

Rothbury Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

Community update #2
September 2025



Ausgrid is proposing a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in Rothbury to add energy storage to the local electricity network.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback during our early planning for the project in April 2025.

We are now preparing the Environmental Impact Statement and remain committed to engaging with the local community. The feedback we get will continue to shape the project.

This community update outlines some of the potential environmental and community impacts of the project and lets you know how you can learn more and provide your feedback.



Store
540MWh
of energy



Power
36,450
households
a day

As we switch to renewable sources like solar and wind power, we need more energy storage to make sure we have power when the sun isn't shining, and the wind isn't blowing. This will mean we can provide our customers with more sustainable, more reliable and more affordable power.

NSW needs six times more energy storage before 2030. Projects like the Rothbury BESS are important to help keep our electricity supply stable.



Planning process

The Rothbury BESS project will be assessed as a State Significant Development under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (NSW) 1979.

An important step in this process is talking to the local community and seeking feedback. Earlier this year, we heard what matters most to you and your feedback informed the project's Scoping Report. Your feedback will continue to shape the project as we progress design.

We will report on this feedback, as well as the results of technical studies, in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) will place the EIS on public exhibition. Anyone will be able to read it and submit formal feedback directly to DPHI.

We are currently preparing our EIS and expect it will be on public exhibition in early 2026.

PROJECT TIMELINE

1 Early to mid 2025

- Submit Scoping Report to NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI)
- DPHI sets out what must be assessed in the project's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

2 Mid to late 2025

- Prepare EIS, including technical studies
- Submit EIS to DPHI

3 Early to mid 2026

- EIS exhibition
- Project determination

4 Late 2026

- Start construction

Understanding the possible impacts

We want to understand how the Rothbury BESS might impact our neighbours and the local community. We have heard there are concerns about safety and visual amenity in particular. We are completing technical assessments and will share the results as they are available.

We want your input on how we can manage the impacts.

Noise

A BESS uses fans to keep the batteries cool. These fans can create some noise depending on the weather and outside air temperature. We are preparing a Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment that will test how much noise the Rothbury BESS will create. This assessment will also report on how we will manage noise during construction and how we will make sure noise stays within the accepted levels set out by the Environment Protection Authority.

Safety and hazards

We have heard there are concerns about fire risk and safety. We are preparing a hazard analysis and a bushfire hazard assessment. We are also working with fire safety authorities to make sure that hazard management plans are in place.

It is important to know that a fire in a BESS is rare. Safety systems are incorporated into the design of every battery

unit, including monitoring systems that automatically shut down the BESS if necessary. In the unlikely event of a fire, most are very small and affect only one unit of the battery.

Traffic and transport

The project is behind the Ausgrid substation on Wine Country Drive. We know managing traffic on this road is important for the local community and visitors to the region. We are conducting traffic studies and preparing a Traffic Impact Assessment to understand the volume and type of traffic. If any road upgrades are needed, these will be included in this assessment. We will also create a Traffic Management Plan to reduce impacts on the road network as much as possible during construction.

Visual amenity

We know the community values the scenic landscape of the area. We are preparing a Visual Impact Assessment to show what the project will look like within the current landscape. Because the project site is behind the existing substation, we anticipate visual impacts from Wine Country Drive to be low. We are also investigating tree screening along Old North Road to further reduce impacts.

What is a BESS?

A BESS is a group of large rechargeable batteries, connected to form one very large battery. A BESS collects energy, stores it when there is a lot and then releases it when there is high demand for electricity. These large batteries are critical to ensuring the reliability of electricity supply for households and businesses.

By connecting a BESS to our existing substations, we are reducing the impact on communities and the environment, and decreasing the need to build more large transmission and distribution lines. This helps reduce costs and makes electricity more affordable.

Ausgrid is also connecting community batteries to our network infrastructure.

Community batteries are the same technology, at a smaller size, and help manage energy from rooftop solar locally.

The benefits of BESS include:



