Ausgrid

Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone
Network Infrastructure upgrades

Project information

Ausgrid has partnered with EnergyCo to deliver critical network infrastructure upgrades for the Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) to provide a clean, affordable and reliable power supply for energy consumers across NSW.

The Hunter-Central Coast REZ will have the capacity to transfer 1 gigawatt of renewable energy by 2028.

What is the Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone?

Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) are the modern-day equivalent of traditional power stations. They combine renewable energy generation, storage capabilities and transmission infrastructure at scale, to ensure a clean, affordable, and reliable energy system for homes, schools, hospitals, businesses and industry across NSW. REZs will strengthen Australia's power system as the country transitions to a low-carbon future.

The Hunter and Central Coast regions have unique features which make them ideal locations for a REZ. These regions have excellent renewable energy resources and the ability to utilise existing power stations, rehabilitated mining land, electricity network infrastructure, port and transport infrastructure, and a skilled workforce.

The Hunter-Central Coast REZ was declared on 9 December 2022 and sets out the intended network transfer capacity for sub-transmission infrastructure in the Hunter-Central Coast REZ of 1 gigawatt.

Ausgrid's role in the REZ

EnergyCo is working with Ausgrid to finalise a proposed network solution for renewable energy delivery.

EnergyCo has signed a deed with Ausgrid to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the critical REZ network infrastructure.

Ausgrid's proposed infrastructure includes two new substations, a major upgrade on two existing substations, a minor upgrade of other substations, and upgrading of approximately 85km of existing powerline lines.

The benefits of Ausgrid's solution

The Hunter-Central Coast REZ infrastructure will be mainly built where there is existing Ausgrid infrastructure. In some cases there may be a need to expand easements or obtain new easements. The aim is to minimise impact on communities, landowners and the environment.

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

1GW
intended network transfer capacity

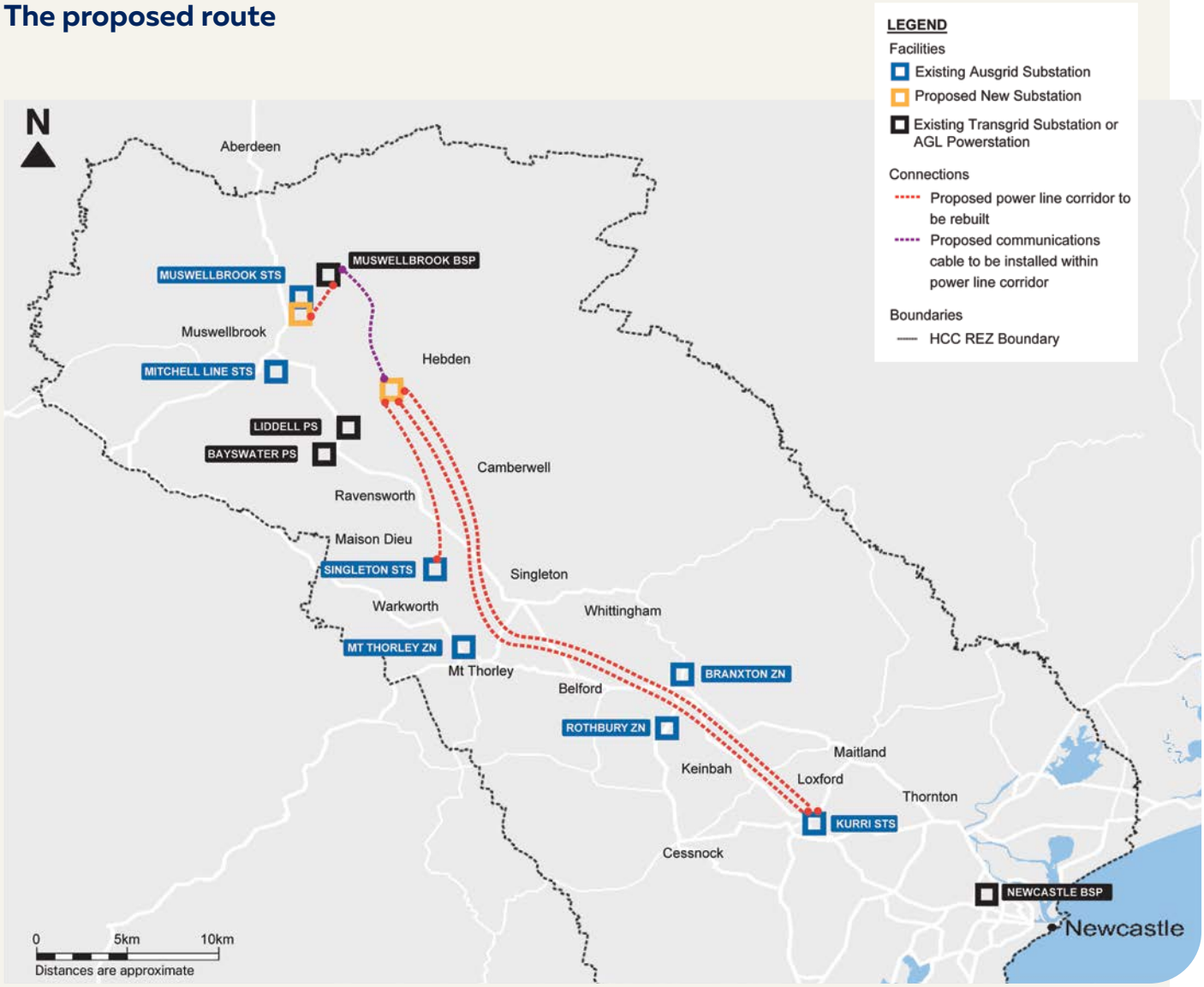
85km
upgrade of existing sub-transmission power lines

2
new energy hubs (substations)

2
upgrades to existing energy hubs (substations)

18km
new underground optic fibre communications cable

The proposed route



Key dates

Early 2025 – mid 2025

Refine design.

