

Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ)

Regional Reference Group – 22 February 2021

Location:	Savannah Room, Taronga Western Plains Zoo
Date and time:	Monday 22 February 2021, 9:15am for a 9:30am start to 12:30pm
Host:	Energy Corporation of NSW
Chair:	James Hay, Chief Executive, Energy Corporation of NSW

Attendees

- Dugald Saunders MP, Member for Dubbo
- Gargi Ganguly, Senior Advisor, National Indigenous Australians Agency

NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – ECCS and Energy Corporation of NSW

- James Hay, Chief Executive, Energy Corporation of NSW (Chair)
- Chloe Hicks, Director, Energy Infrastructure and Zones
- Catherine O'Neill, Senior Project Officer, Energy Infrastructure and Zones
- Jamie Fermio, Project Officer, Energy Infrastructure and Zones
- Julie Sheather (Newgate) Senior Advisor

NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – Local and Regional Planning

- Jessica Holland, Manager Western Region, Local and Regional Planning
- Amanda Carnegie, Planning Officer, Local and Regional Planning

Department of Regional NSW

- Murray Wood, Regional NSW Investment Manager
- Meredith Harrison, Business Development Manager

Dubbo Regional Council

- Stephen Wallace, Director Development and Environment
- Steven Jennings, Manager Growth Planning

Mid-Western Regional Council

- Julie Robertson, Director Development

Upper Hunter Shire Council

- Paul Jakes, Manager Waste and Sustainability

TransGrid

- Brad Hopwood, Project Director, Central-West Orana REZ
- Heather Wagland, Head of Property and Environment
- Michael Lloyd, Community Engagement Manager

Essential Energy

- Chantelle Bramley, General Manager Strategy, Regulation and Corporate Affairs
- Anders Sangkuhl, Regulatory Strategy Manager

Apologies

- Roy Butler MP, Member for Barwon
- Hon Ben Franklin, MLC
- Hon. Mark Coulton, Member for Parkes
- Sarah Barrett, Advisor, Hon. Andrew Gee MP, Member for Calare
- Orana Joint Organisation of Councils
- NSW Aboriginal Land Council, Councillor Grace Toomey, Central Region
- Narromine Regional Council, Councillor Craig Davies, Mayor
- Dubbo Regional Council, Michael McMahon, Chief Executive Officer
- Liverpool Plains Shire Council
- Warren Shire Council
- Gilgandra Shire Council
- Warrumbungle Shire Council, LEEANNE RYAN, Director Environment and Development Services
- Coonamble Shire Council, Pip Goldsmith, Manager Economic Development and Growth
- National Wind Farm Commissioner, Andrew Dyer
- Mining and Energy Related Councils, Greg Lamont, Executive Officer

Notes

No.	Description	Time	Lead
1	Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country	10 min	Dugald Saunders MP
2	Introductions and agenda overview	5 min	James Hay
3	NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap & Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• See presentation for details	30 min	James Hay
4	Update on Central-West Orana REZ <ul style="list-style-type: none">• See presentation for details	15 min	Chloe Hicks
5	Update on Central-West Orana REZ Transmission <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community and landowner consultation on the transmission study corridor commenced in December 2020.• This was a soft launch to ensure landowners were not being asked to provide their time for consultation after a busy harvest season and with the upcoming Christmas holidays.• The release of the study corridor included a mailout to landowners and publishing the study corridor on the TransGrid and DPIE websites.	30 min	Brad Hopwood / Michael Lloyd

No.	Description	Time	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key activities undertaken to determine transmission study corridor included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consideration of technical, environmental and community constraints such as bushfire prone land and prime agricultural land, as well as the results of the NSW Government ROI process for generation and storage projects in June 2020. ○ Field studies in publicly accessible areas to verify desktop studies. ○ Consultation with key stakeholders such as local Councils, Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALC) and local and Federal MPs. • The next step in the planning pathway for the project is to prepare Scoping Reports to request the Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs). • TransGrid are aiming to undertake detailed environmental assessment work on a narrower corridor and progress property negotiation discussions with landowners by Q3/Q4 2021. • Current landowner and community engagement activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 14 community drop-in sessions across the region in Wellington, Elong Elon, Dunedoo, Leadville, Gulgong, Cassilis and Merriwa from 15 February-26 February 2021. ○ Seven out of the 14 community drop in sessions have been completed and have been attended by 10-15 people on average and up to 40 people. ○ There are 255 landowners in the corridor who have all been contacted by an initial mailout and subsequent phone call. ○ Contact has been made with approximately 173 landowners (>50% of landowners in the study corridor) ○ Information landowners have been providing TransGrid during this early phase of consultation include property specific information that cannot be seen on maps to help avoid constraints and maximise opportunities. ○ An interactive map of the study corridor has been launched and feedback/comments have been provided for approximately 13 properties thus far. ○ Providing landowners with a copy of TransGrid’s Landowner Consultation Guide which details the consultation stages throughout the project. ○ Reaching out to community organisations in the area to establish relationships • Landowner and community sentiment has been predominately neutral so far. • A small number of landowners have identified they do not want transmission infrastructure on their properties and other landowners have provided recommended locations on their property for the new infrastructure. 		

