

State Significant Development Committee

Business Paper

9 JUNE 2026



State Significant Development Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Objective

The objective of the State Significant Development Committee (the Committee) is to enable submissions and responses relating to state significant development in the Muswellbrook Shire to be considered in a timely manner to meet timeframes set by the NSW Government.

2. Scope

The scope of activities to be overseen by the Committee include:

- Assess State Significant Development and prepare submissions and responses relating to state significant development.
- Consider changes in Government legislation and guidelines on planning matters.
- Receive updates on proposed State Significant Development projects, and existing quarry operations.
- Authorise submissions and responses to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) on state significant development.

3. Authority

Muswellbrook Shire Council authorises the Committee, within the scope of its role and responsibilities, to:

- Use delegated authority to authorise submissions and responses to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and the Independent Planning Commission (IPC).
- Assess State Significant Development and prepare submissions and responses relating to state significant development in the Muswellbrook Shire.
- Request information required to inform decision making (subject to their legal obligations to protect information and with prior consultation with the General Manager).
- Request information from employees (with approval of the General Manager) or Councillors.
- The Committee may request these persons to present information at Committee meetings to assist in understanding any matter under consideration.
- Obtain external legal or other professional advice, as considered necessary, to meet its responsibilities (in accordance with Council Budget and procurement arrangements and subject to prior consultation with the General Manager).

4. Composition and Tenure

The members of the Committee shall be 9 Councillors elected by Council.

Members (voting)

All members of the Committee (Councillors) are entitled to one vote with the Chair having a casting vote in the event of a tied vote.

**Attendees (non-voting)**

The following Council officers will act as liaison officers to the Committee:

Department	Role
Director – Planning & Environment	Liaison Officer
General Manager	Attendee
Director – Community & Economy	Attendee
Environmental Planning Officer	Attendee
Legal Counsel	Attendee

Invitees (non-voting) for specific Agenda items

Other officers may attend by invitation as requested by the Committee or the General Manager.

5. Responsibilities of Members

Members of the Committee are expected to:

- Agree that they are bound by Council’s Code of Conduct.
- Understand the relevant legislative and regulatory requirements appropriate to Muswellbrook Shire Council.
- Contribute the time needed to study and understand the papers provided.
- Apply sound analytical skills, objectivity and judgement.
- Express opinions frankly, ask questions that go to the fundamental core of the issues, and pursue independent lines of enquiry.
- Act, and be seen to act, properly and in accordance with the requirements of the law and the terms of Council’s Code of Conduct.
- Act in good faith and fidelity in the interests of Council and the community.

6. Reporting

Following each meeting, the minutes will be reported to the next Council Meeting and the Chair will be required to provide a brief summary.

7. Meetings

- The Committee will meet at 4pm on the second Tuesday of each month except for January.
- The need for any additional meetings will be decided by the Chair of the Committee, though other Committee members may make requests to the Chair for additional meetings.
- The Committee shall comply with Council’s adopted Code of Meeting Practice and Code of Conduct.
- Councillors may attend and participate in meetings of the committee by audio-visual link with the approval of the committee.



8. Attendance at Meetings and Quorums

A quorum will consist of six (6) Committee members. Meetings can be held in person or by video conference.

Voting

The Committee is expected to make decisions by consensus, however if voting becomes necessary, then the details of the vote are to be recorded in the minutes. Each member of the Committee shall be entitled to one vote only. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair will have a casting vote.

9. Secretariat

The General Manager will ensure that appropriate secretariat support is provided to the Committee. The Secretariat will ensure the agenda for each meeting and supporting papers are circulated at least one week before the meeting and ensure minutes of the meeting are prepared and maintained.

Minutes shall be approved by the Chair and circulated to all Committee members within one week of the meeting and filed in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy.

10. Conflicts of Interest

Members of Council committees must comply with the applicable provisions of Council's Code of Conduct in carrying out their functions as Council officials. It is the personal responsibility of Council officials to comply with the standards in the Code of Conduct and regularly review their personal circumstances with this in mind.

Committee members must declare any conflict of interest at the start of each meeting or before discussion of a relevant agenda item or topic. Details of any conflict of interest should be appropriately minuted.

Where members or invitees at Committee meetings are deemed to have a real or perceived conflict of interest, it may be appropriate they be excused from Committee deliberations on the issue where the conflict of interest may exist. The final arbiter of such a decision is the Chair of the Committee.

11. Induction

New members will receive relevant information and briefings on their appointment to assist them to meet their Committee responsibilities.

12. Review of Committee Terms of Reference

At least once every two years the Committee will review this Committee's Terms of Reference and make recommendations on any changes to Council for its determination.

Any changes to the Committee Terms of Reference must be approved by Council.



MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL

P.O Box 122
MUSWELLBROOK

2/6/2026

Cr J. Drayton (Chair)
Cr D. Hartley (Deputy Chair)
Cr C. Bailey
Cr D. Douglas
Cr L. Dunn
Cr G. McNeill
Cr D. Marshall
Cr R. Scholes
Cr S. Ward
Mr D. Finnigan (General Manager)
Ms S. Pope (Director – Planning & Environment)
Ms S. Richards (Director - Community & Economy)
Ms T. Folpp (Environmental Planning Officer)
Ms A. Hathway (Legal Counsel)

You are hereby requested to attend the State Significant Development Committee to be held in the Meeting Room, Level 1 Tertiary Education Centre, 87 Hill Street, Muswellbrook on **9 June 2026** commencing at **4:00 pm**.

Sharon Pope
DIRECTOR – PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT



Order of Business

1 Acknowledgement of Country	7
2 Apologies	7
3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting	7
4 Disclosure of Any Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests	11
5 Business Arising	11
6 Business	12
6.1 Activities Summary for State Significant Development	12
6.2 EnergyCo New England REZ - Opportunities Identification and Prioritisation	15
7 Adjournment into Closed Committee	25
8 Closed Committee	25
9 Date of Next Meeting	25
10 Closure	25



1 Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of Country

Council would like to respectfully acknowledge the local Aboriginal people who are the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land on which this meeting takes place

2 Apologies

3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

RECOMMENDATION

The Minutes of the State Significant Development Committee Meeting held on **12 May, 2026**, a copy of which has been distributed to all members, be taken as read and confirmed as a true record.

Moved: _____ **Seconded:** _____

MINUTES OF THE STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL HELD IN THE TEC MEETING ROOM, LEVEL 1 TERTIARY EDUCATION CENTRE, 87 HILL STREET, MUSWELLBROOK ON 12 MAY 2026 COMMENCING AT 4:19PM.

PRESENT: Cr J. Drayton (Chair), Cr D. Douglas, Cr D. Marshall, Cr R. Scholes and Cr S. Ward.

IN ATTENDANCE: Cr R. Mahajan, Cr M. Morris, Mr D. Finnigan (General Manager), Ms S. Pope (Director – Planning & Environment), Ms S. Richards (Director - Community & Economy), Mr M. Lysaught (Director – Infrastructure & Property), Mr J. Hogan (Chief Financial Officer), Ms T. Folpp (Environmental Planning Officer), Mrs T. Ward (Environmental Planning Officer), Mrs D. Watson (Senior Land Use Planner), Mrs M. Sandell-Hay (Governance Officer), Ms L. Ward (EA to Mayor & GM), Mr D. Waddell (ICT Officer) and Mr I. Skanes (Grants & Community Engagement Co-Ordinator).

1 Acknowledgement of Country

The Acknowledgement of Country was read by Cr D. Douglas.

2 Apologies

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr D. Douglas and Cr D. Marshall that:

The apology for inability to attend the meeting submitted by Cr C. Bailey, Cr L. Dunn, Cr D. Hartley and Cr. G. McNeill be ACCEPTED.

In Favour: Cr J. Drayton, Cr D. Douglas, Cr D. Marshall, Cr S. Ward and Cr R. Scholes

Against: Nil

3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr R. Scholes and Cr D. Douglas that:

The Minutes of the State Significant Development Committee Meeting held on **14 April, 2026**, a copy of which has been distributed to all members, be taken as read and confirmed as a true record.

In Favour Cr J. Drayton, Cr D. Douglas, Cr D. Marshall, Cr S. Ward and Cr R. Scholes

Against: Nil

4 Disclosure of Any Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Nil

5 Business Arising

Nil



6 Business

6.1 2025 Extractive Industry (Quarry) Audit

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr D. Douglas and Cr R. Scholes that:
The information contained in this report be noted.

In Favour: Cr J. Drayton, Cr D. Douglas, Cr D. Marshall, Cr S. Ward and Cr R. Scholes

Against: Nil

6.2 Gelston Battery Energy Storage System - Planning Agreement General Terms

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr R. Scholes and Cr S. Ward that:
The SSD Committee resolves to accept the Initial Offer submitted by Ascera Energy Pty Ltd for the Gelston Battery Energy Storage System, in accordance with staff comments provided in Attachment B.

In Favour: Cr J. Drayton, Cr D. Douglas, Cr D. Marshall, Cr S. Ward and Cr R. Scholes

Against: Nil

6.3 Activities Summary for State Significant Development

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr D. Marshall and Cr S. Ward that:
The information contained in this report be noted.

In Favour: Cr J. Drayton, Cr D. Douglas, Cr D. Marshall, Cr S. Ward and Cr R. Scholes

Against: Nil

7 Adjournment into Closed Committee

Nil

8 Closed Committee

Nil

9 Resumption of Open Committee

Nil

10 Date of Next Meeting

9 June, 2026



11 Closure

The meeting was declared closed at 4:30pm.

.....
Mr D. Finnigan
General Manager

.....
Cr J. Drayton
Chairperson



4 Disclosure of Any Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

5 Business Arising

Nil



6 Business

6.1 Activities Summary for State Significant Development

Responsible Officer: Director - Planning & Environment

Author: Sustainability Officer

Community Strategic Plan: 3 - *Thriving Economy*

Our community has opportunities for employment, business and training and we drive investment into our economy to benefit our community.

