

New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ)

Community Reference Group (CRG) South - Meeting 5

Date: Wednesday 3 December 2025 – 4pm to 6.30pm

Location: STEM Innovation Lab, Donald Horne Building, 140 Bridge St, Muswellbrook

Chaired by: Margaret Harvie

Attended

Chairperson	Margaret Harvie
Community Representatives	Ninna Douglas * Brigitte Thomas Kate Whitehead Valley Alliance – Mark Eather
LALC Representatives	Nungaroo Local Aboriginal Land Council – Noel Downs Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council – De-Anne Douglas
LGA delegates	Upper Hunter Shire Council – Cr Adam Williamson Muswellbrook Shire Council – Mayor Cr Jeff Drayton Tamworth Regional Council – Jordan Kirk*
EnergyCo Representatives	Julian Watson, New England REZ Deputy Project Director Melissa Maurer, New England REZ Community Engagement Manager Leanne Thompson, New England REZ Senior First Nations Advisor Joel Gruber, New England Technical Design Manager
Note taker	Kate McGrath
*Online attendance	

Apologies

Declarations of interest

Member	Details
Kate Whitehead	Pecuniary interest: Acting for Upper Hunter Shire Council in relation to the Maizewood Battery Energy Storage System Project at Aberdeen, NSW. Potentially acting for a landholder in negotiations with a Turnbull Renewables entity in relation to the proposed Scott Creek Windfarm located at Willow Tree, NSW.
Brigitte Thomas	Pecuniary interest: Landholder within EnergyCo proposed transmission line corridor.

Nungaroo Local Aboriginal Land Council – Noel Downs	Pecuniary interest: Nungaroo land may be included in the transmission line corridor
Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council – De-Anne Douglas	Pecuniary interest: Wanaruah land may be included in the transmission line corridor
Kate McGrath	Non-pecuniary interest: Kate is the Employment Facilitator for the New England North West Local Jobs Program which provides funding and support for workforce development in the renewables sector. Pecuniary interest: Investor in Sapphire Windfarm.
Margaret Harvie	Non-pecuniary interest: Margaret has advised generators on community engagement and delivers a community engagement training course which generators participate in.

Agenda item discussion and actions

Item 1. Acknowledgement of Country

- Meeting opened 4.05pm
- The Chair acknowledged that we are meeting on Aboriginal land, paid respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Energy Corporation of NSW acknowledgement was on the PPT presentation.

Item 2. Welcome and housekeeping

- Chair welcomed members and outlined structure of meeting.
- Resignation from Rob Warren accepted.
- Chair extended sincere gratitude to Robert for his participation in the CRG to date.
- Introductions and welcome – round the room.

Item 3. Pecuniary interests

Item 4. Notes of actions

	Action	Responsible	Status
1.	Provide information about changes to corridor when available.	Melissa Maurer	Completed. Project update provided on 2 October 2025, with online CRG briefing held at 5pm.

	Action	Responsible	Status
2.	Provide information regarding changing of waterways since colonisation being assessed in Aboriginal Heritage Survey.	Phil Jones	The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) surveys include consideration of how waterways have changed by identifying wider areas of sensitivity near the current waterway based on the surrounding landforms (eg changes are less likely or pronounced in steep rocky areas compared with broader flatter areas).
3.	Share Central West Orana Community and Employment Benefit Program information and associated ministerial announcement with CRG.	Melissa Maurer	<p>On 20 October 2023, the Minister for Energy announced that an initial \$128 million would be made available for community and employment benefits in the Central West-Orana (CWO) REZ over four years. Funds were brought forward so that communities could benefit from the renewable energy transition even before construction began.</p> <p>Hundreds of millions of dollars will be made available for community and employment benefits in the CWO REZ over the next 33 years. The program will be funded from access fees, paid by generation and storage projects with an access right to connect to the network infrastructure.</p> <p>We worked with communities within the CWO region to ensure the program reflects regional priorities. Read the full Consultation Feedback Report to learn more.</p> <p>The \$70 million in funding for Stage One was made through four grant streams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations Fund: \$10 million for projects that empower local Aboriginal organisations, create job opportunities and enhance outcomes for Aboriginal people. • Local Community Fund: \$15 million for community and First Nations projects that improve local amenity and foster community connections. • Local Community Small Grants: \$500,000 to support small-scale events, initiatives or projects that deliver tangible benefits for local and First Nations communities. • Legacy Infrastructure Fund: \$45 million for eligible councils to work with communities to deliver infrastructure projects that boost liveability and drive regional economic development. <p>Further details are available on our website here. A short video is also available here.</p>

