

Agenda

Hunter Central Coast Regional Reference Group – Meeting

Monday, 4 August 2025

10:00am – 12noon

Venue: Singleton Council Chambers or Teams

Business items

Item	Lead	Time
Welcome	Chair	1 minute
Acknowledgement of Country	Rodney Groves HTP First Nations Lead	2 minutes
Hunter Transmission Project EIS update <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temporary workers accommodation• Traffic and Transport• Biodiversity	Peter Redwin – HTP Executive Project Director Carolyn McCallig – HTP Planning & Environment Lead	40 minutes
Council Commissioning Payments	Darren Clarke -Director Regional Coordination	5 minutes
Hunter Conservation Investment Strategy (DCCEEW)	Kelly Carbery – Manager Strategic Projects	15 minutes
HCC REZ Network Upgrades (Ausgrid)- Review of Environmental Factors exhibition themes and responses	Amanda Stephinson	15 minutes
Port to REZ and Newcastle Logistics Precinct updates	Liz Sacco – Stakeholder Engagement Manager Lemuel Yeung - Design Project Manager	10 minutes

Item	Lead	Time
Regional Outcome Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement Capability Uplift Program • Jobs guide • First Nations Workforce Readiness • Hunter Business Prospectus – Net Zero Economy Authority 	Darren Clarke -Director Regional Coordination	20 minutes
General Business Next meeting scheduled for 3 November at Cessnock City Council)	Chair	2 minutes

Online	In person	Apology	Name	Represents
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bob Pynsent (BP)	Independent Chair
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sue Moore (SM)	Mayor Singleton Council
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Daniel Watton (DW)	Mayor Cessnock City Council
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adam Schultz (AS)	Mayor Lake Macquarie City Council
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	John Sullivan (JFS)	Singleton community
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Phillip O'Neill (PO)	Cessnock community
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diane Crosdale (DC)	Lake Macquarie community
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Craig Anderson (CA)	Regional Environment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Samantha Martin-Williams (SMW)	Regional Business
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ashley Williams (AW)	Regional Aboriginal Rep
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jeffrey Drayton (JD)	Mayor Muswellbrook Shire Council
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amanda Wetzel (AW)	Newcastle Community
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Darren Clarke	RRG Secretariat

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Emily Davies O'Sullivan (EDOS)	RRG Secretariat
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sam Harding (SH)	RRG Secretariat
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Walter Mansfield	RRG Secretariat

Visitors

	NAME	POSITION
In Person	Peter Redwin (PR)	HTP Executive Project Director (EnergyCo)
Online	Carolyn McCallig (CM)	HTP Environment and Planning Lead (EnergyCo)
In Person	Bronte Stutchbury	Manager Program Delivery (EnergyCo)
In Person	Rodney Groves (RG)	First Nations Engagement Lead - HTP Community Team (EnergyCo)
Online	Lemuel Yeung (LY)	Design Project Manager (EnergyCo)
Online	Kirsten Lees	Manager Project Comms and Engagement (EnergyCo)
Online	Liz Sacco (LS)	Port to REZ Stakeholder Engagement (EnergyCo)
In Person	Kelly Carbery (KC)	Manager Conservation Programs (DCCEEW)
Online	Louisa Mamouney (LM)	Executive Director, Planning Offsets, Threatened Species and Ecosystems (DCCEEW)
In Person	Amanda Stephinson (AST)	Communications and Engagement Lead HCC REZ (Ausgrid)
In Person	Struan Wilson	Transgrid
Online	Panduka Manamperi	HCC Project Director
Apology	Dimitri Perdikaris	Strategic Delivery Manager (EnergyCo)

The Chair welcomed members and visitors in attendance both in person and virtually.

RG delivered an Acknowledgement of Country.

Apologies as per the above.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW HCCRRG MEMBER:

- Chair welcomed Ashley Williams to the RRG as the First Nations Representative.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

- Chair welcomed and introduced visitors to RRG meeting.

