

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Wine district power upgrade underway

EnergyAustralia has started work on a \$34 million upgrade to the electricity network supplying the Hunter's booming wine tourism district.

The first phase of the project involves development of a new 33,000 volt power line from an existing bulk supply point at Stanford Road, Heddon Greta, to Duffie Drive, Cessnock.

The second part of the project – development of a new zone substation at Kurri Kurri and associated high voltage powerlines – is expected to follow in September after further community consultation and an environmental assessment.

EnergyAustralia's General Manager Network, Geoff Lilliss, said the upgrade would reinforce the network supplying the vineyards district, where power usage increases significantly during summer months.

"It will cater for growing demand for power across the Cessnock and Kurri as well as replace the existing substation at Kurri," Mr Lilliss said.

"We hope to have the 33,000 volt line in service by next summer, when electricity use is expected to increase in line with the hotter months."

The new power line will be built on wooden poles located in road reserve along Northcote Street and Cessnock Road, as well as existing electricity easements.

Mr Lilliss said consultation with the local community on the new Kurri substation and associated powerlines was continuing.

"We've written to almost 500 homes about this project and we are receiving some excellent feedback," he said.

"By listening to their views, we have been able to make some substantial changes to our original plans.

"We're hoping to finalise consultation and the environmental assessment on the substation and power lines by the end of July."

The project will be assessed under the new Infrastructure State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP), which took effect from January this year.

Media contact: EnergyAustralia Hunter News Pager 02 9962 9754