	Action	Responsible	Status
4.	Nungaroo Local Aboriginal Land Council CEO Noel Downs will connect Leanne Thompson with local organisations and people	Noel Downs	Noted and completed.
5.	Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council CEO De-Anne Douglas and Leanne Thompson to liaise regarding suitable dates for SIA interviews	De-Anne Douglas/ Leanne Thompson	Pending while focus has been on updated study area and relevant land claims.
6.	EnergyCo to advise Nungaroo LALC if no nominations are received from Aboriginal representatives	Melissa Maurer	Completed.
7.	Provide information regarding project intersection on land claims within Nungaroo LALC boundary	Leanne Thompson	Completed.

Item 5. Meeting process

- Chair outlined agenda items.
- Chair explained approach to give members more participation in discussion on items that are put up and go to question register.
- Note that several CRG members are no longer impacted landholders and there are likely changes in participation as a result.
- Chair noted question register has been distributed.

CRG meeting renominations

- Chair outlined CRG renomination process.
- Likely to be at least two (2) vacancies for South CRG.
- Chair explained that current members who renominate will be automatically appointed.
- Question from CRG member regarding why renominations is required?

Response from EnergyCo that no application is required, its simply confirmation of continued participation in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

- CRG members are encouraged to stay on to maintain continuity in established understanding.
- Comment from CRG member that there are newly impacted groups and communities who would like to be part of the process. Other groups and communities are very keen to have a say.
- Comment from Valley Alliance representation that they will stay on but there are groups in the west and east who want to be part of CRG.
- Chair commented there are likely to be 2 vacancies for those people to nominate as individuals, but it will remain at one group representative on the CRG.
- Chair asked CRG what the feeling of the CRG is in regard to the current composition?

Action: A survey may be developed and distributed dependent on CRG feedback.

- Chair asked if sectors who should be represented are missing?
- Comment from Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council representative that it has 18 land claims.
- Comment from a CRG member that it would be productive to have a member from the mining industry.
- A CRG member questioned this in that this REZ doesn't impact any mines.
- Suggestion from CRG member that mining industry is pivotal in implementation of transmission lines and their experience in major projects and dealing with landholders getting projects approved would be beneficial.
- Chair commented that there is a lot of suggestion that energy companies could learn more from the experience in mining.
- EnergyCo indicated that they speak with mines regarding oversize over mass (OSOM) routes and movement. There are two (2) mines impacted by OSOM movement and one is a road owner, the other is a property impacted but none are in the transmission route itself.
- CRG member suggestion that even someone from the Minerals Council might have knowledge of industry and workforce.
- CRG member indicated that mines have specific legislation versus the legislation for the REZ.
- Chair asked if daytime meetings are more suitable, some CRG members have work commitments but there has also been feedback requesting daytime meetings.
- One member indicated that it's a long day with travel and concerns have been raised by her employer re the times for the meeting. Hunter REZ has them during the day, people should be aware of the risks of a late meeting with travel and WHS concerns.

Chair indicated that accessibility for all is the challenge, and community representatives who work through the day and are doing this as a volunteer role don't have access to join the CRG.

- CRG member indicated that discussion in meetings is not always productive and meant that meetings don't go to time. Keep to the time, then people can work around it.

Chair indicated that the composition of the group will also influence the time of the day to accommodate workers with day time commitments.

