

# MINUTES: Marulan Gas Fired Power Project – Community Reference Group – Meeting 6

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| <b>Date</b>          | Wednesday, 26 August 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Time: 5-7pm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Venue</b>         | Meridian Café, 85 George Street, Marulan                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Attendees</b>     | Deborah Palmer (DP), CRG Chairperson<br>Christie Charlin (ChC), Community Representative<br>Carlos Charlin (CaC), Community Representative (online)<br>Tony Mulvihill (TM), Community Representative<br>Geoff Kettle (GK), Stakeholder Representative<br>Alessandro Donagh-De Marchi (ADDM), Community Representative<br>Dakota Gow (DG), Community Representative<br>Casey Hart (CH), Community Representative | Clr Bob Kirk (BK), Goulburn Mulwaree Council<br>Clr Christopher O'Mahony (CO), Goulburn Mulwaree Council<br>Mayor Paul Culhane (PC), Upper Lachlan Shire Council (online)<br>David Wilson (DW), Head of Community Engagement, EnergyAustralia<br>Amanda Jones (AJ), Planning & Approvals Lead, EnergyAustralia<br>Jonathan Carter (JC), Land and Property Engagement Leader, EnergyAustralia<br>Matt Poole (MP), Project Manager, EnergyAustralia (online) |
| <b>Invited</b>       | Office of Wendy Tuckerman MP                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Apologies</b>     | Simon Arkinstall (SA), Upper Lachlan Shire Council                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Invited guest</b> | Ben Cottle (represented by Jim McBirnie (JMcb))                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

| Item | Discussion Point                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.   | <p><b>Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country</b></p> <p>The Independent Chairperson opened the meeting, welcomed attendees and provided an Acknowledgement of Country. The Chair acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land, including the Gundungurra and Ngunnawal peoples and the Pejar Local Aboriginal Land Council, and paid respect to Elders past and present. The Chair extended that respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people present.</p> <p>Members introduced themselves.</p> |

Members were invited to declare any pecuniary or other interests relevant to the agenda. DP noted that their time is paid for by EnergyAustralia. No other declarations of interest were made.

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2. **Apologies**

Nil.

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3. **Invited guest**

The Chairperson introduced Mr Jim McBirnie who was attending the meeting on behalf of Mr Ben Cottle and was provided with a 10-minute allocation at the beginning of the meeting.

Mr McBirnie advised that Mr Cottle would be directly affected by the proposed pipeline. He outlined three principal concerns: impacts on Mr Cottle's cattle business and working farm, the consultation undertaken with Mr Cottle, and the consideration of alternative pipeline routes.

Mr McBirnie advised that Mr Cottle operates a working agricultural property supporting approximately 750 cattle, with oats and wheat grown as part of the cattle operation. It was noted that considerable time and investment had been made to establish and operate the farm and that Mr Cottle did not want project infrastructure across productive agricultural land.

The potential impacts identified by Mr McBirnie included disruption to cattle yards and farm operations; heavy vehicle movements, dust and noise during construction; reduced flexibility in how the property could be used; and the longer-term effects of operational noise and lighting. Mr McBirnie said the impacts would extend beyond the construction period and questioned whether the environmental and ecological effects on the property had been adequately assessed.

Mr McBirnie advised Mr Cottle had met with EnergyAustralia in May 2026 and understood that the approved pipeline alignment had been selected, but expected there would be a genuine opportunity to consider alternatives. Mr McBirnie referred to a possible route further south which he said could avoid or reduce impacts on Mr Cottle's improved agricultural land.

Mr McBirnie noted that at a meeting with EnergyAustralia on 13 August 2026, Mr Cottle had been advised that an alternative route was not preferred. Mr McBirnie expressed concern that an analysis of that option had not been provided. Mr McBirnie noted the alternative was approximately 700 metres shorter, crossed less-improved land and could result in lower operational impacts. Mr McBirnie requested that the southern route be considered as an option and confirmed that Mr Cottle did not accept the proposed pipeline crossing his property.

EnergyAustralia advised the route selection process had sought to minimise environmental impacts, affect the fewest landowners, align with existing easements,

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property boundaries and roads where practicable, maintain constructability and pipeline stability, and retain the shortest feasible route when these factors were considered.

EnergyAustralia advised that the alternative routes raised different land access, environmental, constructability and operational considerations. It confirmed that the matters raised by Mr Cottle would be considered through the continuing assessment and engagement process.

Mr McBirnie was invited to share the notes discussed at the meeting with the Chairperson for distribution to members.

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#### 4. **Actions arising from Meeting 5**

The action register was reviewed. Updates are included in the action table at the end of these minutes.

