

Background Briefer: Narrabri Community Battery Project

1. Don't Risk Losing the Project – It's Ready to Go

The community battery is fully funded, designed, mostly paid for and has most of its approvals. Any changes now could delay the project, add costs, or even put it at risk. Let's keep it on track.

2. A Boost for Local Jobs and Innovation

This project brings federal investment into Narrabri, supports local benefits, and shows that our Council is open for business and backing smart, energy agnostic, future-ready infrastructure.

3. Safer, Smarter, and Locally Beneficial

The battery is a safe, well-engineered solution that keeps more excess solar power, local. It reduces pressure on the grid and helps position Narrabri as a leader in clean energy innovation.

Community Benefits

Community batteries allow excess day time solar energy to be stored locally and shared back during peak evening times. In general terms this allows more rooftop solar in the grid and better utilisation of that solar.

These systems also contribute to **grid stability** and can help defer costly infrastructure upgrades by smoothing out local demand and supply. During extreme weather or outages, the Narrabri battery can **enhance resilience**, by providing a spot for charging phones etc during outages.

Geni.Energy is a **non-profit organisation** and is locally based in Narrabri, creating new opportunities for the region to participate in the energy transition.

The Narrabri Community battery is guided by a community advisory committee. When a profit is realised by the battery this will be **distributed back to local renewable energy projects**. It is anticipated that between \$10,000-\$20,000 per annum of profits will be put back into the local community.

We would love to offer a **local retail deal** where locals buy and sell their power to and from the battery but that model is currently not available on such a small scale - we asked three retailers who all said no. We expect this will become available in coming years.

The Narrabri Battery features **local art works** depicting the threatened species of the region including the Kaputar Pink Slug and swift parrot.

Community batteries also foster **local engagement and empowerment**. When communities are involved in planning and decision-making, they build energy literacy, trust, and a sense of ownership in the clean energy transition. Furthermore, they

support broader climate goals by reducing reliance on fossil fuels and lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

Timeline of Narrabri Shire Council's Support

Grant Funding

Prior to the 2022 federal election, the Labor Party committed to delivering a community battery in Narrabri. Following their election win, a public grant process was established, and Geni.Energy was successful in securing funding in **May 2023**.

Due to various delays, we have had to apply for extensions, and the project is now scheduled for completion by **June 2025**.

Narrabri Shire Council Support

Narrabri Shire Council supported the grant application process and, upon funding being confirmed, passed a motion in **February 2023** to establish the **Narrabri Renewable Energy Hub** and support the community battery project.

- Council submitted the **Development Application (DA)**, which was approved in **July 2024**.
- The DA required the battery to be elevated due to flood risks identified during assessment. A **Modification Application** to address this was approved in **September 2024**.
- A **Construction Certificate** was issued in **February 2025** following Council's process.

We scheduled **March 3, 2025**, as the installation date for the battery and associated infrastructure (including concrete culverts, switchboard, stairs, and railings). However, unresolved connection agreement issues forced us to delay installation and ask suppliers to hold components until a new date could be set.

Due to minor technical design changes, we submitted another **Modification Application** in **March 2025**.

Engagement with Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC)

Since 2023, Geni.Energy has engaged with local NSW Fire and Rescue representatives. In **February 2025**, we presented the battery's safety features to the **Local Emergency**

Management Committee. Following the meeting, one member submitted an objection to Council regarding the battery's location.

Licence Agreement

At this stage, Council informed us that progress on the Modification Application would be paused until the **Licence Agreement** was finalised, effectively pausing the whole project.

We had last reviewed and negotiated changes to the Licence Agreement in **December 2024**, and believed it was ready for Council's completion. In **March 2025**, we were invited to attend a Council meeting in support of a motion to allow staff to finalise the Licence Agreement.

Council Motions – March & April 2025

At the **March 2025 Council meeting**, the motion to finalise the Licence Agreement was endorsed. However, a last-minute amendment by a Councillor was passed, requiring a new element to the agreement and therefore further renegotiation.

Very soon after that meeting, a **Notice of Motion** was submitted for the **April Council meeting**, effectively halting all progress on the Licence Agreement and, as a result, bringing the project to a standstill.

Why We Need Your Support

We are now seeking **letters of support** to demonstrate the strong local backing for the Narrabri Community Battery. These letters are critical in encouraging Councillors to allow Council staff to finalise the Licence Agreement and enable the project to proceed.