- Chair asked which elements of the CRG process and format of the meeting are helpful and which are less helpful.
- Comment from CRG member that procedure is better, that being more disciplined in discussion works better and it's improved since early meetings.
- Comment from CRG member that when some people are negatively impacted and others profit there will always be push back and venting of frustration and anger.
- Suggestion by CRG member that new membership will likely be similar.
- CRG member indicated that angst is understandable, and people haven't been treated respectfully with the change, but EnergyCo staff shouldn't be treated with disrespect, and the Chair has previously been disrespected.
- Comment from CRG member that people shouldn't be attacked but also that people have the right to a say.

Chair acknowledged that those who come in new to the CRG may need time to find their feet.

- Comment from CRG members that there is need to improve the set up for hybrid meetings - sound is an issue for online attendees.

Chair indicated that the STEM building is likely the best technology and if that presents issues it may prove difficult to completely meet the needs for the future. Moving the meetings between either end of the proposed route and provide online access has been an attempt to make CRG as accessible as possible.

- Comment from CRG member that the way people are treated and the discussions is hard to deal with when there is frustration, anger and high emotion, and there's times when the disrespect has been from all parties.
- Comment that a better microphone is needed so online participants can hear everything.
- Comment from CRG member that if you invite mining you also have to invite all the big industry in the area, mining is more prominent further south but in the other end there's Baiada and forestry.

Response from EnergyCo that inviting some and not all may be a problem.

- CRG member indicated that they felt there needs to be more individual community members, those who aren't directly impacted but can speak more broadly on behalf of interests of the whole community. There are people who are experiencing a financial benefit or loss and there would be a benefit to having more objective community members who aren't as emotional, this would contribute to a smoother run meeting.

EnergyCo indicated that this is good feedback for the future composition of the group.

- Chair asked if communication by EnergyCo to the CRG has been adequate.
- Comment from LALC representative regarding the frustration of being impacted by two REZs that don't speak to each other. EnergyCo recently came to LALC and spoke about both REZs so LALC was equipped to speak with members. This was useful as information from meetings could be shared with board, Elders, community. The recent route changes have created a big issue. Aboriginal cultural concerns were raised with original route.
- The CRG member indicated that current information is needed, and as much as possible.
- CRG member indicated that not all impacted people were spoken with.
- EnergyCo indicated that they spent several hours with LALC's and answered their questions.
- Suggestion from CRG member that coordination between EnergyCo and other state departments has been an issue, such as Dartbrook Rd, and Minister for Roads said roads won't be reclassified because EnergyCo won't use them, but Dartbrook said they had been approached by EnergyCo regarding the use of the roads, and there are either lies or miscommunication happening.

Response from EnergyCo that they can't speak for Minister Aitchison's comments, but there is ongoing conversation with Transport for NSW.

- Comment from CRG member that the process for reclassification for OSOM will require work and take considerably longer. EnergyCo need to sort things with council roads before worrying about private roads. Bypass will be finished in quite a few years, and coordination needs to happen in the meantime.

Action: Follow-up and see what the sequence of information is and what the facts are regarding road reclassification and OSOM routes

- Comment that Muswellbrook Council received confirmation in writing that Wyong Rd and Kayuga Rd won't be used, and Dartbrook 'can't be sold' while EnergyCo is hanging over their head. Transport for NSW confirmed the Minister's comments, may even be in writing, regarding the road reclassification.
- Chair asked if the question register has worked and been a good thing.
- Comment from CRG member that having a manifest of all the questions asked helps avoid the repetition.
Response from EnergyCo that if its valuable to members then it will continue.
- Chair asked if CRG members feel supported as community conduits for information and if more support is required.
- Comment from CRG member that newly impacted landholders have a preference to speak directly with EnergyCo and no one else has really reached out.
- Valley Alliance has a lot of members and a lot of contact with organisation members, and up to date members are sharing information about the REZ and the renewables sector, CRG membership adds to this information and understanding.

