

New England REZ network infrastructure project

October 2024 project update

The New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) is a critical energy project for NSW that will provide clean and reliable electricity to consumers for generations to come. 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.

Study corridor for the REZ network infrastructure project

The New England REZ will be serviced by new network infrastructure, including transmission lines, energy hubs and enabling infrastructure which will transfer power generated by solar, wind and storage projects to electricity consumers.

EnergyCo is in the early stages of planning the new network infrastructure needed to unlock and service the New England REZ.

We have been consulting with landowners, communities and stakeholders on a study corridor for the REZ network infrastructure project since June 2023.

We would like to thank the community for working with us to date and we'll continue to work with landowners and the community to further refine the study corridor.

Project snapshot

The New England REZ network infrastructure project will include:



Four energy hubs to connect future energy generation and storage projects in the REZ



New single 500kV and 330kV transmission lines to connect proposed energy hubs in the REZ



New dual 500kV transmission lines to connect the REZ to the existing electricity network in Bayswater, near Muswellbrook



Enabling infrastructure, including upgraded or new access tracks and public roads, upgrades to existing electricity and utility infrastructure, and construction works and facilities.

Feedback received and information gathered from ongoing field investigations to date has resulted in:



**Better outcomes
for communities
and the
environment**



**About 80 fewer
landholders
in the study
corridor**



**A total reduction
in transmission
easements of
39 kilometres**



Community engagement session in Armidale



McCully's Gap



Field investigations



Walcha

How community feedback is helping shape the study corridor

Local input is important and has informed our planning since the release of the preliminary study corridor in June 2023.

We are committed to ongoing engagement with the community to ensure local knowledge and perspectives are considered in the planning process. Community feedback helps us to better understand what is important to communities as we develop the REZ.

Following consultation with landowners, community and stakeholders, a number of changes were made to the alignment which we announced as part of the revised study corridor in March 2024. This included:

- Realignment to avoid crossing Boorolong Creek improving environmental outcomes, as well as a reduction in the number of landowners impacted and a reduction in the amount of transmission line located in a flood zone.

- Realignment near Glenbawn and Gundy to help minimise impacts to neighbours and reduce the overall length of the transmission line and increase the use of state-owned land.
- Realignment near Loomberah, Dungowan, Woolomin and Mulla Creek to increase the use of state-owned land, minimise impacts to smaller lifestyle properties and minimise the number of dwellings visually impacted by infrastructure.
- Realignment between McCully's Gap and Muscle Creek to help reduce impacts to landowners in this area.

We are currently working with impacted landowners to further refine the corridor. Early and ongoing engagement is important to help us better understand individual land use and local priorities. It also allows us to design the project in a way that avoids, mitigates and manages potential impacts to property and flora and fauna species wherever possible.

Working with generator design partners

EnergyCo has been working with the developers of proposed major generation and storage projects who plan to connect to the New England REZ network infrastructure project over the past year. These developers are known as our generator design partners.

We are working with generator design partners to carefully plan the REZ and ensure the new network is fit for purpose. EnergyCo is currently investigating options to connect generators to the REZ network infrastructure in a coordinated way, including potentially sharing connection lines where possible to reduce visual impacts and the location of infrastructure on private land.

For information on how EnergyCo identified generator design partners, visit our website at energyco.nsw.gov.au/ne

Generator project approval pathway

Generation and storage projects that wish to connect to the new network infrastructure will need to apply for access rights through a competitive tender process, where projects are assessed on merits including impact on the electricity system, community engagement approach and organisational capacity. Successful projects will contribute access fees that include funds for community benefit and employment purposes in the region once they are operational.

Access schemes are a key part of the NSW Government's plan to coordinate and encourage renewable energy and storage investment in REZs and realise the objectives of the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. For more information, visit [Access schemes](#).

Developers of renewable energy projects are also required to seek other necessary approvals to allow for the construction and operation of their projects in accordance with relevant legislation. This includes submitting a development application to obtain development consent from the Minister for Planning or the Independent Planning Commission.

