

Project overview

New England Renewable Energy Zone network infrastructure project

October 2026



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of Australia, and the oldest continuing culture in human history.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and to all Aboriginal people. We acknowledge the work that Aboriginal people have done to maintain land and water.

We will show respect through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to engage with the Aboriginal community to ensure local priorities and values inform and influence decision making.

We reflect on the continuing impact of government policies and practices and recognise our responsibility to work together, with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities towards improved economic, social and cultural outcomes.

Published by Energy Corporation of New South Wales (EnergyCo). EnergyCo is the NSW Government statutory authority responsible for delivering the New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) network infrastructure project as a critical part of transitioning to a cleaner future under the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. You can read more about EnergyCo on our website: energyco.nsw.gov.au

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Cover image: Existing 330 kV double circuit transmission line in the New England.

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Strategic context

NSW is upgrading its electricity network as ageing coal-fired power stations retire, with 3 of the 4 remaining generators expected to close by 2034.

At the same time, electricity demand is forecast to grow due to population and economic growth, electrification and large new loads such as data centres. A renewable energy system, supported by transmission, storage and gas, is the lowest-cost

pathway to maintain reliable electricity supply. Renewable energy zones (REZs) are part of NSW's plan to enable new renewable generation and storage to efficiently connect to the grid. New England is one of 5 REZs declared across NSW.

Renewable energy zones across NSW



What is a REZ?

Renewable energy zones (REZs) are geographic areas that group renewable energy generation such as wind and solar, storage like batteries and pumped hydro as well as high-voltage transmission lines, to deliver energy to the homes, businesses and industries that need it.

The New England region was selected as a REZ because it has some of the state's best renewable energy resources, strong connections to the NSW electricity grid, and the capacity to deliver large amounts of energy for NSW while supporting regional economic growth.



Why is the REZ needed?

REZs will help deliver lower wholesale electricity costs and place downward pressure on customer bills through increased competition.

The benefits of this investment extend beyond energy. REZs are creating new opportunities for regional NSW through jobs, skills development, community investment and increased economic activity.

For landholders who host infrastructure, this can provide a stable and diversified source of income that supports the long-term resilience of farming businesses.

The New England REZ was declared in December 2021 under the *Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020* and has an intended network capacity of 8GW.

Network capacity is the amount of electricity that can be safely carried through the grid at a given time.

As NSW's largest REZ, it is a critical part of the state's clean energy transition.

The New England REZ will be capable of delivering renewable energy generation and storage at the scale and pace needed to maintain energy reliability for our homes and businesses.



Benefits for NSW and the region

The New England REZ is expected to:



Attract more than \$24 billion in private investment by 2035



Support thousands of operational and direct jobs required during peak construction supporting the delivery of renewable energy, storage and transmission infrastructure across the New England REZ



Provide millions in long-term community investment funding through the Community and Employment Benefit Program.

EnergyCo's role

The Energy Corporation of New South Wales (EnergyCo) leads the delivery of renewable energy zones (REZs) to ensure long-term energy security for NSW.

These zones will harness the state's abundant solar and wind resources to keep the lights on and deliver clean, affordable and reliable electricity to everyone in the state.

The REZ network infrastructure project

The New England REZ network infrastructure project involves the construction and operation of new high voltage electricity transmission infrastructure which will connect energy generation and storage projects within the New England REZ to the existing electricity network.

It is critical for ensuring energy security in NSW by capturing and transferring power from solar, wind and storage projects located in the New England REZ to the national electricity market.

The project will:



Enable the delivery of the New England REZ, unlocking unprecedented economic growth for NSW regions



Connect renewable energy generation and storage projects in the REZ to the national electricity grid



Deliver 6 GW of new network capacity by the mid-2030s



Support reliable electricity supply and long-term system strength



Avoid up to 17 million tonnes of emissions per year.



Aberdeen Highland Games



Solar project in the New England REZ

Understanding capacity

Network (or transfer) capacity is the maximum amount of electricity that the network can safely transfer from renewable energy projects to the grid at one time. The New England REZ has an intended network capacity of up to 8 GW under NSW legislation.

