

Minutes

HTP Regional Reference Group – Meeting

Monday, 4 November 2024

2:00pm – 4:00pm

Singleton Shire Council, 12 – 14 Queen Street or Teams

Chaired by: Bob Pynsent – Independent Chair

| Online | In person | Apology | Name | Represents |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bob Pynsent (BP) | Independent Chair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sue Moore (SM) | Mayor Singleton Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Daniel Watton (DW) | Mayor Cessnock City Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Adam Schultz (AS) | Lake Macquarie City Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | John Sullivan (JS) | Singleton community |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Phillip O’Neill (PO) | Cessnock community |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Diane Crosdale (DC) | Lake Macquarie community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Craig Anderson (CA) | Regional Environment |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Samantha Martin-Williams (SMW) | Regional Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Nathan Towney (NT) | Regional Aboriginal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Katie Brassil (KB) | RRG Secretariat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Alana Kosklin (AK) | RRG Secretariat |

Visitors

| | NAME | POSITION |
|-----------|------------------|---|
| In Person | Carolyn McCallig | HTP Environment and Planning Lead |
| In Person | Rodney Groves | HTP Community Team |
| In Person | Darren Clarke | NSW EnergyCo Director Regional Coordination |

Declarations of interest

Nil to declare.

Agenda item discussion and actions

Item 1. Welcome and Acknowledgement

The Chair delivered an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed members and visitors in attendance, both in person and virtually to the November meeting of the RRG. He also thanked Mayor Sue Moore and Singleton Council for hosting on short notice.

Item 2. EIS Update

Presentation by Carolyn McCallig, HTP Environment and Planning Lead

Carolyn introduced herself and her role with the Hunter Transmission Project. She provided details and updates on:

- Update on assessment report
- Project improvements
- Current activities
- What comes next

Presentation slides attached.

Discussion by members covered:

- The interface with the defence land
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage site visits and engagement with Registered Aboriginal Parties' (RAPs).
- The Community team's ongoing engagement activities, avenues and opportunities for stakeholders to be informed and provide input, prior to the EIS going public.
- The aviation report and engagement with the Glider Club.
- Construction compound sites and access roads.
- Benefits sharing scheme, noting the many impacts that will be felt by the Hunter region from hosting the HTP.
- Suggestion that a 6-week exhibition period for the EIS is too short.

Discussion:

SM – asked about the interface with defence land.

CM – advised the operations imperatives of the base could not to be impacted and there was a need to minimise environment/ heritage impacts consistent with state plans.

SM – enquired about Aboriginal Cultural Heritage site visits and assessments

RG – advised identified Registered Aboriginal Parties' (RAPs) had been engaged. Both site and individual visits with RAP's including the relevant consultants were being conducted. Consultation and engagement were ongoing to ensure all relevant input is captured.

SM – A question from the recent Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue forum was about return of aboriginal artifacts to country after mining.

RG – explained the process, site visits and changes included in the alignment to reflect and minimise aboriginal cultural heritage impacts

RG – provided feedback from the Aboriginal community that was positive of the engagement process

SM – asked about progress on the issues raised by the Glider Club

CM and RG – indicated the aviation report was being finalised and they would be in position to share findings soon

SM – enquired about the approval process required for construction compound

CM – informed construction compound approvals will be assessed and included in the CSSI approval process

BP – asked for more details around construction compounds

CM – explained there was a need for three construction compounds that would be shared by both the transmission and switching station contractors. Too early to share exact detail as discussion with potential landowners was in the early stages. Will provide report to the RRG in December.

PO – asked about how best for individuals to engage on specific issues prior to the EIS going on public exhibition

CM – outlined the role of consultants working for the proponent (EnergyCo) on technical aspects of the projects EIS. Ongoing engagement underpins and informs the process. The Community Team's role is to provide the activities, avenues and opportunities for stakeholders to be informed and provide input.

PO – asked about construction compound sites and access routes engagement

CM – advised directly impacted stakeholders are already being consulted. Those indirectly impacted stakeholders and the community more broadly will be included in the consultation process. Still in the process of working through and finalising reports therefore too early to share more broadly yet.

CA – Feedback re: EPBC referral

CM – demonstrated reduction in impacts – request to vary the referral to reflect reduced impacts.

