

Community Benefits Sharing Program

Implementation Plan

1 October 2025

Official



Powering a
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TasNetworks acknowledges the palawa (Tasmanian Aboriginal community) as the original owners and custodians of lutruwita (Tasmania). TasNetworks, acknowledges the palawa have maintained their spiritual and cultural connection to the land and water. We pay respect to Elders past and present and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to outline the Community Benefits Sharing Program (CBSP) for the North West Transmission Developments (NWTD). It provides an overview of the program's intent, the process undertaken to design it, and the key activities required to ensure its successful implementation.

The plan was initially developed in May 2023 and subsequently refined in April 2024 and January 2025. This version reflects the most up-to-date information and aligns with the current NWTD project delivery timeline.

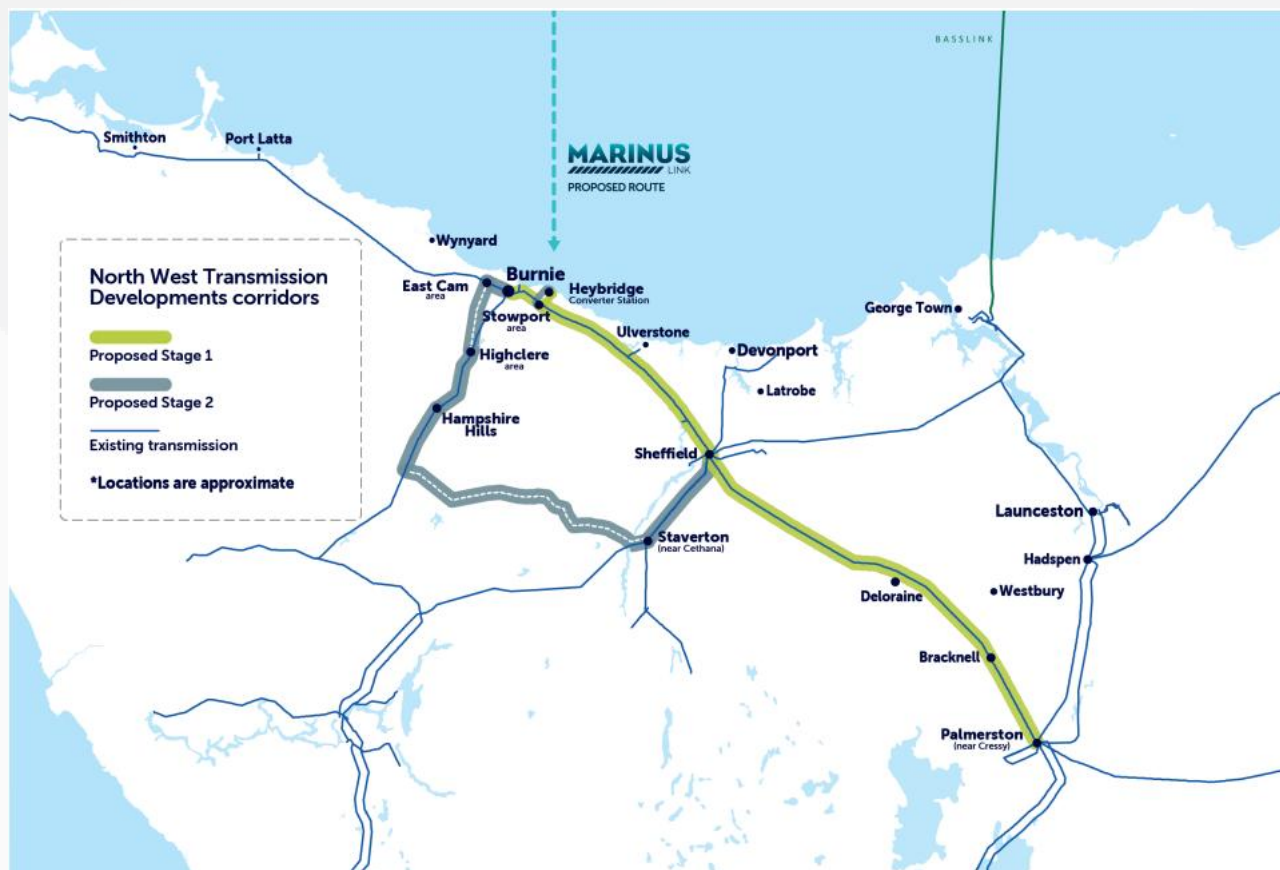
Background

What is community benefits sharing?

