

NSW Parliament Inquiry Examining the Impact of Renewable Energy Zone's - Transgrid Response – Questions On Notice



Number	Question	Transgrid Response
1)	At peak, there were 400-and-something people at the substation site, can you confirm the peak headcount?	The Total Peak Headcount was 1206.
2)	Of the peak workforce, how many were local to the region and how many were brought in (including overseas specialists for the synchronous condensers)?	<p>Workforce composition during construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local workers (Riverina region and adjacent LGAs): 5–10% - Workers from elsewhere in NSW: 25–30% - Interstate workers: 40–45% - Overseas specialists (including synchronous condenser installation and commissioning): 30–35%
3)	Please provide the figures by each LGA for the Community Partnership/Community Benefit Fund.	<p>Transgrid's Community Partnerships Program offers grants of up to \$5,000 for not-for-profit organisations that are local to our planning, operations, and major project areas.</p> <p>Not-for-profit groups provide a range of invaluable resources for their communities. Our Community Partnerships Program was created to give a boost to the people who live and work in the regions local to Transgrid assets or construction.</p> <p>Since 2023, 382 grants totalling \$1,602,698.85 were awarded for a range of initiatives spanning from community infrastructure to workshops, along with sustainability, inclusivity and accessibility projects.</p>

Number	Question	Transgrid Response	
		LGA	Total Amount
		Armidale Regional Council	\$52,345.82
		Balranald Shire Council	\$17,360.00
		Bathurst Regional Council	\$38,633.90
		Blayney Shire Council	\$4,712.73
		Campbelltown City Council	\$4,750.00
		Central Coast Council	\$14,500.00
		Cessnock City Council	\$7,000.00
		Cootamundra–Gundagai Regional Council	\$21,384.00

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		Dubbo Regional Council	\$18,404.95
		Edward River Council	\$124,009.52
		Federation Council	\$15,000.00
		Glen Innes Severn Council	\$5,000.00
		Goulburn Mulwaree Council	\$64,639.00
		Gunnedah Shire Council	\$7,253.25
		Hawkesbury City Council	\$539.00
		Hay Shire Council	\$45,725.90
		Junee Shire Council	\$18,743.00
		Kempsey Shire Council	\$5,983.00

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		Lake Macquarie City Council	\$2,640.00
		Lithgow City Council	\$73,833.00
		Liverpool City Council	\$5,000.00
		Lockhart Shire Council	\$52,814.00
		Mid-Western Regional Council	\$4,475.00
		Murray River Council	\$112,275.00
		Murrumbidgee Council	\$99,421.81
		Muswellbrook Shire Council	\$37,381.86
		Narrandera Shire Council	\$5,000.00
		Newcastle City Council	\$16,575.00

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		Orange City Council	\$28,414.00
		Port Stephens Council	\$5,000.00
		Singleton Council	\$7,100.00
		Snowy Valleys Council	\$116,523.47
		Tamworth Regional Council	\$4,878.42
		Tumut Shire	\$10,000.00
		Upper Hunter Shire Council	\$12,972.50
		Upper Lachlan Shire Council	\$60,159.42
		Uralla Shire Council	\$9,551.00
		Wagga Wagga City Council	\$299,647.02
		Walcha Council	\$9,500.00

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		Wentworth Shire Council	\$43,554.50
		Wollondilly Shire Council	\$16,653.32
		Yass Valley Council	\$103,345.46
4)	Can you just clarify for us the capacity of the transmission that is being built in the South West?	As stated in the Renewable Energy Zone (South West) Access Scheme Order (2024), the transfer capacity of the access rights network is 2,500 MW. This capacity will be available after the completion of Project EnergyConnect, HumeLink and VNI West Project.	
5)	What is the expected capacity of the wind, solar and battery projects anticipated to be built in the Southwest region?	Information regarding South West REZ can be found on the EnergyCo website here .	
6)	Are you aware of additional renewable energy projects being built nearby but not inside the REZ?	Information on NSW generation can be found on the AEMO website here .	
7)	Is there any intent to conduct more combined group information sessions involving Transgrid, REZ developers and EnergyCo?	There is ongoing collaboration between organisations to identify community engagement opportunities where all parties could attend to share information. It is also noted that some engagement activities may need to proceed without collaboration based on project requirements. From 20 to 27 March 2026 Transgrid is holding community engagement sessions in the region to discuss the progress on the Amendment Report, including the amendments and refinement proposed to be made to the project following	

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		<p>the EIS exhibition in August 2025. These sessions are being held in Wagga Wagga, Deniliquin, Wanganella, Conargo, Coleambally, Jerilderie, Mallan and Moulamein.</p>
8)	<p>What direct financial benefit does a host community receive for transmission infrastructure located within its area?</p>	<p>Host communities play a vital role in the success of transmission projects, with both direct and indirect benefits shared with these hosts.</p> <p>Direct benefits are provided to owners of individual landholdings that host transmission infrastructure within their land. These are payments administered as easement compensation under the Just Terms Act, and through the NSW Government's Strategic Benefits Payment Scheme when the transmission line becomes operational.</p> <p>Indirectly, host communities are financially engaged via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgrid's purchase of goods and services while Transgrid and its contractors visit the host communities for development, construction and operational phases. • Opportunities for local businesses to participate in project activity, which could be a result of gaining direct employment on the project or securing subcontracts to provide goods / services. • Project employment would also include a component of upskilling and training, which then flows into future economic benefits for future employment and project legacy. • Providing support for local community groups / local organisations through community investment and benefits programs. <p>By the end of January 2026, EnergyConnect and HumeLink have spent \$832M with local and regional businesses.</p>
9)	<p>Should host communities receive mandated community benefit payments linked to transmission projects?</p>	<p>Transgrid is committed to supporting communities within and around our project/s footprint through meaningful community benefits and investment initiatives.</p> <p>Beyond facilitating the transmission of renewable energy, project/s will deliver substantial social, environmental, and economic benefits to the local region through our Community Investment and Benefits Program/s.</p>