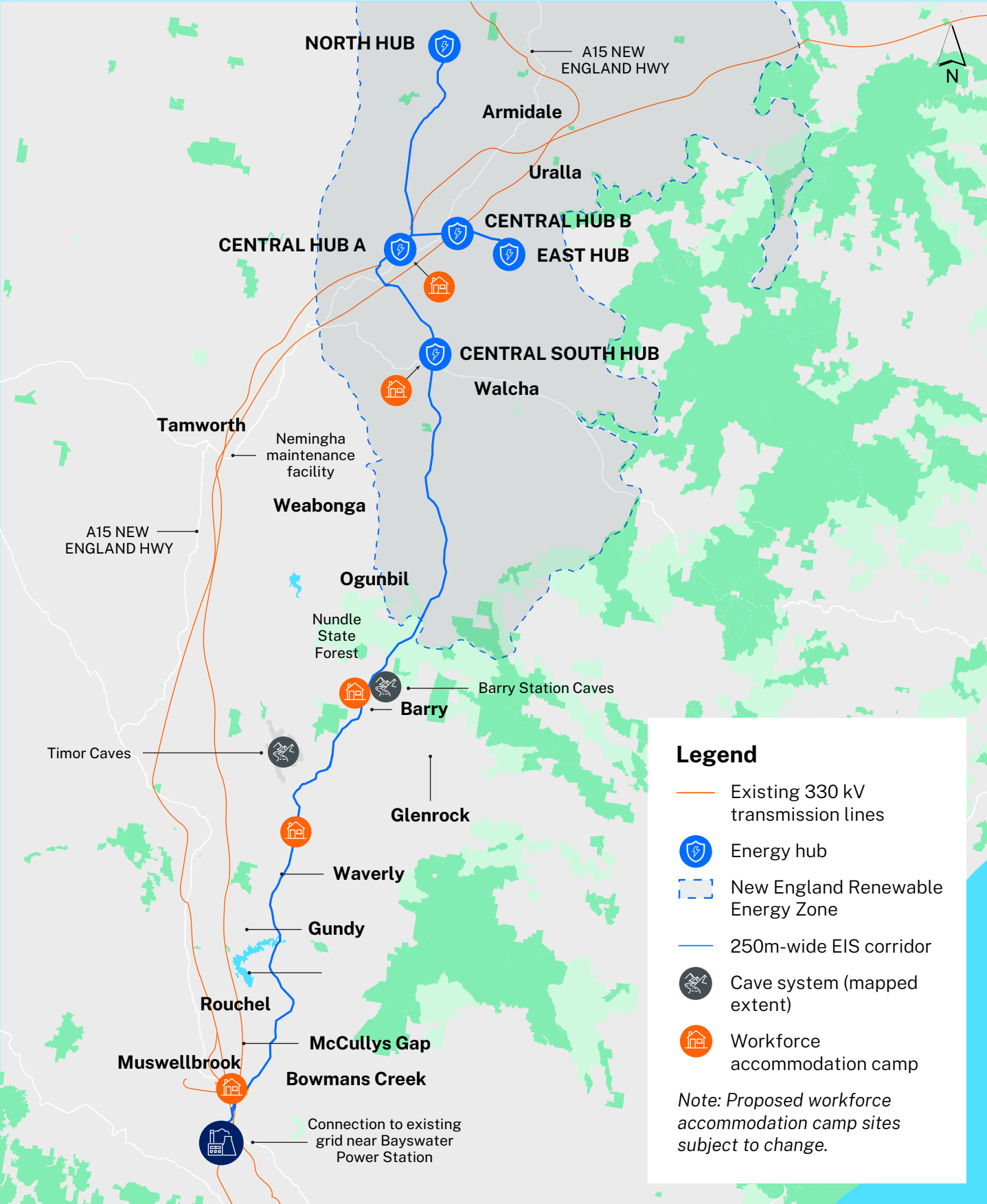
EnergyCo is planning to unlock an initial 6 GW through the REZ network infrastructure project by 2034. A further 2 GW could be unlocked in future to support energy needs –bringing the total network capacity to 8 GW –but this would require separate planning approval and community consultation.

