

# New England REZ North Community Reference Group

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Meeting 6

Friday 20 March 2026

**EnergyCo**

The Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo)



# Acknowledgment of Country



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Energy Corporation of New South Wales acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and we show our respect for Elders past and present through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

# Agenda

Item	Responsible
Acknowledgement of Country	Margaret Harvie
Welcome, housekeeping, and apologies	Margaret Harvie
Meeting procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pecuniary interests</li><li>• Noting of actions</li><li>• Questions Register update</li></ul>	Margaret Harvie
Project update	Julian Watson
CRG feedback	All
REZ First Nations Engagement	Leanne Thompson
<b>Break</b>	<b>All</b>
Focus area: OSOM transport route update	Michael Burden and Anna Zycki
Focus area: Easement acquisition and landowner payments	Aaron Davies
General business, questions and updates	All
Next meeting	All

# 1

## Meeting procedures



# Noting of actions

## Overview

- ✓ An action register is provided with each meeting agenda to support accountability and transparency.
- ✓ The aim is to close out all actions by the following meeting, where possible.
- ✓ Actions will be delivered by the following meeting unless assigned a timeframe for delivery based on feedback from CRG members.

Maintaining an open and trusting environment is our priority, and we'll continue to provide thorough meeting notes to ensure transparency.

# Questions and actions registers



## Questions Register

- Created in response to member requests for greater clarity, transparency and timeliness in tracking questions and answers.
- Captures all questions taken on notice, as well as any submitted in writing for the register between meetings. Members can submit questions at any time.
- An updated register will be circulated before each meeting (noting that inclusion of questions depends on when they are received).
- A further updated version will be distributed after each meeting, including any questions taken on notice.

## Actions register

- The actions register records key commitments made during meetings and tracks progress against them.

# CRG membership



- CRG membership update
- Reminder of Terms of Reference

# 2

## Project update

# Project updates since last meeting



**Refining the corridor** – working with landowners. Reviewing over 400 submissions. Developing feedback report.



**Stakeholder and landholder meetings**, including Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association (inc. site visit), Farmers for Climate Action, Walcha High Country Guardians



**Community information stand** at Armidale show (6-7 March)



**187 project update letters** sent to landholders in the study area



**111 visual impact assessment letters** sent to landholders in new study area



**Fieldwork notification** sent to all landholders in the study area, with specific notifications for Geotech work in public areas



**Presentations** to Rotary (Tamworth, Armidale) and Lions (Armidale) Clubs



**Released information on Tamworth OSOM detour** - consultation with local MP and landholders planned for coming weeks



**Site walkovers for Aboriginal heritage** (details in later slides)



**Shortlisted network operator consortia site visit** – along study corridor from north to south, 17-19 Feb



**Ongoing enquiries management** and support with Ministerial enquiries and GIPA requests



Secured services of the **Farmgate Support Program** which provides free emotional and mental health support to people living and working in rural and remote communities

## Council interface

- Regular interface sessions ongoing with all councils
- North – 6 formal council interface meetings held
- South – 3 formal council interface meetings held

## Regional Major Infrastructure Studies (RMIS) opportunities workshops

- Workshops have helped facilitate further clarification and understanding on councils' proposed initiatives and opportunities
- North: 4 workshops held (Armidale, Walcha, Uralla and Tamworth) – remaining scheduled w/c 23 March
- South: 1 workshop held (Upper Hunter) - remaining session rescheduled

## Council Commissioning Agreements

- Funding support for councils is ongoing
- Additional support package launched to support cumulative impact mitigation preparation
- Additional funding can help progress some of the initiatives / opportunities that come out of the RMIS opportunities workshops

## Third Party Agreement (TPA)

- Working with councils to develop a formalised agreement to capture scope, interface requirements, minimum standards and specifications, etc.
- The TPA looks to provides councils with certainty on what EnergyCo will deliver as part of the transmission line project
- EnergyCo are funding the external legal services to support council in TPA negotiations

# What else is coming up

## Project updates

- Publishing the feedback report in response to submissions (~480 received)
- Refining the study corridor
- Ongoing field investigations, including visual impact assessment site visits, geotechnical investigations and heritage site visits
- InfrastructureNSW project health check
- Upcoming EnergyCo roles advertised – communications, procurement management
- Submit EIS to DPPI - second half of 2026
- Meet the Tamworth OSOM project team at Nemingha Hall - 7 May, 3-6pm
- Technical traffic and transport discussions with Councils
- Briefing to Tamworth councillors / Mayor on the Tamworth OSOM route and site visit at request of local MP

## Community engagement activities

- Upper Hunter Show – 20 and 21 March
- CRG workshops on RMIS following Council workshops
- REZ Coordination Lead presenting at New England North West Future Energy Forum on 30 March
- Ongoing meetings with landholders and community groups, including Red4NE briefing on 30 March



EnergyCo pop-up stall in X

# 3

## CRG feedback



Armidale

# What are you hearing from your community?

As our CRG members, we recognise the strong position you're in to understand the thoughts and sentiment of your community.