Enabling more renewable energy



Reducing the need for new transmission lines



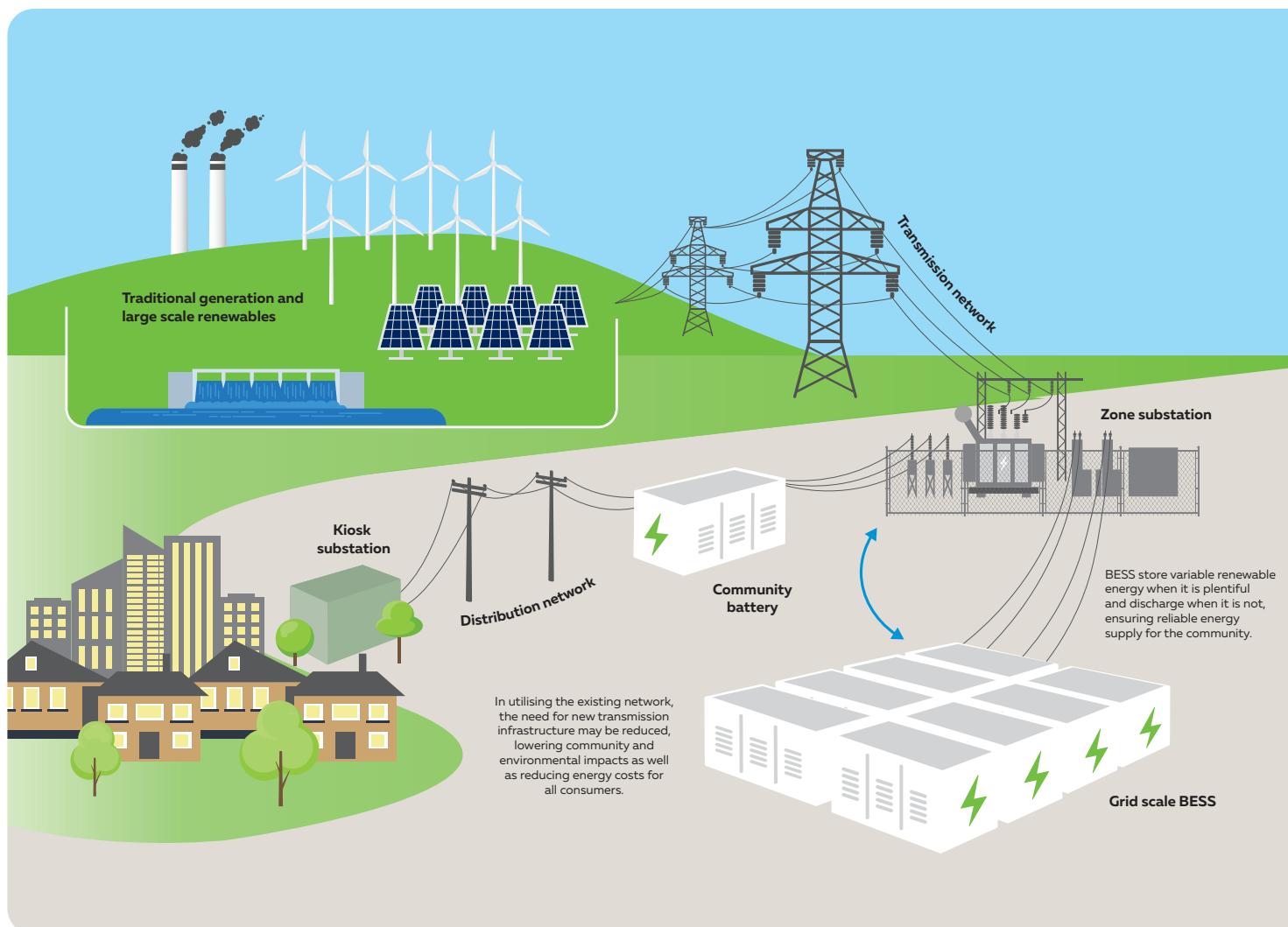
Improving grid stability and reliability



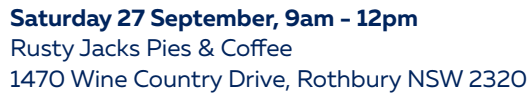
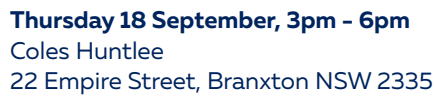
Local construction jobs



Enabling more affordable electricity



We are holding pop-up information sessions and invite you to come and speak with the team.



We want to hear from you and answer your questions. You can meet our project team at an upcoming information session or contact us on the details below.

If you can't make these sessions, we will host more to share the results of our EIS studies in coming months.



Ausgrid is a distribution network service provider. We operate, maintain, repair and build the electricity network in Sydney, the Central Coast and the Hunter.

We distribute electricity to your home or business, maintain existing infrastructure, and invest in new technologies to make the network more sustainable, reliable and affordable. We also need to make sure the network is ready for our customers' future needs.

We want to hear from local community members about our project and answer your questions.

Stay up-to-date by visiting our website:



1800 574 044
Monday to Friday, 9am to 4:30pm



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If you need an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask them to call the project team on 1800 574 044. The interpreter will then help you with translation.

