

Ag + Energy Social Licence Roundtable

Special Agenda: ‘Renewables in Ag, where to from here?’

22 June 2023 | Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre + online

June Special Agenda	<p>Renewables in Ag - Where to from here?</p> <p>This special Ag + Energy Social Licence Roundtable Agenda was designed by the Energy Charter to build on the 2023 National Renewables in Agriculture Conference and Expo, which aimed increase knowledge about the opportunities for farmers in the national energy transition, what benefits regional communities can advocate for and how long term meaningful and positive change will be achieved. In this open invitation session, the Ag + Energy Roundtable invited conference speakers and participants to join us in reflecting on this year’s conference themes and asking the critical question; where to from here?</p> <p>Together, we further unpacked opportunities for farmers to play a greater role in decarbonising the grid and explored how key challenges could be addressed through collaboration between the ag and energy sectors.</p> <p>The outcomes from this session will be used to shape future Ag + Energy Roundtable agendas.</p>
Roundtable Purpose	To discuss strategic issues for the agriculture and energy sectors with a focus on landholders and communities through the lens of social licence to identify what’s working and areas for continuous improvement.
Roundtable Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive better landholder and community social licence outcomes through the energy transition • Elevate discussions from the AG Energy Taskforce and other relevant forums to a strategic level • Feed into to relevant processes run through AEMO and other relevant government and market bodies. • Operate as a clearing house of strategic issues rather than seeking to resolve all issues within the roundtable.
Chair	Independent Chair – Joy Thomas (formerly National Irrigators Association and convener of the Ag Energy Taskforce).

Item	Summary
<p>1. Chair welcome and Acknowledgement of Country</p>	<p>Chair Joy Thomas, Chair Ag Energy Roundtable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome, we open by acknowledging the traditional owners of the country on which we meet - Wiradjuri country. • The Ag Energy Roundtable is seeing momentum, with initiatives underway between the productive agriculture sector and Energy Charter signatories, reflecting some of the objectives we set out to achieve. • This would not be happening without the key elements of developing relationships and building understanding between productive agriculture industries and businesses - and energy providers, as well as those who build the energy infrastructure as part of energy transition. • There are key issues that remain absolutely central to the work of the Roundtable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognising social licence as a first principle ○ Achieving affordable costs for productive agriculture industries, and ○ Land use issues – and impacts on farmers and farming communities - as infrastructure is built across the landscape. • We now have a valuable vehicle that enables direct collaboration between energy providers and agriculture peak bodies and agriculture industries to find ways to collaborate on projects and initiatives. • We can feel optimistic about where we are as a group – while recognising there is scope to do more to achieve tangible outcomes between our sectors. • In the early days of the Ag Energy Taskforce, it became apparent that there was a significant gap in understanding between the energy sector and productive agriculture industries. Rarely before had each sector been called upon to engage - nor understand each other’s industries. • Social licence remains very much at the centre of Australia’s energy transition. Many rural industries and peak bodies are committed to the emissions reduction effort – and it is only fair that there is recognition that without rural landowners and rural communities – the objectives of energy transition and emissions reduction simply will not be realised. And this also goes to the issue of affordable energy costs for agriculture industries to enable them to remain competitive. • Ag Energy Taskforce members participated with the Energy Charter in the development of the Better Practice ‘Social Licence’ Guideline. Social Licence must be underpinned by genuine consultation.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work of the Ag Energy Taskforce in many ways precedes the establishment of the Roundtable - but suffice to say, we now have a platform through the Roundtable to bridge the significant gaps that have existed. We will continue to work in a collaborative way on the issues that confront us all. • The Roundtable is enabling the sharing of information between the ag sector and energy sectors. It is important that all players are at the table; operating in silos, is not an option. • We have a vehicle through the Roundtable – where we can close some of those gaps and strategically work together to achieve real progress. As we move forward, transparency is critical, around the sharing of knowledge on what might be possible and the willingness of all involved to play their part.
2. About the Energy Charter and Ag + Energy Social Licence Roundtable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Energy Charter is a unique CEO-led collaboration of like-minded energy organisations with a shared purpose and passion for customers and communities. • Energy customers rely on all of us. We all use energy every day. It lights our homes and powers businesses. We’re all part of the same ecosystem, so working #BetterTogether is vital now and into the future. • Our purpose is to empower one another across the energy supply chain to deliver better energy outcomes for customers and communities. Our vision is that together, we can create a better energy future for all Australians. • For us, the opportunity is to keep humans at the centre of the design and delivery of energy solutions; to navigate the changing needs of customers and communities as we transform to a cleaner energy future. • There really is no other collaboration like us; and the work we do, together, has never been more important than it is today. • We are #BetterTogether.
3. Reflections from the Renewables in Ag Conference	<p><i>Karin Stark led the group through a reflection exercise drawing from the Renewables in Ag Conference the previous day. All participants were asked to come up with eight ideas in eight minutes answering the below question.</i></p> <p>What are the biggest opportunities ag and energy sector to collaborate on decarbonising the energy grid for shared benefit?</p> <p>The key themes were:</p>



