

Something to brag about

The Bunyip Renewables Action Group (BRAG) has been named the winner of the Community Champion Award in the Future Energy category at the 2023 Premier's Sustainability Awards.

BRAG's Giving Bunyip Something to BRAG About program is an ambitious vision that would see the entire small town of Bunyip move to 100 per cent carbon neutrality by 2030.

Already well underway with delivering on its agenda, BRAG is planning to deliver a 0.8 MW solar farm and 1.6 MWh battery adjacent to the local Bunyip Showgrounds Reserve. This project still has a couple of hurdles to overcome but is well on the way to fruition.

The group also hopes to progress the installation of an electric vehicle charging station at a location very close to the town on the Princes Highway.

BRAG secretary Helen Ross said the group was excited to make such an achievement as a small community group.

"We were absolutely delighted to win, particularly because we are such a small organisation compared to many of the other finalists," she said.

"Perhaps we won because we are a truly community based organisation, initiated and run solely by volunteers."

In an address celebrating the 21st Premier's Sustainability Awards, Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos said he was proud of the journey Victorians are taking to make the state more sustainable and acknowledged the work of the leaders and change makers to reduce waste, boost recycling and use precious resources carefully.

Matt Genever, Sustainability Victoria's interim CEO, said he applauded the Bunyip Renewables Action Group for its aspirational outlook to bring about positive change in the Future Energy space.

"Bunyip Renewables Action Group has challenged the status quo and shown true leadership in the Future Energy field. I feel inspired to hear their story and learn about the difference they're making," he said.

With the award under their belt, Helen and



From left: assistant secretary Sue Anderson, vice president Tony Ross, treasurer Julie Kidd, secretary Helen Ross, president John Langford, and committee members Rachel Osbourne and Jacqui Anderson. Picture: SUPPLIED

BRAG hope this will catapult them to achieve their goals and to further advance ventures to combat climate change.

"I think this gives us a lot more credibility. We're sure the local community already appreciates what we do but perhaps this award will encourage locals to consider our work as a priority for the community," Helen said.

"I hope this recognition will assist us as we apply for future grants, not only for our projects but also on behalf of others in the community such as the local sports clubs.

"It will show other local not-for-profits that

our objective needs to be a priority, something that says hey what we are doing is important."

BRAG has done so much in just three short years of existence; they have many to thank for their ongoing mission.

"We thank Sustainability Victoria, as well as Gippsland Climate Change Network, Baw Baw Sustainability Network and the Yarra Valley Community Power Hub, all of whom had an enormous impact on our group, both initially and further on, and all of whom have been supported by funds from Sustainability Victoria," Helen said.

"Of course we also want to thank our community, Bunyip, for their support and encouragement, especially those who have joined BRAG and more importantly those who are giving their time to work on our committee."

The Premier's Sustainability Awards is Victoria's most prestigious annual sustainability awards program celebrating the businesses, government and community leading the way in sustainable innovation and practices.

To view the profiles of all winners and finalists, visit sustainability.vic.gov.au/psa-2023-winners

Spreading Christmas cheer to families

By Roman Kulkewycz

A new initiative by the Bunyip Community Op Shop to brighten Christmas for families in need has seen the distribution of over 40 grocery vouchers each valued at \$100.

School principals from Nar Nar Goon to Longwarry were invited to submit the number of vouchers required.

To maintain dignity and anonymity, only the principals were aware of the recipient families.

Bunyip Community Op Shop president, Tony Arrigo said at a recent committee meeting it was agreed unanimously to trial this program.

"We wanted to give local families some extra cheer at Christmas this year and the best way we thought was to do it through the school principals.

"We delivered the vouchers personally and were warmly received by each principal."



Bunyp's Columba Catholic Primary School Deputy principal Caz Websdale accepts the grocery vouchers from Bunyip Community Op Shop president Tony Arrigo. Picture: ROMAN KULKEWYCZ

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12651721-BA47-23

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12631825-038-23