Bioenergy Australia
Strategic Plan
2017 – 2020
History

Bioenergy Australia was established in 1997 by a small group of Federal Government organisations to foster and facilitate the development of biomass for heat, power, liquid fuels, and other value-added bio-based products. Since its formation the membership of Bioenergy Australia has been expanded to members from the government, research, education and private sectors.

In 2012 Bioenergy Australia was incorporated as a not-for-profit company, to provide legal clarity for its activities and governance.

Bioenergy Australia is concerned with all aspects of biomass, biofuels and bioenergy, from production through to utilisation. Its work embraces technical, commercial, economic, societal, environmental, policy and market issues.

With our members, we anticipate and develop leading positions on issues of concern to the advancement and growth of bioenergy in Australia. Alongside other renewable energy solutions, government and key stakeholders we will work to improve sustainable energy solutions in Australia.

Vision

For sustainable bioenergy and bio-products to be recognized and widely adopted and deployed as an industry in Australia, as an essential component to reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

Mission

As the advocate in Australia for bioenergy and bio-products, we will create and promote awareness and understanding to influence industry and drive growth.

As Bioenergy Australia prepares for the next three years, there are a number of external and internal challenges and opportunities that need to be considered in the development of the Strategic Plan.
Key external challenges and opportunities

Bioenergy Australia is at a pivotal point in the organisation’s evolution. Formed in 1997, this period of strategy arches over Bioenergy Australia celebrating its 20 years. The organisation and the Industry’s future is bright and encouraging. As a relatively young organisation in Australia it is not burdened by the past and has the opportunity to craft its way forward to best achieve its objectives. With a significant change at the Board and Executive level in 2016/2017 the opportunity for significant reform is available.

Given the status of the organisation and the environment it sits in, it is important to understand the key challenges and opportunities that Bioenergy Australia is facing that informs the development of this strategy.

External challenges

» Limited public profile for Bioenergy as a reliable, renewable energy solution for Australia.
» Limited influence in driving policy and legislative change.
» Bioenergy is undervalued by the broader energy industry and is competing for airtime and investment against wind, solar and batteries.
» Limited understanding/knowledge/education of Bioenergy within industry and government.
» Bioenergy is flexible yet complex and multifaceted.
» Limited financially viable commercial projects in operation and poor capacity domestically to currently deliver large scale projects.
» Inability to control industry participant’s actions and business practices.
» Politicisation of energy, climate change and environmental policy.
» Energy crisis putting huge financial pressure on Australian industries.
» Changing nature of industry associations and member expectations and roles

External opportunities

» Energy is at the centre of the political debate currently.
» Bioenergy is a viable solution for declining regional and manufacturing employment and supporting associated renewable industries.
» Bioenergy is a reliable, renewable energy source that can compete financially.
» International uptake of Bioenergy is significantly higher than Australia, and Bioenergy Australia can leverage off international progress.
» The Australian Government would welcome greater levels of support and collaboration from Bioenergy Australia.
» Bioenergy Australia could potentially expand to represent other areas of the Bio products industry.
» Drive the IEA agenda through a refocused agenda of international engagement and collaboration.

Key internal (organisational) challenges

» Lacking business, IT, customer service, membership and governance systems to support efficient and effective delivery of the strategic objectives.
» Creating an organisational structure and staffing mix that will support the varied strategic objectives.
» Introducing strategic innovations when resources are limited,
» Current constitutional constraints on membership.
» A diverse membership, with a wide range of views and at times differing expectations of the organisation.
» Dependence on volunteers and a disengaged membership.

Key internal (organisational) opportunities

» The extensive knowledge base that resides in the membership and the opportunity to leverage this to develop advocacy skills and resources at appropriate levels within the organisation.
» Not burdened by the past in creation and execution of activities and thinking.
» Significant opportunities for membership growth.
The Strategy

Given the challenges and opportunities identified previously, the Bioenergy Australia strategy for 2017 – 2020 is seeking to make significant shifts in the allocation of time, resources and focus for the organisation for the next 3 years.

The future strategy is tasked to raise the profile of the industry and advocate to Government as its major strategic objectives. These strategic objectives will represent 70% of Bioenergy Australia’s resources. It is imperative for the future success of the Bioenergy industry in Australia that Bioenergy Australia focusses a significant amount of its time and energy on these two key areas.