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#### 5. **Member updates**

Member updates and questions were discussed in sections 6 and 7 below.

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#### 6. **Project update, communications and engagement**

EnergyAustralia provided an overview of the proposed modification and explained that the gas-fired power station would form part of its broader generation portfolio. The plant would be designed to start quickly when additional electricity was required and would use turbine technology that was less emissions-intensive than the technology contemplated by the earlier approval. The modification would also introduce gas storage and a dedicated temporary workers accommodation village.

EnergyAustralia advised that the same project briefing had recently been provided to Goulburn Mulwaree Council and offered to brief Upper Lachlan Shire Council.

#### **Project operation, gas storage and diesel backup**

A community member asked why diesel backup was required if gas storage was proposed. EnergyAustralia explained that gas would be the primary fuel and diesel would only be used as an emergency backup if gas was unavailable or during an extended period of low renewable generation.

A community member asked whether the gas would be stored above or below ground, where it would be stored and how the diesel would enter the site. EnergyAustralia explained that gas would be supplied from the Moomba-Sydney gas pipeline. Compressors would store gas within underground pipeline infrastructure. The diesel supply would be delivered to the site by truck and would provide approximately 40 hours of operation. EnergyAustralia expected diesel to be required infrequently, potentially during one or two periods in a low-renewable year.

A community member asked about the role of gas generation when batteries and renewable generation were available. EnergyAustralia explained that the plant would

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provide firming and grid support when renewable output was low and stored energy was insufficient.

A community member asked whether increased electricity demand from data centres had influenced the project and whether the power station could supply a data centre directly. EnergyAustralia advised that the project would supply the National Electricity Market rather than a particular data centre. It was expected to operate at a capacity factor of approximately 10-15 per cent and remain switched off for most of the time. The modification was not being proposed specifically for data-centre demand.

### **Communications and engagement**

EnergyAustralia reported that 111 engagement activities had been undertaken. Eighteen of 28 near neighbours and all four pipeline landowners had been engaged. The five most frequently discussed impacts were truck movements and road upgrades, visual amenity, noise, the environment and cumulative impacts from developments in the region. The community hotline remained available on 1800 574 947.

EnergyAustralia advised that Cath Russell had left the organisation and recruitment was underway for the vacant community engagement role. Engagement would continue in the interim, including coordination with other proponents. A community member specifically noted the good work done by Cath Russell in the role.

A community member noted many in the community did not know what was happening with the project. Community members wanted to be engaged, but many were busy and could not always attend meetings or scheduled activities, particularly during the week.

EnergyAustralia agreed that engagement needed to reach people where they were. Members said pop-up visibility was important and that EnergyAustralia should not rely only on Facebook or expect people to visit the project website.

A representative of Goulburn Mulwaree Council encouraged EnergyAustralia to engage directly with councils and the community about construction-related matters. Another of the representatives of Goulburn Mulwaree Council noted the difficulty in engaging with community members or people not staying up to date with project information or only engaging when an issue becomes relevant to them.

A community member noted the project team's engagement at the Goulburn Show had made a good impression.

Members and EnergyAustralia discussed several options that could be included in the next round of engagement, including a webinar, an in-person public meeting, a community newsletter, notices on community and school noticeboards and further face-to-face outreach. EnergyAustralia advised that the Modification Report and submission process would be promoted through the NSW Major Projects Portal and local channels, with hard copies provided at key locations and other accessible information provided.

EnergyAustralia undertook to provide the engagement schedule to the CRG for comment once it was a completed draft.

### **Roads and cumulative impacts**

A community member noted the impact to date of traffic on Canyonleigh Road because of increased traffic on the road caused by the projects being investigated in the area.

Council representatives discussed the condition and maintenance of local roads and the need to recognise impacts associated with several projects operating in the area. Council representatives referred to road maintenance schedules and the need to understand the cumulative effect of additional construction traffic. Goulburn Mulwaree Council representatives noted that there was a meeting of their traffic committee on 27 August 2026 and the issues relating to Canyonleigh Road would be discussed.

EnergyAustralia advised that it was coordinating with other developers and would continue discussions with councils about road upgrades, traffic management and construction impacts.

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### **7. Modification Report preview**

EnergyAustralia noted that they would advise the CRG when the Modification Report lodgement and exhibition dates were confirmed.

EnergyAustralia presented a preview of the proposed modification and the supporting technical assessments. The approved project comprises two adjacent gas-fired power stations with shared infrastructure off Canyonleigh Road, Brayton, approximately 12 kilometres north-east of Marulan. EnergyAustralia is now the sole proponent and is seeking to update the approval to reflect current technology and National Electricity Market requirements.

