

# **Picnic Point to Revesby cable project**

Community consultation summary

October 2018



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# 1 Introduction

Ausgrid is planning to replace the existing underground electricity cables that run between our Revesby Zone substation at Tarro Avenue, Revesby and Transgrid's Sydney South substation located in George's River National Park at Picnic Point.

The Revesby zone substation is currently supplied by two 132,000 volt fluid-filled underground cables. The existing cables are more than 55 years old and must be replaced to maintain a safe and reliable power supply to customers. This project is a part of a program to retire fluid-filled cables across the Ausgrid network.

The proposal involves replacing the cables of the same voltage along the existing cable route on Tarro Avenue, Eastern Avenue and Kennedy Street, crossing Weston Street, Tower Street and Burns Bay Road. The southernmost section would access an existing easement through the George's River National Park.

On 26 April 2018, Ausgrid held an information session at the Revesby Worker's Club (Acacia Room) to seek local information and community feedback on the replacement cable route. Interested community members were invited to the information session through newsletters, social media and advertisement in local newspaper.

A detailed presentation focusing on the project need, planning to date and the construction process was shared with the community members who attended the information session.

Ausgrid held the second information session on 17 September 2018 at Revesby Worker's Club (Grevillea Room) to discuss the environmental assessment known as the Review of Environmental Factors (REF). The REF was on display at various locations for the community feedback from 7 September – 28 September 2018.

This report is a summary of feedback received at the information sessions and via direct feedback through phone calls, emails, face-to-face meetings with the project team at Ausgrid before and after the sessions. Community feedback has been considered by the project team as part of the process to refine the replacement route.

## 1a. Information sessions overview

- During the first information session held on 26 April 2018, Ausgrid gave a presentation on the project need, the planning process and general information on construction process for cable projects
- During the second information session held on 17 September 2018, the project team from Ausgrid were available for a drop-in session to discuss the Review of Environmental Factors (REF)
- Attendees and direct respondents provided feedback on the replacement route presented and on the construction process
- Community members also provided information on local areas and issues
- A few of the community members also shared their concerns about noise and traffic impacts during the construction phase

- Feedback was also provided on the project process and the planned community engagement for this project

## 1b. Key outcomes

- Early engagement with the community about the project
- Transparent and open project development process
- Receive local information and input on potential issues on the replacement cable route
- Community feedback incorporated as part of the process to refine the replacement route and minimise impacts during construction

# 2 Community engagement

Early community engagement can:

- Inform the community about why we need to do the work and the potential impacts
- Provide opportunities to involve community in project decisions where possible
- Effectively identify, assess and plan to minimise impact on the community
- Help Ausgrid to better plan and deliver a robust project
- Make and deliver on commitments made by Ausgrid to the community

Local information is being sought from key stakeholders on:

- Areas of local significance
- Roadways
- Parks/reserves
- Trees/vegetation
- Traffic/parking
- Other local information

## 2a. Project and consultation stages



## 3 Presentation on project need

At the first community session held on 26 April 2018, the Ausgrid team shared a detailed presentation about the project. The first part of the presentation focussed on the existing 132,000 volt underground cables that are nearing the end of their service life and why they need to be replaced. The presentation outlined that the existing cables are to be replaced so Ausgrid can maintain a reliable electricity supply in the future. The proposal is part of a network wide program to retire fluid filled cables, prioritising cable replacements based on operation and environmental risk.

Some of the questions raised during this presentation included querying what would happen to Ausgrid's network if the cables weren't replaced as well a request to find out more about how Ausgrid costs the cable options.

Most of the community members who attended the session gave feedback that after listening to the presentation they understood why Ausgrid is planning to replace the existing cables in the area. The majority of workshop participants that gave feedback agreed that Ausgrid needs to replace the existing cables.

Attendees felt that the presentation was good, well explained, and several participants wanted a copy of the presentation. Some participants wanted to know more about the current capacity of the cables and levels of usage.

The questions and answers from this presentation can be read in full at the appendix at the back of this summary.

### 3a. Next steps

- The presentation is available on the project web page -  
[www.ausgrid.com.au/picnicpointreesby](http://www.ausgrid.com.au/picnicpointreesby)

# 4 Presentation on project development

This segment of the presentation focused on the project development process - from when Ausgrid identifies a project need until construction starts.

