

MINUTES

WVTN COMMUNITY CONSULTATION GROUP – MEETING #7 – 13 OCTOBER 2021

Meeting date: 13 October 2021
Meeting time: 6pm – 8.00pm, 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
Martin Webb	Community member - Moorabool/CCG East
Randall Cape	Community member - Moorabool/CCG East
Darren Edwards	Community member, Energy Grid Alliance - Moorabool/CCG East
Rebecca St Ledger	Community member - Ballarat/CCG Central
Grant Harrison	Community member - Melton/CCG East
Darren Rudd	Manager City Design & Strategy - Melton City Council (part)
Deb Neumann	Principal and Technical Director – Strategic Planning, Infrastructure and Environment - Jacobs
Shelley Ada	Studies Coordinator - Jacobs
Justin Justin	Stakeholder Engagement Specialist - AusNet Services
Dina Jones	Secretariat - AusNet Services

Apologies

Katie Gleisner	Manager Planning and Development - Pyrenees Shire Council
Bronwyn Southee	Manager Development and Community Safety - Hepburn Shire Council
David George	Head of Planning and Development - Northern Grampians Shire
Vanessa Osborn	Coordinator Major Developments - Moorabool Shire Council
Fiona Gray	Executive Manager Catalyst Projects - City of Ballarat
Stephanie McGregor	Executive Project Director - AusNet Services

Not attended

Chris Stevens	Chair Potato Growers' Association
Ian Terrill	Ballarat Group of Fire Brigades – Ballarat/CCG Central
Brendan Driden	Community member – Pyrenees/CCG West

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.



- Chairperson referenced the updated Terms of Reference and the Code of Conduct applicable to all attendees.
- Chairperson noted the council representatives' preference to be observers at the meetings.

Agenda item 2	Update on webinars and engagement activities
---------------	--

- The webinars were generally well attended, especially the ones relating to the Corridor selection process and compensation.
- The webinars are followed by 30 minute one on one sessions on various topics, with 50 bookings to date.
- AusNet is keen on feedback on the format of the sessions from the group.
- Feedback included that the corridor selection process webinar was interesting and informative, however lacked information on undergrounding options and the use of AC vs DC technology
- During the Q&A part, questions asked were not summarised and interpreted the way they were required, and the technology made it difficult to clarify and respond quickly.
- It was suggested to allow all participants to see the other questions.
- AusNet outlined the format of the next round of community consultation sessions in Waubra, Ballarat, Darley and Melton, being offered in person, if possible, given the COVID restrictions.

Agenda item 3	Presentation – Planning approvals including Environmental Management Framework (EMF) and Environmental Performance Requirements (EPR)
---------------	---

- See attached presentation slides as attachment A.
- Below are questions relating to the presentations.

Question/comment referring to the EMF	Answer
Is the proposed Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) based on the exact route alignment or the wider corridor?	It is based on the route alignment, as the PSA documentation will only be submitted once the final route is known and the EES is completed.
What is a road zone 1?	This refers to an arterial road, if the proposal seeks to alter the access a separate planning approval is required.
Is the PSA documentation prepared?	No, at this stage only the framework for the PSA is complete.
Are buffers considered around sensitive use zones?	There is no formal requirement for buffers in planning schemes, generally only around defined noxious uses, i.e., mining activities.
Is consideration given to planning policy conflicts?	Yes, all relevant stakeholders are engaged with as part of the TRG.
Does the VC157 Amendment apply?	This amendment only applies to energy generation projects, not transition projects.

Membership of the Community Consultation Group does not equate to support for AusNet Services nor endorsement of the project. The CCG is not a decision-making body. Please refer to the Terms of Reference.