CA – is it a bilateral assessment.

CM – yes - a quasi-bilateral assessment

CA – wants to see how the region will benefit from offsetting by virtue of the region hosting this infrastructure for the benefit of the entire state. There are very large residual impacts, and the Hunter wants to benefit. Minister has discretion to influence a strategically beneficial offset outcome to reflect and meet regional expectations.

DC – Explanation re: role of DCS and need for a regional coordinated approach to maximise the benefits to the region. Recent request from Minister for EnergyCo to deal directly with BCS. Any existing individual arrangements are linked to reputation and relationship management. A strategic offset delivery plan will be presented to the Board.

CA – supports the approach to offsetting and reinforced the need for a strategic approach to offsetting. To avoid death by a thousand cuts which is what has been experienced in the past.

CA – suggested the exhibition period for the EIS in July/ August next year needs to be for a longer period of 6 weeks. Acknowledging this is a decision for Planning.

Item 3. Community Team Update

Presentation by Rodney Groves, HTP Community Team

Rodney provided a Community Team update as per the slides, noting that feedback specifically from the Aboriginal community has been positive and they appreciate the ongoing and regular contact and consultation.

Discussion by members covered:

- RAP engagement process.
- Recent pop-up sessions hosted by the community team and a reminder of upcoming sessions.
- Access and construction roads with interest for more information to be shared when available in the middle of next month.

Discussion:

RG - Feedback from Aboriginal community has been positive, and they appreciate the ongoing and regular contact and consultation.

CA – asked if there was RAP involvement in designing test excavation works

CM and RG – reinforced the process and RAP engagement. Great feedback and input and interesting finds which have informed the alignment. Reinforced cultural impacts are broader than just sites or finds and importantly include sight lines, law and dreaming stories.

RG – provided feedback from pop-up sessions in Singleton, Morisset and Cessnock and reminded members there were more in the same locations this coming week.

BP – more detail needed re: access and construction roads

CM – Information update will be shared with the RRG at the December meeting

Item 4. What Else is Happening Regionally

Presentation by Darren Clarke – NSW Energy Co Director, Regional Coordination

Darren introduced himself and his role to provide an overarching and coordinated approach across all EnergyCo projects in the Hunter and Central Coast. That he can provide feedback on cumulative impacts, synergies and enabling infrastructure to government. Project overview of HCC REZ and Port to REZ with slides.

Discussion by members covered:

- Fostering better community support for renewable energy.
- Queries regarding benefits for the region given impacts from the projects.
- Details of what the \$128 million Port to REZ budget would include.

- EnergyCo’s plan for support for Councils

Discussion:

DC – asked the RRG to provide any suggestions re: fostering better community support for renewables.

SM – identified the four-pinch point in the Singleton LGA ie. Jerrys Plains for Port to REZ project.

CA – reinforced that in relation to offsetting and biodiversity our region we will be looking under the Christmas tree for the benefits

PO – asked what activities were included in the \$128 million Port to REZ budget.

DC – explained the \$128 million was to upgrade highways to facilitate the transport of renewable projects infrastructure ie. blades for wind turbines and will be funded and managed by government. In the case of the HCC REZ and HTP the Network Operation will be responsible for upgrades to local roads.

Item 5. General Business

| Action | Responsible | Status |
|--|--------------------|---------|
| <p>The HTP RRG to hold an extraordinary meeting online:</p> <p>When: 2 December 2024</p> <p>Time: 10am – 12 noon</p> <p>Agenda: An update on the following items – construction compound, laydown areas and construction access roads, engineering and planning support for Council’s</p> | Chair /Secretariat | ongoing |
| <p>The secretariat to arrange a meeting between the RRG Chair and HTP Project leaders to reinforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the importance of support for councils • biodiversity offsets and benefit sharing | Chair/ Secretariat | ongoing |
| <p>Darren Clarke to arrange for a representative of Ausgrid to present at a future meeting of the RRG on the HCC REZ.</p> | Darren Clarke | ongoing |
| <p>Share graphics x 2</p> | Chair/ Secretariat | ongoing |

Upcoming meetings

The next meeting of the HTP RRG will be an Extraordinary Meeting:

Date: Monday 2 December 2024

Time: 10am – 12 noon

Place: Teams/ online

Meeting Schedule for 2025:

3 February – TBC - Lake Macquarie City Council - *to hear from regional business organisations*

5 May - TBC

4 August – TBC

3 November – TBC

Meetings to be held on the first Monday of the month from 10am – 12noon.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution to the discussions.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 3:45pm.

