

Renewable Energy for Business

How can you switch your business to renewable electricity? This post provides a short guide for businesses with smaller energy demand, and how they can go renewable.

For some organisations, electricity is big business. It is a large cost and large proportionally as part of their business operations. Many other businesses, including large ones, do not have large annual electricity consumption.

It can get confusing.

Large corporates have been very active in signing Corporate Power Purchase Agreements, also known as PPAs, directly with wind and solar farms to directly. However these contracts come with their complexities and setup costs, and are best suited for organizations with capability in energy markets and making very large purchases of renewables.

PPAs have the benefit of directly supporting a new wind or solar project to be financed. But these PPAs are not realistic or even possible for everyone. So how do businesses with smaller energy demand switch to renewables?

Energy Purchasing Scale	Very Small	Small	Medium to Very Large
Annual Electricity Consumption	Less than 100 MWh p.a.	Between 100 MWh and 1,000 MWh p.a.	Over 1,000 MWh p.a.
Estimated Annual Electricity Costs	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000 to \$250,000	Over \$250,000
Renewables options	Call up retailer and ask for GreenPower	GreenPower	GreenPower, Direct renewables procurement via a PPA
Services	Energy Made Easy Commercial comparison sites Green auction Business Energy Advice Program	Commercial comparison sites RFT via a broker Business Energy Advice Program	Energy consultants

Very Small Energy Users

Generally, for very small electricity customers, the best option to go renewable is Greenpower. Many retailers offer Greenpower as an additional cost to the bill and not much effort is required.

Under Greenpower plans, your retailer buys Renewable Energy Certificates, known as LGCs (Large-scale Generation Certificates), from Wind and Solar farms on your behalf. They then “retire” those certificates so that others can’t claim the environmental attributes to ensure more renewable energy is produced.

Such contracts are generally 1 year or month-by-month due to their small nature.

How to make the switch:

DIY (Do it Yourself)

If you want to do it yourself, there are many resources to help you. You can speak with your retailer and ask about renewable options or get some quotes from other retailers.

Greenpeace and Total Environment Centre have set up the Green Electricity Guide which ranks the retailers on their renewable credentials.

There are also several electricity cost comparison websites like Wattever, Make It Cheaper and Energy Made Easy to help you find the best deal.

So with limited work, you can get an understanding of the market and choose which may suit you.

Energy Consultants or Brokers

Some of these comparison sites will go a step further and do the work of switching for you. There are several energy consultants and brokers that know the market and can get quotes for smaller energy customers. Ask them for Greenpower options, and if you don’t think they are providing you good options you can find a broker that does.

This list below are some energy brokers known to us:

- Make It Cheaper
- Sustainable Energy Solutions
- Energy Action

Group purchases

If price is a driver, you can consider joining a buyers group. These group deals can help unlock economies of scale, while still including GreenPower in the final offer.

For smaller electricity buyers, some brokers like Energy Action regularly form groups to go to the market to get better pricing.

Make sure renewable energy options are available in such broker offers!

You can also use the Wattever and other comparison websites to get online quotes.

If you would like to add additional brokers or consultants to this list, please get in touch via email info@businessrenewables.org.au

Small Buyer Options

Small buyers can use the above options, but if your organisation spends more on energy a couple more options open up:

Run a tender

Larger organisations often run tenders for electricity. They issue a “Request for Tender” document that lists out your details, objectives and requirements. You then get multiple tenders to compare and choose.

If you have not done this before you can contact a broker to do it for you.

Medium to Very Large Buyer Options

Medium to Very Large electricity buyers are now able to sign PPAs that directly support emissions reductions by financing new wind and solar projects. This is generally not possible for smaller organisations, or those that use less electricity. However, there are still ways you can access renewables directly.

More Renewables Options:

Regardless of the size of your electricity bill, there may be ways to achieve direct emissions reductions, like installing **rooftop solar panels** on the roof, investing in energy efficiency like **LED lights** or **efficient hot water**, or supporting emissions reductions with **EV chargers** in car parking for staff, visitors or the public.

Don't forget Marketing & Comms

It is great to see organisations doing something to support renewables and accelerate the transition to renewable energy. You can magnify your impact by marketing your efforts and encouraging others to do the same.

This can be by displaying the Greenpower logo on your website, showcasing your environmental credentials in public communications or even making a press release about

your choice of retailer and emissions reductions. Contact GreenPower to be listed on their business directory and show your support for Australia's renewable energy sector:

<https://www.greenpower.gov.au/who-uses-greenpower/business-directory>