

Agenda

Hunter Central Coast Regional Reference Group – Meeting

Monday, 2 February 2026

10:00am – 12noon

Venue: The Store (6 Stewart Avenue, Newcastle West) or Teams

Business items

Item	Lead	Time
Welcome	Chair	1 minute
Acknowledgement of Country	Rodney Groves HTP First Nations Lead	2 minutes
Transport Operations Strategy	Anna Zycki – Transport for NSW	30 minutes
Port to REZ and Newcastle Logistics Precinct updates	Liz Sacco – Stakeholder Engagement Manager	10 minutes
Hunter Transmission Project Update	Stephanie Lewis – HTP Communications & Engagement Manager Carolyn McCallig – HTP Planning & Environment Lead	20 minutes
HCC REZ Network Upgrades update	Amanda Stephinson & Jason Wall - Ausgrid	10 minutes
Regional Coordination Update	Darren Clarke – Director Regional Coordination	10 minutes
RRG self-evaluation & continuous improvement session	All	20 minutes

Item			Lead	Time
General Business			Chair	10 minutes
Online	In person	Apology	Name	Represents
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bob Pynsent (BP)	Independent Chair
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Adam Schultz (AS)	Mayor Lake Macquarie City Council
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 (DCR)	Lake Macquarie community
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Craig Anderson (CA)	Regional Environment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 (DC)	RRG Secretariat
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walter Mansfield	RRG Secretariat

Visitors

	NAME	POSITION
In Person	Stephanie Lewis (SL)	HTP Communications & Engagement Manager
Apology	Carolyn McCallig	HTP Environment & Planning Manager
In Person	Rodney Groves (RG)	First Nations Engagement Lead - HTP Community Team (EnergyCo)
Online	Anna Zycki (AZ)	Executive Director Development & Solutions, TfNSW
In Person	Kirsten Lees	Manager Project Comms and Engagement (EnergyCo)
Online	Liz Sacco (LS)	Port to REZ Stakeholder Engagement (EnergyCo)
Online	Glen Clifton (GL)	Project Manager Port to REZ
Online	Amanda Stephinson (AST)	Communications and Engagement Lead HCC REZ (Ausgrid)
Online	Jason Wall (JW)	Project Director HCC REZ (Ausgrid)
Apology	Panduka Manamperi	HCC Project Director
Online	Hudson Bawden	Community Engagement Manager, TfNSW
Online	Cam Martin	Asset Planning Manager, Cessnock City Council

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

RG delivered an Acknowledgement of Country.

Apologies as per the above.

Conflict of Interest

- Chair asked if any members had any conflict of interest to be declared. Chair advised of a family member working for Port of Newcastle.

TRANSPORT OPERATIONS STRATEGY

Presented by Anna Zycki

- TfNSW have conducted a logistics review where numerous issues were identified.
- Looking at additional roadworks to improve corridor safety allowing for contra-flows, minimising impacts to townships, reviewing curfews and coordinating oversize/overmass (OSOM) vehicles out of Port of Newcastle.
- SM – Queried if the review was focusing on particular areas like the Port of Newcastle or Jerrys Plains.
- AZ – Looking at the full corridor. There was a series of studies undertaken on different aspects including speed of trucks, time of day and how to support OSOM through small towns to minimise disruptions.
- SM – Queried about speed of OSOM and arrival times into Jerrys Plains.
- AZ – Looking into the logistic function and managing OSOM journeys very closely than what is currently done. Will be looking into ways to best sequence the way OSOM leaves the Port and have a clear indication of where each OSOM is.
- SM – Asked if this information will be communicated with heavy vehicle/truck operators and the community.
- AZ – Confirmed that it is the intention to communicate information with the heavy vehicle/truck industry and communities so they know what to expect.
- PO – Acknowledged that the assessment had been undertaken and if it could be shared with the RRG.
- AZ – Explained that work done to date is essentially a model that shows what happens when trucks move faster/slower or in a certain order. More of a model for transport planner expert analysis rather than a document for general community consumption. Publicly available information and findings/recommendations from the analysis will be available at a future date.
- BP – Queried when the logistics coordinator would be appointed.