All community members who attended the session agreed with Ausgrid's approach to engaging the community during the project development process. This approach includes distribution of newsletter, holding community information sessions, meetings, updates and door knocks where required.

Comments from participants included the more consultation the better and Ausgrid's approach for this proposal was commended. Most of the community members who attended the session agreed that Ausgrid started consultation at the right time.

Participants suggested that Ausgrid speak to the local schools and the childcare centres about the project to incorporate their feedback. They were concerned that the construction impacts around the school and the childcare centres would affect the kids and have major implications on the traffic in the area.

Other comments included that Ausgrid should consider going through Victor Avenue instead of Kennedy Street as that route avoids impact on the local schools. Attendees were also interested in understanding the arrangement of cables in the trench.

Most of the community members who attended the information session thought that Ausgrid had considered all the factors before deciding on a cable route.

The questions and answers from this presentation can be read in full at the appendix at the back of this summary.

## 4a. Next steps

- Provide information on consultation completed in the Picnic Point and Revesby area
- Community living and working near to potential cable routes will receive information about the project and will be invited to community session for the REF (Review of Environmental Factors)
- Ausgrid will be seeking submissions on the environmental assessment for the proposal during the REF display period
- Continue consultation

## 4b. General feedback on planning cable routes

Attendees rated a few areas of importance when planning cable routes as:

- Ensuring cables are designed and installed safely
- Reducing costs to electricity consumers
- Minimising environmental and social impacts
- Community receives regular updates about the project in form of newsletters and notifications

## 5 Presentation on construction process

The second part of the presentation was on the construction process with information on how Ausgrid generally installs underground cables across the network.

Most of the community members who attended the session said that they had a better understanding of how Ausgrid plans and installs underground cables after listening to the presentation. They also said that the information graphic helped them to understand some of the common construction activities.

Several attendees had questions about the construction process. These questions included:

- Would the new cables be installed in the footpath?
- How would the new cables be installed in the road?
- Who could be contacted about issues with temporary reinstatement?
- How much notice do residents receive for before works start?
- Would there be road closures during construction?

Several attendees had feedback about the construction process. Feedback included:

- Ensuring there is a community contact at all times
- Have a discussion with the council to confirm if there was any other work scheduled to take place at the same time
- Talk to other services in the area to combine the impact for the community
- Getting feedback from locals after the cables have been installed to hear about any construction impacts

### 5a. Response to questions raised during the construction presentation

- All cables would be installed to relevant health and safety requirements and are assessed in the environmental assessment before any work can proceed
- There will be another opportunity for the community to review and make a submission on the environmental assessment for the project during the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) display
- As the project progresses a detailed design would be completed
- Ausgrid will have a dedicated community engagement officer at all stages of the project. A 24 hour community construction line and a project email is available throughout all stages of the project
- Residents and businesses are encouraged to contact the community engagement team with any questions or concerns, including queries about temporary restoration
- Ausgrid generally provides an advance notice of at least 4 business days before any work begins in an area in addition to the progressive information provided during project planning
- The presentation is available on the project web site at  
[www.ausgrid.com.au/picnicpointreesby](http://www.ausgrid.com.au/picnicpointreesby)

## 5b. General feedback on the construction process

Attendees shared a few areas of importance to consider during the construction process:

- Ensuring work areas are safe and secure
- Notifying community in advance of work in their area
- Working to relevant health, safety and environmental guidelines and standards

## 5c. General feedback on traffic management during construction

Attendees shared their concerns about traffic management:

- Street closures during construction
- Impact of construction to the nearby schools and childcare centres
- Access to resident properties

## 5d. General feedback about reinstatement of roads during construction

Few concerns about the reinstatement of roads during construction were shared by the residents:

- How will Ausgrid restore affected areas to their previous state?
- Will the temporary reinstated road surface be safe for pedestrians/ motorists to use?
- How will Ausgrid work with Council to avoid digging up roads that they plan to resurface?

The questions and answers on the construction process can be read in full at the appendix at the back of this summary.