EnergyCo

The Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) is part of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)

Carolyn McCallig

Environment and Planning Lead

Hunter Transmission Project

4 November 2024



Recap



EnergyCo

- Project Scoping Report submitted to DPHI in May 2024
- SEARs issued for HTP in August 2024
- EPBC Act Referral submitted to DCCEEW in June 2024
- Between May and September 2024 work was undertaken to refine the corridor to improve project outcomes for people and the environment including alignment changes and careful selection of construction ancillary locations

Update on assessment scope



EnergyCo

Project changes since Scoping Report

- **Transmission line corridor**
 - South of the Hunter Valley Operations coal mine to avoid proposed HVO expansion area and levee on the Hunter River
 - Further east of Mount Thorley to increase separation between private properties and a major hazard facility in Mount Thorley Industrial Estate
 - In the Singleton Military Area (SMA), in response to advice from the Department of Defence
 - In Pokolbin State Forest, Corrabare State Forest, and Olney State Forest in response to environmental constraints identified during field work, bushfire considerations, and feedback from private property owners and Forestry Corporation of NSW
 - Near Cedar Creek to avoid private property impacts and to address design and constructability constraints, bushfire considerations and minimise vegetation clearing
- **Construction support sites, accommodation camps and access tracks**
 - Construction compounds and worker support sites indicative and subject to ongoing negotiations. At least three accommodation camps will be required
 - Combination of existing access tracks/roads and new / upgraded tracks
- **Network enhancement**
 - Stringing of communications infrastructure and structural strengthening of towers along the existing 500 kV transmission line between Kemps Creek and Eraring Power Station and the 500 kV line to Bayswater Power Station.
 - Minimal impacts expected as these works would be undertaken within the existing Transgrid easements

Project improvements



EnergyCo

Impacts to private properties

- There are **less than 25 private properties** located in the HTP corridor – reduced from 78 in the preliminary corridor presented to the community in late 2023

Disturbance areas

- Scoping Report – considered impacts within a 1km wide project corridor (construction and operations)
- Design refinement and measures to avoid impacts has reduced this to 140 m project corridor and a 70m wide operational easement
- Less riparian areas in disturbance area
- Less areas of cultural value in disturbance area

| | Scoping | Current |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|
| Project area (ha) | 10,713 | 3,469 |
| Disturbance area (ha) | 1,835 | 1,301 |
| Native vegetation impacted | 1,300 | 498 |

Indicative only subject to further refinement

Current activities



EnergyCo

Biodiversity

- Spring surveys ongoing – August to November 2024
- Summer Surveys planned – December 2024 to February 2025

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

- Test excavations occurring – HVO, Corrabare and Department of Defence land
- Ongoing consultation with RAPS and other Aboriginal stakeholders

Other investigations/surveys

- Bushfire, visual, noise and vibration, traffic, geotech (inc. contamination), surface water quality

Engagement to seek feedback and inputs into assessment scope

- As per Rodney's slides
- Social and agriculture – surveys and land productivity (questionnaires)

What comes next



EnergyCo

EIS

- Surveys and fieldwork to continue through to early 2025
- EIS development and assessment of impacts informed by field investigations and community and stakeholder engagement – now to public exhibition of EIS.
- EIS lodgement – Late June/Early July 2025
- Public exhibition – July / Aug 2025

Design

- Ongoing design refinements within the transmission corridor to minimise impacts further
- Further analysis of construction requirements including construction compounds, accommodation camps and access tracks
- Site selection process to conclude for DoD Singleton Military Area

Property

- EnergyCo is in the process of negotiating with landowners for a permanent easement acquisition of land to host the transmission line
- We're also working with some landowners to acquire an access easement (for an access track) or construction lease (for laydown areas, intersection upgrades and road widening).



Questions?

