Dear Members & Friends,

Welcome to the Q2 edition of the German-Australian Business News, which we have dedicated to the topic of Renewable Energy. This important industry sector is constantly changing and evolving thanks to the arrival of new technologies, be it in the area of energy generation, storage or transmission, and as such it deserves our ongoing attention.

In this issue, we present first-hand insights from member companies who are industry leaders in the renewable energy sector. These are complemented by input from the Australian Clean Energy Council. Read about new energy generation and storage technologies made in Germany and Australia, and more broadly what the global developments in the industry mean for the energy mix and energy transition in Australia.

Renewable energy will also feature strongly in some of our upcoming Chamber events and projects, including an inbound delegation by the German Industry Initiative for Energy Efficiency, in collaboration with the Australian Energy Efficiency Council. We will inform you about this and other upcoming events through our usual channels including our fortnightly Events Australia Newsletter and our website www.germany.org.au.

As in previous editions, our Policy Update once again keeps you abreast of the latest developments around the EU-Australia Free Trade Agreement negotiations and other policy initiatives by the Chamber, including our recent meeting in Melbourne with Bill Shorten’s team of senior advisors.

I would like to thank you, our members and friends, for your ongoing support. Please do not hesitate to contact our membership or events departments with any questions or suggestions that you may have.

Kind regards,
Alexandra Voss
Executive Director
German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce

Business Dinner with Dr h. c. Gerhard Schroeder, Former Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and Vice Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Herrenknecht AG

It surely is a rare occasion that a German Chancellor comes to visit Down Under (the last time was Dr Angela Merkel in 2014), so when our member company Herrenknecht AG approached us in late December regarding an imminent visit by Dr h. c. Gerhard Schroeder, German Chancellor between 1998 and 2005 and now the Vice Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Herrenknecht AG, there was a certain vibe of excitement and anticipation in the air.

In order to make the hemisphere-crossing journey most efficient, Dr Schroeder’s itinerary was set extremely compact for high-level meetings and events with state and local politicians and authorities. Together with the Founder and CEO of Herrenknecht AG, Dr.-Ing. E.h. Martin Herrenknecht, the Former Chancellor also had intensive conversations and exchanges with the stakeholders and business partners of the company. As the premium supplier worldwide for all-around technology solutions in mechanized tunnelling area, Herrenknecht is involved not only in the Sydney Metro Tunnel projects but likewise in Melbourne’s West Gate Tunnel and Metro Tunnel, to name a few.

As part of the high-level talks of the Herrenknecht leadership team with state and local politicians as well as business partners, the AHK Events Team was entrusted with organising the main event of their mission to Australia - a large business reception and dinner for stakeholders and business partners on 5 February. At the core of the event, held at ‘The Residence’ of the Grand Hyatt Melbourne, was Dr Schroeder’s keynote address on the topic of ‘New Political and Economic Perspectives in a World of Change’. Over nearly 45 minutes Dr Schroeder, Vice Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Herrenknecht AG delivered a compelling case for free trade and against protectionism, elaborated on the consequences of Brexit and the new order in global trade brought about by the American administration, and encouraged Australia and Germany to cooperate even more closely in light of the above developments.

The AHK Events Team successfully delivered the project management for the event, including pre-event security checks, VIP logistics, venue management, food and beverage selection, display and exhibit management, photography, videography and AV, entertainment, as well as running the event on the day. Herrenknecht AG was full of praise for the work provided by the AHK team and are already looking forward to their next business mission to Australia.

Written by Lars Mehlan,
German-Australian Chamber

UPCOMING EVENTS

Events range from workshops & seminars to roundtable discussions, receptions, to large-scale conferences. Some events are open to the public, while others are only accessible for members. Our speakers include top-level industry experts, leading government representatives and inspiring thought leaders.

01 May
AICD –Subsidiary companies and intercultural governance course

16 May
2019 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

22 May
Evening Forum: Blockchain across Australia’s Growth Centres

29 May
Workshop: Antitrust Enforcement in the Digital Economy
The natural choice for German businesses in Australia since 1941
Policy Update on Trade and Investment

2019 has started as a challenging year in the international trade and investment environment. While there are challenges, positive developments such as the advanced negotiations for the Australia–EU FTA or the implementation of the EU–Japan FTA should not be forgotten.

The global trade and investment environment had a challenging start into the new year with continued tensions between the US and China and the European Union, the Brexit uncertainty and no progress so far on the reform of the World Trade Organization. Those are all indeed important issues affecting many businesses active in international trade and investments, including many companies in the German-Australian business relationship. However, beyond the headlines, it should be noted that there significant positive developments.

On the issue of the of Australia–EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the third formal round of negotiations took place in Canberra in March and produced significant progress on a number of key aspects, including market access rules, visa issues and government procurement. Together with our partners such as the German Embassy, we continue our engagement to advocate for a comprehensive agreement that deals with the various tariff and non-tariff trade and investment barriers still existing in the relationship. Of special importance is the chapter for small to medium-sized enterprises (SME).

Another very positive development with indirect impact for Australia was the implementation of the EU-Japan FTA from 1 February 2019. This has created the single largest free trade area in terms of economic size and removes a significant number of trade barriers on both sides. It is also highly important in its symbolic value when two trade superpowers, the EU and Japan, support a rules-based and open international trade and investment environment.

Within our region, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) entered into force on 30 December 2018 with Australia and now six other member states (Canada, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore and Vietnam). The remaining member countries will join once their ratification processes are finalised. CPTPP is already showing improvements in trade and investments between member states.

On the specific level of the Chamber’s policy work, one of my recent projects is the chamber submission on the issue of brown mar-morated stink bug (BMSB) to the Inspector-General of Biosecurity, Dr Helen Scott-Orr, for her review. BMSB has significantly impacted many goods importers from Germany since new measures were announced for the 2018/2019 season. We argue that the management of BMSB measures can be significantly improved; please contact me if you want to receive a copy of our submission. With the recent New South Wales state election and the upcoming federal election, we have also increased our engagement with both government and the opposition in order to ensure that issues relevant for the German-Australian and wider EU-Australian business communities are well considered when new governments are formed and that we continue our close working relationship with political decision makers.

One key topic in the relationship is energy with its various sub-topics such as renewable energy, battery storage systems and energy efficiency. As you can see in the other articles of this Business News edition, there are highly innovative German-Australian businesses active in the renewable energy field. Within the German-Australian Chamber, we help such businesses to connect with relevant business partners and with our policy work help to communicate innovative energy solutions for the Australian market to political stakeholders such as Members of Parliament, Ministers and relevant Departments. This is also a field where is beneficial for our members to closely follow relevant State, Commonwealth, COAG and German developments. The Chamber’s Policy Advisory Committee member will also support our work in this area through their industry expertise throughout the year.

Stay tuned for more updates on the website about the latest developments around trade and investment developments. As with all our policy projects, please feel free to get in touch if you want to discuss them, or want to get involved.

Written by Dr Michael Zettinig, German-Australian Chamber

Email: michael.zettinig@germany.org.au
Phone: (02) 8296 0448
Roundtable Discussion with Senior Advisors to Bill Shorten

In early February 2019, we had an opportunity to discuss with three of Opposition Leader Bill Shorten’s senior advisors in Melbourne in a small roundtable set-up.

This discussion, one of the follow-up activities from our Canberra Delegations in 2018, provided a unique opportunity to engage with influential senior advisors of Australia’s Opposition Leader in the year of the federal election. The atmosphere was very productive and an open dialogue developed covering the key issues and opportunities in the German-Australian business community.

We discovered that there are numerous topics of common interest. One such topic is the Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement and its impact on Australian businesses and workers as well as companies in the German-Australian business community such as German Mittelstand companies. The upskilling of the Australian workforce through international skills transfers and in support for Australian advanced manufacturing / Industry 4.0 companies participating in global supply chains was of significant interest. For that and other topics, we offered to organise follow-up discussions, including during our next Canberra Delegation in the second half of 2019. If you want to be involved in such discussions in future, especially in regards to upskilling of the workforce, please get in touch with me to discuss this.

Another focus area of the discussion was energy. With Labor having announced a major energy policy on 22 November 2018, the roundtable was able to use this as a basis for the in-depth discussion. Some of the aspects touched on were the German experience from the “Energiewende” (energy transition), the importance of discussing energy efficiency as part of every comprehensive energy discussion, how the tax rules impact on energy investment decisions and what opportunities lie in the field of hydrogen, especially in the so-called “green hydrogen”- that is; hydrogen produced from renewable energy sources. As this is a very dynamic industry field, especially with the COAG Energy Council decision to develop a National Hydrogen Strategy and to establish a COAG Energy Council Hydrogen Working Group, we want to follow-up on this topic in future discussions.

Other major topics were the development of the Australian defence industry with support from German industry, the development in the Asia-Pacific and its impact on the bilateral Australia-Germany relationship, Brexit and what role industry can plan to support successful government initiatives such as the 1.5 track dialogue established between Australia and Germany.

The feedback received after this intensive dialogue has been very positive and we plan to continue similar discussion fora for our members throughout the year.

Written by Dr Michael Zettinig, German-Australian Chamber
Lunch Forum: Economic Outlook 2019

The German–Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce was delighted to welcome more than 60 guests to a Networking Luncheon with an Economic Outlook by HSBC’s Chief Economist for Australia, New Zealand and Global Commodities, Paul Bloxham.

