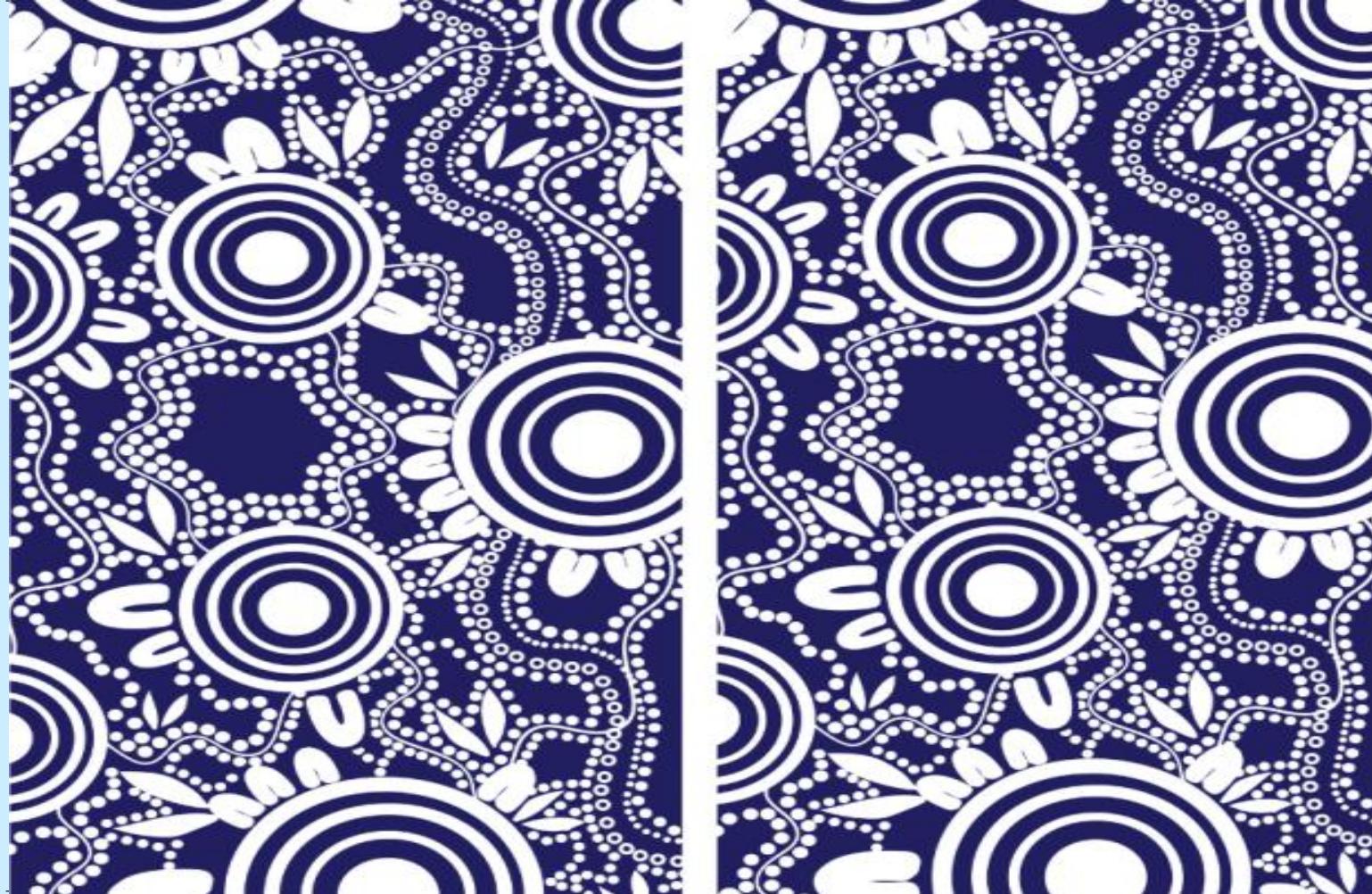


Case Study: The Illawarra REZ

Lessons in grid coordination and regional collaboration

Emily Speers Mears and Lauren Tapp
Co-Directors, Network Recommendations

Acknowledgement of Country



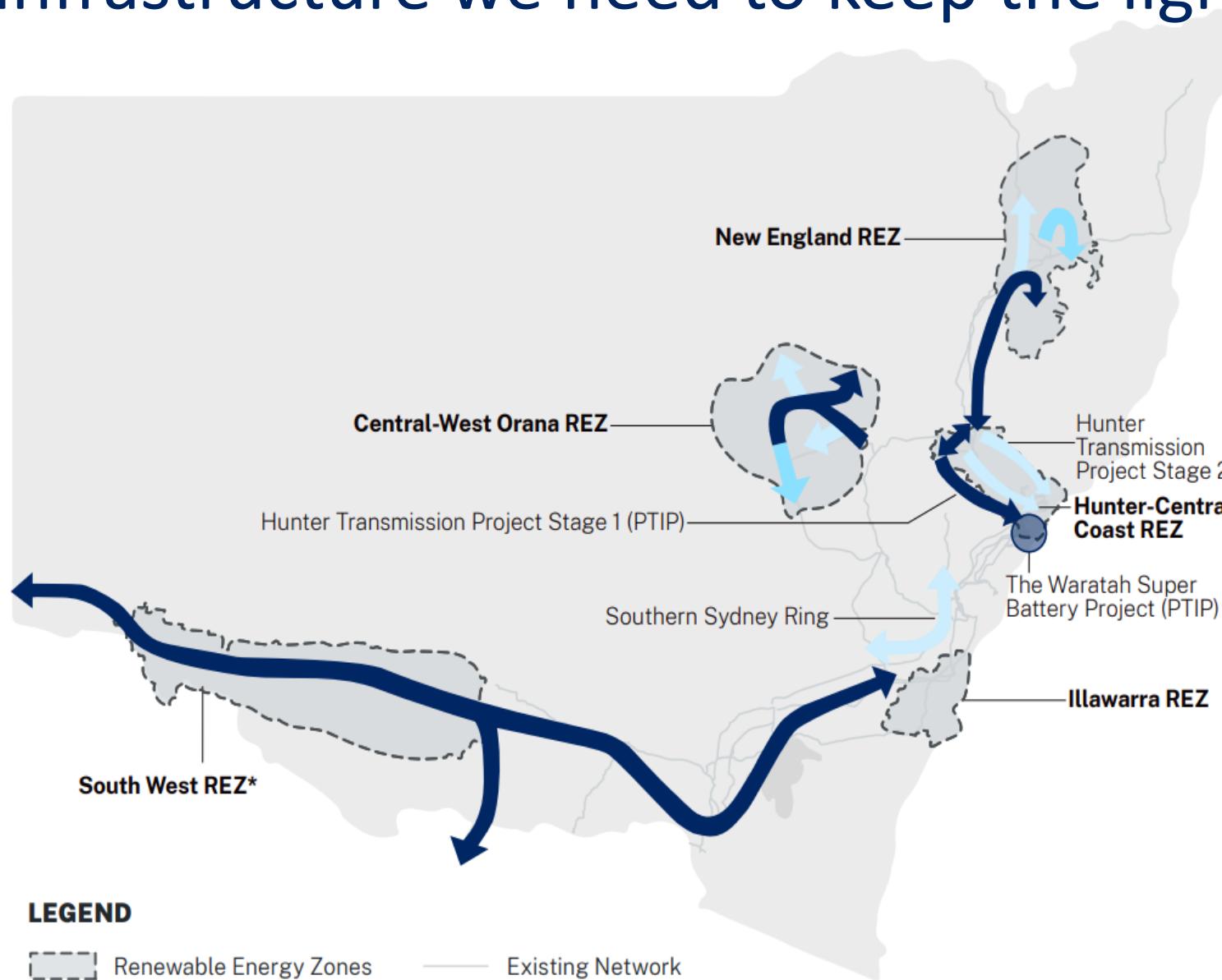
STANDING TOGETHER

Standing Together is a powerful visual representation of unity, strength, and connection. The artwork features interwoven connection lines linking people, places, and pathways—symbolising how we are all joined together, standing as one.

At its heart, this piece celebrates the idea that together, we are stronger. Each connection reflects the importance of collaboration, community, and shared purpose—values that sit at the core of both cultural practice and modern progress. It acknowledges the shared responsibility of caring for the land, respecting Traditional Owners, and working in partnership with communities towards a more sustainable future.

Through its symbols, and connection lines, Standing Together is a reminder that true strength lies in standing side by side—with each other, with Country, and with culture.

