

**Location:** Dubbo Regional. Theatre and Convention Centre

**Date/time:** Thursday 29 October, 11:00am – 1:00pm (AEDT)

**Host:** NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE)

**Chair:** Chloe Hicks, Director, Energy Infrastructure and Zones, DPIE

## People present

- Dugald Saunders MP, Member for Dubbo
- Sarah Barrett, Advisor, Office of the Hon. Andrew Gee MP

## NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

- Chloe Hicks, Director, Energy Infrastructure and Zones, DPIE (Chair)
- Stuart Hodgson, Director Programs, Renewable Energy Zones
- Jamie Fermio, Project Officer, Renewable Energy Zones
- Amanda Carnegie, Planning Officer, Local and Regional Planning
- Julie Sheather (Newgate) Senior Advisor

## Regional NSW

- Ash Albury, Director, Regional Central West and Far West
- Meredith Harrison, Business Development Manager, Orana

## Dubbo Regional Council

- Steven Jennings, Manager Growth Planning

## Narromine Regional Council

- Councillor Craig Davies, Mayor

## Gilgandra Shire Council

- Randall Medd, Economic Development Manager, Inland Rail Project Manager, Gilgandra Shire Council

## TransGrid

- Brad Hopwood, Head of Commercial Development, Strategy Innovation and Technology
- Sarah O'Grady, Community Engagement Lead – Major Projects
- Cameron Hamilton, Government and Stakeholder Engagement Manager

## Essential Energy

- Chantelle Bramley, General Manager Strategy, Regulation and Corporate Affairs

## People attending via video conference

- Nicole Brewer, Director, Energy Assessments, DPIE
- Julie Robertson, Director Development, Mid-Western Regional Council
- Paul Jakes, Manager of Waste and Sustainability, Upper Hunter Shire Council
- Pip Goldsmith, Manager Economic Development and Growth, Coonamble Shire Council
- Andrew Dyer, National Wind Farm Commissioner

## Apologies

- Roy Butler MP, Member for Barwon
- Hon Ben Franklin, MLC
- Hon. Mark Coulton, Member for Parkes
- Orana Joint Organisation of Councils (check – may have been represented by Craig Davies)
- Ben Shields, Mayor Dubbo Regional Council
- Michael McMahon, Dubbo Regional Council
- Liverpool Plains Shire Council
- Warrumbungle Shire Council
- Warren Shire Council
- Jayne Humphreys, Senior Coordination Officer, Regional Development (check)
- Murray Wood, Regional NSW Investment Manager

## Notes

No.	Description	Time	Lead
1	<b>Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highlighted potential benefits including private sector and government investment, attracting energy intensive industries in the region, jobs and skills, telecommunications and income diversification</li></ul>	5 mins	Dugald Saunders MP

No.	Description	Time	Lead
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# Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone Regional Referene Group Meeting #1



## Meeting minutes

2	<p><b>Introductions and purpose of the Regional Reference Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DPIE noted that the purpose of the RRG was to guide development, engagement and community benefit sharing. Current membership could be extended in the future if members felt it was appropriate</li> <li>• Essential Energy asked whether the engagement strategy would be made public</li> <li>• Regional NSW noted that local content and jobs, training and procurement will be key interests for local community</li> </ul>	15 mins	Chloe Hicks
3	<p><b>Status of the Central-West Orana REZ</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DPIE outlined the background and current status of the REZ, including the need to start on transmission first and possible option for pumped hydro at Lake Burrendong. Streamlined regulatory processes would be in place with a target of shovel-ready at the end of 2022.</li> <li>• DPIE noted the opportunity to coordinate community enhancement funds to maximise their impact.</li> <li>• Essential Energy said they would to see a public engagement strategy</li> <li>• DPIE outlined upcoming engagement activity including DPIE newsletter, letters to landholders from TransGrid, EnergyCo establishment, Dubbo shopfront, deliberative forums, TransGrid pop-ups.</li> <li>• DPIE indicated that the focus is now shifting from establishment and regulatory reform, to detailed design and technical studies, generator and storage EOI and community benefits such as local content and jobs.</li> <li>• Concerns raised included:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The need for ongoing rather than short term jobs, including embedding local contractor requirements, Aboriginal requirements and job requirements. DPIE indicated that this would be addressed through skills development and supply chain focus, in addition to quotas.</li> <li>○ Lessons to be learned from Inland Rail – generally poor engagement but rail maintenance facility has been well received. TransGrid explained approach being taken on EnergyConnect</li> <li>○ Impact on communities from short-term workforce. DPIE indicated that a staged approach to building generation and network connection sequencing would assist.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	45 mins	Chloe Hicks

