



# **Submission: Hunter Transmission Project - Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

24 September 2025

The Hon Paul Scully  
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

Attention: Kurtis Wathen, Contact Planner  
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure  
Uploaded via Planning Portal

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Dear Minister Scully,

**Re: Hunter Transmission Project Environmental Impact Statement Submission**

The ten Member Councils of the Hunter Joint Organisation (Hunter JO) welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the Hunter Transmission Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and considerations for the Hunter region in the delivery of this significant project.

The Hunter JO is the statutory Local Government entity established by the NSW Government to support the ten councils of the Hunter Region to work together for better regional outcomes, and to strengthen collaboration with State and Federal Governments in planning and delivering critical infrastructure and investment.

Member Councils of the Hunter JO include:

- Cessnock City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Maitland City Council
- MidCoast Council
- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- City of Newcastle
- Port Stephens Council
- Singleton Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council

The core statutory functions established by the NSW Government for the Hunter JO and joint organisations more broadly across NSW include:

1. Strategic planning and priority setting
2. Intergovernmental collaboration
3. Shared leadership and advocacy

The Hunter Region is the largest regional economy in Australia, driving around 28% of regional NSW's total economic output and a population approaching one million people.

The ten Mayors of the Region, through the Hunter JO, are strongly aligned in recognising the economic transformation challenges facing the region, and welcome the opportunity to provide input to this important regional project.

Should you have any further queries please don't hesitate to contact Kim Carland, Advocacy and Government Relations Lead, Hunter JO at [kimc@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kimc@hunterjo.nsw.gov.au) or on 0460 034 614.

Yours Sincerely



Cr Sue Moore  
Chair Hunter Joint Organisation

# SUBMISSION

## Key Regional Considerations

### 1. Worker Accommodation and Housing Legacy

At peak construction, the project will employ approximately 750 workers, with around 300 requiring temporary accommodation. The Hunter is already experiencing one of the most acute housing shortages in NSW, with rental vacancy rates below 1% in some areas. Without proactive planning, the influx of workers risks exacerbating housing affordability pressures for local communities.

While central to delivery of the Hunter Transmission Project itself, the development of temporary worker housing has the potential to more broadly support the delivery of State Government housing priorities and targets. For example, design and construction approaches that use modular and reusable methods can ensure that when the project is completed, temporary housing can be repurposed into permanent housing stock or other legacy community infrastructure for the region.

In addition to the type of construction, the location of temporary worker accommodation during project delivery is also important. This is because locating temporary accommodation within or near existing communities can provide economic benefits through boosting local business activity, as well as enhancing social outcomes by supporting the wellbeing of workers through enhanced integration with local communities.

### Recommendation:

The Hunter JO recommends that temporary worker accommodation delivered under the project:

- Utilise modular and reusable construction methods that will be repurposed for permanent housing stock in the Hunter region, in partnership with local Councils, Homes NSW and Community Housing Providers.
- Be located near or within towns and villages rather than remote rural sites to ensure economic benefits are realised by local communities
- Utilise local suppliers and services wherever possible
- Is designed using sustainability and amenity principles.

### 2. Local Water Infrastructure

Demands on local water infrastructure arising from short term worker accommodation has the potential to place significant strain on already stretched local facilities and services. Councils outside the Hunter Water service area carry full responsibility for water and wastewater infrastructure, with the cost of upgrades well beyond the capacity of small regional councils to deliver.

Increases in temporary worker populations and project construction activity will increase water demand and wastewater generation, placing further pressure on local water infrastructure. Careful consideration of these impacts and working with Councils and other agencies to identify and fund required upgrades to water infrastructure can support not only delivery of the transmission project itself but provide enduring benefits for the community. These in turn can play an important role in supporting local Councils and their communities provide additional housing and to further transform and diversify their local economies in line with State Government objectives.

### Recommendation:

Collaborate with local councils and other agencies to identify and fund upgrades to local water infrastructure that supports both implementation of the transmission project itself and provides enduring infrastructure to support future housing and economic activity to support the region's economic transformation.

## 3. Regional Workforce Transition

The closure of major employers such as the Eraring Power Station in 2027 presents a significant risk of displacement for skilled workers with around 1,000 direct jobs affected. More broadly, nearly 12,000 direct and indirect jobs will be lost by 2030 with the closure of two mines in the Upper Hunter alone. Without intervention, the region faces the loss of critical skills just as demand for a skilled workforce is growing through major energy transition projects.

The Hunter JO calls on EnergyCo and the NSW Government to prioritise a structured transition pathway for local workers, ensuring their redeployment into the Hunter Transmission Project wherever possible. A formal workforce transition plan, developed in partnership with mining and energy companies, unions and training providers, will retain skilled labour in the region, reduce social and economic impacts on families, and support the broader transformation to a net zero economy.

### Recommendation:

Guarantee preferential recruitment pathways for displaced workers, by establishing a formal workforce transition plan with mining and energy companies, unions, and training providers to redeploy skilled local workers into the Hunter Transmission Project.

## Conclusion

The Hunter Transmission Project is a critical component of NSW's planned net zero energy future. In addition to the direct electricity infrastructure being constructed, projects of this scale and importance provide the opportunity to catalyse delivery of broader State Government policy objectives in the communities in which they are located. With the Hunter Transmission Project, these include contributing to long-term housing supply, enhancing water infrastructure and security, and supporting local workforce transition – all of which will directly support the region's broader economic transformation in line with State and Federal Government policy directions.

Adopting these recommendations will contribute to building community support and confidence in the energy transformation underway in the Hunter and position the Hunter Transmission Project as a national model for how transmission infrastructure can deliver enduring legacy benefits for regional communities.

The Hunter JO and its ten member councils are committed to working with EnergyCo and the NSW Government more broadly to ensure the Hunter Transmission Project contributes to delivery of the broader suite of priorities we all share for the region. This includes providing legacy benefits that will support local communities in their efforts to transform and diversify the region's economy to align with State and Federal Government net zero policy and targets.