

Media Release

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New England REZ north hub to be relocated to reduce community impact

Following extensive consultation, the northern energy hub for the New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) will be relocated to significantly reduce potential impacts to private landowners and the Boorolong community.

EnergyCo and Origin Energy (Origin) are working together to relocate the north hub from privately owned farms to 'Warrane', Origin-owned land northwest of Armidale and the site of the proposed Northern Tablelands Wind Farm.

The north hub is one of four critical energy hubs, a type of substation, which will collect electricity from renewable energy generators in the REZ (such as wind and solar) and transfer it to the grid.

Co-locating the energy hub with the Northern Tablelands Wind Farm will reduce construction impacts to the community and ensure more power lines are located on land owned by renewable energy generators.

Importantly, Origin's property is well placed to host the hub when assessed against the NSW Government Transmission Guideline and EnergyCo's planning pillars. This includes fewer access constraints, reduced impact to farms and private property as well as areas of environmental and heritage significance and co-location with proposed wind farms.

The relocation of the north hub would not have been achieved without constructive engagement from landowners and the local community, which will continue over the coming months as EnergyCo works to refine the corridor for new power lines connecting to the hub.

The move also marks the beginning of a long-term collaboration between EnergyCo and Origin to help deliver the New England REZ. Origin is one of several developers EnergyCo is working with to ensure the new REZ network achieves its purpose of providing affordable, clean energy to the grid.

Attributable to EnergyCo New England REZ Deputy Project Director, Julian Watson:

"We need to get the balance right by considering landowner and community feedback along with our technical and environmental expertise when designing a project of this size and scale. We are

proud to have achieved this outcome as a direct result of collaboration with community and key stakeholders.

“EnergyCo is committed to working closely with landowners and communities to find solutions and this outcome is a great example of community-led feedback helping to design the project.

“We thank Origin for working with us to deliver this important change and look forward to further engagement as we develop the project.”

Attributable to Origin Executive General Manager Energy Supply & Operations, Greg Jarvis:

“Collaboration between renewable energy proponents, EnergyCo, landowners and the local community will be critical to the successful delivery of the New England Renewable Energy Zone.

“Origin is delighted to have worked successfully with these groups to identify a solution that will help reduce the impacts of electrical connection and transmission infrastructure on landowners and the local community.

“We will continue to work with EnergyCo, landowners and the local community on the delivery of both the north hub and the proposed Northern Tablelands Wind Farm.”

Further information:

What is a Renewable Energy Zone?

Renewable Energy Zones will group new wind and solar power generation into locations where it can be efficiently stored and transmitted across NSW. Five zones have been identified and will keep NSW electricity reliable as coal-fired power stations retire, delivering large amounts of new energy to power our regions and cities.

REZs will help deliver lower wholesale electricity costs and place downward pressure on customer bills through increased competition, while supporting local jobs and business opportunities during construction and operation.

Where is the New England Renewable Energy Zone?

EnergyCo is in the early stages of planning the REZ in the New England region, centred around Armidale. New England has some of the best natural energy resources in the country and some of the State’s finest potential sites for pumped-hydro development.

The region has is also close to the existing transmission lines that connect to the NSW east coast, Upper Hunter and Queensland, which provides opportunities to increase NSW’s energy resilience.

On background:

Visit the FAQs on our website to learn more - www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/ne/frequently-asked-questions

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