Development applications

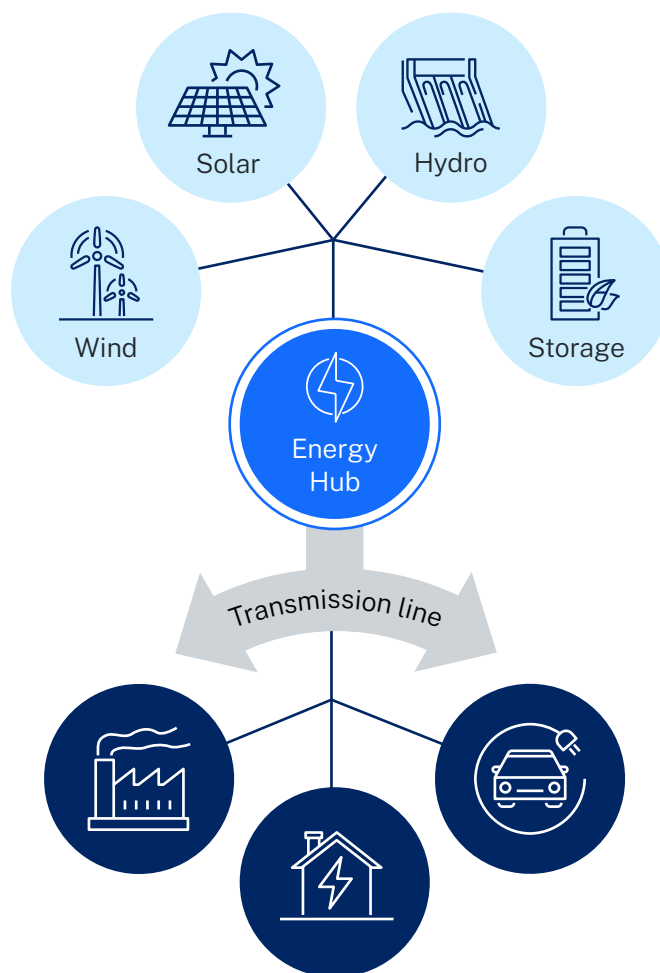
Energy generation projects, including wind and solar projects, with a capital investment value of more than \$30 million are classed as State significant development (SSD) under the [State Environmental Planning Policy \(Planning Systems\) 2021](#).

Generation projects that meet this criteria are required to submit development applications (DA) with the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

DPHI coordinates the assessment of applications under the [Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979](#). This includes working with other government agencies and councils, encouraging community participation, and preparing a detailed whole-of-government assessment report.

For more details on the DA process for all SSD projects, including generators, visit our website at energyco.nsw.gov.au/ne/renewable-energy-generation-projects

How a REZ works



Legend

- Light blue circle: New renewable generation
- Dark blue circle: New REZ infrastructure
- Grey arrow: Existing transmission network
- Dark blue circle: Energy users



Generator connections to existing network infrastructure

Not all generation projects within the REZ are connecting to the new REZ infrastructure, there are some projects connecting to the existing Transgrid network.

Generation projects connecting to the existing Transgrid network infrastructure will negotiate connection easements through mutually agreed arrangements with landowners and will be required to receive an offer to connect from Transgrid.

For enquiries about generator connections to the Transgrid network infrastructure, you can contact individual project developers via their contact details or Transgrid by calling 1800 222 537.

See where generator projects are proposed in the REZ

You can now see where approved generator projects or those currently seeking planning approval are located on the New England REZ interactive map on our website.

We will continue to update the interactive map as more information is available.

Please note, the interactive map includes projects which have lodged a scoping report with the DPHI, or where information is available from our generator design partners.



Scan the QR code to view the interactive map.



Coordinating the delivery of the REZ

Early and ongoing engagement with generation and storage project developers helps us to coordinate the delivery of community benefits, manage potential impacts and ensure the New England REZ leaves a lasting positive legacy for the region.

We are working with developers of generation projects, local councils, government agencies and other key stakeholders on strategies to ensure potential cumulative impacts and benefits are managed and coordinated within the REZ.

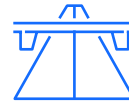
Key topics being investigated include:



Workforce accommodation



Training and employment opportunities



Roads and traffic management



Water and wastewater use



Waste management



A range of key community and social services

For more information please see the fact sheets on the project documents page on our website:

- [Coordinating generation and storage in the REZ](#)
- [Delivering community benefits](#)

Register your interest for our community reference groups

Applications are now open to join one of our community reference groups (CRG) for the New England REZ.