The Bioenergy Australia strategy for 2017 - 2020 has four key sections which reflect the major streams of focus (% weighting) based on the organisations’ environment, as well as its strengths and weaknesses.

- Raising the profile of the Industry 40%
- Advocating to Government 30%
- Increased Industry Engagement 20%
- Ensure Bioenergy Australia is a sustainable organisation 10%

Raising the profile of the Industry 40%

Bioenergy Australia, has up until recently, not had an active role nationally in profiling the work of the Bioenergy sector. The opportunities to profile the sector are significant and the strategy seeks to have a major impact on raising the profile of the industry, and specifically meet the following objectives:

**Targets**

- Increase the demand for Bioenergy by raising the industry’s profile with government, industry and stakeholders and improving the level of understanding of the potential contribution of Bioenergy.
- Increased media profiling of Bioenergy projects and increased demand for media comment by Bioenergy Australia on matters regarding the energy and climate change debate.
- Bioenergy experts well represented in industry events and forums.
- Australia viewed as an attractive market for significant international players, and Bioenergy Australia is viewed as a facilitator for driving connections and collaborations.
- By 2020 there is a pipeline of successful projects, including 3+ large scale and 30-40 smaller scale.
- Bioenergy embedded into the core structure of relevant university programs.
- Significantly increased references to bioenergy in renewable energy policy development and communications.

Operational implementation strategies

**National pr & communications campaign.**

- Develop and execute a National Communications and PR strategy to raise the profile of the sector with key influencers.

**New website & e communications.**

- Develop and execute a new website and revised e communications program.

**Annual bioenergy conference/summit and other regular events.**

- Develop and execute an annual conference as the major national event to showcase the sector and engage with the public and the broader industry.
- Invest in specific PR regarding the conference. Deliver a rich conference that attracts members and delivers high quality content.
- Deliver a series of fringe events and activities to promote bioenergy to the broader industry, government and public.
- Develop a series of announcements regarding Bioenergy position statements.

**Develop National Awards Program.**

- Create a National Awards Program to highlight the significant advancements in the Bioenergy sector.

**Develop a refreshed brand for Bioenergy Australia.**

- Develop a new logo and brand presence for Bioenergy Australia.

Advocating to Government at all levels 30%

Bioenergy Australia has previously focused on other strategic priorities and has not invested heavily in advocating to Government. This strategy has been developed to initiate engagement with Government in a new way and seeks to expand Bioenergy Australia’s scope and influence. It is also
focusing resources on not only the development of policies, but on the advocating of these policies through Government engagement, summits, media profiling and industry groups.

**Targets**
- Drive policy change to facilitate the future development of the Bioenergy industry.
- Deliver successful and mutually beneficial partnerships with ARENA. Drive increased funding and investment in Bioenergy from Government.
- Bioenergy is understood by MPs and staffers.
- To be recognized as a key industry body representing Bioenergy within the energy sector at the Federal/State government level and we are called on for speaking notes, event speaking roles, reference groups etc.
- Advocate for an ARENA reverse auction for Bioenergy projects.

**Operational implementation strategies**

*Never miss an opportunity to put bioenergy forward as a solution.*
- Make submissions to Government on relevant policies and initiatives at the national and state level.
- Advocate for the creation of a Parliamentary Friendship Group for Bioenergy.
- Develop and execute a Federal Bioenergy Parliamentary event annually in Canberra to showcase Bioenergy to key MPs, Advisors and Departmental staff.
- Have ongoing dialogue and build relationships with Ministers/Shadow Ministers and their offices.
- Develop and roll out “Friends of Bioenergy” communications list.

*Deliver successful government programs through arena & cefc*
- Deliver the current ARENA agreement and associated activities.
- Develop an extension program to the current agreement that seeks to expand the areas of work, and support the growth of Bioenergy in Australia.
- Become a facilitator and introducer of people and projects both domestically and internationally with the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC).

*Ensure we are consistent with our language and approach.*
- Develop an annual Advocacy Strategy that identifies 3-4 key areas of influence we seek to have.
- Create and execute 10 policy position statements per year nationally.