Generation capacity is the maximum amount of electricity that all renewable energy projects can generate at one time when operating at full capacity.

The REZ could support around 13-15 GW of generation (and storage capacity) to fill the initial 6 GW of network transfer capacity (from the transmission lines). We need more generation capacity than network transfer capacity because not all generators will be operating at their maximum capacity all the time.



New England REZ network infrastructure project



The map shown represents the project features at the time of the environmental impact statement public exhibition (October 2026).



Existing 330kV transmission line near Timbumburi

The New England REZ network infrastructure project is a national energy priority

The project is formally established in NSW law through the *Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020*.

This is the enabling legislation for the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, our pathway to powering our state with affordable, clean and reliable energy for everyone.

It is expected and planned for in national electricity system modelling. The 2026 Integrated System Plan – Australia's national electricity planning blueprint – identifies the project as an anticipated development, meaning it is expected to be needed to meet future system requirements.

It is a foundational part of the least cost pathway for Australia's future energy system. In the 2025 Infrastructure Investment Objectives report published by AusEnergy Services Limited, the project forms part of the development pathway – the sequence of generation, storage and transmission investments that delivers the lowest cost, most reliable energy system over coming decades.

In other words, the development pathway for our energy system depends on the New England REZ network infrastructure project to unlock large-scale renewable generation and maintain system reliability as coal retires.

Key features of the project



New high voltage transmission infrastructure, including 330 and 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission lines, which will connect the REZ to the existing grid



Five energy hubs (a type of substation) to connect future solar, wind and storage projects within the REZ to the new 500 kV network infrastructure



An extension to the existing Bayswater Power Station substation



A maintenance facility near Tamworth to support operational requirements of the project



New or upgraded access tracks and public roads



New or upgraded electricity or utility infrastructure



Other construction related work and facilities, such as laydown facilities and workforce accommodation camps.

Read more

EnergyCo has prepared an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the New England REZ network infrastructure project which describes how the project would be built.

Visit EnergyCo's website at energyco.nsw.gov.au/ne to learn more about the project.

Developing the project design

EnergyCo started planning the transmission corridor for the REZ network infrastructure project in 2022. We developed the proposed design by bringing together a wide range of information, including technical and environmental studies and feedback from landholders, communities and stakeholders.

The project reflects years of planning, environmental assessment and community engagement and will continue to be refined as we progress through detailed design and approvals. Key refinements to date include:



Deferring the south hub in January 2024 to simplify the network layout and reduce impacts



Relocating the north hub in May 2025 to reduce impacts on private landholders and the Boorolong community



Moving the corridor between Bayswater Power Station and central hub A in October 2025 to provide safer and more efficient construction, better bushfire management and reduced construction, environmental and traffic impacts



Refining the corridor in multiple locations between October 2025 and April 2026 to avoid sensitive environmental areas and minimise visual impacts at dwellings



Deferring the northern connection between north hub and a proposed switching station near Boorolong in August 2026.



Example of tower construction in progress

Who builds and operates the network?

EnergyCo is procuring a network operator to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the new network infrastructure.

The network operator will have a concession period of 35 years. This is the length of time the network operator is contracted to manage and operate the infrastructure before it is handed back to the government.

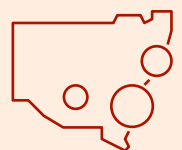
EnergyCo began a tender process for the network operator in 2025, with 3 consortia (groups of companies) currently preparing tender submissions. We expect to identify the preferred network operator in late 2027, with construction to begin in 2028.



Example of a switching station being built

Supporting local jobs and businesses

Construction of the REZ network infrastructure project will support thousands of operational and direct jobs at peak across the New England and Upper Hunter regions, generating up to \$882 million each year in annual economic activity during construction.