Item 7. Study area update overview

- Presented by Julian Watson New England REZ Deputy Project Director.
- Significant change between Bayswater power station and central south hub and change to associated arrangements at hubs.
- Suite of work and reasons to guide the decision to change the route.
- Safer and more efficient construction and better bushfire management.
- Commitment not to impact aerial firefighting capability.
- Corridor versus corridor on a per hectare basis there is less bushfire risk in the new corridor.
- Reduced construction, environmental and traffic impacts.
- Constructing the pads and sites for towers, and the access roads to the sites, the new route reduces elements of difficult construction and unconventional methods such as the need to use heavy lift helicopters, and less overall access road construction required, and the roads are more straightforward.
- Less needs to be removed from site, less time to do it, and less need for third party properties.
- Comparison of environmental impacts favours new corridor, will minimise and mitigate and then offset where unavoidable.
- Traffic impacts reduce for heavy vehicle movement with less spoil needing to be removed and less risk of extended construction period.
- Costs and risks reduced overall.
- Glenbawn has been heavily used in the last week fighting fires, EnergyCo are talking with Rural Fire Service about that use and there is up to date information to take on board, and at the first pass the alternative route will work but aviation specialist needs to confirm.
- Less private land impacted by shorter route.
- Impacts on 13km of Nundle State Forest and NSW forest land at Glenbawn.
- EnergyCo released [Bulk Corridor Design Refinement Report](#) that compares metrics of the two corridors

Action: EnergyCo to share links for [Bulk Corridor Design Refinement Report](#)

- Since the announcement EnergyCo has connected with landholders to share information and gather information about property specific constraints and concerns with landowners.
- Targeted community group discussions to hear what is important and listen to some alternative suggestions, and options will be explored.
- 12 community information sessions held between Gundy and Guyra and 2 town hall sessions at Gundy and Walcha with about 850 attendees.
- Have your say feedback period has been extended to 12 December 2025, good number of responses - some direct through the process and there are less direct responses too.

- Met with landowners to discuss properties and hear views and explore optionality from landowner suggested changes in both the bulk corridor and the Central Hubs A and B and East Hub area.
- Network generation versus network capacity has been raised, network capacity is different to the nameplate capacity of the generators in the REZ and the generator will be higher than the transfer capacity of the infrastructure, and 6GW of transfer capacity planned with a larger amount of generation capacity successful through access scheme application process that then seek to get energy into the NEM through the system.
- People feel that there had previously been a note by government that generation and transfer capacity would be the same, and the act refers to transfer capacity.
- Acknowledge the call for people to understand what generators there are and what their timing is, and their storage and capacity.
- Public information can be shared but earlier stage developments aren't prematurely shared.
- EnergyCo reported that a Community feedback report which lists key themes and responses will be released early next year.
- There will be ongoing engagement with landowners.
- Amended scoping report will be available by end of year
- Refined study area from 3km to 1km will occur early 2026 to provide people with certainty and will hopefully include areas of change as result of input from landowners and community.
- A community consultation report will be published.
- The EIS will be submitted to DPPI in the second half of 2026.

Item 8 Study area update: CRG member feedback – What are you hearing in your communities?

- Comment from CRG member that the changing of 3km to 1km is important.
- Comment from CRG member that communities weren't treated respectfully when the change of route happened, and LALC wasn't given the respect of being a landowner. More certainty when corridor is refined, which is a lot of work, and there's hours of work with the land claims. Leanne from EnergyCo has been supporting the LALCs.
- CRG member asked why the corridor has to be so big, why is a kilometre needed?

Response from EnergyCo that feedback from key stakeholders and landowners to come up with an initial 1km study corridor didn't provide the flexibility to encompass change potential, and EnergyCo wanted to provide flexibility within the 3kms. 1km identified where the construction will be but still allows flexibility for micro siting or moving from one area of a property to another to accommodate landowner preference. Will be reduced to a 250m corridor for temporary construction easement then 70m easement for each transmission line (140m in total). People give feedback and present other options, and movement in one area often requires a shift either side, especially when there is a collective landowner consensus on suitable placement.

- Comment from CRG member that the 1km corridor can create more uncertainty, and TransGrid used to say where they wanted the line and then negotiate from there.
- A CRG member indicated that as a landholder it's good to be able to say there needs to be adjustment.
- Comment that community perception is that the 3km will be impacted.