Is Council agreement to the PSA required?	The planning minister will sign off on the PSA, however councils are engaged throughout the process through the TRG. Councils can also submit a submission as part of the EES process, they do not have a veto right.
Question/comment referring to the EPR	Answer
If impacts can't be effectively managed, at what point does the project continue? (Reference to the flow chart)	Specialists will make recommendations to avoid or minimise the impact, this feedback loop is occurring now between the specialists and the designers. It is ultimately up to the Planning Panel to make the final decision whether the suggested mitigation measures are appropriate.
Where are we in the process?	The project is currently in the 'Impact Assessment' phase.
If there are objections to the projects through the public exhibition phase, what happens then?	The Minister will make an assessment.
Is the project team liaising with the Minister now during the process?	No.
At what point are the EES scoping requirements considered, i.e., the use of DC and undergrounding?	These are considered throughout the process, as there is a requirement to address these in the documentation.
When will the assessment be with the Minister?	See timeline of the project on the project webpage.
Who is responsible under the EMF if there is a compliance concern?	This will be considered as part of the TRG with DEWLP and councils.

Agenda item 4	Community perception/questions/emerging issues
---------------	--

- General feedback from the Community Benefit Fund presentation was that releasing some of the funds early, i.e., before the project is approved, could be seen as a tool to influence public opinion.
- Land access for survey works is an issue in the community.
- Reference was made to the Anthony's Cutting project where upgrades to picnic facilities were committed but were never delivered.
- Comment was made that the studies into overhead and undergrounding should be made public so the public can decide which option is better for them.
- Comment was made about the perceived role of councils to advocate on behalf of the community and be in a position to answer project related questions.
- Discussion around Social Media posts and allegedly contentious field interactions between landowners and AusNet staff/sub-contractors.

Agenda item 5	Next meeting date, topic
---------------	--------------------------

- Chair references the Terms of Reference and asked members to sign or acknowledge the Code of Conduct.
- Secretariat asked group members to consider whether they want to share their contact details.
- Next meeting: 10 November 2021.
- Next topic: Compensation and bushfire. The group expressed strong interest in the undergrounding topic and asked AusNet to explore to bring it forward.
- Meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Actions	Who
Secretariat to follow up with members to sign or acknowledge Code of Conduct.	Secretariat.
Group members to let the secretariat know if they want to share their contact details.	All.



Attachment A

Presentation – Planning approvals including Environmental Management Framework (EMF) and Environmental Performance Requirements (EPR)

(see attached document)

WVTNP - CCG meetings - Action list

Meeting date	Action	Who	When	Completed
13 October 2021	Secretariat to follow up with members to sign or acknowledge Code of Conduct.	Secretariat.	Next meeting	
13 October 2021	Group members to let the secretariat know if they want to share their contact details.	All.	Next meeting	
15 September 2021	Group members to provide feedback on the six CBF pillars.	All	Next meeting	13 October 2021
15 September 2021	Group members to let the secretariat know if they want to share their contact details.	All	Next meeting	
25 August 2021	Incorporate suggested changes to the Terms of Reference and re-send to group.	Secretariat		25 October 2021
13 July 2021	Chairperson to follow up with resigned CCG members to gain a better understanding of the reasons for the resignations.	Chair	31 July 2021	23 July 2021
13 July 2021	AS to contact community members on the waitlist.	AS	31 July 2021	30 July 2021
13 July 2021	Forward questions received to Barton Napier/AS and collate responses.	Secretariat	25 August 2021	Closed
13 July 2021	Change minutes format to include Q&A and action list section.	Secretariat	25 August 2021	10 August 2021
8 June 2021	AS to follow up with community member with concerns about lack of answers, information on the webpage including the pins provided via the interactive map.	AS	30 June 2021	
8 June 2021	Minutes to be amended as per discussion and agenda item "Community questions/sentiment" be added to the agenda.	Secretariat	18 June 2021	15 June 2021
8 June 2021	Include the overview of the 19 studies in minutes.	Secretariat	6 July 2021	24 June 2021
8 June 2021	Include a list of the TRG member organisations to the minutes.	Secretariat	6 July 2021	24 June 2021 (sent with May meeting minutes)
8 June 2021	Follow up with community member regarding Moorabool News article	AS	30 June 2021	Completed
18 May 2021	AS to provide feedback to Benestar regarding the steps to access the services	AS	8 June 2021	Completed