Coordinating the generation, storage and network infrastructure we need to keep the lights on



Central-West Orana REZ network infrastructure under construction

Hunter Central Coast REZ network final revenue determination reached

Over 10GW of new generation secured (CWO and SW REZs)

New England REZ RfP released

Waratah Super Battery operational

What is an urban REZ?

Manages increasing demand and peak demand in an urban centre

Prioritises 'non-network solutions'

Integrates consumer energy resources

Underpins the growth of low-carbon industries and industry decarbonisation





The Illawarra REZ

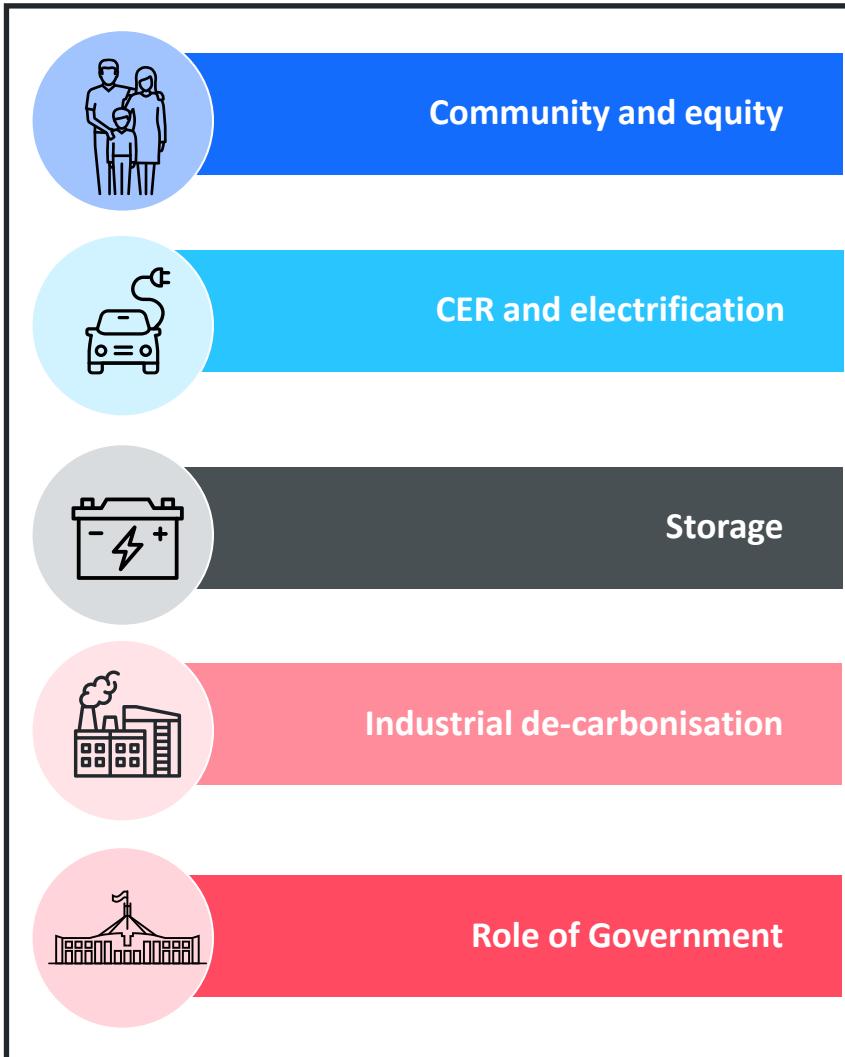
The intended network capacity for the Illawarra REZ is 1 gigawatt.

The Illawarra region has unique features that make it ideal for a REZ:

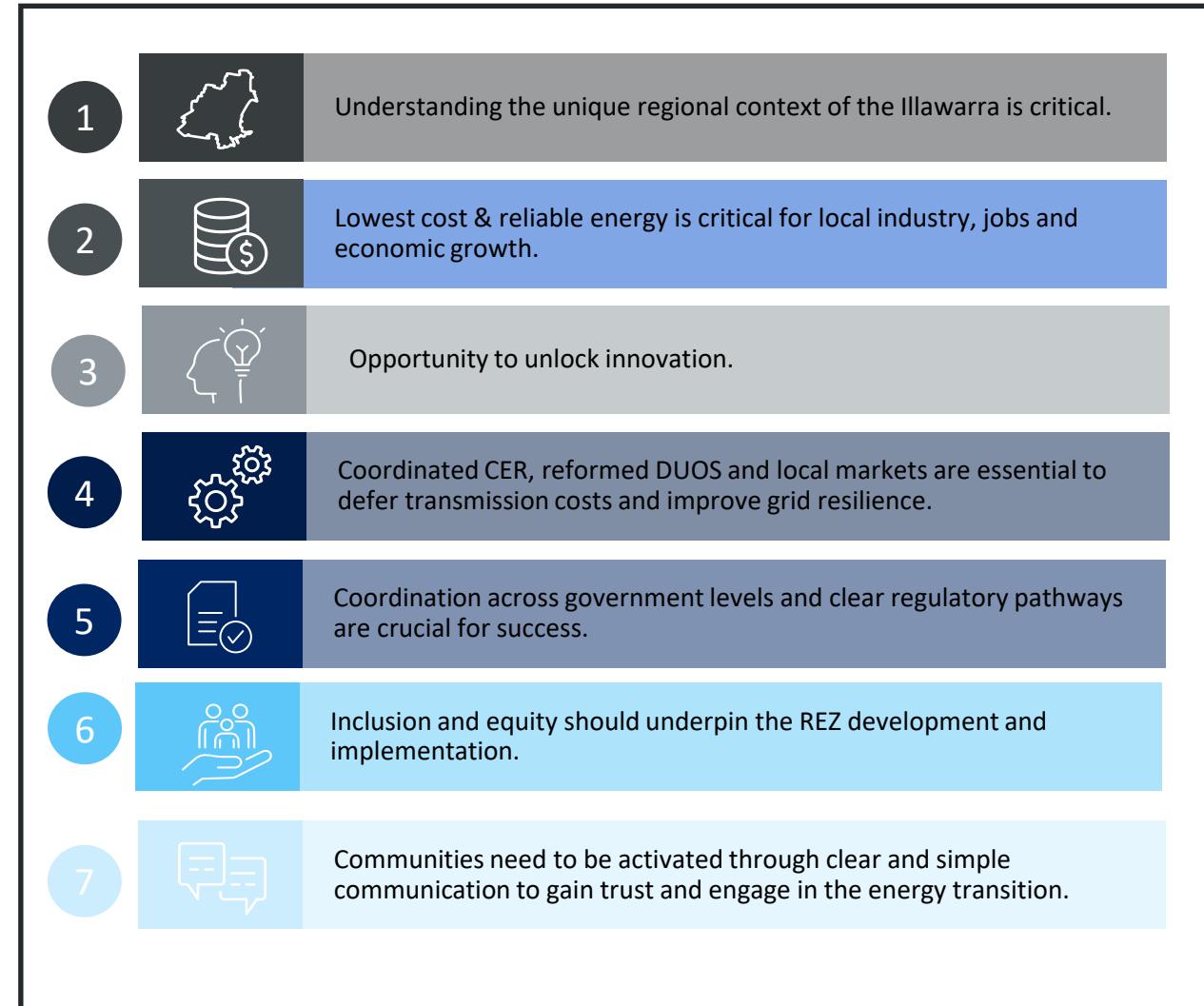
- major energy, port and transport infrastructure already in place
- skilled workforce ready to support renewable energy projects
- potential for future renewable energy projects

There is strong community interest in the Illawarra REZ

Local stakeholder interests



Themes raised by the community (Roundtable, May 2025)