EnergyCo

The Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) is part of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)

Rodney Groves

Engagement Lead

Hunter Transmission Project

4 November 2024



EIS engagement in October

Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) engagement

- Received briefing on archaeological work to date and upcoming as the project progresses. Test excavations have started.

Community consultation/engagement activities

- Pop-up community information stalls in each zone eg. Singleton Square, Cessnock Village, Morisset Square – 22/23 October 2024.
- 30+ community members stopped to talk to staff popping-up.
- Environmental, Visual and Construction/Traffic impacts were noted as specific topics of interest by those that indicated they would like to receive more information via E-newsletter.



EnergyCo



Upcoming EIS engagement



EnergyCo

Community consultation/engagement activities

- Pop-up community information stalls in each zone eg. Singleton Square, Cessnock Village, Morisset Square
- Bulk mailout inviting people to select topics of interest to receive targeted updates (webinars, FAQs, EDM)
- Targeted access road webinars
- Communication pack to support the revised timeline
- Indigenous Chamber of Commerce Stall
- Hunter ALP Caucus Meeting - briefing
- Utilities and Water briefing sessions (support technical Teams).

Technical Sessions

- For stakeholders who have registered an interest through the bulk mailout and/or via a call out in the monthly EDM eg. Biodiversity, traffic, Aboriginal cultural heritage.

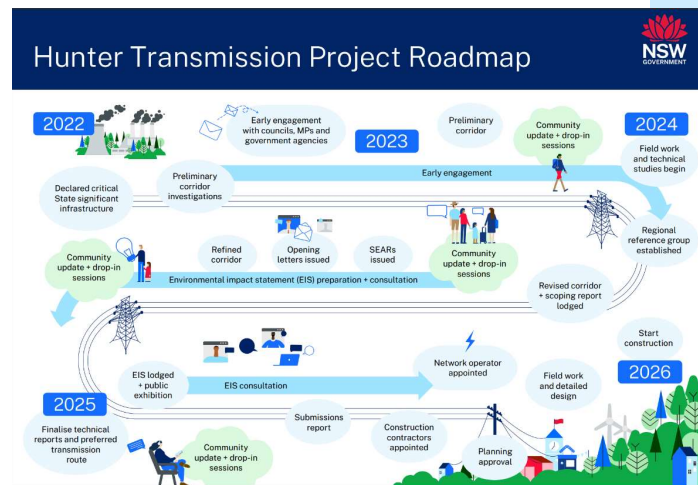
Communications activity



EnergyCo

Communications

- Revised timeline shared late October via e-newsletter – no feedback received
- Refining HTP – next project update – due in late November
- Advertising (radio and press) to commence 5/11 to drive awareness of HTP / upcoming report.



Property acquisition update



EnergyCo

Landowner engagement activities - October

- Opening letters sent or delivered to a further 11 landowners (21 total)
- Most were for road access easement lease agreements and one for full acquisition for the transmission line
- Direct meetings with 6 acquisition affected landowners
- Working with the Field Work team to facilitate access to private property for flora and fauna surveys; cultural heritage surveys and geotech surveys

Upcoming Landowner engagement activities

- Direct meeting with 2 more landowners following opening letters
- Continue checking with landowners post opening letter to offer support
- Work across the communications and engagement teams on communications for roads impacted stakeholders
- Support the Property and Field Work teams.



Questions?