Community benefits sharing programs are a common element of major projects, nationally and internationally. They recognise that while major projects may deliver broad benefits to communities across a region, a state or even across the country, project impacts are only felt by the local communities surrounding the project. Benefits sharing programs provide additional benefits to local communities to ensure there is a more equitable distribution of benefits.

About the NWTD

TasNetworks plans to strengthen the transmission network in North West Tasmania. The proposed NWTD project will include 240 km of new and upgraded transmission lines and other energy infrastructure. The developments will allow Tasmania's power system to remain strong and stable while providing the increased capacity needed to accommodate new and existing renewable energy developments in the region, including Marinus Link.



About the NWTDCBSP

The infrastructure that will be built as part of the NWTDCBSP has significant social, environmental and economic impacts on the local community surrounding the project in North West Tasmania. Developing a Community Benefits Sharing Program (CBSP) is a critical part of TasNetworks' commitment to ensuring an ongoing and sustainable positive legacy for communities in this region.

This commitment is consistent with the Tasmanian Government's Renewable Energy Coordination Framework, which states: "Sharing with the community the financial benefits of renewable energy growth will provide for a long-lasting positive contribution to regional Tasmania. This sharing is essential, as the renewable energy vision will require high levels of engagement and acceptance". It also aligns with expectations set out by the Energy Charter's Better Practice Social Licence Guideline.

Designing the Program

A co-design process was used to develop the NWTDC CBSP to ensure that the benefits the program will deliver are the ones that the local community will most value. Figure 1 provides an overview of the co-design process.

Figure 1: CBSP co-design process



A key aspect of the co-design process used for the NWTDC CBSP was the creation of a Youth Panel. Young people are the community members who will be living with the project for the longest but they are very often completely absent from community engagement processes. The Youth Panel guaranteed the involvement of young people in this co-design process.

The Youth Panel was asked to draft the community benefits sharing framework to ensure the values, concerns and priorities of the local community, and young people in North West Tasmania in particular, were reflected in the benefits the program will deliver.

The Youth Panel approach also allowed the development of the CBSP itself to be a community benefit, by recognising that young people are our future leaders and by upskilling and empowering them for further civic participation. This included learning how to work with others, consider and negotiate different points of view, and draft formal recommendations.

The co-design process also involved local community and stakeholders who were invited to share their feedback about the Youth Panel's draft framework. This collective feedback was considered by the panel before it finalised its recommendations for the framework.

The final element of the co-design process was the involvement of local stakeholders in the development of the governance arrangements for the program's implementation. Stakeholders with experience of, and an interest in, community grant programs shared their insights into the governance elements that are needed to effectively administer a benefits program. This included things like how the program could be administered, who should assess and identify successful applications under the

program, and the best ways to arrange funding to get maximum benefits. This guidance was used to draft a range of governance options which were tested with stakeholders before they were finalised.

Utilising this iterative, co-design approach for both the development of the benefits program and how it will be implemented, ensures the program delivers the benefits the North West community value and addresses local concerns, interests and priorities.

Further information about the co-design process is included in Appendix A.

About the Program

TasNetworks has committed \$10 million to support initiatives that deliver meaningful benefits to communities within the six local government areas affected by the NWT D, subject to a final investment decision.

TasNetworks will oversee the administration and governance of the CBSP, ensuring it is delivered with transparency, accountability, and strong community alignment.

An Independent Community Assessment Panel (ICAP) will be established to review applications and select successful initiatives for funding. Panel members will be drawn from the six local government areas impacted by the NWT D project, ensuring local knowledge and perspectives are central to the decision-making process.

Below are the key components of the NWT D CBSP, developed collaboratively with stakeholders and the community through the co-design process.

