

Project Update



Engaging the community
see page 2



Environmental approvals
see page 3

In July 2022 AusNet officially launched the Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone™ (G-REZ™), Victoria's first industry-led Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) project.



An alternative corridor
see page 3



Next steps
see page 4

A REZ acts as an extension cord for new renewable energy developments in the region, coordinating the delivery of renewable energy via high voltage transmission infrastructure.

Since launching the project, the team has delivered 10 community pop-ups at locations near the preferred transmission route. These pop-ups have provided an opportunity to understand the views of the local community regarding the project and answer any questions that they might have.

A Community Advisory Group is also being established which will provide advice to the project team. Nominations have now closed and the team has

carefully considered each nomination to ensure it is representative of the Gippsland community.

We've also made referrals to the State and Federal Governments under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. These referrals are an important first step in defining the requirements AusNet will need to meet to receive state and federal government approvals for the project.

In addition, the project team is exploring an alternative transmission corridor travelling along the original alignment and then deviating to travel through Loy Yang. We're continuing to engage directly with landowners proposed to host G-REZ infrastructure to explore how we can best deliver this project in a way that works for all parties involved.

Keep reading to find out the latest information about the project.

Project highlights



Approximately **\$500m project**



Enough clean energy to power **2 million homes**



Reducing **3.6 million tonnes of CO₂ annually**



Unlocking **3-4GW** of renewable energy



Improving **reliability and diversity** of Victoria's energy supply



Securing the future of Gippsland's **renewable energy industry**



What we heard

Continuing to engage the community

More than 300 people attended the G-REZ community pop-ups across Gippsland in July and September. The G-REZ team conducted 10 community pop-ups in Traralgon, Sale, Rosedale and Yarram, to share information and answer questions about the project.

The first seven pop-ups were held in July and provided an opportunity for members of the community to learn more about the project and discuss the preferred transmission route. A summary of the feedback heard throughout these pop-ups and what the project team is doing to address this feedback is available on our [website](#). Feedback included:

- a general preference for underground transmission infrastructure;
- health and environmental concerns;
- a recognition of the need for energy security and for a project such as G-REZ; and
- a desire to understand how the preferred transmission route was chosen and what alternatives were considered.

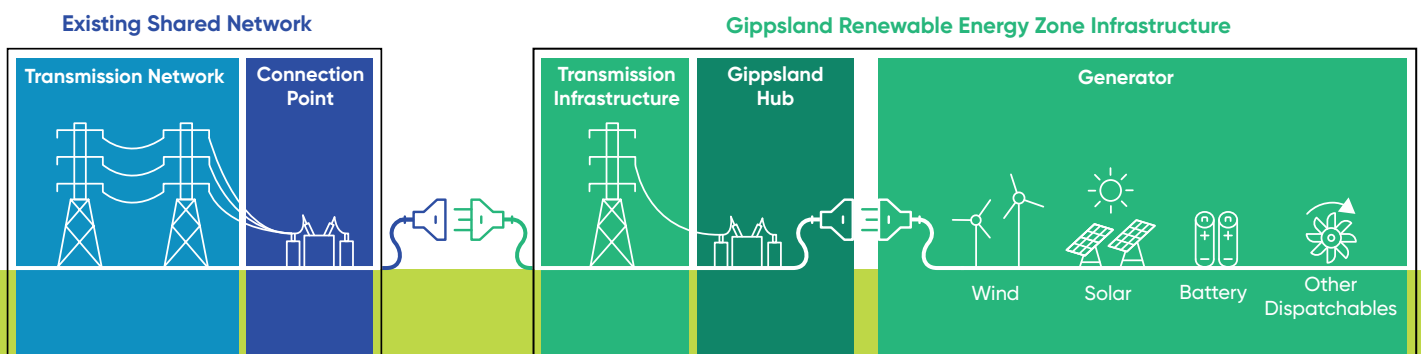
In September the team delivered a further three pop-ups. These pop-ups provided an opportunity to learn more about the environmental referrals for the project and discuss the alternative corridor. Attendees at these pop-ups were keen to explore in more detail the differences between underground and overhead transmission infrastructure and the activities permitted with each, as well as understand who might be looking to utilise this new transmission line.