Item	Summary
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support mid and large scale solar, wind and storage 2. Improve compensation and impact management 3. Focus on shared benefits, value creation and jobs 4. Better engagement, advocacy and information sharing 5. Improved price and affordability outcomes through transition 6. Enabling Government legislation, engagement and policy (all levels) 7. More coordination, collaboration and leadership 8. Greater adoption of bioenergy and circular economy approaches 9. Focus on restoring biodiversity, natural systems and cooling the climate 10. Explore electric transport opportunities <p>Access the full list of 150+ ideas here.</p>
<p>4. Where to from here workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are the biggest opportunities ag and energy sector to collaborate on decarbonising the energy grid for shared benefit? • What challenges need to be addressed by the ag and energy sectors 	<p><i>Participants were asked to take the individual ideas they had generated as the jumping off point for a small group discussion on how we might best evaluate, prioritise and these ideas. They were provided with the 'Head, Heart & Hands' Framework to help them work through the emotional, logical, and practical considerations for each.</i></p> <p>Group 1: Led by Karin Stark, Renewables in Ag Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrify what's possible (i.e. Electric tractors), this requires a step change and would change irrigator schedule • Community Benefit Sharing • Industry support for legal and landholder • Shared power across different NMIs and across a farm – controlled micro-grid, which then services the grid • Funding for large scale renewables – opportunity to position regional Australia differently • Sustainable Australia Fund – bound by legislation re. finance to open up more investment



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<p>to enable these opportunities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-farm value – more support for energy audits • Shared economic activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government backed green bonds ○ Collaborating on resilience activities ○ Sticks and carrots approach to ensure benefits are shared fairly ○ Risk of transition being seen as mining 2.0 if things do not change course (re. benefits and economic value)
	<p>Group 2: Led by Dale Holliss, Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable energy for Ag 8c/8c • Activate sense of urgency around transition • Extend the planning horizon • Better understand collaboration vs. consultation • Optimise waste sources (circular economy) • Establish localised community hubs to necessitate commercial consent • Develop metrics around benefits sharing • Ensure community input is recorded and input into Energy Co planning processes • Identify and build enabling infrastructure (roads, accommodation)
	<p>Group 3: Led by Joy Thomas, Ag + Energy Roundtable</p> <p><u>Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying • Collaboration on location – look for early wins, mapping projects • Upskilling the ag sector and communities to take advantage of opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bioenergy, enabling influence, load-sharing, co-location, changing language, changing practices and process, renewables diesel. • Energy audits and building code (household farms and businesses)



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Energy Chapters – networked groups that are able to influence and educate, ability to share knowledge. <p><u>Growth opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversification on revenue Decentralising the grid Regulatory frameworks to enable small scale generation Innovation to enable the co-location of ag practice (i.e. Agrivoltaics) Energy as a commodity Attracting energy project via industries Carbon capture and sequestration Thinking wholistically about a sector – not all about electricity <p><u>Key stakeholders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ag sector Regional, Remote and Rural communities Local Government Local Business Chambers Federal Government
5. Renewables in Ag Workshop Wrap Up	<p><i>Online participants joined the Roundtable. Amy Abraham, Energy Charter facilitated a presentation from each of the group leaders on their ideas as documented above.</i></p>
6. Better Practice Showcase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing neighbour impacts, SuperGrid Landholder Payment Framework 	<p><i>Part of the Ag + Energy Roundtable is about sharing on what’s going well, so we can inspire better practice across sectors. The below Better Practice updates draw from previous agendas.</i></p> <p>Dana Boxall, Powerlink Queensland (access the presentation here).</p>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Landowner and Community Advocacy 	<p>Powerlink and Queensland Government released the SuperGrid Landholder Payment Framework, which is the first transmission scheme in Australia to offer payments to adjacent landholders. Dana Boxall, General Manager Community and Delivery Services provided an overview of the Framework, including the collaborative design process.</p> <p>Rod Stowe, Transgrid Landholder and Community Advocate (access the presentation hear)</p> <p>Rod Stowe leads the Office of the Landowner and Community Advocate, established within Transgrid to help implement the best possible landowner and community engagement practices across all of major transmission projects. The office works to balance the interests of landowners and communities with our critical role to deliver an energy system for the future. Rod presented on the recommendations made and how these are being implemented within Transgrid.</p>
<p>7. Ag Energy Taskforce Chair update</p>	<p>Dale Holliss, Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group summary</p> <p><u>What is the Taskforce?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Taskforce was established in September 2014 and includes a group of peak agricultural bodies, and related ag business entities seeking to advocate to decision makers, the impact of high energy costs on food and fibre production in Australia and the flow on effects. The Taskforce is currently chaired by task force member Bundaberg Regional Irrigators Group (BRIG). Initially we focussed on the AER, the ACCC, federal and state government governments and inquiries. While the Energy Charter, has engaged with the Taskforce over a number of years and we have been able to draw attention to the issues the agriculture sector and rural communities are facing, we had not engaged the transmission and distribution businesses directly. It became increasingly apparent that there could be mutual benefit and opportunities to establish a direct relationship with energy transmission and distribution businesses, through the Energy Charter. That relationship has been established and very importantly it is outcomes focussed and pragmatic and mutually beneficial.