Eligibility requirements

- To be eligible for the CBS program, initiatives must:
 - Have a positive impact on the community, in at least one of the following six focus areas, by:
 - supporting emotional, mental, and/or physical health
 - preserving, benefiting and/or enhancing the environment
 - providing community infrastructure, and/or accessibility to community services, including transport
 - delivering community arts initiatives, including events
 - providing skills, training, and/or education
 - encouraging a sense of community.
- Deliver demonstrable benefits to an 'identified community' within the six local government areas affected by the NWT D.
 - Some examples of an 'identified community' include: a defined geographic location, or a specified demographic group, or a minority or marginalised group.
 - If required, priority will be given to initiatives benefitting identified communities who experience a greater impact from the NWT D. These may include those with a line of sight of the project, those impacted during project construction, or those impacted by greenfield development.
- Demonstrate one or more of the following core values, noting that larger initiatives, as outlined above, must demonstrate all four of these values:
 - Inclusion – supporting participation by, and delivering benefit for, the broadest, most diverse group of people possible
 - Accessibility – addressing participation barriers, such as physical access, language and literacy, amongst others
 - Lasting impact – generating ongoing benefits that continue after the initiative has been delivered

- Environmental sustainability – delivery of the initiative to have regard for and address/limit its environmental impact.
- Be Australian owned or, if not, registered in Australia, noting that priority will be given to Tasmanian owned initiatives, particularly those within the six local government areas affected by the NWTD.
- Demonstrate community support if initiatives are for commercial purposes.

An example of 'commercial purposes' that may be eligible are social enterprises or community organisations that generate funds through trade but where the profits are given back to the community through the services they deliver. Initiatives that fall within this category will only be eligible to apply for tier one funding.

Applications for religious purposes, political purposes or individual gain are ineligible for the CBSP

Funding requirements

The CBSP will provide four tiers of funding under which applicants can apply for funding.

Tier one initiatives

Tier one initiatives are those seeking funding of less than \$10,000 (excluding GST).

This tier is focused on initiatives that are proposed to encourage a sense of community, particularly amongst young people.

The focus of this 'micro-funding' tier is also to encourage innovation and support the testing of new ideas and/or community initiatives. Applications to develop and test 'start-up' concepts would be considered under this tier.

Successful tier one initiatives must demonstrate at least one of the four core values identified above. Successful tier one initiatives will be ineligible to receive repeat tier one funding but may be eligible to apply for other funding tiers to further develop proven concepts.

Tier two initiatives

Tier two initiatives are those seeking funding between \$10,000 and \$50,000 (excluding GST).

The focus of tier two funding is on the delivery of local initiatives/single site/location initiatives, and the further development and testing of innovative initiatives to address community disadvantage. Initiatives that empower young people and those that are proposed to encourage a sense of community are also its focus.

Successful tier two initiatives must demonstrate at least two of the four core values identified above.

Tier three initiatives

Tier three initiatives are those seeking funding between \$50,000 and \$250,000 (excluding GST).

The focus of tier three funding is on initiatives that deliver community benefits in multiple locations within the six affected LGA and/or those with a staged delivery approach that require a longer delivery timeframe over multiple years. Generally, funding is expected to be staged and subject to the delivery of initiatives meeting agreed milestones and/or key performance indicators.

Successful tier three initiatives must demonstrate each of the four core values identified above.

Tier four initiatives

Tier four initiatives are those seeking funding beyond \$250,000, up to or exceeding \$500,000 (excluding GST).

The focus of tier four initiatives is to address significant systemic issues affecting identified communities within the six local government areas affected by the NWTD. Generally, funding is expected to be staged and subject to the delivery of initiatives meeting agreed milestones and/or key performance indicators.

Under this tier, initiatives with matched co-funding from other providers, whether government or private benefactors, are encouraged. Initiatives will need to demonstrate their efficacy/have demonstrated proof of concept to be considered for tier four funding.

Successful tier four initiatives must demonstrate each of the four core values, identified above.

Application process

There will be two funding application rounds per year*:

Round one

Tier one and tier two applications and complete tier three and four applications will be fully assessed for funding. Initial tier three and four applications will be reviewed for feedback.

Proposed initiatives under tier three and tier four will undergo an initial review (see details below) to confirm their eligibility for consideration in round two and the application requirements that will apply.

Initial reviews for tier three and four applications are recommended due to the quantum of funding sought and to ensure applicants are given every opportunity to optimise their submissions including responding to initial review feedback.

Where 'fully formed' applications that meet all relevant criteria are received during this application round, then these applications will be fully assessed.

Round two

New tier one and two applications and new complete tier three and four application and previously confirmed tier three and four applications will be fully assessed for funding. New initial tier three and four applications will be reviewed for feedback.

Each application round will be open for six weeks, during which time potential applicants can seek guidance from TasNetworks about their application and required content.