EnergyCo

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Darren Clarke


Director Regional Coordination


EnergyCo


4 November 2024





Hunter Central Coast REZ

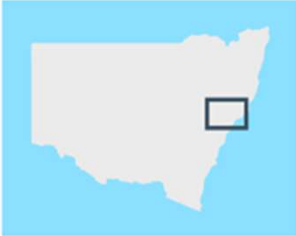
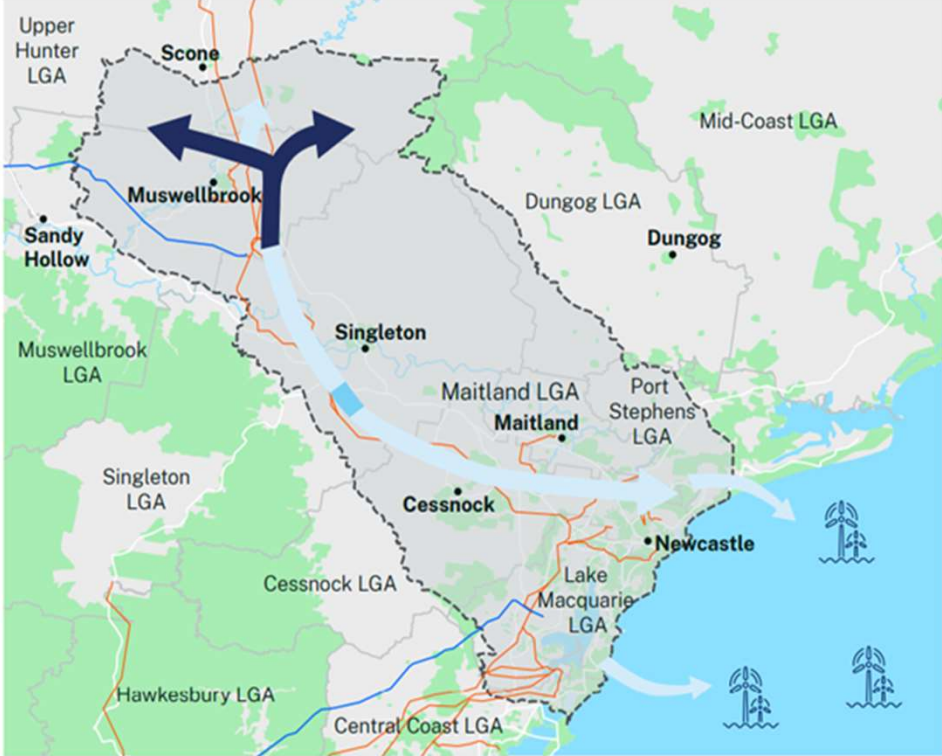
 Declared REZ on 9 December 2022

 1GW Intended Network Capacity

 Currently working with Ausgrid to deliver network solution

 Significant utilisation of existing electricity infrastructure

 Network Solution to be delivered by mid-2028



Legend

-  Major Roads and Highways
-  Existing 500 kV Network
-  Existing 330 kV Network
-  Deliver Now
-  Secure Now
-  Plan for the Future
-  Potential future Commonwealth Offshore Wind Zone

Source: NSW Network Infrastructure Strategy, May 2023

Preferred Network Operator – Ausgrid

EnergyCo is working with Ausgrid as the preferred Network Operator. Ausgrid's proposed project solution appropriately meets the required objectives for the current 1GW HCC REZ target and has capacity to deliver in a manner that:

- a. minimises disruption to local communities;
- b. avoids significant environmental impact; and
- c. is predominately confined to landowners already hosting electricity infrastructure



Demonstrated experience in electricity infrastructure delivery



Strong relationships with equipment suppliers and delivery partners.









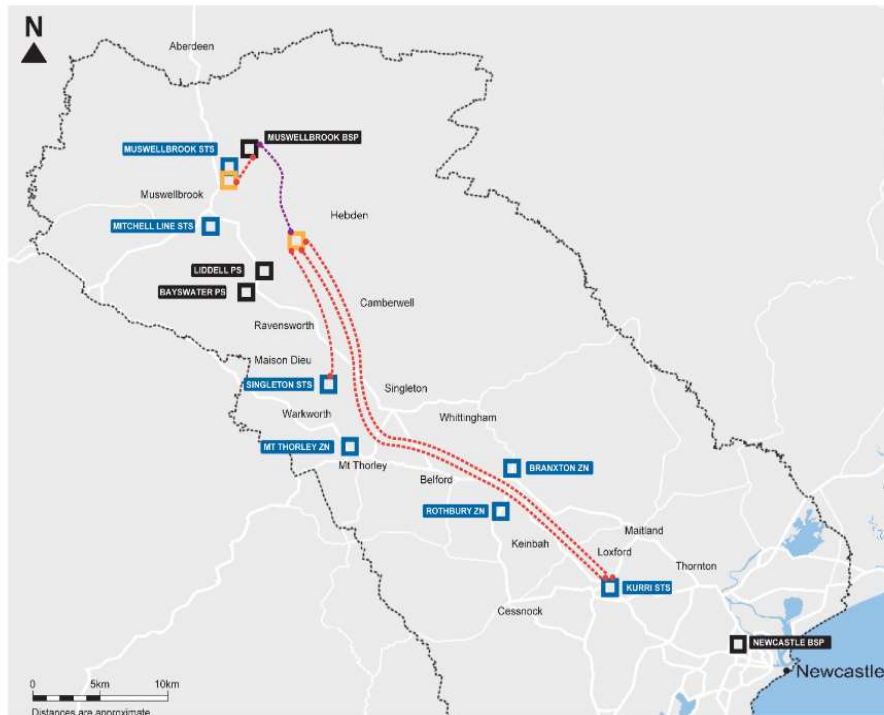
Ability to leverage pre-existing landowner relationships to support delivery.