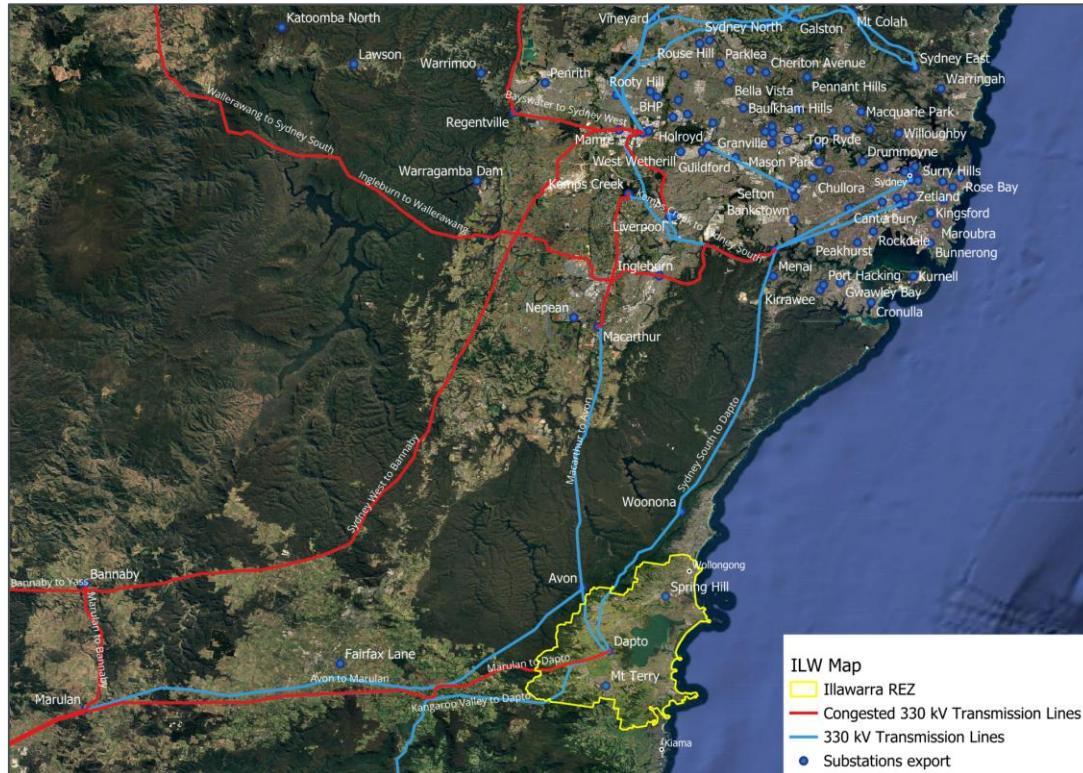


The diagram lists seven themes, each numbered 1 to 7 and accompanied by a small icon. The themes are:

1. Understanding the unique regional context of the Illawarra is critical. (Map icon)
2. Lowest cost & reliable energy is critical for local industry, jobs and economic growth. (Stack of coins icon)
3. Opportunity to unlock innovation. (Lightbulb icon)
4. Coordinated CER, reformed DUOS and local markets are essential to defer transmission costs and improve grid resilience. (Gears icon)
5. Coordination across government levels and clear regulatory pathways are crucial for success. (Document with checkmark icon)
6. Inclusion and equity should underpin the REZ development and implementation. (Hand holding people icon)
7. Communities need to be activated through clear and simple communication to gain trust and engage in the energy transition. (Speech bubbles icon)

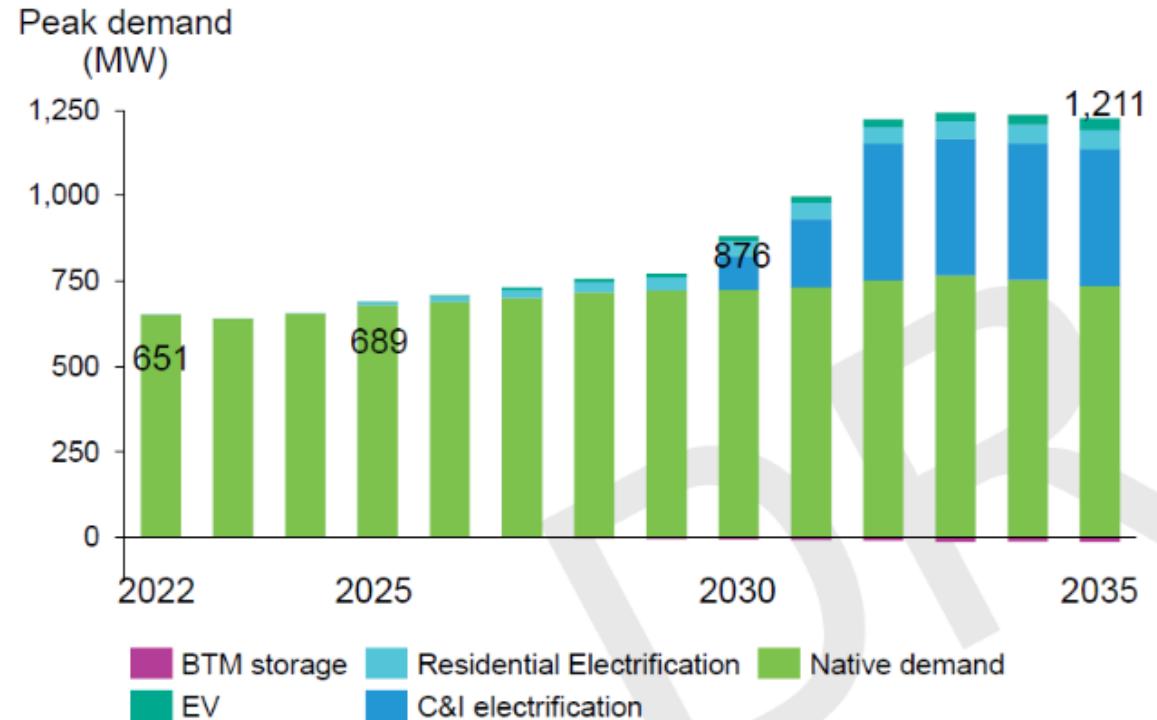
The Illawarra has grid congestion and increasing industrial demands