Ongoing site investigations.

Mid 2025

Review of Environmental Factors (REF) on public display.

Mid – late 2025

Detailed design and early works.

Early 2026

Start of sub-transmission line and substation construction works.

Mid 2028

Commission and move into operation and maintenance phase.

The planning and project approval process

Ausgrid is the approving authority for the work under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (NSW) 1979*.

As part of the approval process, Ausgrid will prepare an environmental assessment known as a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) to determine the potential environmental impacts of the Project.

The REF will be placed on exhibition around mid-2025 and the community will be invited to make submissions. More information about the REF process and how to have your say can be found at: yoursay.ausgrid.com.au/HCCREZ.

Following the REF exhibition, Ausgrid will review all submissions and prepare a summary report. The Project will then be determined for approval based on the information contained in the REF and a further deed signed with EnergyCo.

What will Ausgrid consider during the assessment process?

To determine the final design of the network infrastructure upgrades, Ausgrid must undertake detailed investigations. In order to minimise impact on landowners, the community and environment, where possible Ausgrid has determined the sub-transmission line route by utilising the existing infrastructure corridor and Ausgrid substations.

The REF covers:

- **Biodiversity**
- **Visual**
- **Hazard and risk**
- **Surface water and quality & flood risk**
- **Bushfire risk**
- **Noise and vibration**
- **Heritage (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal)**
- **Geology, soil, groundwater and contamination**
- **Traffic, transport and access**
- **Social and economic**

Landowner and community engagement

Ausgrid is committed to working alongside EnergyCo and engaging with local landowners, communities, councils and businesses to ensure the Project delivers benefits for all stakeholders.

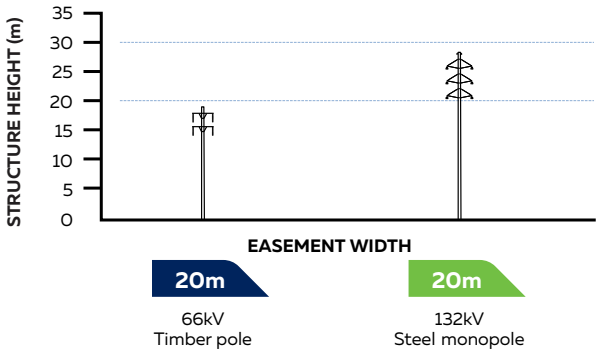
Throughout the Project design and construction, Ausgrid will host drop-in sessions to inform the community, provide up-to-date information about what's happening, and most importantly, to hear any concerns they may have.

What will the new infrastructure look like?

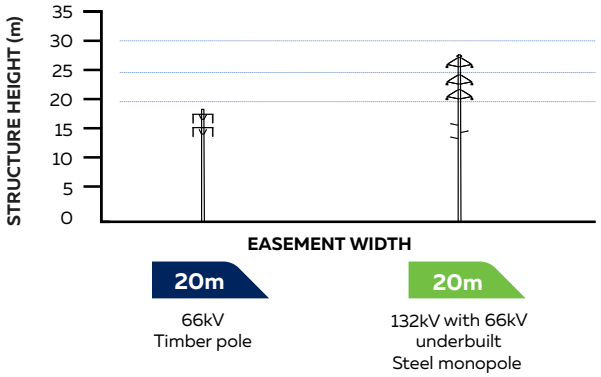
Ausgrid would replace approximately 85km of existing sub-transmission lines between Kurri Kurri and Muswellbrook. Below are diagrams showing indicative pole structures.

66kV single pole structures

Residing in a typical 20m wide corridor, timber poles would be replaced by one new steel monopole. One option is a **132kV steel monopole** (shown below).

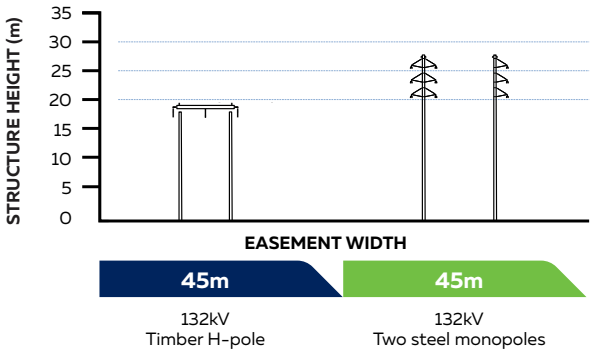


The second option is a **132kV with 66kV underbuilt steel monopole** (shown below).



132kV two pole structure (H-pole)

Residing in a typical 45m wide corridor, H-poles would be replaced by **two 132kV steel monopoles** (shown below).



Visual representation of new poles and wires

Ausgrid existing **Ausgrid proposed**

Find out more and share your feedback

Register to stay up-to-date or contact our project team for more information. You can also find information on our website.

www.yoursay.ausgrid.com.au/HCCREZ

1800 955 635
Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm

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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 955 635**. The interpreter will then help you with translation.

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