18 May 2021	AS to explore additional mental health support services offers	AS	8 June 2021	Completed
18 May 2021	AS to take CCG feedback provided and share with the project engagement and communications teams, as well as technical teams as needed.	AS	8 June 2021	Completed
18 May 2021	Secretariat to share group member's email details.	Secretariat	18 May 2021	Completed 21 May 2021
18 May 2021	AS to set up Teams page as a trial and share access details.	AS	12 June 2021	In progress
28 April 2021	Discuss future dates beyond July	Secretariat	8 June 2021	Completed 18 May 2021
28 April 2021	Publish minutes of the meetings on the project's webpage	AS	Ongoing (Within one week of minutes being ratified by the group)	Completed
28 April 2021	Chair and secretariat to forward plan and allocate topics and dates to meetings	Chair/Secretariate	18 May 2021	11 May 2021
28 April 2021	AS to provide link to map of initial project from AEMO's webpage and to provide additional information about AEMO and its underlying legislation.	AS	18 May 2021	11 May 2021
28 April 2021	AS to provide link to the Victorian Government's Directions Paper.	AS	18 May 2021	11 May 2021
28 April 2021	AS to share AEMO video from briefing of Moorabool Council	AS	18 May 2021	11 May 2021
28 April 2021	Outline how AS uses the information received	AS	18 May 2021	Completed 18 May 2021
7 April 2021	Update on FAQ document status	AS	18 May 2021	Completed
7 April 2021	Distribute minutes to TRG and further within AusNet Services	AS	Ongoing	Ongoing
7 April 2021	Provide history and details about the project's scope and key milestones at next meeting	AS	28 April 2021	28 April 2021
7 April 2021	Provide updated FAQ document to the group	AS	As updated	In progress
7 April 2021	Set up a review of CCG in mid-2022	Secretariat	mid 2022	TBD
7 April 2021	Attendees to review ToR and CoC and provide feedback and comments to secretariat.	All attendees	28 April 2021	28 April 2021

#7 April 2021	Set next meeting for last week of April	Secretariat	17 April 2021	20 April 2021
7 April 2021	Forward plan of next meeting dates and locations to be discussed at next meeting	Secretariat e	28 April 2021	28 April 2021

WVTNP - CCG meetings – Q&A

Meeting date	Question	Response
Follow up question after 13 October 2021	Who is responsible for enforcing a non-compliance of any of the Environmental Management Conditions under a Ministerial approval?	<p>The Environmental Management Framework (EMF) for the EES is presently being drafted and has not been socialised with the Technical Reference Group or other stakeholders at this time. It is within the EMF that the responsibilities and processes for monitoring compliance will be established. In general, compliance measures will take a number of different forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant regulatory authorities will review and approve environmental management plans including construction environmental management plans where required. • Regulatory authorities will be responsible for administering and enforcing statutory approvals, or where not complied with undertaking necessary measures to reach compliance. • The Proponent and their contractors will be responsible for maintaining compliance and this will involve regular monitoring and auditing of compliance, against all requirements of the EMF, including Environmental Performance Requirements. • Some Projects that have undergone an EES process have had an Independent Environmental Auditor appointed to audit compliance with Environmental Performance Requirements. It is uncertain if this will be the case for WVTNP.

	Question/comment referring to the EMF	Answer
13 October 2021	Is the proposed Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) based on the exact route alignment or the wider corridor?	It is based on the route alignment, as the PSA documentation will only be submitted once the final route is known and the EES is completed.
13 October 2021	What is a road zone 1?	This refers to an arterial road, if the proposal seeks to alter the access a separate planning approval is required.
13 October 2021	Is the PSA documentation prepared?	No, at this stage only the framework for the PSA is complete.
13 October 2021	Are buffers considered around sensitive use zones?	There is no formal requirement for buffers in planning schemes, generally only around defined noxious uses, i.e., mining activities.
13 October 2021	Is consideration given to planning policy conflicts?	Yes, all relevant stakeholders are engaged with as part of the TRG.
13 October 2021	Does the VC157 Amendment apply?	This amendment only applies to energy generation projects, not transition projects.
13 October 2021	Is Council agreement to the PSA required?	The planning minister will sign off on the PSA, however councils are engaged throughout the process through the TRG. Councils can also submit a submission as part of the EES process, they do not have a veto right.
	Question/comment referring to the EPR	Answer
13 October 2021	If impacts can't be effectively managed, at what point does the project continue? (Reference to the flow chart)	Specialists will make recommendations to avoid or minimise the impact, this feedback loop is occurring now between the specialists and the designers. It is ultimately up to the Planning Panel to make the final decision whether the suggested mitigation measures are appropriate.
13 October 2021	Where are we in the process?	The project is currently in the 'Impact Assessment' phase.
13 October 2021	If there are objections to the projects through the public exhibition phase, what happens then?	The Minister will make an assessment.
13 October 2021	Is the project team liaising with the Minister now during the process?	No.
13 October 2021	At what point are the EES scoping requirements considered, i.e., the use of DC and undergrounding?	These are considered throughout the process, as there is a requirement to address these in the documentation.

