

Meeting minutes

CENTRAL-WEST ORANA REZ COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP

Held on: 17/02/2025 – 10:00am to 1:00pm

At: Western Plains Cultural Centre, Dubbo

Chaired by: Lisa Andrews

Attendees:

Independent Chair	Lisa Andrews (Chair)
EnergyCo representatives	Amer Hussein, CWO Director Community and Place (AH) Jane Sayabath, CWO Community and Council Interface Manager (JS) <i>online</i> Yvette Lloyd, CWO Director Regional Coordination (YL) Shannon Schofield, Manager Planning (SS) Rebecca Williams, CWO Community Engagement Manager (RW) Alivya Powell, Aboriginal Engagement and Community Outcomes Officer (AP) Alicia Rados, CWO Senior Manager Community and Stakeholder (AR) <i>online</i>
LGA delegates	Councillor Katie Dicker, Mid-Western Regional Council (KD) <i>online</i> Councillor Kathy Rindfleish, Mayor of Warrumbungle Shire Council (KR)
Government/MPs	Jane Diffey, Snr Electorate Officer, Dubbo Electorate Office [Dugald Saunders MP] (JD) <i>[arrived at 11.00am]</i>
Community representatives	Jock Rice-Ward (JRW) Colin Kilby (CK)
Stakeholder groups	Neville Mattick, RE-Alliance (NM) <i>online</i> David Thorne, NSW Farmers (Mudgee) (DT) Beverley Smiles, Central West Environment Council (BS) Rosemary Hadaway, Mudgee District Environment Group & Watershed Landcare (RH) Jane Hegarty, Cassilis District Development Group (JH) Jillian Kirwan Lee, Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal (JKL) <i>left at 12.33pm</i>
ACERZ representatives	Kee Li, ACJV Community and Stakeholder Engagement Manager (KL) Tung Pham, ACJV Project Wide Director (TP) Miranda Wood, Director of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement (MW) Jodie Barrington, ACJV Stakeholder Engagement Manager <i>online</i> (JB) Kate O'Shaughnessy, ACJV Place Manager (KO) Emily Wheeler, Communications & Stakeholder Engagement Advisor (EW) Catie Anderson, ACJV Operations Services Director (CA)
Aboriginal Affairs Department delegate	Tony Fuller (TF)

Observers	<p>Fiona Court, Partner & Managing Director, SEC Newgate (consultant for ACERERZ) (FC) joined at 11.20am</p> <p>Stephanie Saill, Head of Energy Transition at the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) (SSa) Presenter</p> <p>Kristy Walters, Policy & Engagement Officer (EWON) (KW)</p> <p>Carla Martinez, WSP (SIM Plan consultant) (CM)</p> <p>Kim-Cherrie Davidson, WSP (SIM Plan consultant) (KCD)</p>
Apologies	<p>Mel Manchee, Snr Electorate Officer Roy Butler's Office (Member for Barwon) (MM)</p> <p>Kylie Manson, Warrabinga Wiradjuri #7 Native Title Claimants (KM)</p>

AGENDA

1	Acknowledgement of Country	Chair
2	Welcome and introductions	Chair
3	Apologies	Chair
4	Governance/Declarations	Chair / All
5	Business arising	Chair
6	Correspondence	Chair
7	EnergyCo – Project Update	AH
8	ACERERZ – Project and Update	TP
9	EWON Presentation	SSa
10	SIM Plan Update	SS
11	General Business	All
12	Next meeting	Chair

