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Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone Community Reference Group

Terms of Reference

July 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

The Energy Corporation of New South Wales acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. Since the Dreaming the People of Dharawal Country have cultivated and sustained a deep connection with their land, waters and skies which are central to their spiritual identity, despite the devastating impacts of colonisation and forced removal. 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. Through a shared voice and collective action, we can forge a more resilient region evident in economic, social and environmental aspects, while upholding our cultural values.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This document outlines the terms of reference for the Community Reference Group (CRG) for the Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone (REZ). As suggested by the name, the group is intended to represent local community and stakeholders from across the region and promote a two-way engagement on all the projects and initiatives the Energy Corporation of NSW seek to deliver as part of the Illawarra REZ.

1.2 Geographic Region and Scope

The Illawarra REZ was formally declared on 27 February 2023, with an intended network capacity of 1 GW. The REZ stretches from Wollongong to the Shoalhaven region on the NSW South Coast, on Dharawal land.

The Illawarra region has unique features that make it an ideal location for a REZ. It has major existing energy, port and transport infrastructure, along with a skilled workforce, industrial activity and strong capacity for integrating new and innovative renewable energy generation and storage solutions.

This REZ is intended to be NSW's first 'Urban REZ, leveraging the unique features of the Illawarra region to deliver cleaner and more affordable and reliable power to NSW homes and businesses, and do so in a manner that provides opportunity for local communities and businesses and continues to elevate the region as a great place to live, work and invest.

