

Media Release

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Business boom for Riverina as work progresses on EnergyConnect project

Construction of the eastern alignment of Australia's largest transmission project is ramping up, bringing a major economic injection to communities and local businesses across the Riverina.

EnergyConnect will enable the sharing of electricity between NSW, South Australia and Victoria for the first time, integrate cheaper and cleaner renewable energy into the grid, and help Australia achieve its emissions reduction targets.

Transgrid and its construction partner SecureEnergy are building the 700km NSW section of the project from Wagga Wagga to the South Australian border, with a connection to Red Cliffs in Victoria.

Executive General Manager of Major Projects Gordon Taylor said: "Through this project we have so far invested more than \$94 million with over 160 local and First Nations businesses in the Riverina, Murray and Sunraysia regions.

"Transgrid is delivering the critical infrastructure and priority projects identified by the Commonwealth and NSW governments to enable Australia's clean energy transition.

"The Riverina is the heart of our renewable energy transformation and we're committed to maximising the positive social and economic benefits for everybody, including supporting local businesses to grow and create jobs.

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

Secure Energy Project Director Samuel Basanta Lopez said: "Local businesses are helping us get on with the job of building the critical transmission infrastructure needed to bring cheaper and cleaner renewable energy to millions of Australians.

"Spending with local suppliers helps businesses grow, create new jobs and develop skills, providing a much-needed economic boost for local communities across the project."

One of those businesses is family-owned Kennedy Bros Earthmoving, which has operated in Wagga Wagga for more than two decades.

Kennedy Bros Earthmoving is building access points and access tracks for safe vehicle entry and exit from roads to facilitate construction of the transmission line and worker camps.

Company owner Andrew Kennedy, whose daughters Jessica and Madalyn work in the operations of the business, said the contract has allowed the business to expand.

“It’s a very positive thing for our business to be involved in this project. It gives us certainty for the future and enables us to employ new operators and bring new people into the business,” Mr Kennedy said.

“We’ve directly employed another eight people and we have also employed another three or four contractors to help complete the works.

“We see it as vital for the existence of local communities for the large companies that come into town to employ locals, keeping the money in the town and enhancing the community.”

Total Tools in Wagga Wagga is another key local supplier for the project, providing tools and equipment.

Store Manager Nathan Bromham said: “It makes a massive difference to what we do. It gives us the confidence to continue to invest heavily in stock and also into our staff, so it’s been great for our business.

“It helps keep that money with local businesses and the community so everyone wins at the end of the day.”

Transgrid and SecureEnergy have committed to buying locally as work progresses on the eastern section of EnergyConnect between Wagga Wagga and Buronga.

Other local suppliers include Wagga Trucks, Hillis Motor Group at Wagga, and Daimler Trucks Wagga which are supplying more than 120 vehicles including prime movers, crew trucks, utes and buses.

Southland Supply Group at Wagga Wagga is providing personal protective equipment (PPE) for workers.

For more information about EnergyConnect visit: www.transgrid.com.au/energyconnect

VIDEO HERE:

<https://youtu.be/Ry-lq8WXkfE> (Master)

https://youtu.be/ekNCwL6_Dwk (Clean)

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