# 6 Feedback on replacement route

Attendees were asked to provide general comments on the replacement route. These comments have been considered by Ausgrid as part of the process to refine the preferred cable route. These comments and Ausgrid's responses are outlined below.

## 6a. Local Information

The members of the community who attended the community session shared some local details about the area.

- Peak hour traffic on Kennedy Street, Weston Street and Burns Rd
- Schools, pre-schools and childcare centres on Kennedy Street
- Other services in the ground

## 6b. Questions and comments on replacement route

Several attendees had questions about the replacement route. Responses to a few questions raised during the construction presentation are answered below. Further questions and answers on the replacement route can be read in full at the appendix at the back of this summary.

### **Q. Why not put new cables in Victor Avenue in lieu of Kennedy Street?**

A. There are many factors Ausgrid needs to consider when determining a preferred route to ensure that all technical, environmental, community, safety and economic factors are addressed. In order to minimise the environmental impacts, Ausgrid will be utilising an existing electricity easement to install our cables which follows a fire trail through the Georges River National Park. This will ensure that any damage to the local vegetation is minimised. This easement follows a path through the park which leads to Kennedy Street.

Minimising the distance traversed in roadways also minimises all the associated impacts. A reduced distance minimises:

- the duration of the project
- impact to number of residents
- the amount of material required to be excavated and disposed
- roadways requiring restoration
- overall cost of project

Installing the cables in Victor Avenue would add an approximate 500m of distance to the overall route. At an approximate cost of \$5M/km, this would increase the project costs by \$2.5M. Ausgrid aims to decrease the costs passed on to its customers wherever possible by minimising the Ausgrid component of household electricity bills.

**Q. What about the traffic impacts on Kennedy Street and Weston Street?**

Before any work starts, Ausgrid prepares traffic management plans (TMPs) as part of the Construction Environmental Management Plan and site specific traffic control plans (TCPs). These plans are reviewed by the relevant council or by Roads and Maritime Services (depending on the road). The traffic management plan developed as The TMPs and TCPs consider the surrounding community in regards to safety and to minimise disruption.

The relevant road authorities also usually direct Ausgrid to complete works on busier roads at night, which Ausgrid tries to avoid especially in residential areas.

Traffic management would be in place during the construction stage. However, there will be instances where a section of the road would be closed for traffic with access maintained to residential traffic only (for example during joint bay installation). Other streets may have temporary parking restrictions or detours put in place. These arrangements would form part of the traffic management plans to enable Ausgrid to complete work as quickly and as safely as possible.

Ausgrid will consider and discuss with the relevant authority any reasonable requests from the community to potentially minimise impacts on traffic and parking. The community will be notified of any impacts in advance.

**Q. What are the construction impacts on residents and schools in the area?**

A. Ausgrid plans to finish the majority of the construction work around the school during the term holidays to avoid any direct impact to the students.

During construction, Ausgrid and our contractor for the civil component would be required to work under the REF conditions of the project. There will be traffic, parking, and some noise and vibration impacts associated with the work, but Ausgrid will put measures in place to minimise these as much as possible.

Before starting any work, Ausgrid carries out an environmental assessment of potential noise and vibration impacts. All work is completed in line with the results of the assessment, the Construction Environmental Management Plan and Ausgrid's environmental management policies.

During the work, there will be some temporary changes to traffic and parking arrangements in some streets. Ausgrid will work closely with Council and Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) to minimise our impact on the local road network. A detailed Traffic Management Plan will be prepared in consultation with Council, RMS and other key stakeholders.

Ausgrid has held a meeting with the principal of Picnic Point Public School in July and has factored concerns in the planning process. It was agreed that trenching works of high impact to the school are to be completed during the school holidays. Ausgrid will continue to liaise directly with the impacted schools during development and construction.

In addition, during construction, the community engagement team will be on hand and available via the 24 hour community information line (or via email or site visit) to discuss any concerns about the project.

## 7 Review of Environmental Factors (REF)

Under the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, Ausgrid is the determining authority for the project. This process includes preparation of an environmental assessment (Review of Environmental Factors or REF). The REF includes a range of specialist studies and input from the community, councils and other authorities.

The REF was on exhibition for comment from Friday 7 September 2018 to Friday 28 September 2018. At this stage, Ausgrid encouraged further feedback from the community by email, phone or directly at a drop in information session held during this time.