Response from EnergyCo that there is a good diagram to show the process of reducing the area of impact.

Action: Share diagram outlining process of reducing corridor area.

- Comment from CRG member that the announced change horrified people, they are optimistic of positive change but still uncertain.
- Comment from CRG member that there has not been direct contact, only a mail out in the mailbox.
- Comment from CRG member that impact hasn't been clarified, and landowners shouldn't have to be proactive.
- CRG member talked of community feedback of anger about Walcha South hub.
- Valley Alliance representative indicated that they have been blamed for route change and anger was directed at them.
- Comment from CRG member that the EIS timeframe and lodgement in second half of 2026 has created the feeling that it's not enough time.
- Comment from CRG member that Upper Hunter Council are supporting undergrounding.
- Comment from CRG member that feedback from residents has been that the communication has largely been by mail out and 3km zone has impacted small producers and acreages.
- Comment from Council representative on the CRG that council had to be careful in messaging not to be wedged, with people impacted by old and new lines putting pressure on council, council careful not to take sides.
- Comment from CRG member that it's the hottest topic in Upper Hunter Shire and the feedback loop will go on.
- Comment from CRG member that new route is through the expensive properties and anyone who is anyone is now impacted.
- Comment from CRG member that it's going to be the biggest topic through 2026 and council need to manage it pretty tightly.
- Comment from CRG member that the community continue to want it underground and somewhere else.
- CRG member indicated that the online presentation had made the figures clear and that the relocation of the study corridor makes sense.
- Comment from CRG member that there has been points made from landowners asking about the potential in the network operator procurement process to underground in the vicinity of Lake Glenbawn.

Response from EnergyCo that if the network operator indicated they wanted to underground then EnergyCo would not object but there are technical challenges.

- Comment from CRG member that given there has been study in prior locations, whether instead of refining the route it should be expanded, and is this artificially increasing the timeframe. Clarity regarding the width of the easement will be beneficial.
- Comment from CRG member that a simple statement is needed saying “this is the number of hectares studied, this is the number of routes considered” to make it clear it isn’t an arbitrary change.
- Comment from CRG member that there haven’t been too many complaints in Muswellbrook as it’s on the eastern boundary.
- Comment from CRG member that accommodating various landowners mustn’t be based on who has the deepest pockets and the higher value land.

Response from EnergyCo that it will be based on what is technically feasible and reasonable.

- Comment that moving the line has made Ninna’s community happy and she is happy for her position on the CRG to be taken by someone else from a community that needs a voice such as Nundle and Hanging Rock.
- Comment from CRG member that feedback in Tamworth has been positive as LGA impact is lessened, concerns about safety on regional roads now that it’s less on the New England Highway and concerns about local and regional roads not being built for large freight and heavy transformers, but largely it is positive overall.
- Comment from CRG member that there is lack of reports provided on cultural and environmental studies and would appreciate being given updates on this.
- Comment from LALC CRG representative that consultants are difficult to contact unless they need something, emails left with no response, but the community expected to be responsive to consultants.
- LALC will support broader community in their needs.

Break - 5.27pm to 5.50pm

Item 9 First Nations engagement

- Leanne Thompson reported that engaging with LALC’s on the land claims within REZ project, and SIA interviews deferred until 2026. Providing support to DCCEEW for development of guidelines.
- Comment that guidelines need to be shared with the LALCs and the timing isn’t great due to Christmas.
- Aboriginal guidelines are shared with Aboriginal groups and need to be ratified before they are shared publicly.

Action: Share guidelines with CRG once DCCEEW have finalised.

Action: Share LALC feedback with DCCEEW along with request for early access to drafts.

