

Meeting Minutes

Victoria NSW Interconnector West

Meeting title:	VNI West Community Consultative Group Meeting 3	Date:	31 January 2024
Location:	Deniliquin RSL Club, End St Deniliquin	Time:	10:00am – 12:00pm
Chairperson:	Brendan Blakeley		
Attendees:			
VNI West Project Team - Transgrid			
Colin Mayer	Project Director		
Geoff Hudson	Environment Manager		
Joel Annett	Community and Stakeholder Manager		
Ben Doran	Land and Property Manager		
Farid Faiz	Engineering Manager		
Jarryd Barton	Principal Environmental Planner, WSP		
Michael Johnson	Program Director, Stakeholder Relations, Major Projects		
Elise Caldwell	Project Coordinator		
VNI West Community Consultative Group			
Donald Bull	Landholder		
Mick Lalor	NSW NPWS		
Trevor Clark	Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council		
Bob Crawford	Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council		
Bruce Rollinson	Landholder		
Alison Glenn	Bunnaloo Branch, NSW Farmers		
David Crew	Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre		
Mark Dalzell	Edward River Council		
Sarah Ryan	Murray River Council		
Steven Parisotto	Murrumbidgee Council		
Peter O'Shannassy	Murray Local Land Services		
Apologies			
Leon Atkinson	Cummaragunja Local Aboriginal Land Council		
Michael Chalmers	Ricegrowers' Association		
Reem Nasr	Community and Stakeholder Advisor/Secretary VNI West CCG		
Gary Stoll	Murrumbidgee Council		
Rose Dunn	Deniliquin Local Aboriginal Land Council		
John Kerr	Moama Local Aboriginal Land Council		
Paul McFadyen	Community Engagement Lead, Place Management, Transgrid		
Shannon Sampson	Community member		

Scott Sheather

Murray Local Land Services

Acknowledgment of Country

On behalf of the group, Brendan Blakeley acknowledged the Wamba Wamba and Barappa Barappa/Pereppa Pereppa, Traditional Owners of Deniliquin and its surrounding areas.

Meeting proceedings

Agenda item	Summary notes
<p>0. Welcome, introductions and housekeeping and review of previous minutes</p>	<p>Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and attendees introduced themselves.</p> <p>Chair reviewed action items from previous meeting.</p> <p>Joel Annett advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JA reached out to Mr Crawford following the meeting and offered a one-on-one meeting about the project. • A presentation on Biodiversity has been confirmed to be an agenda item at a future meeting. • All publicly available information from the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) Program has been considered. • Transgrid and our contractors hold public liability insurance coverage to cover legal liability for third party property damage and/or bodily injury that may occur during survey/investigation access, construction and operation of transmission assets. • JA advised that an inspection on the 132kV line on Mr D Bull's property had taken place and email was sent to him to confirm this. • Community investment and benefits suggestions were tabled and discussed at the meeting.
<p>1. Route selection methodology & options overview</p>	<p>Jarryd Barton outlined the route selection methodology.</p> <p>He noted the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stepped process of route selection • assessment methodology and hierarchy of constraints for assessment criteria (opportunities, low, moderate, high risk), • process for identifying route options identification. <p>He provided an overview of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 route options • assessment scores for each route <p>The process yielded an eventual recommendation of Route Option C</p> <p>Joel Annett The preferred route is around 1km wide. There are two wider sections, one at the border and one along the north eastern section of the route.</p> <p>The border crossing location is not yet determined and will be selected in consultation with Transmission Company Victoria (TCV).</p> <p>The route seeks to follow existing delineation such as roads, travelling stock routes (TSR's) and property boundaries where possible and where it makes sense and to minimise impact on high intensity agricultural land.</p>

