

Social impacts

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.

Overview

The Social Impact Assessment (SIA) carried out for the Central-West Orana REZ transmission project identifies potential social impacts that may occur as a result of the construction and operation of the project and opportunities to mitigate and manage these impacts.

The SIA considers potential social impacts to communities across the project study area and the wider REZ, where relevant.

For more information on social impacts and identified mitigation strategies for the Central-West Orana REZ transmission project, please view **Chapter 13: Social** of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) via EnergyCo's website at energyco.nsw.gov.au/cwo.



EnergyCo Place Managers near Wellington.

Regional snapshot

-  **20,000 km²**
-  **152,418** population
-  **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders: 12%** within the regional social locality*
-  **<2.5%** unemployment rate

Key employment industries:

-  **Agriculture, forestry and fishing**
8.1% of employment
-  **Mining**
15.9% of employment


*The area that will experience indirect benefits or effects of the project during construction and/or operation.

Assessment process

The SIA was carried out in line with the Department of Planning and Environment’s State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines (2022) which outline the environmental assessment process for the REZ transmission project.



Phase 1	<p>Application of the State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of potential social impacts and the assessment level required to investigate these impacts.
Phase 2	<p>Detailed assessment of potential social impacts We are here</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and stakeholder engagement carried out to inform the assessment. • Assessment of potential social impacts, including the scale and stage of the project that the identified impacts may occur. • Identification of mitigation measures to minimise and manage impacts.
Phase 3	<p>Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines mitigation plans and strategies, and methods of evaluation. • Tracks implementation of the SIMP. <p>Community feedback received during the public exhibition of the EIS will be used to inform the development of the SIMP. The SIMP will be implemented during construction and operation of the REZ transmission project.</p>

Social impacts have been identified and considered across eight key areas with mitigation measures proposed to avoid, minimise and manage impacts in the community.

 Community	 Accessibility
 Way of life	 Health and wellbeing
 Livelihood	 Culture
 Surroundings	 Decision-making

Community engagement

Engagement for the SIA was completed between October 2022 and May 2023 and included:

	44 face-to-face and phone interviews.
	104 responses to an online survey distributed to landowners in the 1 km study corridor.

Key themes raised during the SIA engagement included:

- 1** Impacts to services and social infrastructure during construction.
- 2** Effects on community cohesion, sense of community and property values.
- 3** Concerns about proximity to transmission infrastructure.
- 4** Changes to the landscape.
- 5** Agricultural impacts and constraints.
- 6** Engagement with First Nations stakeholders and communities.
- 7** Economic opportunities, including local employment and supplier opportunities for local businesses.
- 8** Bushfire and flood risks during operation.

Listening to community feedback

Feedback from the community and stakeholders has been used to inform all phases of project development and where possible, the project has been designed to avoid or minimise potential impacts.

EnergyCo acknowledges that changes to the Central-West Orana region resulting from the development of the REZ transmission project and multiple generation projects will impact communities in varying ways and change over time.

Community and stakeholder engagement is ongoing and will continue throughout the next stages of development of the REZ transmission project and the wider REZ as a whole.

Mitigating social impacts

The following mitigation plans and strategies are proposed to avoid or minimise potential social impacts in the Central-West Orana REZ.

These strategies would be developed by the Network Operator who will design, build, operate and maintain the REZ network.



Landowner engagement strategy

Each landowner who has been engaged to host infrastructure has been assigned a dedicated Land Acquisition Manager and Place Manager to ensure they are supported through the development, construction and operation of the project.



Property management plan

A baseline property report will be prepared in consultation with each host landowner. The report will outline:

- measures to manage impacts to the property as a result of construction activities for the project
- construction working hours on the property
- biosecurity requirements
- land access agreement(s).



Workforce management plan

The REZ transmission project workforce management plan will outline the behavioural requirements for project workers and will include:

- a code of conduct with a zero tolerance policy for anti-social behaviour
- requirements for local context and cultural awareness training
- a workforce health and safety program to support positive engagement with the local community.



Industry and Aboriginal Participation Plan

The local workforce participation strategy will address local skills gaps and training requirements and identify employment opportunities with a particular focus on increasing First Nations participation.

The industry participation plan will identify opportunities for the supply of local goods and services and help support local businesses prepare for increased demand during construction of the project.



Construction communication and engagement strategy (CCES)

The CCES will outline how the community and stakeholders, in particular residents nearby to the project area, will be engaged and informed during construction of the project.

The CCES will outline the approach the Network Operator will take to manage responses to enquiries and complaints.



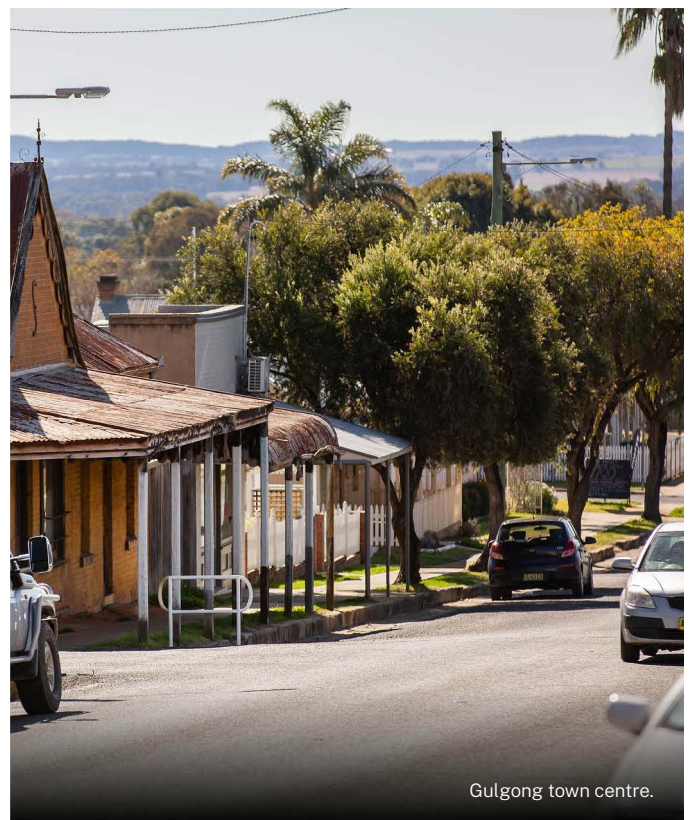
Community wellbeing strategy

The community wellbeing strategy will identify how information and support services, including mental health counselling, will be provided to residents nearby to the construction area.



First Nations working group

The First Nations working group will continue to be held as a forum to identify opportunities to increase First Nations participation for the project, including employment and training and skills initiatives, and supplier opportunities for First Nations businesses.



Gulgong town centre.

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:

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🗣️ 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.

