

# Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone project

Newsletter April 2026



## About the Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) network infrastructure upgrades

The Hunter-Central Coast REZ network infrastructure project will deliver new powerlines, substations and supporting assets to move renewable energy from generators to homes and businesses across the region.

The new infrastructure is expected to be operational by 2028 and will provide an additional **1 gigawatt** of clean-energy transfer capacity.

### The Hunter-Central Coast REZ network infrastructure at a glance



## Project updates

### EnergyCo approval for the Hunter-Central Coast REZ

In December 2025, we received final approval from EnergyCo to proceed with construction of the project. This is a major milestone for the energy transition in NSW as it will be the first REZ in Australia to upgrade existing distribution poles and wires. This means the work will be completed with reduced impacts on surrounding communities and the environment.



Marking a key milestone. Ausgrid CEO Marc England and EnergyCo CEO Hannah McCaughey signing the deed to commence construction of the Hunter-Central Coast REZ project.



## Work has commenced on the Hunter-Central Coast REZ

On 6 February 2026, following the deed signing, we officially acknowledged the start of construction and marked the occasion with our contractors and staff at the proposed Antiene substation site in Muswellbrook with a smoking ceremony.

It was a fantastic milestone that celebrated the collective effort behind the project and recognised the importance of this next step forward.



Smoking ceremony at Antiene substation.

On 27 February 2026, we welcomed the Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, to our Kurri Kurri substation, where she met the team and new apprentices who will be working on this exciting project. It was great to mark this key milestone and see first hand the upgrades on our poles and wires that are already under way.



The Hon. Penny Sharpe with Ausgrid, EnergyCo and new project apprentices at the Kurri Kurri substation site.



Ausgrid Hunter-Central Coast REZ team, our partners EnergyCo, and our key contractors John Holland Group, Genus and Service Stream all coming together to mark the commencement of works milestone.

## Construction updates

Recent progress with our delivery partners shows the project is tracking strongly across all work sites:

- **John Holland Group** commenced earthworks on the new greenfield substations on the Sandy Creek and Antiene sites in early February. Both locations are now fully mobilised, with early works focused on establishing safe access, installing environmental controls and preparing the sites for major construction activities.
- **Genus** has de-strung the first 4km of line and is now installing poles and wires for the new line section in Muswellbrook. They have also commenced work in the Kurri to Branxton section of the line. These works include site assessment, vegetation management and preparing access tracks.

- **Gongues** has mobilised to begin civil works for the upgrades at Kurri Kurri Subtransmission Switching Station.
- **Service Stream** has installed more than 10km of new optic fibre conduit in Muswellbrook.



Construction at the new Antiene substation, Muswellbrook

## Collaborating with local businesses

A core priority of the project is ensuring local businesses benefit directly from the opportunities created throughout design, construction and ongoing operations. The scale of the project means a wide range of skills, services and suppliers are needed, and we are committed to keeping this work as local as possible. This includes civil works, transport, fabrication, electrical services, accommodation, catering, environmental services and more.

We continue to actively engage with businesses across the region, encouraging local capability, supporting regional jobs and strengthening the local supply chain. As new work packages are released, we want local suppliers to be well-placed to participate in and to grow alongside the project.

To help streamline this process, all businesses are encouraged to register their interest through the ICN Gateway, where project opportunities are listed and supplier details can be matched to upcoming work. Registering ensures your business is visible to our delivery partners and considered for relevant business opportunities as they arise.

Find out more and follow the steps to register your interest on our website at [ausgrid.com.au/hccrez](https://ausgrid.com.au/hccrez)

## Engaging respectfully with Aboriginal cultural heritage

As part of preparing the route, we've been collecting Aboriginal cultural artefacts found on the surface in areas where construction can't avoid them. This work is being carried out respectfully and in close consultation with the local Wanaruah/Wonnarua community to ensure cultural values are protected throughout the process.

The artefacts will undergo analysis to help build a clearer understanding of Aboriginal history and connection to Country in this area. Once this work is complete, they will be repositioned at a location agreed with the Registered Aboriginal Parties, ensuring they remain protected and returned to Country with care.



Aboriginal cultural artefacts found and repositioned during land assessments, in collaboration with Wannarua/Wonnarua community

## Project next steps

As construction progresses, we'll continue to stay in close contact with you so you always know what's happening and what to expect. Your feedback and local knowledge remain essential as we move through each stage of delivery.

If you'd like to talk to our team about anything related to the Hunter-Central Coast REZ project, we encourage you to reach out using the contact details below. You can also find out more information about the project on our website at [ausgrid.com.au/hccrez](https://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 subtransmission line and substation construction works

#### Mid 2028

- Commission and move into operation and maintenance phase