Delivery Program Goal: Not Applicable

Operational Plan Action: Not applicable

Attachments: Nil

PURPOSE

To advise on recent activities of Council Officers and Councillors in relation to State Significant Development, including energy generation projects.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The information contained in this report be noted.

Moved: _____ **Seconded:** _____

REPORT

Project Name	Update.
AGL Macquarie Power Stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The stacks at Liddell Power Station were demolished at 11 a.m. on 26 May 2026. AGL have submitted a request to surrender the development consent for the Liddell Ash Dam. Staff will review and provide a response to AGL.
Bengalla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and Councillors attended the May CCC, site tour cancelled due to predicted rain. Commencement of construction of the new Bengalla Rd is expected in Q4 of 2026. BMC will hold public information sessions during construction to update the community on progress. MOD 9 (changes to final landform, methane flaring, and updates to infrastructure areas) expected to be lodged in June 2026. Completing a lot of feral animal control, particularly rabbits, foxes, dogs, and pigs. Dry conditions make it easier to see animals. 8 new Tapered Element Oscillating Membrane (TEOM) air quality



Project Name	Update.
	<p>monitoring units are being installed. 4 of the 8 are operational.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 0mm of rain was recoded on site in April, following below average rainfall in March of 21mm.
Dartbrook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No update.
Mangoola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff attended the May Community Consultative Committee (CCC) meeting. ● 220 ML of water were pumped from the Hunter River in Q1 2026 due to dry conditions. ● Hunter Riverbank stability monitoring occurred. ● Rehabilitation and landform shaping is underway for 2026. ● CCC is looking for a new community representative to replace Denman Chamber of Commerce as they have not attended a CCC for some years. Chair has attempted to contact them many times. ● CCC to attend a site tour at the August meeting.
Maxwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff and Councillors attended the May CCC. ● Akaysha Energy attended the CCC and gave an update on their battery and data centre project. The data centre will be mainly air cooled but will still require a water licence. They are aiming for Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) lodgement in Q2 of 2027. ● The land acquired from BHP in October 2025 (now referred to as Maxwell North). The geology is similar to Maxwell Underground and there is an opportunity to create another 300 jobs. ● Of the 430 workers at Maxwell, 5% are female. There is one female working in the underground team. ● Flora and fauna surveys to commence shortly to prepare scoping report for new mine approval.
Mount Arthur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Mayor and Staff attended the May CCC. ● First round of redundancies at Mount Artur will commence in 2028. ● Mine Staff are generally accepting the closure, with many requesting training in other mining equipment. 200 staff have obtained careers counselling. ● Pumped Hydro development for this site would be the second largest Pumped Hydro in Australia after Snowy Hydro but there are still development challenges. ● An EOI went out for the community reference group for post mining expenditure. BHP seeking 12 people, they have 8 so far from Muswellbrook and Denman. ● A list of competencies has been developed for the Board of the Mount Arthur Community Contribution Fund. There will be bespoke training for the board. ● 52 ha of rehabilitation has been completed this year. They are on track for seeding in May 2026. ● MAC is building a nursery to grow seedlings for their rehab and offset areas from local provenance stock.



Project Name	Update.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CCC meetings have been moved to Tuesdays.
Mount Pleasant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MACH Energy has provided its MOD 8 Submissions Report. While some of the Council matters were addressed, a number of issues remain outstanding. Staff will prepare a response.
Liddell Coal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No update.
Energy Co & Renewable Energy Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff and the Mayor met with the Proponent for the Uungula Wind Farm to discuss transport of OSOM on the Golden Highway. Movement schedules are shown on the Proponent's website https://squadronenergy.com/news/osom-delivery-schedule-24-may-to-14-june-2026/ . There is an issue with OSOM passing through the school zone on the Golden Highway at Denman due to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) requirement to depart Warkworth at sunrise; and another issue in relation to the VMS board at Denman bridge not being installed.• Staff met with EnergyCo to discuss the scope of work for road upgrades to construct the NE REZ 500 kV line (note that this discussion is for minor roads in the shire and did not include Option 1b of Port to REZ roads).• Muswellbrook Solar Farm formally commenced construction on 14 May 2026. A report on the status of its accommodation and employment will be provided at the SSD Committee meeting in July.• Staff met with the Proponent for an accelerated synchronous condenser located in Armidale. The project proposes the use of the Kayuga Road part of Option 1b, but not Dartbrook Mine Road in 2027. Staff confirmed that Council's objection still applies.• McCullys Gap community meeting held on 13 May 2026 was well attended by Councillors, staff, community, and renewable energy project reps.



6.2 EnergyCo New England REZ - Opportunities Identification and Prioritisation

Responsible Officer: Director - Planning & Environment

Author: Environmental Planning Officer

Community Strategic Plan: 3 - *Thriving Economy*
5 - *Working Together*

Our community is involved in decision making and resources are managed to align with the values and priorities.

Delivery Program Goal: Not Applicable

Operational Plan Action: 3.4.1.3 - Advocate on behalf of the community on matters related to State Significant Development and the renewableenergy roll-out.

