

Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone project

Newsletter September 2025



Artist impression

About the HCC REZ network infrastructure upgrades

The Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone (HCC REZ) will unlock an additional network capacity of 1 gigawatt (GW) for the connection of clean energy generation.

The Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) selected Ausgrid as the preferred network operator in December 2024 following a competitive tender process.

Ausgrid has collated the submissions and prepared a report which is available at ausgrid.com.au/HCCREZ, along with the final REF.

Ausgrid has reviewed and considered the REF against the requirements of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act)*, and has determined the project is approved to proceed to construction.

Network upgrades include:

- building two new substations in Muswellbrook and at Lake Liddell
- upgrades to 85km of subtransmission lines between Kurri and Lake Liddell
- upgrades to existing infrastructure at Rothbury and Kurri substations.

Planning update

Review of Environmental Factors – update on submissions

As part of the planning process, a draft Review of Environmental Factors (REF) for the proposed works was publicly exhibited and open for comment from 29 April to 9 June 2025. The submission period has now ended.

Eight submissions were received including from local councils, businesses and individuals.

What we heard



Protecting the visual amenity of the region is important



Community is keen for jobs and upskilling



Traffic during construction must be carefully coordinated



Opportunities for local businesses are welcomed



Meaningful, ongoing engagement with local Aboriginal communities is required



Equitable outcomes and local benefit sharing is paramount

The Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone Network Infrastructure at a glance:



1GW

intended network capacity



85km

upgrade of existing subtransmission power lines



2

new substations



2

upgrades to existing substations



18km

new underground optic fibre communications cable



For more information visit ausgrid.com.au/HCCREZ

Procurement meet and greet with local businesses

Ausgrid and our contractors are committed to supporting local jobs and suppliers throughout the delivery of the HCC REZ network infrastructure upgrades.

To help us connect with local expertise, we hosted a meet and greet event in May to introduce our contractors and procurement teams to local businesses and suppliers in Singleton.

We valued the opportunity to engage with local services in the community. It was great to build connections, and for businesses to find out how they can get involved.

Interested in learning about potential business opportunities?

Make sure you're registered at our ICN gateway page at <https://gateway.icn.org.au>

Australian Energy Regulator publishes preliminary paper on HCC REZ

The Australian Energy Regulator (AER) regulate energy networks and set revenue maximums to ensure consumers pay no more than necessary for energy to their homes and businesses.

In May, Ausgrid submitted its revenue proposal to the AER. Stakeholders were invited to make submissions, with one received from the Customer Panel and one from the AER's Consumer Challenge Panel.

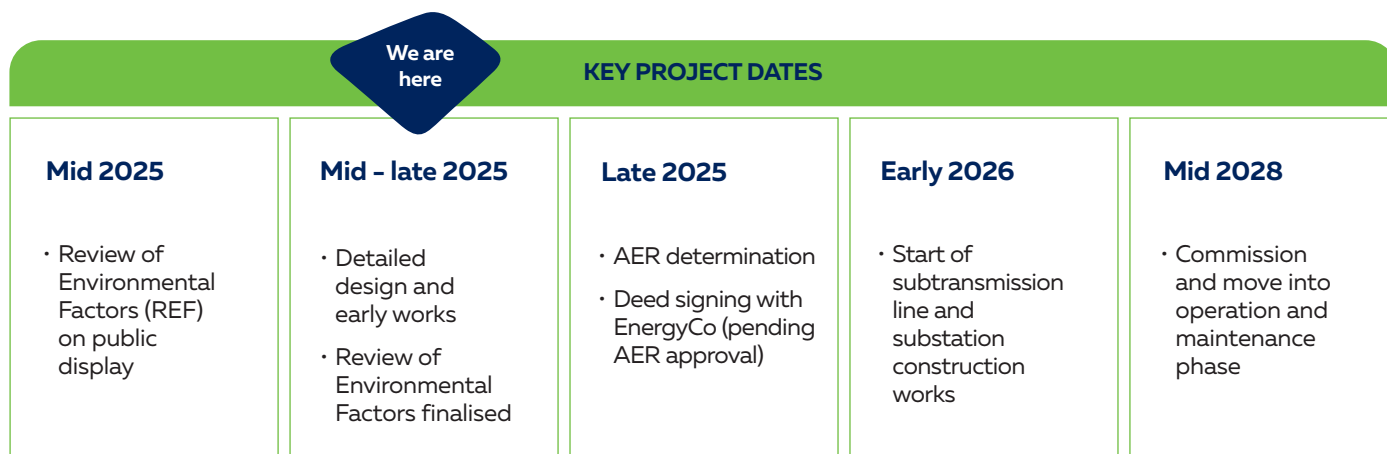
In August the AER published their Preliminary position paper which provides an early indication of their assessment of Ausgrid's revenue proposal.

