

# Consultation feedback report summary

## Community and Employment Benefit Program

Modernising our electricity system is essential for clean, reliable and affordable energy across NSW, and presents an opportunity for once-in-a-lifetime investment in the regions. On top of improved regional infrastructure, the NSW Government will provide up to \$265 million in community funds and \$1.5 billion in landholder lease payments.

Since the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) was declared, EnergyCo has been consulting with the local community on a Community and Employment Benefit Program that will allocate an initial \$128 million to that REZ over the next four years. The program will provide this funding to community organisations, First Nation communities and local councils to contribute to the long-term prosperity of the region and ensure communities that host the new energy infrastructure are left better off than they were before.

The Community and Employment Benefit Program Consultation Feedback Report outlines the approach and findings from consultation undertaken in the region from 5 February to 10 March 2024. This consultation built on earlier work done in 2023 to understand both community sentiment and cumulative impacts.

The report summarises the consultation insights, activities (including channels, feedback mechanisms and promotions), audiences and stakeholders, findings and next steps.

- **Hundreds of community members and stakeholders participated in EnergyCo's consultation activities.** From 5 February to 10 March 2024: 176 people attended a briefing session, 63 attended six facilitated stakeholder workshops, 98 attended eight community drop-in sessions, 104 attended pop-up stands at community-led events and 147 completed an online survey.
- **Funding priorities remained consistent with those identified during earlier consultation phases:**



Housing and accommodation



Roads and transport (condition, capacity, and traffic)



Training, apprenticeship, employment, and business opportunities



Environmental programs, water and sewerage infrastructure, and utilities



Social infrastructure and services



Telecommunications

- **New benefit priorities were identified**, relating to the strategic visioning of the program. This includes ensuring initiatives are long-term and provide meaningful legacy, as well as ensuring equitable benefits are fair and locally appropriate.
- **New community concerns were identified across the REZ**, including concerns over cost of living and retaining local populations.
- **Respondents provided feedback on the design and delivery of the program**. This included the need to provide application support, aligning funding decisions with the needs of communities including incentives for people to stay in the region, and ensuring benefits are delivered in consultation with communities.

The full Report can be accessed on the [EnergyCo website](#).

The key findings of the report have informed the Program's policy and grant guidelines, which set out the fund allocation process and criteria in more detail (also available on the EnergyCo website).

If you would like further information or to stay up to date, we encourage community members to subscribe for email updates by contacting our team on 1800 032 101 or by emailing [cwo@energyco.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cwo@energyco.nsw.gov.au).

