

Biodiversity offsets

New England Renewable Energy Zone

July 2024

EnergyCo is leading the delivery of the New England REZ network infrastructure project to connect new renewable energy generation and storage in the REZ to the existing electricity network. The first two stages of the project are scheduled for completion by 2033 to ensure energy security across NSW as our coal-fired power stations retire.



Managing impacts to biodiversity

EnergyCo is designing and developing the REZs and network infrastructure projects to avoid and minimise impacts to native vegetation and habitat as much as possible. However, there will be unavoidable residual impacts to biodiversity from renewable energy developments in the REZs.

EnergyCo is working with government authorities, renewable energy developers, landowners and other key stakeholders to assess impacts to biodiversity, and explore strategic biodiversity offsetting and other measures to provide good long-term biodiversity outcomes.



Biodiversity offsets

A biodiversity offset is the protection of biodiversity values within a landscape, such as habitat for a particular species or vegetation type.

When a development impacts those biodiversity values, that impact must be offset by protecting and improving similar biodiversity values on another site. The flora and fauna of that offset site must be protected, managed and enhanced for it to be considered a biodiversity offset under NSW Government guidelines. The site must also achieve an improvement or gain in biodiversity values.

The [Biodiversity Offset Scheme](#) is a NSW Government framework for assessing and offsetting the impact of development on biodiversity in NSW. It aims to provide a transparent, consistent and scientifically-based approach to avoiding, minimising and offsetting impacts on native biodiversity. EnergyCo is developing the REZs and transmission projects in line with the biodiversity offset requirements outlined in the scheme. For more information about the NSW Government's Biodiversity Offset Scheme, visit environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity-offsets-scheme.

Biodiversity offset initiatives

When developing the REZs and network infrastructure projects, EnergyCo considers a range of options to offset potential biodiversity impacts:



Adding to conservation areas next to existing national parks



Implementing pest and weed control programs



Restoring degraded lands



Establishing biodiversity stewardship sites on land with good quality remnant vegetation or threatened species habitat for long term protection and management



Making financial contributions towards a fund to assist landowners of existing stewardship sites

These measures will provide a number of benefits for the regions, such as providing biodiversity stewardship opportunities for local landowners, potential expansion of national parks, and the management of invasive species and pests.

Biodiversity offsetting opportunities for landowners

Many private landowners in and around the REZs and network infrastructure projects have areas of native vegetation that may be protected for conservation purposes as a biodiversity stewardship site.

Stewardship sites can generate potential income for landowners. They are established through a biodiversity stewardship agreement over the land to generate biodiversity offset credits, which can then be sold.

EnergyCo has support available for landowners with suitable sites to assist them through the process. If you are a landowner interested in hosting a biodiversity stewardship site, we would like to hear from you.

For more information, visit the NSW Government's Environment and Heritage website at environment.nsw.gov.au and search 'biodiversity stewardship agreements' to read their landowner guide.

Contact us

Get in touch with our team if you have any questions or would like to learn more about hosting a biodiversity stewardship site.



nerez@energyco.nsw.gov.au



1800 061 114
(9am-5pm, Monday to Friday)



energyco.nsw.gov.au/ne



Scan the QR code for more information.



If you need help understanding this information, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450** and ask them to call us on **1800 061 114**.