13 October 2021	When will the assessment be with the Minister?	See timeline of the project on the project webpage.
13 October 2021	Who is responsible under the EMF if there is a compliance concern?	This will be considered as part of the TRG with DEWLP and councils.
15 September 2021	What if the project does not go ahead, why bring forward funding? How much is 20%	Waiting on approval within AS to total funding amount and to bring 20% forward into the pre-EES approval phase of project.
15 September 2021	What about the issue of land fragmentation, if the project interrupts bio-links, impacting the work of local land care groups.	The project will look for local areas, where possible, to implement the required offsets and will work with the local land care groups.
15 September 2021	AS to note that bringing the funding forward can be seen as wanting to buy influence.	Noted.
15 September 2021	The benefits from the fund should go to the impacted communities, not to energy start-ups or for-profit groups.	Noted, this is the intention.
15 September 2021	What about neighbouring landowners, who are not directly affected and therefore not compensated?	Access to the fund is for not-for-profit community groups, not to be confused with compensation to landowners, not intended to go to private entities.
15 September 2021	There is confusion in the community about how far along the EES process the project is, there are rumours there will be a route announcement late October.	The project is 12 months into the EES process, it is anticipated that the documents will be on public display and there will be public hearings in approximately 12 months from now, with a decision due late 2022. The final route will be announced by AusNet Services in late 2021. This route will be subject to further investigations and surveys as part of the EES. The Minister for Planning will decide on the EES and whether the project can go ahead or not and what conditions are placed on the project, if any.
15 September 2021	There is the potential that the project will be challenged through the legal courts, is there a mechanism to provide feedback to the Minister and/or AEMO to avoid this?	The project is working through the EES process and there is no definite project until the planning and environmental approvals have been issued.
15 September 2021	What are the actual costs of the project to date?	We are not in a position to provide information on the costs of the project to date.
15 September 2021	Why won't AS consider DC for undergrounding, instead of AC?	Noted, this will be addressed when undergrounding is discussed.

15 September 2021	Concerns about mental health were raised, especially if the project goes until 2022 and once the section 93 notices go out.	Noted.
15 September 2021	Issue about accessing information on the project's website was raised. Would be appreciated if the information about the EES was clearer and easier to find.	Noted.
15 September 2021	There is the perception that the EES process is designed to make the project work, not many projects in the past have been changed due to the EES outcomes.	Noted.
15 September 2021	Comment was raised that compulsory acquisition of land is not preferable, as the landowners lose the option to negotiate. There needs to be a distinction between land acquisition and land access, they are not the same.	Noted.
15 September 2021	Suggestion was made to use an interactive online tool to make information more accessible. Comment was made that the website is not the only tool the project should rely on.	Noted, the website is being re-designed and will launch soon with more features including interactive pages.
15 September 2021	Has the project had any discussions with the Liberal Party about their alternative route and will AS consider alternative routes?	No discussions have been held with the Liberal Party about their alternative route. Our focus remains on identifying the least constrained route that meets the project objectives. AS does consider alternative routes that meet project objectives.
15 September 2021	Can the power lines use existing infrastructure/easements or alternative delivery models?	The project is intending on utilising existing easements where possible including in the Bulgana to Waubra section where we intend on running parallel to the existing 220kV line. Houses have built up to the edge of easements which means it is not possible in many instances to use existing easements. We have been asked whether we could run transmission lines along the Western Highway however there is no space particularly in areas such as Melton where again, houses are built up to the road corridor.
15 September 2021	Should the group meet more frequently?	AS shares information with the group as it becomes available, more frequent meetings won't mean that more information will be available.
Follow up after 25 August 2021	Do AusNet complete the EES as an "inhouse" task or do they employ consultants to do this for them?	AusNet employ consultations with expertise in the various areas of the EES eg. Biodiversity, Agriculture, Landscape and Visual Amenity. All of the presenters at the webinars are consultants and experts in their field.