No.	Description	Time	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Hunter Council queried how local Councils are being kept informed of TransGrid’s consultation activities. • TransGrid confirmed they have held briefings with all Councils in the study corridor, including Upper Hunter Shire Council and regularly email Council to update them on consultation activities before they commence. • TransGrid will confirm the contact at Upper Hunter Council who has been contacted about this project. • TransGrid outlined additional upcoming activities include progressing technical work, undertaking field surveys, briefings and planning the next round of community information sessions. • Mid-Western Council request TransGrid share the outcomes of their community information sessions and the community sentiment about the transmission project with local Councils • TransGrid confirmed this information will be included in the Scoping Reports and will be communicated to Councils before Scoping Reports are published • Upper Hunter Council query whether the transmission infrastructure will be above ground or underground. • TransGrid confirmed the expectation is the transmission infrastructure will be above ground, as costs would be prohibitive for a project of this distance and above ground transmission infrastructure is considered to have less environmental impact and result in less restrictions on farming and other land practices. • Dubbo Regional Council asked whether landowners have identified what other benefits they want other than financial compensation, for example telecommunication upgrades. • TransGrid confirmed they are expecting to receive feedback from landowners with ideas of additional benefits but do not have any specific requests or feedback to report at this stage. 		
6	<p>Workstreams deep dive</p> <p>Collaborative session identifying opportunities, stakeholders, project examples and key issues and risks for the following workstreams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal consultation and negotiation guidelines <p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building tender writing capacity and support for local Aboriginal businesses ○ Using Aboriginal names for places, structures or other REZ features and integrating local Aboriginal history into the REZ project ○ Working with LALCs to assist them with funding and other support they need to maximise the use of the land they own and manage 	60 min	All with Chloe Hicks facilitating

No.	Description	Time	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developing programs and traineeships and starting early in schools ○ Achieving quick wins that build support and show commitment to working with local Aboriginal communities ○ Building genuine relationships by being consistent and turning up ○ Supporting the use of Aboriginal consultants and businesses to assess cultural heritage matters and provide advice and project support <p><u>Concerns</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engagement efforts need to be genuine and there needs to be a focus on co-design with Aboriginal communities. ○ Overpromising and underdelivering. ○ Setting targets without consulting with the local Aboriginal community to understand whether they are achievable. ○ There will be different dissenting voices in Aboriginal communities, and it takes time to understand who you need to talk to and how to consider all voices. ○ Significant time involved with land purchase if Native Title land rights are applicable <p><u>Key stakeholders:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Three Rivers Regional Assembly, Regional Rail Project team, Dubbo College (Year 12), Clontarf Foundation, Girls Academy, local community working parties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social licence and community benefit sharing <p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategic investment in housing in a way that will benefit host towns and use learnings from the mining sector ○ Training opportunities for young people and promotion of REZ career opportunities ○ Develop an agriculture strategy ○ Co-location of infrastructure, including telecommunications on transmission ○ Voluntary planning agreement (VPA) used as key way to contribute to other community infrastructure and benefits ○ Community energy projects in partnership with local network service providers i.e. community batteries, EV chargers, microgrids etc. ○ Visitor centre or similar to attract tourists to the area <p><u>Concerns</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need to ensure diverse community views are being heard 		

