

Sally Edwards
PO Box [REDACTED] NSW 2843
[REDACTED]

2nd September 2024

Chair, Mr Andrew Mills
Spicers Creek Panel Chair & Commissioners
Independent Planning Commission
GPO Box 3415
Sydney NSW 2001
ipcn@ipcn.nsw.gov.au

RE: Case – Spicers Creek Wind Project SSD- 41134610

Dear Mr Mills, Panel Chair Professor Neal Menzies, Commissioners Suellen Fitzgerald, Michael Wright

I write to you today to seek your guidance. I am a concerned member of the Warrumbungle Region, in the CWO REZ. I wonder if you might be able to consider and respond to my question below.

Firstly, I would like to provide you with a little background information to give you more perspective. As an active Community Development Coordinator and volunteer across the Warrumbungle Region, I was strongly endorsed to nominate as a community representative on The Energy Corporation of NSW's (EnergyCo's) Community Reference Group in its inaugural term (2022-2023). I served in this role for over 12 months. At the time, it was believed that this forum would help connect the region's communities with information about the CWO REZ and an avenue to raise concerns and seek answers for the impacted communities. I found this wasn't the case, with many questions remaining unanswered, most notably questions around Community Consultation and detailed Cumulative Impact assessment, monitoring and mitigation, and concerns raised continually being overlooked, some still to this day. Please find attached copy of relevant minutes.

The Central West Orana REZ has never been presented to the impacted communities, nor the region *in its entirety*, to transparently show the scale of the delivery, number and type of projects, the method of delivery and all potential benefits and impacts. I believe this is unfair and borders on negligence on the part of the NSW Government.

The "draft Declaration" of the Central West Orana REZ was publicly exhibited for 28 days during the COVID Pandemic, towards the end of 2021. For many reasons, the Warrumbungle region communities were not made aware of this exhibition and did not even know what the CWO REZ was. 50% of the 6 submissions received throughout the exhibition period of the draft declaration were from Renewable Energy Developers, and all submissions remain confidential.

Given the entire CWO REZ proposal has not been put before the public through the planning process I wonder at what point in the planning process is it assessed that all relevant legislation is complied with ie. that there are no breaches?

I objected to the CWO REZ Transmission project and wrote passionately about my objection to the REZ. Realising that essentially it was only the Transmission project on display; I include this submission also for your reference.



Sally Edwards

[REDACTED]

I believe it important that someone analyses whether the CWO REZ delivery is acting in accordance with the relevant legislations, most notably that the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020 was followed accordingly or whether the CWO REZ Declaration was in breach of this legislation. I firmly believe that the Warrumbungle Region community's views could not possibly have been considered prior to the declaration being made given the complete lack of awareness amongst the local people. I have addressed this concern and provided evidence in the early parts of my Public Meeting presentation document, however I didn't speak to them on the day. Given that justification for many projects, such as Spicers Creek, is the locality within the REZ, I see this a vital part of the assessment process – but cannot ascertain when this occurs. Thank you for your time and consideration, I hope that you are able to provide me with some clarity around this.

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

2/9/24

Sal Edwards

Volunteer, Farmer & Community Capacity Builder

Warrumbungle Region NSW

Meeting minutes

Central-West Orana REZ Community Reference Group

Thursday 27 April 2023
 11:02am to 1:24pm
 Parklands Resort & Conference Centre, 121 Ulan Road, Mudgee

Attendance

Category	Attendees
Independent Chair	Lisa Andrews (LA)
EnergyCo representatives	Adam Clarke, A/Director Planning & Policy (AC) Jamie Fermio, Manager Planning & Policy (JF) Cleo Andrews, CWO Community & Stakeholder Lead (CA) Brian Cullinane, CWO Planning & Environment Lead (BC) (online) Bridget Kelleher, Senior CWO Place Manager (BK) Anna Howard, CWO Place Manager (AH)
LGA Delegates	Mayor Matthew Dickerson, Dubbo Regional Council (MD) Cr Katie Dicker, Mid-Western Regional Council (KD) Cr Kathy Rindfleisch, Warrumbungle Shire Council (KR)
Community representatives	Dougald Morse (DM) Colin Kilby (CK) <i>[arrived at 11.06am]</i> Sally Edwards (SE) John Kelly (JK) <i>[arrived at 11.24am]</i>
Stakeholder groups	Kate Hook, RE-Alliance (KH) David Thorne, NSW Farmers (Mudgee) (DT) Beverley Smiles, Central West Environment Council (BS) Rosemary Hadaway, Mudgee District Environment Group & Watershed Landcare (RH) <i>[left at 12.23]</i> Grant Gjessing, Business Mudgee (GG) <i>[left at 11.49am]</i>
Invited guests	Stephen Archer (SA) and Mika White (MW), Lightsource BP Eleanor Cairns (EC) and Darren Chesterfield (DC), RES Group
Observers	Karen Wilson <i>[arrived at 11.24am]</i> Mark Conn <i>[arrived at 11.24am]</i>
Apologies	Mike Young, Executive Director Planning and Communities

Category	Attendees
	Cara Inia, Director Community and Place

Agenda items

Item	Details	Responsibility
1	Acknowledgement of Country	LA
2	Welcome and introductions	LA
3	Apologies	LA
4	Business arising from inaugural CRG	LA
5	Declarations	LA
6	Correspondence report	LA
7	EnergyCo project update and presentation	EnergyCo
8	Questions and discussion	All
9	General business	LA
10	Next meeting	LA

EnergyCo Meeting minutes

Item	Description	Lead	Updates
1	Acknowledgement of Country	LA	
2	Welcome and housekeeping	LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting opened at 11:02am Welcomed observers Karen Wilson and Mark Conn
3	Apologies	LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mike Young, Executive Director Planning and Communities Cara Inia, Director Community and Place
4	Business arising from last meeting	LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EnergyCo to circulate easement acquisition fact sheet with the meeting minutes – closed. Include slide on different stakeholders involved in the REZ and their responsibilities – closed. Include a list of acronyms with the minutes moving forward. RH asked for links to be included to relevant websites – closed. Details to be provided with the minutes on how people can complete EnergyCo's online survey – closed. January project update to be sent with the minutes – closed. LA to include SE's questions with the minutes – closed. Invitation to be extended to the Consumer Trustee for a future meeting – Invited, follow up required. <p>ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LA to write to DPE raising concern that Solar Farms (SSD developments) don't require CCC to be established – closed. <i>LA will update CRG when response received from DPE.</i> Project milestones to be provided with the minutes – closed.
5	Declarations	LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No changes.
6	Correspondence report	LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As included in the agenda SE provided several questions which were answered by EnergyCo prior to the meeting.
7	EnergyCo presentation		
7.1	Project update	CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CA provided an overview of activities carried out since the last CRG meeting, including Network Operator tender, ongoing EIS development, continued landholder engagement, land acquisition status of energy hubs and easements, community events and the community benefits survey.

Item	Description	Lead	Updates
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CA provided update on CWO access tender rights. ACTION: Circulate finalised guidelines with CRG members once available.
7.2	Stakeholders in the REZ	CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CA provided overview of key stakeholders in the REZ. ACTION: RH requested a diagrammatic version to help explain key stakeholder relationships.
7.3	Community survey results	CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CA provided brief overview of results received in the community benefit survey. The feedback report is currently in draft and due to be distributed in May. ACTION: Provide to CRG members once finalised. CA offered to provide any specific data to the CRG if requested.
7.4	Upcoming engagement	CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CA advised community feedback report to be released May 2023, implementation plan engaged scheduled for mid-2023. CA advised plan to update CRG on implementation plan at the next meeting.
7.5	Implementing delivery of programs in the REZ	AC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AC provided an overview of the REZ specific implementation plan with three core areas – enabling infrastructure, community initiatives and delivering local outcomes. AC provided an update on initiatives currently under development for CWO REZ which included roads, housing and accommodation, training and skills, energy, waste, social infrastructure, telecom and First Nations and local business.
7.6	Candidate Foundation Generator updates	SA EC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SA provided project overview of Lightsource BP's Sandy Creek Solar Farm. SA provided an overview of Lightsource BP's cumulative impact strategy in relation to workforce & workforce accommodation, traffic and transport, waste, agriculture and biodiversity and ecology. EC provided an overview of RES's Barneys Reef Wind Farm and EIS timeframes. EC provided an overview of Tallawang Solar Farm and their EIS response to submissions. EC provided information on the Industry & Aboriginal Participation Plan (IAPP), the Neighbour Shared Benefit Scheme and Community Benefit Fund.
8	Questions and discussion		
8.1	General discussion	ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SE requested questions be issued/published on the website as addendum to the minutes. ACTION SE follow up from submitted questions: Can you advise the CRG when opening letters go out? Yes. ACTION SE follow up from submitted questions: What do pop-ups look like & who attends? BK advised pop-ups are being held monthly on the third week of the month in Gulgong, Dunedoo and Coolah. An Acquisition Manager and Place Manager attend to answer any questions the community might have. Objective is to provide an easily accessible presence in the community.

Item	Description	Lead	Updates
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SE follow up from submitted questions: How does EnergyCo establish community impacts? In relation to Merriwa OSOM, you state, “Consulting with key stakeholders” CA advised EnergyCo is consulting with generators, Transport for NSW and Councils along the road network. Overview information was provided at community sessions in February. EnergyCo need further scope information from relevant bodies to start more detailed consultation with community - early conversations at this stage. ● SE follow up from submitted questions: EnergyCo is not carrying out a specific review into engagement – Does it matter to EnergyCo if communities are engaged or disengaged? CA advised community consultation is a key consideration and EnergyCo is increasing its presence in the community and will continue to update the CRG. ● RH follow up from submitted questions: We expect EnergyCo to be much more proactive than just providing a media release to radio station. CA advised the project team is not authorised to provide comment directly to media, all requests are managed by EnergyCo’s media unit. ACTION: Provide advice from RH to EnergyCo media team. ● RH: What is EnergyCo’s relationship with Turnpike? CA advised Turnpike is one of the companies contracted by EnergyCo for CWO to provide resources to support the delivery of the project. ● RH commented it is very disingenuous and there is a lack of transparency within this group. RH: Can you identify who is who? CA advised EnergyCo’s staff includes a mix of direct employees and contract staff. This is standard practice for major government infrastructure projects. Several companies have contracts to provide employees to EnergyCo. ACTION: RH requested that EnergyCo provides information on the role of the place managers. ● DT: Why didn’t EnergyCo let private landowners in on their accommodation needs? Why buy land when you can lease from landholders? CA explained the property on Neeleys Lane was on the market and EnergyCo took a considered approach to a strategic acquisition. Purchasing the site on market avoids the need for undertaking compulsory acquisition. CA also advised this is not the only accommodation site the project will require/is looking at and this will be further informed by the appointed Network Operator. In planning workforce accommodation, EnergyCo is considering not only the Network Operator’s immediate requirements but also broader opportunities to provide legacy housing outcomes for communities. ● KH: Has EnergyCo come up with a work camp solution? Is there room for innovative legacy opportunities? Are discussions about opportunities occurring? CA advised there is no one solution to the issue and advised EnergyCo has been seeking input from Councils to understand opportunities and constraints. As discussed, EnergyCo has planned to provide an update on workforce accommodation at the July CRG meeting.