<p>Follow up after 25 August 2021</p>	<p>Is feedback from the community collected during the EES passed onto the appropriate authorities on continuous basis during the process or does it wait until the EES is completed before feedback is given?</p>	<p>Yes all feedback received from the community is passed onto the relevant specialist at the time it is received so the feedback can be incorporated into the specialists work.</p>
<p>Follow up after 25 August 2021</p>	<p>With regard to other stakeholders is it possible to be more specific? Local councils, emergency services and state and federal government representatives are clear enough but industry groups covers a large group of people. Have the electrical retailers been consulted for example? Do the meetings take place on a formal regular basis or do they happen as required?</p>	<p>Some of the other stakeholders include energy industry groups such as the Clean Energy Council and Australian Energy Regulator, Re-Alliance, Energy Networks Australia, AEIC. AusNet works closely with other electrical retailers on distribution side of the business.</p>
<p>Follow up after 25 August 2021</p>	<p>It was noted Ausnet were awarded the contract to build the WVTNP by AEMO following a competitive tender process. How many other companies tendered for the job?</p> <p>Were any other routes considered for the task?</p> <p>If the answer to 2 is yes, what other routes were considered and why were they rejected? If the answer to 2 is no, if not and why not?</p> <p>What considerations did AEMO take into account before settling on the proposed corridor and commencing the tender process?</p>	<p>In 2017, AEMO, in its role as the transmission network planner for Victoria, commenced a RIT-T to identify the most economically efficient investment option to increase the amount of electricity that can be transported across western Victoria. The investment option selected within the RIT-T process informed the scope of the WVTNP.</p> <p>At the first meeting of the CCG Stephanie McGregor presented a detailed overview of the project including responding to questions which can be found in the minutes of that meeting:</p> <p>https://www.westvictnp.com.au/52677/widgets/339677/documents/204437</p> <p>A Fact Sheet The role of the Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission process in the development of the WVTNP, https://www.westvictnp.com.au/62122/widgets/312640/documents/189117 was also developed and may also assist with some answers to your questions. If you have any further questions relating to AEMO, we can send them to AEMO for a response.</p>

		<p>In addition, AEMO attended a Moorabool Council webinar session in late 2020, link to the webinar and the follow up QA are below.</p> <p>AEMO explains RiT-T and findings Watch the recording Additional Q&A - AEMO(PDF, 933KB)</p>
<p>Follow up after 25 August 2021</p>	<p>Given the scope of the contract, what flexibility do Ausnet have to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Alter the design of the project · Alter the route from other than the proposed corridor · Consider transmission alternatives ie Overhead or Underground or other whatever that maybe. · Suggest alternative ways to achieve the goals of the project to AEMO 	<p>The WVTNP is subject to an Environment Effects Statement (ESS), the most rigorous environmental impact assessment process in Victoria.</p> <p>The EES process is administered by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) on behalf of Victoria’s Minister for Planning under the Environment Effects Act 1978.</p> <p>The purpose of the EES is to ensure that major projects are designed, constructed and operated to minimise adverse environmental and community impacts. It gives decision-makers (such as Ministers and statutory authorities) the information they need to determine whether approvals should be granted and what conditions should apply.</p> <p>The EES provides a transparent investigation of potential environmental impacts and provides the community with an opportunity to review and provide feedback as the project develops. During the preparation of the EES, we will undertake environmental investigations to understand potential impacts from the project and identify how any impacts can be avoided, minimised or managed.</p> <p>The Victorian Minister for Planning has requested, under the EES scoping requirements, that AusNet demonstrates consideration of feasible alternatives, including the rationale for the preferred mode of construction - overhead or underground, including potential for partial underground construction - and other feasible alternatives raised through community and stakeholder feedback.</p> <p>AusNet is looking at feasible alternatives including the alternatives raised through community and stakeholder feedback such as the Western Highway.</p>