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		<p>Transgrid engages genuinely with community in person early in the project development to ensure we understand the community needs. This then informs the funding requests we make for Community Investment across our projects. The acceptance and approval of this community investment spend comes from a strict application process through the Australian Energy Regulator as part of being a regulated business.</p>
10)	<p>Who carries legal liability if a transmission line causes fire or property damage?</p>	<p>Transgrid holds insurance policies with reputable insurers to cover the risks it faces while operating its transmission network. It should be noted that, irrespective of insurance coverage, Transgrid would be legally liable for any loss or damage to third parties for which it is found to be legally responsible.</p> <p>Further, Transgrid undertakes annual inspections and routine maintenance to ensure that any potential risks are managed and mitigated,</p>
11)	<p>Should compensation for transmission-related damage be automatic rather than negotiated?</p>	<p>See answer to question 10.</p>
12)	<p>Should transmission corridors be centrally planned and co-located to minimise cumulative impacts?</p>	<p>Transmission corridors are established through AEMO's Integrated System Plan (ISP) and NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, then refined through detailed route planning that balances technical feasibility, environmental and cultural constraints, cost, constructability and community input. Any changes to planning processes would be a matter for Government.</p>
13)	<p>Why was the Dinawan substation located outside the formal REZ boundary?</p>	<p>The Department of Planning, Housing and Industry approved EnergyConnect – Eastern, which included the Dinawan site, on 4 September. The EnergyCo South Western REZ was declared on 4 November 2022.</p>

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14)	What is Transgrid's 30-year legacy plan for communities hosting major transmission infrastructure?	<p>Transgrid has been part of communities across New South Wales for more than 70 years, as we own, operate and maintain the backbone of the NSW electricity system, with offices and long-standing operational presence in regional centres including Newcastle, Orange, Tamworth, Wagga Wagga and Yass. Over decades, Transgrid has worked alongside landholders, councils and communities to build, operate and maintain transmission infrastructure that underpins reliable electricity supply across the state, adapting its approach as community expectations have evolved.</p> <p>Transgrid strives to build positive and lasting relationships with our local communities, and create tangible benefits for energy consumers, local communities, and the environment as part of our commitment to building a sustainable clean energy future.</p> <p>Transgrid's Social Licence Framework outlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our approach to building and maintaining Social Licence across its projects and operations activities. • the elements of expenditure that can be categorised as Social Licence investment. • the project level delivery tools and plans contributing to achieving Social Licence • a decision-making process for the identification, evaluation, scoping, planning, cost/benefit appraisal (where possible) and delivery of prudent and efficient Social Licence investment opportunities • the Social Licence investment governance, monitoring, and evaluation process <p>We also consult with the local communities on social legacy initiatives, details on this can be found here.</p>

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		Further information on Transgrid's Social Licence Program can be found here .
15)	Should decommissioning bonds apply to transmission infrastructure projects?	This is not something that is required for transmission projects as decommissioning of transmission lines occurs rarely.
16)	What single legislative reform would most improve fairness and accountability in the REZ rollout?	Reforms which strengthens social licence by ensuring communities are able to share in and shape the benefits of REZ development would assist with obtaining the long-term support for the energy transition. For example the Government legislating the Strategic Benefit Payment, which Transgrid supported is an example of a reform that directly advances this objective.
17)	What should be the minimum enforceable community benefit for large renewable energy projects?	Communities are different, and the nature, scale and duration of impacts vary significantly depending on location, project type and context. In particular, generation and transmission projects should not be combined into one community benefit framework, as they are funded differently, impact communities in different ways, and are delivered through distinct regulatory and investment mechanisms.
18)	Should a temporary pause on new access rights be considered until cumulative impacts are resolved?	The energy transition must move at pace to ensure renewable energy replaces retiring coal-fired power stations and delivers a reliable, clean and affordable electricity system.
19)	Should the project modification process be tightened to prevent substantial post-approval changes without a new EIS?	The <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> (EP&A Act) already establishes clear mechanisms to manage post approval changes for both State Significant Development (SSD) and State Significant Infrastructure (SSI). These mechanisms are designed to ensure that only appropriate refinements can proceed as modifications, while substantial changes trigger a new assessment and, where required, a new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

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20)	Should non-disclosure agreements in neighbour agreements be regulated or prohibited statewide?	<p>A 2022 NSW parliamentary inquiry into land acquisition for major projects, particularly under TfNSW included a key finding that the NSW govt seek to remove and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -all non-disclosure terms that currently apply in all residential land acquisition agreements, and any other agreements entered into by acquiring authorities with residents impacted as a result of infrastructure projects - not enter into any such future non- disclosure agreements <p>The <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991</i> is currently under review by the NSW Government.</p>