The AER is expected to make a full determination by November 2025.

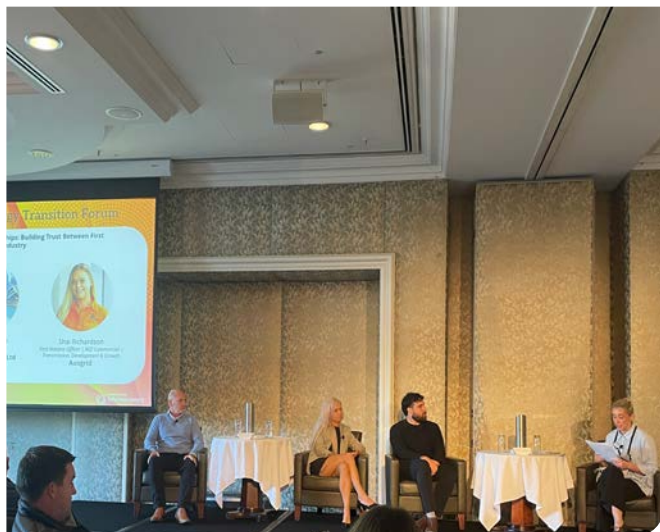
Visit www.aer.gov.au for more information.



Procurement meet and greet



The Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone team in the community



Ausgrid at the First Nations and The Energy Transition Forum

As Australia moves toward a clean energy future, it's essential that First Nations communities are not only included, but they are also central partners in shaping the transition.

Ausgrid's First Nations Officer, Shai Richardson, recently joined a panel at the First Nations And The Energy Transition Forum to discuss the importance of navigating partnerships with the Aboriginal community. The conversation highlighted that trust is built through long-term commitment, and above all, that we need to move forward together.



First Nations cultural awareness training

Ausgrid is committed to upholding and protecting the rights of the Traditional Custodians of the Upper Hunter lands.

A dedicated First Nations Officer has been appointed to the HCC REZ project and works closely alongside the local communities, including with the Wanaruah/Wonnarua, Worimi, and Awabakal peoples.

Embedding cultural awareness in the Project team is essential, and members of the HCC REZ project team were privileged to take part in cultural training with Uncle Glen, a Dunghutti elder living on Wanaruah/Wonnarua country in July.

Held over two days, the immersive training experience covered elements such as how to identify artefacts, cultural safety protocol and engaging with Traditional Owners, and the importance of enduring connection to country for First Nations people.

By deepening our understanding of First Nations culture and connection to the land, Ausgrid hopes to foster lasting, positive relationships with these Traditional Custodians and protect the environment for future generations.

