

Bushfire management

New England Renewable Energy Zone network infrastructure project

Environmental impact statement | Fact sheet | October 2026

The New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) network infrastructure project is a key part of NSW's clean energy future, connecting renewable energy projects to the electricity grid and delivering reliable power to homes and businesses across the state.

Overview

EnergyCo understands the prevention and management of bushfires is a critical issue for communities across the New England and Upper Hunter regions.

The environmental impact statement (EIS) assesses how the project could interact with bushfire risk during construction and operation, including impacts on emergency access, firefighting operations (aerial and on the ground), land management for bushfire prevention, evacuation routes and community safety. The assessment also identified measures to minimise and manage bushfire risks throughout the life of the project.

We consulted with NSW Rural Fire Service and firefighting stakeholders to develop the EIS and will keep working with them as the project progresses.





Managing potential impacts

The EIS identifies a range of measures to minimise and manage bushfire risks during construction and operation. Management plans will be prepared by the network operator before construction starts, including a Bush Fire Prevention Plan, Emergency Management Plans and measures at workforce accommodation camps.

The transmission infrastructure will be designed and maintained in accordance with Australian Standards and transmission network requirements, including vegetation management, regular inspections, ongoing maintenance and monitoring and fault protection systems.

Transmission lines would cross roads as overhead structures only and would not obstruct emergency vehicle access, evacuation traffic, road networks or firefighting operations.

Additional project access tracks and road upgrades may improve access for emergency response activities in some locations.

During construction, controls such as hot work procedures, limits on activities during extreme heat and on-site firefighting equipment will be implemented to prevent accidental fire risks.



What did the EIS studies find?



The project is not expected to increase bushfire risk to the community



Aerial firefighting capability at Lake Glenbawn will be maintained



Site-specific bushfire management procedures will be in place



Firefighting can continue safely

Engagement portal

EnergyCo has prepared an EIS for the New England REZ network infrastructure project which describes how the project will be built.

You can find out more about different project features and the construction program in the EIS by scanning the QR code or visiting EnergyCo's engagement portal at energyco.nsw.gov.au/nerez.



Scan the QR code to visit the engagement portal.

Did you know?

There are no recorded bushfires caused by 500 kV transmission lines in Australia, and existing 330 kV transmission lines across the Hunter and New England regions have operated for decades without igniting bushfires.





Existing easement with managed vegetation

Energy hubs and maintenance facilities

Energy hubs, the Nemingha maintenance facility and the Bayswater substation extension would incorporate Asset Protection Zones (space between the edge of the hub / facility and vegetation, preventing trees falling onto the site or ambient heat from bushfires getting too close) and site-specific bushfire management arrangements.

These measures are designed to reduce fuel loads around infrastructure. They help reduce the likelihood of bushfire affecting project infrastructure, provide safer access for emergency services, and support the ongoing safe operation of these facilities during bushfire conditions.

The network is being designed in line with NSW Rural Fire Service's 'Planning for Bush Fire Protection (PBP) 2026', available to view online at rfs.nsw.gov.au.

Fighting fires around transmission lines

NSW Rural Fire Service has established protocols for fighting fires around transmission lines, both from the ground and in the air.

When arriving at any incident, crews conduct a dynamic risk assessment and develop an appropriate strategy, considering all factors both natural and manmade. Resources, including aircraft, are then deployed in the most effective manner to combat that fire.

Fires near energy infrastructure may require a different approach because of potential electrical hazards, but this does not stop firefighters or pilots from responding. Every fire is different and crews adapt their tactics to suit the circumstances.

Aerial firefighting at Lake Glenbawn

The EIS found the transmission corridor will not prevent aerial firefighting operations at Lake Glenbawn. We understand how important protecting these operations is for communities in the Upper Hunter.

The transmission corridor crosses about 1 kilometre of the lake's upstream eastern area. North-south flight paths are unaffected, and east-west water-scooping remains feasible because there is ample space at the western end of the lake and adequate clearance over the transmission line when landing or taking off from the east.

A peer review of the EIS aviation impact assessment was completed by an independent aviation specialist which confirms our findings.

EnergyCo consulted NSW Rural Fire Service to develop the EIS and will keep working with them to minimise firefighting impacts as the project progresses.



Water-scooping aircraft operating

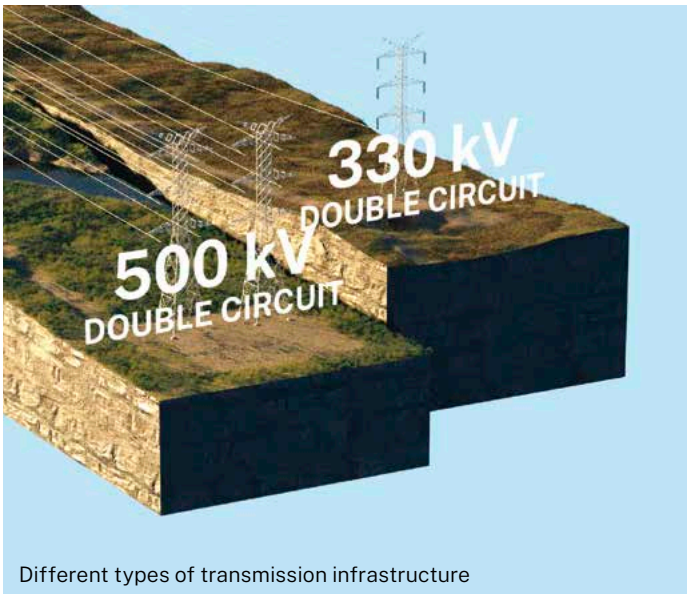
Read more

Visit EnergyCo's engagement portal at energyco.nsw.gov.au/nerez to learn more about the project and bushfire management:

- Section 17: Hazards and risks
- Technical Report 11 – Aviation impact assessment
- Technical Report 12 – Bushfire impact assessment



Lake Glenbawn



Different types of transmission infrastructure



Artist's impression of a finished tower

Learn more and have your say on the EIS

The environmental impact statement (EIS) is on public exhibition in October and November 2026. You can have your say on the EIS by making a submission to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure on the NSW Planning Portal.

To view the EIS and make your submission, visit planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects and search application number 'SSI-74175972'.



Scan the QR code to visit the NSW Planning Portal.



Contact us

EnergyCo wants to hear what you think about our plans. If you have questions or want to give feedback, please get in touch with our team.



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Scan the QR code for more information.

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