Wind farm in the Central-West Orana REZ

Connecting solar, wind and storage projects to the grid

Private developers will plan, finance, build, own and operate renewable energy generation and storage projects within the REZ, including wind farms, solar farms, pumped hydro and battery storage systems.

EnergyCo is working with developers of these projects to plan how they will connect to the grid and make sure the network is fit for purpose.

When will we know which projects will be built?

There are several key steps that generation and energy storage projects need to complete before construction can start.

The process to allocate access rights to projects can start once an access scheme is declared. For the New England REZ, we expect an access scheme to be declared in late 2026. The main access right allocation process is expected to begin in 2027 and be completed in 2028.

Importantly, developers also require planning approval, an offer to connect and an investment decision before they can fully commit to their projects and commence delivery. Each project will have its own timelines for these steps, informed by when they can connect to the network.

The investment decision is the point at which the developer formally commits to building the project. It is usually the final milestone before construction, made once the developer is confident about the

project's costs, approvals, expected revenue and transmission connection.

Only once these steps are in place will developers proceed to construction.

Generation and storage projects can be delivered faster than the network infrastructure project.

This means they can begin construction later, timing their completion dates so they come online shortly after the transmission network is finished.

What do developers need before they can build?



Agreement with landholders:

A voluntary process where developers agree on access terms with landholders to build their projects.



Access rights: Allocated under the New England REZ access scheme.



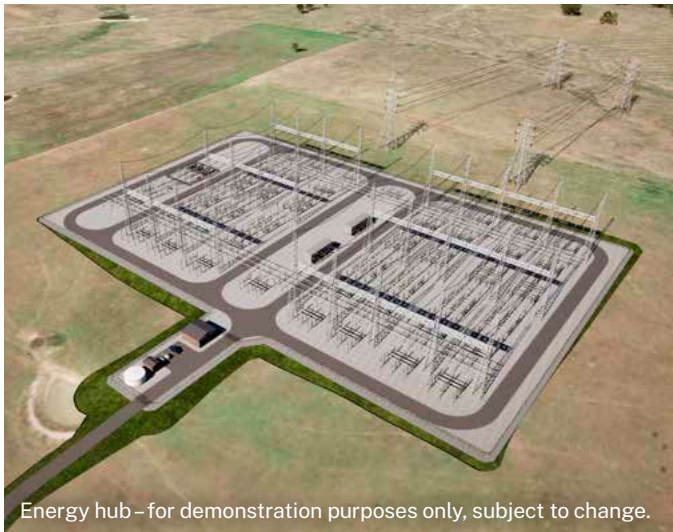
Planning approval: Environmental assessment and development consent.



An offer to connect: From the network operator.



An investment decision: Final commitment to build.



Energy hub – for demonstration purposes only, subject to change.

About the New England REZ access scheme

An access scheme sets out the terms and conditions for developers of generation and storage projects to connect to and use specified network infrastructure. Where an access scheme is in place, generation and storage projects connecting to the grid require an access right or consent to connect. This ensures EnergyCo is in control of which projects connect to the network in the REZ.

Access schemes ensure the network operates in the best interest of consumers and delivers benefits to host communities. They can give investors more certainty by controlling how many projects connect and the type (such as wind, solar or storage). Successful projects pay an annual access fee that includes funds for employment and community benefits in the region.

EnergyCo invited feedback on a draft access scheme in July 2026. Thank you to everyone who took time to review the proposal and provide comments. The final access scheme for the New England REZ is expected to be declared in late 2026, subject to approval by the Minister for Energy.

Read more at energyco.nsw.gov.au by searching 'New England REZ access scheme'.



Energy hub connections

Renewable energy projects in the REZ will connect to the electricity network either through EnergyCo's new REZ infrastructure or Transgrid's existing network.

For projects connecting to the new REZ infrastructure, connections will be established through one of the 5 new energy hubs (a kind of substation).

Each project will need its own transmission line connection between the energy hub and the project site. These are known as 'connection assets' and will typically operate at 330 kV.

