

Site investigation work

New England Renewable Energy Zone

April 2024

The New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) is a critical energy project for NSW that will provide clean and reliable electricity to consumers for generations to come. The first two stages of the project are scheduled for completion by 2033 to ensure energy security across NSW as our coal-fired power stations retire.

What are we doing?

EnergyCo is carrying out field investigations to help refine the New England REZ transmission project study corridor and inform the environmental studies needed to assess the project. This work includes ecological surveys, heritage surveys, visual assessments and geotechnical investigations that will take place throughout 2024.

Investigations will be carried out within the revised study corridor, generally focusing on an area about 250m wide in the centre of the 1km study corridor. The revised study corridor can be viewed on our [interactive map](https://caportal.com.au/energyco/rez) at caportal.com.au/energyco/rez.

Ecological surveys

Ecological autumn surveys are being carried out and will continue into subsequent seasonal surveys. 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.

Heritage surveys

Heritage surveys are carried out by heritage specialists walking over land and documenting their observations. In a small number of cases where items of interest or specific landforms or other archaeological indicators are identified, test excavations may be carried out. Any such excavation work will be undertaken in consultation with the landowner and only performed by qualified

heritage specialists, including archaeologists and Aboriginal participants to identify and assess any items of potential heritage significance. Excavations are typically undertaken using a shovel and trowel with soil searched and/or screened for cultural heritage items before being returned and restored.

Visual assessments

This work involves taking photos to identify and record 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 take place over the coming months at several sites within the revised study corridor. The sites include local roads, ancillary sites and 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, with any surplus soil distributed as agreed with the landowner.

Geotechnical investigations are often carried out in council road reserves or through agreement on private property.

Aerial mapping surveys

Aerial surveys will be carried out to map the terrain of the revised study corridor and surrounding areas. These surveys are undertaken by light aircraft operating in commercial airspace, flying about 1km above ground level and will generate minimal noise.

How will the work affect you?

Work will be carried out between 7am and 6pm, Monday to Friday. No work will be carried out on weekends or public holidays.

Some out of hours work will be required for seasonal fauna surveys and this will be discussed directly with relevant landowners. Aerial mapping surveys may also be undertaken outside of standard hours, depending on weather conditions.

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

We will 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](http://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/ne-rez) at www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/ne-rez.

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 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the New England REZ transmission project.

Contact us

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☎ Call 1800 061 114 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

🌐 energyco.nsw.gov.au/projects/new-england-transmission-project

📱 Scan the QR code to subscribe for updates.

🗣️ 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**.

