

Site investigation work

Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone

February 2023

EnergyCo is delivering the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) to provide a clean, affordable and reliable power supply for energy consumers across NSW. The REZ will initially unlock at least three gigawatts of new generation capacity from solar, wind and storage projects within the next decade.

What are we doing?

EnergyCo is carrying out field investigations in a number of locations throughout Mid-Western, Warrumbungle Shire, Dubbo and Upper Hunter local government areas.

Between **February and June 2023**, field investigations will take place throughout the REZ transmission project study corridor.

Ecological surveys

Ecological summer surveys will be carried out from February. The surveys involve identifying existing animal and plant species in the area and studying their habitat. The type of survey can vary but usually includes observations, cataloguing and gathering of samples. This work usually involves between two and four ecologists.

In some cases, and pending approval from landowners, ecologists can set up wildlife cameras to monitor when fauna are most active as well as small box traps to help collect samples. Box traps are usually set up in native vegetation or attached to trees for a period of 1-2 weeks and checked daily.

Aboriginal heritage surveys

This work is being carried out in two parts. The first part includes heritage specialists walking over land and documenting observations. The second part involves carrying out test excavations and archaeological excavations at a small number of properties. The work will be carried out by qualified heritage specialists including archaeologists and Aboriginal participants to identify and assess any items of potential heritage significance. Where required, excavation will be done by hand using a shovel and trowel with soil searched for cultural heritage items before being restored.

Heritage surveys can be carried out by between two and nine specialists.

Noise monitoring

This work involves using specialised monitoring equipment to measure existing background levels of noise. Monitoring data will help to inform the expected future impacts from the construction and operation of the project.

Noise monitoring will be carried out by a small team of environmental specialists. In some cases, and pending approval from landowners, monitoring equipment may be left unattended while data is collected over a given period of time.

Visual assessments

This work involves taking photos to identify and measure existing features of the land. Visual assessments will be carried out by small teams of surveyors and usually take up to two days to complete at each location. Visual assessments cause minimal disruption as they only involve handheld, tripod or vehicle mounted devices.

Geotechnical investigations

Geotechnical investigations will continue over the coming months in a small number of sites outside the study corridor including near Dunedoo, Wuuluman and Lake Burrendong. These locations include local roads, ancillary sites and a small number of locations within the proposed southern extension of the transmission network. This work involves using a small drill rig to drill a hole about 10-15cm in diameter to take soil and rock samples. The work is completed by about three people for up to two days in each location. Once completed, the hole will be backfilled and the surface restored.

Geotechnical investigations are often carried out in council road reserve or through agreement on private property. This work provides the project team an understanding of ground conditions to inform design considerations and environmental approvals.

How will the work affect you?

Work will be carried out between 7am and 5pm, Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays.

Some out of hours work will be required for seasonal fauna surveys and this will be discussed directly with relevant landowners.

In some cases, survey work may need to be carried out multiple times on one property for the duration of the survey period.

We'll work directly with landowners to understand expectations and requirements in carrying out work on private property.

More information about the process for land access agreements for private landowners is explained in our [field investigations fact sheet](#) at energyco.nsw.gov.au/cwo.

Why is this happening?

This work will help us better understand local land uses and allow us to confirm environmental conditions, local ecology and understand engineering constraints as part of investigations to inform the design and an Environmental Impact Statement for the Central-West Orana REZ transmission project, which is expected to be lodged with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment and publicly exhibited in quarter 3 2023.

Contact us

✉ cwo@energyco.nsw.gov.au

📞 1800 032 101 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

🌐 energyco.nsw.gov.au/cwo

🗣️ 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 032 101.



Work area map

Field investigation work area

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