

Community Advisory Group

Terms of Reference



1. Introduction

An industry-led initiative to develop Victoria's first Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) in Gippsland will see the region become one of the state's major hubs for renewable energy. A REZ is essentially a new type of power station, that coordinates the delivery of renewable energy from multiple large-scale generators to the electricity grid. It will involve developing the right electricity transmission infrastructure and capacity to create a secure, affordable and reliable energy system to connect to the grid.

The project, called the Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone™ project (G-REZ™), is being led by AusNet Services and will unlock 3-4GW of renewable energy by 2027 – enough to power two million homes. It will play a vital role in delivering affordable, clean and reliable energy, and will help prepare the state for the retirement of coal-fired power stations.

G-REZ will ensure Gippsland continues to play an important role in Victoria's energy future by attracting more than \$70 million in direct investment. During the peak construction period, the G-REZ project and connecting generation projects will create about 2,100 jobs. Approximately 140 long term jobs will also be created over 25 years from new energy generation projects in Gippsland.

G-REZ will require the installation of around 85km of new 500kV transmission lines in Gippsland.

It will provide a coordinated approach to getting energy from multiple developers to homes and businesses via a single, high voltage transmission line and will reduce the amount of transmission infrastructure required in the region to support these projects.

2. Background

Gippsland is at the forefront of the renewable energy transformation, with its sunshine and abundant wind resources making it the ideal location for development. There are a number of large-scale solar and onshore and offshore wind projects currently in planning or construction across the region.

As part of the development of the project, a G-REZ Community Advisory Group (GCAG) will be established as a key avenue for community involvement during the development and construction phases of the project.

The GCAG is one component of a broader community engagement program for the G-REZ project. There will be many opportunities (including outside of the GCAG) for all interested stakeholders to engage with the G-REZ team over the life of the project.

3. Purpose

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- 3.1. The GCAG is a key avenue for community input during the development and delivery of the G-REZ project.
- 3.2. The GCAG will assist the project team by:
 - 3.2.1. Creating an effective forum for discussion and exchange of ideas and information primarily related to the project development and construction aspects of G-REZ.
 - 3.2.2. Providing input and feedback about elements of the project as requested by the project team.
 - 3.2.3. Providing local advice and knowledge to the G-REZ team regarding approaches to community engagement and information sharing.
 - 3.2.4. Supporting the development and delivery of the G-REZ Community Benefit Sharing program and initiatives to be supported through this.
 - 3.2.5. Identifying local issues related to project development and construction.
 - 3.2.6. Providing the project team with local knowledge to assist with identifying a suitable project development solution where possible.
 - 3.2.7. Sharing information about the project with their wider networks and ensuring broad engagement in the region.
- 3.3. The GCAG is not a decision-making body, however AusNet values the feedback and local knowledge that the group will be able to provide and is committed to working with the group to ensure the development of the project is shaped by its feedback.

4. Membership

- 4.1. The G-REZ Community Advisory Group will comprise up to 15 members of the Gippsland community including:
 - 4.1.1. a Chairperson, elected from within the GCAG by means of a majority vote.
 - 4.1.2. a Deputy Chairperson, elected from within the group by means of a majority vote to support the Chairperson as required.

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- 4.1.3. the Deputy Chairperson is also expected to act as Chairperson in the event the Chairperson is unable to attend a meeting.
- 4.1.4. up to 13 members (in addition to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson who are also considered members) representing a cross-section of local community interests, including but not limited to, community groups, agriculture, local government, industry and business, training and education, and environmental groups.
- 4.2. Any individual interested in becoming a member of the GCAG will be required to nominate for the GCAG.
- 4.3. Advertisements calling for nominations to the GCAG will be published for a period of at least two (2) weeks within the local newspapers *The Gippsland Times*, *The Latrobe Valley Express* and *The Bridge*, as well as on the G-REZ website, whenever there is a vacancy to be filled.
- 4.4. In considering nominations to the GCAG, the GREZ project team will take into account the nominee's:
 - 4.4.1. professional skills and experience.
 - 4.4.2. community networks and connections.
 - 4.4.3. interests and motivations for being a member of the GCAG.
 - 4.4.4. address in relation to the G-REZ project and the geographic diversity represented on the GCAG.
- 4.5. Members will be appointed to the GCAG by the G-REZ project team.
- 4.6. In the event of a resignation or removal of a member, the GCAG Secretariat and G-REZ Project Director will work with the Chairperson to determine if the vacancy is to be filled.
- 4.7. In the event of a vacancy required to be filled, clauses 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 will apply.

