

ZERO EMISSIONS NOOSA

Turning the page on solar

The Page family-owned business has been manufacturing furniture for the educational and commercial market since 1919. Zero Emissions Noosa met up with Shane Smith who's been with Page Furnishers for over 40 years. He arrived on his electric scooter and says no fancy title, just call me spokesperson.

He's a strong advocate for solar, having a large home system and is proud of his Tesla battery, particularly when there's power outages and his power stays on giving him that slightly smug feeling when his house is the only one in street with the lights still on. And no more annoying clock resetting.

Page invested in solar back in 2015 with a large 200kW on their two buildings either side of Factory Street in Pomona. It was a natural choice for the business, fitting in with their sustainable ethos. Attention is paid to reducing raw material wastage and they've found ways for timber, metalwork and paint shop materials to be re-used and recycled. Solar provides over 40 percent of their electricity needs with the panels oriented east and west to even out generation during the day.

The majority of their electricity bill is based on the maximum 30-minute usage over a month(demand charges), so they have many efficiency measures such as slow ramp up of compressors and fans. They've investigated batteries for the factory, but the financial case doesn't stack up yet.

Shane says they've experienced some reliability issues with inverters so have recently

upgraded to top-tier Fronius inverters, so warns not to scrimp on quality. His only grumble is that they can't export their excess due to Energex restrictions, which he says is a crying shame that generation for two and a half days a week is wasted. Shane says it's a credit to family owner Alan Page that the business is still innovating and thriving sustainably after 102 years in business.

Sun Powered Pomona

The hinterland towns and districts of Federal, Pinbarren and Pomona make up postcode 4568 and are under the spotlight as Zero Emissions Noosa (ZEN) continue to track progress towards the goal of zero community emissions for Noosa by 2026.

Local resident and Noosa Councillor Brian Stockwell is feeling pretty impressed with the results by his community of just over 3,500 people and says: "It's great to see over a half of residential properties in Pomona have solar arrays and a bit over a quarter of business properties likewise. With only 12 percent of our roof space used, the town is already getting 41 percent of its power needs from renewables. This makes the goal of zero community emissions by 2026 a realistic goal.

"I reckon with the typical friendly rivalry it will be a race to see which hinterland town or village will be first to claim the prize of 100 percent of its power supplies being generated from renewables, at this stage Cooran is in the lead with 46 percent."

The postcode has installed over 4,000 kW



Page Furnishers at Pomona solar installation.

Pictures: SUPPLIED

of solar, which if laid end to end would stretch for 25 km. Pomona is also home to the largest industrial solar installation in the Noosa Shire with the 200kW system at Page Furnishers. All this solar means that the community in the postcode is averting over 5,000 tonnes of CO2 which otherwise would have been emitted by coal-fired power stations.

Pomona is also home to another councillor,

Karen Finzel. She's equally enthusiastic and says: "A big shout out to all those who are in the race towards reducing emissions! Pomona Hinterland Village is home to like-minded individuals who are focussed on working locally as a community to help achieve our goal of zero emissions by 2026. Together we strengthen communities." Next time we'll look at Cooran - postcode 4569.