The modification would increase generating capacity from 800 MW to 1.43 GW, allow up to four heavy-duty open-cycle gas turbines, increase the project area from 130 hectares to 255 hectares and extend the approval lapse date to 2031. The combined-cycle option would be removed and temporary workers accommodation and gas storage introduced.

EnergyAustralia explained that dispatchable gas generation is intended to firm renewable generation and provide grid stability and fast-start reliability as coal-fired generation retires. The proposed turbines would be capable of dual-fuel operation, and optional clutches could allow synchronous condenser operation without burning fuel.

Aurecon has prepared the Modification Report in accordance with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines. The report is supported by technical assessments and appendices.

Given the amount of information in the Modification Report, members were asked to identify their key areas of interest. These were identified and were the basis of the discussion. All areas covered by the Modification Report are highlighted in the attached presentation accompanying these minutes.

### **Landscape and visual**

Eight representative viewpoints were assessed. Six would experience no change from the approved project and two would experience a very low increase in visual impact. The

proposed temporary workers accommodation would have a moderate-low temporary visual impact for nearby motorists and two residences. Mitigation would include non-reflective materials, screening vegetation and carefully designed lighting.

A community member asked whether the higher stacks had been selected to improve dispersion and air quality. EnergyAustralia advised that the visual assessment used a conservative 45-metre stack height. The final height may be lower, subject to turbine selection and air-quality requirements, and a stack height of approximately 36 metres may still meet the applicable air-quality and health criteria.

A community member questioned how scenic quality had been assessed. They referred to the images prepared for nearby properties and said the prospect of seeing three or four stacks was disappointing for residents. They noted that this was different to their recollection of an earlier update that noted 1-2 stacks. They noted that their decision to buy their property was based primarily on their views which would now be interrupted by the project stacks.

Another community member asked about the number of transmission towers needing to be built near the site. EnergyAustralia confirmed 3 are needed. The visual impact of these towers was noted by one of the community members.

A community member noted the project could affect the overall feel and use of a property, not only the view from a nominated receiver point. Members also noted that pixelated images and measurements on a page could be difficult for the community to interpret. They asked that the visual material clearly show the different turbine configurations and explain how receiver sensitivity and the overall effect on individual properties had been considered. EnergyAustralia noted that the pixelated methodology would not be used as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

EnergyAustralia noted that community members could make submissions even if they disagreed with the technical assessment.

A community member asked who had undertaken the assessment and how the modification process dealt with the scale of change from the approved project. EnergyAustralia advised that Aurecon had prepared the assessment and that the Modification Report would assess the revised project against the statutory requirements. The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure was noted as the determining authority.

EnergyAustralia advised that the assessment had been done based on a worst-case scenario. It was possible that the final stack height could be lower than assessed. Mitigation of the visual impact of the stacks could include screening vegetation and careful selection of materials, colours and lighting.

A question was asked about how the impacts in the table provided are defined. EnergyAustralia agreed to provide further information about the visual assessment and receiver-sensitivity approach.

### **Noise and vibration**

EnergyAustralia advised all assessed receivers complied with the 35 dB(A) rural residential operational noise trigger level under every modelled scenario. Roadworks may exceed noise management levels at two receivers, although neither would be highly noise affected. The sleep disturbance criterion was met at all receivers.

A community member asked how blasting would be coordinated and how nearby residents would be notified. EnergyAustralia advised that blasting, if required, would occur for a limited period during early works and would be subject to management measures and advance communication with affected receivers.

A community member asked about the closest residences and the effect of operating noise in a quiet rural environment. The discussion compared the 35 dB(A) project noise trigger level with existing background levels that members said could be around 25-30 dB(A) at some locations. Members noted that a project could comply with the statutory criterion but still be clearly noticeable, particularly at night.

Members also raised cumulative construction noise and traffic from other developments. EnergyAustralia advised that the assessment included operational noise, sleep disturbance, low-frequency noise, construction noise, road traffic noise and health-related considerations.

Members requested plain-English information and comparative diagrams showing the difference between existing background noise and predicted project noise.

EnergyAustralia agreed to provide this information and to ensure the Modification Report explained the results in accessible language.

### **Traffic and roads**

EnergyAustralia advised peak construction would generate approximately 126 heavy-vehicle trips each day and about 70 oversize and over-mass movements, including 28 high-risk movements. Local roads were forecast to retain acceptable levels of service. An upgrade of Canyonleigh Road was proposed between Brayton Road and the site access. A Traffic Management Plan, Driver Code of Conduct and school-zone measures would be implemented.