- AZ – Scoping out a logistics coordinator now. It would be a function within TfNSW and look to have it established within the next 6 months.
- AW – Pointed out that there are risks around OSOM movements impacting on locals using the road network to get to work, etc and if TfNSW are looking into providing more public transport along the corridor.
- AZ – A review of the public transport network is being worked on but not part of this program. TfNSW are looking at the way of managing the road network to minimise disruptions and avoiding having OSOM on the roads at busy times.
- AW – Concerned that there is a risk of OSOMs getting stuck/delayed. Needs to be alternative public transport when needed as backup.
- AZ – Acknowledged this is a risk. Noted TfNSW will be closely monitoring planned movements of turbine blades in May-June 2026 to inform operational strategy and minimise traffic disruption and safety risks. On average there are 25-30 OSOM movements in the Lower Hunter every month already. With the increase in numbers, there will be a large amount of planning in the first phase to manage going forward.

PORT TO REZ AND NEWCASTLE LOGISTICS PRECINCT UPDATES

Presented by Liz Sacco & Glen Clifton

- GL – Provided an update of each work site and pullover bay with most tracking well.
- PO – Asked who was funding the upgrades.
- GL – There was \$128.5m allocated in the NSW State budget.
- CA – Questioned if the updates were going through the REF process and will be exhibited.
- LS – REF completed end of 2024/early 2025. There were five minor REF packages. As they were for minor works, TfNSW was the approver and they weren't on exhibition. The REFs are available on the TfNSW website:
<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/current-projects/renewables-transportation-%E2%80%93-port-to-renewable-energy-zones-rez>
- LS – Newcastle Logistics Precinct EIS scheduled for display Q2 2026 with a 28-day exhibition period.
- AW – Mentioned that a few RRG members participated in the social impact analysis and wanted to know if that had been finalised.
- LS – Thanked the members who participated. WSP still undertaking interviews. Final report will be in EIS Social Impact chapter.

- AW – Noted relevance of historical buildings on NLP site. Will the project look to undertake improvements to the building.
- LS – Unsure at this stage. It was raised through the social impact analysis interviews.
- DC – Noted the budget allocated to the project and how it will be tight to deliver any opportunities beyond the scope of delivering Newcastle Logistic Precinct – which is focused at this point on delivering the infrastructure required to support the efficient storage and movement of OSOM equipment arriving at the Port of Newcastle and ultimately being delivered to project sites. Noted additional opportunities to make improvements to (or achieve adaptive re-use of) the heritage buildings may be achieved through additional funding but would need to be the subject of an additional NSW Budget proposal.

HUNTER TRANSMISSION PROJECT UPDATE:

Presented by Stephanie Lewis

- SL – Noted the program of engagement that has taken place as part of the submissions received in the EIS.
- SL – Number of refinements taking place as part of the amendment report including no longer requiring the temporary workers accommodation site at Gouldsville Road site in Singleton, minor alignment adjustments and changes to access tracks and forestry roads.
- CA – Raised concerns around early works commencing before offsets are delivered and the sequencing of SODA payments.
- DC – EnergyCo consulted with the RRG about EnergyCo no longer independently pursuing offsets in December 2024 and subsequently had DCCCEW brief the RRG on the Hunter Conservation Investment Strategy in 2025.
- DC – The HTP Strategic Offset Delivery Agreement will be a public document but is still being negotiated with DCCEEW. As an immediate comparable reference point, it was noted the CWO SODA is live and can be found here:
<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-11/central-west-orana-transmission-project-offset-delivery-progress-250415.pdf>
- CA – Noted it would be beneficial for the RRG to have greater insight and understanding as to how DCCEEW intend to deliver offsets under a HTP SODA. Understood that it would be delivered in alignment with the Hunter Conservation Investment Strategy but concerned this it is a very high-level strategic document and

more detail akin to what Biodiversity Conservation Trust share would be preferable . Suggested a deep dive into the SODA and biodiversity conservation will be beneficial.