Congested transmission lines



Transmission assets

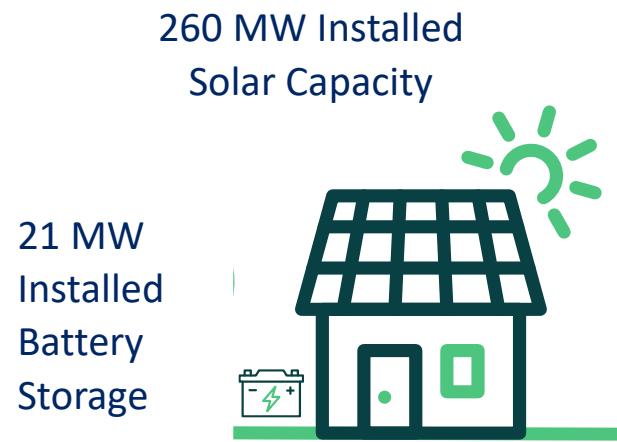
Increasing industrial demands



Illawarra REZ Peak Demand forecast (source: Endeavour Energy)

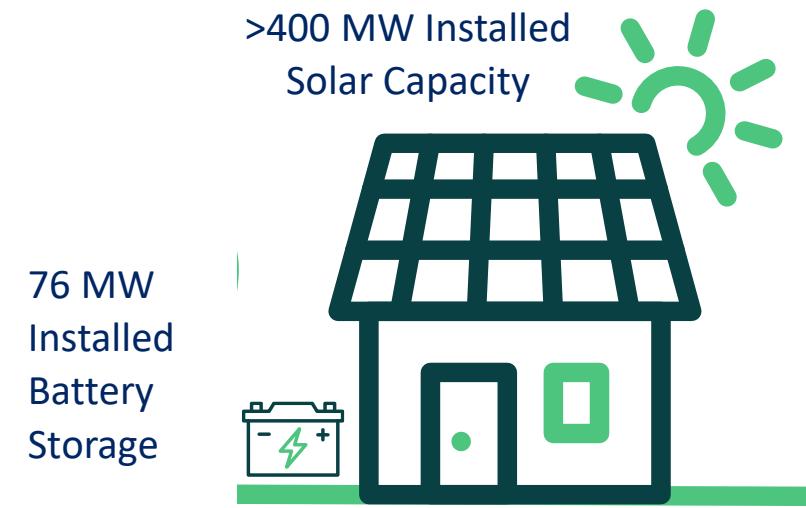
Consumer energy resources are growing

Current



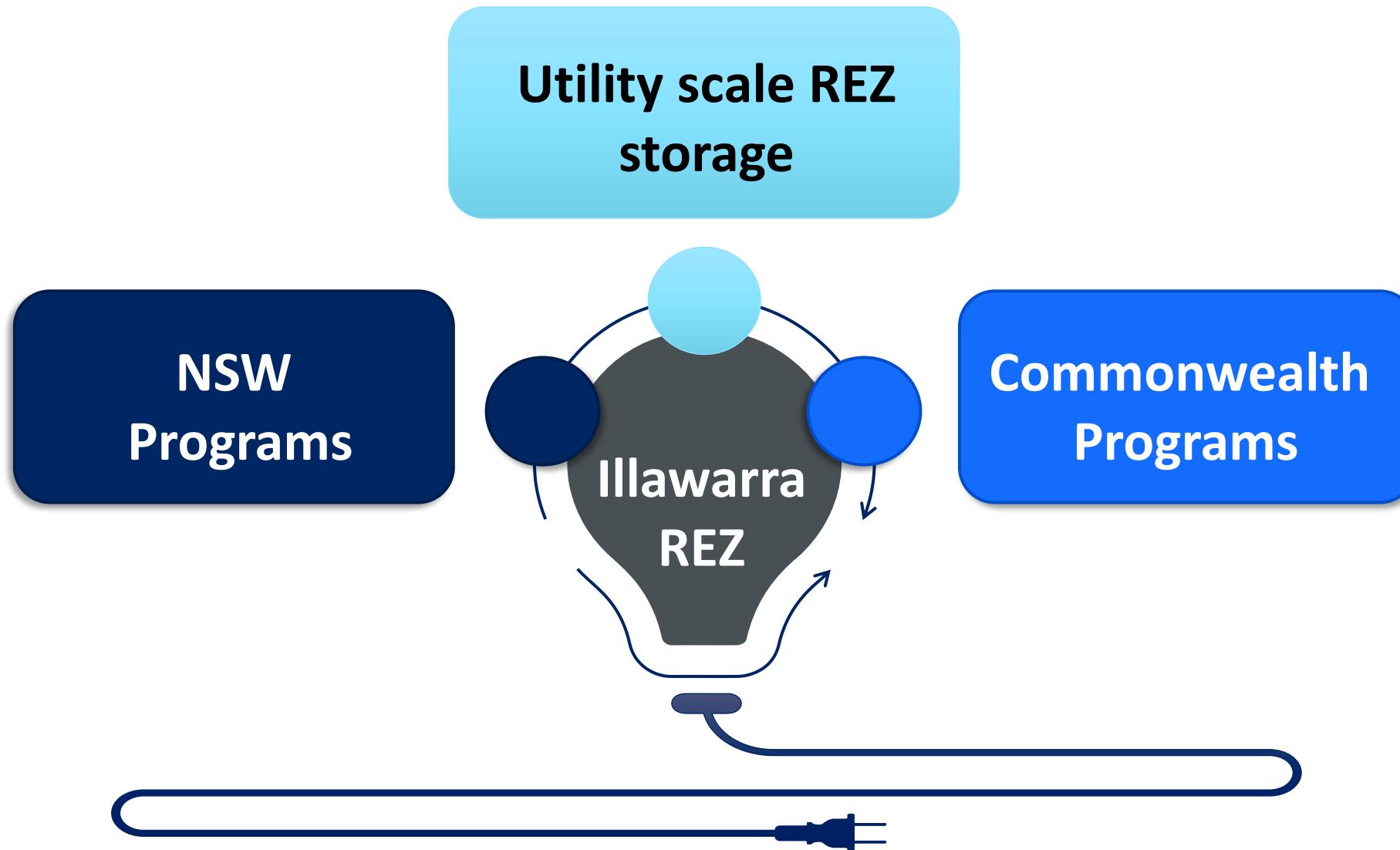
37% of homes and businesses with installed solar

2030 (projected)



55% homes and businesses with installed solar

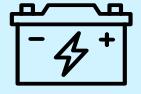
The Illawarra REZ will benefit from integrated solutions



EnergyCo is considering a range of REZ options



Network upgrades



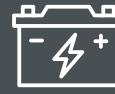
More efficient use of existing infrastructure



Innovative network solutions



EnergyCo working with Transgrid and Endeavour Energy to assess network upgrade options



Integrating rooftop solar, community batteries, local storage



MOU with Endeavour Energy to investigate solutions

What have we learnt so far?



Community and industry appetite

- Roundtable Reconnect in December 2025 – to continue the conversation

Opportunity and strong foundations

- Joint Planning with Transgrid and Endeavour Energy
- BlueScope Project Delivery Group

Innovation - evolving the REZ concept for an urban setting

- New partnerships for fresh ideas



What are the lessons from your own experience in grid coordination and regional collaboration?

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