

Riverina Renewables Service Centre

The South West Renewable Energy Zone (SW REZ) in New South Wales has the potential to become a focal point of the energy transition in the wider region.

Establishment of RES' Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Service Hub and Co-located Education and Training Centre in association with the SW REZ would secure the pivotal importance of this region in Australia's renewable future.

Supporting the regional community and a number of wind, solar PV and Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) projects across New South Wales and neighbouring states, this state-of-the-art facility will foster sustainable energy solutions, regional economic growth, local jobs and career pathways for regional residents.



**Specialising in
Operations,
Maintenance,
Education and
Training**

Objectives

- 1** Establish a facility that responds to stakeholder requirements as identified through extensive consultation, collaboration and co-design with educational institutions and other relevant bodies, including Murrumbidgee Council's Scholarship Committee as part of implementation of the Argoon Wind Farm \$100,000 Scholarship Program and \$50,000 First Nations Scholarship Program.
- 2** Illustrate career pathways for regional community members from early in their schooling, with the understanding that retaining talented young people is critical for maintaining thriving communities
- 3** Support transition training for individuals from other industries, enabling them to shift into renewable energy careers and capitalise on the regional economic growth.
- 4** Enable critical skills development and employment opportunities locally with space for up to 10 technicians and apprentices from the Riverina region. Align skillsets of regional workers with the future opportunities in the renewable energy sector through provision of dedicated renewable energy education and training such as apprenticeships, internships, and work experience.
- 5** Correct the increasing shortage of skills for construction and operational phases of renewable Projects, which is leading to some parties importing skilled workforce from abroad.
- 6** Provide a meaningful recognition of the involvement of First Nations Peoples in Projects of this type through consultation with Traditional Owners and the Argoon Wind Farm First Nations Liaison Officer.
- 7** Role modelling gender balance diversity by targeting a 50% gender split.
- 8** Support wind, solar PV and BESS projects across NSW, Victoria and South Australia by providing essential Operations and Maintenance services for wind, solar, and energy storage projects.
- 9** Enable critical skills development and employment opportunities locally through the recruitment of up to 10 technicians and apprentices from the Riverina region. Align skillsets of regional workers with the future opportunities in the renewable energy sector through provision of dedicated renewable energy education and training such as apprenticeships, internships, and work experience opportunities in collaboration with local educational institutions.
- 10** Inspire young people to consider STEM education and career paths.
- 11** Enhance operational efficiency with a dedicated facility for storage of wind, solar, and battery spares, ensuring quick access to parts and reducing project downtime across the SW REZ.
- 12** Provide a lasting legacy for the Riverina region.
- 13** Facilitate a heightened level of understanding and appreciation within the regional community for the renewable energy Projects being hosted by that community.

Training Specifications

Renewable Energy and related activities: Sessions intended to inspire as well as educate, for primary school children through to trade and university students, to provide oversight of the full life cycle of renewable Projects and adjunct industries.

Renewable Energy Fundamentals: Training focused on the basics of Solar PV, Wind Energy, and Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) to provide new recruits and apprentices with a strong foundation in the renewable energy sector.

Specialist infrastructure and equipment: Leveraging RES' deep relationships with leading renewable energy equipment manufacturers, the training centre will feature dedicated facilities such as a key renewable equipment (such as solar panels and inverter equipment, key substation equipment) that allow a range of training providers to deliver dedicated training on contemporary, real-world equipment.

Technical Skills Development: Specialised training in the installation, maintenance, and repair of solar panels, wind turbine components, and battery storage systems, ensuring technicians can effectively support a wide range of renewable energy assets.

Safety Certifications: Facilitate comprehensive safety training programmes, including Working at Heights, Electrical Safety, and Hazardous Material Handling, aimed at maintaining the highest safety standards in day-to-day operations.

Advanced Diagnostics and Predictive Maintenance: Instruction in the use of advanced diagnostic tools and technologies for predictive maintenance, reducing downtime and maximising asset performance.

Hands-On Apprenticeship Programmes: Apprentices will undergo practical training in a workshop environment, gaining experience with real-world equipment under the guidance of experienced industry professionals.

Transition Training: Tailored programmes for individuals from traditional industries (e.g., coal, oil, and gas) to upskill them in renewable technologies, including forklift licensing, welding certifications, and other relevant technical qualifications.

Sustainability and Environmental Impact: Courses on the importance of sustainability in renewable energy projects, focusing on minimising environmental impacts and enhancing energy efficiency utilizing local training institutions who already specialise in this field.

Collaboration with Argoon Wind Farm Scholarship Programs: Co-design with Murrumbidgee Council's Scholarship Committee to support the implementation of the \$100,000 p/a Argoon Wind Farm Scholarship Program and the \$50,000 p/a First Nations Scholarship Program.



