through a real time network before connecting them to the grid. The facility will unlock new opportunities around renewable energy capability that will ultimately translate into new investments, economic growth, lower energy bills and new jobs for Canberrans. The DER Lab is another example of how our transition to a sustainable energy future creates jobs. The ACT Government supported collaboration between local industry, research and tertiary sectors to undertake innovative projects that contribute towards attracting investment and growing the established and emerging priority sectors of Canberra's economy.

OCSE has assessed that current progress towards this Recommendation is satisfactory, although further support to encourage and provide incentives for the development and uptake of distributed grids will enhance climate resilience.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Signature: 

Date: 7 March 2022

By the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, Dr Sophie Lewis