Follow up after 25 August 2021	How much of an input other than the Community Groups like Stop Ausnet Towers have other stakeholders had? By other stakeholders I mean the like of the electrical retailers who send us our electricity bills, the local shire councils along the proposed route and government representatives both elected and contracted.	The project team has regular meetings with multiple stakeholders. Some of the stakeholder groups include, six local councils, Government and opposition MP's, industry organisations, regional stakeholders including community groups, emergency services, tourism, business, environmental and local associations.
25 August 2021	How is AS engaging with politicians?	Both state and federal sitting and opposition politicians are provided with regular updates. Requests for route changes are for AEMO to address.
25 August 2021	What is the timing between the letters, as outlined in the land access process presentation?	This depends on the frequency and level of engagement between the parties. The Electricity Act does not prescribe a timeline.
25 August 2021	How will AS try to win back trust within the community?	AS will provide factual and relevant information to address questions, as this information becomes available.
25 August 2021	Acknowledging the process regarding publishing technical reports, is there a way to release information sooner?	AS appreciates the comments. This can be looked at as technical specialists complete their reports. Presentation on land access arrangements provided relevant and valuable information.
25 August 2021	AS should share this with the community	Noted
25 August 2021	More information on the Electromagnetic field would be appreciated	An independent EMF survey will be undertaken in the area soon.
25 August 2021	Can the existing easement and/or infrastructure be used when upgrading from the planned 220kv to 500kv?	The upgrade from the planned 220kv to 500kv is being investigated by AEMO and the state government. AS is not involved in the process.
13 July 2021	Does AS keeps a database of questions asked regarding the project. And how many questions have been recorded? There have been hundreds of questions raised. All questions raised get shared with the relevant teams within AS to make sure they are appropriately responded to.	There is a consolidated list of all questions raised as part of the community drop in sessions, as well as a list of all questions raised by landowners through meetings. AS has published responses to the drop in session questions on the website.
13 July 2021	Would the assessment be any different if planning for an underground route?	This corridor is assessed for an overhead route. The need to consider an underground option is required as part of the EES scoping document, which was released in December 2020, approximately six months after the overhead investigations began. Therefore, there is a six-month delay

		<p>between the overhead assessment and the underground investigations, which are currently underway.</p> <p>As such, further constraints might arise as part of the undergrounding investigations. An undergrounding design has different constraints e.g., geology and terrain, compared to an overhead design so the route will differ.</p>
13 July 2021	Regarding the bar chart with the constraints (slide 9) this is a qualitative assessment, is there also a quantitative assessment, i.e., constraints per km?	<p>The analysis of constraints can only go so far. Conceptual routes need to be identified to understand whether a constructable route that manages environmental and land use impacts can be designed within the corridor/s.</p> <p>The constraints mentioned are not weighted. Previous experience has shown that weightings are subjective and based on value judgements that should be avoided.</p> <p>Individual constraints are analysed to understand what constraint or constraints were contributing to the low, moderate or high constraint. The constraints analysis that was undertaken identifies key differences between conceptual routes with regards to values and constraints.</p> <p>Those constraints with material differences were analysed in consultation with technical specialists to understand whether they could be mitigated or managed, that is whether they are material differences that would influence the selection of a single corridor.</p> <p>The corridor assessment is not based on costs.</p>
13 July 2021	In the presentation, there was a reference to the Ballarat to Bendigo overhead lines, what type is this?	These are 220kV lines.
13 July 2021	Regarding the bar chart, this is only representative of a point in time, the long-term impacts could be less?	<p>The corridor assessment considered the life of the project, that is design, construction and ongoing maintenance.</p> <p>Constructability and operability issues are considered in understanding whether constraints can be effectively managed.</p> <p>Undergrounding can be more invasive during construction, even with a narrower easement. To cross a river valley, for instance, it is easier to</p>

