



## Community Consultation Group Terms of Reference

### PROJECT BACKGROUND

AusNet Services, who is delivering the Western Victorian Transmission Network Project (WVTNP), will create up to three Community Consultation Groups (CCGs) to help facilitate stronger community interaction and involvement with the Project.

The WVTNP is a new 190km long transmission line extending from Bulgana near Stawell in western Victoria to Sydenham in Melbourne's north-west via a new terminal station to the north of Ballarat. This transmission line will increase transmission capacity in the western Victorian network to unlock renewable power generation and deliver more clean, affordable, and reliable energy to Victorians.

This critical, state-significant project is a major economic investment in western Victoria that will create jobs and unlock economic development opportunities during and after construction. The transmission line is expected to be operational by 2025.

### PURPOSE

AusNet Services has established the Community Consultative Group (CCG) to help it maximise community understanding of, and engagement with, the project. An understanding of community concerns will assist in delivering a project that is the best it can be for the community.

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives include:

- Provide a transparent and accessible forum to discuss issues of community interest related to the project.
- Capture community feedback and suggestions to assist with decision-making for the project.
- Increase understanding about the project within the community.
- Provide advice on effective responses from the project team to arising issues and concerns.
- Provide advice on benefit sharing projects recommended by the community.

Specifically, the members of the CCGs will:

- Act as conduits for issues affecting the wider community.
- Represent community views regarding local issues, impacts and benefits.
- Receive briefings on the progress of the project.
- Provide information about the project to other community members.

## CCG MEMBERSHIP

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

Whilst CCG members, are potentially connected to formal or informal community groups, it is recognised they are on the CCG as an individual. CCG members have a responsibility to present a considered view on issues.

Each CCG will include up to 20 community representatives from the following LGA's:

- Northern Grampians Shire Council
- Pyrenees Shire Council
- City of Ballarat
- Hepburn Shire Council
- Moorabool Shire Council
- Melton City Council

Community members will be preferred if they reside, own a business or a property, or work in one of the six LGA through which the new transmission will run or they represent a broad-based community or business group, including and not limited to, agriculture, environment, tourism, business, renewable energy, emergency services.

The CCG will have an independent chairperson and a secretary.

Members of the CCG will be appointed by the Independent Chair and confirmed by AusNet Services. Members will receive an email from the Independent Chair confirming appointment.

All CCG members will be required to agree and sign the Code of Conduct, see Appendix 1.

By accepting an invitation to join the CCG, a member agrees to allow AusNet to publicly acknowledge their participation.

New members can apply or be invited to join the CCG should the need arise, provided that that maximum community membership of 20 is not exceeded. The Independent Chairperson has sole discretion on who is appointed to join the CCG.

The Independent Chairperson, in consultation with the appointed CCG members, has the discretion to form only one or up to three CCGs.

Council officers representing each of the six LGA's will attend the meetings as observers.

Project staff, contractors and consultants will not be members of the group and may provide support and give presentations to the CCG as required.

The CCG may invite presentations from special interest groups at the Chairperson's discretion in consultation with the group.

## MEETING THE CCG'S PURPOSE

The Purpose of the CCG will be met by:

### AusNet

- Briefing the CCG on the project and work needed for its completion.
- Briefing the CCG on engagement activities.
- Enhancing CCG member understanding of the project by arranging briefings by environmental and other specialists undertaking work on the project.
- Responding, where possible, to requests for information from CCG members.

### Community members

- Adhere to these Terms of Reference, including the Code of Conduct.
- Sharing their understanding of the project with their communities.
- Collecting and sharing community sentiment and concerns relating to the Project.
- Providing feedback on the effectiveness of AusNet's community engagement activities.
- Recommending enhancements to AusNet's Community Engagement Plan.
- Seeking the information needed to allow them to effectively explain the project to their communities.

### Independent Chairperson

- Chairing meetings in accordance with the agreed Terms of Reference and the Code of Conduct.
- Review and evaluate the performance of the CCGs.
- Review and endorse any new nominations for vacant positions as required.
- The Chairperson is the sole determinant of issues to be dealt with.

### Secretariat

- Preparing meeting agendas, issuing notices for meetings, and providing the documents and information needed for each meeting.
- Distributing the agenda seven days prior to a meeting.
- Taking notes, including items for action, for the preparation of draft minutes.
- Distributing the draft minutes to CCG members following their approval by the Independent Chairperson.
- Uploading minutes of meetings to the project website following their confirmation by the CCG.

## CCG MEETINGS

Meetings will:

- Be closed, not open to the public.
- Be held monthly or at a frequency agreed by the CCG.
- Be held face-to-face in Ballarat when possible, or online through Microsoft Teams.
- Run for no longer than two hours and be held between the hours of 6pm and 8pm.
- Require a minimum of four members must be present at each meeting.

Meetings can only be attended by CCG members and people invited by the Independent Chairperson.

A special or extraordinary meeting may be called by the Independent Chairperson and would only be called if there is an issue or event of sufficient importance.

Issues and ideas that arise during the CCG meetings which fall outside the Terms of Reference will be referred to the project team.

**APPENDIX 1**

**Community Consultation Group Code of Conduct**

As a representative of the Community Consultation Group (CCG), I agree:

- To attend CCG meetings and provide apologies in advance where attendance is not possible.
- To act in an advisory capacity to the project by disseminating information within the community and providing insight and advice into community perspectives on the project.
- To obtain and represent the views of the broader community.
- To represent the views of my organisation, interest group or community.
- To participate in a positive way to finding solutions to issues or concerns.
- To respect the ideas and beliefs of all members and provide an atmosphere where all members feel comfortable to participate.
- To notify AusNet Services of any actual or potential conflict of interest that may arise in relation to the project during my participation in the CCG.
- To allow AusNet Services to publicly promote my participation in the CCG to facilitate and encourage community feedback.
- To respond to any media enquiries as an individual representing my opinion or interest group and not on behalf of the WVTNP or CCG.
- That comments made by other members of the CCG in the meetings, including the Independent Chairperson, must not be discussed with the media nor posted to social media.
- I understand that where a member disregards the Code of Conduct, as agreed by the CCG members, the Independent Chairperson may ask them to step down and/or their organisation may be requested to nominate a replacement.

**Name:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**