Item 10 General business, questions and updates

Undergrounding of infrastructure

- EnergyCo is progressing overhead high voltage AC line as this is the best overall solution.
- Bidders can provide alternative design solutions in their proposals.
- Insight into process - six entities, five consortia, lodged an EOI and were assessed against criteria and as a result three have been shortlisted for progression.
- Two-part RFP process has commenced.
- Interactive process to get best outcome for project and consumers.
- Work with proponents to get feedback on innovation, risk reduction, financing and approach to design. That forms Part B which forms part of the final assessment process.
- Years worth of work with the bidders.
- Comment from CRG member to confirm that the EIS will be approved before tender is awarded.
- EnergyCo aims to maintain competitive tension between tenderers through the conditions of approval phase.
- Comment from CRG member that their questions have been answered in the question register.
- Comment from CRG member on undergrounding and resulting discussion about the cost which is generally agreed at 2.5x overhead lines, and once report is finalised it may be worth more discussion.
- Comment from CRG member about inquiry on undergrounding for AusNet route connecting to NSW. There have been queries about land access and related landowner concerns regarding activities in Victoria.

Landowner property information

- EnergyCo will be undertaking environmental and technical surveys to inform EIS and approach and it's more accurate if there's been an opportunity to undertake the investigation on site, but landowner participation is voluntary. EnergyCo is not proposing to seek access using legislative powers and prefers to consult with landowners to seek access permission.
- Measures to minimise disruption to landowners and compliance meet requirements around biosecurity and access reports. In-region team based in Tamworth and Armidale to manage the process and Land Access Form to ensure specific requirements are met by all sub-contractors and staff and to liaise with landowner in appropriate way, fulfil any single point of contact requirements and engage by preferred method to meet landowners' requirements and expectations (i.e. no access during lambing and calving).
- EnergyCo looking to make sure people understand access is voluntary for the landowner.
- Other methodologies are used if access not possible, such as predictive modelling or assessment which assumes species are present, and then verified through survey after acquisition process is completed.

Community benefits

- Community benefits tailored for New England REZ, REZ wide studies renamed as regional major infrastructure studies to inform development. Intent of studies is for baseline understanding of water supply, housing etc. Will then identify key values and priorities of councils and other stakeholders. Then it can be what drives the funding direction in near term and long term.
- Energy Legislation Amendment Act 2025 was passed in recent weeks which looked to resolve a challenge that act previously had, where funds had to be spent in REZ and in practice this meant the funds could only be expended on activities and projects physically within the boundary of the REZ.
- One LGA has a small part within boundary but unable to expend funds as desired due to previous requirement.
- Bulk corridor is not within the REZ, and this change enables consideration of expenditure on corridor too.
- Comment from CRG member that the legislation change is great, and question as to whether the CEBP will be managed in consultation with councils and sporting groups, cultural and arts groups and non-government health and community services organisations?
- EnergyCo indicated that the intent after the release of the studies is to enable councils as infrastructure providers to prioritise investment of funding for items such as water availability and other priorities.
- EnergyCo indicated that once the studies are released there will be engagement with the CRG, and general community. EnergyCo will develop the benefit program to be tailored for the New England region.
- CRG member asked if EnergyCo intend to liaise with local councils.

Response from EnergyCo that they will.

- Comment from CRG member that engagement needs to be broader as not all councils have a good relationship with the Aboriginal community and so don't engage with the broadest community living in the LGA.

Response from EnergyCo that engagement around the Community Benefit program including First Nations engagement will be undertaken by the company NewGate - it will include multiple options to provide feedback. A survey and other input will inform the development of the CEBP.

- Comment from CRG member that in CWO there was an independent cumulative impact study completed, and question about whether this will be completed for the NE REZ.
- EnergyCo response indicated that in addition to the Regional Major Infrastructure Studies, there is a social impact analysis being prepared for all 5 REZs across the state and 2 members from each CRG are contributing to the codesign of the analysis.
- Question about who the nominees were from this CRG.
- Response from EnergyCo that this is a separate process by Astrolabe, Noel and Kate have volunteered to contribute. Understood that there will be 2 meetings for this study and only one has been attended by the CRG representatives.

- CRG member indicated that the Hunter has a separate Aboriginal group which Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council sits on.

Action: Get update from the team regarding this social impact study and progress.

