

The Bellingden Shire Courier-Sun

Bellingden Courier Sun pg 9 - 18SEP2013

Energy centre to power Dorrigo employment

BY JESS GRACE

A PROPOSAL for a Dorrigo Energy Centre aims to create and retain local employment in the area as well as provide examples of different energy sources and how they are utilised.

The centre also proposes to train people in different types of energy, as well as provide accreditations and opportunities for practical learning associated with some university and TAFE modules.

With a focus on rural people, the centre would allow everyone to see all the types of energy sources available.

"It's [the centre] not intended to be primarily a renewable or alternative energy centre, just to show the types of energy for practical application," Dorrigo Energy centre organiser Peter Lynch said.

The range of energy options include micro-hydro, solar, thermal, photovoltaic, wind and biomass (focussing on farm waste to energy).

The centre aims to be a not-for-profit organisation, which would provide greater access to government funding.

Mr Lynch and his wife and business partner, Salena Bryce, have met with many groups in the Dorrigo community to discuss their proposal.

"There is a significant amount of [energy innovation] passion in the Bellingden Shire, that's why we are pursuing this," Mr Lynch said.

The intended site of the centre is at the original micro-hydro weir in Dorrigo, built in 1922.

Mr Lynch and Ms Bryce have researched the concept since 1996.

Since selecting Dorrigo in 2003, they have been working closely with Bellingden Council who

have been supportive.

The estimated cost of the centre is \$2.7 million, however, most of the building would be done as part of a training course.

"In the future, I see Waterfall Way being known as the Energy Way whereby people journey from the coast through energy-aware towns like Bellingden and Dorrigo leading through to the proposed community wind farms near Armidale," Mr Lynch said.

Meanwhile, Pelena Energy, which Mr Lynch owns, is restarting its project in Talise Village, Vanuatu, to create a micro-hydro system.

Due to the business opportunity, Pelena Energy has been able to re-employ one part-time person.

However, there is not enough business to fully re-open its doors at this stage.



Anare Matakivil, Philip Boedoro and Peter Salemao from Talise Village in Vanuatu with Peter Lynch from Pelena Energy in Dorrigo