**Build strategic partnerships with industry and allied associations.**
- Develop MOU’s with key industry groups and allied associations to expand the reach, voice and influence of Bioenergy Australia.

**Increased Industry Engagement 20%**

Over recent years, Bioenergy Australia has unfortunately become disconnected from its membership base and the priorities the membership sees for the organisation. This has resulted in a declining membership base and plateaued event attendances. The challenge for the organisation in growing membership is to focus on what members want. We should be expanding the benefits and show value, understanding the potential membership and what they want, and maintaining a high level of membership engagement in decision making of the organisation. This strategy seeks to identify opportunities to do this.

**Targets**
- Triple membership of Bioenergy Australia by 2020.
  A diversified membership base that includes major corporates.
- Contested Board elections annually.
- Develop leading local experts on topic areas.
- Deliver a strong set of industry events that support knowledge sharing and increased capacity within the industry.
- Bioenergy Australia is viewed as a facilitator for major international players interested in the Australian market.

**Operational implementation strategies**

*Grow the membership.*
- Clearly articulate the membership options/categories and cost on the website and on other promotional material.
- Develop a membership growth strategy.
- Focus resources on raising the profile of the industry and advocating to government.

*Maintain a 90% and above membership retention rate.*
- Focus on delivering benefits for the industry, not on marketing membership.
Form industry working groups on specific topics that will assist in building membership engagement.

Bring the management of membership “in house” to ensure that members are directly connected and communicating with staff not external contractors.

Develop and deliver a membership satisfaction and strategy survey to inform the future of the organisation.

**Restructure membership**

Restructure the membership of Bioenergy Australia to broaden and drive growth of the membership base.

**Provide support for emerging businesses**

Develop a suite of support services to assist small and emerging businesses such as:

- Free legal advice line.
- Business set-up tools.
- Connections to project finance.
- Business network events.

**National knowledge sharing events**

Develop a national strategy and plan for the delivery of member events.

The events’ program will encompass the following:

- **Business Breakfast Meetings (4)**—Half day presentation focused meetings across major Australian cities, aim to offer a range of presentations on current sector issues and developing projects and are aimed at raising awareness, networking and sharing knowledge.

- **Topic Specific Workshops (2)**—Targeted full day workshops aim both to inform and mobilize sector participants to focus on an identified barrier or opportunity facing the sector. Their aim is to lead to the development of a resource, a solution or materials developed by the sector, for the sector.

- **Webinars with National and International Speakers (5 or 8)**—Our program of webinars will enable Australian bioenergy sector players to be exposed to international and leading Australian bioenergy experts involved in the international IEA Bioenergy program.

- **Invitation Only Events (1 or 2)**—Small, exclusive, invitation only events will be reserved for the highest-level BA Members. These events will offer high level discussion opportunities over dinner with the BA Board and an invited guest.

**Relevant and inspiring member communications**

- Develop a new website and continue improving member communications to provide relevant, timely and inspiring news and content to support the membership.

- Ensure that member communications highlight the achievements of the organisation and build engagement with the membership.

---

**Ensuring Bioenergy Australia is a sustainable organisation 10%**

Bioenergy Australia has traditionally outsourced the majority of its business operations to an external organisation and has not invested in the internal systems, procedures and structures to support innovation and growth. It is essential that Bioenergy Australia improves its processes and policies to support the organisation’s growth within a complex operating environment.

**Targets**

- Maintain a financially stable platform for the future.
- Provide solid governance and transparency to the membership.
- Develop strong policies and procedures.

**Operational implementation strategies**

- Develop a new and sustainable staffing structure to meet the objectives of the organisation and that leads, inspires, supports and empowers employees and members.

- Deliver constitutional and governance reform to increase and diversify membership and revenue growth.

- Ensure regular financial reporting, budgeting and review and ensure financial performance meets industry benchmarks, including increased turnover and cash flow positive.

- Invest in internal membership management systems and procedures, rather than outsourcing all key functions.

- Develop and deliver policies and procedures to support the operations of the organisation.

- Identify risks to stable financial performance and ensure risk mitigation is implemented and reviewed regularly at Board level.