

# Rothbury Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

Community update #3  
February 2026



**Ausgrid is proposing a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in Rothbury to add energy storage to the local electricity network. We're planning for the energy network of the future, now.**

Thank you to everyone who has engaged with us so far. Your feedback is helping to shape the project design, technical studies, and planning processes.

Since our last update, we've progressed detailed studies to inform our Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). These studies assess potential impacts on a range of areas, including traffic, noise levels, cultural heritage, the local landscape and the local economy.

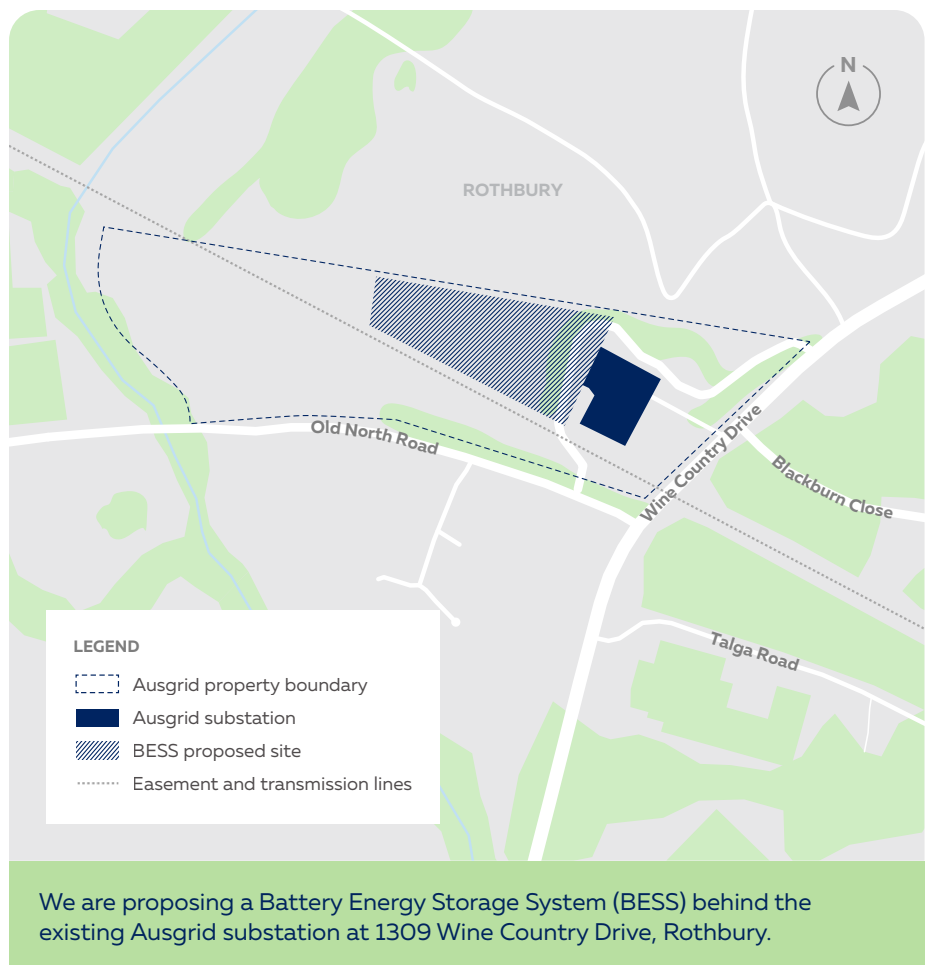
All studies will be made publicly available during the exhibition of the EIS this year.



Store  
**540MWh**  
of energy



Power  
**36,450**  
households  
a day



# Technical assessments – findings so far

Here's a summary of what's being assessed and our findings so far, focused on areas we've heard are important to the local community. You can provide additional feedback using the QR code on the back page of this newsletter.



## Noise

The main source of noise is cooling fans in the battery units. We have completed noise monitoring at the project site to understand current noise levels. Using this, we have modelled the predicted construction and operational noise levels for the project.

We have heard managing noise impacts is a priority for the local community. In response, we are planning to install noise walls around the battery units. These walls are designed to reduce sound at the source, ensuring noise stays within the accepted levels set out by the NSW Environment Protection Authority.



## Visual

We have completed a visual impact assessment from key public and private viewpoints around the site. Photomontages showing how the BESS will look, including the planned noise walls, are being finalised and will be available in the EIS.

We have heard the community values preserving the area's scenic landscape and wants to ensure the project complements its surrounds. We will plant screening vegetation where possible to further reduce the project's visual impact.



## Hazards

We have completed a Preliminary Hazard Analysis, which evaluates risks from electrical incidents, weather events, equipment failure and other operational hazards. While unlikely, if a fire were to occur, we must have measures in place to prevent it from spreading and enable adequate space for firefighting access.

To meet safety standards, we will maintain safe spacing between all battery units and ensure water is available on site. If the project is approved, a detailed Fire Safety Study—developed in consultation with Fire and Rescue NSW—will include an emergency response plan.



## Bush fire

A Bush Fire Hazard Assessment has been completed, which identifies potential hazards and risks associated with bush fires and assesses the risk that the project could cause a bush fire, either during construction or operation.

The project is located on bush fire prone land (category 3), which means it contains grasslands and other low-risk vegetation. The bush fire risk is relatively low, but measures such as asset protection zones will be implemented in line with guidance from the Rural Fire Service.



## Cultural heritage

We have completed an Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment, working with Registered Aboriginal Parties. This assessment included digging small test pits to understand the archaeological potential of the site. It found there is minimal risk to Aboriginal cultural heritage in the area of the proposed BESS due to historical land clearing.