A community member asked how vehicles would travel between the Hume Highway, Brayton Road, Canyonleigh Road, the project site and the temporary workers accommodation facility. EnergyAustralia outlined the proposed routes and advised that shuttle buses would transport workers from the accommodation facility to the project site.

EnergyAustralia advised that oversize and over-mass deliveries would generally occur at night and outside peak periods. The proposed Canyonleigh Road works would include widening and sealing. Some members noted their objection to the widening of the road and sought clarity about the approvals required from councils and road authorities.

EnergyAustralia noted that the road widening was proposed to be on the existing road reserve, not on private property.

Members raised the need for safe school bus stop locations, pull-off lanes or passing opportunities. These were noted by EnergyAustralia.

A representative of Upper Lachlan Shire Council said the impact of Hume Highway and local-road construction on residents needed to be considered, including access impacts and disruption beyond damage to the road surface. Council representatives referred to experience from other projects and the importance of understanding maintenance and approval responsibilities.

Members also discussed the cumulative effect of construction traffic from other projects. It was noted that another proponent has predicted there would be a cumulative 1,300 truck movements along Canyonleigh Road every day.

EnergyAustralia advised that the assessment did not look at the cumulative impact of predicted truck movements and noted the Modification Report predicted approximately 126 heavy-vehicle trips per day at peak construction and that further detail would be provided in the Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment and traffic management planning.

### **Air quality and greenhouse gas**

EnergyAustralia noted construction dust would be managed through standard controls. Scope 1 emissions were expected to be lower than for the approved project once operational, and the project would contribute less than one per cent of the electricity-sector baseline under the Safeguard Mechanism.

A community member asked whether temperature inversions were considered in the air-quality assessment as well as the noise assessment. EnergyAustralia confirmed that temperature inversion was included in both noise and air quality modelling. Exhaust gases would leave the stacks at a high temperature, rise and disperse, and the assessment tested the relevant worst-case scenarios.

A community member asked about pollutant-specific modelling and health impacts. EnergyAustralia advised that the Modification Report would include detailed air-quality modelling and health-related assessment, including fine particulate matter and oxides of nitrogen.

A community member questioned whether there would be ongoing monitoring once the project was operating. EnergyAustralia advised that ongoing monitoring would be undertaken in accordance with approval and regulatory requirements, with information made available through the project website where required. Members requested real-time or regularly updated data where practicable. EnergyAustralia noted the NSW EPA monitoring it is required to do for other projects is available on the EnergyAustralia website where it is required to publish monthly licence compliance monitoring results.

### **Water**

Energy Australia advised operational water demand was estimated at 103-130 ML each year, with total construction demand of 181 ML. Preferred supply sources were harvested stormwater, licensed extraction from the Wollondilly River and recycled water trucked

from local sewage treatment plants. The assessment found the project would achieve a neutral or beneficial effect within the drinking-water catchment.

A community member asked about the use of recycled water. EnergyAustralia advised that discussions with Council were progressing. Recycled water could be trucked to the site. A dedicated pipeline had not been included at this stage but could be considered in future if feasible.

### **Economic and social impacts and workers accommodation**

EnergyAustralia advised the project would employ up to 400 full-time-equivalent workers during peak construction and up to 10 during operations. Local procurement and employment targets would be developed in consultation with councils and the community. A new Community Benefit Sharing Program was proposed. A temporary accommodation facility off Ambrose Road would accommodate up to 400 workers and include shared amenities, rooftop solar and battery storage, and shuttle buses to the project site.

EnergyAustralia advised that the construction workforce would ramp up from approximately 200 workers to a peak of up to 400. Construction was expected to take approximately two to three years. The proposed accommodation facility would contain about 400 single rooms and shared facilities and would be located off Ambrose Road, subject to landowner agreement and planning approval.

A representative of Goulburn Mulwaree Council asked how long construction would take. EnergyAustralia advised that the current estimate was approximately two to three years.

EnergyAustralia noted the workers accommodation could become a shared facility for other projects in the region.

### **Submission process**

EnergyAustralia outlined the public submission process. Submissions on the Modification Report will be made through the NSW Major Projects Portal. The Department will review submissions and EnergyAustralia will be required to respond to the issues raised. Feedback may result in further refinement of the project before determination.

Members asked how long the report would be exhibited and how submissions would be handled. EnergyAustralia advised that the public exhibition was expected to run for at least 28 days. The Department would prepare a key issues summary and EnergyAustralia would respond to individual submissions and broader themes. If substantial amendments were made, the Department could require further public exhibition.