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## Meeting minutes

No.	Description	Time	Lead
4	<p><b>Transmission study corridor and engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TransGrid explained the reasons for the required transmission and the corridor identified for further study, including the mix of 500 and 300 Kv, split to manage bushfire risks and possible Lake Burrendong extension.</li> <li>• Study corridor is 180km long and between 3-6km wide; final easement will be 60-80m wide.</li> <li>• TransGrid outlined upcoming engagement activities including letters and phone calls before Christmas, followed by 2021 on farm sessions, drop-in sessions, have you say via the project webpage and an online interactive map.</li> <li>• Questions from the floor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Nature of easement compensation for landholders? TransGrid advised it would be a one-off payment based on the Just Terms Act. Freehold would be acquired for substations.</li> <li>○ Location of generation in proximity to the line? TransGrid advised that based on the June 2020 EOI process, it was likely that there would be enough generation within 30kms, but that it could also connect from further away. DPIE added that it was likely that solar farms would locate quite close to substations and wind farms further away due to their requirements. One of EnergyCo's role will be to coordinate access to the shared transmission backbone at the edge of the REZ through contestable transmission and distribution lines. DPIE advised that the REZ and transmission may go further north and west in the future DPIE and that while this might draw projects to the east, but this is because these projects are also looking at existing constraints in those western areas. This pilot REZ is just the beginning, there could be further extension</li> <li>○ Stakeholders would like to see a map of the REZ and transmission line overlaid with topography and land use.</li> <li>○ How prime agricultural land is being defined? DPIE advised that they are working closely with DPI with updated information that is not publicly available.</li> <li>○ Impact on communities from short-term workforce, including local labour and housing shortages with multiple projects ex-REZ underway? DPIE indicated that a staged approach to building generation and network connection sequencing would assist.</li> <li>○ Viability of renewable projects already planned that would be outside the REZ? DPIE advised this would not impact their viability.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	30 mins	Brad Hopwood  Sarah O'Grady

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## Meeting minutes

4	<p><b>Transmission study corridor and engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ EnergyCo's role? DPIE confirmed the focus would be on planning and community engagement, rather than building energy infrastructure.</li> <li>○ Balancing distribution and transmission? Further collaboration between DPIE, TransGrid and Essential will occur. The pilot REZ will help identify what else is needed.</li> </ul>	30 mins	Brad Hopwood  Sarah O'Grady
5	<p><b>Open stakeholder discussions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Education, skills and training for the local workforce, with a particular focus on jobs for Aboriginal people</li> <li>○ Pricing of energy for the local community (how can they get a benefit beyond that which flows to others across NSW)</li> <li>○ Attracting energy intensive industries through lower energy costs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Concerns and issues</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Need enduring benefits rather than a boom then a bust. Long term, not short-term jobs (anti 'fluro brigade' and labour camps)</li> <li>○ Avoiding prime agriculture land, and being sensitive to farmer views of their own land value</li> <li>○ Be cognisant of timing of development and community capacity to cope with worker influx and impact on limited housing and prices (cumulative effect on local communities – boom/bust cycle – 7 SSD in and around Wellington already)</li> <li>○ Visual impacts and industrialisation of the landscape - need to trade-off between proximity to the transmission and impact on the community, also in the context of other major projects</li> <li>○ Industrialisation of the landscape</li> <li>○ Quicker you can narrow the corridor and reduce angst, the better – experience from Inland Rail. Owners face uncertainty for extended period of time and can't make plans, or sell or buy as they're not sure if they will be affected.</li> <li>○ Wellington needs a long term plan. Where is focus of council best directed?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	20 mins	Julie Sheather

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Engagement preferences and considerations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Avoid peak times such as Nov-mid Jan harvest</li> <li>○ Need to ensure transmission communication is in the context of the broader REZ, especially visually</li> <li>○ Learn from the mistakes of inland Rail and gas pipelines - localised, face to face engagement is best. Avoid town hall type meetings. There has been a lot of poor engagement in the area.</li> <li>○ Impact of corridor assessment on landholders – uncertainty (can't sell or invest) – advice to get the corridor sorted quickly</li> <li>○ Need to be clear on what benefits flow to the hosting community (go beyond the infrastructure)</li> <li>○ Visit people personally (go and see them rather than asking them to come to you)</li> <li>○ Guidelines for landholders on how to deal with generators would be helpful</li> <li>○ Guidelines for councils on their role would be helpful</li> <li>○ Consider more engagement at Mudgee end of transmission corridor</li> <li>○ Clarify that a REZ does not mean their land will be re-zoned</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
6	<p><b>Next steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chloe Hicks closed the meeting with the following key take-aways to inform both the development of the REZ and how the community is engaged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be mindful of the need to located REZ infrastructure in the right location for the community, acknowledging the history of these places</li> <li>○ Understand and address the cumulative impact of big infrastructure (understand those challenges)</li> <li>○ Pursue enduring benefits including local jobs and investment that goes beyond the short-term so host communities realise benefits from the REZ (offtake agreements, community energy initiatives, industry purchasing direct from generators)</li> <li>○ Consult with communities in the most appropriate way and at the right time</li> <li>○ Investigate ways to reduce local energy bills that go beyond the statewide impacts</li> <li>○ Ensuring all messaging addresses the broader REZ, impacts and benefits rather than just each element</li> <li>○ Take people on the learning journey as the REZ is planned and designed so they understand and are empowered to participate</li> <li>○ Don't lose sight of the importance of reducing emissions</li> <li>○ Starting the ground-truthing the benefits and impacts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	5 mins	Chloe Hicks

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Meeting minutes

## Actions arising

No.	Action	Responsible
1	DPIE to produce a public engagement strategy	DPIE
2	Stakeholders would like to see a map of the REZ and transmission line overlaid with topography and land use.	DPIE
3	Dubbo Council to share Wellington social study	Dubbo Regional Council
4	DPIE to share key messages with the RRG and seek feedback	DPIE
5	Schedule next meeting for February 2021	DPIE

## Next meeting

February 2021 – Exact date TBC