HUNTER TRANSMISSION PROJECT EIS UPDATE:

Presented by Peter Redwin and Carolyn McCallig

- PR and CM provided an overview of the HTP project status and additional details on construction support sites and temporary worker accommodation sites, findings from biodiversity and traffic and transport impact assessment and summary of the forward program for HTP.
- CM noted that additional seasonal surveys are planned for Spring 2025, which may result in some amendment to the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report.
- BP – Noted that Mayors have not been happy to date with the location of temporary workers accommodation in their LGA. Asked if there has been any communication between EnergyCo and the Mayors working towards a solution.
- DC – Confirmed that engagements are continuing with Council's noting that each LGA has different preferences. Muswellbrook and Singleton have provided a number of sites for EnergyCo to consider while Lake Macquarie recommended engaging with Avondale College to explore opportunities to transition worker accommodation solution into student housing. Noted that there isn't enough time to modify the EIS with alternative worker accommodation solutions at this stage, but EnergyCo are looking into options and are open to making amendments if alternative options are feasible and appropriate.
- PR – Confirmed HTP are involved in the conversations with Council.
- CA – Questioned if an environmental assessment has been undertaken on the temporary workers accommodation sites in the EIS.
- CM -Confirmed a full environmental assessment has been undertaken, not just a desktop analysis.

- SMW – Clarified that the traffic and transport movements for HTP doesn't count those relating to the Port to REZ project and asked how those impacts are being considered.
- CM – Port to REZ project impacts are considered in the cumulative impacts. Noted that Port to REZ construction activities will be completed by the time HTP commences (from a temporal perspective) and most OSOM movements on Port to REZ will occur during road curfew hours defined by Transport for NSW. The cumulative impacts will take into consideration both traffic network and community impacts.
- AW – Questioned if cumulative impacts considered planning approvals.
- CM – Confirmed that Development Applications and State Significant Applications in the larger area were included.
- AW- Asked if HTP has had any engagement to date with the Urban Development Program
- CM – No but interested in knowing more.
- PO – Asked CM to provide an update on the status of the social and economic impacts webinars raised at the previous RRG meeting.
- CM – Unfortunately timing did not allow for the social and economic impact webinars but happy to share further details if required.

ACTIONS:

- SM – Requested for Jerrys Plains to be considered as a temporary workers accommodation site for Singleton LGA. Noted it has potential to deliver a legacy housing outcome.

COUNCIL COMMISSIONING PAYMENTS:

Presented by Darren Clarke, Director Regional Coordination

- DC–Noted that all agreements have been signed with in principle agreement reached with Lake Macquarie City Council that will likely be executed this week. The different values for each Council was explained on the basis that Council's were eligible for up to \$250,000 per annum per EnergyCo project (over a 3-year term) that impacts the respective LGA.
- AS–Not aware of in principle agreement for Lake Macquarie City Council and will need to be briefed by staff.

- PO – Queried if Council Commissioning Payments can be used by community groups for planning documentation requests or advice.
- DC – Advised the Council Commissioning Agreement model is applied across every REZ for consistency and the activities in which Council may recover costs for are firmly defined in Council Commissioning Agreement. Each request from Council to access the funding is assessed on its merits with a process in place outlined in the agreement, with Councils being very proactive to date on engaging with EnergyCo to understand whether certain activities align with the Council Commissioning Agreement terms. If there are other funding mechanisms that need to be required, this can be explored, but there is no guarantees it can or would be funded by EnergyCo.
- JD noted it was important to understand what activities Muswellbrook Shire Council can invoice for because it is expected that the amount of work Council are undertaking for EnergyCo projects is significant and the funding will be absorbed quickly.