- **Access Rights for non-REZ generation projects**
- EnergyCo put out paper on how to consider access rights. NEREZ has some technical differences to CWO (CWO is radial, NE is meshed with TransGrid and connected at Bayswater and 2 other locations), energy flow is different and it allows for generators connected to TransGrid to access New England capacity.

Action: Provide link to access rights paper.

- Access team within EnergyCo is thinking about how to differentiate between TransGrid network generators and EnergyCo network as TransGrid has less overall capacity operating at their upper limit much of the time.
- Different access rights and fees may apply for generators.
- From an equity perspective there needs to be an acknowledged contribution to the REZ network with some benefit from it.
- Market thoughts were sought and industry representatives put forward submissions with varied views and the generator access team will have to resolve this.
- This involves application of an access control mechanism with the need to have consent from EnergyCo to connect and ensure load modelling and system security is assessed and managed well.
- Will prepare draft access scheme for release in 2026, with mandatory consultation period of 28 days.
- EnergyCo is not proposing to re-consult on the generation and storage consultation strategy. The consultation was to seek feedback at a policy level on how generators will connect to the network and was not dependent on the location of the transmission corridor.
- Comment from CRG member that given access rights are awarded on an individual basis if a project is sold the rights go with it.

Potential trading of Access Rights

- Question as to whether there is scope to trade access rights like water rights?
Response that EnergyCo manages access rights but there is no proposal for the rights to be a tradeable item.
- Comment from Valley Alliance to clarify the events leading to the route change and their involvement:
 - Mid 2024 the Aberbaldie Glenrock travelling stock route (TSR) was proposed as an alternative route selection for transmission lines to the South Hub of the New England REZ. In late 2024 EnergyCo rejected the alternative route following an assessment.
 - In early 2025 EnergyCo confirmed the proposed transmission line route would impact aerial firefighting capacities at Chaffey Dam.

- May 2025 EnergyCo developed an exclusion zone around Chaffey Dam and Lake Glenbawn in consultation with RFS and aviation stakeholders which required an adjustment to the transmission line route.
- 24 September 2025 at the CRG meeting held in Tamworth EnergyCo informed members that refinements to avoid aerial firefighting constraints were in progress and an update would be provided shortly.
- CRG Members including Valley Alliance were notified of the change in transmission line route through online briefings conducted by EnergyCo on 2 October 2025 in line with the notification to the broader community.
- Valley Alliance were not informed or consulted on the new study area before it was announced on 2 October 2025, apart from notification to landowners on October 1, which includes some Valley Alliance members.
- Valley Alliance requested the above be confirmed by EnergyCo.
- Valley Alliance representative indicated that there have been accusations that they knew of route change for six months in advance, and they would like it on the record that this was not true.

ITEM 11 Next meeting

- Discussion about next meeting date and the potential need to be flexible to ensure it times with progress of corridor refinement.
- Question from Chair whether the CRG want to meet later or have the meeting in March even if all the information isn't available at that time.
- Comment from CRG member that there is great interest in this project and a March meeting would be good even if there aren't new updates.

EnergyCo indicated that there can be an online session when announcement of 1km is finalised.

- A CRG member indicated that as there will be at least 2 new members a March meeting would be good for them.
- CRG member indicated that an online meeting for route refinement wasn't ideal and the 1km discussion should be an in-person meeting.
- Suggestion from CRG member that there should be 2 meetings for the South to enable Tamworth and Muswellbrook participation.
- Response from EnergyCo that the north is covered by the second CRG.
- CRG member suggested that the meeting should be held at the closest point for most people.

EnergyCo indicated that there may need to be an online meeting if the announcement doesn't coincide with a planned meeting.

- Consensus to hold a meeting again in Muswellbrook in March and if the corridor is not refined at this time there will be an additional meeting scheduled a week after the 1km refinement is announced (realistically likely online).
- CRG member reiterated that the announcements impact everyone and there needs to be face-to-face discussion.
- The consensus was that too many meetings is better than too few.
- CRG member asked the required number of meetings under the charter.

Response from Chair: Minimum of four meetings, once a quarter.