Proposed Solution Overview - Ausgrid

LEGEND

- Facilities**
-  Existing Ausgrid Substation
 -  Proposed New Substation
 -  Existing Transgrid Substation or AGL Powerstation
- Connections**
-  Proposed power line corridor to be rebuilt
 -  Proposed communications cable to be installed within power line corridor
- Boundaries**
-  HCC REZ Boundary



This map has spatial representations of the proposed electrical connections. These do not represent specific line easements.

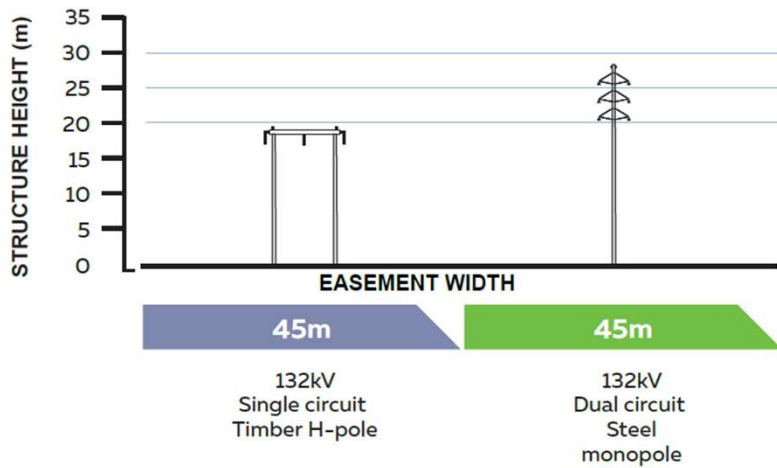
Ausgrid's proposed 1GW solution is predominantly brownfield and would be delivered in three stages. Staging allows for allow for the 1GW network capacity to be commissioned progressively:

SP 1: Upper Hunter Secondary Systems Modernisation (350MW)

SP 2: Muswellbrook Network Rearrangement and Singleton to Kurri 132kV link (630MW, cumulative)

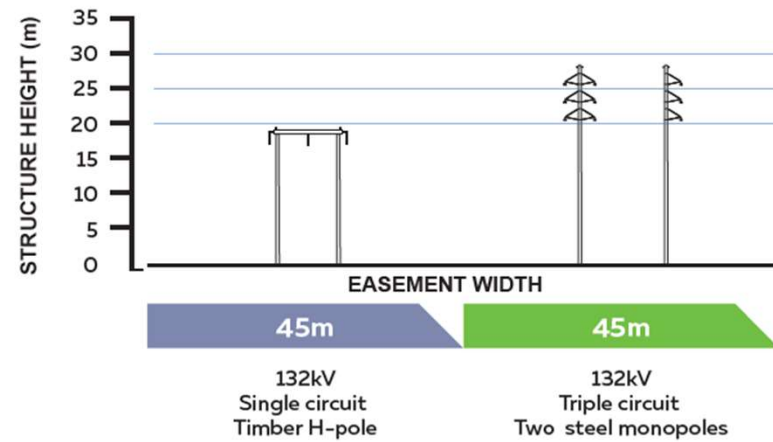
SP 3: Eastern Hub 132kV switching station and Eastern Hub to Singleton 132kV link (1GW, cumulative)