Hosted by our Executive Member HSBC, guests were greeted at 12 pm with a delicious buffet luncheon at the RACV City Club. After our guests had the chance to engage in some networking and enjoy some lunch, our Melbourne Branch Manager Tina Thoms welcomed the guests on behalf of the German–Australian Chamber. She thanked HSBC for their kind support before handing over to Brendon Green, State Manager Victoria and South Australia, HSBC Bank Australia Limited who explained HSBC’s strong footprint in Germany and introduced the guest speaker Paul Bloxham.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our Executive Member HSBC for hosting this insightful lunch event, and of course to Paul Bloxham for taking time out of his busy schedule to provide us with some current insights to the ever changing economy.

Key points from Paul’s presentation*:

- Generally speaking, it’s a more challenging environment than last year. There are three main reasons for the global slow-down: First, financial conditions have been tightening. Second, the impact of the fiscal stimulus on US growth in 2018, including a substantial corporate tax cut, is set to fade, slowing US growth. Thirdly, the effects of trade tariffs and the threat of further trade protectionism have weighed on growth, with indicators of trade and manufacturing sector activity broadly declining, including in China and the US.

- HSBC’s economics team sees global growth slowing from an above-average 2.9 per cent in 2018, to 2.6 per cent in 2019 and 2.4 per cent in 2020.

- For Australia, weakening global growth presents a challenge, but the key is what happens to China’s domestic demand and commodity prices.

- Despite the gloomy media coverage, the housing price correction has been orderly so far. This largely reflects that the labour market is tightening, with the unemployment rate around a six-year low at 5.1 per cent. A tight labour market has also supported consumer spending. However, a key risk to the outlook is that the weakening housing market begins to weigh on the consumer.

- Politics is also expected to play a bigger role in 2019, with an election due by 18 May. A boost in government spending is expected to support growth, particularly on transport and social infrastructure.

- With support from the mining sector, a positive labour market and an expected fiscal boost, HSBC’s economics team expect Australia’s growth to be 3 per cent in 2019, but the risks are tilted to the downside.


Written by Caroline Stapleton, German–Australian Chamber

QLD Chapter New Year’s Reception

Last week the Queensland Chapter of the German–Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce welcomed members and friends to its New Year’s Reception in the heart of Brisbane’s cultural precinct. The first local event of the year took place at the Queensland Museum, where over 50 guests enjoyed the atmosphere of the recently opened SparkLab.

The host of the evening was Richard Holy, General Manager Queensland at DB Schenker who welcomed all guests and introduced attending board members and Queensland chapter executives. Keynote speaker of the evening was Tobias Sonnenburg from Tritium, an award-winning technology company for fast charging solutions for electric vehicles. Tobias, Head of Product Development, delivered valuable insight into the e-mobility sector and Tritium’s journey of becoming a leading technology provider.

The official programme ended with a prize draw for family pass tickets to the NASA exhibition at the Queensland Museum, a group pass for an exclusive, private behind the scenes tour at the Queensland Museum and the book “A Diamond in the Dust”. Afterwards, guests used the opportunity to further network while enjoying the catering. We’d like to thank the Queensland Museum for the donation of passes as well as DB Schenker for their ongoing support and sponsoring this event.

Written by Michaela John, Queensland Chapter of the German–Australian Chamber
Sydney New Year’s Reception 2019

The German-Australian Chamber has a long-standing tradition of hosting its New Year’s Reception in exquisite venues. Thanks to Premium Partner Accru Felsers, this year we have had the opportunity of holding our reception on the ‘James Craig’, the flagship of the Sydney Heritage Fleet.

With great excitement and anticipation, more than 160 members and friends of the German Chamber made their way to Pyrmont where the 19th Century square rigger (or Tall Ship) waited to be boarded. The three-masted barque was restored over the course of more than 30 years with a budget of almost $A30 million and its impressive restoration was recognised in 2003 by the World Ship Trust’s award of their prestigious Maritime Medal. At 5.30 pm the first guests were allowed to board and greeted by German beers on tap and German delicacies such as buns filled with miniature Bratwurst as well as small slices of Currywurst.

After some mingling guests were asked to make their way into the lower deck of the Tall Ship where our Executive Director Alexandra Voss welcomed everyone and thanked Premium Partner and event partner Accru Felsers for making it possible to celebrate the New Year’s Reception aboard the James Craig. She welcomed the German Ambassador, H.E. Dr Anna Prinz as well as the German Consul-General Peter Silberberg and gave a short overview of exciting and relevant services that the Chamber has in stock for its members in 2019.

On the policy side members can look forward to the Chamber’s continuing engagement in the Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement negotiations, engagement with Government Ministers and Shadow Ministers as well as a Canberra Delegation after the federal election. In regards to membership, we are continuing to grow and deepen our network, especially now with our newly appointed Membership Coordinator located in Sydney to support our Membership Director Tina Thoms. Further, we are continuing to expand our activities in Queensland through our Chapter and, going forward also WA. The Consulting Team will be managing a range of bilateral initiatives, including several outbound delegations as well as an inbound delegation which will bring German SMEs to Australia and New Zealand. The Chamber’s event program will support the above initiatives, with a particular focus on the topics represented by the Australian Government through their six Industry Growth Centres.

Continued on page 8...
Following this, Alexandra asked the Ambassador to stage to say a few words. Dr Prinz welcomed all members and friends of the Chamber and pointed out the excellent German and Australian relations before handing over to the event sponsor Accru Felsers, represented by Partner Steven Zabeti who thanked everyone for coming and described the strong relationship between the Chamber and Accru Felsers, a founding member of the very same.

After the speeches ended, everyone made their way back upstairs in anticipation of the two-hour cruise that awaited our passengers. The ship left Pyrmont to pass Darling Harbour and the Sydney Harbour Bridge and cruise around Sydney Harbour until it returned at 9 pm, allowing our guests to take in the sunset across the Sydney skyline.

We hope that our members and friends enjoyed themselves during the cruise. We thank our Premium Partner Accru Felsers for making it possible to host this year’s New Year’s Reception at such an impressive venue and look forward to seeing everyone again at one of our upcoming events!

Written by Eva Kosinski, German-Australian Chamber
International Women’s Day 2019

On International Women’s Day, the global community has an opportunity to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. On 8 March, we reflect on the barriers that stop women from reaching their potential and call for ways to improve the status of women worldwide.

On International Women’s Day 2019, the chambers and business councils who reside in International Chamber House hosted their annual event at the Plaza Ballroom, Regent Theatre in Melbourne. Over 500 guests heard from speakers including the Lord Mayor of Melbourne Sally Capp; CEO of Ousia, Dio Chen; Consul General of the Republic of Indonesia for Victoria and Tasmania, Ibu Spica Tutuhatunewa; Diversity Capability Development Manager of Australian Unity, Eleni Berezed-Samuel; and Councillor of City of Melbourne and Chair of People City, Beverley Pinder.

The theme of this year’s International Women’s Day was Balance for Better, which calls for a more gender-balanced world from the boardroom to government and everywhere in between. The official International Women’s Day campaign recognises that balance is not only a women’s issue but a business issue, which is a necessary means of driving positive economic and social change.

Our first keynote speaker, Melbourne’s Lord Mayor, Sally Capp, spoke eloquently about her experience as a senior woman in a range of executive positions. Sally said that equality is not inevitable, but it must be fought for, it must be pushed for and it must be driven. With regard to International Women’s Day, Sally said that it’s important to tell the stories of women who have come before us and who have been ‘firsts’ in their field of work. As the first female in several of her professional roles and the first elected Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Sally said that she believes firsts are only valuable when they open up pathways for other women to follow. By telling the stories of women, Sally said that we can have real and impactful change within society.

The second keynote speaker Dio Chen travelled from China for just 24 hours to present at our International Chamber House event. Dio is well known in China as the Chairwoman of four companies and Director of Liby Group, a domestic usage chemical manufacturing company, which records annual sales of over $500m Australian dollars, operates over one million retail terminals and ranks No. 1 in China and No. 5 in the world with the likes of Unilever and Proctor & Gamble.

Dio said that when people ask how she achieves a good work-life balance, she says that she has to explain that she’s never managed to balance them properly. Although she admits that she has a complex and challenging work environment, Dio says that she still takes her children to school before work, tries to get home before eight to read them a story at night and plans her international travel to minimise nights away from her family. She says that female workers do live in an unfair society but that they need to know that it’s not about winning, it is about not giving up.

Following the keynote presentations, guests had an opportunity to network and enjoy high tea before the panel discussion, moderated by Frank Ribuot, the Chief Executive Officer Australia, New Zealand, South East Asia and India & Workplace Gender Equality Ambassador at Randstad. During the panel discussion, Ibu Spica, Eleni and Beverley spoke about the perception of women in society, their experience facing adversity in the workforce, the role of mentoring, the potential for gender quotas and the importance of access to education for girls worldwide.

Overall, the event was a great success and enjoyed by all. The Chambers of International Chamber House would like to warmly thank our sponsors, Swisse, Australian Unity and Citi for their generous contribution and to thank all our speakers and moderator for giving up their time and expertise to be a part of International Women’s Day 2019.