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	<p>Bob Crawford Noted that it appears on page 38 that renewable zones require a 30km buffer. Is it a buffer or an exclusion zone? With 30kms of the line going through the Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), this should be reworded and made clearer in the final report.</p> <p>Jarryd and Joel clarified that the 30 kms is not an exclusion zone just a reference to the amount of the preferred route that would be within the REZ zone allowing for potential connection to future infrastructure within this zone.</p> <p>Donald Bull Noted a preference for CCG members to be notified of the preferred route ahead of landowners so they could be prepared for questions from the community.</p> <p>Joel Annett Noted the feedback. Advised preference is for directly impacted landowners to be the first to know about information impacting them. Advised that the timing proposed to provide CCG members with details is asap following report release.</p> <p>Donald Bull What is the status of the Yanco Delta wind farm (Northwest of Jerilderie) and are you talking with them?</p> <p>Addendum to minutes: The following link provides information on that project.</p> <p>Yanco Delta Wind Farm Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure (nsw.gov.au)</p> <p>Colin Mayer Noted that Transgrid is talking with the renewable energy proponents / operators along or in proximity to the route as part of overall engagement for VNI West.</p> <p>Trevor Clark Questioned difference in the bushfire rating between options. Noted local experience that grassland fire can be more dangerous and fast moving than bushland fires.</p> <p>Jarryd Barton Noted that the ratings are relative to each other and not an absolute value - so a rating of zero doesn't mean that there is no risk or no constraint. Bushfire is a key consideration in our planning and operations but the values for fire risk applied to all route options don't have much of an impact on the overall weightings.</p> <p>Alison Glenn Advised that the Moulamein airfield was used the previous week and stated that the line should be moved north.</p> <p>Joel Annett Transgrid will seek further feedback on use and status of the airfield.</p> <p>Alison Glenn sought clarification that the line follows main roads, boundaries, railways, public land etc where possible.</p> <p>Jarryd Barton noted that where this could be done it was the preference to follow roads, railway lines etc.</p>
2. Consultation on Preferred Route Option C	<p>Joel Annett outlined the consultation program and methodology. Feedback received during the consultation phase will be considered and incorporated into the final route report which will be published in late March. The final route will then be incorporated into the scoping report submitted to the Planning Department for consideration and further investigation through an EIS.</p> <p>Bob Crawford Asked if Transgrid has a plan B if the project can't proceed with the preferred route. Suggested an option further north running parallel with Project Energy Connect. Raised loss of social license if the route is too close to Moulamein.</p>

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	<p>Trevor Clark Asked what will happen if the Victorian component of the project can't proceed?</p> <p>Colin Mayer <i>Advised that Transgrid must proceed with the project development and planning as per its requirements as a TNSP. Transgrid is working closely with TCV to ensure alignment of the two projects. Currently, there is nothing to suggest that a significant change to the proposed project will be required. In the event there is a significant change the project would need to adjust accordingly.</i></p> <p>Alison Glenn Requested extension of exhibition period to end March in consideration of people needing to seek advice to inform a submission. Added that Transgrid needs to clearly explain that engagement doesn't stop at the end of the submission period.</p> <p>Colin Mayer <i>Noted that this was useful feedback and Transgrid would emphasise the steps in the process and the various points for input at the upcoming meetings.</i></p> <p>Alison Glenn noted the mental health and business operation concerns that are within the community around this and other energy projects.</p> <p>Addendum to minutes</p> <p>Transgrid offers a confidential counselling and advice service. Assure Programs' psychologists are professionally qualified with a minimum of five years' post-registration experience. Like doctors, the psychologists are bound by a professional Code of Ethics preventing the disclosure of personal information without written consent.</p> <p>The service is confidential and anonymous. Transgrid does not receive any information about who uses these services.</p> <p>Sessions generally last one hour and most issues can be resolved within a few sessions. When long-term advice or counselling is required, the counsellor will consider the most appropriate referral option and make a recommendation.</p> <p>There is no cost to landowners in accessing this service.</p> <p>How to make an appointment</p> <p>You can book an appointment by calling Assure on 1800 808 374, or you can request an appointment online.</p> <p>When you call Assure, please let the team know that you are from Transgrid, and the business unit is "Landowners." This will ensure you are able to get the support you need. You are not expected to provide the reason – this is a conversation saved for your session with the psychologist.</p> <p>In addition, the NSW Centre for Property Acquisition has free support and counselling services available to any landowners affected by an acquisition. For more information, call 1300 029 146 or visit their website.</p> <p>Steven Parisotto asked for confirmation that late consultation submissions will be received.</p> <p>Transgrid <i>responded that they would receive late submissions within reason.</i></p> <p><i>Addendum: If people are having difficulty responding in time, they should reach out to the Transgrid team and make alternative arrangements.</i></p> <p>David Crew Looking at the documents, Weraï State Forest is still marked on your maps. It has been a freehold area for some time and the maps should</p>