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	<p data-bbox="562 256 947 284"><u>Why do we need the Taskforce?</u></p> <ul data-bbox="611 300 2018 914" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="611 300 2018 411">• Due to the relatively small size of the proportion of direct revenue from Agriculture many Energy Retailers and Networks have tended to overlook the importance of the sector and as such we have become a forgotten demographic.<li data-bbox="611 427 2018 496">• It is critical that the voice of the agriculture sector is heard because of the cornerstone nature of agriculture in our regional and export economies.<li data-bbox="611 512 2018 660">• High electricity costs are impacting on Australia’s capacity to be competitive in the international market for agricultural product and undermining the viability of producers of fresh food and natural fibre consumed by all Australians. These pressures are also impacting many rural businesses, resulting in loss of employment opportunities in rural and regional communities.<li data-bbox="611 676 2018 745">• Impacts are particularly severe on commodities that require energy to pump water or requires processing, packaging and/or refrigeration.<li data-bbox="611 761 2018 873">• Regional communities are at the centre on the energy transition, with landholders being approached to host new energy infrastructure across Australia. The energy sector has a responsibility to recognise and minimise these impacts and work towards shared value outcomes for everyone – and the taskforce can assist this.<li data-bbox="611 888 2018 914">• There are opportunities for on-farm renewables to cut costs and emissions if all sectors can work better together. <p data-bbox="562 970 947 997"><u>Taskforce objectives and actions</u></p> <ul data-bbox="611 1013 2040 1209" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="611 1013 2040 1082">• The key objective of the Taskforce is to achieve affordable, optimised, and individualised tariffs to ensure the sustainability of intensive agriculture.<li data-bbox="611 1098 2040 1209">• We define affordability is defined as a long-term price ceiling of 8 cents for electrons (R) and 8 cents for the Network (N) component. To achieve this objective, we engage with a range of organisations to ensure that the agricultural sector is no longer a forgotten demographic. <p data-bbox="562 1265 913 1292"><u>What does the Taskforce do?</u></p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taskforce members also work collaboratively across the energy sector, as well as with State and Federal Governments to identify and advocate for mutually beneficial outcomes. • The Ag + Energy Roundtable enables this by providing a platform for key issues and opportunities to be elevated for discussion between both sectors, supporting effective and efficient sector-to-sector engagement, with a focus on identifying opportunities for collaboration. • In Queensland, recent achievements include the Dynamically operated controlled load tariffs being made accessible to irrigators and small business in the ERGON network, (Optimised) as well as the implementation of a Solar Soak tariff for the 2023/24 year, Individualized. • At our last Roundtable we also raised the impact of transmission developments on neighbours and to hear an update on how this is being addressed by Powerlink today. • We have also assisted the Energy Charter and its members to better understand agriculture requirements and have been able to assist with the development of the Better Practice 'Social Licence' Guidelines on co-existence and shared value opportunities for transmission and agricultural landholders. • The Ag Energy taskforce looks forward to working with all segments of the energy industry to ensure as smooth as possible transition to the renewable energy goals for agriculture.
<p>8. Energy Charter Update: Priority #BetterTogether Landholder + Community Social Licence</p>	<p>Amy Abraham, The Energy Charter introduced the Better Practice Social Licence Guideline. The Guideline was launched in May 2023 with the National Framers' Federation. While focused on transmission, it provides a practical framework and guidance for all players in the energy transition, including renewable energy developers. The co-design and development of the Energy Charter's Better Practice Social Licence Guideline was critical to developing a deeper understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ways electricity transmission infrastructure impacts agricultural landholders and their communities • The principles that underpin how to build and maintain social licence for landholders and communities affected by transmission developments • Practical opportunities to minimise impacts and deliver shared value during the planning, construction, operation and decommissioning of transmission infrastructure.



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	<p>By validating impacts and identifying opportunities to improve outcomes for agricultural landholders, the Better Practice Guideline supports transmission businesses to better understand and act on, the factors that contribute to building trust and maintaining social licence with agricultural landholders and their communities.</p> <p>The Better Practice Guideline is also intended to support agricultural representatives, landholders and host communities to raise and discuss known impacts and work constructively with transmission businesses to achieve shared value outcomes.</p>
9. Thank you and close	Joy Thomas, Independent Chair, Ag + Energy Roundtable thanked all participants and co-hosts.