EnergyCo will work with developers to coordinate connection assets.

Importantly, because we do not yet know which generation and storage projects are connecting to the network, these connection assets are at an earlier stage of development.

They are not identified or assessed in the EIS for the REZ network infrastructure project.

Connection assets will be subject to separate planning approvals and community consultation which may commence from 2027.



Energy hub – for demonstration purposes only, subject to change.



Supporting delivery of the REZ

EnergyCo is working with communities and stakeholders to make sure the REZ is delivered in a coordinated way and delivers lasting benefits for our regions.

EnergyCo is working with government agencies, councils and industry to identify and address the challenges associated with REZ delivery, while supporting long-term regional growth and community benefits.

This work includes:



Upgrading roads and improving logistics networks to support the transport of renewable energy and transmission infrastructure



Identifying improvements to regional infrastructure, including water, wastewater and waste management services



Coordinating workforce accommodation solutions to support the temporary and permanent workforce needed to deliver the REZ.

The NSW Government is taking a whole-of-government approach to managing cumulative impacts.

We recognise the impacts of REZ development extend beyond transmission infrastructure to areas such as roads, water, waste, housing, jobs and skills. Responsibility for regional infrastructure and services sits across multiple NSW Government portfolios.

The NSW Government's Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap Steering Committee, chaired by the Premier's Department, is coordinating whole-of-government action on cumulative impacts. The government's intended model is collaborative and works across government, with different agencies retaining responsibility for infrastructure and services within their respective portfolios and statutory requirements.

At a local level, EnergyCo has established quarterly New England REZ Regional Steering Committee meetings with councils and agencies to ensure local issues are being escalated and addressed by the relevant authorities.

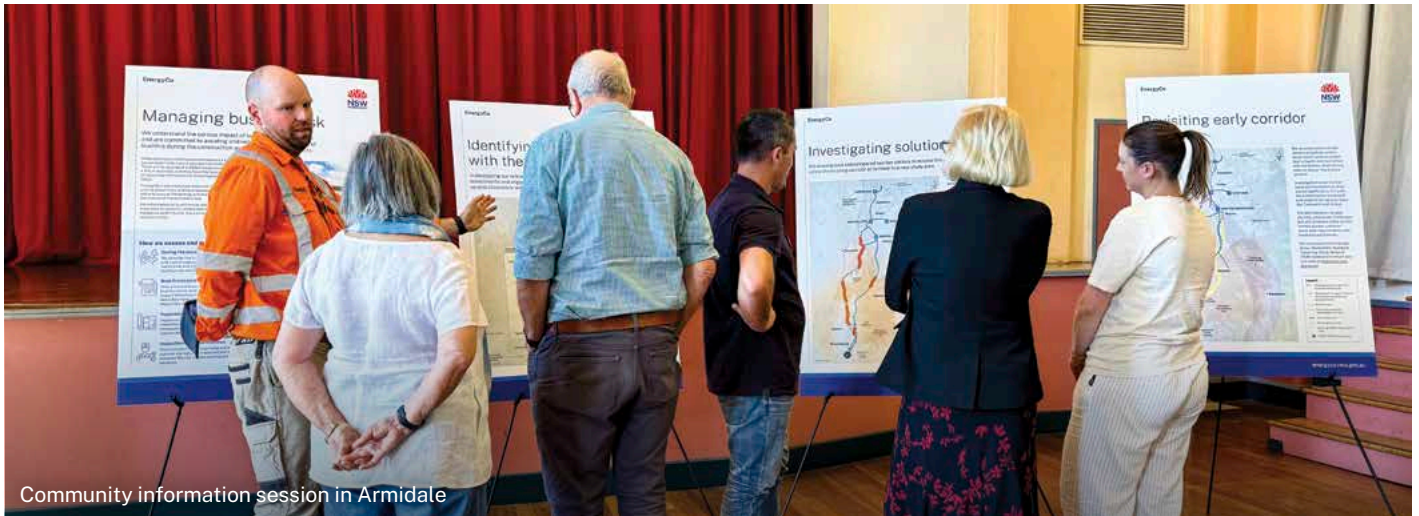
EnergyCo has also undertaken regional studies on water and wastewater, waste and circular economy, training and skills, workforce accommodation and supply chains to provide a common reference point for government and industry to address demand for services and infrastructure cross the region. Since releasing the studies in December 2025, there have been more than 150 meetings with councils, developers and agencies to coordinate responses.