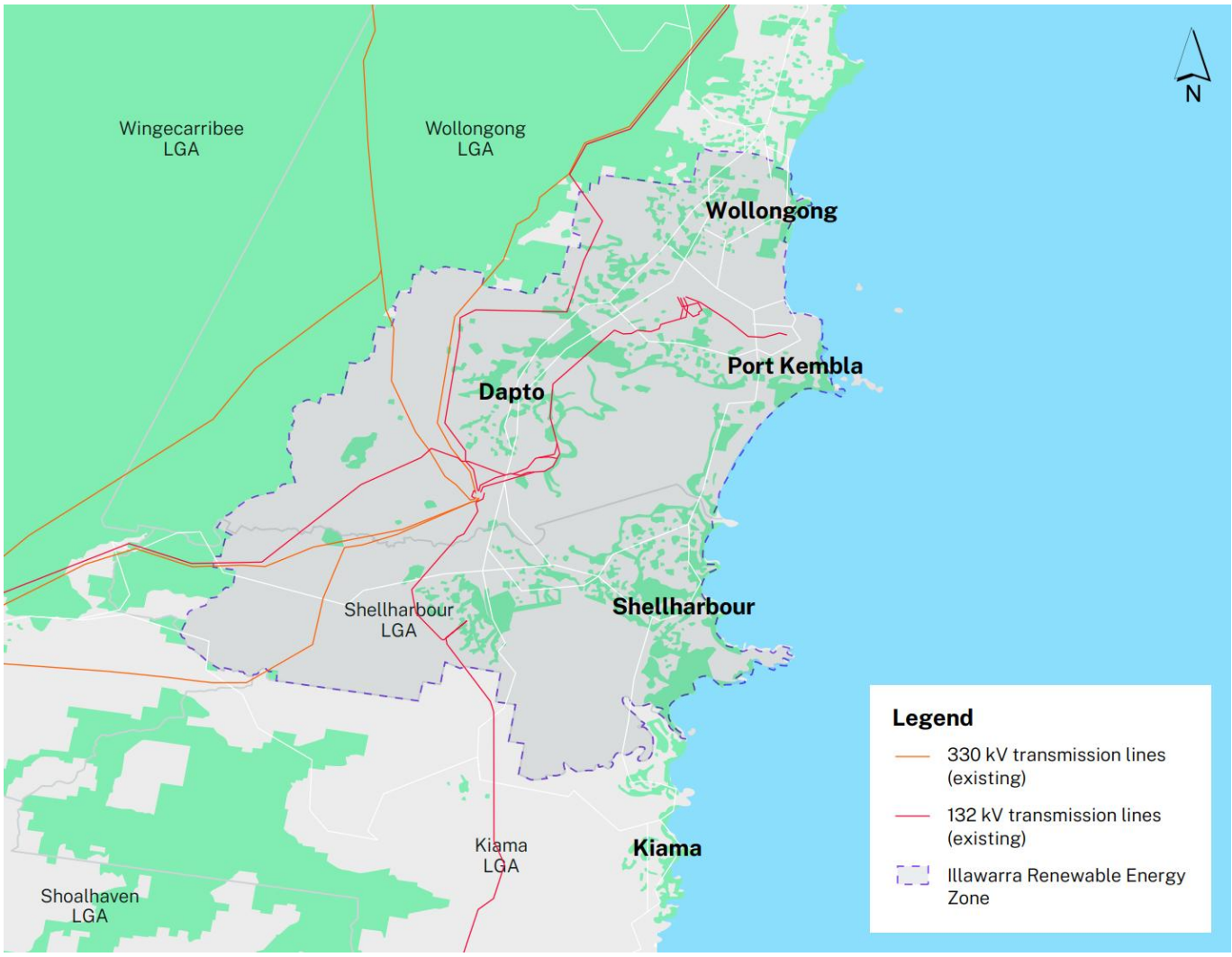

Figure 1 Illawarra REZ overview

The Illawarra is a regional hub for adjoining areas, both socially and economically, housing major industry (including BlueScope's steelworks), health, education, logistics and transport (with one of three Ports in the state). There are a number of major developments occurring within the Illawarra that will require reliable and affordable electricity into the future.

The Illawarra REZ Community Reference Group will play an important role in supporting EnergyCo to foster local community support for new generation, storage, network and related infrastructure through open and honest collaboration with diverse stakeholder groups. In addition, the Community Reference Group will assist EnergyCo in identifying opportunities and removing barriers to maximising benefits to the Illawarra community that can result from the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap and energy transition across NSW.

2 Overview

The EnergyCo Illawarra REZ Community Reference Group (ILW REZ CRG) will perform an advisory and consultative role with EnergyCo as the NSW Infrastructure Planner, and the broader community represented in the Illawarra region.

The purpose of the ILW REZ CRG is to:

- Facilitate genuine engagement between EnergyCo and the broader Illawarra community on all EnergyCo initiatives in the Illawarra REZ;
- Perform and advisory and consultative role regarding the planning, design and delivery of the Illawarra REZ;
- Provide independent, high-level input on the ILW REZ project;
- Allow EnergyCo to seek feedback from the community on project-related matters; and
- Give the community a forum to ask for information or give feedback.

2.1 Objectives and responsibilities

The ILW REZ CRG is established to perform an advisory and consultative role. The ILW REZ CRG performs a consultative role, but does not hold specific decision making powers. The ILW REZ CRG will provide a forum for strategic discussions between EnergyCo and the broader Illawarra community about all Illawarra projects across the three stages of the ILW REZ, including;

- The design of the Illawarra REZ;
- Community views on the Illawarra REZ;
- Actions to avoid and minimise impacts on people and the environment;
- Ideas and initiatives to maximise the benefits and build social licence for the Illawarra community; and
- Actions to reduce the cumulative impacts of the ILW REZ project.

2.2 Roles

The ILW REZ CRG will comprise of the following formal roles:

- Independent Chair – as outlined in the following section

- Deputy Independent Chair – as outlined in the following section
- Secretary – The EnergyCo Regional Coordination team will convene the meetings on behalf of EnergyCo

The ILW REZ CRG will be chaired by an Independent Chair and Deputy Chair (the Chairpersons). The Chairpersons are expected to:

- Provide leadership
- Be independent and impartial
- Act as the key contact between the ILW REZ CRG and EnergyCo
- Facilitate constructive discussion between members
- Give all members an opportunity to share their views
- Help resolve any differences of opinion between members fairly and transparently.

If the Chair is absent or unavailable to attend a meeting, the Deputy Independent Chair will act in their stead.

2.3 Membership

The ILW REZ CRG will be comprised of:

- An Independent Chair
- A Deputy Independent Chair
- A regional representative from First Nations Community
- A regional business and industry representative
- A regional environment representative
- Local community representatives with relevant project/subject matter expertise
- An EnergyCo representative.

The Chairpersons will be appointed via a procurement for services process.

EnergyCo will appoint the representatives for the ILW REZ CRG via a publicly promoted Expression of Interest. Appropriate members will be shortlisted and elected by EnergyCo's recommendation and final decision by the appointed Chair and Deputy Chair. The Chairpersons will be engaged via a NSW Government Procurement process prior to Expressions of Interest for membership are published.

Remuneration

The Chairpersons will be paid a daily sitting fee by EnergyCo for arranging and chairing meetings or attendance at other relevant events or engagements requested by EnergyCo.

Other members will not be paid for their services but will be able to recover any reasonable costs associated with attending meetings (petrol, meals, etc) from EnergyCo.