Printed copies of the REF were available at the Panania Library and Knowledge Centre, Panania and at Ausgrid's office at 570 George Street, Sydney. Interested community members could also view the REF via the link on our website [www.ausgrid.com.au/picnicpointrevesby](http://www.ausgrid.com.au/picnicpointrevesby).

A drop in session was also held at the Revesby Workers Club on Monday 17 September 2018 for community to discuss the REF and ask questions.

While Ausgrid received no formal submissions during the REF stage, Ausgrid considered all feedback received via phone calls, emails and face-to-face meetings till date as part of the process of assessing the project for construction approval.

## 8 Workshops evaluation

The majority of community members who attended the information sessions held in April and September, who provided feedback said that they were very interested in the information that was presented at the sessions and that they were very likely to share this information with their community and colleagues.

The three most popular ways that attendees said they would most like to be involved with the project are to:

- Receive regular project updates
- Provide feedback on the community impacts
- Receive construction updates when work is in their area

The three most popular ways that attendees said they would most like to be kept up to date on the project are to:

- Receive project updates via email
- Attend community sessions
- Receive project updates via notification/newsletter

## 9 Next steps

The majority of attendees who provided feedback said that they found the workshops interesting and that the content was open and transparent. The presentation was considered to be informative. All attendees that provided feedback felt that their views were heard. A few attendees noted that the first community session was held during the last week of the school holidays. This could be avoided to encourage more participation from the community.

This feedback was noted and the next community information session held for the REF display was held at least two weeks before the school term holidays were due to begin.

Ausgrid thanks all the community members for their participation and feedback till date. Ausgrid also welcomes all feedback at any stage of the project.

## 9a. Appendix

Detailed responses to questions asked during the community information sessions:

### **Q. Why is the project needed?**

A. Revesby Zone Substation (ZS) is currently supplied by two 132,000 volt Self Contained Fluid Filled (SCFF) underground cables from Transgrid's Sydney South Bulk Supply Point (BSP) located in the Georges River National Park at Picnic Point.

These cables are more than 55 years old and are now approaching the end of their service life. They have been subject to failures in recent years and need to be replaced for us to maintain a safe and reliable power supply to customers in the area.

The replacement of these cables will enable Ausgrid to maintain a safe and reliable power supply to customers in the area. Ausgrid proposes to replace these two existing cables by installing two new 132,000 volt underground cables in a combined cable trench. These cables will be replaced like-for-like, so the new ones will be installed along the same route.

### **Q. Why can't we just fix the existing cables?**

A. The existing cables are known as self-contained fluid filled cables (SCFF) and Ausgrid has an agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency to progressively remove this type of cable from Ausgrid's network. The fluid filled cables have high maintenance costs, high failure rates, extended repair times and require special jointing. Failure of these cables can lead to leaks which have the potential to cause environmental damage.

### **Q. What would happen if the cables weren't replaced?**

A. As the cables continue to age there will be an increased rate of failure associated with the assets, leading to decreased reliability and loss of supply (blackouts). There is also an environmental risk associated with retaining these cables in service.

### **Q. How does Ausgrid cost cable options?**

A. Ausgrid has completed a range of 132,000 volt cable projects in recent years. Using information from previous projects we are able to assess likely costs and risks of each project.

### **Q. Are the cables being replaced in the existing route?**

A. Ausgrid started planning to replace the cables in early 2018. This process involved engaging with the local council and key stakeholders in the areas where the replacement cables could be laid.

Ausgrid has investigated the route options and decided on a replacement cable route for the project. The existing cables will be replaced like-for-like so the new ones will be installed along the existing route along Kennedy Street.

**Q. How does Ausgrid avoid existing pipes and underground infrastructure?**

A. Ausgrid has already completed site investigations to physically identify underground services as well assess the ground conditions. In areas where there are many underground services, Ausgrid would modify construction activities, often hand digging around the infrastructure.