Attachments: 1. NEREZ Council opportunities register Muswellbrook Shire Council [6.2.1 - 7 pages]

PURPOSE

To seek endorsement from the State Significant Development (SSD) Committee for the projects identified by Council staff for the Opportunities Register for the EnergyCo New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ).

Endorsement by the SSD Committee is required prior to submission to EnergyCo.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The State Significant Development Committee endorses the projects on the EnergyCo New England REZ Opportunities Register provided in Attachment A.

Moved: _____ **Seconded:** _____

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) is the NSW statutory authority appointed to lead the delivery of the Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) under the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap (Roadmap), enabled by the *Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020*.

EnergyCo must deliver REZ infrastructure in a manner that benefits consumers, investors, and regional communities. This includes identifying and coordinating regional responses to the cumulative impacts arising from REZ development.

EnergyCo has finalised five Regional Major Infrastructure Studies for the New England REZ, addressing:

1. Local supply chain;
2. Workforce accommodation;
3. Waste and circular economy;
4. Training and skills; and
5. Water and wastewater security.



The studies are available on EnergyCo's website at the following link

<https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/ne/project-documents-new-england-renewable-energy-zone>

Muswellbrook Shire is one of the councils included in the New England REZ planning, due to the 500kV powerline to be constructed to connect to the Bayswater switching station. EnergyCo has requested Council input into identifying opportunities to address cumulative impact challenges, which are essentially projects that could be funded by EnergyCo. Staff have been provided with a template to submit for an "Opportunities Register".

The Opportunities Register (see Attachment A) was prepared through consultation with various staff and presented to the Directorate Leadership Group (DLG) on 20 May 2026. Endorsement by the SSD Committee is required prior to submission to EnergyCo.

PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

Nil.

REPORT

The NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap establishes a coordinated framework for renewable energy development across designated REZs. EnergyCo has been appointed to lead delivery of the REZs, including the New England (NE) REZ.

A series of Regional Major Infrastructure Studies have been completed to identify potential cumulative impacts and key regional challenges associated with the NE REZ development. These include impacts relating to workforce accommodation, water and wastewater security, waste management, training and skills, and local supply chains.

The studies also identify potential regional response opportunities. The studies are available on EnergyCo's website at the following link <https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/ne/project-documents-new-england-renewable-energy-zone>

EnergyCo is seeking input from the relevant councils to identify opportunities that address the cumulative impact challenges within the NE REZ. Importantly, EnergyCo has advised that any opportunity submitted must be supported by either:

- The Regional Major Infrastructure Studies;
- A Council study;
- Documented community engagement; or
- An existing Council strategy or policy.

In response, Staff have:

- Reviewed relevant Council studies, strategies and projects; and
- Prepared a list of potential opportunities (noting that consultation with relevant Managers and Directors occurred in March 2026 to validate alignment with infrastructure capacity, operational considerations, and strategic priorities).

The potential opportunities were presented to the Directorate Leadership Group (DLG) on 20 May 2026 and are provided in Attachment A.

CONSULTATION

The Regional Major Infrastructure Studies were circulated to Managers and Directors in September 2025 and February 2026.

Internal consultation on the Opportunities Register was undertaken with relevant Managers and



Directors in March 2026.

The Register was presented to the Directorate Leadership Group (DLG) on 20 May 2026.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Finalisation and submission of the Opportunities Register does not commit Council to capital expenditure at this stage.

However, opportunities identified within the Register may have future resourcing implications should they progress to detailed feasibility, business case development, or implementation. By limiting the opportunities to those already identified in studies, strategies, or plans of Council, it is hoped that the opportunities reflect infrastructure or projects Council is already contemplating, and towards which EnergyCo may be able to provide a source of funding.

Any such financial implications will be subject to separate reporting and approval.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Opportunities included in the Register must be consistent with adopted Council strategies, policies, and planning frameworks.

STATUTORY / LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct statutory implications arising from endorsement of the Opportunities Register. However, future implementation of identified opportunities may trigger relevant planning, infrastructure, or regulatory approvals.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Key risks include:

- Submission of opportunities not adequately supported by existing studies or policy; and
- Reputational risk if opportunities are raised without internal alignment.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATIONS

Nil.

