

Media Release

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Lockhart workers camp eases pressure on Riverina housing

A self-contained camp that will be home for more than 200 workers has opened at Lockhart in the Riverina as part of EnergyConnect, Australia's largest transmission project currently under construction.

EnergyConnect will allow energy to be shared between NSW, South Australia, and Victoria and enable the connection of more new renewable generation.

Transgrid and construction partner Elecnor Australia are building the 700-kilometre NSW section of the project from Wagga Wagga to the South Australian border, and a connection to Red Cliffs in Victoria.

The 20ha camp at Lockhart will accommodate workers who will be building the eastern section of the project between Wagga Wagga and Buronga, NSW.

Transgrid Executive General Manager of Major Projects Gordon Taylor said: "Providing quality accommodation is a key step in progressing construction as it nears Wagga Wagga and ensures people are safe and comfortable while working away from home.

"Camps like this one at Lockhart allow us to bring workers into local communities without taking up housing local families may need. It's a simple way we can help ease pressure on the rental market and accommodation providers.

"EnergyConnect is already providing a huge boost to local communities and it's exciting to see the first workers moving into this purpose-built facility," he said.

The Lockhart camp is one of six along the EnergyConnect route which will house more than 1,300 workers for the mega project.

Elecnor Australia Project Director Samuel Basanta Lopez said: "Our camp strategy is focused predominately on ensuring our worker health and safety. The distances our employees must travel to our work sites is an important factor in determining our camp locations to manage fatigue.

"Most of our workers will be housed in purpose-built temporary work camps which are state-of-the-art. This approach is also intended to reduce pressure on the local rental market and commercial accommodation; and it ensures travel to site is minimised," said Mr Basanta Lopez.

Each bedroom at the Lockhart camp includes its own ensuite bathroom, fridge, TV and air-conditioning.

There is a full kitchen and dining mess to provide hot meals, a gym, prayer, and recreation rooms, and first aid centre as well and wi-fi and office spaces plus areas for heavy vehicles and equipment.

28-year-old Chris Spooner from Sydney is among the first workers to have moved into the camp.

“It’s been great, you’ve got a gym, the food is fantastic – I’m a bit scared I will put on a lot of weight because the chef is too good.

“The rooms are really comfortable, you’ve got television, air-con, your fridge, all your creature comforts,” he said.

34-year-old James Bell from the Gold Coast is also enjoying life at the camp.

“I used to be a scaffolder, so I’ve been in a lot of camps, but this one is right up there with the best of them. The food is a definitely a highlight, it’s top notch, they’re looking after us really well,” he said.

Melbourne father of four Junior Tato said the camp provides a sense of community for workers away from their families.

“You get to mingle with lots of different nationalities and cultures and you learn a lot during the stay here as well.

“The camp and the facilities help take your mind off things a little bit when you’re with the crew and just mingling so definitely a great facility here as well as people,” he said.

Additional camps will also be established at Dinawan, near Coleambally and Cobb Highway near Hay, NSW.

Construction on the western section of EnergyConnect from Buronga to South Australia commenced mid last year and work is now progressing on the eastern section between Wagga and Buronga.

The project is creating up to 1,500 jobs, primarily in regional NSW, and contributing \$4 billion in net economic benefits.

EnergyConnect has so far invested more than \$75 million with 150 local and First Nations businesses in the Riverina, Murray and Sunraysia regions.

To find out more about EnergyConnect visit: www.transgrid.com.au/projects-innovation/energyconnect

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