

# CASE STUDY

## Solar

### Finley Returned Soldiers Club

#### BACKGROUND

Finley Returned Soldiers Club (RSC) in the Riverina region of New South Wales is home to 1,600 members and employs 25 staff. With two bowling greens, an auditorium and squash courts, the Club also features standard facilities such as a bar and gaming area.

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Since 2008, Energy Action has helped the Club reduce its annual energy bill by almost to \$25,000. Savings of \$19,000 were delivered via the Australian Energy Exchange online reverse auction, while a review of their network tariff identified a further \$4,500.

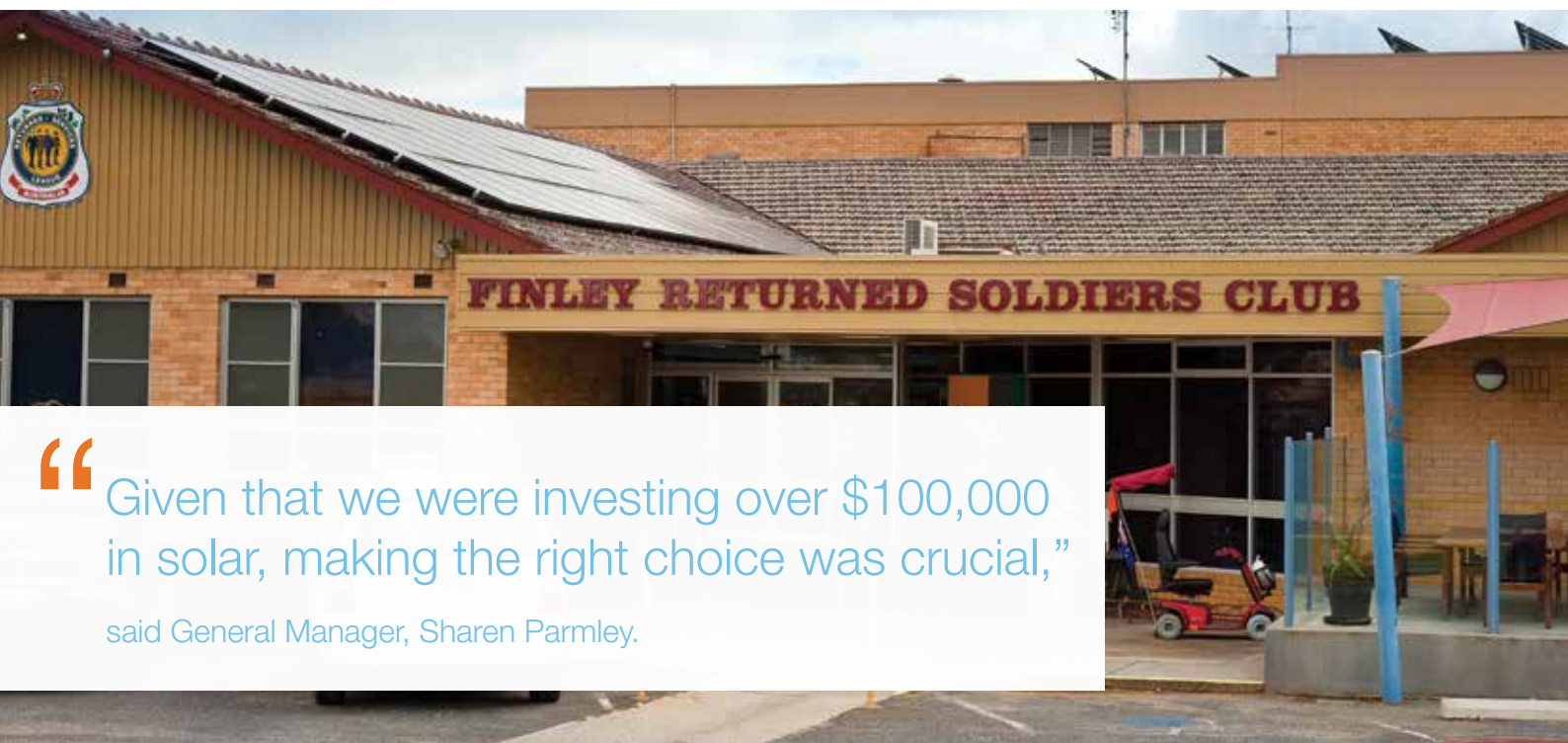
Impressed with the level of service and results, General Manager, Sharen Parmley, contracted the Energy Action to assist in commissioning a rooftop solar PV system. Sharen and the Club's Board had sought four independent quotes, which varied dramatically in price, and spent four months deliberating before turning to Energy Action.

#### OPPORTUNITY

Rising energy costs and network tariffs, coupled with concerns about the impact of the carbon tax, led the Board of Finley RSC to investigate onsite solar power options. However choosing the right solar array was not an easy process.

"Given that we were investing over \$100,000 in solar, making the right choice was crucial," said General Manager, Sharen Parmley.

"When it came to choosing the right company, we needed to get our heads initially around what each was offering. While all four companies quoted on similar panels, the inverters differed and I didn't have enough knowledge to differentiate between the quotes. The process was made even more complicated when one company quoted \$20,000 higher for what appeared to be exactly the same system."



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During a conversation with Energy Action on monthly energy use, Parmley mentioned her confusion, at the time not realising that Energy Action could assist in sourcing the most effective system and best prices.

“Energy Action investigated the cost disparity in the quotes on our behalf and discovered one company had actually over quoted, not thinking we would check it properly,” said Parmley. “Energy Action also pointed out that the 30 KW systems we were looking at weren’t large enough to provide any real dent in the power we consume during daytime operating hours, so we would still need to rely heavily on an electricity supplier. Instead, Energy Action recommended a 50 KW system as it had the capacity we needed and our roof space was large enough to accommodate the required panels.”



“Energy Action knows the market and has proven itself as a business that can act on our behalf to secure the best prices. With the cost of energy only likely to increase further in the future, Energy Action’s services will continue to be of great use to us.”

Energy Action quantified the output from a number of systems on the Club’s behalf and provided Parmley with the high quality information needed to justify the financial investment to the Board and their financier.

“Energy Action’s team knew the market and understood the difference between the various systems so were able to provide us with expert advice. I now know that inverters, which convert solar energy into electricity, are vastly different in quality, with some overseas cheaper options not necessarily the most effective.”

Installation of 50kW solar system reduced energy use by up to 20%

### OUTCOME

With the 50 KW system installed Finley RSC is able to power the facility on 50 per cent solar during daytime operating hours. Energy use has been reduced by more than 20 per cent and the \$116,000 investment will pay for itself in less than six years. Energy Action will continue to monitor and report on the performance of the system, ensuring that the investment is meeting the financial targets the club expected.

“Member feedback has been great,” said Parmley. “Some other local businesses have started talking to us about the system and are considering going solar themselves.

“We’ve now started working with Energy Action to reduce our energy costs further by replacing our current lighting with more efficient options including LED, which we expect to reduce our energy consumption and costs for lighting by up to 50 per cent. With so many different lighting technologies and companies out there, it’s hard to know who to go with unless you’re working with a business like Energy Action that does this all the time.

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