Written by Australia China Business Council-Victoria
Luncheon Discussion with Dr Klaus Schüler and the German-Australian Business Community

Topic: “The political situation in Germany and the German-Australian relationship”

The German–Australian Chamber had the pleasure of collaborating with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung’s (KAS) Regional Programme Australia and the Pacific to organise a roundtable discussion in Sydney in February 2019 on the occasion of a visit by Dr Klaus Schüler, the federal managing director of the CDU, Germany’s ruling party.

It is commonly acknowledged that we live in politically turbulent times, where disarray and uncertainty in one area – Brexit being a case in point- can have wide-ranging consequences for businesses worldwide. As the CDU's longstanding federal managing director, Dr Klaus Schüler has been at the forefront of how such developments affect Germany and its role in Europe as well as globally. His visit to Australia hence provided a unique platform to discuss current bilateral developments and opportunities with key stakeholders in the German-Australian business community.

Alongside business leaders and industry experts, participating in the roundtable were the German Consul General Peter Silberberg, the GACIC’s Executive Director, Ms Alexandra Voss, the Deputy Head of the Department for European and International Cooperation from KAS Headquarters in Berlin, Mr Frank Priess, as well as Dr Beatrice Gorawantschy, the Director of KAS' Regional Programme Australia and the Pacific.

As an introduction to the topic, Ms Voss and Mr Priess respectively placed the work of the GACIC and KAS in the wider global context of political and economic change. This provided the springboard for Dr Schüler to offer an outlook on Germany’s position in a period of re-orientation and structural transformation.

Challenging developments since 2015/2016 are symptomatic of wider global shifts and are forcing liberal democracies to address fundamental political questions, such as growing challenges to the rules-based order by illiberal forces, including in the trade and investment area. Dr Schüler highlighted how these developments provided both challenges and opportunities for the economic sector, which led into an engaging discussion about the potential of the German-Australian relationship to become even stronger. This discussion was chaired by the German-Australian Chamber’s Director of Policy, Dr Michael Zettinig, and addressed matters such as the increase in cooperation offered by the currently negotiated Europe-Australia Free Trade Agreement as well as the promises of digitalisation and Industry 4.0 / Advanced Manufacturing to provide Australia access to global supply chains.

Written by Dr Michael Zettinig, German-Australian Chamber

Invitation - Industry Conference

Energy Efficient Solutions for Smart Infrastructure and Transport Developments

1 July 2019
ICC Sydney
The German–Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce has recently introduced a new event format – a series of workshops which give members who are service providers and experts in certain fields a platform to present relevant topics.

Held in the AHK offices in Melbourne and Sydney over 3 dates, the topic of "Australian/ German Dual Citizenship" attracted a total of approx. 50 participants. Presented by Ully Fritsch, a registered migration agent (MARN 1790167) and Director of our new Member Chapter 2 Australia, the workshops addressed the following questions:

What are the benefits of Australian Citizenship versus Permanent Residence?

 Certain government/social benefits, such as HECS loan, are only available for Australian citizens, and it is widely expected that others may follow. Furthermore, citizens can be absent from Australia for extended periods, without risking their right to return; by contrast, Permanent Residents wishing to travel overseas require a Resident Return Visa (RRV) - after the initial five years as a permanent resident - and must meet its eligibility requirements...which could change at any time. Naturally the ever-increasing Visa Application charges – also applicable to the RRV- are no longer a consideration for Australian citizens.

How do the two applications (for Australian citizenship and the BBG) affect each other and what timing issues do you need to consider?

The BBG permit comes into effect upon collection and is valid for two years from the date on the certificate. This means a BBG holder has to have become an Australian citizen before the BBG certificate expires. Considering that the application process for Australian citizenship currently can take close to two years (from the time of application to the ceremony) Ully Fritsch in most instances recommends, that those intending applicants who meet the eligibility criteria for Australian citizenship, lodge the Australian citizenship application at the same time as the BBG application.

We thank our guests for attending the workshop, and of course Ully Fritsch for travelling to Melbourne and Sydney from Perth to present this interesting topic.

Written by Caroline Stapleton, German–Australian Chamber

Please Note:

The Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany should be your first point of contact when it comes to visa and citizenship enquiries.

www.germany.org.au
Green is the New Black: Renewable Energy in Australia

It was only a few short years ago that the future of renewable energy in Australia was uncertain.

Investment in utility-scale renewable energy was stalled to practically zero; and confidence in the application of renewable energy technologies in the commercial and residential sector was restrained. The Federal Government of the time mooted the removal or shut down of key pillars of stimulus and support for renewable energy – including the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (RET), the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) as well other institutions and mechanisms created by preceding governments. Wind energy projects of the time were mothballed. Solar energy projects were speculative at best. Renewable energy was pushed aside by its political opponents as non-mainstream, inefficient, costly and not in Australia's best interests. With power prices rising and the 2016 blackout in South Australia, renewable energy (unfairly) shouldered the blame for such woes. Climate change denial and support for coal-fired power generation was part of political discourse. Energy policy was in a state of paralysis.

Today, whilst energy policy at the Federal level is still uncertain, the fact is that renewable energy is now mainstream and a permanent (and increasing) feature of Australia’s energy mix. Doubt over the business case for key renewable technologies (especially wind and solar power) has long been extinguished. Green is the “new black” or the accepted mainstream form of electricity. “Black” power (coal, gas-fired power generation) once mainstream, is now in decline, and green (renewable) energy is the future: a viable form of clean electricity generation for investment and operation in Australia. The RET survived (although in a reduced form), the CEFC continues to operate as an arm’s length lender to renewable energy projects, and institutions such as the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (which invests in renewable energy technologies) have survived and flourished.

Renewable Energy Investment

Investment in Australian renewable energy projects is now at an all-time high, with many wind and solar energy projects constructed in the last few years. Moreover, there are many permitted projects under construction or awaiting construction. At the domestic level, families are buying rooftop solar systems for their homes. Commercial rooftop solar is also on the increase with business looking to reduce their electricity costs. Coal-fired power generation continues – and is here to stay for some time yet – but in truth, Australia’s major banks and investment banks (both in Australia and overseas) have little interest in investing in coal power. The same applies to gas-fired electricity generation (albeit for different reasons: sky-high gas prices have rendered investment in gas-fired electricity to an economic third place for viability).

Where is Investment happening?

Everywhere Dormant wind energy projects from years ago have been injected with investment and are now built; many new projects will be built. Wind energy investment continues with major wind energy projects, especially in Victoria and NSW. Wind farms at Dundonnell (336 MW, south-west Victoria), Bulgana (194MW, near Ararat) Moorabool (321MW) and Lal Lal (216MW) (both south of Ballarat) are being built. Mt Gellibrand (132MW, near Colac) and Ararat Wind Farm (75MW, near Ararat) were all recently completed. In NSW Taralga (107MW), Gullen Range (166MW) and Boco Rock (113MW) have been operating for a few years. Rye Park (327MW) and Liverpool Range (1000MW) are permitted. Confidence is high: German-owned wind energy company, WestWind Energy, announced their intention to construct and operate a 1000MW wind farm in central-west Victoria, a capacity to power Geelong.

But it is in solar that the action is hot. In the last three years, there has been a proliferation of constructed and operational utility-scale solar power generation projects across Australia. There are also many permitted projects soon to be built. Whilst many of these are in Queensland (eg Hughenden, Collinsville, Ross River) all states and territories are home to large utility-scale solar power generation projects. According to the Clean Energy Council, there were 24 commissioned solar projects in 2018 and a further 60 under construction or due to start construction. Innogy’s massive Limondale Solar Project in NSW (349MW) is an example. In Western Victoria, Total Eren is hoping to build a solar project exceeding 450MW, which will complement current operating and permitted Victorian solar
energy farms at Wemen, Yatpool, Karadoc, Bannerton and in central north Victoria near Glenrowan. South Australia has approved large solar projects both operating and under construction (including Bungala – 220MW), as has Northern Territory (Katherine) Western Australia (including Emu Downs and Waddi) and Tasmania (George Town and Wesley Vale).

And it’s not just about wind and solar

Hydro power is still the largest form of renewable power generation in Australia. The Federal Government has recently committed to Snowy 2.0 which will expand the generation capacity of Snowy Hydro by 2000MW. Other renewable technologies – bioenergy, geothermal, wave and tidal – are also now commercial although at different economic trajectories. Bioenergy projects are common in the agricultural sector.

Batteries are also now a permanent feature with renewables. Improved battery technology has meant investment and use in the utility, commercial and residential sector. The Hornsdale wind energy project – which is linked to a 50MW battery – is a celebrated case. And consumers want them in their home too, as the politics of electricity and pricing has meant the proliferation of support schemes and subsidies to support not only rooftop solar, but now batteries.

German Players

It is no secret that German companies are leaders in the renewables sector. German companies are not only originators and innovators of renewable energy technologies, but they are also investors. Many German players – hidden champions in an investment and project development context – are in the Australian renewable energy market. There are perhaps too many to mention, but WestWind Energy (wind energy), NewEn (wind energy), Pro Ventum International (wind energy) ibvogt (solar energy), BayWa (wind and solar energy) Wirsol (solar energy) and innogy (RWE’s renewable energy arm; solar and wind) are examples.

Suppliers and engineers are plentiful as well. Siemens Gamesa has been selling wind turbines and building Australian wind energy projects for some time. Enercon has also built wind projects in Australia. Siemens is also a lead supplier of equipment for power distribution and transmission. Gildemeister has built solar projects here.