Item	Description	Lead	Updates
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SE commented there is a stark contrast between the community’s expectation of consultation and what EnergyCo is doing. SE reiterated the community and in particular this CRG, want to contribute to the planning and design, not be told about EnergyCo’s plans after they have been decided. ● SE: Does EnergyCo have plans to discuss and engage about the cumulative impacts? CA advised that was one focus of the community consultation carried out between January and March 2023. This aimed to understand community sentiment about concerns and priorities for the REZ and further work is being developed for the implementation plan. ● KH: Is the Implementation Plan open for feedback? Can we get a draft version before the next CRG meeting? CA advised that EnergyCo can not commit to providing the plan at this stage as it is currently under development, however, if it is ready at that time then it would be shared with the CRG. ● BS: In relation to access fees, do they pay for the upfront cost of the transmission lines before other things? AC advised the access fees include money for delivering community benefits, and generators pay access fees when the line is electrified. EnergyCo understand this does not necessarily align to when communities would like to see the benefits. EnergyCo have applied to the government transmission acceleration fund (TAF) to secure some upfront funding to provide community funding and employment benefits. This will include funding for community grants in the implementation plan. The costs of building the transmission project are financed by the Network Operator and recovered through energy consumer bills. ● SE: Do you have working groups listed for training and skills? AC advised there is a working group established with the Electricity Infrastructure Jobs Advocate and an internal working group with the Department of Education and TAFE. ● SE: Is this on a local level and can we have a list of who is involved? AC advised a meeting was held in Dubbo in February ACTION: Provide a list of who was involved in the working groups for skills and training. ● CK: Upgrades to the highways, does the State Government pay for these? AC advised there are various sources of funding for upgrades and maintenance depending on the road. In regard to upgrades on the State network - some government will pay, other upgrades generators will pay, some might also be community upgrades which the Council will be a part of. ● SE encouraged Telcos to investigate current infrastructure. Batteries do not work on some towers which means there is no service when the power goes out. We would like EnergyCo to push the NSW telecommunications authority. ● BS: Do the generators have to investigate telecommunications? Worker safety is an issue when outside telecommunication range. AC advised EnergyCo is working with NSW Telco to investigate

Item	Description	Lead	Updates
			<p>opportunities for legacy infrastructure that provides community benefits outside of the temporary construction periods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CK: Can EnergyCo influence the government to impact the legislation? Could this committee direct EnergyCo to impact legislation? AC advised EnergyCo's remit is not in telecommunications policy which is a Federal remit. ● CK requested it to be noted that, unless there is legislation, improved telecommunications will not occur and requested this to be a part of the conditions of approval. Noted. ● DT: What will happen when 3G is turned off? AC advised that is outside of EnergyCo's remit. ● MD: Advised his biggest concern is any thought, decision or discussion around the survey results are invalid. Self-surveys do not give scientific data. CA advised the survey is one data point of how EnergyCo is informing its decisions and advised other platforms, processes and data are being used in addition to this. ● RH: We need to view an engagement and communications strategy for the REZ. Engagement activities are ad-hoc. RH commented there is no two-way exchange and would like to know the activities planned and their purpose. CA advised EnergyCo holds a range of engagement activities and meets with Council on a range of topics, it will be shared if approved. ACTION: Query if a copy of CWO REZ engagement and communications strategy can be shared. ● DT: How far is Sandy Creek Solar Farm from Elong Elong? SA advised roughly 10kms. ● SE: What stage is the project up to? SA advised they have a SEARS. ● CK: What LGA/s is the project in? SA advised Dubbo and Warrumbungle. Divided nearly 50-50. ● CK: Are there differences in policies from council to council? SA: Yes, there are some differences, but councils are not the consent authority. MD: Commented that councils are along for the ride. ● BS: The outcome of your project going ahead relies on access to the transmission infrastructure? SA: Yes, it is reliant on access to EnergyCo's transmission infrastructure. ● BS: On that map, everything is on top of each other. SA advised projects on the map are the Candidate Foundation Generators (CFGs). AC advised the access rights are granted through a competitive process with the Consumer Trustee beginning in Q2/Q3 2023. ● KD: In relation to the access rights, will we have the first 10 successful CFGs by September? AC advised the access rights is independent of EnergyCo. It would be likely to take a number of months for an announcement. As advised Lightsource BP is putting in a significant amount of investment to commit to a certain point for access rights. Credible entities will meet timelines.

Item	Description	Lead	Updates
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DM: With your studies, is it same pasture next door as the sample for findings? SA advised yes, as close as we could get it. ● DT: What about foxes? Do you have exclusion fencing? Can foxes get through? SA advised they don't have exclusion fencing, but no issues with foxes to date. ● MD: With your initial results and working with CSU & UNSW. Are you going to publish these results? Scientifically valid results? SA advised that they plan to, but there is a two-year process to get controlled samples. 1/8 of the way through with a second study to come. Ongoing process. ● DM: 850MW – 1600HA 2 to 1 ratio. Why this site? SA advised they look at a number of things e.g., proximity to REZ, flat cleared land, avoiding agriculturally valuable land, neighbour proximity. It is a large land parcel, two landowners, tucked away off main road in an area with renewable infrastructure. ● DM commented he is sceptical of the findings. SA advised they need to carry out appropriate scientific studies with specific benchmarking as they want results with value from an agricultural perspective. ● DT: What is the panel gap at Wellington Solar Farm? SA advised 5 metres. DT: Is it the same gap at Sandy Creek? SA advised, no it is proposed to be 6.5m as the panels are larger. ● RH: What are people asking for in the neighbour shared benefit scheme? EC advised RES has a criteria and specific payments which neighbours can put forward their interest for. We have received EOIs to join. The scheme is on our website, and we also contacted people who we think would be eligible. ACTION: Provide neighbour shared benefit scheme website link for minutes. ● RH: Do you need the transmission infrastructure for the project to go ahead? EC advised yes. ● DM: Do landowners sign an NDF? EC: advised no. We have privacy clauses and keep our commercial information confidential. DM: Lightsource BP, do you make them sign NDF? SA: Advised no, we have confidentiality clauses to protect the landowners. ● KR: Have you done a study - if these projects all get up at once? And are we going to cope? CA advised yes recently, and this was included in the CFGs. ACTION: Provide employment histogram in minutes. ● MD: There is a report in most recent council meeting – Dubbo Regional Council specific – Include the future need for 6,000 people, timeline of when jobs are needed. ACTION: Provide report in minutes. ● DM: Where are solar panel fabricated? SA advised China. There is one Australian provider who would take 3 years to fill our order. ● KD: Where are wind turbines coming from? EC advised most likely China, however we have not chosen a wind tower manufacturer.

Item	Description	Lead	Updates
8	General business		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DT: What is the expected life of the transmission line? AC advised more than 20 years. Question taken on notice. ACTION: Provide information on expected life of the transmission lines. • DT: Why don't landowners get payments for the duration of the line's life? Strategic benefit payments are for a 20 year period. AC advised policy decision was made by the previous Government and it is not within EnergyCo's remit to make changes to the policy, which applies NSW-wide and not just to EnergyCo projects. CA advised that community members are welcome to raise this issue via the Minister for Energy if they are unsatisfied with the policy decision. • BS: Is the social impact assessment ongoing? Were all landowners included? Question taken on notice. ACTION: Provide an update on landowners included in the SIA interview process. • BS: The new substation at Wollar – is it a different project? CA advised no; it is part of the Network Operator scope. ACTION: Provide confirmation that new Wollar infrastructure is part of EnergyCo's EIS and confirm that for any upgrades Transgrid will seek their own approvals. • BS: Is there an EMF Study for double 500kV line? CA advised it will be in the EIS - WSP Australia is preparing the EIS studies on behalf of EnergyCo. • BS: Are there other 2 x 500KV in a 140m easement. BK advised yes on the Great Western Highway coming into Sydney. Could EnergyCo provide examples of where there are 2 x 500kV lines in a 140m easement? ACTION: Provide example of 2 x 500kV lines in 140m easement. • BS: Is EnergyCo aware of an Ausgrid pilot in Merriwa? There is a lot of community interest to progress this idea. AC yes, we are aware of the microgrid trial. • KH: Feedback – Appreciate if EnergyCo can provide the presentation beforehand in the future. • SE: How is EnergyCo addressing the mental health concerns of the community? CA advised EnergyCo has no tangible actions at this stage. SE commented the Coolah information session was traumatic for some community members and would like to see this addressed in the future. • SE: Are there any formal requirements to demonstrate social licence? CA advised social licence is identified as an objective under the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. DT noted that EnergyCo shifted the transmission route in response to landowner concerns about following the Merriwa Cassilis Plateau. • JK: Adjoining landowners' public liability - Insurance companies will not cover over \$200 million. CA advised this has been raised in the NSW Government's response to the Agriculture Commissioner's review into the relationship between agriculture and renewables. SA advised Lightsource BP's position on insurances which has been provided to neighbours and a copy is to be released at start of construction.