We'd like to take some time in this session to hear from you about:

- Community feedback and sentiment – what are you hearing from your communities?
- Parts of the project you think people don't understand and/or need more information about
- The levels to which you think people want to be engaged and their preferences for how
- Any other information you're happy to share with us

# 4

## First Nations engagement

# First Nations engagement

- Key briefings held with:
  - LALCs Armidale, Tamworth, Nungaroo, Wanaruah and Amaroo
  - NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC)
- Conducted 19 Social Impact Assessment (SIA) interviews with Aboriginal stakeholders
- Commented on DCCEEW draft First Nations Guidelines in preparation for internal and Minister approval



# Aboriginal heritage surveys

- Seven rounds of field survey completed to date, including:
  - 145 field survey days (26 weeks of survey)
  - Survey of 115 properties
  - Two days of scar tree verification
  - Approx 5,000 ha area subject to sampling via pedestrian transects, around 48% of project area surveyed to date
- Test excavations in June 2025 – five weeks in New England and one week in Upper Hunter.
- Key sites identified include:
  - Potential ring tree (see photo) near likely access track
  - Artefact scatters
  - Isolated finds
  - Potential archaeological deposits
  - Potential and confirmed scar trees

# Break

# 5

## OSOM transport route update

# Enabling infrastructure – Port to REZ

We're supporting the delivery of enabling infrastructure needed to build REZs.

- We're working with Transport for NSW to upgrade state roads to support the safe and efficient transport of large and heavy renewable energy components to renewable energy zones.
- The NSW Government is taking a lead role to ensure route design, planning approvals, council and community engagement and field work is carried out in a coordinated way rather than on a project-by-project basis.
- Road upgrades are just one part of our broader program connecting the Port of Newcastle to renewable energy zones across the state, enabling renewable energy projects to be built efficiently and with greatest value for communities.
- Our Port to REZ program also includes work to ensure there is adequate portside capacity and infrastructure to meet storage and logistic requirements.

## Our work will:



**Improve pinch points and intersections along the OSOM route from Port to REZ**



**Improve portside storage and logistics to enable the construction of renewable energy zones**



**Reduce risks to public safety, reduce duplication of work by project proponents and manage cumulative impacts on communities and road users.**

