RMCG

VNI West Community Reference Group

April 2026

Chairperson's summary and update

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CRG BRIEF UPDATE

The VNI West Community Reference Group (CRG) met for its fifteenth meeting on 21 April 2026, bringing together community members and senior representatives from VicGrid. Fourteen community members joined the closed-door discussion in the first hour to prepare questions for VicGrid VNI West Team. Notes for this session are recorded in confidence.

For the second part of the meeting, CRG community members were joined by VicGrid, Iberdrola Australia (the VNI West Development Partner), University of Canberra researchers and other observers.

Key topics of discussion included:

- Land access timeline for surveys for the Environmental Effects Statement.
- Iberdrola Australia's appointment as the Development Partner for the VNI West project. Key members from the Iberdrola team provided an overview of the organisation and its role in the VNI West project. Iberdrola are currently working in partnership with VicGrid to support technical design, cost planning, procurement, environmental approvals and benefit-sharing programs. CRG members put many questions to the Iberdrola representatives.
- We had an update on the Social Values Reference Group, learning that it will reconvene shortly with VicGrid and Iberdrola involvement.
- A research team from the University of Canberra introduced their new research project called *Just Transmission*. The project aims to investigate how electricity transmission law, policy and practices in Australia can be designed to advance a just and coherent energy transition. The research team are currently looking at the VNI West and Hunter transmission projects as case studies.

In the second half of the session, we held a workshop discussion titled *What is fair for communities affected by infrastructure?* The workshop considered three questions:

- What are we talking about when we talk about 'community'?
- What is a fair distribution of community benefits?
- How can communities heal and strengthen, given some of the division that has occurred?

The conversation during this workshop led to several important insights and ideas, and I thank the members for their thoughtful perspectives.

The minutes for the April meeting will be reviewed and endorsed by the CRG at its next meeting.

This report has been prepared by:

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