3 Meeting governance

3.1 Quorum

A representative of EnergyCo and six (6) community reference group members must be present to establish a quorum unless otherwise agreed by other committee members.

3.2 Meeting frequency

The ILW REZ CRG will be held at least four times a year, but more frequently if necessary. The Chairpersons will meet with EnergyCo on a quarterly basis to provide feedback to the EnergyCo team on any initiatives undertaken by the CRG and any initiatives planned by EnergyCo which require CRG input.

3.3 Venue

Committee meetings will be held face-to-face in Illawarra where practical. Face-to-face meetings may be held at a location nominated by core members on a rotating basis. Videoconferencing facilities will be provided to allow members to attend meetings remotely.

3.4 Guest attendees

Subject to approval from the Chairpersons/members, guests may be invited to join a committee meeting either as observers or to provide expert subject matter advice or project updates. This may include representatives from EnergyCo, Network Service Providers or Operators, other relevant State Agencies and technical experts or consultants.

3.5 Extraordinary meetings

If there are important and urgent matters requiring consideration, any member may ask the Chairpersons to convene an extraordinary meeting. The Chairpersons will decide whether the extraordinary meeting is warranted, or whether the matters can be addressed in other ways.

3.6 Notice period

Members of the committee will be given at least three weeks' notice before a regular meeting and one week's notice before an extraordinary meeting.

3.7 Consideration of Technical Expertise

The ILW REZ CRG may be provided with technical documentation or briefings from Technical Experts. This information will be provided to the ILW REZ CRG to inform considered and educated decision making. Where possible, technical documents will be provided with sufficient time for review with and will be covered within either regular or extraordinary meetings.

4 Issue resolution

All members recognise and accept the need to act in good faith and use their best endeavours to achieve the ILW REZ CRG objectives.

If circumstances arise where agreement cannot be reached despite the best efforts of members, the matter in question is to be referred to the Chairpersons and its resolution deferred until a process to reach agreement is confirmed by reference group members.

5 Conflicts of Interest

If a member of the ILW REZ CRG has a direct or indirect pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in a matter being considered or about to be considered at a meeting, and this interest appears to raise a conflict with the proper performance of the member's duties in relation to the consideration of the matter, the member must, as soon as possible, disclose the nature of the interest at the meeting.

Details of any disclosure will be recorded in the meeting minutes. The Chairpersons will determine if the member must leave the meeting for the duration of that agenda item. If the declared interest results in ongoing conflict, or may appear to result in ongoing conflict, the CRG may determine that the advice of a probity advisor is required and arrange for their engagement.

6 Confidentiality

All information provided to the ILW REZ CRG on a confidential basis must not be discussed with the broader community.

This does not apply to information which is in the public domain (other than through a breach of confidentiality), nor does it apply to disclosure of confidential information if required by law.

If ILW REZ CRG needs to discuss issues and share project information to progress the objectives of the ILW REZ CRG, appropriate confidentiality / commercial in confidence requirements must be in place and administered.

7 Media and public comment

The ILW REZ CRG may decide to release statements or other information to the media or adopt other approaches to publicise information. However, only the Chair may speak publicly to the media on behalf of the ILW REZ CRG, and should be coordinated through the EnergyCo Community Engagement and Media Team and / or the EnergyCo Illawarra Regional Team.

8 Terms of reference review

EnergyCo may propose changes to these terms of reference to ensure continued effectiveness. The Terms of Reference (ToR) have been designed to be a living document, subject to a 12-month review and refinement process. The review will include a thorough evaluation of the ToR's effectiveness in achieving its objectives. The findings of the review will be used to inform any necessary revisions or updates to the ToR, ensuring it remains current, relevant, and aligned with the ILW REZ CRG priorities.

Over time, EnergyCo may:

- Vary the Terms of Reference of the ILW REZ CRG
- Expand the membership of the ILW REZ CRG
- Replace the members of the ILW REZ CRG
- Provide further guidance on the operation of the ILW REZ CRG

Any changes would be made in consultation with the Chairpersons and ILW REZ CRG members.

9 Version control

Revision	Author	Description	Date
0.1	Lym Garratt – Manager Regional Coordination Illawarra	Draft for internal review	May 2026
0.2	Reviewed by Director Regional Infrastructure Branch	Circulation of a draft version	02 June 2026
0.3	Reviewed by Chairpersons	Circulation of a draft version	07 June 2026
0.4	Approved by Chairpersons	Final Copy	16 June 2026

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