Council:	Muswellbrook Shire		
Date:	31 May 2026	Revision:	2

Priority area	Opportunity Name	Opportunity description / scope	Status (Existing / Upgrade / New)	Capital / Non-capital	Key driver(s)	Source	Location	Indicative cost (if known) & existing funding sources (as applicable)
Housing and workforce accommodation	Temporary Workforce Accommodation (TWA) Strategy and Project Coordination	Identify and assess potential operating models for TWA facilities across Council identified sites, including comparative analysis and recommendations for the most suitable delivery model per location. In parallel, provide funding contributions toward Council officer time associated with coordinating housing and TWA planning and delivery activities arising from REZ and major infrastructure development.	New	Non-capital	Significant workforce accommodation demand associated with REZ and broader economic transition activities; need for coordinated and strategic delivery of housing and TWA outcomes; complexity associated with planning, infrastructure, servicing and implementation; community concerns regarding cumulative impacts; and the need for dedicated resourcing to coordinate and support timely project delivery.	EnergyCo Workforce Accommodation Study	N/A	Cost: TWA Operating Model Scope approx. \$60k. Staff role cost dependent on timing. Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.
Housing and workforce accommodation	Bimbadeen Intersection Upgrade – Eastbrook Links and Ironbark Ridge	Upgrade the Bimbadeen Road intersection and associated infrastructure to remove servicing and access constraints affecting delivery of the Eastbrook Links and Ironbark Ridge residential development areas identified within the <i>'Muswellbrook Local Housing Strategy 2024'</i> . The project would support the release and development of additional permanent housing supply to accommodate projected population growth and workforce demand associated with REZ-related development and economic transition, including workers and families seeking residential accommodation that may not be suitably accommodated within TWA.	New	Capital	Increasing demand for permanent housing associated with REZ development, economic transition and population growth; need to enable delivery of strategic residential growth areas identified in the <i>'Muswellbrook Local Housing Strategy 2024'</i> ; and the requirement for enabling infrastructure to support long-term community growth and housing availability.	EnergyCo Workforce Accommodation Study <i>'Muswellbrook Local Housing Strategy 2024'</i>	Muswellbrook Shire	Cost: Approx. \$2.7M Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.
Housing and workforce accommodation	Urban Growth Servicing Strategy	Prepare a servicing strategy to support future housing growth identified within the <i>'Muswellbrook Local Housing Strategy 2024'</i> . The strategy would assess infrastructure requirements associated with future residential development areas, including water, wastewater, stormwater, roads and other essential services, and identify staging, upgrade requirements, funding mechanisms and delivery pathways to support coordinated housing growth across the Shire.	New	Non-capital	Increasing demand for permanent housing associated with REZ development, economic transition and population growth; need to identify infrastructure constraints and servicing requirements for future residential release areas; requirement for coordinated infrastructure planning to support housing delivery; and the need to inform funding, staging and long-term growth planning outcomes.	EnergyCo Workforce Accommodation Study <i>'Muswellbrook Local Housing Strategy 2024'</i>	See Direction 2 in the <i>'Muswellbrook Local Housing Strategy 2024'</i>	Cost: unknown. Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.
Housing and workforce accommodation	Biodiversity Conservation Opportunities	Identify and secure suitable landholdings within the Muswellbrook Shire to support biodiversity conservation outcomes associated with the <i>'Hunter Conservation Investment Strategy'</i> (DCCEEW, 2025). Opportunities may include strategic land acquisition, conservation partnerships,	New	Non-capital	Increasing biodiversity offset and conservation requirements associated with REZ, transmission and major infrastructure projects; implementation of the <i>'Hunter Conservation Investment Strategy'</i> (DCCEEW, 2025); opportunity to achieve long-	EnergyCo Workforce Accommodation Study	Muswellbrook Shire	Cost: unknown. Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.

Priority area	Opportunity Name	Opportunity description / scope	Status (Existing / Upgrade / New)	Capital / Non-capital	Key driver(s)	Source	Location	Indicative cost (if known) & existing funding sources (as applicable)
		<p>habitat restoration, biodiversity stewardship arrangements and integration with broader regional conservation objectives associated with renewable energy and infrastructure development.</p> <p>This opportunity would also involve understanding the objectives and implementation of the Hunter Conservation Investment Strategy and identifying any potential implications, responsibilities, opportunities, or benefits for Council.</p>			term environmental outcomes and landscape connectivity; and potential economic and strategic benefits associated with conservation investment and land management.			
Water and wastewater security	New Muswellbrook Water Treatment Plant (23 ML/day)	Construct a new 23 ML/day water treatment plant at Muswellbrook to provide high quality potable water to meet projected long-term demand. The project would include associated treatment infrastructure, storage, network integration and supporting infrastructure.	New	Capital	<p>Council's 2021 Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy.</p> <p><i>Note: Council's 2021 Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy did not consider the cumulative impacts associated with Renewable Energy Zone development, including associated workforce growth and industrial demand – see response in next line.</i></p>	<p>WC 2 EnergyCo Water and wastewater security study</p> <p>MSC 2021 IWCMS</p>	Yet to be determined	<p>Cost: \$90M (business case prepared)</p> <p>Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.</p>
Water and wastewater security	Regional Bulk Potable Water Supply Scheme	Investigate and support the development of a regional bulk potable water supply scheme for the Upper Hunter and Muswellbrook. As identified during consultation for the <i>Water Considerations Report</i> (GHD, October 2025), EnergyCo & DCCEEW identified that 'DCCEEW are exploring a large-scale water supply project to provide a common bulk potable water source across the region'. The opportunity for Council is to engage in planning, define local servicing requirements, and advocate for infrastructure outcomes that support long-term water security and enable future growth and industry.	New	Capital	Increasing water demand associated with renewable energy development, economic transition and emerging industries; limitations of existing local water treatment and distribution capacity; need for coordinated, regional infrastructure solutions rather than project-by-project supply; and the opportunity to leverage State and Federal funding to deliver strategic water infrastructure that supports long-term regional resilience.	<p>WS 1 and WS 2 EnergyCo Water and wastewater security study</p> <p>Water Considerations Report (GHD, October 2025),</p>	-	<p>Cost: unknown.</p> <p>Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.</p>
Water and wastewater security	UHSC–MSC Joint Water Treatment Plant	Deliver a shared water treatment plant between Upper Hunter Shire Council (UHSC) and Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC) to provide a secure and reliable potable water supply for both LGAs. The project would involve development of a centralised treatment facility, associated raw and treated water infrastructure, and integration with existing distribution networks. The joint facility would be designed to meet contemporary Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and support long-term regional growth and resilience.	New	Capital	Need to improve water security and reduce risks associated with raw water quality (e.g. algal blooms and turbidity); improve public health outcomes; opportunity to achieve capital and operational efficiencies through shared infrastructure and economies of scale; and improved operational reliability and reduced treatment complexity due to higher raw water quality inputs.	<p>WC 2 EnergyCo Water and wastewater security study</p> <p>MSC 2021 'Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy' (IWCMS)</p>	Upper Hunter	<p>Cost: Up to \$200M (business case prepared)</p> <p>Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.</p>

