



Central BESS Community Reference Group

Terms of Reference

April 2026

Contents

1. Purpose of the Community Reference Group (CRG)	1
2. Background	1
3. Purpose and objectives of the CRG	1
3.1 Purpose	1
3.2 Objectives	2
4. Membership	2
4.1 Membership of the CRG	2
4.2 Chairperson	2
5. CRG scope	2
6. Governance and operations	3
6.1 Fund oversight	3
6.2 Meetings and correspondence	4
6.3 Code of Conduct	4
6.4 Review and amendments	4
6.5 Privacy	4
6.6 Media and publicity	5

1. Purpose of the Community Reference Group (CRG)

The Central BESS Project team (the Project team) is establishing a Community Reference Group (CRG) to inform the development and support the implementation of the Community Benefit Fund (the Fund) for the Central BESS project (the Project). The Fund will be collaboratively developed by the Project team and the CRG, and administered by the Project team.

This collaborative process aims to ensure that the Fund supports meaningful community-driven activities that are inclusive and respond to local needs and priorities.

2. Background

The Project is a 500 MW energy storage project north of Bouldercombe, in Queensland's Rockhampton Region. It will balance supply and demand by storing energy at times of low demand and discharging it at times of high demand. This flexible solution will secure reliable and affordable power for Queenslanders.

ACEnergy began development of the Project in 2023, with approval granted by the Planning & Environment Court in late 2025. Construction is expected to commence in late 2026, with the project operational from 2027-2028. It will create around 50 jobs during construction and five once operational, and will support the delivery of reliable energy to local homes and businesses.

To deliver lasting social and economic benefits, the Project will deliver a \$1.5 million Community Benefit Fund for the duration of the project. Initiatives eligible for the Community Benefit Fund may include:

- Community grants and initiatives
- Scholarships, educational or vocational training
- Local procurement, jobs and training
- First Nations benefit sharing.

We recognise the significance of co-designing the Fund to ensure we support meaningful community-driven activities that respond to local needs and priorities.

3. Purpose and objectives of the CRG

3.1 Purpose

The CRG will play a key role in informing the strategic priorities of the Fund and the application evaluation process, helping to ensure that funded initiatives align with community priorities and deliver lasting and locally meaningful outcomes.

3.2 Objectives

The following key objectives will guide the CRG:

- Provide a local perspective to inform the early development of the Fund, as well as its ongoing implementation and refinement.
- Assess grant applications in line with the Fund's selection criteria and nominate successful grant applicants.

4. Membership

4.1 Membership of the CRG

The Project team will seek to form a diverse CRG, whose collective membership captures the diversity of the local community. The CRG will consist of:

- Up to five (5) members representing the local community
- A Chairperson (Councillor Edward Oram)

Every three years, the Project team will call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) from the community to join the CRG. New members will be appointed based on merit, skills and expertise, for 36-month terms.

The inaugural CRG will be selected through a structured process administered by ACEnergy. The CRG selection criteria is outlined in Table 2 of Expression of Interest (EOI) form.

A member of the CRG can step down at any time by notifying the Project team and the Chairperson in writing.

4.2 Chairperson

Councillor Edward Oram from Rockhampton Regional Council will chair the CRG, with responsibility for providing procedural oversight of the CRG selection process and the CRG's scope and responsibilities.

5. CRG scope

CRG members will undertake the following:

- Act for the community as a whole, rather than advocating for personal or sectional interests, and contribute to representing and considering a broad range of community views.
- Attend an initial meeting with the Project team to inform the Guidelines for the Community Benefit Fund (applicable only to the founding CRG).

- Attend up to three meetings per annual funding round. This could include one induction meeting for onboarding, a half-day group assessment meeting, and one debrief meeting, if required.
- Allow time to read the grant applications before the group assessments take place, and actively participate in meetings.
- Provide feedback on the administration of the Fund, if relevant, such as application questions and opening and assessment dates.
- Promote communication and engagement opportunities to the local community or groups represented.

6. Governance and operations

6.1 Fund oversight

Project team responsibilities:

- Facilitate the first meeting with the CRG to provide background on the Project, and present the draft Fund Guidelines for discussion and refinement.
- Refine and finalise the Fund Guidelines to address CRG feedback.
- Manage the administration of the Fund, including coordinating the application process, supporting the CRG's assessment of applications, and overseeing funding acquittal and reporting requirements.
- Establish and provide ongoing administrative and secretariat support to the CRG.
- Review CRG meeting minutes to confirm accuracy and completeness.
- Maintain and publish CRG meeting minutes on the Project website
- Provide updates on the Project to the CRG, as needed.

Chairperson responsibilities:

- Convene and facilitate ongoing CRG meetings and correspondence in a fair and impartial manner.
- Keep meetings on time and with the agenda.
- Support constructive discussion and ensure all members have an opportunity to contribute.
- Oversee adherence to the CRG Terms of Reference, and Conflict of Interest requirements.
- Oversee the preparation and accuracy of CRG meeting minutes, and ensure minutes are shared with the Project team.
- Facilitate CRG decision-making in line with the Fund Guidelines.

6.2 Meetings and correspondence

Meetings will be held on weekdays at a time that suits the majority of CRG members. Where possible, meetings will be held in person; otherwise they will take place via MS Teams. Correspondence will be via email and phone, if needed.

To achieve quorum on funding decisions, all members of the CRG must be present.

6.3 Code of Conduct

As a condition of engagement, all members of CRG must agree to adhere to the following Code of Conduct and the ethical behaviour:

- CRG members should work collaboratively, act respectfully and in good faith, and with consideration for the views and opinions of others.
- Members are expected to contribute to an atmosphere of open and constructive participation, and openly communicate relevant concerns, interest and ideas and make reasons for any disagreement clear in a constructive and thoughtful manner.
- CRG members must declare in advance any potential conflict of interest. Where a conflict exists, the member must not participate in the assessment or decision-making for that application. Conflicts will be recorded in the CRG meeting minutes.
- In the event that one or more CRG members have a conflict of interest, the Chairperson may determine an appropriate alternative process to enable a fair and transparent outcome. This may include seeking input from non-conflicted members or engaging an independent assessment.
- Confidential Project information shared with CRG members must be handled sensitively and not disclosed outside of the CRG unless advised otherwise.
- CRG members will not publicly comment on behalf of the CRG or seek to advocate on the needs of any individual or organisation.

6.4 Review and amendments

These Terms of Reference may be reviewed and updated, as required. Any changes to this document will be communicated to CRG members.

6.5 Privacy

The Project is committed to fully meeting its responsibilities under the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. The Project team will record and use members' personal information in administering the CRG and to keep members informed about the project. Only authorised Project staff will have access to personal information.

6.6 Media and publicity

Community engagement undertaken by the project team will inform the broader community of project progress, opportunities, and Community Benefit Fund outcomes.

There may be occasions where members' names will be included in publicly available documentation or in the promotion of the CRG's activities. However, members are not authorised to speak on behalf of the CRG, the Project, ACEnergy or its contractors. If members are approached by the media, they should advise the Project team immediately.

Any breaches will be treated seriously and membership of those involved will be reviewed, with the possible consequence of permanent removal from the CRG.