MINUTES
WVTN COMMUNITY CONSULTATION GROUP – MEETING #10 – 9 FEBRUARY 2022

Meeting date: 9 February 2022
Meeting time: 6pm – 8.00pm, in person and online
Meeting called by: Catherine Botta

CCG Meeting Purpose: The CCG is a consultative forum and not a decision-making forum.

Attendees

Catherine Botta	Independent Chair
Allan Harnwell	Community member - Melton/CCG East
Randall Cape	Community member - Moorabool/CCG East
Ian Terrill	Ballarat Group of Fire Brigades – Ballarat/CCG Central
Martin Webb	Community member - Moorabool/CCG East
Darren Rudd	Manager City Design & Strategy - Melton City Council
Carolyn Balint	Approvals Manager – AusNet Services
Lou Ellis	Stakeholder Manager - AusNet Services
Justin Justin	Stakeholder Engagement Specialist - AusNet Services
Dina Jones	Secretariat - AusNet Services

Apologies

Fiona Gray	Executive Manager Catalyst Projects - City of Ballarat
Darren Edwards	Community member, Energy Grid Alliance - Moorabool/CCG East
Vanessa Osborn	Coordinator Major Developments - Moorabool Shire Council
Bronwyn Southee	Manager Development and Community Safety - Hepburn Shire Council

Not attended

Katie Gleisner	Manager Planning and Development - Pyrenees Shire Council
Grant Harrison	Community member - Melton/CCG East
Rebecca St Ledger	Community member - Ballarat/CCG Central
David George	Head of Planning and Development - Northern Grampians Shire

Agenda item 1	Minutes, apologies, and actions of previous meeting

- Independent Chair opened the meeting noting the apologies.
- Minutes of previous meeting were accepted without amendments.
- Action list read out and open actions closed out.
- Discussion about timing of release of the bushfire impact presentation. AusNet explained the TRG had not yet provided comments on the presentation and offered to provide briefings to CFA and Council if there were further questions.
- Noted: Ian Terrill/CFA keen to review and comment before report is finalised. AusNet met with CFA in late February)

Agenda item 2	Presentation – Update on EES process

- See attached presentation for details.
- Below are questions relating to the presentations.
- NB questions and answers aren't verbatim.

Question/comment referring to the presentations	Response
What are secondary consents?	Additional permits required that fall outside the remit of the EES, such as under the Wildlife Act, Water Act, Road Management Act, approval of Cultural Heritage Management Plans etc.
Presentation refers to 'extensive' consultation. Community is sceptical as the route hasn't changed due to community feedback.	AusNet Services were contracted by AEMO to plan and deliver the WVTNP. The area of interest has narrowed to a single corridor and to a route with alternatives. Community feedback as well as survey results and advice from technical specialists is considered as part of the route selection process. All feedback needs to be considered and balanced, including from the experts at TRG, and the community's view.
If AEMO were to change its project requirements, would AusNet Services consider these?	Key aspects of the project like the kw capacity etc were pre-determined. AusNet Services can't comment on AEMO's behalf.
Can AEMO change the scoping requirements of the EES?	No, the scoping requirements are set by DELWP, who owns the EES process. There were 75 submissions to the draft scoping requirements document and the final scoping requirement document changed accordingly.
When will the EES documents be published?	There have been delays due to Covid, floods and lack of access to land to complete field surveys. An EES process usually takes 2-3 years. It is anticipated that the EES will be submitted mid/late 2022. Approval to publish the EES will only be provided after DELWP check the scoping requirements have been met and TRG comments considered.
How do you manage 45 people on the TRG? (Note: As part of the presentation, it was mentioned that there were over 45 participants)	All TRG meetings are held online and chaired by DELWP. All participants provide input and feedback to the technical reports presented by the EES specialists. The role of the TRG is to review and assess the quality of the technical reports.

Agenda item 3	Outlook for 2022

- AusNet is still working through technical studies and gaining access to land for surveys.
- Approach to certain pinch points, i.e., Hepburn Lagoon yet to be determined and alternative routes at Hepburn Lagoon are being further considered by technical specialists.
- The Stakeholder Engagement team is having a planning day to determine further engagement activities and timelines for 2022.

Question/comment	Response
What will the powerlines look like from my property?	The Visual Amenity Impact report is still one of the outstanding reports. The expert will do site visits to determine impact.

Actions	Who
AusNet to follow up with the visual amenity impact expert to brief CCG.	AS

Agenda item 4	Discussion/feedback – Recap of community engagement late 2021

- Community Engagement session in December were well attended and provided access to some experts.
- General perception is, that AusNet Services is not adequately considering alternative solutions. AusNet Services is keen to hear how these perceptions can be addressed.

Question/comment	Response
Attended the Darley session, spoke to one of the engineers, I had the impression that AusNet is only considering overhead lines and not whether there is a better solution.	Noted.
Why not put a HVDC cable in the existing Sydenham to Moorabool easement? Why aren't alternative solutions being considered and if so, why isn't the feasibility of alternatives fed back to the community?	Alternative solutions like feasibility of using existing easements, will be addressed as part of the EES.
There appears to be a lack of forward planning regarding assets and no future-proofing to contain additional lines, when required.	Noted.

Agenda item 5	Community perception/questions/emerging issues

- Reference is made to the Stop AusNet Towers community group and its planned meetings as well as a rally on 8 March. Information to be shared with the group.

Agenda item 6	Next meeting date, topic

- Discussion around meeting frequency, 4 or 6 weekly and whether in person meetings are preferable. Decision to retain a mix of online and in person meetings and to meet six weekly after the March meeting.
- Discussion on whether new members should be invited to the group given the low numbers and to diversify. The group suggests seeking new members including a few landowners directly along the route, and in particular farmers or farmer group representatives. Also, to have an AusNet Services technical expert join the group.
- Next meeting: 6 April 2022 in person in Bacchus Marsh, topic TBC
- Meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Actions	Who
AusNet to follow up with visual amenity impact expert to brief CCG.	AS
Share information about Stop AusNet Towers meetings/events.	Secretariat
AusNet to seek new members as suggested by the group.	AS