Our community engagement also went digital, with an online webinar held to share information about the environmental referrals and approvals process for the G-REZ project and answer questions from the community. A recording of the webinar is available on our [website](#).

Since the launch of our [G-REZ website](#) and [Digital Engagement Space](#) in July, more than 3,000 people have visited the page, with some adding digital pins on the [interactive project map](#) and sharing their views of what the project needs to consider.

The feedback we have received during these online and in person events has proved invaluable as we look to refine the design and deliver a project that will benefit the whole Gippsland community.

There will be plenty more opportunities to find out more about the project and to meet the team. Information about upcoming engagement events and opportunities will be published on our website. You can also register via our website to receive updates about the project to make sure you receive all the latest information about the project. ▽



G-REZ Community Advisory Group (GCAG)

Nominations for the G-REZ Community Advisory Group (GCAG) have closed with a wide variety of responses received from landholders, business leaders, local government and community group members.

The GCAG will act as an important avenue for community involvement during the project. It will assist the team by:

- providing local input and feedback about key elements of the project
- supporting the development of the project's community benefits scheme (including establishing a dedicated sub-committee)
- creating an effective forum for discussion and exchange of ideas and views regarding the G-REZ project.

The group will meet for the first time later this year and we look forward to sharing more information soon.

Environmental approvals

The G-REZ project has been referred to the Victorian Minister for Planning for a decision on the need for an Environment Effects Statement (EES). The EES process is administered by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) on behalf of Victoria's Minister for Planning under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*.

An EES will give decision-makers (ministers, local government and statutory authorities) the information they need to determine whether the G-REZ project should be granted approval and what conditions should apply. It will provide information about potential environmental impacts, and an opportunity for the community to review and provide feedback on the project as it develops.

In addition to the state-led EES process, we have also submitted the project to undertake an EPBC referral under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) to assess nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places. We will notify stakeholders once the referral is published online on the federal government portal. It is open for public comment for 10 business days from the date of online publication at epbcpublicportal.awe.gov.au/all-referrals.

Over the next 18 months, we will undertake field investigations and studies to refine the route and inform the environment and planning approvals.

There will be opportunities for community feedback through these processes. We will let you know when you are able to make a submission via our website grez.com.au.

An alternative corridor

We've heard from a number of landowners proposed to host G-REZ infrastructure and others that have engaged with the team of a desire for the project to explore potential alternative routes in addition to its current preferred alignment.

We've listened to this feedback and have been investigating an alternative corridor, which we released in September this year. The alternative corridor travels along the original alignment from the east and then deviates to travel through Loy Yang and connect into the Hazelwood Terminal Station.

Both the preferred transmission route and the alternative corridor are still in the early stages of development and a lot more work needs to be done before we can determine the final route for the project.

Over the coming months we will be conducting various environmental assessments along the preferred route and alternative corridor to inform our environmental approvals submissions and better understand the suitability of these corridors for transmission infrastructure.



Next steps

The team will continue to engage with landowners proposed to host G-REZ infrastructure, neighbours, the broader community and other key stakeholders to discuss and better understand their views regarding the project.

Landowners along the preferred route have expressed a desire to understand more about potential payments associated with hosting transmission infrastructure and we'll be working directly with these landowners to provide this information and answer any questions they might have.

We'll also be conducting ecological surveys throughout spring to better understand the environmental conditions along the preferred route and alternative corridor.

We hope to appoint members to the G-REZ Community Advisory Group (GCAG) in October and host the first meeting in November.

Project timeline

The project is in the development stage with future stages subject to the outcomes of initial investigations, community feedback and securing the required government approvals. The figure below provides an overview of the key stages and indicative timeframes. Landowner, stakeholder and community engagement will take place throughout project development.



Contact Us

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