MEETING MINUTES

1	Acknowledgement of Country	Chair	
2	Welcome and Introductions	Chair	Meeting opened at 10:37am
3	Apologies	Chair	As listed
4	Business arising from last meeting (22/10/24) Minutes finalised on 6/1/25	Chair	<p>Closed actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to ACEREZ website: www.acerez.com.au • Contact with Destination NSW regarding potential impact from negative press • Consider potential use of facilities at Merotherie Accommodation Camp by local residents and sporting groups • First Nations Engagement Team
5	Declarations	Chair	No changes to previous declarations
6	Correspondence report	Chair	<p>As per the meeting notice & final agenda sent 14 February 2025 with one additional item tabled at meeting from resident of Merotherie Road. AH responded to most of the questions raised, based on the information available in the EIS and accompanying documents on the Major Planning Portal (Link: Central-West Orana REZ Transmission Planning Portal - Department of Planning and Environment)</p> <p>Action: Response to questions raised to be prepared and sent to resident</p> <p>Discussion regarding consultation with landowners, RFS, etc. by attendees. Clarification on consultation with local RFS sought</p> <p>Action: YL took on notice to follow-up ACEREZ in terms of fire safety requirements for onsite infrastructure and assets</p>
7	ACEREZ Presentation	TP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation included Pre-construction minor works overview, civil & earthworks preparation, site access routes for Merotherie temporary workforce accommodation, 3D animation of camp model, site plans, noise modelling, building construction, facilities, main office, water supply, waste disposal, power supply, proposed road upgrades and landowner access.
7.1	Pre-construction minor works overview	TP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil & earthworks preparation. DT stated Merotherie Rd needs to be upgraded and trees are too close to the road. Action: EIS outlines work to be carried out. Details to be confirmed DT requested information on waste management/truck movements. Action taken on notice • Discussion on truck movements. Contractor vehicles will be GPS tracked, with reports provided to ACEREZ

- Intersection will be closed during upgrades with only local traffic permitted to access
- BS sought clarification on tree removal as part of road upgrades and whether these have been included in the biodiversity calculations. AH confirmed
- Clarification sought on whether the intersection design will cope with future deliveries of blades, etc. **Action: Taken on notice. AH stated that the Port to REZ project will include Transport for NSW overseeing the pinch points**
- Roadworks in the floodplain area will be built in accordance with Austroads standards. BS commented that local landowners are concerned with potential changes to water movements
- Planned working hours permitted under the consent are 6am-6pm Monday to Sunday. Generally, ACEREZ & its contractors will be working 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday & 8am to 1pm Saturdays
- Noise monitoring requirements outlined

7.2	Water Supply		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions regarding water supply. Water treatment plant will be installed on site
7.3	Communication		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears to have been an issue with the community notification about Pre-construction minor works delivered to residents. KL noted the feedback and advised that the notification was delivered via multiple channels including face-to-face, phone calls, letterbox drop and email. KL advised that additional contacts would be made with directly affected landowners in the future to confirm they have received the notification. JH commented that case manager needs to be the consistent contact with landowners. Difficult when other representatives are involved. Noted & agreed
8	EnergyCo presentation	AH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project state update: Contract & Financial Close, Access Rights Award Process, Membership of Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) and Planning Approval Conditions
	Australian Energy Regulator (AER)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CK asked when the 35-year life of the transmission line project between EnergyCo and the government commences. Action: Taken on notice but confirmed by MW later that the period is from financial close • Concerns with cumulative impacts of solar and wind farms. YL advised that EnergyCo is sharing concerns with developers • CK sought clarification on the funding of works to date and construction costs. AH confirmed that funds are provided by the government (\$2B) and will be recycled to other REZs in NSW (5), then separate arrangements entered into with developers, then consumers
	Management Plans		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Plans are being prepared. Currently consulting with Councils and Transport for NSW. BS commented that it is important to review the Traffic Management Plan, Transport Strategies to assist in determining the Social Impact of the development (currently underway)
	Community Employment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion between Local Community Fund and Local Community Small Grants Fund. Whether Local Community Small Grants