HUNTER CONSERVATION INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Presented by Kelly Carbery, DCCEEW

- KC and LM provided an overview of the Hunter Conservation Investment Strategy that has been drafted to support a more coordinate approach to biodiversity conservation within REZs. Conservation Investment Strategy identifies priority conservation opportunities for the region and presents opportunities for Councils, First Nations land managers and landowners to participate in biodiversity conservation programs.
- Noted that EnergyCo are intending to enter into a Strategic offset Delivery Agreement with DCCEEW, which would provide foundational investment for delivery of the Hunter Conservation Investment Strategy.
- AST – Sought clarity around who can apply for the Stewardship Support Program and whether Aboriginal organisations or entities beyond LALCs can apply.
- LM – The landowner must be the applicant to apply, noting DCCEEW may explore opportunities for other groups that are not landowners.
- AW – Asked if DCCEEW have been having conversations in the post mining and urban development space for example urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA). Suggested there is an opportunity to broaden out the engagement program so it can be used more widely, not just in the renewable energy space.

- LM – Confirmed DCCEEW have met with UDIA and are aware of the work, but haven't been briefed to date. Agreed there are opportunities for biodiversity certification to be used to fast track development.
- SM – Advised it would be great if the Stewardship Support Program could remain actively open as more people hear about it.
- LM – Noted this is the third time the Stewardship Support program has been accepting applications. Will look at the closing date but will also be open again next year for new applications.
- CA – Asked what the current status is of the Hunter Conservation Investment Strategy and when it will be open to consultation. Asked follow-up question relating to business development opportunities in the biodiversity space and where the workers/expertise will come from.
- KC – The Hunter Conservation Investment Strategy is in the late stages of drafting and will be released in the coming months. It is a live document and will be reviewed every year. In response to the follow-up question, DCCEEW recognises the need for training to increase the amount of people with the right skills, not just in the Hunter-Central Coast, but in all the REZs. DCCEEW will be looking to engage with the industry to explore how this can be addressed in the future.
- PO – Noted that EnergyCo have held meetings that covered biodiversity with the community who had suggestions about offsets. Asked if these have been incorporated.
- KC – DCCEEW are aware of work and engagement undertaken to date. The Conservation Investment Strategy is intended to identify the priority conservation measures and opportunities in the region, and the next step is to engage with landholders that are interested in participating in offsetting.
- AWI – Questioned if there has been engagement with LALCs.
- KC – Yes. Engagement with LALCs has been positive. We have met with Darkinjung, Wanaruah and Mindaribba LALCs to date. We expect to meet with Awabakal LALC shortly and Biribin LALC when available. In early days but will continue to engage.

- SM – Asked if DCCEEW aware of Redbank Power Station proposal to burn waste wood which may be in conflict with this conservation investment strategy.
- KC – Not personally aware of the project, but will look into it.

HCC REZ REF THEMES AND RESPONSES:

Presented by Amanda Stephenson, Ausgrid

- AST – provided an overview of the feedback and submissions attained as part of Ausgrid's HCC REZ Network Upgrades Review of Environmental Factors. Noted a total of 8 submissions, with 7 supportive and 1 opposed. Advised one landowner matter is still with the Energy and Water Ombudsmen, with Ausgrid continuing to work with the landowner on alternate solutions that may address their concerns around the line route on their property.
- BP – Attended drop-in session in Branxton and community were positive and understanding. The information was helpful in understand how Ausgrid's project differed from HTP and how Ausgrid were predominantly utilising existing easements.

PART TO REZ AND NEWCASTLE LOGISTICS PRECINCT UPDATES:

Presented by Liz Sacco and Lemuel Yeung

- LS provided an overview of progress on the port to REZ construction program, confirming 4 intersections are currently under construction, with an additional 4 scheduled to commence shortly. Also confirmed that additional pull over bays have been identified and will be delivered as part of Port to REZ, with the project webpage shortly being updated to provide more detail on the location and proposed solutions for these bays.
- LY – Provided an overview of where Newcastle Logistics Precinct sits in the context of the renewable energy supply chain, connecting port operations to the road transportation network. Confirmed that \$115m in State funding has been received for Newcastle Logistics Precinct to proceed with project.

ACTION:

- BP – Attended NLP event and would like EnergyCo to share the slides from the event with the RRG members to better understand the scale of the challenge.

