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**Media Release**

Multibillion-dollar renewables investment by private sector to power 2.7 million NSW homes

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Maps and photos available: <https://bit.ly/4iLFsqL>

Ten renewable energy projects have been given the green light to connect to the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), through agreements that will deliver enough power to supply more than half of NSW homes.

The NSW Government has awarded groundbreaking 'access rights' to renewable energy companies, which pave the way for wind and solar farms and large-scale batteries to connect to the incoming transmission line in the REZ.

The projects have a total of 7.15 gigawatts of renewable energy and storage capacity, capable of powering 2.7 million homes by 2031 in peak periods. They will avoid 10.29 million tonnes of carbon emissions per year.

Renewable energy generators and projects that have been successful in securing rights to connect to the Central-West Orana REZ are:

- Valley of the Winds (wind farm) – ACEN (919 megawatts)
- Birriwa Solar (solar facility) – ACEN (600 megawatts)
- Birriwa Battery Energy Storage System (battery storage) – ACEN (600 megawatts)
- Sandy Creek Solar (solar facility) – Lightsource bp (700 megawatts)
- Sandy Creek Battery Energy Storage System (battery) – Lightsource bp (700 megawatts)
- Cobbora Solar (solar facility) – Pacific Partnerships (700 megawatts)
- Cobbora Battery Energy Storage System (battery) – Pacific Partnerships (400 megawatts)
- Tallawang Solar Hybrid (solar and battery facility) – Potentia Energy (500 megawatts)
- Spicers Creek Wind Farm (wind farm) – Squadron Energy (700 megawatts)
- Liverpool Range Wind Farm (stages 1 and 2) (wind farm) – Tilt Renewables (1,332 megawatts)

The ten projects are expected to bring more than 3,200 jobs to the region during construction and 870 ongoing operations and maintenance roles, over the average 30-year agreement.

The projects will bring significant investment to the region, including hundreds of millions in community benefits through access fee payments over 30 years. The Minns Labor Government last month announced an initial \$60 million in grants, delivering infrastructure and community-led projects with lasting benefits for residents in the REZ.

When fully operational, the renewable energy projects in this REZ alone are expected to generate 15,000 gigawatt-hours of energy per year.

Liverpool Range Wind Farm, Birriwa Solar and Battery Energy Storage System and Spicers Creek Wind Farm have secured planning approvals and are moving through the next phases of

development. The remaining projects are subject to planning approval processes, including ongoing community consultation.

When combined with the recently announced wind, solar and battery projects that will connect to new power lines in the South West REZ, more than 10 gigawatts of renewable energy and storage is being added to the NSW grid, enough to power more than 4.3 million homes.

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

“These deals will secure billions of dollars of private investment in renewable energy and deliver enough electricity to power 2.7 million NSW homes a year.

“By unlocking new renewable capacity and enhancing battery storage, we are making our power grid more reliable and putting downward pressure on bills.”

Quote attributable to EnergyCo Chief Executive Officer, Hannah McCaughey:

“This is a landmark initiative that puts NSW on the map as a leader in renewable energy innovation. Granting access rights to these renewable energy projects will almost double NSW’s current operating large-scale wind and solar generation.

“In addition to private investment, the Central-West Orana REZ will fund community initiatives and generate thousands of jobs. It will also help keep the lights on and secure our energy future.”

Further information:

What is a Renewable Energy Zone?

- REZs 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 electricity reliable as coal-fired power stations retire, by delivering large amounts of energy.
- REZs will help deliver lower wholesale electricity costs and place downward pressure on customer bills through increased competition.

Where is the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone?

- The state’s first REZ is in the Central–West Orana region, centred by Dubbo and Dunedoo. It takes in Gulgong, Mudgee, Wellington, Gilgandra and other towns.
- Transmission lines for the Central-West Orana REZ will travel 240 kilometres. The easement will take in 0.04% of the total agricultural land in the four impacted local government areas.
- A wind, solar, or energy storage project must hold an access right, or approval from EnergyCo, before it can connect to the REZ network infrastructure.

What is EnergyCo?

- EnergyCo is the NSW Government authority responsible for leading the delivery of REZs, as part of the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. The Roadmap is the state’s 20-year plan to transform our electricity system and unlock more affordable and reliable energy.
- EnergyCo leads strategic planning and consultation processes, to make sure the new transmission infrastructure needed is built in the right place at the right time, with benefits for host communities.

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