

# Stakeholder Advisory Council Minutes Tuesday 9 July 2024

Name	
<b>Stakeholder Advisory Council members</b>	
Chris Hazzard	St Vincent's de Paul
Steve Bates	Callide Dawson Chamber of Commerce
Lance McManus	TSBE
Wendy Miller	Powerlink
Marion Callope	Acting Manager, Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
Ian Mackinnon	Centre for Clean Energy Technologies and Practices, QUT
Paul Hodgson	Centre for Hydrogen and Renewable Energy, CQUniversity Australia
Claire Mitchell	Queensland Government
Andrew Richards	EUAA
<b>Apologies</b>	
Tracey Stinson (proxy for Christiaan Zuur)	Clean Energy Council
Abhiney Arora	Queensland Manufacturing Institute
Melissa Smyth	Queensland Government
<b>CS Energy</b>	
Rebecca Kelly	Head of Corporate Affairs
Emma Roberts	EGM Customer and Growth
Darren Busine	CEO
Brett Clark	Head of Customer & Retail Growth
Darrin Crompton (online)	Retail Business Lead
Nev Hoehne	Indigenous Engagement Adviser
Andrew Broadbent	Business Planning Manager
Pauline Elliott	Head of Commercial Partnerships
Lynda Crawford	Manager Engagement and Employee Communication
Kiren Thandi (observer)	Media & Digital Content Advisor

## Meeting summary

### 1. Yarning circle with Marion Callope and Nev Hoehne

The meeting began with a yarning circle with Marion Callope and Nev Hoehne, discussing what challenges face vulnerable customers in remote and rural regions.

Key points included:

- CS Energy is expanding reach into new areas and so will need to engage with traditional owner groups we haven't met yet. We are also re-engaging with the Gangulu People in the Biloela region and we are moving toward developing a Cultural Heritage Management Plan with the Barunggam People in the Chinchilla region.
- Marion gave us some background on herself – she has been in the Queensland Government for 29 years and predominantly with this department. Her connections are to the Western Cape area of Queensland up around Weipa.
- Marion believes the challenges for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are multiple and as a society we don't have insight into them because we don't see them every day.
- The biggest issues they find for rural and remote and discrete communities are things like connectivity, issues with technology and understanding the digital space.
- It is also about understanding what opportunities could fall out of that for First Nations communities because we know a lot of people in those areas will never leave their homeland – so how do we take services to them and give them the same opportunities as everyone else in Queensland. How do we build capacity and capabilities and transfer skills, knowledge and experience into these communities?
- The other challenge is when government engages with communities multiple times they are engaging with the same people. They wear multiple hats and so there needs to be a balance between working with them and understanding the pressure on communities.
- It takes more than one agency to make an impact – needs to be a collaborative, co-design approach.
- An example of where this has worked well is the Northern Renewables Coordination Group, which is working well to unpack the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan in terms of workforce development. There is also conversations about how could Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses be engaged in procurement processes in renewable energy or energy as a whole. There has to be conversations about how small businesses can be supported to have a piece of the pie. This could include things like revegetation work and cultural heritage work as well as construction services.
- They have an officer that is dedicated to looking at major projects between now and when the Olympics roll out in terms of capability and pre-qualification requirements.
- They also work with the Indigenous Participation in Construction Committee (IPCC) to increase Indigenous participation.
- One positive change Marion would like to see is taking time to get to know the areas and people you are working with to better develop a collaborative approach.
- In addition, the department is working with Indigenous businesses to help them understand what pre-qualification means. **Action: Marion sent contact details to CS Energy.**
- Nev gave an update on the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and that CS Energy has now come to the end of the 12 months of the RAP. We are going to embed what we have learned and build on our capability before we move on to the next RAP phase.

- Some improvements we have made are onboarding Indigenous businesses and First Nations trainees.

## 2. White space – questions from the council

Members raised topics for discussion including:

- **Wholesale prices trends for next 12 months** – around \$100 in the last few quarters of the year. There has been a bit of a wind drought, so with wind returning and supply at Callide coming back on may drop prices in the short term. However, there is a lack of generation in NSW, and uncertainty around Eraring closure and coal issues in NSW. In addition, the New England Renewable Energy Zone is one of the first to be deployed under the Energy Infrastructure Roadmap and that will impact how much power transfers between Queensland and NSW.
- **Class action progress** – we remain in court. It is a challenging topic and CS Energy continues to defend it strongly.
- **Queensland Police Services solar management project** to get visibility of solar performance and savings through our customer portal. In its infancy and we are exploring our options. Help the QPS get visibility of what the options are – if this is solar inverters, batteries demand response programs etc. **Action: CS Energy to keep customers in the loop on this.**
- **Capacity investment scheme. Future session suggestion – what are the options on future energy market design and how organisations like CS Energy can play into that.** There are examples of hybrid markets around the world – we need a long runway because commitments/contracts being made 10 years in advance. There was a question if Australia is big enough to make hybrid markets work well. There was discussion comparing Australia and UK markets, and that UK markets didn't have to deal with getting 40% of supply from rooftops. There was also discussion about whether Australia should be looking at exchanging electrons from the west and east and through the centre – a national plan that doesn't just separate us. There are some emerging technologies that might facilitate connection (Derek Abbot). **Action: Professor MacKinnon emailed papers to CS Energy on this technology.**
- **Community education** – there was discussion about what CS Energy may be looking to do differently in terms of supply – an example was the Brigalow Peaking Gas Plant. Identified that community needs to understand what nuclear means. Also discussed future ambitions for community investment program and how we can add shared value.

## 3. Callide

- Members discussed the rebuild effort and were shown a video outlining a vision for the future of Callide. Make it clear our reason for continuing to build and supply renewable energy in Central Queensland is because of the community.
- Investigating different assets – including gas peaking plant.
- Discussion on housing in the Biloela area for renewable energy workers.
- Discussion on alternate/back up to gas – fuel cells.

#### **4. Connecting new technology to the grid**

- Discussion about system strength, investment in refurbishment of older equipment or investment in synchronous condensers to achieve a balance of cost for consumers.

#### **5. Retail transformation program**

- CS Energy's retail business grown since 2018 – have been investing to modernise our offering to customers.
- Updating our billing system (retiring 20 spreadsheets) – in line with expectations of customers of any other service provider in the market.
- Personal approach – customers know they can call our team personally.
- Will build out the customer portal so customers can do more – fully digital experience with the ability to buy energy and certificates.
- Priority over next 12 months to learn about products and services with our customers.
- Discussion on solar curtailment – a trial to turn off PV panels over the weekend on schools and then turned back on – shared payment with schools.
- Discussion on how curtailment, or demand management can provide more equity for people who don't have access to that infrastructure to share in the benefits of it.

#### **6. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting**

- Have done an assessment and implementation plan.
- Identified about 50 ESG initiatives under way in the business and reported through Annual Report and Energy Charter Disclosure.
- Australian Sustainability Reporting Standards published for consultation in 2023. – CS Energy classed
- We are considering ESG initiatives in line with the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan, our purpose, vision and strategy and how we deliver value for the five areas of social, human, natural, financial and manufacturing.
- The group was asked to provide feedback on our preliminary assessment of material topics. Feedback included: considering impact of climate on transformation of energy system, considering the concept of an equitable transition so that everyone gets the benefits and we don't end up with haves/have nots, supply chain development and bringing them along in the transition.