

Penny Sharpe

Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy
Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

**Paul Scully**

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

Media Release**Central West Orana REZ transmission project gets planning approval in Australian first**

Thursday 27 June 2024

NSW has reached a significant milestone in the renewable energy rollout, with the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) transmission project securing planning approval.

It is the first REZ in Australia to achieve this critical step, paving the way for the construction of essential transmission infrastructure to connect large-scale solar, wind and energy storage projects to the electricity grid.

The project is expected to drive up to \$20 billion in private investment in solar, wind and energy storage projects, supporting around 5,000 jobs during peak construction.

The Central-West Orana REZ is a key initiative under the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap to deliver clean, affordable and reliable energy to households and businesses across the state. The project will deliver at least 4.5 gigawatts of transmitted electricity, which is equivalent to powering 1.8 million homes.

Planning approval of transmission lines will mean work can begin on the construction and operation of around 240km of lines and supporting infrastructure within the Central West Orana REZ. This transmission infrastructure is critical to NSW's renewable energy future. It will connect multiple major renewable energy projects to the grid, to pump cleaner, affordable power to homes and businesses across the state.

The Environmental Impact Statement was exhibited in late 2023 and included measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate potential environmental and community impacts. Extensive community and stakeholder engagement informed a number of key changes to the project.

In order to proceed with planning approval, the NSW Government assigned nearly 100 approval conditions to support the rollout of the transmission project.

The Central-West Orana REZ is approximately 20,000 km², and takes in cities and towns including Dubbo, Dunedoo and Mudgee.

The Central-West Orana REZ offers significant opportunities for the region and will:

- drive economic growth through substantial private investment
- Invest in community benefit projects that will leave a lasting legacy
- create local jobs in construction and ongoing maintenance

Financial close for the project is scheduled for the second half of 2024. Construction works are expected from late 2024, with initial operation anticipated in 2028.

More information will be available [here](#) at 9am.

Quote attributable to Minister for Climate Change and Energy Penny Sharpe:

“This is the first REZ Transmission Project in the country to obtain planning approval, paving the way for a significant boost in renewable energy generation to replace aging coal-fired power stations.

“It’s not just about clean energy. This project will bring long-term financial benefits to both NSW electricity consumers and the local communities which will host the Central-West Orana REZ.

“The Minns Labor Government will continue to work closely with communities, the Australian Government and the preferred network operator to finalise the project.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Paul Scully:

“Planning approval for the Central-West Orana REZ transmission project is a huge step forward in progressing 12GW gigawatts of generation under the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap and moving towards our clean energy future.

“The Minns Labor Government is accelerating the delivery of renewable energy infrastructure. We also know that if done right, this energy generation transition will develop a wave of new industry and jobs. That means transmission jobs, manufacturing jobs, construction jobs and maintenance jobs.

“Our recent budget invested money into the planning system to support and speed up the NSW Government’s assessment of renewable energy projects and meet our 2050 goal of Net Zero emissions.”

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