Sonnen, a battery manufacturer – has moved operations to Adelaide and is taking advantage of a growing market and battery support programs. German solar panel and inverter providers have been supplying the Australian residential and commercial market. SMA has supplied projects as well as many Australian households and commercial premises with their inverters.

Where are Renewables headed? It’s the Grid, Stupid

Renewables are here to stay. Seismic energy policy shifts will no longer mean the end of renewable energy investment in Australia. The RET will come to an end soon (in 2020), but the business case for large scale renewables will survive – despite the current focus in energy policy on “reliability” and prices (an attempt to blame renewables for grid woes and rising domestic energy costs).

Politicians no longer use negative language for renewables. Those who oppose renewables simply talk around a discussion on them and refer to “reliability” and technology neutrality. Coal-fired power is mentioned by only a few. Green is the new black: popular and accepted; even fashionable.

Politicians of all political colours are advocates of rooftop solar systems and residential battery technology. The cynics say this is a pitch for votes. True, but rooftop solar and batteries are easily embraced for the costs that can be saved.

The largest challenge facing renewable energy today is less about acceptance and policy and more about the functionality and availability of the grid. Our grid was not built to support distributed forms of energy. The grid was built for centralised fossil fuel power generation. The challenge for grid operators and the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) (the guardian of the grid), is to manage the grid so that power is delivered at all times. In this AEMO has been successful (despite engineering challenges). It follows that the debate about reliability is misleading.

Renewable energy projects could be rendered unviable if they cannot connect to the grid with the ability to deliver the relevant project’s full generation capacity for sale to consumers. As matters currently stand, many renewable energy projects find themselves “constrained” and unable to connect and deliver all their electricity capacity to the market or contracted customers. What needs to happen is investment in the grid to support distributed forms of energy – ie renewables – as they continue to take and deliver more of Australia’s generation capacity.

Provided by Peter Dreher, HWL Ebsworth Lawyers

ABOUT PETER DREHER

Peter Dreher is a Partner at HWL Ebsworth Lawyers and leads the firm’s Melbourne Corporate & Commercial Group.

He also leads the firm’s National Renewable Energy Group and has advised in over 50 renewable energy projects in Australia, New Zealand and Thailand.

Peter’s clients include German-based developers, constructors, investors and suppliers.
Storage Solutions for the Energy Transition

The energy transition is making progress – in Germany, in Australia, and all around the world.

Renewable energy is becoming cheaper, and the expansion figures for regenerative energies are beating record after record. Electromobility is also increasing worldwide. This is having a fundamental impact on our energy system. Energy storage devices will assume a key role, whether in private households or on a large industrial scale. VARTA Storage – part of the VARTA AG Group – develops and produces storage solutions for a wide range of different energy transition requirements. The solutions guarantee that solar power from the roof is effectively stored and is then available just when it is needed.

Half of all newly built photovoltaic systems in Germany are already being connected to the grid in combination with a battery storage system. And once again, more systems are now being installed overall. Increasing your degree of independence and thus reducing energy costs, are the main arguments used in favour of purchasing an energy storage system.

The intelligent home

The targeted use of green energy through transparency of production and use make storage devices lucrative and of interest to home owners. “The storage system in combination with intelligent solutions will play a significant role in driving forward the energy transition,” explains Gordon Clements, General Manager at VARTA Storage. The solution is called Smart Home. For an intelligent home, intelligent end devices are needed in particular. These are digital multipliers that can communicate with any other device, whether it’s the heating system or the electric car. VARTA believes strongly that the energy storage system will be at the heart of the future smart home.

Solutions for electromobility

Since the autumn of 2018, VARTA Storage has been working in cooperation with Porsche Holding Salzburg (PHS). PHS has included the VARTA commercial storage system in its portfolio. Porsche Holding Salzburg, a one-hundred percent affiliate of Volkswagen AG, is the largest car trading company in Europe, and operates worldwide in 27 countries. With its MOON brand, Porsche Holding Salzburg offers complete solutions for the charging infrastructure field. In the future, MOON will also make use of storage systems, including the innovative battery technology offered by VARTA. For Reiko Stutz, General Manager Commercial

PV, storage system and an electric car: A VARTA storage system in use at the Diakonie social welfare station in Nördlingen-Herkheim.
Storage Solutions at VARTA Storage, the cooperation with PHS is an example of the economic benefit of commercial storage systems: “The rise in the number of electric vehicles increases the electrical capacity requirements at the grid connection point. The VARTA commercial storage system buffers peak loads. Therefore no large sums need to be invested in the grid infrastructure. Our ‘electrical turbocharger’ optimises the load capacity in the car showroom. The aim is to make car showrooms fit for the energy future and for electromobility. After all, the triumphal march of electromobility will also present car traders, car showrooms and car workshops with challenges.”

If several high-capacity electric cars are charged at the same time, there is a big need for electric power. This is a situation that all car showrooms will regularly face in the future. A further challenge is to also make available the regenerative solar energy from the roof during the night, thus guaranteeing sustainable mobility. PHS is giving itself the option of doing so by using the VARTA flex storage commercial storage system. With the highly flexible storage system, PHS can respond to a wide range of customer requirements. Thanks to the cooperation with VARTA Storage, the customer, for example a car showroom, is given a solution that is adapted to their needs, consisting of the production, distribution and storage of photovoltaic power generated on the company’s roof. Depending on requirements, capacity can be provided and all consumption on the grid connection can be optimised. Lucrative own consumption is also on the rise. In this way, optimum energy management in the car showroom is guaranteed and energy costs are noticeably reduced.

Example: Diakonie fleet, Herkheim

The fact that it can be worth integrating photovoltaics and energy storage systems for car owners is illustrated by a current example from Nördlingen-Herkheim near the VARTA Storage headquarters. Since last year, the Diakonie social welfare station there has been covering a portion of its mobility requirements with electric cars. Green power is provided by a photovoltaic roof system. A VARTA Storage energy storage system now ensures that a significantly higher number of kilometres can be covered with solar power than with the sole use of direct power from the photovoltaic system. In total, the five electric vehicles cover a distance of 180,000 kilometres per year. With a consumption of 18 kilowatt hours for every 100 kilometres, the Herkheim fleet can cover 23,500 kilometres per year with power drawn directly from the photovoltaic system. If the photovoltaic power is stored, this level increases to 78,600 kilometres per year - a gain of over 55,000 kilometres. In this way, the Herkheim Diakonie social welfare station avoids emissions of around 266 tonnes of climate damaging CO2 every year.

With its use of the energy storage system, the station can also increase its own consumption of photovoltaic power from 45 to 90 percent. On average, the station can avoid purchasing 10,745 kilowatt hours of power every year purely thanks to the photovoltaic system. If it stores unused, self-generated power, this level increases to 21,170 kilowatt hours per year. The energy costs are therefore noticeably reduced. In the future, the VARTA storage system will also be able to prevent overloads on the 40-kilowatt grid connection through the incorporation of further electric vehicles.

Provided by VARTA AG
The Value of Evidence-Based Practices in the Renewable Energy Sector

The importance of collaborative research engagement between university–industry is an acknowledged knowledge transfer capability, defined as intellectual property creation and academic entrepreneurship. The research collaboration can comprise collaborative research, contract research, consulting and informal relationships (Perkmanna, et.al 2012).

Universities generate knowledge and perform a social function in the education of large groups of individuals. More recently, several universities have established links with Industry (as knowledge users) and in facilitating technology transfer and commercialisation of specific knowledge (Etzkowitz et al., 2000b; Florida and Cohen, 1999; Gulbrandsen and Slipersæter, 2007) and may involve patenting and licensing of inventions including academic entrepreneurship (O’Shea et al., 2008; Phan and Siegel, 2006; Rothermel et al., 2007). Importantly, commercialisation of a concept/patent etc. generates most interest because of its "measurable market acceptance for outputs of academic research" (Markman et al., 2008).

In support of commercialisation, many universities have established specialised structures, such as technology transfer offices (TTOs), science parks and incubators (Clarysse et al., 2005; Siegel et al., 2003), and created supportive internal rules and procedures (Thursby et al., 2001).

Apart from commercialisation, which is an important yet rigorous pathway way for academic research to contribute to economy and society, other ways in which university research is transferred, is through 'academic engagement' or informal technology transfer (Link et al., 2007), or knowledge-related collaboration by academic researchers with non-academic organisations (Salter and Martin, 2001). Such engagements include formal activities such as collaborative research, contract research, and consulting, as well as informal activities like providing ad hoc advice and networking with practitioners (Abreu et al., 2009; Bonaccorsi and Piccaluga, 1994; D’Este and Patel, 2007; Meyer-Krahmer and Schmoch, 1998; Perkmann and Walsh, 2008).

Vtara considers these engagements as significant to strengthening its technological capability and that exploring external engagement, between industry and academic researchers in particular, can be of most benefit to Industry, more so for those small business entities that do not have an R&D budget to engage in long term research. But seeking guidance from academia, is of undoubted interest, notably to policy-makers and university managers. More recently Government agencies and universities themselves have made concerted efforts to increase academic engagement with benefits that include social legitimacy for publicly subsidised scientific research, stimulating economic activity and to raising revenue for universities (Cohen et al., 2002). Moreover, Universities’ income from such engagement can be quite lucrative (Perkmann et al., 2011). "It should be added that academic engagement is not a new phenomenon but has a long tradition, particularly at universities that emphasise practical and technical relevance as part of their mission, such as the US land grant universities who seek to provide practical education whilst assisting local firms and agricultural contexts" (Mowery and Nelson, 2004).