Two groups will be established:

- **North CRG:** to represent communities in the New England REZ boundary
- **South CRG:** to represent communities between the REZ boundary and the southern end of the corridor at Bayswater near Muswellbrook

The CRGs will provide a forum between EnergyCo, community representatives and key stakeholders to provide project information and gather community feedback. The groups will play a critical role to foster open, transparent and regular communication, enabling us to work with the community to address challenges and maximise community benefits.

We are looking for a mix of people who live locally or who have interests in the project, including community, environment, First Nations and industry groups. The CRGs will be facilitated by an independent chairperson engaged by EnergyCo.

To register your interest, complete an application form on our website at energyco.nsw.gov.au or contact 1800 061 114 or nerez@energyco.nsw.gov.au. Applications close on 8 November 2024.

SEARs issued for the REZ network infrastructure project

The REZ network Infrastructure project has received the Secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARs) from The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

The SEARs outline the specific environmental, social and economic factors which need to be considered and addressed in the project's environmental impact statement (EIS).

SEARS help ensure the project is carefully planned to minimise and mitigate potential impacts to the environment and the community. The SEARs are available to view on the NSW Major Projects Planning Portal at planningportal.nsw.gov.au



Working with landowners

Meeting with landowners and carrying out field investigations in the study corridor is a critical part of the planning process. Local knowledge helps us ensure local matters, land use, and environmental, cultural, and social factors are considered as we design the transmission route.



Why is local knowledge important?

- **Understanding land use:** Landowners are familiar with local land use, such as agricultural, commercial or residential which helps us to identify the best suited location for the infrastructure, and areas to avoid.
- **Environmental considerations:** Local communities have a unique understanding of sensitive ecosystems, flood-prone areas or places of natural beauty which may not be included on topographical maps.
- **Cultural and heritage sites:** Communities are closely connected to historical and cultural sites and can help us avoid these areas to maintain the cultural integrity of the region.
- **Economic and social impact:** Landowners can provide insights into how infrastructure might affect local businesses, traffic, and housing, as well as where development could best support economic growth.

Engaging with local stakeholders will help ensure the network infrastructure is delivered in a way that respects local needs and contributes to the overall success and sustainability of the project.



Engaging with communities

Following the release of the project's scoping report, EnergyCo held 12 community sessions in August and September, attended by more than 550 community members from across the region.

Community information sessions were held in Muswellbrook, Murrurundi, Tamworth, Woolomin, Uralla and Armidale. Additional community pop-up sessions were held in Scone, Walcha, Wallabadah, Muswellbrook, and AgQuip in Gunnedah.

The sessions provided an opportunity for the community to meet the project team, get the latest updates and ask questions about the project. We will continue to hold regular community pop-up sessions in the New England REZ, and share details of upcoming pop-ups on our website at energyco.nsw.gov.au.



Community pop-up sessions

EnergyCo will hold a series of community pop-up sessions throughout the year so you can speak to the team, ask questions and provide feedback. During the next month you can find us at:

Tamworth

Sunday 20 October,
8am to 1pm at Peel St
Markets, 400 Peel Street,
Tamworth, NSW 2340

Uralla

Saturday 26 October,
10.30am to 3pm at
Thunderbolts Festival Uralla,
Alma Park, Queen Street,
Uralla NSW 2358

Gundy

Thursday 31 October, 3pm
to 6pm, at Gundy Soldiers'
Memorial Hall, 10 Duke
Street, Gundy, NSW 2337

Armidale

Saturday 9 November,
10am to 4pm at Black Gully
Festival, Black Gully Reserve,
Armidale NSW 2350

We will be visiting other communities in the project area throughout the year. Visit our website for the latest updates.

Engagement snapshot to date:

5240



community and stakeholder interactions to date

12



pop-up engagement sessions engaging with 385 people in the region

2700+



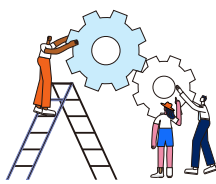
phone calls, emails or SMS with community members and stakeholders this year

9



e-newsletters to 650+ registered community members and stakeholders

24



community information sessions with 978 attendees

529



individual or group meetings held

Next steps

EnergyCo is carrying out field investigations to help refine the New England REZ network infrastructure project study corridor and inform the environmental studies needed to assess the project. This work includes ecological surveys, heritage surveys, visual assessments and geotechnical investigations that will take place throughout 2024 and 2025.

