

Heritage

Central-West Orana REZ transmission project

September 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 Central-West Orana REZ transmission project will involve the construction of new transmission lines, energy hubs, switching stations and related infrastructure. The new REZ network infrastructure will enable renewable energy from solar, wind and storage projects to be distributed to energy consumers across the State via the existing NSW transmission network.



Aerial view of Lake Burrendong.

Overview

EnergyCo acknowledges the diverse history of the Central-West Orana region and is committed to mitigating potential impacts to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage from the REZ transmission project.

Assessments of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage have been carried out to inform the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the REZ transmission project. The assessments identify culturally significant areas, places and artefacts within the project study area and mitigation measures to avoid, minimise and manage potential impacts.

Aboriginal heritage consultation snapshot



Consultation with 15 Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), key Aboriginal community members and knowledge holders.



12 weeks of field surveys and test excavations with RAPs.



Focus group meetings to discuss the assessment method and Aboriginal heritage findings.

EnergyCo has prepared an EIS for the Central-West Orana REZ transmission project. For more information on the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage assessments for the project, please view **Chapters 11: Aboriginal heritage** and **Chapter 12: Non-Aboriginal heritage** of the EIS via EnergyCo's website at energyco.nsw.gov.au/cwo.

Aboriginal heritage assessment

The Central-West Orana REZ transmission project is located in an area primarily associated with Wiradjuri people and partially including the southern border of the Gomeri nation.

The Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment for the project's EIS involved a desktop assessment followed by comprehensive field surveys and test excavations carried out by archaeologists and 15 RAPs.

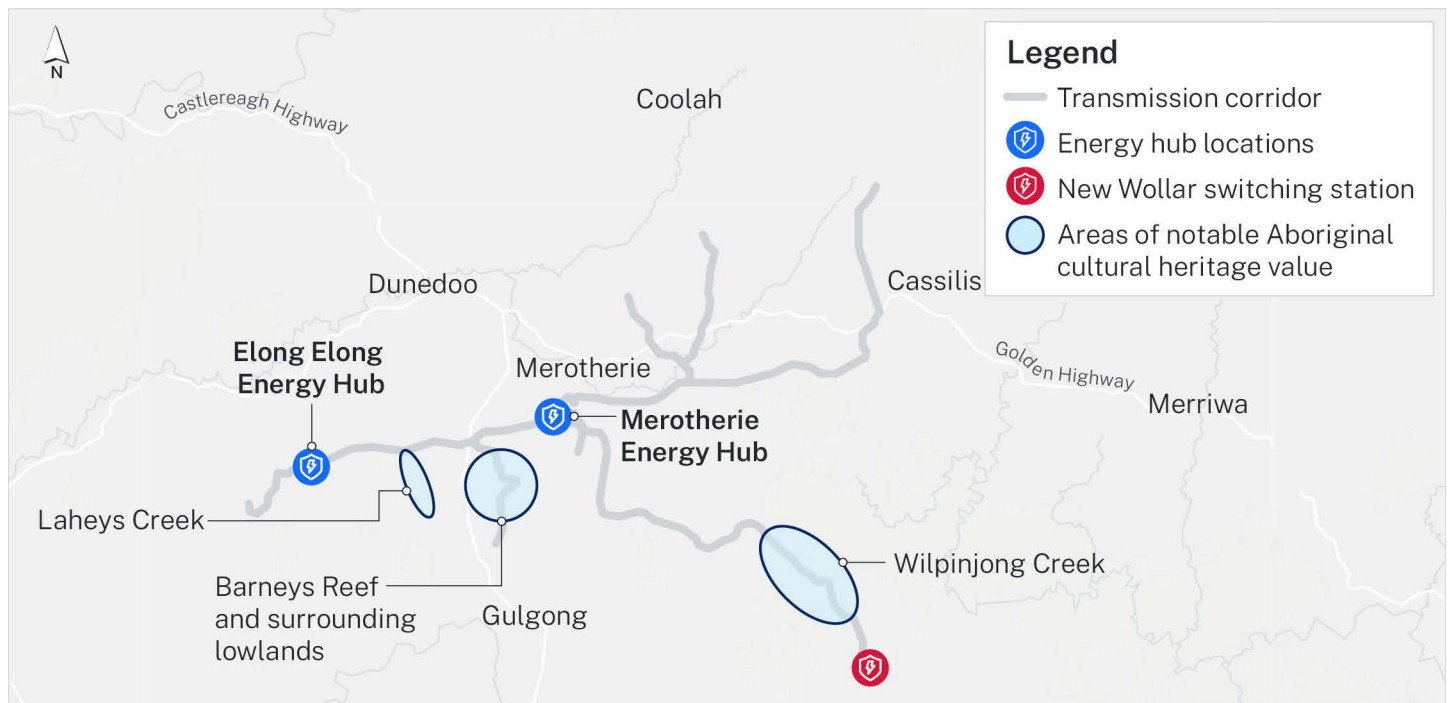
The assessment identified a number of notable areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage value within the project area which are pictured on the map below and include:

- the banks of Laheys Creek
- the boundary between Barneys Reef and the surrounding lowlands near Tallawang
- a suite of grinding grooves on discrete sandstone dominated hills in the northwest of Merotherie energy hub
- diverse sites of cultural heritage value along Wilpinjong Creek.

In addition to these sites, zones with archaeological potential were identified including all land in the construction area within 150 metres of 13 watercourses classified as being a second to fourth order stream (using the Strahler stream order classification system). These zones are expected to have sub-surface archaeological potential for higher densities of stone artefacts and/or other areas of past foci to be present.



Indicative areas of notable Aboriginal cultural heritage value



Managing impacts to Aboriginal heritage sites

EnergyCo has avoided impacts to some Aboriginal heritage sites identified in desktop assessments and field surveys through the refinement of the construction area and continued development of the project design.

We will continue to refine the exact location of the transmission line towers and other infrastructure during the detailed design process to avoid impacts to Aboriginal sites and places that may potentially be impacted from the construction and operation of the project, where possible.

As part of ongoing work to minimise impacts to Aboriginal heritage, EnergyCo is investigating measures to avoid sites identified as high and moderate cultural significance, particularly around Merotherie energy hub and workforce accommodation site, and sites where culturally modified trees and cultural deposits are located.

Non-Aboriginal heritage assessment

Items and sites of non-Aboriginal heritage significance have been identified in the project area dating back to the first European expedition into the NSW Central Tablelands in 1813.



Based on a review of historical aerial mapping, previous heritage studies and field surveys, 24 unlisted heritage items and two locally listed heritage sites, Wandoona Homestead and Goulburn River National Park, were identified within and in close proximity to the construction area. The unlisted heritage items have been identified as mainly potential archaeological sites and homesteads of local heritage significance.



Indirect impacts would occur at three unlisted heritage sites and two locally listed heritage sites due to visual impacts from the transmission infrastructure and/or potential vibration impacts from earthworks during construction. Potential indirect impacts to these items has been assessed as neutral/slight.

Impacts to Non-Aboriginal heritage from the project have not been assessed as being identified as significant enough to diminish cultural significance in the region.

Mitigation measures

Prior to construction, an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan will be developed by a heritage specialist in consultation with the RAPs to manage and avoid impacts to Aboriginal heritage within the construction area, where possible.

A heritage-interpretation strategy will also be developed by a heritage specialist to identify the interpretive values of the area and to provide direction for potential interpretive opportunities for the project.

Mitigation measures

A range of mitigation measures would be implemented to minimise and manage potential impacts on listed local heritage sites and unlisted heritage items within the construction area. Direct impacts to heritage sites would be avoided and minimised through detailed design and adjustments to the construction methodology where possible. If a heritage site cannot be avoided, cultural heritage management actions may be implemented, including:

- non-intrusive geophysical investigations
- archaeological test excavations
- salvage or archival recording.



About EnergyCo

The Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) is a statutory authority responsible for leading the delivery of Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) under the NSW Government's Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. For more information, visit our website at energyco.nsw.gov.au/about-energyco.

Contact Us

For more information about the Central-West Orana REZ project, you can visit our website or contact the project team:

✉ cwo@energyco.nsw.gov.au

📞 1800 032 101

🌐 energyco.nsw.gov.au

🗣️ 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**.

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. You can find more information on our website by scanning the QR code or by visiting energyco.nsw.gov.au.