Written by Dr. Clive Stephens, VTARA

ABOUT VTARA

Vtara is an Independent Power Producer (IPP) with expertise in the downstream fuels, solar PV plants and biofuels industry. The team of Vtara has in excess of 25 years’ experience in the project management and design of power projects across several states in Australia and India.

Vtara has a strong and experienced project team available to evaluate and develop renewable power projects, in particular, solar PV plants and integrated biomass feedstock gasification systems.

We engage with different research centers to improve our technology and the return on investment of our clients, prioritizing issues critical to implementation and to identify factors that influence the upfront cost. We offer different types of agreement and financial arrangements including PPAs, CAPEX funding, leasing and rentals.
What do 'Finkel Plan' and 'Clean Energy Target' Actually Mean for German Mid-Cap Companies?

The Australian Energy Market
Renewable energy is coming. There can be no questions, Australia shows commitment to global climate standards and aims. Though, what does that mean for German mid-cap companies? Depending on the federal state you are operating in, you might be eligible for zealous funding programmes. This is why it is worthwhile to keep one’s eyes open. New technologies like microgrids will definitely gain more and more significance. Accordingly, it might be a terrific moment to start to obtain information about renewable energy, better sooner than later. A first step might be to become familiar with the terms „Finkel Plan“ and „Clean Energy Target“.

Finkel Plan
Finkel Report dates back to September 2016. It stems from the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Energy Council. Among many other organisations, the COAG Energy Council is a Ministerial forum for the Commonwealth, Australian state and territory jurisdictions and New Zealand. Its task is to pursue issues of national importance and crucial reforms in the resources and especially energy sectors. Finkel Plan offers 50 concrete proposals for creating a higher degree of supply reliability and climate protection. Head of this enterprise has been the Australian Chief Scientist Dr. Alan Finkel who has gathered the know-how of leading individuals of Economics, Science and Technology. The most controversial proposal within this project was the so-called „Clean Energy Target“ (CET).

Clean Energy Target
In contrast to the renewable energy target (RET) from 2001, the CET does not rigidly aim for an inflexible amount of renewable energy within electricity mix. CET was generally thought of to be technologically neutral. Electricity mixes were not supposed to surpass a determined emission intensity, only. Particularly, the composition of the mix in regard to wind, solar and coal or wind, solar and gas can still be left open. All in all, the Australian government has approved nearly all of the cornerstone of Finkel Plan.

Renewable Energy Target
Centrepiece was the introduction of an aim for renewable energy in 2001. This project has been called as already mentioned RET. Nevertheless, RET has been repeatedly adjusted within the last few years. Additionally, there has been quite an impact since 2011. Large producers have to meet the so-called “SRET” (Large-Scale Renewable Energy Target), while the “Small-Scale Renewable Energy Scheme” or “RES” brings with it funding opportunities.

What does that literally mean? The large-scale RET aims at a mark of 33,000 GWh at the maximum by 2020. In other words: Australia’s entire demand for energy shall consist to an amount of 23.5 % of renewable energy. This is nearly one fourth of Australian energy demand. Current estimates forecast that 75 % of this will be produced by wind power, solely. As far as small-scale RES is concerned, there is the option to apply for subsidies for small-scale renewable energy systems (solar panel systems, small-scale wind systems, small-scale hydro systems, solar water heaters and air source heat pumps). The eligible period of 15 years is from 2017, starting with the installation year until 2030 when the scheme ends.

Wind Energy and Solar Power
Just looking at 2016, Australia has supported the construction of wind turbines with about AUD 600 Mio. Compared with other sources of renewable energy, wind power is still cost-effective. This is also why there are 79 wind farms in Australia with a performance of 4.327 MW. But not only this, there are four major projects for wind energy plants with a total volume of up to AUD 800 Mio under construction due to various technological innovations within the last few years.

Solar energy ranks second in regard to renewable energy in Australia. In 2016 again, the Australian government has approved an additional AUD 92 Mio investing in new solar plants projecting to triple solar power performance in Down Under within the foreseeable future. Also, private households jump on this bandwagon. 16,5 % of private homes hold own photovoltaic systems.

Almost all of the federal states have created incentives here over the last few years. Prices for energy generated by photovoltaic systems have sunk, generally.

Outcomes for German Mid-Cap Companies: Opportunities for Investment
Australia takes the gloves off. The country is eager to meet international climate objectives. Although this might be pleasing from a global point of view, entrepreneurs will also have to pick up the tab. The price level will definitely increase in the future. Especially energy-intensive business models have to be prepared for this development. Nevertheless, Finkel Plan and Clean Energy Target might best be translated with: Good days ahead for investors! This evolution to renewable energy is definitely not set to change anymore. German businesses with strong economic interests in Australia might think about participating in Australia’s new energy market. This does not necessarily mean that wind turbines or solar plants have to be built, autonomously. There are numerous other ways to share in this growth. As an example might serve the various possibilities the stock markets have to offer. Specialized advisors can help your business to find tailor-made solutions for sound investment.

Written by RA Dr. Stephan M. Ebner, Esq., von Seelstrang & Partner mbB
Abundant wind and sun, falling turbine and panel costs, and corporate demand for contracts to hedge against rising power prices have attracted dozens of international developers looking to build wind and solar farms in Australia. Australia’s largest solar power plant to date is now under construction by the German energy utility Innogy SE. The Limondale solar farm is located near Balranald in New South Wales and will be made up of 872,000 solar panels. German-Australian Business News invited Alba Ruiz Leon, Managing Director of Innogy Renewables Australia and Vince Read, Project Director of the Limondale solar farm to give an insight into Innogy’s Australian lighthouse project and renewables growth aspirations.

With more than 3.9 gigawatt of installed capacity, Innogy is one of the European leading renewable energy companies. In addition to wind power, the company embraces growth prospects in the solar energy sector. “Our aim is to actively pursue and unlock opportunities in promising solar markets in Europe, North America and Australia,” Alba said. “We do this by building strong and healthy partnerships with local developers who we can work with to attain milestones – just as we have done here in Australia.” Limondale has been developed in partnership with Overland Sun Farming, one of the solar leading Australian development companies.

Last year Innogy took over the Limondale project rights and became sole owner of the project. “Australia ranks among the continents with the highest solar radiation per square metre, setting the country ahead of the curve for this positive energy transition towards decarbonisation, which is a perfect reason to enter the Australian market and to construct a solar power plant with 349 Megawatt installed capacity,” underlined Vince. “At around 480 million Australian Dollars this project is our first significant utility-scale solar investment and Australia is an excellent starting point for us to grow a valuable solar business,” Alba added. As a result of Innogy’s expansion into the Australian market, it has established the subsidiary Innogy Renewables Australia Pty Ltd. The Melbourne based team is exploring renewable opportunities including further solar, battery storage as well as wind farm projects.

Australia’s largest solar plant in a nutshell

The construction works for Australia’s largest solar farm are currently underway. “Last year we did some preparation works and pre-piling tests. Beginning of this year the first components arrived at the construction site, about 14 kilometres south of Balranald, New South Wales. The German energy utility builds Australia’s largest solar plant.
We have started with the installation of the foundations for the approximately 870,000 solar panels,” explained Vince. To give an idea of the scale of this project: It covers an area of 900 hectares which is equivalent in size to 451 times the Melbourne Cricket Ground stadium. “In the last couple of weeks the construction team had to cope with the extremely hot weather and some dust storms. Nevertheless we are making good progress.”

Innogy’s subsidiary company BELECTRIC will manage the construction works. “BELECTRIC is an experienced company in the global solar market with nearly two gigawatts of executed projects globally, including photovoltaic projects in Queensland and New South Wales. After construction, BELECTRIC will operate and maintain Limondale solar farm,” said Vince. It is anticipated that the project will provide a number of benefits to the local and wider community during construction and operation. “We value and understand the importance the local community plays in bringing to life large-scale infrastructure projects, like our Limondale solar farm,” Alba said. “We are creating direct employment opportunities, including a peak workforce of between 300 to 400 contractors during construction and up to seven full-time positions during operations,” Vince added. “In addition we need local service providers to support both the construction works and the ongoing 30 year maintenance works, this brings additional value to the local economy.”

The commissioning of the power plant will take place in stages. Full commercial operation is planned for mid-2020. “After full commissioning our Limondale solar farm will generate enough electricity to supply an equivalent of around 105,000 Australian homes each year and will play an important role in increasing energy security by contributing to a more diverse energy mix.”

Towards renewable energy

The expansion of the large-scale photovoltaic market is providing many reasons to be optimistic about the future of solar under the Australian sun. A total of 14.7 gigawatts of large-scale solar and wind projects were under construction or reached financial close last year, more than double 2017’s record, according to the Clean Energy Council. “Currently Australia generates nearly 20 percent of its electricity from renewables.”

To expand renewable energies it is of vital importance that beside the excellent natural renewable resources, the country is supportive for increasing the share of renewable energies,” Alba stated. States and territories regulations have been playing a pivotal role in setting energy policy and driving the energy transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy and storage.