- AW – Sought clarification as to whether the presentation help us understand if there needs to be any land use changes along the key routes including Hunter Expressway and New England Highway and how that may impact other land-uses and activation.
- DC – Advised EnergyCo are working with the Hunter JO. Will work with the RRG where there are opportunities to make sure benefits are realised for communities and businesses.
- PO – Queried if Port to REZ and Newcastle Logistics Precinct are undertaking community engagement or is it the role of the RRG to spread the word about the projects.
- DC – RRG is a reference point. There are statutory planning requirements relating to EnergyCo's level of community engagement that need to be followed and that broader engagement at a project level is being undertaken.
- LS – EnergyCo are working with closely with TfNSW on Port to REZ in relation to community engagement for Port to REZ and working out OSOM matters including frequency, time of day of movements and where they will stop. Once this has been worked out, more information will be shared. Port to REZ has tapped into community group that are impacted and given presentations.

ACTION:

- BP – RRG recommended members should be invited to community engagement sessions at a project level so they can attend.
- RG – By having RRG members present, it raises the profile of that opportunity and gives the RRG first-hand knowledge of the community's thoughts.

REGIONAL COORDINATION INITIATIVES:

Presented by Darren Clarke, Director Regional Coordination

- DC – provided an overview of the various initiatives EnergyCo are currently delivering to ensure regional benefit realisation, including jobs, local business participation and broader legacy outcomes for Hunter Central Coast Communities. These initiatives include:
 - Local business Procurement Capability Uplift Workshops

- Intends to help local businesses connect with EnergyCo, network operators and other generator/storage proponents to understand what local skills, services and supply is required for their project.
- Provides local businesses with an opportunity to better understand where they can locate procurement and tendering information and opportunities to pursue.
- Provides businesses with a procurement specialist session to help build capability and readiness for future tendering opportunities, whether related to the REZ or broader market opportunities.
- Renewable Energy Jobs Guide
 - Developing an easy to digest reference document for community members to better understand what job opportunities there are in renewable energy and network infrastructure projects and what Registered Training.
- SMW – Asked if EnergyCo has been connecting with the Net Zero Economy Authority as they are leading a review of a renewable energy jobs plan.
- DC – Yes, they are advocates for the development of a Jobs Guide as there is currently a gap. Confirmed EnergyCo is also working with the Net Zero Economy Authority on a supply chain document focussing on renewable energy projects relating to transmission towers and electrical balance of plant.
- Hunter Business Prospectus
 - EnergyCo are currently working with Net Zero Economy Authority to support the development of a Hunter Business Prospective that will identify and promote Hunter based businesses that can support transmission tower manufacturing and installation as well as the balance of electrical plant for renewable energy developments across NSW. Confirmed a contractor has been engaged but will need to confirm anticipated timing for release of the prospectus.
- First Nations Workforce Readiness
 - EnergyCo have engaged University of Newcastle to work with the Hunter Central Coast REZ First Nations Working Group (FNWG) to undertake analysis and identify barriers to First Nations workforce participation in renewable energy and network infrastructure projects.
 - Objective is to identify barriers and implementable actions to address these barriers so EnergyCo can either take action or work

- with Whole of Government to advocate for focussed programs and or investment, where appropriate.
- Preliminary findings will be presented to the HCC REZ FNWG next month.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- BP and PO – Requested for EnergyCo to come back to the RRG and share details of the Community and Employment Benefits Program (CEBP) as soon as possible and ideally before the next RRG meeting, noting there are non-disclosure arrangements in place for RRG members.
- AW – Suggested EnergyCo consider how EnergyCo might utilise the RRG in the interim period in which DCCEEW continue to address the regulatory constraints to delivering a CEBP in the Hunter Central Coast.
- DC – Acknowledged the interest and importance of developing a CEBP in consultation with the RRG and broader communities and committed to taking RRG's requests back to relevant EnergyCo staff for consideration. Noted a shared desire to sharing details and working with the RRG to shape a positive CEBP as soon as possible.

CLOSE AND WRAP UP:

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution. There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:56pm.