Investigations will be carried out in the preferred study corridor, generally focusing on an area about 250m wide in the centre of the corridor. The preferred study corridor can be viewed on our interactive map.

This work will help us better understand local land uses and allow us to confirm environmental conditions, local ecology and understand engineering constraints to inform the design and EIS for the project.

The EIS is expected to be placed on public exhibition in late 2025.

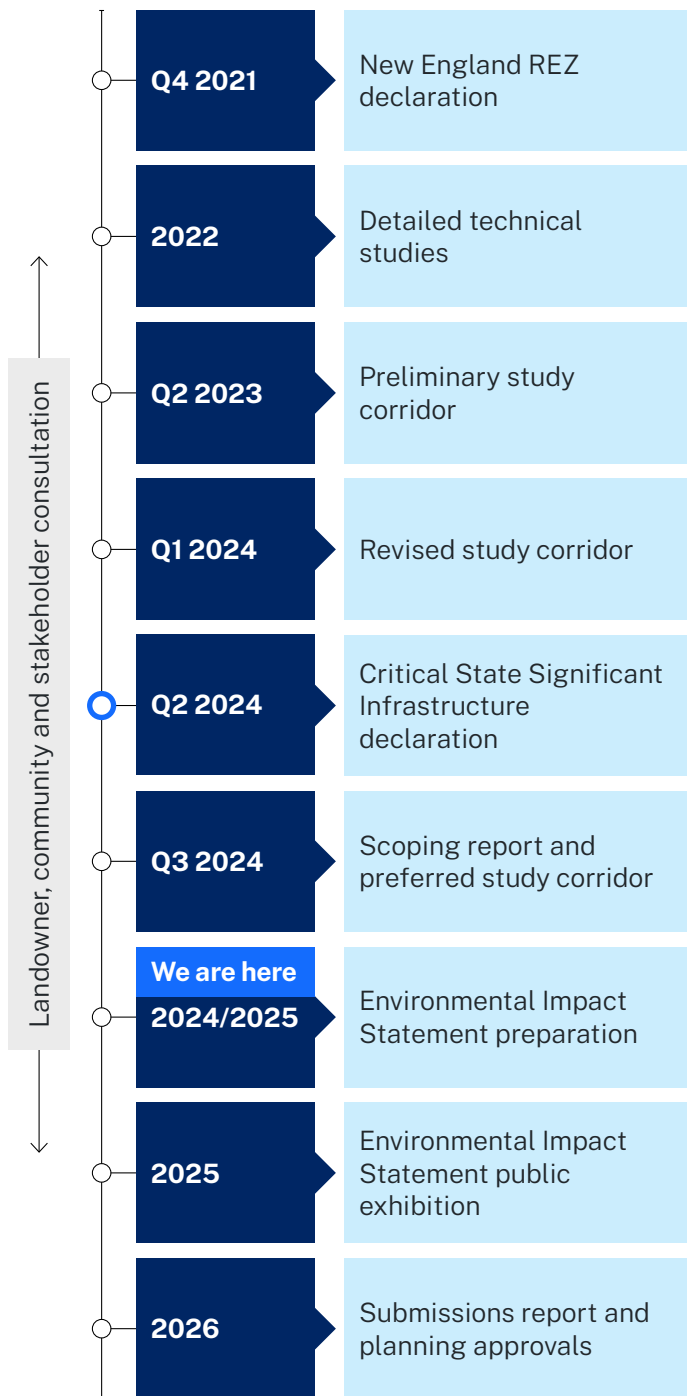


Tamworth



Walcha

Project development timeline



New England Highway

About EnergyCo

The Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) is a statutory authority responsible for leading the delivery of Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) as part of the NSW Government's Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap.

EnergyCo is working closely with communities, investors and industry to deliver the state's five REZs.

For more information about EnergyCo, visit our website at energyco.nsw.gov.au/about-energyco.

Contact us

For more information about the New England REZ project, you can visit our website or contact the project team.



nerez@energyco.nsw.gov.au



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



energyco.nsw.gov.au/ne



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**.



Share your feedback

EnergyCo wants to hear what you think about our plans. If you have questions or want to give feedback, please get in touch with our team. You can find more information on our website by scanning the QR code or by visiting energyco.nsw.gov.au.