**Q. When will the project start and finish?**

A. Construction for the project is planned to start in late 2018 and continue for approximately 9-12 months.

The works are scheduled over three stages as follows:

- Investigation works along the new cable alignment (including minor excavation in roadways to locate underground services and collect soil samples)
- Construction works along the new cable alignment (including excavation to install new conduits and joint bays, backfill of excavations and hauling of new cables)
- Decommissioning works along the alignment of existing cables (including excavating near existing joint bays, purging of insulating fluid from cables and removal of fluid tanks)

A detailed project and community engagement timeline is below:

**To date:** Investigate options: Preliminary investigations conducted along the cable replacement route. Early meetings with stakeholders.

**April 2018:** Community input: Information session to introduce the project and collate community feedback. Feedback used by Ausgrid to inform decision making and planning.

**May-June 2018:** Ground investigation work: Site investigations to assess ground conditions and pinpoint any existing services. Ongoing liaison with the community to minimise impacts.

**July-September 2018:** Environmental Assessment (REF): REF prepared and displayed for submissions. Information session held to discuss the REF and encourage further community feedback. Final community feedback incorporated as a part of the project review. Construction approval obtained.

**Late 2018:** Construction: Construction, installing conduits and cables, and reinstatement of affected areas completed in stages. Construction will continue for approximately 9-12 months. Ongoing liaison by Ausgrid to minimise construction impacts for the community.

**Q. Will I be able to have a say in the outcome?**

A. Community feedback will be one of the factors considered by Ausgrid to plan the cable route and to develop the construction program.

**Q. Will the environmental impacts be assessed?**

A. An environmental assessment known as the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) for the project has been prepared. This process involves preparation of specialist studies and input from the community, council and other authorities.

From September 7 2018 – September 28 2018, the REF was placed on exhibition for community feedback. Printed copies of the REF were available at Panania Library and Knowledge Centre, Panania and at Ausgrid Head Office at 570 George Street, Sydney and the community invited to make submissions. Interested community members were also encouraged to view the REF uploaded on our website [www.ausgrid.com.au/picnicpointrevesby](http://www.ausgrid.com.au/picnicpointrevesby).

A newsletter with more details about the project and the REF was distributed to everyone along the proposed cable replacement route.

While Ausgrid received no formal written submissions during the REF stage, Ausgrid considered all feedback received via phone calls, emails and face-to-face meetings till date as part of the process of assessing the project for construction approval.

Ausgrid will now determine the project for approval based on information contained in the REF, the specialist reports, the consultation report and other relevant documents.

**Q. What is the likely impact to the vegetation associated with the cable installation?**

A. There is no expected removal required due to cable installation. Minor tree trimming may be required in isolated locations for the access of the construction equipment.

**Q. What can be expected during the construction period?**

A. The cables will be installed by excavating a trench to install the plastic conduits that hold the cables. There will also be associated work at various locations along the route to build underground 'joint bays' and pits to pull through and join sections of cable. Construction is expected to start from late 2018 and be completed in 9-12 months.

The trenching work will involve:

- digging trenches, approximately 1.5 metres wide, to lay conduits (plastic pipes) to hold the new cables
- filling trenches and resurfacing the area temporarily
- trenching and resurfacing takes about three days outside each property depending on ground and weather conditions
- excavating two underground joint bays along the route in the road to feed in and join cables together
- feeding in and joining the cables within the joint bays – this takes two to four months to complete
- work on the joint bays occurs in distinct stages
- final restoration is completed in consultation with local council or relevant road authority

There may be trenching crews working at multiple locations simultaneously.

**Q. What will be the expected construction impacts?**

A. Ausgrid is committed to minimising the impact of its activities on local communities and the environment. There will be traffic, parking, and some noise and vibration impacts associated with the work, but Ausgrid will put measures in place to minimise these as much as possible.

There will be traffic, parking, and some noise and vibration impacts associated with the work, but Ausgrid will put measures in place to minimise these as much as possible.

Before starting any work, Ausgrid carries out an environmental assessment of potential noise and vibration impacts. All work is completed in line with the results of the assessment, the Construction Environmental Management Plan and Ausgrid's environmental management policies.

During the work, there will be some temporary changes to traffic and parking arrangements in some streets. Ausgrid will work closely with the Council and Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) to minimise our impact on the local road network. A detailed Traffic Management Plan will be prepared in consultation with Council, RMS and other key stakeholders.

