



Trusted Environmental and Geological Information Program

Basin Reference Group — Communique Meeting 1 | 21 July 2022

Meeting summary

On 21 July 2022 the inaugural Trusted Environmental and Geological Information (TEGI) program Basins Reference Group (BRG) meeting was held via videoconference. The program partners, Geoscience Australia and CSIRO, presented the TEGI program to community, First Nations, industry, environmental, and government representatives from Queensland and South Australia.

The focus of the first BRG was to introduce key stakeholder and Traditional Owner groups to the TEGI program, start to build meaningful relationships for the future, and ensure the program is delivering trusted science that meets the needs of BRG members.

The purpose of the BRG is to give key stakeholders a voice into the program and receive information to take back to those they represent. It is important to the TEGI program that those who live and work in the regions are able to actively engage with the program, ensuring the program deliverables meet their needs.

The BRG presentations will be made available to participants.

The following provides an overview of the meeting's three sessions, the themes discussed, and the participants' collated comments.

Session 1 – What we want to achieve?

Session 1 gave participants the opportunity to understand the TEGI program objectives and what the BRG meetings are hoping to achieve. Participants were asked three guiding questions to support discussions:

- What do we want to achieve through this ongoing engagement?
- What will be the ongoing benefits to the attendees?
- What are the assumptions we are making or unexpected consequences?

Discussion theme	Participant responses
Benefits of attending BRG meetings	Participants want to use the BRG forum to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve their understanding of the purpose of the TEGI program—how it will impact individuals, organisations and communities • improve their understanding of the science involved.
Sharing experience and knowledge through communication	Participants noted the importance of the BRG facilitating communication and knowledge sharing. Participants saw the BRG as a mechanism to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve knowledge sharing • improve connections with relevant people • get access to a range of contacts involved with the program • open discussion between industry, government and community groups. • listen and learn from others, including governments, land holders, First Nations groups, and communities • support effective communication and provision of timely information to build confidence and community trust • avoid duplication of work • integrate data from a variety of sources • speak with the scientists undertaking the work, to build trust in the science • bridge the gap between science, the public and decision makers through improved and transparent science communication.
Indigenous engagement	Participants saw the BRG as a forum to improve engagement with First Nations groups. Engagement may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking opportunities to map the cultural matters across the basins – <i>outside scope of the TEGI program in Stage 1</i> • communication of the scientific outcomes to the community and what the ‘on-ground’ impacts may be.
Understanding the basins and their resource potential	Participants saw the BRG as an opportunity to improve their understanding of the basins and resource potential; including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basin geology—e.g. Galilee Basin • environmentally responsible sourcing of gas, groundwater, carbon capture and storage • water and groundwater quality and quantity.

Session 2 – Research priorities

Session 2 gave the participants an overview of the science themes being undertaken and the types of products likely to be delivered. Program scientists provided short presentations detailing the work being undertaken through TEGI Stage 1, including impact assessments and the collation of data for resources, water and the environment.

Participants were asked four guiding questions to support discussions on what their information needs were for each basin location:

- What are the fundamental research questions within the current research priorities?
- Who should be engaged?
- What other work has been done or is underway?
- Are there other research priorities we have not discussed?
- What are some of the attendee's concerns?

Discussion theme	Participant responses
Improved access to data	Participants indicated they wanted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved access to data for efficient approval and decision-making • an opportunity to gather baseline data to fill knowledge gaps in and inform decision-making • a central location for accessing trusted data • access to baseline data and post-disturbance data—i.e. trends over time.
Research themes	Participants were interested in understanding a diversity of research questions; including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water—allocation, aquifers, dams, quality, quantity, recharge, security • soil—the interplay between soil and water; flow-on effects to agriculture and tourism business – <i>agricultural and economic impact assessments are outside scope of the TEGI program</i> • resources—what is in the ground and is it prospective? • the interconnections between resources and the requirements (technical and regulatory) for their extraction—e.g. hydrogen storage • the connection between future agricultural/grazing areas and mining • having baseline surveys conducted to inform pre- and post-disturbance activities • confidence in a robust scientific process.
Impacts	Participants wanted to know how: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extractive resource activities may impact on sources of water—natural springs, groundwater and surface water—and how to protect aquifers • activities may impact on habitats and migratory species; and environmental health more broadly • extractive activities may impact on agricultural and tourism businesses.
Other priorities and concerns	Participants identified the following matters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • climate change • understanding hydraulic fracturing risk • improved understanding of hydrogen extraction technologies • carbon dioxide emission management • improved engagement with community groups and First Nations people • consideration for cultural landscapes, particularly with First Nations people • pest and invasive species management—biosecurity • providing confidence to community that science is impartial and unbiased • regional planning.
Who should be involved	Participants identified nine key groups who should be included as part of the BRG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nation and Traditional Owner groups • Industry bodies • Natural Resource Management groups • Community groups and local residents • Land holders • Local governments • State/Federal governments—including regulators • Tourism operators • State/region-based and non-government organisations—e.g. conservation groups.

Session 3 – Ways of working

Session 3 gave participants the opportunity to discuss how they would like to engage with the TEGI program and work together going forward. Participants were asked six guiding questions to support discussions:

- How frequently should we engage?
- How will we engage, in person, online or hybrid?
- How will we engage outside of meetings?
- How much time do you need with material to consult stakeholders?
- Which products are most useful?
- What resources or tools do we need to report back to those we represent?

Discussion theme	Participant responses
Frequency of engagement	<p>Participants expressed a range of opinions for frequency of engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most groups suggested meeting two to three times a year would be enough, a small group suggested once a year, another small group suggested four times a year. • Meeting more frequently—e.g. monthly—as we get close to the end of Stage 1 (December 2022) was proposed. • Meeting when a milestone is met, data pack or product is released was suggested, rather than a prescribed time.
Methods of engagement	<p>Participants expressed a range of preferences for how they wished to engage with the program; including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hybrid meetings—where virtual meetings are preferred, but also offering one to two face-to-face meetings over the year • meetings occurring between basin sub-groups for ‘deep dives’ with an annual larger group meeting • opportunities for engagement between First Nations and Traditional Owner specific groups.
Engagement between meetings	<p>Participants indicated a desire to have online or digital tools to engage with the program between meetings; including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YouTube videos • social media or a chat forum • linkages into existing network distribution lists and publications • dedicated sessions to explain the science fundamentals.

The Program committed to finding an approach that supported regular and meaningful ongoing engagement and communication with BRG members. The program will balance future meetings to ensure the BRG meet when the program has enough to present but also that BRG members are not overburdened. The program noted that future BRG meetings would occur before December 2022.