Item	Description	Lead	Updates
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SE asked LA to circulate the NSW Government's response to the Agriculture Commissioner's review. ACTION: Provide with the minutes. JK: The Maryvale Solar project is on prime agricultural land. There has been no consultation with adjoining neighbours. ACTION: Provide information on status of Mary Vale solar Farm if available.
9	Meeting close		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting closed at 1:24pm. LA thanked all for their attendance and contribution Next meeting: Thursday 20th July, Dubbo – 11am start

Action items

No	Action	Responsibility	Due date	Comments/updates	Status
1	Questions from SE be issued/published on the website as addendum to the minutes	CA	12/5/23	EnergyCo will attach the questions from SE to the final minutes published on the website.	To be actioned
2	Advise when Opening letters have been issued	CA	31/5/23		To be actioned
3	Provide description of the CWO REZ place managers roles	CA	5/5/23	Refer to Place Manager position description attached with the meeting minutes. EnergyCo notes that this is an internal EnergyCo document and is not intended for external distribution beyond the CRG.	Complete
4	Follow up invitation extended to the Consumer Trustee for a future meeting	CA	20/7/23		To be actioned
5	Provide finalised CWO Access Rights guidelines once released by the Consumer Trustee	CA	31/5/23		To be actioned
6	Provide update on Neeleys Lane ancillary site when available	CA	20/7/23		To be actioned
7	Provide a list of who was involved in the working groups for skills and training and accommodation	CA	5/5/23	<p>Working group participants include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EnergyCo • NSW Treasury • NSW Office of Energy and Climate Change • NSW Department of Education • Training Services NSW, West Region • Department of Regional NSW • Department of Planning and Environment • Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Far West Orana • TAFE NSW • Charles Sturt University • Association of Independent Schools NSW • RDA Orana • Electrical Trades Union 	Complete

No	Action	Responsibility	Due date	Comments/updates	Status
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VERTO • ACEnergy • Squadron Energy • Lightsource BP • Iberdrola • ACEN Australia • Acciona Energia • Tilt Renewables • RES Australia • ib Vogt • X-Elio • CWP Renewables • Dubbo Regional Council • Mid-Western Regional Council • Warrumbungle Shire Council • AEMO • Clean Energy Council • Three Rivers Regional Assembly • Mudgee Local Aboriginal Land Council • Mining and Energy Union South Western District • NSW Farmers Association 	
8	Provide a copy of CWO REZ engagement and communications strategy	CA	20/7/23	<p>A copy of EnergyCo's overarching CSE strategy for the CWO REZ project is attached with the minutes. EnergyCo notes that this is an internal EnergyCo document and is not intended for external distribution beyond the CRG. Since this is an internal working document to guide EnergyCo's CSE outputs, it is not planned to be published on EnergyCo's website.</p> <p>We welcome feedback on the CSE strategy for EnergyCo to consider. Please send feedback via</p>	Complete

No	Action	Responsibility	Due date	Comments/updates	Status
				Lisa Andrews or directly to EnergyCo via cleo.andrews@dpi.nsw.gov.au.	
9	Provide website link in relation to RES Neighbour benefit scheme	LA	20/7/23		To be actioned
10	Provide CWO REZ forecasted employment histogram	CA		The workforce histogram is available on page 15 of EnergyCo's March 2023 research summary report via this link: https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-03/cwo-rez-report-research-impacts-benefits.pdf The workforce histogram has been added as an attachment to the minutes for reference.	Complete
11	Provide link to Dubbo Regional Council Business Paper [Analysis of Short-Term Worker Accommodation Needs]	LA	20/7/23	Page: 62 on this link: https://www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/278/Business%20Paper%20-%20Ordinary%20Council%20Meeting%20-%2023%20March%202023.pdf.aspx?Embed=Y	Complete.
12	Provide information on expected life of the transmission lines	CA	5/5/23	The transmission towers have a specified design life of 50 years. Once they reach 50 years, the towers would have exhausted their design life and are due for replacement. The Network Operator may implement a regime of maintenance and upgrades to allow the practical design life to be extended, such as replacing specific elements once they reach the end of their service life. Transmission easements have no expiry and will remain in place indefinitely or until such time as EnergyCo takes steps to remove it. In short, the useful life of a transmission tower does not impact the life of an easement.	Complete
13	Provide Social Impact Assessment process and provide percentage of impacted landowners included in the assessment	CA	5/5/23	Engagement activities for the SIA consultation program includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An online survey completed by 120 impacted landowners 	Complete

No	Action	Responsibility	Due date	Comments/updates	Status
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six interviews with community groups • 17 landowner interviews • An interview with NSW Aboriginal Land Council (western division) EnergyCo is currently carrying out a second round of SIA interviews with First Nations groups in the REZ.	
14	Provide confirmation that new Wollar infrastructure is part of EnergyCo's EIS and confirm that for any upgrades TransGrid will seek their own approvals	CA	5/5/23	New Wollar substation forms part of EnergyCo's EIS for the REZ transmission project. Transgrid is responsible for complementary upgrades to its existing network, such as Wollar substation. EnergyCo notes that Transgrid withdrew its planning application for the Wollar substation upgrade. See the Planning Portal for details.	Complete
15	Circulate the NSW Agriculture Commissioner's report. [Renewable energy generation and agriculture in NSW's rural landscape and economy – growth sectors on a complementary path]	LA	5/5/23	The NSW Government's response to the Agriculture Commissioner's Report is available to view via this link and attached with the minutes: https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/lup/nsw-agriculture-commissioner	Complete
16	Provide example of 2 x 500kV lines in 40m easement.	CA	20/7/23	Transgrid does not have an example of 2 x 500kV double circuit steel tower (DCST) lines beside each other at present. The Transgrid line from Bayswater to Wollar to Mt Piper to Bannaby is 1 x 500kV DCST. There are however many examples within NSW of adjacent 500kV to 330kV and 330kV to 330kV transmission lines sharing an adjoining corridor across the (Transgrid) NSW transmission system, especially from traditional thermal (coal) power stations which commonly have 3-4 transmission lines connecting them to the NSW transmission system to ensure good resilience and reliability.	Complete

No	Action	Responsibility	Due date	Comments/updates	Status
17	Provide an update on the Maryvale Solar Farm approval if available.	LA	20/7/23	<p>Information about the Maryvale Solar project status and determination is available on the Planning Portal:</p> <p>https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/maryvale-solar-farm</p> <p>According to the Planning Portal, the modification for capacity increase is still at the assessment phase and has not yet been determined:</p> <p>https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/maryvale-solar-mod-2-capacity-increase</p>	Complete

Next meeting

Date: Thursday 20 July 2023

Time: 11am to 1pm

Venue: TBC in Dubbo

Future meetings

Date: Week beginning Monday 23 October 2023, Mudgee NSW

Acronyms

Acronym	Definition	Relevant links
AEMO	Australian Energy Market Operator	aemo.com.au
AEMO Services	Consumer Trustee and subsidiary of AEMO	aemoservices.com.au
AER	Australian Energy Regulator	aer.gov.au
CCC	Community Consultative Committee	planning.nsw.gov.au/Assess-and-Regulate/Development-Assessment/Community-Consultative-Committees
CFG	Candidate Foundation Generator	energyco.nsw.gov.au/cwo/renewable-energy-generation-projects
CSU	Charles Sturt University	
CWO REZ	Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone	https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/cwo-rez
HCC REZ	Hunter Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone	https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/hcc-rez
NO	Network Operator	https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/cwo#update-on-first-ranked-network-operator
NE REZ	New England Renewable Energy Zone	https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/ne-rez
OSOM	Oversize and over-mass vehicle movements	
PAN	Proposed Acquisition Notice	
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone	
RNI	REZ Network Infrastructure (the transmission project)	
SBP Scheme	Strategic Benefit Payment Scheme	energyco.nsw.gov.au/community/strategic-benefit-payments-scheme
SW REZ	South West Renewable Energy Zone	https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/sw-rez
UNSW	University New South Wales	

5.2.2 Central-West Orana REZ construction workforce

Figure 5 shows the projected workforce numbers between 2023 and 2028 during construction of the REZ transmission project and major generation projects with planned connections to the REZ network. Workforce numbers are estimated to exceed 4,000 between mid-2025 and mid-2026, with a peak of about 5,000 in late 2025.

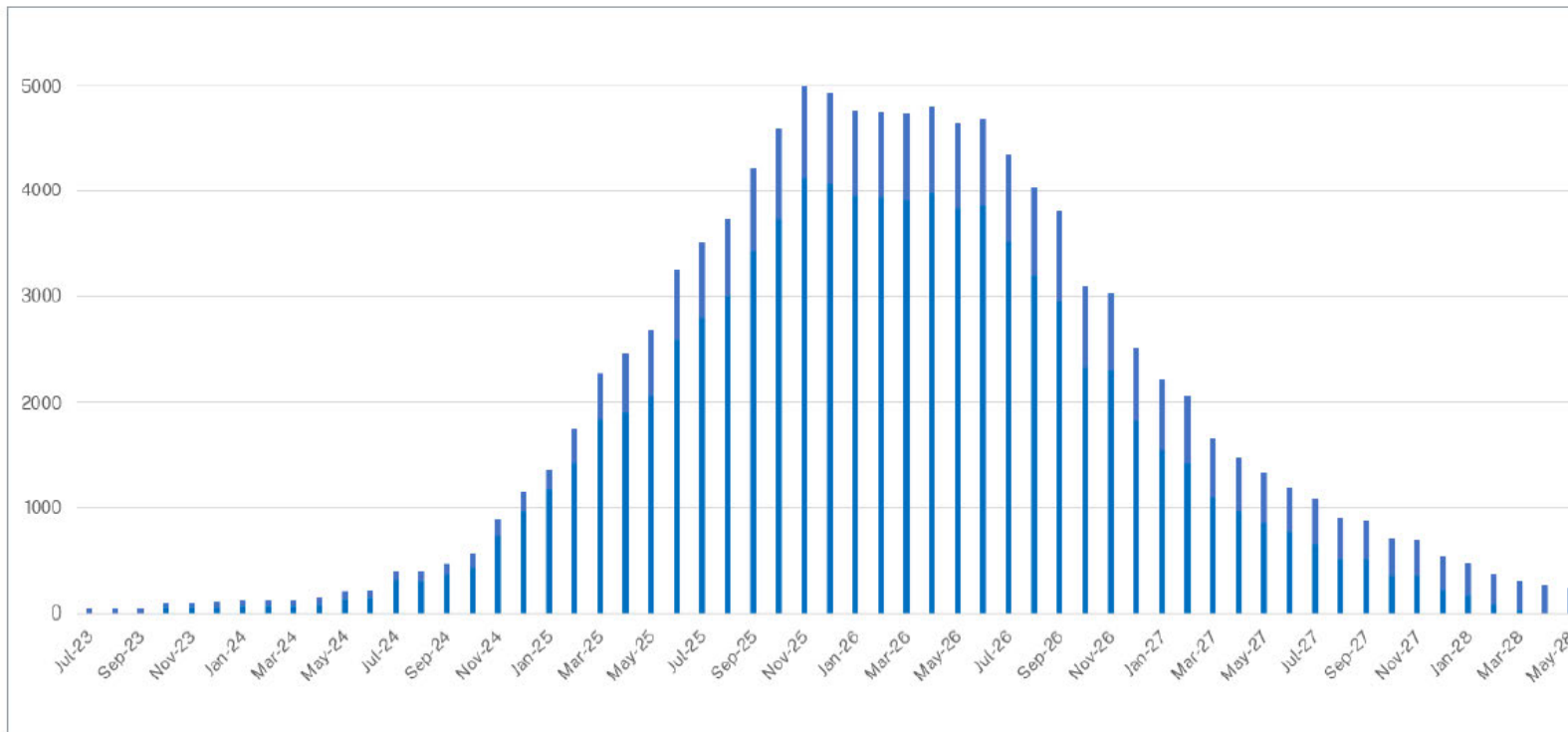


Figure 5: Workforce projection for the REZ transmission project and major generation projects with planned connections to the Central-West Orana REZ transmission network (Candidate Foundation Generators). Source: EnergyCo 2022.

Addendum: Questions from Sal Edwards

April 2023 CRG Meeting Questions from Community, via Sal Edwards	Answer
<p>EnergyCo Website: There are two main sections of the EnergyCo website applicable to the CWO REZ, the CWO REZ Section (Under Renewable Energy Zones) and the CWO Transmission Project (Under Projects). Much of the information included under the <i>Transmission Line Project section</i> SHOULD be under the REZ Section Eg. CRG Minutes, Project updates etc. The CRG is not a Transmission Line Project CRG, it is a REZ CRG. Access to information for community is difficult due to the scale of the project and the lack of collaboration between REZ Stake-Holders for providing this information, it is vital that all REZ information is easily accessible. Q: Could EnergyCo please review the structure of the Website and placement of associated information, having these TWO separate sections of information is confusing. And incorrectly placing information and updates is also preventing this from being accessible. The Transmission Line Project information, should all be located under the REZ page, and all REZ information should be located under the REZ section, not the transmission line project page.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, these two sections of the website are unable to be integrated at this time. There may be future revisions to the website however none are planned in the short-term. This feedback will be considered for future website changes.</p> <p>In the meantime, EnergyCo has updated the CWO REZ page to include information about the Community Reference Group under the heading 'community consultation'. There are new links added to help direct users to the relevant information.</p>
<p>Conflicting Maps of Corridor: Having had conflicting maps of corridor location online and on the iPad at Community Info Sessions, could EnergyCo please step out the communication process and timing of communications in regards to potential acquisition for landholders that may have been included on those maps?</p>	<p>Consultation with affected landowners has been ongoing since early 2022 when EnergyCo announced a revised study corridor for the REZ transmission project. EnergyCo initially contacted landowners via letter, with subsequent engagement being managed via our dedicated Land Acquisition Managers based in the region.</p> <p>In the scoping report released in September 2022, there was a deviation in the corridor in the vicinity of Ulan Road at Turill. The most up to date version of the study corridor was presented in the maps shown at EnergyCo's September information sessions and on our online interactive map. This amendment was done to align with the previous alignment planned by Tilt Renewables for the development of the 330kV transmission line to the Liverpool Range Wind Farm. EnergyCo's land team contacted impacted landowners prior to the scoping report being released. It is important to note that the corridor has been subject to ongoing development and refinement since this time and there may be further changes as a result of ongoing design investigations and landowner consultation.</p> <p>We expect to begin the process of acquiring transmission easements over the coming months (Q2 2023). This will include issuing opening letters to affected property owners as the first step in the formal acquisition process.</p> <p>The final transmission route will be presented in the Environmental Impact Statement which is planned for</p>

	<p>public exhibition in Q3 this year. The alignment will take into account a range of factors, including landowner feedback, distance to dwellings, geography, design constraints, environment and other impacts.</p>
<p>Detailed findings of Cumulative impact studies (6): When will the detailed findings of the cumulative impact studies be released to community? Noting that the content of the <i>Coordinating community impacts and benefits in the REZ</i> report released March 2023 is primarily a summary and contains key findings in a very broad context and details where EnergyCo is continuing consultation or consolidating information etc but lacks detailed specifics in regards to the impacts identified and solutions being acted upon.</p>	<p>Further information about proposed initiatives resulting from EnergyCo's research will be provided later this year via an Implementation Plan (mid-2023 TBC). We will notify the community once this is available.</p> <p>A further update on this topic will be provided in the CRG presentation.</p>
<p>EnergyCo announcement of land procured for Worker's Camps: Is it true that EnergyCo has been in contact with neighbouring landholders to land that EnergyCo has acquired for Worker's Camps to advise of purchase and purpose for land? If yes, would this not be helpful information to advise CRG member's of? I have received two phone calls asking me of my knowledge of this, to which I have replied – nothing?</p>	<p>EnergyCo has purchased, on-market, a block of land at 118 Neeleys Lane, Cassilis. EnergyCo is developing plans for the proposed ancillary site which will be subject to assessment and approval as part of the Environmental Impact Statement. Neighbouring residents have been informed of the purchase, however no public announcement has been made. EnergyCo is carrying out further investigations to confirm how the site will be used prior to carrying out further engagement with the community.</p>
<p>Workers Camp strategy and Plan of Delivery: As with previous question regarding detail around cumulative impact findings and solutions, could EnergyCo provide information regarding the Worker's Camp strategy for the Transmission Line project and the Plan of Delivery? And also clarify, how this Worker's Camp strategy has been evaluated from a REZ perspective on Workforce Accommodation?</p>	<p>The transmission Network Operator is expected to require multiple temporary workforce camps to support construction of the REZ transmission network. While land has been purchased at Cassilis for potential use as a temporary work camp (subject to planning approval), we need to carry out further investigation work over the coming months to confirm the overall strategy for workforce accommodation and other proposed camp sites. The Environmental Impact Statement will provide a detailed assessment of proposed workforce accommodation camp sites for the transmission project. The EIS will be displayed for public exhibition in Q3 this year.</p> <p>In terms of workforce accommodation across the REZ, EnergyCo is continuing to consult with Candidate Foundation Generators and the Department of Planning and Environment to investigate potential joint workforce accommodation solutions. There are a number of constraints being assessed including planning regulations, industrial relations, commercial risks and other issues. EnergyCo will provide a detailed update on temporary workforce accommodation at the July CRG meeting.</p>
<p>In regards to OSOM traffic and Merriwa and the Golden Highway, could EnergyCo list the community stakeholders they working with in Merriwa and the Upper Hunter?</p>	<p>Community consultation has not yet been carried out on oversize and over-mass (OSOM) vehicle movements between the Port of Newcastle and the REZ. For context on timing, OSOM movements are expected to start from 2025. We are still in the initial planning stages for OSOM deliveries and we are consulting with</p>

	<p>key stakeholders to understand the community impacts from these activities.</p> <p>Discussions are in progress with Transport for NSW, the Department of Planning and Environment and Candidate Foundation Generators to confirm the scope, approval pathway and delivery of this work. Consultation will be carried out with affected communities once further details are confirmed.</p> <p>We encourage community members to contact us at any time if they would like to discuss the current status of this work.</p>
<p>Community Access to EnergyCo: Would EnergyCo consider a regular presence at say a project proponent’s office in community to answer community questions in person? Eg, Tilt or ACEN office in Coolah, once a month or once a fortnight for a day? Also, question for both EnergyCo and Proponents, would you consider regular interview times on Local Radio for the sharing of information etc. Eg. Three Rivers Radio</p>	<p>EnergyCo is not considering a presence at proponents’ offices at this time.</p> <p>However, we recently implemented a schedule of monthly pop-up events at local venues so people can speak with our team face-to-face. Upcoming events are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday 29 April, Gilgandra Show • Saturday 13 May, Wellington Show • Monday 15 May, outside Dunedoo Newsagency, 10am to 2pm • Tuesday 16 May, outside Coolah IGA, 10am to 2pm • Wednesday 17 May, outside Gulgong IGA, 10am to 2pm • Monday 19 June, outside Dunedoo Newsagency, 10am to 2pm • Tuesday 20 June, outside Coolah IGA, 10am to 2pm • Wednesday 21 June, outside Gulgong IGA, 10am to 2pm <p>If the CRG can share an email address for Three Rivers Radio, we will add them to EnergyCo’s media distribution list to ensure they receive future media announcements about the project. In addition, we would also be happy to add any local media outlets to our e-newsletter distribution list to ensure they receive our latest project updates via email.</p> <p>Local media outlets are welcome to pass on interview requests and we will forward them to EnergyCo’s media unit to coordinate a response. For context, the project team is not authorised to provide comments directly to the media, so any requests must be managed via the media unit.</p>
<p>Request an update from EnergyCo on the Community Info Webinar that was postponed? Is this to be rescheduled? Will this include information on impacts as well as community benefits?</p>	<p>EnergyCo has no plans to reschedule a community webinar at this stage, however we will consider webinars for future rounds of engagement.</p> <p>For context, at the time of cancellation, there were 38 webinar registrations and about two thirds of these were from industry stakeholders such as renewable</p>

	<p>energy developers rather than members of the community.</p>
<p>Request an update from EnergyCo on their review into how they engage with communities eg. Coolah</p>	<p>EnergyCo is not carrying out a specific review into how communities are engaged in the REZ. However, we welcome ongoing feedback to help improve our engagement activities.</p> <p>As an example of how we are listening to community feedback on our engagement, we have recently started a program of pop-up events to increase our presence in local communities.</p>
<p>How and what the IPC decision process might look like for projects that are required to be reviewed by the IPC, inc time-lines etc?</p>	<p>The Independent Planning Commission (IPC) is an independent body which operates separately to the Department Planning and Environment and other NSW Government agencies. The IPC review would not apply to the REZ transmission network because the Minister for Planning is the consent authority SSI / CSSI projects. The IPC process would apply to SSD projects where there are more than 50 public submissions objecting to the application, or where the Council within whose are the application is located objects to the project, or where the applicant makes a reportable political donation.</p> <p>The IPC has information available on their website to explain their role and the process they follow in planning decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IPC's responsibilities • Their role in the planning system • Their decision-making process • Frequently asked questions <p>EnergyCo understands the timing of the IPC process can vary depending on the complexity of the project. However, because the IPC review typically involves holding a public meeting, and in some cases a public hearing, including the requirement to publicly notify these events, it may add 2-3 months to the process.</p> <p>Further advice can be requested by contacting the IPC on 02 9383 2100 or by emailing ipcn@ipcn.nsw.gov.au.</p>

Central-West Orana REZ Transmission

I **OBJECT** whole-heartedly to the CWO REZ Transmission project and more importantly to the industrialised model of Renewable Energy Zones. The declaration of the Central West Orana REZ and the associated Transmission Project (SSI-48323210) are not in accordance with relevant Legislation.

SSI-48323210

OBJECTION SUBMISSION
NOVEMBER 2023

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act)

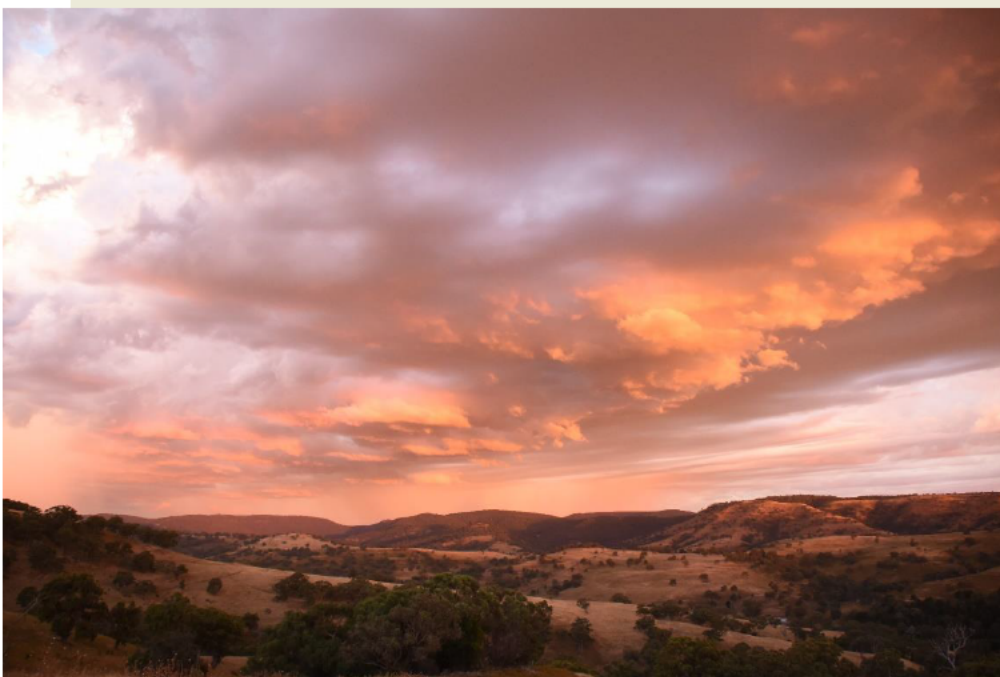
Division 2.6 Community participation
Division 5.2 State significant infrastructure

Functions: 1. State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines Oct 22
2. Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects Oct 22

Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020

Part 4 Renewable energy zones and access schemes

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999



Case for Change – The Transmission Line Project, the “Spine” of the CWO REZ

Sally Edwards, Warrumbungle
Region NSW

The cumulative and residual Social, Environmental and Economical impacts are simply TOO great. They are a cost we should not force future generations to bear. It is our generational responsibility to act in a considered and balanced way in regard to all developments with such substantial cumulative and residual losses and costs. The Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) model and the Rapid Transition to Renewable Energy (RE) are driven ultimately by global corporate investors. The very fact that the EnergyCo "Registration of Interest" invitation was extended to RE developers and **NOT** to Local Government Regions, Towns and Communities and then used to identify and declare REZ locations is evidence of this. Some would view this as a conflict of interest. This RE Transition is not about saving our environment & securing the future of Australia, if it was, we would be spending the time needed to get it "right".



Personal Background

Relevant Experience

Sally Edwards

Current Roles:

2022 –

Volunteer
Community Representative -
Warrumbungle Region
EnergyCo CWO REZ Community
Reference Group (CRG)
30 endorsements from the Warrumbungle Region

2018 –

Contract
Community Development Coordinator
Binnaway Progress Association

2012 –

Volunteer
Treasurer/Committee Member
Coolah Youth & Community Centre

Previous Roles:

2019 - 2021

Volunteer & Contract Facilitator
Building Our Warrumbungle Communities
(Asset-based Community Development)

2016 - 2021

Business Owner/Manager
Coolah Garden Café & Pantry

2013 – 2022

Contract
Community Development Coordinator
Coolah District Development Group

2010 – 2012

Volunteer
Event Coordinator
Future Beef Breeders Youth Camp



The Central-West, and the Warrumbungle Region matter to me. The future of Regional NSW and Rural Australia – the food and fibre producing areas of our country are important not only to me, but to every Australian. I care about the future of our land and water, the animals and their habitats, our communities - and the families that call it home.

Over the past 10 years, I have been actively seeking to understand and gain knowledge about the state significant developments and infrastructure projects - the CWO REZ, proposed for the Central-West. I volunteered as a Community Representative on the CWO REZ Community Reference Group in 2022.

It is my belief and my professional opinion, that the costs of development using the REZ model for the future of Australia's Energy Generation are too high, they are destructive. Our regions, our rural communities will pay the ultimate price, that future generations of Australian's will look back on in bewilderment and with shaking heads. It is my priority to help sustain rural communities, to maintain their unique character and identities, and to maintain and grow community connection. Can we energise our country without decimating our landscapes, our small rural communities, and regional areas in the process?



Division 2.6 Community Participation

CWO REZ PROPOSAL & DELIVERY
NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH EP&A Act

Inform → Consult → Involve → Collaborate → Empower?

Total regional social locality population in CWO REZ (Table 13-4 EIS Main Report) = 152,418
 Total Central-West Orana Region population = >290,000

The CWO REZ Communities have NOT actively participated in the declaration decision of the CWO REZ. I recall those in our local region found out about the “Renewable Energy Zone” (REZ) when Transgrid held a “Community Consultation” session in Cassilis, from there Local Government went searching for information and answers, and so did community. From the very beginning, the information relating to the CWO REZ has not been provided to the public in a balanced and objective way. The public have not been adequately or transparently **informed**.

I volunteered to apply to sit on the CWO REZ Community Reference Group in an attempt to ensure that the concerns and aspirations of community members were understood and actively considered. Most of the concerns I have raised have not resulted in change to the way the project is delivered or even in alternatives being considered. Most of the concerns and issues raised have resulted in being further “informed” and at times with little to no transparency.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

EIS Main Report 5-1, 5.1.1 Engagement Approach references broad alignment with the Quality Assurance Standard for Community & Stakeholder Engagement (International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) 2015)

At no time have I witnessed the Public being invited to **Collaborate** in any aspect of a decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of a preferred solution.

The CWO REZ project and the Transmission Line Project may have a narrow alignment i.e having informed and consulted with some low level of reach, with the “Quality Assurance Standard for Community & Stakeholder Engagement (International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) 2015)” but by no means could soundly demonstrate a broad alignment with such a quality assurance standard.

The level of participation in numbers, in relation to the CWO REZ Population is inadequate for the significant impacts faced by the CWO REZ communities.

Demonstration of Levels of Participation

Organiser	Activity	Method	IAP2 Level (See # Key)	Number of Participants	Target Population	% of Target Population	% of the REZ Participation
Energy Co (Ref EIS 5-7 Pg 194)	Letter to Landowners	Letter	Inform	350	350	100%	0%
Energy Co (Ref EIS 5-7 Pg 194)	Info Sessions	6x Drop-In Sessions	Consult	130	152,418	0%	0%
Energy Co (Ref EIS 5-8 Pg 195)	Newsletter	E-Newsletter	Inform	200	152,418	0%	0%
Energy Co (Ref EIS 5-8 Pg 195)	Newsletter	E-Newsletter	Inform	290	152,418	0%	0%
Energy Co (Ref EIS 5-8 Pg 195)	Info Sessions	7x Drop-In Sessions	Consult	143	152,418	0%	0%
Energy Co (No reference in EIS?)	Community Listening	Online Survey	Consult	55	152,418	0%	0%
Energy Co (Ref EIS 5-8 Pg 195)	Social Impact Assessment (SIA)	Interviews**	Consult	44	152,418	0%	0%
Sal Edwards - Community Representative	Coolah Community Survey	Online Survey	Consult	130	900	14%	0%
Energy Co (Ref EIS 5-9 Pg 196)	SIA - Landowners	Online Survey	Consult	104	80	130%	0%
Energy Co (Ref EIS 5-9 Pg 196)	Newsletter	E-Newsletter	Inform	450	152,418	0%	0%
Energy Co (Ref EIS 5-9 Pg 196)	Info Sessions - Wellington Guligong Coolah	Community Information Session	Consult	92	?	#VALUE!	0%
Energy Co (Ref EIS 5-13 Pg 200)	Community Benefits Survey	Online Survey	Consult	290	152,418	0%	0%

Key IAP2 Level

**

- Inform →
 - Consult →
 - Involve →
 - Collaborate →
 - Empower
- Includes Councils & Organisations

Table above - quantifying the levels of "participation." Demonstrates no activity to Involve, Collaborate or Empower (REZ Population figure obtained from Table 13-4 EIS Main Report)

Note: Coolah Community Survey results attached to support this Objection submission and support the reasoning made relating to community participation levels and overall community understanding.

Overall Comments:

1. The engagement activities demonstrated in the above table appear to be less than satisfactory when considering the nature of the project ie. Critical State Significant Infrastructure, the population directly impacted (REZ Area) and the total number of population engaged in consultation. **This data demonstrates a sum total zero % participation.** I acknowledge that this EIS is for the Transmission Line project, what will become the "spine" of the CWO REZ, but given that there is EIS content relevant to the whole of REZ (20 - Cumulative Impacts) and as this is the first formal opportunity for submission, I am including my thoughts here. However, I am of the firm belief that the CWO REZ Project in its entirety should have undergone its own feasibility and Cost Benefit Analysis and project planning process and I do understand this would have challenged the current planning system model. This, in itself is evidence enough that this transition using the REZ Model is a rushed execution that has not undergone extensive investigation and scrutiny and development of the framework and associated legislation to successfully and ethically deliver such a scale of REZ projects across the State, that each encompass many CSSI and SSD projects simultaneously.

2. The *Community Participation Plan (DPIE2019b)* is also listed as a guiding document for the Community Engagement Approach (EIS 5.1.1). While there are general suggestions that are relevant, this document doesn't adequately cater for a project such as the entire REZ. The potential cumulative and residual impacts identified for the REZ are significant and of a magnitude not previously considered at the time of this document's creation or that of the relevant legislation. The REZ Model, undergoes **no project approval** in its entirety, yet relies solely on the States Planning Approval process for the individual SSD and CSSI projects. At NO time has there been any community participation, conversation or effective collaboration for planning a successful delivery of the entire REZ with those local to the CWO REZ project. This **does not align** with the demonstrated commitment, recorded as The Department's commitment to community participation (Community Participation Plan Pg 8) as **"utilising local knowledge and expertise"** and **"which empowers local communities in the planning process"**.

3. The data displayed above and as displayed in the EIS clearly demonstrates that it is more in "extremely narrow" alignment with the *Quality Assurance Standard for Community & Stakeholder Engagement (International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) 2015)*.

4. Interpretation of this data could and should demonstrate that while the community have been "somewhat" informed and consulted (although when quantifying the measure of these activities it could be interpreted that while the activities have been conducted, there has been a zero % participation level to adequately inform or consult the REZ community population), there has been NO

attempt to involve, collaborate or empower the public in the planning and delivery of the CWO REZ.

5. One example of excluding the involvement of the public, is the lack of a collaborative development of a whole of REZ Temporary Workforce Accommodation strategy in collaboration with the public. If there has been a strategy developed, it was without the public's involvement and is not currently a publicly available document. If it hasn't been developed yet – why not? Proponents are already consulting community on TWA locations AND this has occurred through the Transmission Line Project EIS Exhibition period, which is also demonstrating an extreme lack of whole of REZ coordination on the ground. This is but ONE example of many decisions made for the REZ wide project delivery to not involve or collaborate with the public.

6. The Social Impact Assessment engagement was a targeted approach. As an active Member of the Community Reference Group, why weren't the CRG Members invited to participate? I conclude that NO MEASURES were put in place to ensure that substantial or even adequate participation were achieved through Social Impact Engagement. 28 Individuals, 3 Councils, 11 Organisations and 2 public services were interviewed. Total of 44. See *EIS Technical Paper 7, 3.4.2.1 Interviews To me*, for a CSSI project and for the first REZ, which encompasses MANY SSD projects all developing simultaneously within a declared area, this approach and associated outcomes for Social Impact Assessment are inadequate.

7. The resulting outcomes from questions posed and community feedback provided through the CRG forum have been limited and not of considerable value to the community. I question the overall effectiveness of the forum, considering the quantity of volunteer time spent actively representing community through discussions, detailing and posing questions through email correspondence, attending CRG Meetings and in reflecting on the overall value and transparency of information given to community in return.

8. At the most recent meeting of the CRG, discussion was limited to the EIS and the broader REZ topics such as the Community Benefit Fund and the formation and Terms of Reference of the SteerCo were verbally requested to be "off the table". These broader issues were of particular importance to community at the time following the public announcement by Minister Sharpe of \$128m of funding available to the region in the next 6 months. With no guidelines around the announced funding and now with no further opportunity through the CRG to discuss until early 2024, one could conclude that the announcement was a publicity stunt during the EIS exhibition period?

To summarise, due to the lack of openness and transparency afforded to community and the willingness to share detailed information around the Cumulative Impacts, I will be resigning from this volunteer position as Community Representative for the Warrumbungle Region.

Please find attached supporting documents detailing questions posed to EnergyCo through the CRG forum to date.



Division 5.2 State Significant Infrastructure

CWO REZ (Whole of REZ) PROJECT

NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH OBJECTS of EP&A Act

Cumulative Impacts

Throughout the EIS Document there are many identified significant cumulative and residual impacts from both the delivery of the Transmission Line Project and the associated whole of REZ delivery. The mitigation measures proposed at the EIS stage lack context and detail. It is crucial that the public have input into these mitigation measures for such significant impacts. There are at least 28 Management Plans, Systems and Strategies yet to be developed and these are routinely listed as the "mitigation measure" – when they don't even exist yet for comment. These include:

- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan
- Biodiversity Management Plan Construction
- Biosecurity Management Plan
- Bushfire & Emergency Management & Evacuation Plan
- Constriction Noise & Vibration Management Plan
- Community Wellbeing Strategy
- Complaints Management System
- Construction Waste Management Plan
- Driver Fatigue Management Plan
- Environmental Management Plan
- First Nations Liaison Group
- Historical Heritage Management Plan
- Industry Participation Plan
- Landscape Character & Visual Impact Management Plan
- Landowner Engagement Strategy
- Local Workforce Participation Strategy
- Operational Communications Plan
- Operational Emergency Management Plan
- Pre-Construction & Construction Communications & Engagement Plan
- Property Management Plans
- Riparian Vegetation Management Plan
- Social Impact Management Plan
- Soil & Water Management Plan
- Traffic Management Plan
- Vegetation Management Plan
- Vehicle Movement Plan
- Workforce Management Plan



The promise of a future management plan, system or strategy provides no detail or confidence to the public in the mitigation of significant cumulative impacts or opportunities.

I note that each of these mitigation measures have varying levels of significance pre-mitigation. It is important for the public to be able to both understand and provide feedback on these proposed mitigation measures. If these aren't detailed in the EIS, how does this allow the public and local government to contribute and collaborate?

There is evidence to demonstrate that some of these strategies and plans should ALREADY be in place and in action. Eg. Community Wellbeing Strategy, Pre-construction communications & Engagement Plan, Social Impact Management Plan

The lack of a community wellbeing strategy and the consideration of trauma-informed community engagement practices has been evident in the engagement activities that have been conducted.

Overall Comments:

1. The entire CWO REZ project has not undergone any approval process. This Transmission Line EIS is not an adequate way, nor is it in accordance with the relevant legislation, to address any or all of the cumulative impacts and associated opportunities that the whole of REZ project potentially causes or provides.
2. The CWO REZ area includes communities and lands that were severely impacted by cumulative natural disasters. Primarily the Sir Ivan Fire, then the ensuing drought, mouse plague and ironically, 1-in-100-year floods and record hailstorms also. Add these traumas and/or stressors to the numerous impacts from COVID Lockdowns and for the CWO REZ project to engage with communities and residents with no trauma-informed processes and practices is extremely naïve and ill-informed.
3. The potential cumulative impacts identified (20-1 EIS Main Report) are:
 1. Land use, property & Agriculture
 2. Landscape & Visual
 3. Biodiversity
 4. Aboriginal
 5. Social
 6. Economic
 7. Noise & Vibration
 8. Bushfire & general hazards
 9. Air quality
 10. Traffic & transport
 11. Waste Management
 12. Surface water and groundwater supply

When asked through the CRG, *"Who is conducting the ongoing monitoring of the combined water requirements of all proponents and any associated effects/impacts on the regions water tables? This same question around ongoing monitoring and assessment could be applied to each of the significant cumulative impacts eg. TWA, Traffic, noise/vibration, dust, visual amenity, aboriginal heritage, social, economic etc Who has the responsibility of the ongoing monitoring and assessment of each of these? Do they ALL fall ultimately to the Dept of Planning? If yes, what does this monitoring and assessment look like and how best can the communities begin to seek knowledge and understand?"*

The answer provided to the CRG was: "Biodiversity Conservation Services is working with EnergyCo regarding biodiversity offset options that provide a strategic conservation outcome. This may be extended to include large wind and solar projects in the REZ, but this has not been confirmed. A key principle of cumulative impact assessment is that each project is responsible for managing its own impacts to an acceptable level, minimising the overall contribution to impacts. In this regard, it is the responsibility of the proponent to monitor the effectiveness of the mitigation and demonstrate compliance with any approval conditions. DPE typically includes conditions of approval to publish monitoring data as required. In terms of water take, the ability to source water from regulated or unregulated sources, including groundwater sources, is dependent on the available entitlements. As the water source is managed holistically through water sharing plans, there are restrictions on how much can be allocated year upon year. Water Access Licences typically include a requirement to monitor the volumes being extracted. The Department of Planning and Environment carries out audits to ensure proponents are complying with their approval requirements."

Who is responsible for calculating the **sum total** of each impact and assessing its acceptability? Then consider the total from a whole of REZ perspective or a State perspective? Eg. What is the maximum amount of Regent Honeyeater habitat that can be removed in our REZ or across NSW? Is there a maximum level or threshold for every threatened or migratory species impacted? Who is measuring, monitoring and assessing these for each threatened or migratory species, for total native vegetation and threatened ecological communities and for **every identified cumulative impact**? Refer Appendix E EIS Main Report and Table A-3

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act), Function: State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines

Overall Comments:

1. The guidelines state **3.1 Introduction** "All SSI projects require the approval of the Minister under Division 5.2 of the EP&A Act before they may proceed. Prior to determination, they are subject to comprehensive assessment with extensive community participation under the EP&A Act. The main steps in the assessment are shown in Figure 1 and explained in more detail in sections 4 to 14 of these guidelines. While all SSI projects undergo the same comprehensive assessment, **the scale and impacts of these projects can vary significantly**. Consequently, **it is important to ensure that the level of community engagement and assessment required for each project is proportionate to the scale and impacts of the project**. All SSI projects are determined on their merits, having regard to their economic, environmental and social impacts and the principles of ecologically sustainable development."
2. As the Transmission Line Project (SSI-48323210) and each RE Project are exhibited independently and assessed on their own merits, I believe it is impossible to establish a true and accurate measure of the scale and impacts that the CWO REZ presents in its entirety. And as such, the level of community engagement and assessment is therefore not proportionate to the collective scale and impact of the CWO REZ. The transmission line project is by default like a "spine" of the CWO REZ, and without its infrastructure approval, many of the associated RE projects may not be able to effectively deliver the energy they will potentially generate. Given the "critical" nature of this Transmission Line project and while there is an attempt to identify the cumulative impacts of all the projects, I urge the DPE and the Minister to consider that this, the CWO REZ project delivery has not been and is not under near enough active monitoring, assessment or scrutiny to ensure that the cumulative and residual economic, environmental and social impacts don't blow out and become disastrous.
3. **3.8 Community Participation:** "Community participation is integral to assessing the merits of SSI projects, leading to the improved design of projects, reduced environmental impacts and ecologically sustainable development. Under the EP&A Act, all SSI EISs must be exhibited for at least 28 days, and anyone can make a submission on the EIS during the public exhibition."
4. I again would like to highlight that while activities were held to offer community participation on an "inform" and "consult" level, the zero % of participation across the REZ is insignificant (refer to table quantifying community participation, pg 4) and can't be accepted as adequate community participation. Nor should it be ignored that the activities offered did not offer opportunities for the public to be "involved" or to "collaborate" in an effort to "empower" the impacted communities.
5. I note with interest that the very exhibition of the EIS is categorised as active community participation, as anyone can make a submission. I see this process mostly as another opportunity to provide feedback, to participate in consultation and not greatly as an opportunity to be involved in potential mitigation measures or planning improvements or in collaborating towards development alternatives and solutions.
6. Some might consider the potential Community Benefit Fund as a way to "empower" the public and the communities, but given the public haven't been involved in the development of the framework that will be used to govern the CBF, it is highly unlikely that the community will successfully be empowered.
7. **5.3 High Standard:** "The EIS must be prepared to a high standard, having regard to the Department's State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines – Preparing a Preferred Infrastructure Report, and should: • be as succinct as possible and easy to understand • reflect community views • contain a technically robust assessment of the impacts of the project • **provide a justification and evaluation of the project as a whole, having regard to the economic, environmental and social impacts of the project and the principles of ecologically sustainable development**."
8. This EIS, it may be "**as succinct as possible**" as per the guidelines, but even with the extension of 2 weeks, I have yet to read and digest all of the EIS Main Report and the associated technical reports. The time it takes to review the EIS by each community member is time away from their family, their business or employment or their down-time and all at their own cost.

This is significant and nowhere is this acknowledged or considered. The many months it took the proponent to compile the data and prepare the EIS (and I imagine in this instance at taxpayer expense), is disproportionate to the short time-frame that the public has to digest and fact-check not only the content of the EIS but all the associated legislation and guidelines referenced throughout. 9. The guidelines also state that the EIS should **“reflect community views”**. How can this EIS reflect community views, when so few members of the REZ community have participated in the engagement activities? When they have, many have left despondent with not being able to clarify detail or obtain transparent answers to their questions. Many questions were “commonly answered” with, this information will be included in the “detailed design process”.

10. Can EnergyCo please substantiate HOW the principles of ecologically sustainable development have been considered in the EIS and how they influenced the mitigation measures of the economic, environmental and social impacts of the entire CWO REZ? I am unable to draw conclusion that they have been regarded in the compilation of the EIS for the Transmission Project and even less for the REZ in its entirety.

10. If or when the proponent prepares an amendment report or a preferred infrastructure report, I would request that this amendment report also be placed on public exhibition.

11. **10.2 Assessing an SSI application:** In completing its assessment, the Department will typically: • review the design of the project • consider whether the project is compatible with the strategic context • visit the site and surrounds • check whether the project complies with any relevant statutory requirements • analyse the issues raised in submissions and the proponent's response to submissions • carry out targeted community engagement where necessary to investigate key concerns • seek advice from government agencies and independent technical experts • assess the impacts of the project against relevant government standards and criteria • evaluate the merits of the project as a whole, having regard to the economic, environmental and social impacts of the project and the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

12. When **assessing the impacts** of this project in the process of assessing this SSI application, how can the full array of cumulative impacts caused by the REZ be assessed when the project essentially being assessed is the Transmission Line Project?

13. I would like to respectfully ask the Director of Energy Assessments, DPE and the Minister to dutifully consider the fact that potentially the rollout of the REZ Model is being conducted in such haste and utilising legislation and guidelines (that were developed at a time when the REZ Model wasn't even considered) that it cannot possibly assess the impacts in a true, meaningful and transparent way, and in considering this, it might also be considered that by only requiring the Transmission Line project to follow the planning process, is not sound reasoning for the entirety of any Renewable Energy Zone not to be assessed in its entirety AND in an ongoing process, as more and more SSD projects request approval within a REZ area. Thank you for your consideration of this.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act), Function: Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects

Overall Comments:

1. The guidelines state clear **Community participation objectives**. Proponent-led engagement: The Department expects proponents to adopt the Department's community participation objectives when engaging on State significant projects. These objectives are:

- open and inclusive
- easy to access
- relevant
- timely, and
- meaningful

Note: At this point in time I am running out of time to provide extensive detail for this part of my submission (as submissions are closing today and the clock is ticking). I will attached 3 supporting documents that support my conclusion that the REZ Community have NOT adequately participated as outlined in the many relevant legislation, quality assurance standards and guidelines referenced. Including the Departments Community Participation Plan.

There is evidence in the questions raised by community through the CRG that Community Participation has NOT been open and inclusive, easy to access, relevant, timely or meaningful. This is further evidenced in the apparent lack of understanding as displayed in the Community Survey conducted and resulting data attached.

Due to time constraints, I provide the list below to connect questions posed to the CRG and their associated answers (or lack of) as evidence that these Community Participation Objectives have not been adequately adopted.

Open and Inclusive: Questions around the engagement of consultants (Turnpike Advisory) to act as EnergyCo Staff eg. The CWO REZ Team including the Project Director, Director of Community & Place, CWO Community Stakeholder & Lead etc. There are many EnergyCo representatives and at any one time (even now) it remains unclear who is or might be a temporary consultant serving a defined term or a permanent EnergyCo staff member. This was highlighted when Community and Stakeholder positions finished during the EIS Exhibition (contracts expired? Again, not transparent) and new positions/contracts commenced.

As Member of, and Treasurer for the Coolah Youth and Community Centre, a volunteer organisation based in Coolah. It was noted that payment for an EnergyCo hire booking was received from Turnpike Advisory for venue hire for a Community Consultation event. This raised questions as to why? What was the firm engaged for? Whether the Advisory firm were engaged purely for staff resources or if their engagement included community consultation expectations and deliverables? The lack of clarity around the engagement terms, transparency around the governance of the engagement only leaves doubt and questions for community.

Note also the question around the land size being considered for the Merotherie Hub and the associated answer at the time. At NO TIME when questioned, did EnergyCo include community and be open with the consideration that this land was being reviewed for potential TWA. The same can be said for the consideration of the Neeley's Lane location – the land was purchased with NO consultation with community regarding its future purpose. No, Open and inclusive cannot be terms associated with the communications received from EnergyCo by Community.

Easy to Access: Questions referring to advertising constraints, website structure and location/availability of online information, lack of social media use and the inability to rectify these issues efficiently after receiving feedback.

Relevant: Questions around the cumulative impacts have been posed and discussed at most, if not every CRG Meeting. The details of Cumulative Impact Study Findings remain information held by EnergyCo and have not been made publicly available.

Summarised and very basic details around cumulative impacts remain the only information shared and mitigation measures are not being collaborated upon with community.

Note the questions around conflicting maps of the transmission corridor – not relevant info and not open and transparent.

Timely: Public media announcement (during EIS exhibition) of \$128m worth of funding to be available to the region in the next 6 months as part of the Community Benefit Fund, but no funding guidelines available or opportunity to discuss through the CRG. No explanation to the CRG as to why the access rights weren't included in Tender 4 of the Tender Guidelines. Information is not timely.

Meaningful: The lack of consistent, transparent and honest communication limits the ability to foster meaningful conversation and/or collaboration, it actually prevents it.

Additional question for the Director of Energy Assessments, DPE & The Minister. When external consultants are engaged for such crucial roles as Project Director and Director of Community & Place (among others) for CSSI Projects **IF** there becomes evidence of negligence or actions not in accordance with specific legislative requirements etc. Who does the responsibility and/or liability fall to? The engaged consultant or EnergyCo? What safeguards are in place for the regions and communities, should an engagement not be delivered effectively? Can the department provide clarity around the Terms of Engagement for any and all consulting firms, such as Tender Guidelines etc, which assumably would have been publicly available information at the time the tenders were announced and publicised?

Part 4 Renewable Energy Zones and Access Schemes

CWO REZ DECLARATION

NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH EIIAct 2020



Refer Division 1, 19 (4)

(4) The Minister may make a declaration only if the Minister—

- (a) is satisfied that it is consistent with the objects of this Act, and
- (b) has considered the following—
 - (i) existing network infrastructure in the renewable energy zone and the rest of the State,
 - (ii) land use planning, environmental and heritage matters,
 - (iii) the views of the local community in the renewable energy zone,**
 - (iv) other matters prescribed by the regulations.



At NO time, was our Council (Warrumbungle Shire) OR our Communities (Coolah, Dunedoo, Uarbry, Leadville, Cassilis) sought to express our views on the Renewable Energy Zone. We “found out” after it was announced and after, Transgrid came to Cassilis to host a Community Consultation session.

The very declaration of the CWO REZ is not in accordance with the EIIAct 2020. The views of the community in the Renewable Energy Zone had not been sought, so couldn't possibly have been considered. (Division 1, 19 (4)(b)(iii))

Note: EIIAct 2020 - 34 Directions for priority transmission infrastructure projects

(2) The Minister must not direct a network operator to carry out a priority transmission infrastructure project unless the Minister has considered the following -

- (a) existing network infrastructure in the area in which the priority transmission infrastructure project will be located,
- (b) land use planning, environmental and heritage matters,
- (c) the views of the local community in the area in which the priority transmission infrastructure project will be located,**
- (d) other matters prescribed by the regulations.

Below is my summary of remaining issues I had planned to raise in this submission in detail, listed as important items to consider. I am simply out of time to continue delving into the report, technical documents and associated guidelines, legislation and correspondence to present a detailed list of questions and reference to associated reports or legislation for each individual item. I have focused up until now on the TWO prominent issues relevant to my roles and experience within our Warrumbungle Community – Community Participation & Cumulative Impacts.

Please note the following items/questions as areas of concern that I believe need careful consideration also or noted objection.

- Dwelling 399 and 717 From photomontages. I object to the proximity of the transmission lines to these two dwellings – 399 & 717. I object in principle to the placement of these high-voltage transmission lines in close proximity to homes, sheds, yards and other vital pieces of farming infrastructure.
- I object to the compulsory acquisition process. There has to be a better way, this is a land rights issue. Landowners should maintain the right to say no, or sell their property in its entirety at an acceptable rate, higher than market value.
- Insurance and liability implications for landholders neighbouring high-value RE projects. This is also a land rights issue. To be forced into a position where the allowable Public Liability cover for their farm, cant and wont cover the value of neighbouring projects should an incident occur where the farmer is liable. This needs to be mitigated and prevented. (See CRG record of Qs from Oct/Nov 23) Noting that landholders had no further luck when communicating this challenge with proponents.
- I object to the use of photo montages that did not show any of the required vegetaion clearing – this is deceptive and misleading
- Decline of land value in project areas and to neighbouring properties
- Under the SBP Scheme, private landowners in NSW will receive annual payments for hosting certain infrastructure associated with new major high-voltage transmission projects that are critical to the energy transformation and the future of the energy grid on their land for a period of 20 years. This scheme should be for the life of the infrastructure, not just for 20 years.
- Construction of the project would result in direct impacts to around 1,032 hectares of native vegetation, including 22 plant community types (PCT). Four of the 22 PCTs expected to be impacted are listed as threatened ecological communities (TECs) under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (BC Act) and three are listed as TECs under the EPBC Act. In addition, construction of the project has the potential to directly impact 33 threatened flora and fauna species, or their habitats. – Is there an approved conservation advice for each listed threatened species (except one that is extinct or that is a conservation dependent species), and each listed threatened ecological community, at all times while the species or community continues to be listed, as required by the EP&BC Act?
- The Biodiversity impacts are considerable and as such I believe when added to all the other Biodiversity impacts of CWO REZ projects are an unacceptable cost to the region and to our environment. Biodiversity offsets don't begin to recover these impacts. The details strategy of offsets isn't even available yet for review. The greater knowledge I gain of the Offset scheme only adds to my concern for the future of our flora and fauna and to our ability to monitor what species we are forever impacting, while under the illusion that we are “paying” for the protection of like habitats, when in fact they are already existing. The loss, is a loss and will forever be a loss and the addition of funds to any program, does not begin to recover this loss. This ultimately can be proven when we lose protected species. Let us not contribute to the loss of the 33 protected species identified in this EIS.
- Impacts to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, how can these be measured and accepted or mitigated?
- Irreparable impacts to visual landscapes
- Impacts to agriculture and agricultural businesses
- Community Benefit Fund, while the potential investment in impacted communities appears beneficial and appealing to some, it is worth noting and should be considered that our Councils and Communities lack sufficient volunteer and human resources to effectively

manage existing community driven and Council led projects. Projects are already seeking extensions to reporting due to time constraints from lack of people on the ground. This is a very real challenge, that cannot be underestimated. To throw funding at communities already under such limitations and pressure would only exasperate the problems and increase stress on community volunteers and would also contribute to the failing of future program and project delivery.

- Failed community engagement activities not included in the EIS – this is evidence that should be included. Community Listening Survey – 55 respondents, REZ wide.
- Was a Strategic Options Assessment conducted for the REZ Model initially and include consideration of localised energy generation projects, owned by communities - for communities, owned by suburbs – for suburbs, owned by cities – for cities?
- Groundwater Ecosystem communities – some projects NO impacts? Underground water 20-54?
- Bushfire ignition risks – Extreme during operation?
- Aerial fire-fighting impacts
- Cumulative Impact monitoring and assessment – initial CBA and ongoing? Local Community/CWO REZ/State and National
- Calculation of kW allocation per home by proponents Avg under 2kW? How is this possible? An average household on my own calculations would require 5-10kw at least. This is misleading and inaccurate. If the government is relying on these estimations – these need to be urgently addressed.
- NSW Parliament Enquiry into the feasibility of undergrounding transmission – timing of enquiry is inappropriate for this EIS to progress. The EIS transmission project should not be able to be approved until after the findings of this enquiry are released and considered
- Pg 194 The revised study corridor advertisements were not published in the impacted towns local newspapers, coolah diary, dunedoo diary, merriwa ringer?
- 5.3.2 Summary of Engagement Activities – ends Jan 2023? Community Information sessions were held in Feb 2023 with a significant amount of frustration and angst displayed. No mental health support available. NOT in EIS?
- Page 53 of Technical paper 7, listing hospitals in Warrumbungle LGA. Hospital table 4.4.2.3 This information is incorrect and incomplete.
- Who checked the content of the Technical papers for local accuracy? If something as important as hospitals in a LGA can be incomplete and inaccurate, how can we be assured that the rest of the local information is correct and/or complete? I have not had time to fully read any of the papers cover to cover. Should the accuracy of this information actually RELY on public submissions to pick these up and correct them? I don't think so.
- Workforce anticipation 14-5 "Approximately 10 per cent of the construction workforce is expected to be from the study area and the remaining workforce is expected to come from within NSW." – How can these predictions be realistic? Confirming that no international workforce is expected to work on the Transmission Line Project?
- Accessibility of panel discussions/information sessions
 - Not willing for information sessions to be livestreamed to allow all community members to view the panel answers at their convenience. Similar to how a Council Meeting is livestreamed.
- Further Supporting Documents - CRG Minutes link (8x Meeting minutes)
<https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/cwo/working-community>

The following parts of the undertaking-engagement-guidelines-for-ssp, I query whether in the delivery of the REZ and the Transmission project if EnergyCo are effectively utilising and implementing these guidelines?

3.3 Ensure engagement is effective Proponents should remember that high quality planning outcomes rely on effective engagement. Effective engagement occurs when the community, councils and government agencies have the information they need to understand a project and its impacts, and are given the opportunity to participate in a meaningful way. Effective engagement can give a proponent first-hand insight into what people value and how they expect a project will affect them.

When engagement is carried out in an effective and meaningful way, productive working relationships that enable important conversations between all parties with an interest in a project can be established. This in turn can provide the foundation for good planning decisions. While this does not guarantee consensus, effective engagement means the community acknowledges the assessment was fair and transparent and understands how various and diverse views and concerns were considered, and how those views shaped the final design of the project. To facilitate meaningful engagement, the proponent should show how feedback was considered and how it influenced the final shape of the project.

3.4 Ensure engagement is proportionate to the scale and impact of the project The proposed engagement activities for a State significant project should be proportionate to the scale and likely impacts of the project and the likely interest the community might have in the project. Proportionate engagement prevents consultation fatigue and keeps costs and time impacts to reasonable levels while remaining meaningful. Proportionate engagement relates to the:

- scale and likely impacts of the project
- geographic reach of engagement
- number of activities (including the number of tailored activities, for specific groups)
- stages of engagement.

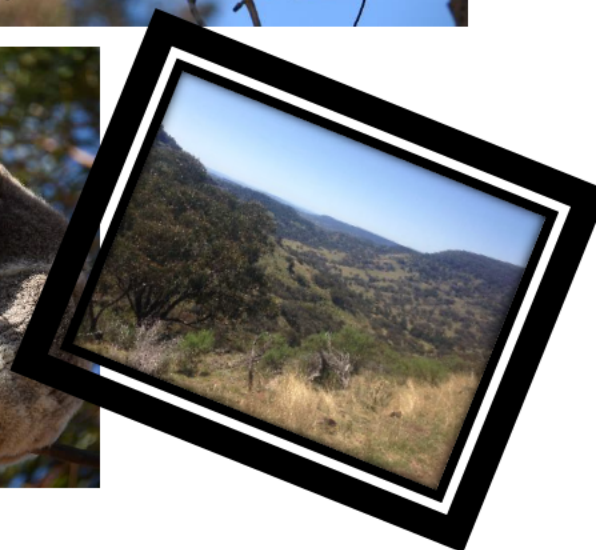
3.7 Implement the community participation objectives State significant projects, by their very nature, are likely to impact or attract interest from a diverse range of people and groups. To engage effectively, a proponent should:

- identify the people or groups who are interested in or are likely to be affected by the project
- use appropriate engagement techniques. This is particularly important when engaging with specific groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, where engagement should be a discrete, planned activity undertaken by and with experienced Indigenous engagement specialists
- ensure the community are provided with safe, respectful and inclusive opportunities to express their views
- involve the community, councils and government agencies early in the development of the proposal, to enable their views to be considered in project planning and design
- be innovative in their engagement approach and tailor engagement activities to suit the:
 - context (e.g. sensitivity of the site and surrounds)
 - scale and nature of the project and its impacts
 - level of interest in the project
- provide clear and concise information about what is proposed and the likely impacts for the relevant people or group they are engaging with
- clearly outline how and when the community can be involved in the process
- make it easy for the community to access information and provide feedback
- seek to understand issues of concern for all affected people and groups and respond appropriately to those concerns
- provide feedback about how community and stakeholder views were used to shape the project or considered in making decisions
- be able to demonstrate how the demography of the area affected has been considered in how and what engagement activities have been undertaken. More detailed information on the expectations for engagement at each phase in the environmental assessment is provided in Appendix A.

Appendix A:

Table 1: Engagement at each phase in the environmental assessment

Phase	Expectation
Preparing the EIS	The proponent must: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• implement any engagement activities required by the SEARs (including engagement with relevant government agencies, council and the community)• inform the community about the opportunities to engage• explain how community feedback will be considered and documented• provide relevant information in plain English so that potential impacts and implications can be readily understood• be clear about the level of influence engagement will have by identifying what elements can be changed as a result of feedback• give the community the opportunity to voice their concerns or share local knowledge so that this information can be considered early on in the planning, design and assessment• consider the issues raised by the community, council and relevant government agencies when making project refinements and accurately reflect how these issues have been addressed in EIS documentation• keep the community, council and relevant government agencies informed with up-to-date information on the project. The community is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• seek clarification about the project and its impacts• provide timely feedback to the proponent about aspects of the project which they support, do not support or wish to be adjusted• provide clear reasons for any concerns to enable the proponent to consider possible alternative approaches to address the issues



To protect the amazing beauty of our environment, our home – I object to this project & the CWO REZ.