Benefit Program

Fund is ongoing or rolling on. **Action: YL to confirm**

- Clarification of governance with applications/allocations. Department of Primary Industries/Regional Economic Development will administer
- CK raised concern that the CRG workshopped the CEBP and agreed that the major distribution of funds needed to go to the Local Community Small Grants Fund, which would assist those most impacted by the project. This has not occurred
- JKL noted that \$58M is yet to be allocated and would like to know how this would be distributed amongst the four funding streams. Further, requesting that EnergyCo confirm the evaluation process, who will be conducting/determining the allocation, timing, etc. **Action: Future presentation on CEBP**
- JH noted that the Legacy Infrastructure Fund excludes Councils from using the money on roads. This could have helped the local residents greatly. JH stated that the original EIS included the upgrading of the Ulan Road/Golden Highway intersection, however, this has now been scrapped. **Action: AH to confirm**

Port to REZ Update

- All intersection works will be carried out by the same contractor, with completion date proposed for Q2 2026.
- JH enquired whether Transport for NSW had provided numbers on vehicles and frequency of leaving the Port. AH advised that this is currently being finalised. **Action: Timeframe of movements/intervals etc. to be confirmed.** RH commented that consideration also needs to be given to OSOM movements for mining equipment. YL confirmed that Transport for NSW are the coordinators for these movements

BREAK 12.10pm

RECOMMENCED 12.33pm

8	EWON Presentation	SS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation included explanation of EWON's role in Renewable Energy Infrastructure, dispute resolution, key deliverables, complaint handling, etc.
9	SIM Plan	SS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS provided an update on the Social Impact Management Plan in accordance with Condition B55 of the consent • Details of consultation/feedback received to date • Due to this meeting going over time; attendees were invited to stay after the formal close to participate in consultation with WSP to share opinions on potential impacts (positive or negative), mitigation and monitoring • Attendees were also offered one-on-one appointments if they were unable to stay
9	General business	LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT enquired about telecommunications (Telstra). TP advised that ACERZ will be installing its own system (microwave disc) • BS thanked EW & RW for attending the meeting of the Wollar community. There are still some issues to be resolved in terms of funding (due to the boundary line of the REZ) • BS enquired whether there was an update on recruitment of the workforce. TP advised that local contractors will be used for a

couple of months until the camp is set-up			
10	Next meeting	LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Confirmed and agreed for Tuesday 20th May 2025 in Mudgee at 10am with the venue to be confirmed
11	Meeting close	LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Meeting closed at 1:14 pm

ACTIONS

No	Action	Responsibility	Due date	Comments / updates	Status
1	Provide feedback from sentiment survey when available in 2025.	AH	When available	Not yet available (17/2/25)	To be actioned
2	Slide outlining timeline of management plans to be included in future CRG presentations	JF	Ongoing	Management Plans being prepared (17/2/25)	To be actioned
3	Provide update on SIA coordination between REZ projects	AH	Next Meeting		To be actioned
4	Provide a copy of the Heritage Management Plan to CRG members	JF	When available		To be actioned
5	A copy of the policy and application results will be provided when available for CEPB community grants through Regional Development NSW	JS	When available		To be actioned
6	Response to questions raised to be prepared and sent to resident	AH	ASAP		To be actioned
7	Follow-up ACERZ in terms of fire safety requirements for onsite infrastructure and assets	YL	Next meeting		To be actioned
8	Road Upgrades: EIS outlines work to be carried out. Details to be confirmed	TP	Next meeting		To be actioned
9	Will intersection design will cope with future deliveries of blades	AH	Next meeting		To be actioned
10	Confirm when the 35-year life of the transmission line project between EnergyCo and the government commences.	MW	Next meeting	MW confirmed period is from Financial Close	Actioned
11	Future presentation on CEBP, evaluation process, allocation of remaining \$58M, timing, whether Local Community Small Grants Fund is ongoing or rolling on	YL	Next meeting		To be actioned
12	Confirm whether Ulan Rd & Golden Highway intersection is to be upgraded	AH	Next meeting		To be actioned
13	Timeframe of movements/intervals of OSOM vehicles leaving Port	AH	Next meeting		To be actioned



NEXT MEETING

Date: Tuesday 20th May 2025

Time: 10am morning tea 10.30am to 1pm CRG

Venue: TBC (Mudgee)