

3 October 2024

Highlights:

- Byron Community College (NSW) has a new 19.3kW donor-enabled rooftop solar system.
- The project cost was funded by an interest-free loan from national climate action charity, CORENA.
- The \$14,700 interest-free CORENA loan is sourced entirely from community donations!
- CORENA has funded \$1.55 million in interest-free loans for 55 community emissions reduction projects.

Byron Community College has a new 19.3kW rooftop solar system at the charity's college in Mullumbimby, NSW. An interest-free loan of \$14,700 - sourced entirely from donations - financed the project and was provided by national climate action charity, Citizens Own Renewable Energy Network Australia (CORENA).

The new solar system is expected to avoid an estimated 26,397kWh of grid electricity/year, thereby avoiding 19 tonnes of carbon emissions/year. It's expected that solar will reduce the charity's electricity bills by approximately \$4,025 per year - and once their CORENA loan is repaid, the organisation can divert these energy bill savings towards their core purpose of providing community education services.

CEO, Anne Stovin states *"Byron Community College stands to benefit significantly from a CORENA loan for a new solar system. This investment will reduce our energy bills plus it aligns perfectly with our core sustainability values, as well as providing a powerful example of sustainability in action to inspire our students to embrace energy efficiency in their own lives. As a community organisation, these benefits are enormous and widespread, reinforcing our commitment to environmental stewardship and demonstrating practical, impactful solutions for a sustainable future."*

A local clothing business, Ottway the Label, supplemented the many other wonderful donors by generously donating the final \$6,700, thereby fully funding the loan and allowing the project to proceed immediately.

CORENA operates Australia's longest running donor-driven revolving fund for practical climate action. Interest-free loans are available to not-for-profit, community and social-enterprise organisations for projects that reduce their carbon emissions. Citizens across Australia [make tax-deductible donations](#) to collectively crowd-fund these community climate projects. These donations are then returned to CORENA's revolving fund in the form of loan repayments, and these funds, plus new donations, are then used again to fund future projects.

CORENA offers interest-free loans to fund the following project types:

- Solar installations
- Energy efficiency upgrades (including LED lighting, building insulation etc)
- Replacing gas appliances (including water/space heating, cooking) with energy efficient electric alternatives.

- Purchasing electric vehicles
- Any combination of the above - or talk to us about any other project type that will reduce emissions.

To date, CORENA has provided loans totalling \$1,552,950 to enable 55 separate climate action projects. These projects have avoided using over 6,135MWh of grid electricity which equates to reducing carbon emissions by approximately 3,981 tonnes.

Other community organisations are encouraged to apply for a CORENA interest-free loan. CORENA provides free technical advice and assistance and hosts monthly online Q&A sessions providing [information for community organisations](#) who want to learn more about CORENA loans.

Incidentally, this is one of three CORENA-funded emissions reduction projects that are being installed within weeks of each other. The [Byron Community College](#) (NSW), plus [Northern Agricultural Catchments Council](#) (WA) and [Mansfield Statewide Autism Services](#) (Vic) will collectively install a total of 150.54kW of solar (and one solar battery), funded by a total of \$182,453 in CORENA interest-free loans.

END.

- CORENA's 56th project webpage <https://corenafund.org.au/56-byron-community-college/>
- Byron Community College website <https://byroncollege.org.au/>
- Byron Community College Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/byroncollege>

About Byron Community College

Byron Community College is a not-for-profit community organisation that provides a wide range of training to the wider community. They operate a number of nationally recognised training courses as well as a large number of short courses (100+ per term). They also provide youth training, local markets and have a community garden.