Access to properties will be maintained at all times during construction, unless alternative arrangements have been made in advance with affected property owners.

Once work is finished, Ausgrid will restore any areas impacted by construction to as close to pre-construction conditions as possible.

**Q. Will you put the cables in the grass verge?**

A. Cables of this voltage are generally installed in the roadway with the pavements and grass verge allocated for lower voltage cables or power lines.

**Q. How long will work take outside my home?**

A. Generally trenching proceeds at a rate of 20-30 meters per day so this means that crews should pass your home in around two-three days. However, this rate depends on how much rock is in the ground as this takes longer to excavate.

**Q. Will I be able to get my car out of the driveway while you are working in my street?**

A. Yes. Access to properties will be maintained throughout the project unless we have made prior arrangements with you. If crews are working directly in front of your property, they will work with you to help you exit as quickly as possible.

Generally, steel plates are placed over the trench to allow cars to drive over the trench – this can take around five to ten minutes to organise depending on the work being undertaken.

Traffic controllers will be on site to ensure you can safely enter onto the road/street.

**Q. What about joint bays?**

A. At intervals along the route there will be extended works to build underground 'joint bays'. Precast concrete joint bays will be brought to site and placed into pits that will have already been excavated in the road by our contractors. There will also be smaller pits associated with controlling and monitoring the cables and to assist with cable installation.

Cables will be brought to the joint bay locations on large cable drums. The cables are pulled through the joint bays and into the conduits. The project team will discuss the proposed location of the joint bays and pits with neighbours as early as possible after our contractors have prepared their construction plans.

**Q. Do you put joint bays in driveways?**

A. No, Ausgrid tries to avoid driveways. As soon as the project team has planned where the joint bays will be located, consultation starts with the immediate neighbours. This is done at least 21 days before the joint bay is excavated in the roadway.

Ausgrid and the contractor make contact with all residents adjacent to the joint bays well in advance of work starting to discuss the construction process.

Generally joint bays remain in place for a couple of months but access to properties is maintained. This amount of time is required to allow the pit to be excavated, the cables to be pulled through and specialist crews to undertake cable joining work inside the bay. This is done in stages.

**Q. Will there be a joint bay outside my house, and if so, what does that mean for me and my family?**

A. The exact location of joint bays along the cable routes has not yet been finalised. Once the contract is awarded, the contractor will prepare a detailed project design, including the location of all joint bays.

We will make contact with all residents adjacent to the joint bays well in advance of work starting to discuss the construction process. Generally joint bays remain in place for a number of months but access to properties is maintained. This amount of time is required to allow specialist crews to undertake staged cable jointing work inside the bay.

**Q. When does Ausgrid plan to undertake site investigations?**

A. Ausgrid has undertaken site investigations in various locations along the cable route during May and June 2018.

**Q. How will Ausgrid restore affected areas to their previous state?**

A. All areas affected by Ausgrid works will be reinstated to previous condition once work is finished, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the affected stakeholder.

Restoration of roadways typically involves two stages:

1. Excavated sections of road will be backfilled immediately and temporarily resurfaced to allow normal use by traffic
2. Once all cables have been installed and tested, permanent resurfacing will be done in consultation with the relevant authority (i.e. Council, Roads and Maritime Services)

**Q. Who could be contacted about issues with temporary reinstatement?**

Ausgrid will engage a contractor to complete all trenching and temporary restoration works. Names and contact details of the relevant contractor will be provided as the first point of call for all enquiries.

Secondly, Ausgrid has a dedicated community engagement team for all stages of the project. A 24 hour community construction line is available during all project stages as well as a project email.

Residents and businesses are encouraged to contact the community engagement team with any questions or concerns, including questions about installing cables in particular areas.

**Q. How will Ausgrid work with Council to avoid digging up roads that they plan to resurface?**

A. Ausgrid has met early with council in the area where we plan to install cables to receive local information as well as to get details on their program of works.

These meetings will continue throughout all stages of the project to keep council updated on our plans and to coordinate works where possible to try to minimise having to excavate after any council road restoration.

**Q. How will the cable project have an impact on my property value?**

A. Cables are buried beneath the roadway. Ausgrid has no knowledge of an impact on property values as a result of the existence of underground cable systems.