Proposed Subtransmission Construction



AUSGRID EXISTING

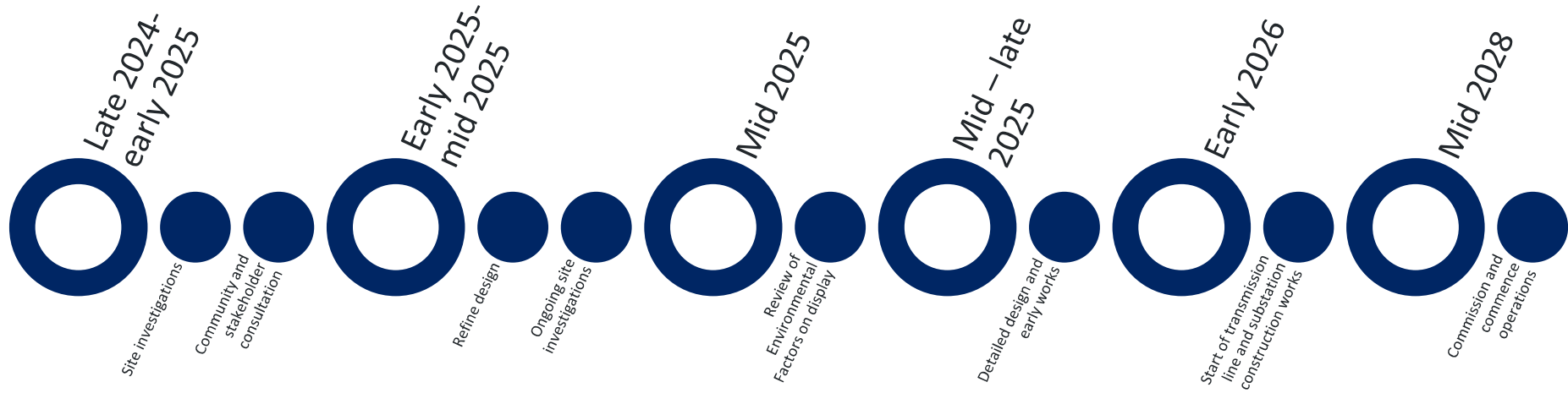
AUSGRID PROPOSED



AUSGRID EXISTING

AUSGRID PROPOSED


Activity Timeline - Ausgrid



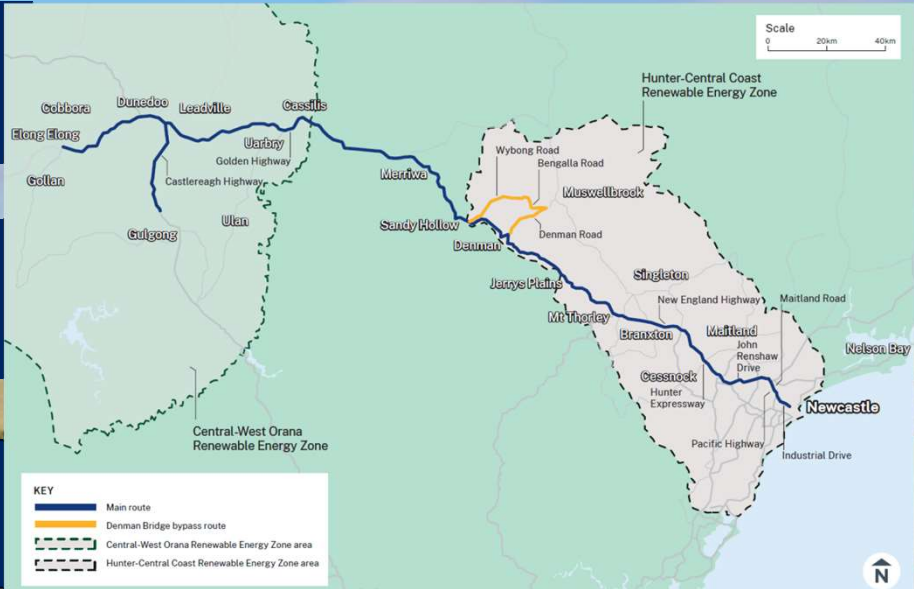
Port to REZ – The Hunter is the beating heart of REZs



 Delivery of projects across all REZs will require the transportation of large and heavy renewable energy components from the Port of Newcastle

 Upgrading of road intersections and pinch-points along the state-road network are required to enable the movement of oversized equipment.

 \$128M funding secured in 2024/25 Budget



 Works commencing late 2024



Questions?