

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

***For immediate release***

**26 February 2026**

**Climate Charity announces Innovation Award Winner!**

**Citizens Own Renewable Energy Network Australia (CORENA)** is delighted to announce [CrowdVision.ai](https://www.crowdvision.ai) as the winner of the second CORENA Innovation Award.

The award recognises the most innovative and creative emission reduction project or initiative, as assessed by a judging sub-committee of CORENA.

Most buildings operate inefficiently: Air conditioning and lighting often run at full capacity regardless of how spaces are actually used. This leads to substantial and unnecessary carbon emissions. At the same time, existing “smart building” systems are expensive, cloud-dependent, and inaccessible to schools, small organisations and community facilities.

CrowdVision.ai is developing an affordable, AI-driven building intelligence system that will measure and visualise real world building occupancy and environmental data allowing air conditioning and lighting settings to be optimised to reduce energy use. This initiative combines three emerging technologies: edge AI, environmental sensing, and live data analytics into a low-cost, retrofit-friendly device capable of delivering automated energy reductions.

Edge AI devices, as opposed to Cloud AI, conduct the data processing at the source of data generation such as sensors, IoT devices, or local servers, rather than using the cloud. This uses significantly less energy and offers privacy protection as the data is never streamed to the cloud.

Support from the CORENA Innovation Award will assist the team to move from design to reality, funding the high-accuracy hardware and assembly needed for their first live pilot. This is a vital step in proving the system’s ability to cut emissions, ultimately providing an affordable, high-impact tool which may be useful for many of our non-profit loan recipients.

Monica Oliphant, CORENA’s patron said *“The judges felt the project was innovative, relevant to community organisations and had a high potential for reducing carbon emissions. They also appreciated that the development of the technology is well progressed and the award would assist with the practical implementation of the pilot phase.”*

CORENA would like to congratulate CrowdVision.ai for their work on this innovative project and celebrate all of the award nominees for their tireless efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

The value of the 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 CORENA Innovation Award was established in recognition of CORENA's founder, Margaret Hender, and the innovative and pioneering spirit that drove her to establish and grow CORENA from humble beginnings in 2013. The award was first offered in 2023 and was won by Future Materials. A generous philanthropic donation from Giving for Good has allowed us to run the award again in 2025/26.

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## 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 **\$1.9 million** for **61 projects**.

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."*

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**Community organisations interested in applying for a CORENA loan** can learn more at:

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

## Media Contact:

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