5. Roles and responsibilities

- 5.1. The Chairperson is responsible for:

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- 5.1.1. leading meetings of the GCAG.
- 5.1.2. assisting in facilitating discussion and participation by all members of the CAG.
- 5.1.3. requesting presentations or further information regarding specific issues from the G-REZ project team.
- 5.1.4. working with the Secretariat, G-REZ Project Director and, where appropriate, other members of the G-REZ project team to identify agenda items for upcoming meetings.
- 5.1.5. reviewing meeting papers as required prior to distribution to members.
- 5.2. The Deputy Chairperson is responsible for assisting the Chairperson in acquitting the duties described in clause 5.1.
- 5.3. Members are responsible for:
 - 5.3.1. attending all meetings of the GCAG.
 - 5.3.2. contributing openly to and participating constructively in committee discussions.
 - 5.3.3. listening to, and respecting the views and contributions of other members, AusNet staff and any other attendees or observers at GCAG meetings.
 - 5.3.4. ensuring all members have an equal voice.
 - 5.3.5. sharing information more broadly about the G-REZ project within community groups and other networks they are part of.
 - 5.3.6. acting in accordance with the *GCAG Code of Conduct*.
- 5.4. Members are able to cease their membership of the GCAG at any time by notifying their intention to the Chairperson and the Secretariat in writing.
- 5.5. In the event a member is unable to attend a meeting, they are expected to advise the Chairperson and GCAG Secretariat no less than 24 hours before the scheduled meeting date and time.
- 5.6. A member may, at the discretion of the Chairperson, ask a proxy to attend a GCAG meeting. The proxy will be required to adhere to the Terms of Reference.

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- 5.7. In the event a member fails to acquit their responsibilities outlined in clause 5.3, or is absent for more than three (3) consecutive meetings without a valid explanation, the Chairperson, in consultation with the G-REZ Project Director and the Secretariat may elect to remove this member from the GCAG.
- 5.8. AusNet will provide Secretariat support to the GCAG.
- 5.9. The GCAG Secretariat is responsible for:
 - 5.9.1. preparing meeting agendas and any other necessary meeting papers in consultation with the GCAG Chairperson and G-REZ Project Director and circulating these to members.
 - 5.9.2. attending GCAG meetings and taking minutes and recording any actions.
 - 5.9.3. circulating meeting minutes to members.
- 5.10. Representatives from the G-REZ project team's community and stakeholder engagement, land and environment and project management workstreams will attend meetings of the GCAG.
- 5.11. G-REZ project team attendees are not considered members of the GCAG.

6. Committee meetings

- 6.1. Meetings of the GCAG will be held every two (2) months.
- 6.2. The date and time of upcoming GCAG meetings will be communicated in advance and reconfirmed at the conclusion of each meeting.
- 6.3. A reminder of upcoming GCAG meetings be emailed to members one (1) week before each meeting.
- 6.4. If a member wishes to have a presentation added to a meeting agenda, or has an idea for a topic of discussion, they should inform the Chairperson as soon as possible.
- 6.5. Issues and ideas that arise during GCAG meetings that fall outside of this Terms of Reference will, where possible, be referred to the G-REZ project team by the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson.

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6.6. A quorum for the meeting will be 50% +1 of the membership.

7. Meeting papers

7.1. A meeting agenda and any associated papers will be provided to GCAG members no less than three (3) business days before each meeting.

7.2. Minutes of meetings will be provided to the GCAG within 10 business days of each meeting.

7.3. A summary of each meeting will also be provided to members within 10 business days of each meeting.

7.3.1. Members will have a further five (5) business days to review the summary and provide any changes to the Secretariat. After five (5) business days a copy of the meeting summary will be made available on the G-REZ website incorporating any changes from members.

8. Travel and allowances

8.1. Each member attending a meeting will be paid a travel allowance in the form of a fuel voucher.

8.2. The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will be paid a sitting fee per meeting.

9. Roundtable series

9.1. Each GCAG meeting will include a roundtable discussion to gain feedback on specific topics related to the G-REZ project.

9.2. Topics for roundtable discussions will be considered from G-REZ staff and requests from GCAG members.

9.3. Potential topics for roundtable discussions may include, but are not limited to:

9.3.1. building local capacity including supplier diversity and training.

9.3.2. engagement approaches for the broader community.

9.3.3. the Community Benefit Sharing framework and projects and initiatives that should be supported as part of this.

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9.3.4. Vegetation and regeneration within the project area.

9.3.5. Proposed project construction methodology.

10. Review and lifespan of the GCAG

- 10.1. The GCAG will continue to operate through the development and construction phases of the G-REZ project.
- 10.2. The GCAG's Terms of Reference, including its function and purpose, will be reviewed on an annual basis, to ensure the operations remain fit for purpose and relevant to the stage of the project.