Priority area	Opportunity Name	Opportunity description / scope	Status (Existing / Upgrade / New)	Capital / Non-capital	Key driver(s)	Source	Location	Indicative cost (if known) & existing funding sources (as applicable)
Water and wastewater security	Update Council's 'Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy'	Update Council's 2021 'Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy' to reflect population and employment forecasts, economic transition, future industry demand (including REZ projects), and emerging infrastructure including the (potential) BMC pipeline and Denman to Sandy Hollow Pipeline.	Existing	Non-capital	<p>The current IWCMS predates REZ declaration and does not account for cumulative water and wastewater demand associated with renewable energy development, workforce accommodation, population change, post-mining economic transition or population change. The update would assist Council to assess network capacity, understand future infrastructure needs, and identify opportunities for secure and transparent water allocation.</p> <p><i>Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Water Considerations Report' (GHD 2025, Table 7.1) - DCCEW commencing project to assess supply and demand for potable and raw water across the region in collaboration with EnergyCo. The project will consider water needs based on the NSW Major projects within the region. Report will be issued June 2026. WD2 - Staff support a comparable water study that includes HCC, NE REZ, HTP and all REZ projects in MSC, and any TWA. This should include capacity network infrastructure. 	WS 3 – note that MSC is currently not listed in WS 3. WD 2. EnergyCo Water and wastewater security study	N/A	<p>Cost: The 2021 IWCMS update costed approx. \$200k</p> <p>Funding source: The 2021 IWCMS update funded through the 'Safe and Secure Water Program'.</p>
Water and wastewater security	Recycled Water & Potable Water Refill Stations	<p>Upgrade and/or install infrastructure to provide both recycled (non-potable) and potable water fill points. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new recycled water fill point at the Muswellbrook Recycled Water Treatment Works (RWTW); and Upgrades to potable water fill points at the Thomas Mitchell Drive Industrial Area. <p>For recycled water, the project would incorporate access, metering, backflow prevention, user controls and capacity for multiple users.</p> <p>For potable water, the project would be upgrades to existing infrastructure to increase capacity and fill speed.</p> <p>The infrastructure would support construction, dust suppression and industrial activities associated with REZ and major infrastructure projects.</p> <p><i>Note that while cumulative impacts for water and wastewater were not assessed at Denman, it is preference that the</i></p>	New	Capital	Increasing demand for both potable and non-potable water associated with renewable energy projects, construction activities and economic transition. Opportunity to reduce reliance on potable water where non-potable alternatives are suitable, improve utilisation of treated effluent, and provide reliable access points for water supply. Supports REZ and broader industry demand while reducing pressure on existing water distribution systems and improving operational efficiency.	WS 4 EnergyCo Water and wastewater security study	<p>Muswellbrook RWTW; 30 Skellatar Stock Route</p> <p>Muswellbrook WTP; Scott Street</p>	<p>Cost: Unknown.</p> <p>Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.</p>