No.	Description	Time	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensuring the right skills, qualifications and certifications are planned in advance so local businesses and residents can participate in tenders and get jobs created locally ○ Ensure enduring community benefits, and that appropriate governance and controls are in place, so funds are going to the right places ○ Addressing legacy issues if projects don't meet community expectations ○ Strategic approach to using prime farmland <p><u>Key stakeholders:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Farmers Federation, Chambers of Commerce in the region, local media (including print, radio and social media), tourists, Aboriginal groups, TAFE and other training providers, local government, local businesses, major energy user associations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● REZ Regional Energy Strategy <p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use surplus network capacity at the distribution level ○ Combining local Councils and other big energy users to support a renewable energy project through a PPA ○ Mandated local manufacturing levels ○ Critical minerals industry regions overlap with REZ and could work together strategically ○ Electrification of transport and agricultural machinery <p><u>Concerns</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where the REZ intersects the shared network augmentation or congestion may occur ○ Delivery capacity of the REZ in the context of the ISP ○ Supply markets for material, and the logistics and competition in that market ○ Community expectation that the REZ will solve distribution issues ○ Tight delivery timeframes ○ Managing cumulative impacts of developing the REZ ○ Lack of economic value add opportunity inside the REZ ○ Ensuring there are local benefits from all the new energy infrastructure ○ Need to align with other existing strategies ○ Not effectively using spare capacity on the distribution network will result in higher costs for consumers <p><u>Key stakeholders:</u></p>		

No.	Description	Time	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local project developers offering PPAs, National Farmers Federation, local suppliers and manufacturers, other councils outside REZ (how will REZ impact future renewables in their LGA), significant load users, land owners, Chamber of Commerce, TAFEs, international supply chains, national bodies of material suppliers, support organisations (St Vincent De Paul, CWA etc) <p>• Communications and messaging</p> <p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research other major projects in the area to have an understanding if the area has been over-consulted ○ New agricultural mapping of 'industry profiles' (Tamara Prentice – IAL mapping) ○ Engage/use local content advisors ○ Establish a skills academy for the REZ ○ Clear messaging this project is not about re-zoning land ○ Tell the story of all the benefits this project can bring ○ Clear messaging why engagement is being done early and what decisions will be influenced by the community engagement <p><u>Concerns</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some areas may have consultation fatigue ○ Coordination of multiple entities consulting on this project, and the need to clearly communicate how each piece fits into the bigger picture ○ Messaging should consider local issues, as regional NSW is not homogenous ○ Transparency is needed of prioritising competing interests ○ Clarify what 'prime' agriculture land means for each community <p><u>Key stakeholders:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tamara Prentice (key stakeholder for agriculture land mapping), new local businesses, existing local suppliers, Regional Development Australia, Destination NSW, wineries in the mid-western region, Agriculture commissioner – Daryl Quinlivan, Inland Rail 		
7	<p>Next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EnergyCo next steps include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Formal declaration of the CWO REZ under the legislation ○ Begin New England REZ engagement ○ CWO REZ Access Scheme consultation paper ○ Establish Aboriginal consultation guidelines and Working Group ○ Launching the Pumped Hydro Recoverable Grants program 	15 min	James Hay and Chloe Hicks

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Regional Reference Group – Meeting 2

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No.	Description	Time	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electricity Infrastructure Investment Safeguard first tender round expected in early 2022.• EnergyCo encourages members to recommend additional stakeholders to participate in the RRG.		

New actions

No.	Action	Responsible	Comments/Updates	Status
F1	TransGrid to confirm the contact at the Upper Hunter Council who is receiving CWO REZ communication	TransGrid		
F2	TransGrid to share feedback from community drop-in sessions and ongoing landowner and community consultation with local Councils	TransGrid		
F3	DPIE to share feedback from the community deliberative forums with the broader group.	DPIE		
F4	Regional NSW to facilitate introductions and champion interactions between Energy Infrastructure and Zones team and the Inland Rail project	Regional NSW		
F5	Regional NSW to share information on critical minerals mapping and opportunities	Regional NSW		
F6	Essential Energy to share information of the opportunities and constraints on the distribution network as inputs to the REZ Regional Energy Strategy	Essential Energy		

Open action items

No.	Action	Responsible	Comments/Updates	Status
O3	Dubbo Council to share Wellington social study	Dubbo Regional Council	Steve Jennings to follow up.	Open

Closed action items

No.	Action	Responsible	Comments/Updates	Status
O1	DPIE to produce a public engagement strategy	DPIE	The first CWO REZ newsletter has been released and the next newsletter will be released in the coming weeks. Additional communication resources for the public are being developed.	Closed
O2	Stakeholders would like to see a map of the REZ and	DPIE	TransGrid has released the map of the transmission corridor to relevant landowners and	Closed

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	transmission line overlaid with topography and land use.		published the corridor on their website.	
O4	DPIE to share key messages with the RRG and seek feedback	DPIE	DPIE shared all transmission corridor collateral with the RRG in December 2020. Collaboration, discussions and opportunity for feedback with the RRG will be ongoing.	Closed
O5	Schedule next meeting for February 2021	DPIE	Complete.	Closed

Next meeting

Tuesday 18 May, 10am-1pm (TBC)