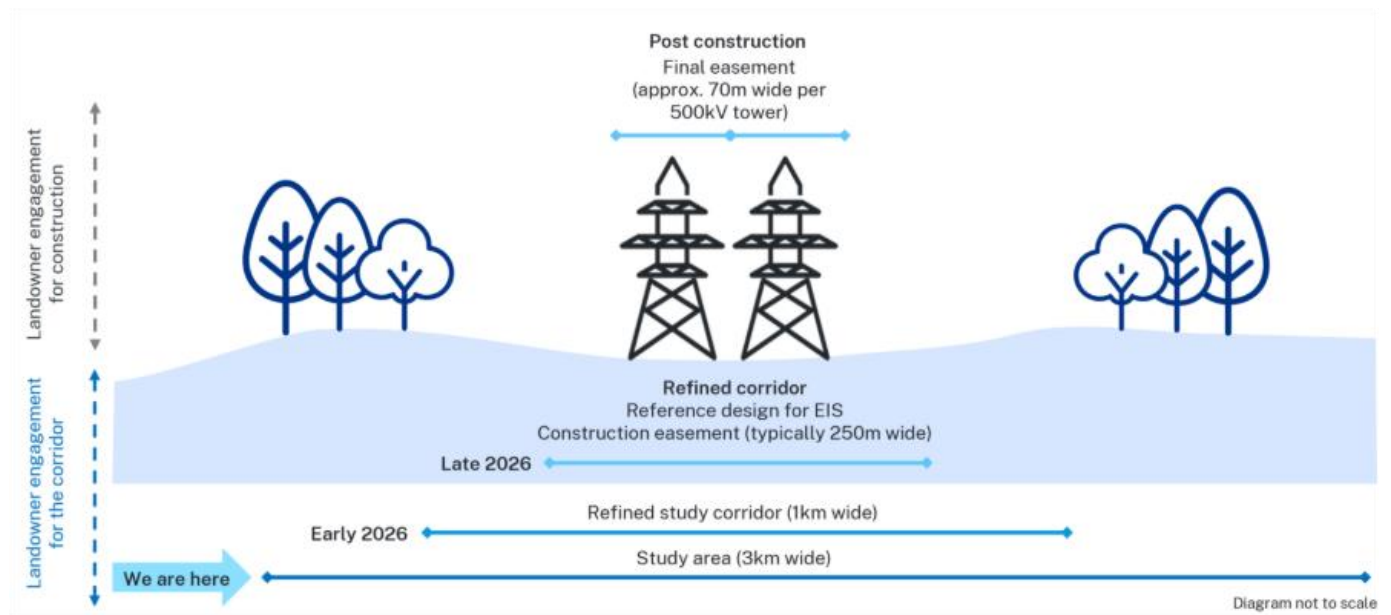
- CRG member asked how much notice EnergyCo will have before announcement.

EnergyCo response that organising landholders and collateral is a priority and improves certainty for the community and that the target date will be determined in the new year, but there are always variables.

Meeting close 6.36pm

Date of Next meeting - Proposed to be Thursday 19 March 2026 at 4pm in Muswellbrook.

	Action	Responsible	Status
1.	Develop survey and update CRG (dependent on feedback)	Mel Maurer	To be reconsidered based on feedback
2.	Follow-up and see what the sequence of information is and what the facts are regarding road reclassification and OSOM routes	Julian Watson	
3.	EnergyCo to share links for Bulk Corridor Design Refinement Report		Completed. Included in meeting notes.
4.	Share diagram outlining process of reducing corridor area	Mel Maurer	Completed. Diagram included below
5.	Share guidelines with CRG once DCCEEW have finalised	Leanne Thompson	
6.	Share LALC feedback with DCCEEW along with request for early access to drafts	Leanne Thompson	
7.	Get update from the team regarding this social impact study and progress	Mel Maurer	
8.	Provide link to access rights paper	Mel Maurer	Completed. Included in meeting notes.



Upcoming meetings

Regular meeting 19 March 2026

Announcement of refined corridor at this time or future online meeting.