

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

21 October 2025

Climate action charity offers \$5,000 Innovation Award

Citizens Own Renewable Energy Network Australia (CORENA) is pleased to announce that nominations are now open for the **CORENA Innovation Award**.

The award recognises an **innovative and creative emissions reduction project or initiative**, as assessed against CORENA's judging criteria. It has been established in honour of **CORENA's founder, Margaret Hender**, whose pioneering spirit led to the founding of CORENA in 2013.

The value of the 2025 Innovation Award is \$5,000 - which can be applied as a one-off cash contribution to the recipient organisation, for the implementation of the winning project or initiative, or as an offset against a CORENA loan to support the implementation of the project or initiative. The **Innovation Award winner** will be announced in January 2026.

Eligibility Criteria

Applications are open to:

- Any **organisation or individual** pursuing a project or initiative to reduce carbon emissions.

Project Requirements:

- The project or initiative must be in the early stages of development i.e. the award will not be awarded retrospectively to an established project or initiative, unless for expansion purposes.
- The award funds must be important in achieving implementation of the project or initiative.
- The applicant may or may not also be pursuing a loan with CORENA .
- CORENA employees, contractors, committee members and their immediate families are not permitted to apply.

Self-nominations and **nominations by others** are both accepted.

Judging Criteria

Eligible applications will be judged by the CORENA Committee against the following criteria:

1. The project or initiative will achieve a demonstrable, long-term reduction in carbon emissions;
2. The project or initiative employs innovative or novel solutions to achieve carbon emission reductions;
3. The project or initiative employs an emerging technology to reduce carbon emissions;
4. The project or initiative serves as an example, or blueprint for future projects or initiatives or otherwise demonstrates growth potential; and
5. The project or initiative advances our energy system towards a cleaner economy.

Applications must address item number 1 of the judging criteria, plus at least one of items 2 - 5.

How to Apply / Nominate

- **Apply or nominate via the form** on the CORENA website:
<https://corenafund.org.au/corena-launches-5000-innovation-award-2/>
- Queries can be directed to:
✉ admin@corenafund.org.au

Timeline

-  **Applications Open** – 16 October 2025
-  **Applications Close** – 11:59pm AEST 15 December 2025
-  **Winner Announced** – January 2026

About CORENA

CORENA (Citizens' Own Renewable Energy Network Australia) operates Australia's longest-running donor-driven **revolving fund for climate action**. To date, CORENA has funded over **\$1.85 million** for **60 projects**, avoiding more than **7991 MWh** of grid electricity — equivalent to powering 377 average homes with 100% renewable energy.

CORENA offers **interest-free loans** to not-for-profit, community, and social enterprise organisations for:

- Solar installations
- Energy efficiency upgrades
- Replacing gas appliances with efficient electric alternatives
- Purchasing electric vehicles

Georgia Cooke, CORENA's Chair, states *"The climate emergency needs innovative ideas and this is something our founder, Margaret Hender, is passionate about. We hope this award will help organisations on their path to net zero and generate new approaches which can be adopted by other organisations CORENA works with."* Ms Cooke also called for community organisations to apply for a CORENA loan *"We encourage community-focused organisations to apply for an interest-free CORENA loan to reduce their emissions and long-term energy bills."*

Community organisations interested in applying for a CORENA loan can learn more and register for monthly Q&A sessions at:

 <https://corenafund.org.au/apply-for-a-project-loan/>

Media Contact:

Sarah McCabe, CORENA Head of Operations

 admin@corenafund.org.au

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