EnergyAustralia advised that the exhibition and instructions on how to make a submission would be advertised online and through the required public notices. Community members would be encouraged to provide feedback and anyone could make a submission. The Modification Report would not be publicly available until it was formally placed on exhibition.

A representative of the Upper Lachlan Shire Council noted their community consultation event on 13 October and invited EnergyAustralia to attend. Representatives from

Goulburn Mulwaree Council also noted they are holding an outreach consultation event on 25 September.

### **Project timing**

A community member noted that the project has changed in the 17 years since it was first approved. They asked how the proposal would be assessed and whether the scale of the changes meant that EnergyAustralia should seek an approval as a new project or as a modification. EnergyAustralia advised that the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure would determine whether the modification pathway was appropriate. The Modification Report would describe the changes, assess their impacts and demonstrate compliance with the statutory requirements.

Members asked how long EnergyAustralia could wait before deciding whether to proceed should the modification be approved. EnergyAustralia advised that the Modification Report was expected to be lodged around the end of October 2026 and a final investment decision by EnergyAustralia was anticipated in 2027. The proposed approval lapse date was 2031, meaning construction would need to commence by that date unless the approval was changed or withdrawn.

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9. **Any other business**

No other business was recorded.

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10. **Next meeting**

November 2026 – to be held online. Date to be confirmed but will be to coincide with the public exhibition period.

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| No.                     | Originated | Action Item                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Responsibility  |
|-------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Previous actions</b> |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                 |
| 1                       | M1 A6      | Provide updated air quality modelling and noise modelling to the CRG. Updates were presented as part of the Modification Report preview. Closed.                                                                                                   | EnergyAustralia |
| 2                       | M1 A7      | Provide visualisations of the proposed plant, including stack height and night-time lighting impacts. Landscape and visual assessment findings and mitigation were presented; final visual renders remain part of planned communications. Ongoing. | EnergyAustralia |
| 3                       | M1 A12     | Share outcomes of EnergyAustralia's environmental studies and data with councils and other agencies. Ongoing.                                                                                                                                      | EnergyAustralia |
| 4                       | M4 A6      | Discuss EnergyAustralia's position on the new NSW pipeline regulations and guidelines. Ongoing.                                                                                                                                                    | EnergyAustralia |
| 5                       | M5 A1      | Invite Ben Cottle to attend the August CRG for 10 minutes at the start to provide comments. Ben Cottle was represented by Jim McBirnie. Closed.                                                                                                    | Chairperson     |
| 6                       | M5 A2      | Follow up directly with invited guests, provide the CRG Terms of Reference and offer to act as a conduit between landholders and EnergyAustralia where appropriate. Follow up occurred after the April meeting and meetings held. Closed.          | Chairperson     |
| 7                       | M5 A3      | Continue direct engagement with affected landholders regarding the underground pipeline and property-specific matters. Engagement is continuing. Ongoing.                                                                                          | EnergyAustralia |
| 8                       | M5 A4      | Progress neighbour information materials for workers accommodation. Newsletters, visual renders and technical information remain part of planned communications. Ongoing.                                                                          | EnergyAustralia |
| 9                       | M5 A5      | Incorporate feedback on pop-up timing, including Saturdays in Marulan. Face-to-face pop-ups and monthly near-neighbour engagement are continuing. Suggestions have been adopted as                                                                 | EnergyAustralia |

| No.                | Originated | Action Item                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Responsibility  |
|--------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                    |            | part of the planned engagement in October.<br>Closed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                 |
| <b>New actions</b> |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                 |
| 10                 | M6 A1      | Provide the CRG members with the October Engagement Schedule for comment.                                                                                                                                                                                                  | EnergyAustralia |
| 11                 | M6 A2      | Advise CRG members when the Modification Report lodgement and public exhibition timing is confirmed.                                                                                                                                                                       | EnergyAustralia |
| 12                 | M6 A3      | Provide plain-English information and diagrams explaining predicted project noise levels, existing background noise and how the assessment relates to local conditions.                                                                                                    | EnergyAustralia |
| 13                 | M6 A4      | Provide further detail on the approvals, responsibilities and proposed arrangements for local road upgrades and traffic management.                                                                                                                                        | EnergyAustralia |
| 14                 | M6 A5      | Provide further information explaining the landscape and visual assessment, including receiver sensitivity.                                                                                                                                                                | EnergyAustralia |
| 15                 | M6 A6      | Provide a link to another project webpage that shows how air quality data is monitored - <a href="https://www.energyaustralia.com.au/about-us/energy-generation/nsw-epa-reports">https://www.energyaustralia.com.au/about-us/energy-generation/nsw-epa-reports</a> Closed. | EnergyAustralia |