Priority area	Opportunity Name	Opportunity description / scope	Status (Existing / Upgrade / New)	Capital / Non-capital	Key driver(s)	Source	Location	Indicative cost (if known) & existing funding sources (as applicable)
		<i>Denman facility potable and non-potable water fill points be upgraded also.</i>						
Water and wastewater security	Temporary Potable Water Treatment Infrastructure	Deliver temporary potable water treatment infrastructure at Muswellbrook WTP to supplement existing capacity during peak demand associated with REZ projects, major infrastructure delivery and economic transition. This may include modular or package treatment plants, associated storage, and connections to the existing water supply network to support short- to medium-term supply requirements while permanent upgrades are planned and delivered.	New	Capital	Increasing short-term potable water demand associated with REZ projects, construction activity and workforce accommodation through temporary add-on treatment modules; constraints in existing water treatment capacity; need for interim infrastructure solutions to maintain reliable supply; and the ability to stage infrastructure delivery in line with growth while longer-term water supply solutions are progressed.	WC 2 EnergyCo Water and wastewater security study	Muswellbrook WTP; Scott Street	Cost: unknown. Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.
Water and wastewater security	Recycled Water Management and Reuse Strategy	Investigate and develop management, reuse and distribution options for recycled water generated by the wastewater treatment plant if operations approach 80% treatment capacity (as identified in the EnergyCo studies). The project may include assessment of recycled water demand, storage requirements, distribution infrastructure, agricultural and industrial reuse opportunities, environmental discharge considerations and potential non-potable supply opportunities associated with future growth and industry development. Subject to demand and business case outcomes, the project may include planning, funding and delivery of new recycled water storage, treatment and distribution infrastructure to support future growth, industry development and water security outcomes within the Shire.	New	Capital	REZ development is predicted to increase wastewater treatment demand and place pressure on existing treatment capacity. If the wastewater treatment plant approaches 80% operational capacity, additional planning will be required to identify sustainable recycled water management and reuse pathways to support long-term water security, operational efficiency and environmental outcomes.	WWC 1 WWC 2 EnergyCo Water and wastewater security study	Muswellbrook RWTW; 30 Skellatar Stock Route	Cost: unknown. Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.
Waste management and circular economy	Circular Economy Infrastructure Investment (incl. Bi-Directional Weighbridge Facility)	Support investment in long-term circular economy infrastructure to enable recovery, reuse, recycling and repurposing of materials associated with renewable energy, construction and industrial activities. This includes delivery of a new bi-directional weighbridge facility to support increasing heavy vehicle movements associated with REZ development and major infrastructure projects across the region. Opportunities may include development of recycling and processing facilities, material recovery infrastructure, industrial precincts and supporting logistics networks to establish sustained circular economy capability within the region. <i>Note: Consider review of waste classifications and regulatory pathways to facilitate the safe reuse and repurposing of</i>	New	Capital	Increasing waste streams associated with REZ, transmission and major infrastructure projects; Significant increases in heavy vehicle and freight activity; increasing demand on existing infrastructure; need to maximise long-term regional economic benefits from resource recovery and reuse; opportunity to diversify the local economy and create ongoing employment; and recognition that investment in long-term circular economy infrastructure, rather than short-term grant funding, is critical to achieving sustained regional and industry outcomes.	EnergyCo Waste management and circular economy study Council does not currently have a Waste Strategy	Muswellbrook Shire Muswellbrook Waste Facility, 252 Coal Rd	Cost: unknown. Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.

Priority area	Opportunity Name	Opportunity description / scope	Status (Existing / Upgrade / New)	Capital / Non-capital	Key driver(s)	Source	Location	Indicative cost (if known) & existing funding sources (as applicable)
		<i>materials, noting current EPA requirements may limit or constrain opportunities for beneficial reuse of some waste streams.</i>						
Waste management and circular economy	Extended Producer Responsibility and Product Stewardship Frameworks	Advocate for and support implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and product stewardship frameworks for renewable energy, construction and industrial waste streams generated through REZ development and economic transition activities. This may include opportunities for manufacturers, suppliers and project proponents to contribute toward collection, recovery, recycling, reuse and end-of-life management of materials such as solar panels, batteries, wind turbine components, packaging, electrical equipment and construction materials.	New	Non-Capital	Significant volumes of renewable energy, construction and industrial waste are expected to be generated through REZ and infrastructure development; need to reduce landfill disposal and improve resource recovery outcomes; importance of creating long-term circular economy markets and reducing financial burden on local government waste infrastructure; and recognition that producers and suppliers should contribute to lifecycle management and recovery of products and materials placed into the market.	EnergyCo Waste management and circular economy study	N/A	Cost: unknown. Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.
<i>The following opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed Hunter Energy Resources Centre to support a coordinated approach to workforce development, skills and training, employment pathways, and local business participation across the Hunter region.</i>								
Jobs, training and skills	Renewable Energy Skills and Employment Pathways Program	As soon as possible, establish a renewable energy “taster” and pre-employment training program within the Muswellbrook Shire, modelled on the Central-West Orana REZ Renewables Taster Program. The program could provide nationally accredited training and practical exposure to construction, civil and renewable energy industries, including qualifications such as White Card, confined spaces, working at heights, traffic control, risk management, small plant operation and articulated haul truck operations. The program may also include work preparation workshops (e.g. resume writing and interview skills), PPE provision, transport assistance and direct engagement with employers delivering REZ and infrastructure projects within the region.	New	Non-capital	Significant workforce demand associated with REZ and economic transition activities; opportunity to improve local workforce participation and skills development; need to provide pathways for residents into renewable energy and infrastructure employment; and importance of ensuring regional communities benefit from employment opportunities generated by major projects and long-term industry transition.	EnergyCo Training and Skills Study - Opportunity 1	N/A.	Cost: unknown. Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.
Jobs, training and skills	Inclusive Renewable Energy Workforce Pathways Program	Develop a coordinated workforce participation and school-to-employment program to increase local participation in renewable energy, construction and infrastructure industries, particularly for underrepresented groups including young people, women, Aboriginal people, migrants, people with disability and the long-term unemployed. The initiative may include partnerships with organisations such as the Muswellbrook Multi-Cultural Connect Group, Blackrock Industries, Warriors, Challenge Community Services, and community service providers to deliver mentoring, career awareness, training, work readiness support, micro-skills programs, apprenticeships, school engagement activities, careers events and pathways into employment associated	New	Non-capital	Significant workforce demand associated with REZ and economic transition activities; opportunity to increase local workforce participation and improve long-term employment outcomes for underrepresented groups; need to develop sustainable school-to-employment pathways for emerging industries; importance of improving workforce diversity and social inclusion; and need for coordinated training, mentoring and employment support.	EnergyCo Training and Skills Study - Opportunity 1	N/A	Cost: unknown. Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.

