



INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY ZONES (REZ) ON RURAL AND REGIONAL COMMUNITIES AND INDUSTRIES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Hearing: October 29 2025

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Good for the Gong

1. Good for the Gong believes that thoughtful planning, robust and independent ecological assessments, and ongoing monitoring of renewable energy projects can not only reduce environmental impacts but also support and maintain the resilience of local ecosystems. When biodiversity is considered from the start, community confidence increases and the long-term environmental benefits of clean energy can be maximised. Strengthening environmental assessments and standards would help ensure the energy transition delivers environmental, social, and economic benefits together.

2. Good for the Gong is excited about the renewable energy transition because it opens the door to a cleaner, fairer and more resilient future for our community.

We see three key areas of opportunity:

First, the shift to renewable energy gives our community access to cleaner, more affordable energy. As technologies improve and local projects grow, we expect energy bills to stabilise and become less vulnerable to global price shocks. That stability is especially important for low-income households who often feel cost pressures most. It is also important for our local industries and job opportunities. With large renewable projects, local industry such as BlueScope will have the opportunity to decarbonise and remain competitive in a global market - and critically - remain a strong local employer.

Second, the transition gives communities a chance to take part in shaping the energy system. Community batteries, shared solar, and locally owned projects mean residents may benefit directly rather than watching investment bypass them. This builds energy literacy, local pride, and a stronger sense of agency in our region.

Third, we're excited about the environmental gains. Renewable energy is a major step towards reducing emissions and safeguarding the places we love. A cleaner energy system means healthier ecosystems, better air quality, and a safe climate.

We see the renewable transition as a community opportunity. It has the potential to support new jobs, strengthen local skills, and bring long-term environmental and economic benefits to residents across the region.

3)Yes. In our experience, most people in the Illawarra support the shift to renewable energy. Our recent community survey results reinforce this: 72.5% of respondents said governments should prioritise supporting the development of large renewable energy projects as a key climate action. We also see strong support at our events, in conversations at community stalls, and when doorknocking. People want action on climate change, they want cleaner, cheaper and more reliable energy, and they want to play an active part in building that future.



(a) Our community survey shows that mistrust often comes from gaps in communication and a lack of clear, accessible information. For example, 80.7% of respondents said they want the government to provide clear, independent information about large renewable projects. When such information isn't readily available, people are more likely to rely on social media or hearsay, where misinformation spreads easily.

The survey also showed that 67.3% want stronger environmental enforcement and 61.3% want independent environmental assessments, which suggests people worry about whether projects are being managed responsibly. A further 58.7% called for more community consultation, indicating that many feel decisions are happening without enough local input. These gaps create space for uncertainty and mistrust to grow.

In short, misinformation thrives when communities don't feel informed, included, or confident that environmental standards are being upheld.

(b) Our survey results show a strong appetite for clearer communication and stronger accountability, which points directly to where government engagement can improve. As above, the most common request from our community was for clear, independent information, with 80.7% of respondents selecting this option. This shows that people want facts they can trust, presented in a way that is easy to understand and not framed by commercial interests. Providing this information up front would significantly reduce the space in which misinformation spreads. The NSW Government could strengthen engagement by:

- **Starting earlier:** Early conversations, before decisions are locked in, help communities feel heard and reduce anxiety.
- **Establish Local energy hubs in regional areas to provide consistent, easy-to-understand information:** Clear explanations of project impacts, benefits, timelines and mitigation measures build trust.
- **Using trusted local messengers:** People turn to community organisations, local leaders and neighbours to make sense of complex issues.
- **Showing tangible benefits:** Demonstrating what communities will gain, ie, job opportunities for their school-leaving kids, lower bills - helps cut through misinformation.
- **Maintaining transparency:** Open access to environmental assessments, modelling and project data helps counter disinformation with facts.

(c) Yes. Community-led groups like Good for the Gong play a crucial role because we operate at the local level, build relationships over time, and understand the key concerns and issues for our community. Community groups help bridge the gap between government, industry and residents. Supporting this work strengthens trust, improves project outcomes,



and ensures the renewable energy transition is built with and for the community. We are often the first point of contact when residents have questions, concerns or curiosity.

We suggest the NSW Government support the establishment of Local Energy Hubs. These would be a consistent direct touch point and could reach more people, host more accessible events, and ensure communities remain informed throughout the transition, not just during formal consultation periods. By providing accessible and accurate information, they can assist to counter some of the misinformation that has unfortunately been far too pervasive in many communities.

Together, the results above show that the NSW Government could strengthen engagement by prioritising transparent information, ongoing consultation and community collaboration, independent oversight, and clear communication about community benefits. This would directly address the areas where mistrust and misinformation currently take hold.