Employment Specifications

Local Job Creation: The centre will create up to 10 positions for local technicians and apprentices, supporting long-term employment in the region.

Apprenticeship Programmes: Provide apprenticeships tailored to solar, wind, and energy storage systems in support of the Argoon Wind Farm \$100,000 Scholarship Program and \$50,000 First Nations Scholarship Program.

Career Progression: Offer continuous upskilling and career development opportunities, ensuring workers can advance within the renewable energy industry.

Diverse Workforce: Encourage diversity by promoting opportunities for underrepresented groups, including women and First Nations communities, in the renewable sector.

Long-Term Employment: Maintain secure, high-quality jobs that support the ongoing operations and maintenance of renewable energy projects in NSW, offering long term employment for people in the region.

Strategic Partnerships for Regional Growth and Expertise



How the Riverina Renewables Services Centre will Deliver on Objectives

Collaborate with other stakeholders

Invite participation (such as hosting education/training sessions) by other renewable energy stakeholders such as neighbouring renewable energy Projects and Transgrid.

Funding

The Project will commit to \$3,333/MW to establish the Education & Training Centre.

Local recruitment and training

Prioritise hiring local technicians and apprentices, providing transition training for workers from traditional industries to the renewable sector.

Support for renewable energy growth

Establish the centre as a critical resource to support wind, solar PV and BESS projects across NSW.

Gender balance

Provide ongoing visibility of gender balance achieved.

Long-term employment opportunities

Develop a sustainable local workforce skilled in the operations and maintenance of renewable energy assets.

Partnerships with educational institutions

Collaborate with local schools, TAFEs, and universities to offer apprenticeships, internships, and renewable energy education.



Alignment with needs of NSW consumers

RES' global objective: "A future where everyone has access to affordable zero carbon energy".

Creation of a regional Service Hub and Education & Training Centre follows directly from this objective.

Absolute alignment with our central objective

RES is the largest independent renewable entity globally

Sufficient resources

In addition to its global activities in development and construction of renewable energy Projects, RES currently operates and maintains 40GW of renewable energy plants across 24 countries.

This footprint encompasses Wind, Solar, BESS, and imminently Hydrogen.

Experience, depth, breadth, skill

The vast majority of these plants are 3rd party Projects. Independent players are inherently better able to capture 3rd party Projects than OEMs or EPC entities committed to a specific technology.

3rd party independence

RES has a core corporate objective to grow its O&M footprint in Australia, notably through successfully competing for 3rd party O&M contracts

Corporate intent

3rd party O&M operations are in their infancy in Australia, where plant maintenance is generally still overseen by the OEM.

In the more mature markets of Europe and US, 3rd party O&M has become common place.

The effect of 3rd party OEM in those markets has been to drive down operating costs, placing significant downward pressure on overall costs.

In the market-based NEM, that has direct benefit to the NSW consumer in terms of electricity costs.

Benefit the NSW consumer by downward pressure on electricity prices

This Centre would become the operational focal point for RES O&M activities for NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

Meaningful, ongoing employment and investment for the SW region

Preliminary Plan

2025

Q1 2025- Q2 2026: Concept development and partner engagement

- Identification of key gaps in skills, certifications and personnel that the facility could help fill.
- Develop the conceptual plan and engage key potential partners and stakeholders such as Murrumbidgee Council, TAFE NSW, Riverina RDA and schools within 100km radius for input.
- Identify additional funding opportunities.
- To commence on award of Access Rights.

2026

Q3 2026 - Q2 2027: Finalise detailed plan

- Confirm partnerships.
- Finalise suite of training categories to be facilitated.
- Finalise design of Facility and completed local approvals.

2027

Q3 2027 - Q4 2027: Construction phase

- Construction of education and training buildings.
- Set up training infrastructure, including real-world renewable energy equipment.

2028

Q1 2028: Commence recruitment and training

- Recruit local technicians and apprentices, focusing on transition training.
- Launch initial training programmes and offer apprenticeships.

Q2 2028: Centre launch and operational phase

- Open the Riverina Renewables Service Centre and begin full-scale operations.
- Continue recruitment and training to foster local employment.
- Continue establishment and development of partnerships with equipment manufacturers and training providers to ensure facility remains on leading edge as technologies develop.
- Well aligned with capacity release of the SW REZ for the option to service all new projects in the region.

Proponents Expectations

The final specifications of the Centre shall need to respond to the needs of Stakeholders. Therefore fundamental to the Plan as stated above is collaborating with Stakeholders in order to resolve the final details. The details stated in this document such as Specifications are provision until completion of that Stakeholder involvement.