Cumulative impacts are also managed proactively through planning conditions of consent for renewable energy and transmission projects. NSW has dedicated Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) Guidelines for State Significant Projects.

These guidelines require proponents to:

- identify cumulative impacts at both strategic and project levels
- assess interactions between multiple projects
- evaluate combined environmental, social and economic effects
- propose mitigation measures.

These guidelines are used by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) when assessing major renewable energy and transmission projects.



Community information session in Armidale

Working with the community

We recognise a project of this scale will have an impact on local communities.

This is why we have engaged with landholders, communities and stakeholders along the way to understand local priorities and help shape the project.

Since we released our preliminary corridor in 2023, we have engaged with hundreds of people who live and work near our project area.

We have listened to better understand your concerns and have incorporated your feedback and suggestions into our design where possible.

Supporting landholders

Eligible landholders hosting transmission infrastructure will receive \$200,000 per kilometre of transmission line, paid over 20 years.

These payments are on top of the compensation entitlements under the *NSW Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991*, which ensures landholders are compensated fairly for the acquisition of land and easements.

We have a wide range of resources available to support landholders on our website at energyco.nsw.gov.au/info-for-landholders.



What you told us

Your feedback during our planning for the New England REZ network infrastructure project focused on:

- impacts on private land and farming operations
- potential impacts on native vegetation, threatened species, koala habitat, waterways and environmentally sensitive areas such as Timor Caves
- concerns about how transmission lines, towers and renewable energy infrastructure may change the rural landscape
- cumulative impacts, or the combined effects of multiple renewable energy, transmission and associated infrastructure projects occurring across the region
- road and traffic impacts, including increased heavy vehicle movements during construction and the resulting impacts on local roads, safety and maintenance costs
- potential pressure on local housing availability and affordability from the construction workforce
- water availability, wastewater management and the capacity of local services to support growth associated with REZ development
- local employment, training, procurement and community benefit outcomes from REZ investment.

Feedback from landholders, communities, councils and other stakeholders has been used to refine the project design, reduce impacts where possible and inform planning for regional issues such as roads, housing, water and workforce needs.

Community and Employment Benefit Program

EnergyCo's Community and Employment Benefit Program will invest in regional communities hosting new energy infrastructure by funding community initiatives, public infrastructure, First Nations projects, employment and training programs.

Funding will largely come from renewable energy projects through the access fees they pay to connect to the network. The program will continue for many years after the REZs are delivered.

Funding is delivered through grants, partnerships and community initiatives. This approach has already been used in the Central-West Orana REZ, where 75 grants worth \$71.9 million have been awarded to date.

We accelerated delivery of the program for the New England REZ so communities access benefits before construction starts. An initial \$60 million was committed by the Minister for Energy in May 2026, with further funding allocations to come.

Extensive consultation has been undertaken to inform the design and delivery of the New England REZ program (including a webinar, community survey, 10 community information sessions and briefings with 9 councils) to ensure it addresses key priorities that matter to local communities. The program design will be completed in late 2026.

Thank you to everyone who took time to provide feedback and attend our sessions. Your input is valuable in shaping the program.