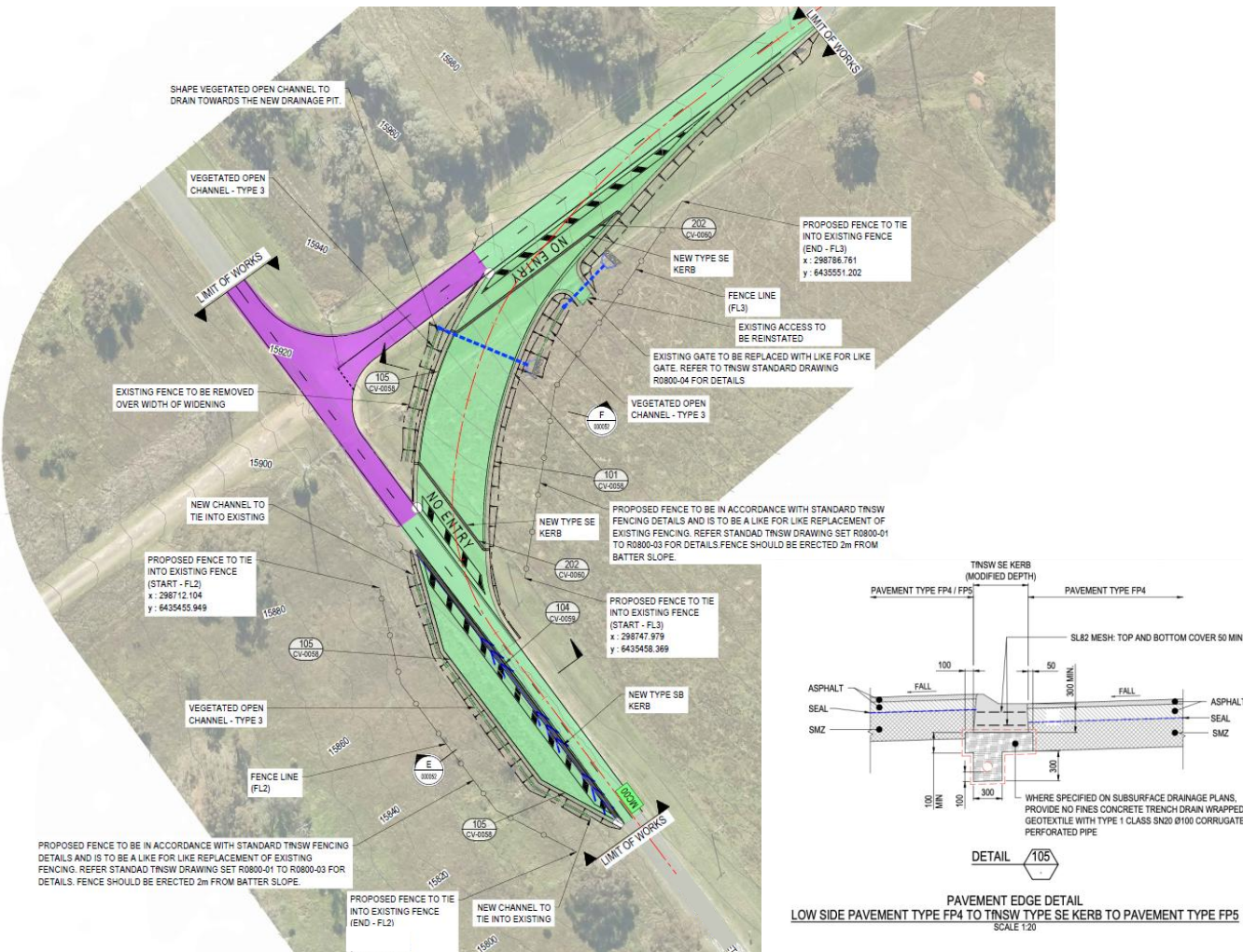
# Port to REZ – Route assessments



Over-size over-mass vehicle

- Primary objective to detour around town centres
- Seeks to minimise disruption (during construction and operation)
- Seeks to create a common route (where possible) to avoid overlapping proposed upgrades by projects
- Consideration of current (and future) network use – e.g., school routes, heavy vehicle routes, etc.
- Seeks to optimise time and budget constraints
- Developed in consultation with road authorities (Transport for NSW / Council)
- Relies on series of site investigations and surveys

# Intersection upgrade – example



- All routes subject to safety assessments
- Incorporate property-specific requirements (gates, fences, access, etc.)
- ‘Raised access platforms’ will only be accessible to approved OSOM loads
- Designs look to maximise use of available road reserve land (i.e., reduce extent of additional land)
- All OSOM loads subject to permits and approvals (Council, Transport for NSW, National Heavy Vehicle Regulator)
- OSOM loads accompanied by range of pilots and Police escorts (as required)
- Movement timing (day vs. night, hours of the day, etc.) determined by Transport for NSW

## Engagement portal



We have launched a new online engagement portal to increase visual communication tools, make information easier to find and integrate consultation activities more effectively.



EnergyCo pop up at the Armidale Show

# How we are engaging



EnergyCo is working closely with Transport for NSW and other stakeholders, and we use a range of engagement activities and resources to ensure communities are informed and involved, including:



**Direct notification** to landholders to keep them informed about project updates and engagement opportunities.



**Website** where we publish the latest project information including project updates and fact sheets, visualisations and upcoming engagement activities.



