

Victoria NSW Interconnector West Community Consultative Group

Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct

Background and purpose

The Victoria to NSW Interconnector West – known as VNI West – is a proposed new 500 kV double circuit transmission line connecting the high voltage electricity grids in New South Wales and Victoria.

VNI West is being jointly developed with AEMO Victoria Planning (AVP) and will connect major projects EnergyConnect in NSW and Western Renewables Link in Victoria. The preferred option runs from Transgrid's Dinawan substation north of Jerilderie in NSW to new substations proposed near Kerang and Bulgana in Victoria.

Purpose

The purpose of the VNI West Community Consultative Group (CCG) is to:

- provide a forum for community members, stakeholders and local councils to seek information from TransGrid and provide feedback to inform Corridor refinement and the subsequent Environmental Assessment process
- provide a forum for open and constructive discussions about the VNI West project
- help Transgrid better understand community perspectives and issues related to the project
- work with Transgrid to develop ideas for community benefits and project legacy.

Membership of the CCG

The Group will have a maximum of 16 Members. These members will be made up of representatives from community and industry groups such as:

- Farmers/Irrigated Agriculture groups
- Education and training groups/Providers
- Environment and Landcare groups
- Community service organisations
- Tourism and business organisations

In addition to the above groups, representation will be sought from Local Councils and between 2-4 landowners (Landowners to be nominated and supported by a minimum of ten community members each).

Participants must be:

- Willing to gather input from the community/stakeholder group represented and bring forward any queries or concerns raised in relation to the project
- Able to disseminate information received during the meetings back to the community/group
- Able to demonstrate why they have an interest in this project and their key areas of interest.

Recruitment and selection

Expressions of interest to be part of the CCG will be advertised via:

- Print advertisements in local newspapers
- Email to those on the project email distribution list
- VNI West project web page on TransGrid's website
- And direct invitation to local Councils and other community groups

Nominations will be received by the Chair of the CCG and will be assessed and selected by the Chair and Transgrid's Landowner and Community Advocate.

Selection criteria

- The CCG should comprise an equitable mix of gender and preferably age groups
- The group should provide for coverage of locations within the study area/along the corridor
- Members of recognised groups will be given preference over self-nominated individuals
- Breadth of local organisations represented.
- Particular expertise or skills sets in major infrastructure/major projects

Meetings

Meetings

- Meetings will be held at a minimum once per quarter, or more often depending on the stage of project development.
- The meetings may be held in various convenient locations within the study area/along the corridor to ensure travel load is shared equitably amongst members.
- Meetings will generally run up to 2 hours
- To ensure safe travel, meetings will occur during the day
- Technical advisors or specialists will attend as required
- All information provided should be accurate and timely
- Any pecuniary/conflict of interest should be declared by members
- Recording of the meetings by an electronic device is not permitted without prior agreement of the independent Chair and all CRG members
- Transgrid may choose to reimburse reasonable travel expenses incurred by members.

Reporting

Notes of the meeting will be provided via email to CRG members within seven working days of the meeting, with any comments to be provided within five working days of that time. In the event of any disagreement about the minutes the independent Chair will have final say. A final set of minutes will be distributed within 3 weeks of the meeting date.

Agendas and minutes of meetings will be made publicly available on the VNI West web page on the Transgrid website.

Attendance

Members of the CRG must be willing to commit to attending meetings regularly (alternative attendees are permitted if the CRG Chair/Secretariat is advised prior to the meeting).

The use of alternative attendees should be kept to a minimum. The Chair may request the replacement of any member who fails to attend three consecutive CRG meetings.

Code of conduct

All members, including the Chair and alternative members, must agree and sign the following code of conduct at the first meeting. Breaches of this code of conduct can be reported to the Chair, who will raise the issue with the member. This may take the form of:

- a verbal warning before or during the meeting (which will be formally recorded in the meeting)
- a written warning after the meeting.

Following three warnings, the Chair may ask the member to leave the group. This position will then be replaced by the Chair.

Members of the CRG will be expected to:

- Attend meetings, at dates and times agreed by the group
- Advise the Chair/Secretariat in advance if they are unable to attend and who their alternative member will be
- Respectfully engage with other members of the CCG
- Contribute to an atmosphere of open and constructive participation
- Openly communicate relevant concerns, interests and ideas and make reasons for any disagreement clear in a constructive and thoughtful manner
- Put forward views but also remain committed to open and shared dialogue
- Actively work with the members of the group to try and resolve any issues that may arise during the CCG's work
- Ensure they do not discuss or share information about matters that are identified as confidential during meetings
- Not interrupt when another member is speaking

- Not speak publicly, for example to the media, on behalf of the CCG
- Not misrepresent the views of other members of the CCG
- Immediately advise the Chair during meetings of any potential or actual conflict of interest relating to matters under discussion
- Abide by the reasonable directions of the Chair as to the conduct of the meetings.

As a member of the Victoria NSW Interconnector West Transmission Project Community Reference Group, I agree to abide by these Terms of Reference.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____