*timing may differ in year one

Assessment process

An Independent Community Assessment Panel (ICAP) will be responsible for reviewing and selecting successful initiatives. This panel, comprising community and skilled regional representatives, will be recruited by TasNetworks. The panel's responsibilities will include:

- Reviewing all applications across tiers one to four against the eligibility criteria and in accordance with the assessment guidelines
- Attending all assessment panel meetings and collectively selecting successful initiatives
- Discussing potential tier three and four applicants, responding to their proposal 'pitch' and discussing and providing advice about their proposed initiatives
- Drafting recommendations reports to TasNetworks about which initiatives should receive funding.

Implementing the Program

TasNetworks will continue to engage and communicate with both internal and external stakeholders throughout 2025 and 2026 in preparation for the launch of the CBSP in 2026.

Key activities during this period will include:

- Establishing governance structures and processes to guide the assessment and evaluation of key initiatives.
- Supporting and upskilling community groups to ensure they understand the application process and are ready to submit well-prepared applications once the first funding round opens.
- Promoting the CBSP, including program details and information on how to apply.

Feedback from engagement activities will help refine the application process, governance arrangements and how we communicate with stakeholders and prospective applicants about the CBSP.

Table 1 outlines the key activities planned between now and the official program launch.

Table 1: Implementation activities*

Proposed timing	Activity	Purpose	Targeted stakeholder/s
October 2025	Community Information Sessions	Two information sessions will be held with key community groups to raise awareness of the CBSP, explain the application and assessment process, and gather feedback to help remove barriers and ensure accessibility once the program launches.	• Community groups and organisations, • Environmental groups, • Sporting and recreation clubs, • Not-for-profits, • Peak and advocacy bodies
	Recruit Independent Chair	A targeted campaign, including public advertising (e.g. SEEK), will be undertaken to appoint an independent Chair for the ICAP.	• Prospective ICAP Chair candidates
	Recruit ICAP members	A broad recruitment campaign will be conducted to attract and appoint members for the ICAP, ensuring diversity of perspectives and expertise.	• Prospective ICAP members
November 2025	Internal workshops	Workshops will be held with key TasNetworks teams to finalise monitoring, reporting, and	• TasNetworks internal teams

evaluation requirements, including funding allocation and management processes.

December 2025	Develop Communications and Promotional Plan	TasNetworks will develop a detailed plan outlining tools, channels, and activities to promote the CBSP to a wide and diverse audience.	• TasNetworks Communications Team
January 2026	Develop communication and education materials	A suite of accessible materials—such as brochures, FAQs, and “how-to” guides—will be developed to help prospective applicants understand the process and confidently apply for funding.	• Community organisations • Applicants • Interested stakeholders
February 2026	ICAP onboarding	A series of onboarding sessions will be held with the Independent Chair and ICAP members to provide program context, build understanding of assessment criteria, and ensure readiness to evaluate applications effectively.	• ICAP Chair • ICAP members
March 2026	Implement promotional plan and campaign	The CBSP promotional campaign will be launched to raise awareness of the CBSP, upcoming funding round and encourage eligible organisations to start thinking about their applications.	• Community and stakeholder groups • General community
April 2026	CBSP webinars	Interactive webinars will be delivered to guide potential applicants through the program’s objectives, eligibility criteria, and application process prior to and during the first funding round.	• Community groups, not-for-profits, peak bodies, interested applicants
	Promotion continues	Ongoing communication activities will maintain program visibility and momentum leading up to the first funding round.	• General public and potential applicants

Mid 2026

CBPS ROUND 1 APPLICATIONS OPEN

* Timing is subject to change

Evaluating the Program

A formal evaluation of the efficacy of the CBSP, the assessment and panel processes will be undertaken following the first year of the program to allow for program improvements and refinements. This evaluation will be undertaken by TasNetworks in partnership with the members of the ICAP and invited subject matter experts with relevant qualifications and experience.

Appendix A: CBSP Process Summary

North West Transmission Developments

Community Benefits Sharing Program
Co-design process summary – July 2023



TasNetworks

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NWTD project

The proposed North West Transmission Developments (NWTD) include 240km of new and upgraded transmission lines and other energy infrastructure that will increase the capacity of Tasmania's electricity network.