**Dedicated project phone and email line** for the community to contact us with feedback and enquiries at any time.



**Online interactive map** which shows key features of the wider New England REZ and project.



**Regular briefings** with landholders, local and state government representatives and local bus companies



**Meet the Project Team session in early May** at Nemingha Hall to give an opportunity for landholders and community to talk with EnergyCo and Transport for NSW about the route

# Transport Operations Strategy

Anna Zycki – Executive Director Development & Solutions, Transport for NSW

# Operational Logistics Review

Commissioned for CWO REZ to assess journey times, pinch points, operational issues along the full journey

Identified issues such as -

- Port circulation – storage, circulation and queueing
- Travel times
- Coordination with other OSOM
- Rest areas and passing opportunities
- Height width restrictions for safe movement
- Curfews and network access





Muswellbrook

# Transport program

- Transport is working on a number of programs to support Renewables -
- Delivering safety and logistics management works along the CWO and NE corridors to complement capacity works being provided by EnergyCo
- Establishing a logistics function to better coordinate timing and access from the Port to REZ zones
- Working with Police on planning for provision of OSOM escorts
- Reviewing curfew and network access requirements

# 6

## Easement acquisition and landowner payments



EnergyCo Place Managers

# Easement acquisition



In most cases, like building transmission lines, we don't buy land outright. Instead, we work with landowners to acquire an easement.

An easement is a legal right where we access and use part of your land to construct and operate a transmission line and where your use of that land is constrained.

## If we acquire an easement:

- ✓ The landholder remains the owner of the land
- ✓ The landholder can continue using the land with some restrictions to ensure public safety and reliability

We expect to start formal acquisition negotiations for transmission line easements in the second half of this year. We can bring our acquisition program forward at an owner's request.



# Easement acquisition

## How wide is the easement?

For the New England REZ project, we are generally looking to acquire:



- a wider temporary construction easement (around 250 metres wide) during the building phase (about 10 years)
- a narrower permanent easement which is defined once construction is finished and will be about 140 metres.
  - the permanent easement will be located within the construction easement

In either case, we aim to agree on compensation for all easements (both temporary and permanent) as part of a single acquisition process.

# Valuation and compensation

If we wish to acquire an interest on land, we'll seek to enter into an agreement with the landowner which will set out all the rights and obligations for both parties relating to the ongoing use and management of the land, including payment of compensation.

## Just Terms Act compensation

-  The market value of the property interests being acquired
-  Payment for reasonable legal and valuation fees

We have started and completed acquisition process for land in some areas for energy hubs (substations), or other project facilities, or at the request of the landowner.



EnergyCo stall at the Armidale Show

# How is compensation agreed?

EnergyCo will obtain its own independent valuation. Landowners are also encouraged to obtain their own valuation.

Having two independent, professional valuations helps ensure that parties can agree fair compensation as part of a negotiated agreement.

When determining your entitlement to compensation, our valuer will consider factors such as:

- ✓ the interests to be acquired
- ✓ the area of land to be affected
- ✓ any decrease (or increase) in residue land
- ✓ location and zoning
- ✓ any impacted improvements
- ✓ recent sales in the area.



Information session in Uralla

# Acquisition by agreement



We strongly prefer to complete the required acquisition by reaching an agreement with the landholder.

We respect that every landholder's property is very important to them and that land acquisition can feel inconvenient and concerning.

Our aim is to listen and understand what is important to the landholder, so we can work together to minimise the impact and inconvenience on their life.

Resources for landholders are available on our website:

- ✓ [Information for landowners](#)
- ✓ [The acquisition process](#)
- ✓ [Compulsory acquisition explained](#)
- ✓ [Centre for property acquisition](#)

# Compulsory acquisition

Compulsory acquisition is a legal process that enables EnergyCo to acquire interests in land for important energy infrastructure when we are unable to complete the acquisition process by agreement with a landowner.

- We strongly prefer to reach an agreement and will work with landholders for at least 9 months to achieve this.
- Compulsory acquisition is only used as a last resort to ensure critical infrastructure projects that benefit NSW communities can proceed on schedule.
- We are required to undertake this process in accordance with the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991 (Just Terms Act)*.



# When payments are made

Our 2-step acquisition approach provides:

- certainty about what interests in your land need to be acquired
- equity, by paying at least 80% of compensation once we reach agreement.

	Advance payment	Final payment
<b>When</b>	Paid within 20 business days after the Deed of Agreement is signed.	Paid after construction is complete and permanent easements are formalised, which can be up to 10 years after the initial agreement.
<b>What's included</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of compensation for temporary construction easements</li> <li>• 80% of the agreed market value for permanent interests</li> <li>• 100% of all other agreed compensation (including legal and valuation fees)</li> </ul>	Remaining 20% of the agreed market value for permanent interests plus accumulated statutory interest for the period.

# Strategic Benefit Payments

The NSW Government requires transmission operators to make strategic benefit payments to eligible private landholders, to ensure landholders share the benefits of the infrastructure they host on their land.