Community information session in Uralla



Community information session in Uralla

Snapshot:

\$60

million in funding committed to New England with more to come

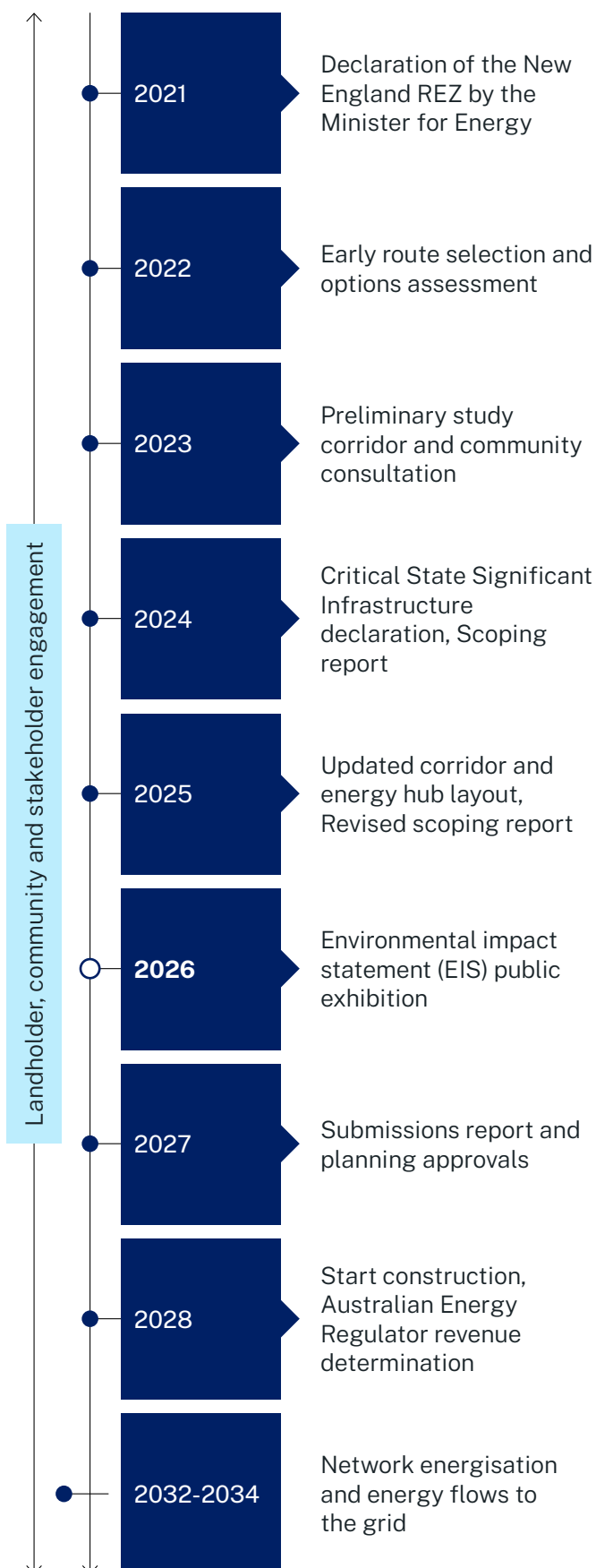
200+

people have had their say

\$71.9

million in grants awarded on the Central-West Orana REZ

Project development timeline



How to make a submission on the EIS

You can provide feedback to DPHI on the New England Renewable Energy Zone network infrastructure project during the exhibition period. DPHI requires submissions to be made online using the NSW Planning Portal. If you need help accessing the portal online, please get in touch with our team or visit an information session.

Have your say online

You can make an online submission during October and November. To have your say:

- **Visit:** the NSW Planning Portal at planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/have-your-say
- **Search:** 'New England Renewable Energy Zone' (SSI -74175972)
- **Click:** 'Make a submission'

Before making your submission, please read DPHI's Privacy Statement at planning.nsw.gov.au/privacy or phone 1300 305 695 for a copy. DPHI will publish your submission on its website in accordance with their Privacy Statement.

Contact us

Our team is available to help:

 nerez@energyco.nsw.gov.au

 1800 061 114 (toll free)

 energyco.nsw.gov.au/nerez



Scan the QR code for more information.

If you need help understanding this information, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450** and ask them to call us on **1800 061 114**.



Tamworth



Thermal drone survey underway



EnergyCo and the Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation (CPHR) Group discussing remote survey methods



Nundle State Forest



Thermal drone surveys