		overflow the river than bore under the river. The focus is on managing each constraint by applying appropriate mitigation.
13 July 2021	There is a perception in the community that this is a State Government project, not a AS project	This gets raised a lot, especially given the uncertainty around the upgrade from the 220kv to 500kv, which is a State Government decision outside of AS's control.
13 July 2021	What is the purpose of the project and is it required to strengthen the national energy security as the state transitions from fossil to renewable energy?	The purpose of the project is to increase transmission capacity in Western Victoria where the network is constrained and cannot support the current and future investment in renewables in the area.
13 July 2021	Do Councillors receive the same information as the CCG?	AS provides Councillor briefings upon council request (Hepburn and Pyrenees so far). Councils are engaged through a range of ways and have membership of the Technical Reference Group. AS will continue to provide briefings as requested by the Councils.
8 June 2021	How are the public notified about the start of the public exhibition of the documents?	<p>The public exhibition will be advertised in at least one metropolitan daily newspaper and in the relevant regional/local newspapers. The notification of relevant stakeholders is supported by the proponent, ie to circulate information via mailing lists, councils to reach out to communities. AS will also provide information on the project website and via email.</p> <p>Community member would like AS to contact relevant public members personally and directly as well.</p> <p>The public exhibition period will be advertised on the AS website and emails will be sent out to subscribers.</p>
8 June 2021	Concern expressed that any feedback from CCG to AS has been stonewalled by AS	Noted
8 June 2021	In regard to the undergrounding, how should feasibility be interpreted, does this only relate to costs? References that the AS tender only refers to overhead lines and AEMO did not consider undergrounding	<p>Cost is an aspect of feasibility, and the guidelines aren't prescriptive regarding feasibility. AEMO's process provides context to the EES, but it does not limit AS in their investigations.</p> <p>The proponent must demonstrate objectivity and robustness regarding the feasibility assessments.</p>

8 June 2021	Who are the lead consultants for the EES?	The two main consultants are Jacobs and Coffey. There are also some specialists subcontracted to Jacobs to provide subject matter expertise in areas that Jacobs does not have in-house expertise.
8 June 2021	What are the 19 studies that are being undertaken?	This was referenced at the April meeting in AS's PowerPoint. Diagram attached to the minutes, see Appendix 1.
8 June 2021	How is the cost versus community and environment balanced?	The proponent needs to explain their rationale for the proposed alignment. A balance or comparison is very subjective, based on personal values. This relies on the process being objective and transparent in how aspects are considered. It was noted that not everyone will agree on an assessment outcome.
8 June 2021	Does DELWP support the CCG minutes being shared with the TRG?	This does not commonly happen. Request to take it on notice but noted if the minutes are online, each TRG representative can access them. Note, the TRG doesn't issue minutes, it only documents actions and provides comments on draft reports to the proponent
8 June 2021	How does DELWP deal with conflict of interests, ie the Minister for Environment is also the Minister for Energy? Reference to MPs not responding to communities' contact attempts.	Conflicts may occur, however the EES process lies within the Planning Minister's portfolio. DELWP is agnostic to political parties and their role is to follow the legislation. The EES process is designed to gather information to support decision-making, therefore transparency and rigor around interests are a focus. The process does not aim to remove or hide tensions.
8 June 2021	How does community and local government feedback flow into the project?	Formal and informal submissions by community members as well as local government are important, whereby the substance of a submission is relevant, not the number of opposing submissions. Local councils also have representatives on the TRG.
8 June 2021	What are the specific negative environmental effects of undergrounding?	As a general comment only, as cannot relate to this project. The relative surface disturbance is generally greater, which could impact on cultural heritage sites, certain flora species, ground cover etc. It is important to have an open mind and view the facts and the assessment before determining that something has a negative outcome.
8 June 2021	Who is on the TRG?	A list of the TRG member organisations is attached, see Appendix 2.