In the last year some state and territory governments have increased commitments to renewable power targets. “With decreasing prices for equipment, large-scale solar is already one of the most cost-effective options for new generation and can help to reach Australia’s renewable energy target of at least 33,000 gigawatt-hours from renewable sources by 2020 and can contribute towards reducing the energy costs for customers,” Alba said. This would be important because electricity prices in Australia have risen strongly over the past decade and are currently among the highest in the world.

Written by Sarah Knauber, innogy SE
Renewable energy market was basically dormant. Despite having one of the best wind and solar resources in the world, an abundance of land, stable legal and financing frameworks, an advanced education sector, a comparatively good grid to start with, no outside interference and, finally, an ageing fleet of coal-fired power stations that would need replacement rather sooner than later, the investment in renewables paled both in comparison to other countries and its population.

Within the last three years, however, Australia has leapfrogged from being a laggard to a leader in the renewable sector. Or has it not?

Investment

The past two years have seen investments in the range of AUD 15bn in the renewable sector and it's still going. Private and commercial rooftop solar PV penetration is amongst the highest in the world and increasing. Australia’s Clean Energy Regulator mentions ca. >10GW of renewables by January 2019 (operating and firmly committed) – already far exceeding the 6.4GW required to meet the country’s (downsized) renewable energy target for 2020.

Foreign companies are investing in Australia: construction companies, developers, independent power producers, advisors, pension funds, banks.

Offtake prices and structures

The first renewable projects under the so-called ACT tender (a contract for difference, or “CfD”, under which the Australian Capital Territory effectively guarantees a feed in tariff for 20 years) saw prices above 170 AUD/MWh. This dropped to less than half for the last projects. Subsequent schemes such as the Victorian reverse CfD saw prices dropping to below 60 AUD/MWh in 2018.

Just as many countries have moved away from feed-in-tariffs, Down Under now sees the majority of offtake structures to be without any state-based schemes, i.e. completely subsidy-free. Instead, the market has evolved to provide a mixture of corporate power purchase agreements, proxy revenue swaps from insurance companies and uncontracted revenues or behind-the-meter arrangements resulting in investors having to form a far more sophisticated view on structures, counterparties and price developments.

Technology evolution and cost reduction

The 15MW Lakeland Solar Farm in Queensland was the first large-scale park to combine solar PV with lithium-ion batteries. When announced in 2016, with some 5 MWh it was one of the biggest at the time. Now, this project dwarfs in comparison to hybrids of wind, solar and/or battery as well as stand-alone storage projects such as the 100MW Tesla Hornsdale Battery project by Neoen in South Australia.

Not only have the costs of both wind and solar come down to a point where renewable projects are the cheapest source of new-built energy and, in some cases, even beat existing fossil fuel plants. Given the price development of batteries, we are now entering the stage where renewables plus storage are cheaper than new fossil fuel plants.

Extending the value chain

New applications are being rolled out to support investments in other sectors, for example, agriculture or steel:

The French utility Engie is pushing ahead with a hydrogen scheme using cheap renewable energy to switch from gas-based fertilizers to green hydrogen products both for the agricultural sector as well as a different medium of storing the energy (gas or granulate).

Another French company, Akuo, builds solar powered greenhouses to combine the benefits of solar and farming.

The biggest Australian steel company, the GFG Alliance, is moving towards using renewable-based electricity to reduce costs and emissions at the same time, supporting the labour intensive Australian steel industry. The first project, Numurkah Solar Farm, is expected to deliver power to the steel company in June 2019.

Upstream, Australia holds abundant reserves in lithium that are started being tapped into for the production of batteries – albeit it is still largely just extracted and shipped to China before re-entering Australia as batteries.
So what’s missing?

Enhanced grid infrastructure

On the positive side Western Australia’s biggest utility starts creating a number of microgrids using renewable energy sources to improve reliability and reduce costs; poles and wires still make up a large portion of Australia’s overall electricity costs and the sometimes very long transmission lines frequently are a cause for bush fires.

However, the recent – mostly economic driven – rush into renewables has led to a frenzy of build-out often far away from the big load centres. Whilst it would be far too simple to blame renewables for load shedding, negative prices or grid instabilities, the initial underestimation of the volume as well as lack of proper regulation and grid management to cope with the intermittent energy resource has certainly not helped, either. Australia’s RCR mainly got into financial trouble as a result of significant construction delays and – mostly grid related – cost overruns.

In short: regulators and grid providers are catching up but there is still a long way to go.

Stable regulatory framework

One of the biggest issues with the Australian electricity sector in general and renewables in particular is the lack of certainty on the regulatory side. On one side there are various state schemes for renewables which didn’t seem to be much co-ordinated. First mover ACT decided to go 100% renewables but the projects didn’t need to be in the Canberra region. Whilst this may lead to the investment happening at the best wind or solar sites, it might also add to above mentioned grid constraints – in other states. Victoria’s VRET favoured projects with a big Victorian content; whilst this is understandable from a state’s perspective, it doesn’t necessarily support the most efficient technology or geography. That said, the (still continuing) lack of guidance on a federal level left the states with little alternatives if they want to actively manage the transition and create jobs and investment. Future alignment between states and the federal level, therefore, is key to achieve sustainable investment.

Similar things can be said about the variety of support schemes. ARENA, CEFC and NAIF, to name just three, all are helping to unlock significant investment. However, a more co-ordinated approach could reduce complexity and lead to a more efficient resource allocation to support regions or technologies.

And, finally, energy efficiency

With ca. 10GWh Australia’s electricity consumption per capita ranks about 40% above Germany’s level. Whilst the rate is slowly declining, in particular Australia’s housing sector with its commonly electricity based heating and cooling systems coupled with often poor insulation has a long way to go. And, coming back to electricity prices, the cheapest electron is the one not consumed.

The big question for Australia is whether it wants to embrace a transition from a fossil fuel based electricity sector to renewables - which, driven by sheer economics, is happening anyway – and thrive on it through investments, job creation and exporting both electricity as well as services or rather watch the change happening and leave the leading role to other countries.

Written by Christian Krebs, NORD/LB
Solar Installations Continue to Go Through the Roof in C&I Sector

The rising cost of electricity is something every business within the Australian market is aware of. But a renewable energy revolution is underway; the Commercial and Industrial sector (C&I) has seen very strong growth in the installation of rooftop solar systems in the last five years, a trend that will only continue to gain momentum across the next five years and beyond.

This boom in solar within the C&I sector is underpinned by a number of factors. From an economic perspective there is a proven business case for solar – electricity rates continue to rise, while the cost of solar system components has decreased and businesses across Australia have demonstrated the financial benefits of offsetting their daytime electricity costs.

However, it is not only financial considerations driving this boom. Increasingly businesses across every industry, but with specific reference to the C&I sector, are considering the triple bottom line, where social and environmental factors are taken into account alongside the financial.

This approach recognises that the decisions made today by a business not only impact its profit, but also people and the planet now and into the future, and as such, a broader and longer-term framework must be considered.

This was the exact approach taken by Brisbane Airport Corporation (BAC) in its partnership with Epho to install the largest C&I behind-the-meter solar system in the Southern Hemisphere.

By installing a six-megawatt system across six sites BAC has been able to compensate 18 percent of its direct power consumption, or 6 percent of total consumption with renewable energy, reducing costs and environmental impact. The system is projected to create 9.3 million kilowatt-hours of energy per year, which is estimated to cut 7500 tonnes of carbon emissions per year – the equivalent of planting 50,000 trees.

While some organisations such as BAC have taken an all-in-one approach, many within the C&I sector have conducted smaller scale trials to determine the benefits prior to a significant investment and multi-site installation. The perfect example of this is Aldi’s solar rollout.

In 2015 Epho installed the first solar system for Aldi in Australia. Since this initial trial the company’s solar uptake has steadily grown as the business has seen the impact financially and recognised the benefits in terms of its environmental footprint, helping to significantly cut carbon emissions. This rollout will culminate this year with an unprecedented number of installations across Australia on both Aldi supermarkets and distribution centres.

The installation of solar systems for C&I organisations such as BAC and Aldi, where extensive rooftop real estate is available and daytime electricity usage is high, delivers strong business benefits both in terms of sustainability and economics.

It is the increasing recognition of the combined economic and environmental benefits delivered by solar that has influenced this boom in the C&I industry, and it is predicted that this growth and momentum is only set to increase; as is the role that solar has to play within the broader renewable energy market.

Solar has the potential to be the number one form of renewable energy, and rooftop solar will contribute significantly to our progression towards this within Australia. We have the sun and the space to maximise solar real estate and the residual growth potential within the C&I market alone means solar is well placed to drive the shift towards renewable energy in the market.

In addition to triple bottom line considerations, consumer trends and emerging technology will also play a part in the continued growth and evolution of the solar industry, even within the C&I sector.

The proliferation of electric vehicles is one such development that will increase demand for additional solar services and supporting technology – for example, the need for employees to recharge their vehicles during the day. While the emergence of electric vehicles has not hit the mainstream in Australia as yet, when we look to the European and US markets, we see that Australia is lagging in terms of uptake of these technologies, and as such, can predict that this will shift in coming years.

As we look to the future of renewable energy in Australia, it is clear that solar has a crucial role to play in the maturation of the market, and that for the C&I sector the boom of rooftop solar is only set to continue.

Written by Oliver Hartley, Epho

ABOUT EPHO

Epho delivers turnkey solar power solutions and engineering consulting services for businesses and government organisations across Australia. The company develops, engineers, procures, constructs, commissions, operates and maintains commercial solar power systems that increase its clients’ profitability by reducing ongoing operational costs. The company is fully ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and AS 4801 accredited and provides services to some of Australia’s largest corporations. www.epho.com.au
The global transition to a low carbon economy is already being fuelled by renewable energy. But if we want to keep global temperatures from rising above 1.5 degrees, we need the support of businesses. Fortunately, for almost every organisation there’s a business case for maximising their use of renewable energy.

Around the world, corporates large and small are taking steps towards renewable energy. In some cases, organisations are transitioning to 100 per cent renewable, while others are already there. Launched in 2014, the RE100 group bring together companies at the forefront of the transition and who have all committed to source 100 per cent renewable electricity by a set date.

While the RE100 initiative should be applauded, there are still millions of businesses across the world that are yet to start their renewable journey, and it is these businesses who will ultimately decide if we will avert the worst effects of climate change.

The BayWa r.e. Energy Report 2019 looks at the role of corporates in the transition, the progress being made and the challenges facing them. Renewable energy is currently at a turning point as it moves from being subsidy driven to market driven and becomes the cheapest form of energy generation in the world.

According to the report, the outlook is positive, with 89 per cent of corporations surveyed agreeing they have a fundamental role to play in driving the renewable energy transition. For 92 per cent the key driver is the ability to reduce costs.

In Australia the transition is well underway. During 2018 and 2019 the renewable energy industry will install more than 10 GW of new solar and wind power. If the rate is maintained, Australia will reach 50 per cent renewable energy by 2025, well ahead of its target.

Iconic beer company Carlton & United Breweries (CUB) is just one of Australia’s renewable success stories. While its origins date back to 1824, its sustainability targets are far from archaic. CUB has committed to sourcing 100 per cent of its electricity from renewable energy by 2025, and it’s well on the way to achieving this.

Karadoc – a milestone for corporate renewable energy PPAs

Towards the end of 2018, BayWa r.e’s Karadoc solar farm was completed and achieved 100 per cent generation to the national grid. Spanning 640 acres, it’s the largest solar farm in Victoria. It’s an impressive sight, which is matched by its generation capacity – its 330,000 photovoltaic cells generate enough energy to power over 110,000 homes.

CUB is already utilising a third of Karadoc’s total power, drawing 74,000 MWh of solar energy from the 225,000 MWh state-of-the-art development. The power was secured through a 12-year Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). In addition to the power being taken by CUB, an additional 10-year PPA has been signed with business energy retailer Flow Power which will supply 20 MW of power and enable local businesses to access low-cost renewable energy.

The CUB deal was one of the first PPA contracts recognised and encouraged by the Australian government. It’s a form of off-take popular around the world for large organisations with consistently high energy demands, giving them a reliable, predictable and secure supply for many years.

A buyers’ market

Last year was a record year for renewable energy in Australia with 2,200 MW of capacity added, divided roughly between wind and solar installations. This trend shows no sign of slowing down as the economics of renewable energy become more and more compelling. It’s creating a buyers’ market, and corporates are taking full advantage.

There are many reasons for this growth. Consumer demand for corporates to act more responsibly is a big driver, but so too are the financial benefits.

The cost benefits of renewable energy are well known. According to a report from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IREA), renewable energy is set to be cheaper than energy from fossil fuels as soon as 2020. And in some places this has already happened, such as BayWa r.e’s 175 MW Don Rodrigo solar farm in Spain, which is set to achieve grid parity and generate clean electricity below market prices without any subsidies.

The future

Karadoc is just one of many BayWa r.e. schemes in Australia, which will total 238 MW of additional installed capacity when all the projects are complete.

The industry has the capacity to deliver deep and rapid emission reductions – making Australia’s current target of 25 per cent renewables by 2020 and 40 per cent by 2025 not only feasible, but commercially viable too.

Provided by BayWa r.e.
The recent planning approval of the Golden Plains Wind Farm in Victoria is projected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 3 million tonnes annually and provide clean renewable energy to power the equivalent of more than 500,000 Victorian homes.

The project is being developed by WestWind Energy, a Victorian-based developer of renewable energy projects since 2004 and drawing on the experience of the Germany based Westwind group of companies, who have developed over 300 MW of wind energy projects in Germany. This project will see WestWind’s development experience in Australia exceed 1.6 GW of wind energy:

**Golden Plains Wind Farm | ~1,127–1,230 MW**
Fully owned by WestWind Energy

The Golden Plains Wind Farm Project involves the establishment of a wind energy facility (WEF) including wind turbines and associated electrical infrastructure on 16,739 Ha to the West, South and South West of Rokewood, within the Shire of Golden Plains; approximately 60 km North West of Geelong, in Victoria. The site is located on land that is primarily used for agricultural purposes that has been substantially modified over time due to agricultural operations such as broad acre cropping and livestock grazing.

The permit allows for the development of up to 228 wind turbines and associated infrastructure. Due to environmental and planning constraints the Project is only proposed to consist of 205 turbines. The planning approval was informed by the Environmental Effect Statement (EES), which places the highest level of scrutiny possible for a Victorian development, including a yearlong process of reviewing technical reports and responding to questions raised by members of a technical reference group and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

The project will provide a huge economic boost for the local region, with the creation of over 700 construction jobs in addition to over 70 direct operational jobs located in Victoria. The project will also deliver a comprehensive community benefits program, including free electricity, energy audits and a community benefit fund. As part of WestWind’s commitment to sharing benefits with the local community, a program will be initiated to facilitate host landholders and the community living within approximately 10km of the wind farm to invest financially in the project.

WestWind works with the Industry Capability Network (ICN) to maximise local business content in our projects and to ensure local industries are briefed on development progress and opportunities. The aim of the ICN is to bring Australian suppliers and project owners together by giving exclusive access to an online database of local projects, industry information sessions and business growth consultants to advise on work opportunities. Once businesses register their interest with the ICN, they will receive regular updates on the development of the Golden Plains Wind Farm.

Work packages will also be updated on this site through construction: goldenplains.icn.org.au.

More details on the project at: w-wind.com.au

Provided by WestWind Energy
As part of the Energy Export Initiative of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi), the German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce has organised an information tour from 11 to 15 March 2019 titled "Study Tour Germany - Energy infrastructure and hydrogen technologies" in conjunction with the Berlin based energiewaechter GmbH.

As part of the trip, representatives from the Australian government, Australia’s largest oil and gas producers, supplier associations, businesses and science joined in order to discuss the topic with industry experts, visit reference projects and companies to seek information on the latest solutions in the area of hydrogen technologies.

The tour started off with a half-day networking event on March 11, 2019 in Berlin and over the course of five days led participants to extensive site visits at businesses, universities and associations in Berlin, Hamburg, Osnabrueck, Duisburg, Duesseldorf and Mainz as well as a visit to the trade fair Energy Storage Europe 2019.

With strong market growth in recent years, renewable energies have now established themselves with a share of 15% in the Australian electricity market. Wind energy and photovoltaics were the drivers of growth with annual growth rates of 18.7% and 57.9% respectively in the last 10 years. Both technologies continue to expect strong growth rates. Hydropower continues to make the biggest contribution, with a share of 40%. Hydrogen was identified as a new driver for Australian economic growth. In particular, the proximity to energy-hungry Asian markets is also putting the focus on exporting hydrogen. The government in Canberra is promoting nationwide pilot projects for the generation, conversion and storage of hydrogen. For hydrogen infrastructure technologies and components, the business outlook is positive.

In 2009, the Australian Parliament passed the Renewable Energy Target Act (RET), which should support growth and employment in renewable energy by 2020. The Australian government commissioned a review of the energy market conducted by Australian Chief Scientist Alan Finkel in 2016, which examined the safety and economics of the Australian energy market. One of the weaknesses identified was the integration and connection of renewable electricity generators to the power grid. Alan Finkel also proposes a national clean energy target that integrates energy and emissions reduction policies throughout Australia.

The aim of the study tour is to provide Australian political and economic decision-makers with knowledge about the development and use of German technologies in the areas of renewable energies and energy efficiency, as well as intelligent networks and storage technologies in order to assess the potential application of respective technologies in Australia. The information tour is a market preparation measure to support the export promotion under the Energy Export Initiative.

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After years of being rocked by unstable policy and toxic politics, the Australian renewable energy sector is finally realising its potential. Both 2017 and 2018 ended on record highs for the industry, with large-scale project investment doubling to A$20 billion across the country by the end of last year.

Both domestic and international investors tuned in to the potential of the large-scale Renewable Energy Target (RET), which has acted to encourage new projects out to 2020. The result has been a surge in wind, solar and storage activity since the middle of the decade, creating more than 13,500 jobs and delivered 14.6 megawatts of new clean energy into the power system.

The year just gone also saw Australia pass a major milestone of two million homes with rooftop solar power systems. Add in a spike in corporate power purchase agreements (PPAs), and the industry is well placed to continue delivering on its substantial promise.

The industry continues to wait on bipartisan federal policy, but state and territories have filled the void. From Victoria to Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, governments have recognised the potential of clean energy projects for regional economies and introduced policies to encourage them. The economic flow-on from these developments is of paramount importance for small communities, not only through direct jobs from projects, but also for local businesses outside of renewable energy which are able to reap the rewards from increased traffic through small towns.

Grid connection and transmission firm up as biggest challenges

In a recent survey of senior executives conducted by the Clean Energy Council, grid connection was rated as the top concern. The clean energy industry is working closely with the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) and network businesses on relieving bottlenecks, improving access and planning for the future. But there is no quick and easy fix.

Perhaps the biggest challenge has been the rapid pace of renewable energy development, with 19 GW of projects in an advanced stage of connecting to the grid and a further 78 GW in the pipeline. This has created pressure on parts of AEMO and network businesses which have not traditionally been geared up to meet such an acute level of demand.

Transmission is also top-of-mind for the entire energy industry as we transition from a power system with a smaller number of coal-fired power generators in remote locations to a more diverse spread of clean energy sources with smart functionality. It is important to note that this isn’t a blame game – the energy system simply wasn’t built for the kind of activity we’re seeing now, leading to congestion in some places. Collaboration is essential to work through the current issues. AEMO has recognized this through its Integrated System Plan (ISP), which is a strategic infrastructure development plan for Australia’s transmission system requirements over the next two decades. The ISP has attracted broad support and defines a series of Renewable Energy Zones, which allow for efficient investment in poles and wires to service the country’s best renewable energy resources.

The Australian clean energy sector has built up a strong record of success over the last few years. We have improved efficiency by building projects at scale and competitive market processes, and this has created positive conditions for investment from Germany and other sources of international capital. If we are able to solve some of the short-term challenges of grid connection, network access and stable national policy, the sky really is the limit.

Written by Kane Thornton, Clean Energy Council, Chief Executive

SOME SIGNIFICANT STATE AND TERRITORY INITIATIVES INCLUDED:

- The Australian Capital Territory’s Renewable Energy Target of 100 per cent by 2020, driven by a series of reverse auctions for wind and solar power.
- A Victorian Renewable Energy Target of 50 per cent by 2030 and the recent Solar Homes Package.
- The allocation of $2.5 billion in NSW to a transmission strategy to enable more renewables in the state.
- The South Australian Government’s Home Battery Scheme.
Innovations for New Technologies

Singulus Technologies builds innovative machines and systems for economic and resource-efficient production processes. The core competencies include vacuum coating technology, surface treatment, wet-chemical as well as thermal production processes.

The company offers machines, which are globally deployed in the photovoltaics, semiconductor, medical technology as well as consumer goods. Singulus Technologies is a renowned manufacturer of advanced thin-film deposition equipment. It is the trusted partner in the respective industry and extends its leadership in the thin film deposition technology for these applications.

Singulus Technologies operates as a driver of innovation in technologic areas with high growth potential.

The headquarter is in Germany, Kahl am Main, Bavaria, with a second manufacturing close to Munich. Singulus Technologies has a sales and service network in all relevant global regions, enabling it to offer advisory and other services worldwide.

The vacuum sputtering machine program ranges from standard sputtering systems to ultra-high vacuum deposition machines applying extremely thin layers with capabilities down to 0.2 nm for the semiconductor industry and data storage, decorative coatings as well as solar cell production.

In the Solar segment, Singulus Technologies offers machinery for manufacturing crystalline solar cells and thin-film solar cells. The field of activity of crystalline solar cells includes production solutions for high-efficiency solar cell concepts.

In the Semiconductor segment, Singulus Technologies established equipment platforms to apply extremely thin layers of coatings of less than one nanometer with the utmost precision. Among other things, this equipment is used in semiconductor technology for magnetic coatings. There is a growing need for processes for achieving the thinnest layers in modern sensor technology such as in medical technology, the automotive industry, and the Internet of Things. For the finishing of surfaces through vacuum coating technology are more applications areas available in the automobile, health or also lifestyle industries.

For the medical technology market, Singulus Technologies provides machinery for wet-chemical processes and coating technology processes. Singulus’ hallmark is ensuring that its sophisticated processes be able to accommodate the characteristics and functionality expected in medical technology. Singulus’ is also working on new applications that it can further expand the market.

Provided by Singulus Technologies
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Dr. Oetker is a 128-year-old family business based in Bielefeld, North Rhine Westphalia. “Creating a Taste of Home” has made Dr. Oetker a household name in cake, dessert and frozen pizza available through traditional grocery channels in over 40 countries.

Dr. Oetker Queen Australia Pty Ltd entered the Australian market in 2010 with the acquisition of the iconic Papa Giuseppe’s Pizza brand in 2011 and the Queen Vanilla brand in 2015. Dr. Oetker’s Ristorante pizza range is the number 1 brand in the category, its superior taste and quality being a catalyst for significant growth in the last 8 years.

The acquisition of the Queen™ business, a 122-year Australian heritage brand has driven strong growth in the Cake ingredients categories in both Australia and New Zealand in the last 4 years and leveraged a great capability to vertically integrate the Vanilla supply chain into the global Dr. Oetker business.

Since Jungheinrich was established in Hamburg, Germany in 1953, the company has grown significantly and we successfully positioned ourselves globally as a system supplier of intelligent intralogistics. Jungheinrich is an intralogistics service and solution provider.

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Moore Stephens is a leading global accounting and consulting group, with a network of 271 independent firms and 614 offices across 112 countries. Moore Stephens Victoria services clients from small to medium enterprises, large private company groups, not-for-profit entities, subsidiaries of international companies, publicly listed companies and high net worth individuals and includes market leaders in many sectors of Australian business.

With 16 Directors and over 130 staff, Moore Stephens Victoria offers a comprehensive range of services with offices in both Melbourne and Geelong:

• Audit & Assurance • Business Advisory
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LTS Licht & Leuchten GmbH is an internationally active company, which develops, produces and provides technical luminaires of the highest quality and optically striking design. Thanks to our large team of lighting designers, we’re able to consider special customer wishes in the planning and construction phase of the building project and thus, to realize individual lighting solutions. Our products are mainly used in the areas retail, hospitality and office. LTS is a member of the Swedish Fagerhult Group and therefore part of the third largest luminaire manufacturers in Europe. At the head office in Tettnang (Bodensee), Germany, LTS employs over 250 people.

LEBENSWERK CONSULTING GROUP was founded by two German professionals with an international business background, Alexander Nowroth and Roland Schulze. Alexander has worked for almost 3 years in Melbourne and has played an active role in the German-Australian business community by co-founding the Young Executive Forum in 2012. He served as a Committee member until his return to Germany in June 2014. The speed of economic and technological changes in combination with a new generation of employees makes the ability for innovation, adaptation, agile leadership and the provision of a company culture which embraces creativity and staff engagement a top priority. Leadership methods and organizational tools which worked yesterday won’t work tomorrow. LEBENSWERK CONSULTING aims to be a long-term partner in solving such dynamic challenges and guiding its clients successfully through the transformation process.

We offer following expertise to clients:

• Innovation Management
• Supply Chain & Logistics
• Sales & Marketing
• Organisational Development

Pilz is an innovative automation technology company operating across the globe. Pilz uses its solutions to create safe automation solutions for man, machine and the environment. In addition to the head office in Ostfildern, Germany (near Stuttgart), the family business is represented with over 2,200 staff in 40 subsidiaries and offices across all continents. Pilz solutions are used in all areas of industry, ranging from manufacturing, automotive, Food & Beverage industries, through to mining, materials handling & Rail. Pilz solutions ensure that baggage handling systems run safely at airports, cable cars travel safely, packaging machines operate without injury and operators are protected from machinery.

Our portfolio of products include the latest developments in sensor technology, programmable control systems, motion control, industrial communication and visualisation solutions. We complement these with a comprehensive range of services worldwide, including safety advice, turnkey engineering, product training and machinery safety seminars.
VTara Solar provides clean and green energy to residential customers, businesses and not-for-profit organisations at zero upfront cost. Our services include grid-connected, hybrid, off-grid and utility-scale energy systems.

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REMA TIP TOP is a globally operating system provider of services and products in the field of conveying and treatment technology as well as tyre repair.

REMA TIP TOP provides a global service network and offers a broad range of polymer-based products, linings and coatings for the industrial as well as for the automotive sector.

Wedgebloom is a privately owned Australian licensed investment advisory firm. Our wealth management business serves Australia-based individuals and families, providing comprehensive financial planning and business governance services. Wedgebloom’s Alternative Investments area provides Asia-Pacific asset allocation services to international fund managers and family offices.

Wedgebloom was founded in 2010 by Eduardo D. Ferreira, a Brazilian-Australian finance and investment professional with extensive international business experience and close ties to Germany.

Eduardo started his career at the Fraunhofer-IPA in Stuttgart, later was investment banker at Deutsche Bank. For thirteen years was CFO at a large Brazilian media conglomerate. He holds an MBA from INSEAD, a CFA charter and is a Graduate Member of the AICD (Australian Institute of Company Directors).

Eduardo is actively involved in mentoring students and young professionals. At GACIC, Eduardo represents Metalshub, a Düsseldorf-based fintech start-up – a digital industrial metals trading platform – which he is a board member of.

Wedgebloom is a pioneer in how people work together in the future and establishing what role companies play in it. Without headquarters, in 14 locations including Mel and Syd, we analyse, advise, design and enable our customers to discover and leverage digital business. Clients include Bosch, Credit Suisse, Hornbach, Miele, Porsche, Rexel and Wesfarmers.

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