- ✓ Eligible landholders will receive a total of \$200,000 (in 2022 real dollars) per kilometre of transmission line hosted and paid by the Network Operator
- ✓ Payments will be made in annual instalments over 20 years from the energisation date of the eligible infrastructure, adjusted to the Consumer Price Index.
- ✓ Payment attached to the land.
- ✓ The energisation date is the date the voltage is first applied from an operating part of the transmission network to any part of the Project Section.

These payments are made in addition to and will not reduce any compensation paid to landholders. Find more details in our [fact sheet](#) or here: [Strategic benefit payment explained](#)



Information session in Armidale

# 7

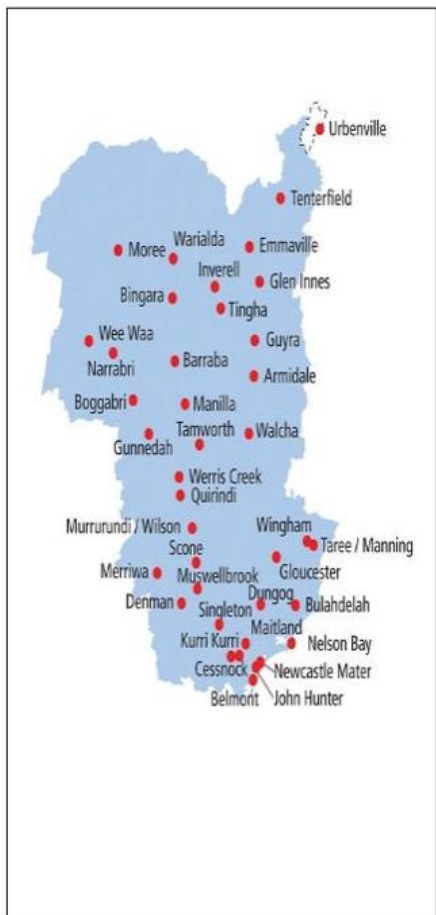
## General business, questions and updates

# Next meeting

✓ Meeting 7: Week commencing 15 June 2026

# Appendix

# Farmgate Support Program



**Additional Help Services**

**Lifeline -13 11 14**  
24/7 confidential crisis support

**NSW Mental Health Line - 1800 011 511**  
24/7 telephone assessment and referral service,

**Alcohol & Drug Information Service**  
1800 250 015 (24/7)  
Information, support, referral and counselling on drugs (legal and illegal) and alcohol  
And parents advice and assistance

**Suicide Call Back Service** 1300 659 467  
[www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au)  
24/7 telephone support and counselling for anyone affected by suicide


**Beyond Blue –1300 224 636**  
[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)  
24/7 mental health counselling, support and referral assistance

**Men’s Helpline – 1300 789 978 (24/7hrs)**  
[www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)  
Information and referral services for men with family and relationship concerns


**Kids Helpline** 1800 55 1800  
[www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)  
Young people 5-25 years old




**Health**  
Hunter New England  
Local Health District



**FARMGATE  
SUPPORT  
PROGRAM**



**0477 322 851**  
[HNELHD-FarmgateSupport@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:HNELHD-FarmgateSupport@health.nsw.gov.au)



**Health**  
Hunter New England  
Local Health District

**Farmgate Support Program**

The farmgate support program provides free mental health and emotional support to farmers, farming families, local businesses and service providers affected by the drought, bushfires & COVID 19.

The farmgate support program is designed to meet the needs of individuals, couples and families; whether they require short term conversations and information or ongoing formal counselling options.

The farmgate support program can also assist community members to access other mental health services they may require.



The **Farmgate Support Program** is designed to assist:

- Farmers and farming families
- Front line service/business providers
- Any other person who is experiencing stress from the drought, bushfires & COVID 19 throughout the Hunter New England Local Health District

**Service Delivery**

- The Farmgate Support Program is a free **mobile service** throughout the Hunter New England Local Health District
- Farmgate counsellors and Peer Workers are able to visit and provide service on farms, in homes and businesses
- Visits can also be arranged at any other place where confidentiality can be guaranteed

**How to Access the Farmgate Support Program**

- You can call or email yourself
- Referral by families, friends and service providers. To make a referral on behalf of someone else, you need their consent before contacting the Farmgate Support Team
- Intake phone number 0477 322 851
- [HNELHD-FarmgateSupport@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:HNELHD-FarmgateSupport@health.nsw.gov.au)