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	<p>be changed to reflect this. Could this be done immediately as it is a distraction for our communities.</p> <p>Colin Mayer noted that Transgrid would ask WSP to look at what can be done to change the online maps. Future maps would ensure that this terminology is removed.</p>
3. Approvals Process	<p>Joel Annett took the CCG through the approvals process and current standing. Once the route is refined following this round of consultation the process to trigger the EIS can commence.</p> <p>David Crew Emphasised the need for early engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders.</p> <p>Geoff Hudson: Advised this engagement has already started and would continue throughout the project.</p>
4. Mapping Activity	Results have been recorded upon maps.
5. Community Investment and Benefits	<p>Joel Annett Advised that Transgrid has developed a Community Investment and Benefits Plan for the project that considers preliminary engagement, research on Council's current community strategic plans and consultation with organisations like the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal.</p> <p>Stated that Transgrid has the Community Partnership Program (CPP) in place which provides grants of up to \$5000 to community organisations.</p> <p>Transgrid is seeking to work with the CCG in addition to other engagement initiatives to identify meaningful investment opportunities that will deliver long term and sustainability benefits to the communities impacted by the project.</p> <p>Trevor Clark The prospect of more water licence buybacks will lower the population and economic output of the area. Buy backs will take time so in thinking about any benefits you will need to anticipate long-term needs in the face of buy backs rather than just look at the current situation.</p> <p>Sarah Ryan Murray River Council are not wanting to accrue any more assets. Council is looking at meaningful services and programs.</p> <p>Council is getting lots of potential community benefits programs from projects. These need to be coordinated or combined so we get a legacy of real social impact from all this work in our region. Also note that Moulamein is engagement fatigued. You could also think of creating assets that provide amenity across Council areas.</p> <p>Bob Crawford My thoughts include-street lighting, highway lighting, community services such as a registered nurse for retirement village, a weir for drought times, get Moulamein substation out of middle of town it would make the centre more attractive and free up land for other uses such as housing.</p> <p>David Crew Social justice programs, initiatives to counter disengagement in school systems. Housing - members of the Indigenous community earn less but, in this region, they pay more in rent.</p> <p>Alison Glenn Look at resourcing - it's no use providing new fire truck if there aren't any skilled people to operate them. Take the time to ensure the benefits outlast the project and don't spend all money with council. Invest in education, scholarship packages fund, long term investment back into the community, housing projects, sponsoring nurses and medical practitioners to come to the community. Essential services to keep people in the community.</p> <p>Bruce Rollinson Telecommunications and state emergency services are key priorities for those living outside of town. You need to be aware that</p>

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	<p>many communities that will bear the brunt of these projects aren't in towns. There needs to be something for them.</p> <p>Joel Annett <i>The theme here is to focus on services and coordinated programs rather than piecemeal projects. Transgrid will continue to provide small, short-term grants (CPP) to community organisations and community projects while the larger package is being worked out.</i></p> <p>Michael Johnson <i>Sustainable projects are prioritised.</i></p>
6. Wrap up and close	<p>Chair: Thanked members for their input and encouraged them to let people know about the forthcoming consultations.</p> <p>He asked that members pencil in 20 March 2024 for the next meeting. This meeting would cover feedback from consultation on the draft route report.</p> <p>He also asked members to continue to think about community benefits.</p> <p>He also requested that if members wanted presentations on other aspects of the project to have a chat with him or Reem.</p> <p>ACTION: Please come to the next meeting with thoughts for Community benefits</p>

Action items

Agenda item	Description	Person responsible	Status
1. Route selection methodology & options overview	Renewable zones requiring 30km buffers page 38, not an exclusion zone, 30kms of the line go through the REZ zone, reword the final report to be clearer	Secretary	ASAP
	Transgrid will seek further feedback on use and status of the airfield north of Moulamein	Joel Annett	ASAP
	Longer consultation period requested to extend past 4 March. Reflecting monetary issues and mortgages – limited availability for consultation. Extend to end of March 2024 Note nature of the consultation with affected landowners is ongoing specifically with them. Refine wording around what the consultation is seeking.	Joel Annett	ASAP
	Update maps moving forward to reflect changed status of Werai State Forest	Jaryd Barton	
	Mental health third party provider to be sent out with minutes for distribution.	Secretary	Completed (See above & below)

Resources

Item	Link
Draft Route Report	https://www.transgrid.com.au/media/1vbfkt2d/vni_west_draft_route_report-29-january-2024.pdf (PDF 23.3MB)
Preferred Corridor Report	https://www.transgrid.com.au/media/0wue2k4h/vni-west-preferred-corridor-report-october-2023.pdf (PDF 3.66 MB)
Draft Corridor Report	https://www.transgrid.com.au/media/af5d3pry/ps135761-env-rep-001-reva_corridor_rpt_v2-2.pdf (PDF 39.34 MB)
Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission Documents	https://www.transgrid.com.au/projects-innovation/vni-west#Regulatory-Investment-Test-for-Transmission--RIT-T-
State Significant Infrastructure	https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/development-and-assessment/state-significant-infrastructurestate-significant-infrastructure
Assure Programs	<p>The service is confidential and anonymous. Transgrid does not receive any information about who uses these services.</p> <p>There is no cost to landowners in accessing this service.</p> <p>How to make an appointment</p> <p>You can book an appointment by calling Assure on 1800 808 374, or you can request an appointment online.</p> <p>When you call Assure, please let the team know that you are from Transgrid, and the business unit is “Landowners.” This will ensure you are able to get the support you need. You are not expected to provide the reason – this is a conversation saved for your session with the psychologist.</p> <p>In addition, the NSW Centre for Property Acquisition has free support and counselling services available to any landowners affected by an acquisition. For more information, call 1300 029 146 or visit their website.</p>

Attachments

Attachment	Format
Glossary	PDF
Transgrid Slides	PDF

Next meeting

Date:	Wednesday, 20 March 2024	Time:	10:00am – 12:00pm
Location:	Moulamein Bowling Club	Chairperson:	Brendan Blakeley