

MERRIWA microgrid trial and Community Hub

Project introduction – microgrid trial project

Ausgrid is proposing to invest around \$3 million in Merriwa to trial innovative technology that contributes to a more responsive, resilient and reliable power supply.

We're investing in a microgrid trial as part of our commitment to supporting local people and communities during planned and unplanned outages. Increasing temperatures mean more extreme weather events, and this in turn increases the risk of unplanned power disruptions.

We are thinking differently about how we can continue to provide for our customers in rural and remote areas.

We are about to commence engaging with our customers and stakeholders on what a microgrid is and what it can power to support community, business and residential activity.

By partnering with the Upper Hunter Shire Council and the Merriwa community to co-design elements of the microgrid trial project, we can best serve the needs of the Merriwa community. This includes helping decide what services are included in an innovative 'community hub' that will operate under emergency conditions.

Help us create your energy future

As we are developing plans for the microgrid trial, we want to involve the community so we can deliver a service that meets their needs. We are keen to hear your feedback on facilities to be connected to the microgrid and the concept and delivery of a community hub.



What is a microgrid?

A microgrid is a small network of power generation, storage and control technologies that are designed to supply a small group of consumers with electricity while operating independently of the central grid. A microgrid can operate autonomously, supplied by energy sources like solar generation, battery storage and diesel power, when power supply from the main grid is disrupted by extreme weather events or is otherwise unavailable.

A microgrid is designed to increase the reliability and resilience of the network and the community.

Why Merriwa, why now?

Ausgrid has considered a range of possible locations, with a focus on improving system reliability and resilience in remote and regional areas. Merriwa has been selected as the preferred location because:

- the existing network configuration means there is a risk of extended outages to the area
- the conditions at our Merriwa Depot are right for this project, with the right amount of space, sunlight and support for an effective trial
- our climate assessments show that the Merriwa and Upper Hunter areas will be some of the most impacted by climate change across Ausgrid's system in coming decades.

The technology is now at a stage that we are confident it will work reliably and cost effectively.

We're proposing to install the microgrid at Ausgrid's Merriwa Depot, which will allow for the majority of the main street to be supplied by the microgrid, providing benefits to the town and surrounding rural properties through the community hub.

What are we planning?

The first step in this trial is to develop a low-voltage connected microgrid at Merriwa, capable of supplying identified premises along Bettington Street, in the centre of town during major outages. The proposed microgrid will include small scale power generation (solar panels and a back-up diesel generator), storage (batteries) and control technologies.

The microgrid will be able to operate during planned and unplanned power interruptions – switching on to maintain supply automatically to homes and businesses in the trial area. It is also proposed to power a community hub to improve Merriwa's resilience to disruptive events by providing services such as refrigeration, laundry and showering facilities and a central meeting point. Community input will help determine the location and services included in the community hub.

Project timeline:

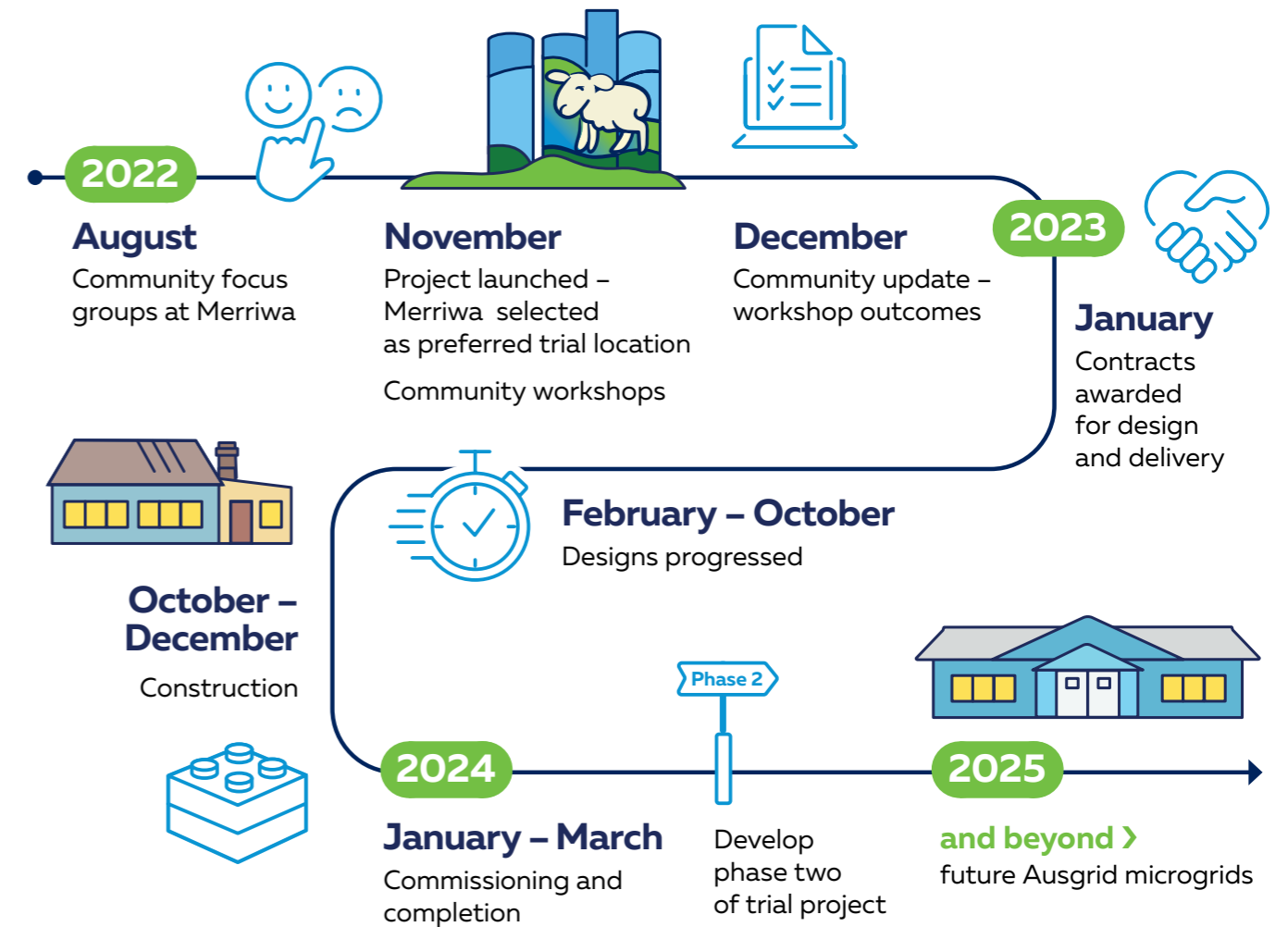


Figure 1: example of microgrid



How can you get involved?

As we develop plans for the microgrid trial, we want to involve the community so we can deliver a service that meets their needs. We are keen to hear your feedback.

The feedback we receive from our customers and stakeholders will shape the Merriwa Microgrid Innovation Trial.

We're in the planning stage of this project and are looking to maximise benefits in Merriwa and the Upper Hunter area, leveraging local businesses and their capability where possible.

To have your say, register to be part of our community workshops, where community members can ask any questions and provide feedback on the proposed microgrid and community hub.

The available dates are:

Workshop 1 (in person)

Tuesday 29 November, 5.30 – 8.30 pm

Workshop 2 (in person)

Wednesday 30 November, 11 am – 2 pm

Workshop 3 (online)

Wednesday 30 November, 5.30 – 8.30 pm

Register for a community workshop to help shape this important project for the Merriwa community.

Workshops are planned between 29 November and 1 December. Participants will receive a \$100 gift card as a thank you for their contributions.

Places will be allocated by demographics to ensure a balanced representation of the Merriwa community.



To know more:

📞 1800 604 765 ✉ innovation@ausgrid.com.au
🌐 ausgrid.engagementhub.com.au/merriwamicrogrid

Register now



MERRIWA
microgrid trial
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