

Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone project

Newsletter July 2026



Moving forward across the Hunter-Central Coast REZ

As we move through winter, the Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) network infrastructure project continues to gain momentum. Construction activity has advanced on both the sub-transmission lines and substations, alongside ongoing engagement with local communities, landholders and industry partners.

The Hunter-Central Coast REZ network infrastructure at a glance

1

1GW
network transfer
capacity



85km
upgrade of existing
subtransmission powerlines



2
new
substations



2
upgrades to existing
substations



18km
new underground optic
fibre communications cable



Earthworks progress on site at our Antiene substation in Muswellbrook



For more information visit ausgrid.com.au/HCCREZ

Construction updates

Work is continuing across the Hunter–Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone network infrastructure project, with construction now underway across the major work areas.

Sub-transmission and Distribution Line works

Line upgrades are progressing across Lovedale and Branxton. Works include removal of old assets, site preparation, hole boring and installation of new poles, before installation of new wires via helicopter.

Crews have also completed several planned 11kV outages to support relocation works. Further site assessments, disconnection planning and construction sequencing are underway for future sections of the route.

Substations

Construction is advancing at several substation sites, including Sandy Creek, Antiene, Kurri Kurri and Rothbury.

At the new Sandy Creek and Antiene substations, works include stormwater drainage, access road upgrades, cable trench works, and installation of high-voltage conduit sections. Upcoming works will focus on continuing in-ground electrical installation, piling and concrete foundation activities.

At the existing Ausgrid substations at Kurri and Rothbury, civil works for network upgrades including switchyard extensions and new 132kV infrastructure are advancing, with equipment installation planned later this year.



Works at Sandy Creek substation



Works at Sandy Creek substation

Optic fibre

Underground optic fibre works are continuing, supporting the communications infrastructure required for the upgraded network. Crews have been laying underground pathways for future services and installing access pits using efficient, low-impact construction techniques.

More than 10 kilometres of fibre optic cable has now been installed.

Upcoming works

The next phase of works will include continued transmission line construction, further switching station civil and electrical works, and ongoing planning for upcoming network outages and commissioning activities, as well as additional helicopter stringing works planned. The project remains focused on delivering the infrastructure needed to support new renewable energy generation and strengthen the region's electricity network.



Recent helicopter stringing covering a distance of 4km in Muswellbrook



Works at Sandy Creek substation

Meet the team

Ben Foley

Project Construction Superintendent



Local Scone resident, Ben, joined the REZ team in January. He spends his days overseeing the construction of multiple Muswellbrook sites. But, at night, you're more likely to catch him supporting his beloved Scone rugby league team or celebrating their latest victory at his favourite dinner spot, the Scone RSL.

How long have you lived in the area?

I've grown up in the Hunter and have lived in the region since I was a kid. These days, we're raising three kids of our own in Scone, and we're very involved in the local community. It's a great place to live and raise a family and we're proud to call it home.

What is your role in the HCC REZ project?

I'm the Construction Superintendent at both our Antiene and Sandy Creek substation sites in Muswellbrook. My role is to oversee the construction of the new substations that will help increase the capacity of the electricity network and support the transition to more renewable energy across the region.

What work did you do before joining Ausgrid?

Before joining Ausgrid, I spent many years working in the Hunter across a range of industries, including mining. I've held both leadership roles and hands-on positions in the field, including as an electrician, and it's been great to see those skills transfer into the renewable energy sector. It's exciting to be part of an industry that continues to create opportunities for local workers.

Why is working on this project meaningful to you?

This project is meaningful because it's contributing to a better future for my kids and for generations to come. It's rewarding to be involved in something that will deliver positive outcomes for our community, including local jobs, investment and cleaner energy. Knowing that the work we're doing today will have long-term benefits makes it especially worthwhile.

Tell us about the progress of the HCC REZ project?

I've seen some fantastic progress since joining the project. When I first came on board, the sites were essentially paddocks and blank canvases. Since then, we've completed major earthworks and laid the foundations, creating strong momentum across both locations. It's been impressive to see how quickly things have advanced, and there's still plenty of exciting work ahead as the project continues to take shape.

The team out and about

It's been a great few months connecting with the Upper Hunter community, from the Festival of the Fleeces and Tocal Field Days to NAIDOC Week events for Wanaruah and Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

These events gave our team the opportunity to spend time with landholders, families and local businesses, sharing updates, talking through how the Ausgrid REZ fits alongside farming and regional industries, and building relationships that will support the project long term.

Spending time on Country during NAIDOC Week felt especially meaningful for our team. It gave us the opportunity to connect more deeply with community, listen and learn directly from Traditional Owners, and reflect on how we continue to strengthen our commitment to working respectfully on Country. The REZ team took part in family fun days across the week, and had valuable conversations with community.



Ausgrid's REZ team out and about with community



Ausgrid's REZ team on site in Muswellbrook

Stay connected

We'll continue to provide regular updates as the project progresses. If you have questions or would like to learn more, please reach out to the team or visit ausgrid.com.au/hccrez

KEY PROJECT DATES				We are here	
Mid 2025 • Review of Environmental Factors (REF) on public display	Mid - Late 2025 • Detailed design and early works • Review of Environmental Factors finalised	Late 2025 • AER determination • Deed signing with EnergyCo (AER approval)	Early 2026 • Start of sub-transmission line and substation construction works		
				Mid 2028 • Construction complete • Commission and move into operation and maintenance phase	

Contact the Hunter-Central Coast REZ project team



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Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm



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EnergyCo

Ausgrid is the network operator delivering the subtransmission network for the NSW Government's Hunter-Central Coast REZ.

energyco.nsw.gov.au/HCC-REZ



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