The developments will link the transmission network from the Cressy area to Sheffield, Burnie, Hampshire and Staverton, providing enough capacity for Marinus Link and other renewable energy developments to connect into the electricity grid.

The developments will support Australia's energy transition alongside Tasmania's ambition to be a world leading renewable energy provider.

Community benefits sharing programs

Community benefits sharing programs are a common element of major projects, nationally and internationally.

They recognise that while major projects may deliver broad benefits to communities across a region, state or country, project impacts are only felt by the local communities surrounding the project. Benefits sharing programs provide additional benefits to local communities to ensure there is a more equitable distribution of benefits.

Like any major infrastructure project, the NWTD will impact communities in the six local government areas in North West Tasmania the project is located within during its construction and operation. Developing a NWTD community benefits sharing program is part of TasNetworks' commitment to ensuring that it will leave an ongoing and sustainable positive legacy for the community in North West Tasmania.



Using a co-design approach

Co-design processes involve community members, stakeholders and decision-makers working together collaboratively to develop an outcome that reflects the values, perspectives and needs of all parties.

A co-design process was used to develop the Community Benefits Sharing Program for the NWTD project to ensure that the benefits the program will deliver are the ones that the local community will most value.

A key aspect of the co-design process used for the NWTD was the creation of a Youth Panel. Young people are the community members who will be living with the project for the longest but they are very often completely absent from community engagement processes. The Youth Panel guaranteed the involvement of young people in this co-design process.



Phase one: developing the draft benefits program framework

Phase one of the co-design process was focused on the establishment of the Youth Panel and its development of the draft benefits program framework recommendations.

A total of 15 people were recruited to the Youth Panel. Panel members were relatively diverse. Based on demographic information they shared with us, the group included:

- Eight female, five male and one non-binary participants
- Three persons aged 18, two aged 22, six aged 23 and one person each aged 20, 21 and 25
- Two participants from the Kentish Local Government Area (LGA), four from Central Coast LGA, four from Meander Valley LGA and four from Waratah-Wynyard LGA
- Two participants identified as Aboriginal.

The Youth Panel was asked to draft recommendations for the framework of the benefits program. In particular, they were asked to identify:

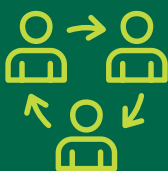
- What projects and/or activities should be awarded funding under the benefits program
- Who should be awarded funding under the benefit program
- How the community benefits program should be delivered.



Phase two: consulting on the draft benefits program framework and governance options

Phase two of the co-design process was focused on seeking stakeholder and community feedback on the Youth Panel's draft recommendations.

During this phase, we also worked with stakeholders to identify potential ways the benefits program could be delivered and the most effective administrative arrangements for its implementation.



Phase three: finalising the benefits program framework and governance options

During phase three of the co-design process, feedback gathered during phase two was shared with the Youth Panel to inform their refinement and finalisation of the eligibility requirements of the benefits program.

Potential governance options for the implementation of the program, which were developed from the stakeholder insights that were gathered in phase two, were shared with key stakeholders and their preferences identified.

Final recommendations

Once finalised, the Youth Panel's report of its recommendations for the benefits program for the North West Transmission Developments was formally provided to a TasNetworks Board representative.

A second stakeholder workshop was undertaken in November 2022 to consider the potential governance models for the benefits program that TasNetworks had developed on the basis of the outcomes of the first stakeholder workshop.

Following the close of the 2022 co-design process for the benefits program, the proposed benefits program framework and governance arrangements were endorsed by the TasNetworks Board. The draft recommendations and final framework are available at www.tasnetworks.com.au/nwtd-cbsp

Next steps

The benefits program will commence alongside the construction of the NWTD, subject to final investment decision. The program is expected to operate between 2025 and 2029 and will provide four tiers under which applicants can apply for funding for local community initiatives.

The detailed development of the governance and administrative arrangements for the benefits program is currently being undertaken. This will include designing the details of the:

- Independent Community Assessment Panel
- Application process
- Supporting administration arrangements

This development will involve further engagement to ensure the benefits program is delivered in a way that aligns to stakeholder and community expectations, and meets TasNetworks' probity obligations.



More information

We encourage you to visit **our website** and connect with us on social media to stay up-to-date with the project and the development of the NWTD Community Benefits Sharing Program.



facebook.com/tasnetworks



linkedin.com/tas-networks

Contact us



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