8 June 2021	In percent, how many affected landowners can AS notify?	AS has contact details for approximately 90% of the landowners. The team is searching for further details of the remaining 10%
8 June 2021	How can it be that you don't have a solid list of all sensitive recipients?	AS is trying to confirm details of each parcel of land, which is difficult, if the listed owner is not a person but an organisation. AS, as a private company, is not able to access local government rates notice databases, therefore AS is relying on publicly accessible sources of information. AS is investigating as best they can.
8 June 2021	Is AS only contacting directly impacted landowners? What about those indirectly affected? The Planning Act requires proponents to inform further than just the directly affected. Comment by another member: What about those who will be visually impacted or tourism businesses?	Under the EES as well as for planning approval consultation with directly impacted landowners is required. AS will be sending letters and emails and will have face to face meetings with impacted landowners and also host community information sessions for indirectly impacted. There are 19 different technical studies. Each technical study has an assessment area based on a potential area of impact. The potential area of impact and receptors can differ between technical studies. AS is currently in the existing conditions phase where the environment is characterised within the area of interest and along the corridors.
8 June 2021	Why has AS informed landowners who are not in the corridor already? The webpage hasn't been updated since the start of the project and doesn't provide any information, it is too convoluted, and it is not clear how people can air their concerns with AS. When will it be updated? Why have pins dropped on the interactive map have not been included? The community member threatens to resign from the CCG, if answers aren't provided by the next meeting.	AS acknowledges that the webpage is not great and is reviewing it. However AS is reluctant to put a timeframe on completion due to the large amount of work that is required to improve the webpage. The information from both interactive maps is available on the website. Area of Interest Western Victoria Transmission Network Project (westvictnp.com.au) NB: This page is being updated to MAP PINS FEEDBACK.
8 June 2021	Landowners and those with line of site to the towers are listed as the first stakeholders in the EES Stakeholder Engagement Plan. Does the mailing list of approximately 1000 include these?	The mailing list is made up of those who registered for e-updates via the project's website. This is separate to the landowner database.

		The landscape and visual impact studies will investigate line of site receptors. AS needs to determine the single corridor and then a route to understand the extent of visual impacts.
8 June 2021	When will the announcement be made and what level of detail will be included on the map? Comments on feeling frustrated about not feeling more informed by being part of this process.	The announcement will be made mid-year. As a publicly listed company there are certain requirements and approval processes to go through. AS is still on track for the announcement, which will narrow down the corridor, however there is further work required to determine the route within the announced corridor.
8 June 2021	Based on this, the community will want to know the alignment and the actual impact on their land. This is a grave impact to the communities, if there is no clarity and confirmation as part of the announcement.	Noted
8 June 2021	What does registered mean? As a landowner they have not had any further contact since an initial meeting with JLL in 2020.	Register refers to signing up to receive e-updates by clicking on a link on the website and filling in a form. Anyone who AS has had contact within meetings or via the community drop in sessions, and have provided their email and phone details are recorded. AS is recruiting more staff to allow for more contact with landowners.
8 June 2021	Harkness and Melton-West is developing rapidly. AS needs to make sure they inform widely given the visual impacts to this area.	Noted
8 June 2021	Why has it taken so long to respond to the feedback received in community drop-in sessions? Over 70 days to receive email that provides a generic response to the questions raised. Comments were made how many other community members received the same generic email and no new information has been provided nor questions answered.	The technical investigations are underway to determine some of those answers. There is a lot of work to do and AS will provide answers once the work has been completed by the technical specialists and reviewed by the TRG.
28 April 2021	Query raised about the potential to upgrade the line between Bulgana and the new terminal station north of Ballarat to 500kv in line with the Victorian Government's <i>Victorian Renewable</i>	It was clarified that the line upgrade is subject to discussions between AEMO, the State Government and AS. AS confirmed it is not currently contracted to deliver the upgrade.

	<i>Energy Zones Development Plan Directions Paper February 2021.</i>	
--	--	--

Appendix 1 – Technical Studies





Appendix 2 – Technical Reference Group membership

The TRG includes representatives from a broad range of backgrounds and expertise:

- DELWP Impact Assessment Unit
- DELWP Environments (Grampians Region)
- DELWP Regional Planning Services, Planning Group
- DELWP Energy Group
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
- Department of Transport
- Aboriginal Victoria
- Heritage Victoria
- EPA
- Melbourne Water
- Glenelg Hopkins CMA
- North Central CMA
- Wimmera Catchment Management Authority
- Port Phillip and Westernport CMA
- Corangamite CMA
- Parks Victoria
- CFA
- Energy Safe Victoria
- Pyrenees Shire Council
- Northern Grampians Shire Council
- Moorabool Shire Council
- Hepburn Shire Council
- Melton City Council
- Ballarat City Council
- Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
- Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation