

Meeting Minutes

Victoria NSW Interconnector West

Meeting title:	VNI West CCG	Date:	12 March 2026
Location:	Deniliquin Golf Club	Time:	10:00am – 1:00pm
Attendees:	Chairperson:	Brendan Blakeley	
	Secretariat:	Beatrice Hobson	
VNI West Project Team - Transgrid			
Colin Mayer	Project Director		
Nathan Menser	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Manager		
Geoff Hudson	Environment Manager		
Ben Doran	Land and Property Manager		
Ben Fraser	Community and Stakeholder Coordinator		
Transgrid guests			
Denise Lo	Manager of Environmental Approvals and Biodiversity		
Monika Moutos	General Manager Environmental Strategy and Planning		
CCG Members			
Colin Bull	Landholder		
Donald Bull	Landholder		
Ethan Koschitzke	Murray River Council		
Jeanette Crew (for David Crew)	Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre		
Karen Lyons (for Roger Knight)	Western Murray Land Improvement Group		
Laura	Local Land Services – Murray		
Michael Chalmers	Ricegrowers Association – Wakool Branch		
Mick Lalor	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service		
Patrick Westwood	Local Land Services – Murray		
Simone Hughes	Regional Renewable Energy Committee		
Tracey Hamilton (for David Crew)	Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre		
Apologies			
Alison Glenn	NSW Farmers, Bunnaloo Branch		
Bruce Rollinson	Landholder		
Garry Stoll	Murrumbidgee Council		
Haydon Love	Cummeragunja Local Aboriginal Land Council		
John Kerr	Moama Local Aboriginal Land Council		
Maisie Moore	Wamba Wamba Local Aboriginal Land Council		
Mark Dalzell	Edward River Council		
Matthew Stewart	Wamba Wamba Local Aboriginal Land Council		
Rose Dunn	Deniliquin Local Aboriginal Land Council		
Shannon Sampson	Community member		
Trevor Clark	Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council		

Acknowledgment of Country

On behalf of the group, Brendan Blakeley acknowledged the Wamba Wamba and Barappa Barappa/Pereppa Pereppa, Traditional Owners of Wanganella and its surrounding areas.

Meeting proceedings

Agenda item	Summary notes
<p><i>Pre-meeting correspondence</i></p>	<p><i>A request was submitted prior to the meeting asking for a telecommunications provider to be present at the meeting to discuss potential improvements to mobile and internet services in the local area.</i></p> <p><i>In response, the Secretariat confirmed that telecommunications would be included as an agenda item for discussion at this meeting. It was noted that engagement with telecommunications providers would be discussed in the context of the project's current stage and approval status.</i></p>
<p>1. Welcome, introductions and housekeeping and review of previous minutes</p>	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves.</p> <p>The Chair reviewed action items and minutes from previous meeting were accepted. See slide 5 of the presentation.</p> <p>Review of previous minutes: Telstra</p> <p>Colin Bull (CB) noted the Yanco Delta Wind Farm is proposing a Telstra-standard communications tower, and encouraged similar proposals from other renewable generators and Transgrid so that the region could have multiple towers. He explained that telecommunications issues around the Dinawan substation have worsened due to EnergyConnect, impacting local landowners, and that Starlink-equipped vehicles are not sufficient to manage the increased strain from worker usage.</p> <p>Nathan Menser (NM) advised Transgrid's social legacy engagement has recognised telecommunications is a key issue for the region. Any funding Transgrid can allocate for social legacy is dependent on obtaining approval from the Australian Energy Regulator (AER). Currently, Transgrid does not have substantial funding for community investment and benefits on VNI West. He noted Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) may have its community investment and benefits program for the South West Renewable Energy Zone (SWREZ) announced sooner than Transgrid achieves such funding.</p> <p>CB commented that telecommunications impacts should be considered a project construction cost, not a community investment cost.</p> <p>NM acknowledged Origin's modification report (currently on exhibition) includes a telecommunications tower proposed to support the workforce and could remain on site after construction, becoming a social legacy initiative.</p> <p>Colin Mayer (CM) noted that Transgrid has been nominated by EnergyCo as the developer of the bulk supply point for the SWREZ. This means that part of the VNI West project will be accelerated, which in turn may accelerate opportunity for some community investment and benefits. CM noted that in discussions with EnergyCo, Transgrid has represented the community view of needing to improve telecommunications around Bundure tower.</p> <p>CB explained that Yanco Delta Wind Farm has a wind tower on Delta Station assessing the wind conditions, and asked if Transgrid could attach telecommunications equipment to it. He noted that Mabins Well Exchange is not very effective and often loses signal.</p>

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	<p>Donald Bull (DB) explained that the-then Conargo Shire had put a temporary arrangement in place which would be similar to what Colin suggested.</p> <p>Monika Moutos (MM) advised that Transgrid will continue discussions with EnergyCo to ensure a coordinated approach on this issue.</p> <p>ACTION: Transgrid to meet with EnergyCo regarding a coordinated approach to telecommunications, and to understand the approach from each proponent.</p> <p>CB noted telecommunications improvements need to be made proactively rather than retrospectively. He noted that use of Starlink at Dinawan substation construction for EnergyConnect is an example of a reactive approach.</p> <p>Simone Hughes (SH) asked where there has been community feedback elsewhere along the proposed route about telecommunications. She noted the proposed camps at Wanganella and Moulamein, and asked what this could mean for signal in those areas.</p> <p>NM responded that Transgrid has received feedback via its social legacy engagement in 2025 that telecommunications improvement is a key issue for the region, as some have spoken to Transgrid regarding dead spots in mobile phone coverage in the region.</p> <p>Review of previous minutes: Cultural Heritage management during construction</p> <p>Jeanette Crew (JC) asked whether Transgrid has permits for the construction work.</p> <p>GH responded that Critical State Significant projects are exempt from obtaining permits but are bound by the conditions of approval. Transgrid are working with the Aboriginal Focus Groups (AFGs) and reviewing the cultural heritage management plans with them to ensure Indigenous groups are involved throughout the whole process.</p> <p>JC asked what criteria Transgrid use to identify areas to conduct test pit excavations.</p> <p>GH responded there is consultation with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) and the archaeologists who identify areas with possible tangible and intangible heritage significance. If an article of heritage is found during the initial test pits, more test pits are excavated nearby to ascertain if there is a site of significance, and its extent.</p> <p>JC noted that the areas can potentially contain very valuable information. She noted she would be interested in the results of the excavations.</p> <p>ACTION: Transgrid to provide an update at the next AFG meeting on the results of the test pit excavations.</p>
<p>2. What are you hearing?</p>	<p>Project timelines</p> <p>SH noted she receives questions about what the delay for VNI West Victoria means for the timeframe for VNI West NSW.</p> <p><i>Note: Discussion held over until later in meeting.</i></p> <p>Firefighting and roads</p> <p>DB noted people are concerned about the effectiveness of aerial firefighting around wind farms and transmission lines. He also noted the significant impact the EnergyConnect project has had on roads in the area. He noted Edward River Council appears to lack resources to adequately maintain roads, and called for coordination across the proponents about road upgrades and maintenance.</p> <p>GH responded that since the EIS exhibition in August 2025, Transgrid has undertaken a more detailed assessment of traffic volumes and vehicle movements, including extensive surveys. Transgrid has shared its findings with TfNSW and local</p>

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	<p>councils, and is using the data as the basis to work through proposed agreements on road upgrades and maintenance.</p> <p>DB asked about the weight of the trucks required for the project.</p> <p>GH explained that the exact weights will vary based on types of loads. Transgrid has conducted detailed assessments of bridge capacity, safety and required road maintenance and upgrade schedules to be endorsed by TfNSW and Councils.</p> <p>Michael Chalmers (MC) asked whether contractors will avoid truck movements during school times.</p> <p>GH confirmed this will be addressed in the Traffic Management Plans, which consider sensitive operating periods and may include measures such as reduced speeds or traffic signals.</p> <p>MC asked whether these plans would be prepared on an area-by-area basis.</p> <p>GH confirmed this approach, and noted these are developed once the contractor is appointed.</p> <p>Community Partnerships Program</p> <p>Karen Lyons (KL) noted that community grants delivered through the Community Partnerships Program have been very positive and appreciated by local communities.</p> <p>Project mapping</p> <p>CB noted that a recent presentation on the Yanco Delta Wind Farm project included detailed maps showing proposed routes and vehicle numbers.</p> <p>GH advised that Transgrid has this level of detail for VNI West and can provide it.</p> <p>ACTION: Include details on traffic and transport routes at next CCG meeting.</p> <p>CB added that landholders want to know the exact tower locations on their properties and noted one neighbour may need to move a shearing shed.</p> <p>Ben Doran (BD) advised that Transgrid is engaging directly with that landholder. More generally, Transgrid’s project team has visited properties to refine the design and consolidate access tracks to reduce impacts, and updated mapping will shortly be issued to landholders.</p> <p>CB noted that Transgrid were on his neighbour’s property and his neighbour was very happy with the detail they received.</p> <p>Ethan Koschitzke (EK) asked whether a more refined route report has been completed since 2024 and if Council can receive shapefiles for the updated alignment.</p> <p>CM confirmed that Transgrid can provide detailed alignment information and present to Councils on the route development and current progress.</p> <p>ACTION: Transgrid to send information of detailed route alignment to Murray River Council and offer project briefing.</p> <p>Mick Lalor (ML) noted some road signs have been removed and asked if it was related to the project.</p> <p>CM confirmed it is not related to VNI West.</p>
<p>3. Project Director’s update – Colin Mayer</p>	<p>CM provided a project update. See slide 8 of the presentation.</p> <p>Transgrid has received notification from EnergyCo that it has been nominated as a developer of the bulk supply point for the South West REZ under the <i>Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020</i>. With the potential investment of EnergyCo into</p>

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	<p>VNI West (under the EII Act), it means Transgrid can consider delivery in two stages:</p> <p>Stage 1 – the Dinawan substation and Transmission Line 51 network upgrade package (Project Director – Colin Mayer)</p> <p>Stage 2 – the main Dinawan to Border transmission line (Project Director – Claire Moore).</p> <p>The planning approvals is continuing for the project and the Environmental Impact Statement covers the approvals for the whole project.</p> <p>VicGrid (formerly Transmission Company Victoria) have engaged Iberdrola to assist VicGrid with project planning. Transgrid will be meeting Iberdrola next month.</p> <p>SH asked if renewable generators are connecting into Dinawan substation and whether they need to wait until the Dinawan substation upgrade is completed to start generation.</p> <p>CM confirmed the Dinawan substation upgrade is needed to support the generation of these projects. From a technical perspective, energisation is a progressive ramp up, as the renewable energy developers have to commission links between their substation and Transgrid’s substation; and only one proponent can get energised at a time. The detailed programs for the energisation are not developed yet. The EnergyConnect project has capacity to transmit around 800MW (megawatts) of electricity, while about 3.56GW (gigawatts) of electricity is proposed in the South West REZ (under EnergyCo Access Scheme).</p> <p>MC asked which direction the electricity moves in.</p> <p>CM explained that interconnectors allow power to flow in both directions, depending on where the power is needed.</p> <p>CM outlined the next steps for the project, including obtaining environmental approval, finalising property acquisition and going to tender for project delivery.</p> <p>CB asked why Dinawan substation upgrades are occurring now and were not done during EnergyConnect construction.</p> <p>MM explained that when the EnergyConnect project was seeking project approval, the South West REZ did not exist. As the energy transition progresses, the generation, transmission and distribution requirements change and therefore the substation upgrades have been identified as part of the VNI West project.</p> <p>DB asked whether the tower design for EnergyConnect and VNI West will be the same.</p> <p>CM responded that the towers have a different design. The VNI West towers will use the same design as the HumeLink towers.</p>
4. Property	<p>BD provided a property update. See slide 11 of the presentation.</p> <p>Patrick Westwood (PW) asked if Transgrid have had any issues with Local Land Services tenure and Crown tenure.</p> <p>BD advised that Transgrid will soon follow up with Crown Lands and Local Land Services (via the LLS CEO).</p> <p>SH asked what Council should do if they get calls from the community asking for advice around property acquisition.</p> <p>CB responded that, in his experience as a landholder, Transgrid are very helpful. Transgrid recommended each landholder get independent legal advice and an independent valuation, with Transgrid agreeing to cover associated costs.</p>

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	<p>BD added that every landholder gets an information pack. Transgrid confirmed it recommends each landholder seek legal representation and an independent valuation, and reimburses landholders for any reasonable costs related to that advisory. BD suggested that if Council receive these enquiries, they should direct landholders to Transgrid for further support.</p> <p>The Chair noted that requirements for compulsory acquisition are outlined under the Just Terms Act. Both Transgrid and the NSW Government's Centre for Property Acquisition have resources available to landholders providing advice on responsibilities and powers for organisations and landholders.</p> <p>Note: Resources related to property acquisition are provided at the end of these meeting notes in the References section. This includes Transgrid's guidelines for living and working near an easement, and guideline for easement compensation and payments.</p> <p>MC asked if the process is different in Victoria to NSW.</p> <p>BD noted that there are slight differences in the legal requirements.</p> <p>MC asked whether there will be a time when Transgrid have to compulsorily acquire properties.</p> <p>BD responded that while compulsory acquisition is available to Transgrid, the preference is to reach a negotiated agreement with landholders wherever possible. CM added that compulsory acquisition becomes more relevant if there is a failure to reach an agreement and construction is imminent.</p> <p>CB commented that the property management plans (PMP) that inform construction contractors of their obligations are extensive. He explained there are basic principles landholders would agree to, but the PMP also notes any property specific requirements assigned by the landholder.</p> <p>BD noted that the PMP also forms part of the overall landowner agreement and compensation package.</p> <p>SH asked if Transgrid will construct the project.</p> <p>CM responded that Transgrid will have a head contractor, but Transgrid will have people on the ground to manage the contractor. He noted that property management plans and environmental approval conditions are included in the contract.</p> <p>SH asked if the contractor has been appointed.</p> <p>CM confirmed they have not.</p> <p>SH noted it is important to have clearly defined roles to the community. She noted with EnergyConnect, the different companies confused the community.</p> <p>PW asked about how Transgrid are managing property management plans across tenure. For example, if neighbouring needs do not align.</p> <p>BD explained that if issues arise across property boundaries, Transgrid will assess whether both sets of requirements can be accommodated and will work to find a resolution, aiming to be as flexible as possible.</p>
<p>5. Environment update – test pit excavations</p>	<p>GH provided an environment update. See slides 13 and 14 of the presentation.</p> <p>JC asked how many test pits were completed across the alignment.</p> <p>GH explained the required number of test pits is determined by archaeological analysis, and additional excavations are undertaken if artefacts are found to ascertain the area of impact.</p> <p>JC asked whether the test pits consider materials beyond artefacts.</p>

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	<p>GH noted that Transgrid is not required to assess geological pollens, but if fossils or similar items are uncovered, they are recorded and discussed with the Registered Aboriginal Parties.</p> <p>JC noted her disappointment that geological pollens are not required to be tested. She noted they can only get research done when there is development happening in the area. It costs significant amounts of money to do these investigations and there are permits required that community organisations cannot get. By leaving these out they are missing a good opportunity for research.</p> <p>GH noted that he will check with the archaeologists how the history of seeds and pollens are dealt with.</p> <p>ACTION: GH to confirm if the history of seeds and pollens is considered as part of the ACHAR.</p>
6. Social legacy	<p>NM provided a community and social legacy update. See slides 16-19 of the presentation.</p> <p>SH asked that Council are informed when the next CPP application is opened.</p> <p>NM confirmed a notification will be sent to the VNI West email subscriber list and all Councils when the next round of CPP funding goes live.</p> <p>PW asked whether Transgrid has provided graduation programs for school students.</p> <p>NM responded that Transgrid has had scholarships for engineering students to attend Charles Sturt University, and continues to look at establishing training and education opportunities in the region.</p> <p>SH noted that local opportunities are important, she explained that Wagga is still a long way for people in the project area to travel for study.</p> <p>CM commented that some subcontractors working on EnergyConnect that are local to Dinawan are asking about opportunities to work on VNI West. He also explained that Transgrid has local workforce participation targets and Indigenous participation targets.</p> <p>SH noted that it is important to feed stories of local subcontractor employment to councils to tell the story to the community about the positive impacts of the project.</p>
7. Amendment Report update	<p>GH and NM provided an amendment report update including outlining the amendment report changes and the proposed upcoming engagement sessions. See slides 22 – 43 of the presentation.</p> <p>SH asked whether Transgrid have a requirement to continue the CCG once they receive project approval.</p> <p>GH responded that usually as a condition of approval, AFGs and CCG would continue.</p> <p>SH noted that Councils are contemplating doing independent bore testing. She also explained that some of the Councils are also developing position statements. For example, Edward River Council has developed one which outlines Council's wishes and requests on behalf of the community. She said that lessons from EnergyConnect show the need for clear agreement upfront on road maintenance responsibilities. She explained Councils are advocating as a group to get more stringent conditions of consent for roads.</p> <p>CM responded there would be an agreement deed across the councils that would be submitted with the EIS.</p> <p>SH also noted the need for a policy around wet weather roads.</p>

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	<p>CM explained that Transgrid’s environmental consultant has worked with a traffic engineer and met with Councils to determine required road improvements.</p> <p>DB noted that although some roads are not outlined as designated construction traffic routes, they will still get traffic due to the number of contractors in the area.</p> <p>GH confirmed that all roads were assessed as part of the traffic and transport assessment.</p> <p>DB asked whether the Deniliquin construction compound will still be used for VNI West.</p> <p>GH confirmed it will be.</p> <p>SH asked if there is the opportunity to use the rail during construction.</p> <p>GH explained that, unlike wind farms, Transgrid does not have large quantities of heavy materials to transport, so rail is not required.</p> <p>ML asked whether the current camp on the Cobb Highway will be part of VNI West.</p> <p>CM confirmed that it will not be used, Transgrid instead is proposing to build a new camp closer to Wanganella. He also noted that the camp at Dinawan substation needs to be relocated as it is in the same location of the proposed incoming connection points for renewable energy generation.</p> <p>NM provided an overview of the upcoming engagement activity associated with sharing information with community regarding the proposed changes in the Amendment Report.</p>
8. Wrap up and close	<p>The Chair outlined the approach for the CCG meetings for 2026 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a meeting in July to discuss the Amendment Report and Submissions Report • and a meeting in November to provide a project update. <p>The Chair noted that if any significant updates arise, Transgrid will convene an additional CCG meeting to discuss them.</p> <p>CB noted that he wants to be kept updated with anything that is happening on telecommunications and roads. He noted the need to be proactive on both of those things, not reactive.</p> <p>ACTION: The CCG to be informed of any updates on telecommunications and roads.</p>

Action items

Agenda item	Description	Person responsible	Status
1. Welcome, introductions etc	Transgrid to meet with EnergyCo regarding a coordinated approach to telecommunications, and to understand the approach from each proponent.		
	Transgrid to provide an update at the next AFG meeting on the results of the test pit excavations.		
2. What are you hearing?	Include details on traffic and transport routes at next CCG meeting.		
	Transgrid to send information of detailed route alignment to Murray River Council and offer project briefing.		
3. Property	Send supporting information on acquisition to CCG members.		

Agenda item	Description	Person responsible	Status
4. Environment update	GH to confirm is the history of seeds and pollens is considered as part of the ACHAR.		
5. Wrap up and close	The CCG to be informed of any updates on telecommunications and roads.		

Resources

Item	Link
Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991	https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-1991-022
VNI West CPA1 Determination	https://www.aer.gov.au/documents/aer-determination-transgrid-vni-west-stage-1-early-works-contingent-project-may-2024 (PDF 648Kb)
VNI West Contingent Application (CPA) 1	https://www.aer.gov.au/documents/transgrid-vni-west-cpa-stage-1-a-1-principal-application-31-january-2024 (PDF 1.28MB)
Preferred Route Report	https://www.transgrid.com.au/media/5whhsuo2/vni-west-preferred-route-report-march-2024.pdf (PDF 4.7MB)
Draft Route Report	https://www.transgrid.com.au/media/1vbfkt2d/vni-west-draft-route-report-29-january-2024.pdf (PDF 23.3MB)
Preferred Corridor Report	https://www.transgrid.com.au/media/0wue2k4h/vni-west-preferred-corridor-report-october-2023.pdf (PDF 3.66 MB)
Draft Corridor Report	https://www.transgrid.com.au/media/af5d3pry/ps135761-env-rep-001-reva-corridor-rpt-v2-2.pdf (PDF 39.34 MB)
Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission Documents	https://www.transgrid.com.au/projects-innovation/vni-west#Regulatory-Investment-Test-for-Transmission--RIT-T-
RIT-T Consultation documents	https://aemo.com.au/initiatives/major-programs/vni-west/stakeholder-consultation
State Significant Infrastructure	https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/development-and-assessment/state-significant-infrastructure
NSW Planning Portal	https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/victoria-nsw-interconnector-west .
Assure Programs	<p>The service is confidential and anonymous. Transgrid does not receive any information about who uses these services.</p> <p>There is no cost to landowners in accessing this service.</p> <p>How to make an appointment</p> <p>You can book an appointment by calling Assure on 1800 808 374, or you can request an appointment online.</p> <p>When you call Assure, please let the team know that you are from Transgrid, and the business unit is “Landowners.” This will ensure you are able to get the support you need. You are not expected to provide the reason – this is a conversation saved for your session with the psychologist.</p> <p>In addition, the NSW Centre for Property Acquisition has free support and counselling services available to any landowners affected by an acquisition. For more information, call 1300 029 146 or visit their website.</p>

Item	Link
Property information (Transgrid)	Easement Guidelines – Living and Working with Electricity Lines Transgrid Easements: Information for Landowners Landowner Easement and Compensation Guideline: Fact Sheet Guidelines for Payments of Professional Fees Easement Payments and Strategic Benefits Payments (website)
Property information (Government)	Centre for Property Acquisition (NSW Government website)

Attachments

Attachment	Format
Glossary	PDF
Transgrid Slides	PDF

Next meeting

Date:	July 2026	Time:	10:00am – 1:00pm
Location:	TBC	Chairperson:	Brendan Blakeley