- SM – Indicated that it would also be good to know how landowners can participate in biodiversity stewardship, especially given some landowners were previously working with EnergyCo on such opportunities.
- SM – Sought clarification on change to temporary workers accommodation site in Singleton.
- SL – Contractors engaged as part of the design and construction tendering process for HTP have indicated that the temporary worker accommodation sites in Muswellbrook, Cessnock and Lake Macquarie would be enough to accommodate the workers. Noted the Gouldsville site will still be required as a construction support site.
- BP – Sought an update on the impacts to the Littlejohn’s Tree Frog.
- SL – EnergyCo has engaged a species expert and are engaging with the University of Newcastle and NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water. Through this engagement to date, EnergyCo has been able to significantly reduce land clearing impacts through transmission and substation design refinements and are now avoiding 60 of 62 known breeding ponds. Noted engagement with the University and other key stakeholders is continuing.

HCC REZ NETWORK UPGRADES UPDATE:

Presented by Amanda Stephinson and Jason Wall, Ausgrid

- AST informed the RRG that the Determination Deed with EnergyCo was signed on 17th December, 2025 with early works now commenced.
- AST – Continuing to work with impacted landowner at Belford.
- AST – Understands there is confusion between HTP, REZs and HCC REZ infrastructure upgrades. Will continue to communicate differences and noted EnergyCo’s interactive tool on its website is a useful point of reference for understanding what project any certain landowner impacts may relate to.
- SM – Noted that impacted landowners had been in contact and that alignment was being driven by existing easements.
- AST – Noted Ausgrid has sought to utilise existing easements in the first instance but is committed working out the best outcome that Ausgrid can achieve with the landowner noting technical and environmental complexities. Noted that it is also

important that impacts on adjoining landowners are contemplated in any decision made around any easement alignment adjustments.

REGIONAL COORDINATION UPDATE

Presented by Darren Clarke

- DC – Noted that concerns had been raised about local businesses having to pay a subscription fee to access renewable energy opportunities on ICN Renewable Energy Zone Topics Page. Confirmed that the ICN Renewable Energy Zone Topics Page and all REZ opportunities are free to access for businesses located within any REZ.
- DC – Noted there was an improvement opportunity around local business awareness and that EnergyCo will deliver dedicated communications initiatives throughout 2026 to ensure local businesses understand they can access and utilise the ICN Renewable Energy Zone Topics Page and can avoid costs of broader ICN subscription if they wish.
- DC – EnergyCo’s Regional Coordination team are working on a speed dating/networking event with HunterNet to bring together local businesses with generators and network operators, planned to be delivered in late April 2026 in the upper Hunter.
- PO – Sought update on Hunter Cumulative Impact Studies.
- DC – Currently in procurement phase and tender evaluation underway. Noted a targeted set of businesses were engaged in the tender process based on known capabilities and to accelerate the procurement process.

RRG SELF-EVALUATION & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- The RRG agreed on the following:
 - Highest priorities for this year are:
 - biodiversity impacts and conservation;
 - delivery of community and employment benefit program; and
 - greater focus and engagement on Aboriginal and Cultural Heritage for EnergyCo projects.
 - An Action Register is set up and maintained to track progress on key issues.
 - Allowing the opportunity for impacted community members to attend the RRG meetings to share insights into their concerns, ideas and interests.

- EnergyCo welcomes the opportunity to shape agendas based on what the RRG wants and introducing more agenda items that allow the RRG to positively shape and help inform EnergyCo initiatives, like a Hunter CEBP.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

- All – Agreed that the remaining three RRG meetings this year will be held at Muswellbrook, Cessnock and Singleton.

CLOSE AND WRAP UP:

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 11:40am.

ACTION REGISTER

Action	Raised by	Comment	Responsible	Status
Deep dive session into the SODA including conservation opportunities, stewardship opportunities for landowners and First Nations participation.	Craig Anderson 2/2/2026	Extraordinary meeting to be arranged between now and next RRG in May.	EnergyCo/ DCCEEW	Open