Priority area	Opportunity Name	Opportunity description / scope	Status (Existing / Upgrade / New)	Capital / Non-capital	Key driver(s)	Source	Location	Indicative cost (if known) & existing funding sources (as applicable)
		with REZ and infrastructure projects. The program may be modelled on successful programs such as the Women in Solar initiative, as well as collaboration with school Careers Advisors, Council's Youth Committee and STEM initiatives. <i>Note: Any opportunity involving Aboriginal people or communities should be developed in consultation with Council's Aboriginal Reference Group and the Local Aboriginal Land Council.</i>						
Jobs, training and skills	Indigenous Employment Support Services	Establish support services to improve pathways to employment and long-term workforce participation for Aboriginal community. The program may include an Indigenous Support Liaison role to coordinate transport assistance (including use of local bus service e.g Upper Hunter Ride Share), support obtaining identification and licences (e.g. driver's licences and birth certificates), provision of PPE and work-related items (e.g. uniforms and work boots), food and wellbeing support, regular check-ins, and broader "pathway to employment" assistance. <i>Note: Any opportunity involving Aboriginal people or communities should be developed in consultation with Council's Aboriginal Reference Group and the Local Aboriginal Land Council.</i>	New	Non-capital	Significant workforce demand associated with REZ and economic transition activities; opportunity to improve local Aboriginal employment participation and reduce barriers to workforce entry; need for culturally appropriate and community-led support services; and importance of ensuring long-term social and economic benefits from regional infrastructure and renewable energy investment are shared with the local Aboriginal community.	EnergyCo Training and Skills Study - Opportunity 1	N/A	Cost: unknown. Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.
Jobs, training and skills	Regional Workforce Dashboard	Develop a Regional Workforce Dashboard to monitor workforce trends, project demand, training capacity and transition pathways associated with REZ development and economic transition. The dashboard could combine labour market data, project workforce forecasts, regional skills inventories, training provider capacity, workforce participation indicators and transition pathways into a single visual platform to support strategic planning and decision-making.	New	Non-capital	Significant workforce demand associated with REZ and infrastructure projects; ongoing economic transition from coal and power generation industries; need to identify workforce shortages, transferable skills and training gaps; importance of improving workforce participation and local employment outcomes; and need for evidence-based planning to support training, infrastructure, housing and long-term regional economic development.	EnergyCo Training and Skills Study - Opportunity 5 Opportunity 6	N/A	Cost: unknown. Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.
Local supply chain	Major Projects Business and Supplier Opportunities Webpage	Develop a dedicated webpage to provide a centralised information hub for local businesses seeking to participate in major projects, REZ development and infrastructure delivery. The webpage could include a major projects overview, Opportunities Register, Local Supplier Database, upcoming tenders, supply chain and construction contract opportunities, service contract opportunities, estimated project timelines, local supplier database/directory, guidance on how to work on major projects, procurement registration information, insurance and safety requirements, contractor	New	Non-capital	Significant procurement, construction and service opportunities associated with REZ and major infrastructure projects; need to improve local business awareness and readiness; opportunity to increase local procurement and supply chain participation; need for a centralised and accessible source of information; and importance of ensuring local businesses can benefit from regional investment and economic transition.	EnergyCo Local Supply Chain Study	N/A	Cost: unknown. Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.

Priority area	Opportunity Name	Opportunity description / scope	Status (Existing / Upgrade / New)	Capital / Non-capital	Key driver(s)	Source	Location	Indicative cost (if known) & existing funding sources (as applicable)
		qualifications, business support and grants, training and skills development opportunities, business events and forums.						
Jobs, training and skills and Local Supply Chain	Muswellbrook Investment Attraction and Industry Development Program	Contribute to the implementation of Muswellbrook Shire Council's Powering the Future Economy and Economic Development Strategy currently being developed.	Existing	Non-capital	Need to maximise long-term economic diversification, investment attraction, and employment outcomes arising from the energy transition and Renewable Energy Zone investment.	EnergyCo Local Supply Chain Study	Muswellbrook Shire	Cost: unknown. Funding source: unknown at the time of writing.



7 Adjournment into Closed Committee

8 Closed Committee

Nil

9 Date of Next Meeting

14 July, 2026

10 Closure