Conversations for a better energy future



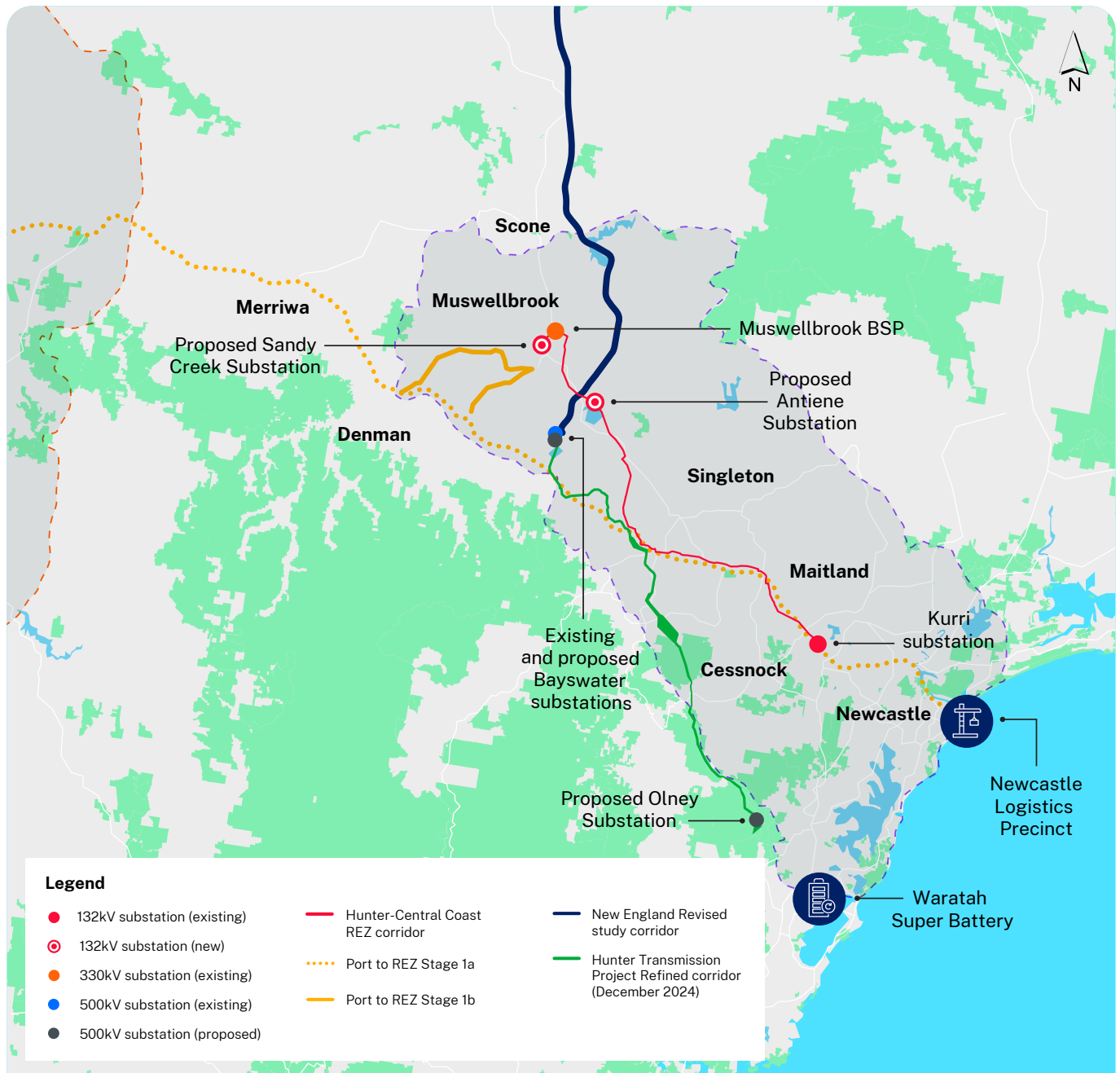
Ausgrid's 'Wired for good' podcast brings together leaders and industry experts to explore the ways in which the energy transition can unlock greater benefits for all Australians. Tackling topics including electrification of the home, the future of energy, and unlocking community benefits, Wired for good are conversations for a better energy future.

In episode 7 we talk about the HCC REZ. Tune in to hear from Kelly Wood, Ausgrid's Group Executive for Transmission Development and Growth as she discusses the importance of working in partnership with community to deliver meaningful benefits for the Hunter community as part of the energy transition.

To learn more visit wiredforgood.com.au

EnergyCo in the Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone

The map shows major projects throughout the HCC REZ, with the proposed Ausgrid network infrastructure works in red.



Contact the Hunter-Central Coast REZ project team



1800 955 635

Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm



hccrez@ausgrid.com.au



Ausgrid HCC REZ
GPO Box 4009 Sydney NSW 2001



Sign up to receive newsletters and updates direct to your inbox.



EnergyCo

Ausgrid is the preferred network operator delivering the subtransmission network for the NSW Government's Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone.

energyco.nsw.gov.au/HCC-REZ

