

Terms of reference

Hunter Transmission Project Regional Reference Group

May 2024

Purpose

The Regional Reference Group (RRG) for the Hunter Transmission Project will perform an advisory and consultative role.

The purpose of the RRG is to:

- facilitate genuine engagement between EnergyCo and the broader Hunter community on the HTP
 - allow EnergyCo to seek feedback from the community on project-related matters
 - give the community a forum to ask for information or give feedback on the project.
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Terms of Reference

The RRG will provide a forum for strategic discussions between EnergyCo and the broader Hunter community about the Hunter Transmission Project, including:

- the design of the project
 - community views on the project
 - actions to avoid and minimise impacts on people and the environment
 - actions to maximise the benefits for the Hunter community
 - actions to reduce the cumulative impacts of the HTP with other projects in the region.
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Members

The RRG will comprise:

- an independent chairperson
 - 3 council representatives, one from each of the relevant councils (Singleton, Cessnock and Lake Macquarie)
 - 3 regional representatives from peak business, Aboriginal and environment groups
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- 3 local community representatives, one from each of the relevant local government areas (Singleton, Cessnock and Lake Macquarie)

EnergyCo will appoint the representatives for the RRG following consultation with key stakeholders in the region, including local councils.

Independent Chairperson

The RRG will be chaired by an independent chairperson. The chairperson is expected to:

- provide leadership
 - be independent and impartial
 - act as the key contact between the RRG and EnergyCo
 - be responsible for overseeing the management and administration of the RRG with the support of the Secretariat, including arranging the time and location of meetings, setting the agenda for meetings, and approving the minutes of meetings following consultation with EnergyCo and the members
 - facilitate constructive discussion between members on the project
 - give all members an opportunity to share their views
 - help resolve any differences of opinion between members fairly and transparently.
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Secretariat

The Hunter Transmission Project community team will act as the Secretariat of the RRG.

Meetings

The RRG will meet at least 4 times a year, but more frequently if necessary.

Attendance of meetings by non-RRG Members

The independent chairperson may invite non-RRG members to attend RRG meetings as observers or to give advice. This may include:

- representatives from EnergyCo or other State agencies
 - representatives from other Councils in the Hunter, including Newcastle, Maitland, Muswellbrook and Central Coast
 - technical experts or consultants
 - members of the public.
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Remuneration

The independent chairperson will be paid a daily sitting fee by EnergyCo for arranging and chairing meetings.

While the other members of the RRG will not be paid for their services, they will be able to recover any reasonable costs associated with attending meetings (petrol, meals, etc.) from EnergyCo.

External Communications

Members of the RRG will be encouraged to share information about the HTP with the broader community. However, any information provided to the RRG on a confidential basis must not be discussed or shared outside the RRG.

The RRG may decide to release statements or other information on the project to the media or adopt other approaches to publicise information.

However, only the independent chairperson may speak publicly to the media on behalf of the RRG. Individual members may make comments to the media or in public forums on behalf of themselves or their stakeholder groups, but not on behalf of the RRG.

Publication of Information

The following information must be published on the HTP project web page on EnergyCo's website:

- the members of the RRG
 - meeting agendas and minutes
 - any other information agreed to by the RRG and/or EnergyCo.
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Changes to the purpose, terms of reference and membership of the RRG

Over time, EnergyCo may:

- expand the remit of the RRG to include other EnergyCo projects such as the Hunter Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone
 - vary the terms of reference of the RRG
 - expand the membership of the RRG
 - replace the members of the RRG
 - provide further guidance on the operation of the RRG.
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