The western portion of the project site, towards Black Creek, was found to have high archaeological potential. The project will not impact this part of the site.



## Social and economic

Construction is expected to create around 100 jobs at its peak, with a small number of ongoing roles once the project is operational. We're working with our contractors to build our local workforce and will actively engage local suppliers and service providers wherever possible.

We are also planning benefit sharing for the project in line with government guidelines. We encourage you to make suggestions about potential benefit sharing arrangements using the QR code on the back page of this newsletter.

# 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



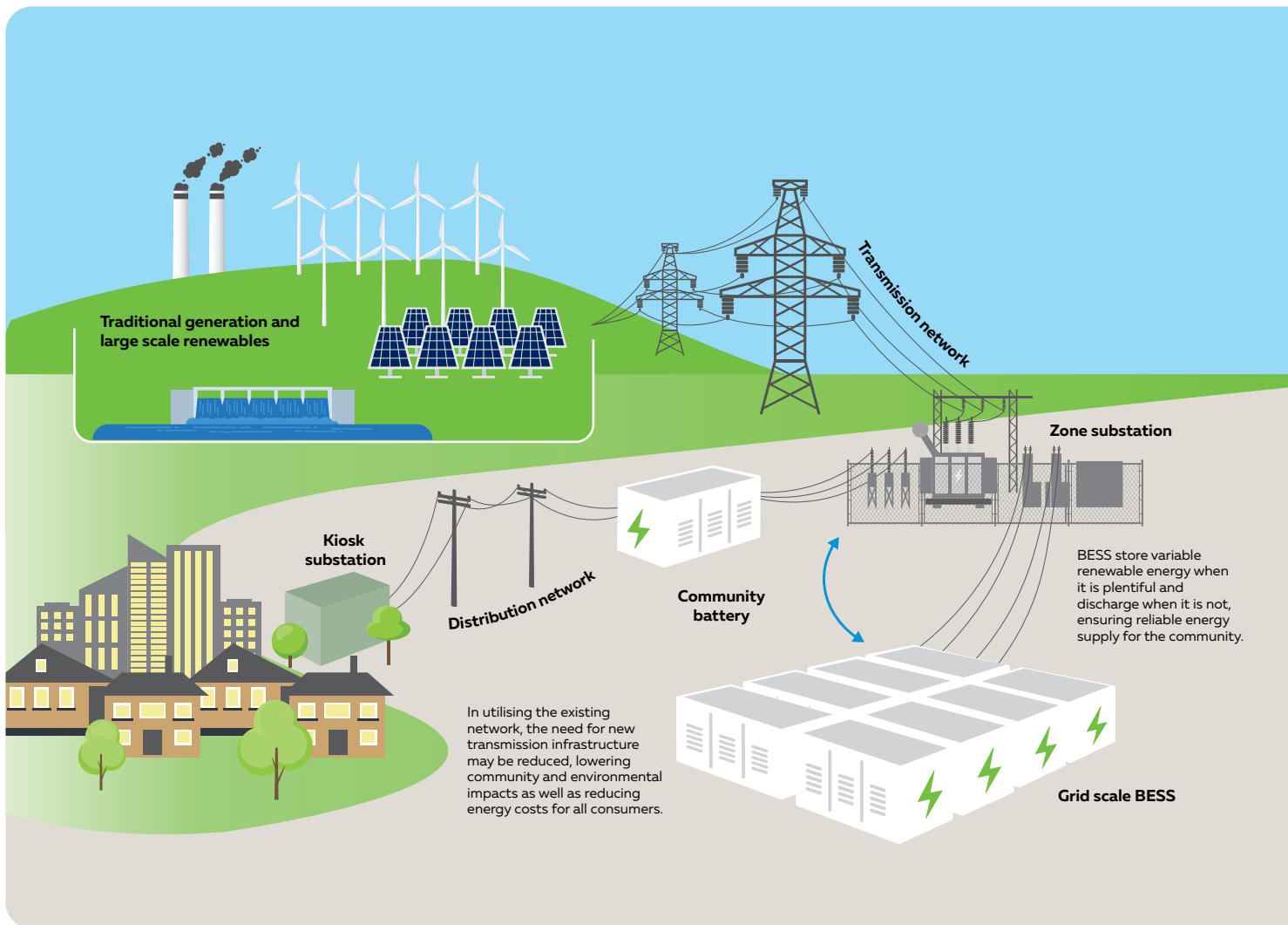
Improving grid stability and reliability



Local construction jobs



Enabling more affordable electricity



## Tell us what you think

We are seeking your feedback to better understand what is important to the local community and to help inform the project's final design.



This survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. All information provided is confidential and only reported in an anonymous aggregated form. We may use specific quotes to highlight community sentiment, but these will not be attributed to a specific person.

**We are planning to submit an EIS soon and expect it will be on public exhibition in the coming months.**

Find out more about the planning and approval process, explore our project website and access the linked factsheets by scanning the QR code.



## Planning pathway

Rothbury BESS is being assessed as a State Significant Development under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

### 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
- Share information about the planning process, project design and technical studies with the community

#### 3 Early to mid 2026

- Submit EIS to DPHI
- EIS exhibition

#### 4 2027

- Project determination

## Who is Ausgrid

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.

## Find out more

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

Stay up-to-date by visiting our website:



[yoursay.ausgrid.com.au/rothburybess](https://yoursay.ausgrid.com.au/rothburybess)



**1800 574 044**

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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.