



Call for non-network options – Draft 2026 Integrated System Plan

Switching Station Near Wondalga

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Australian Energy Market Operator Ltd ABN 94 072 010 327

Notice of consultation

DRAFT 2026 INTEGRATED SYSTEM PLAN CALL FOR NON-NETWORK OPTIONS – SWITCHING STATION NEAR WONDALGA

This notice informs all Registered Participants and interested parties that AEMO is requesting submissions for non-network options for the Switching Station Near Wondalga project. This project is identified as an actionable ISP project in the Draft 2026 *Integrated System Plan* (ISP). This request for submissions for non-network options has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of clause 5.22.12(a) of the National Electricity Rules (NER).

Matter under consultation

The transmission network between Southern New South Wales (SNSW) and Central New South Wales (CNSW) provides access for the hydroelectric generation in the Snowy mountains, renewable generation in SNSW, and import from Victoria and South Australia to New South Wales major load centres.

The HumeLink project is currently being constructed between Bannaby, Gugaa (near Wagga Wagga) and Maragle substations that increase the transfer capacity from SNSW to CNSW by 2,200 MW in both directions.

The three 500 kV circuits (Bannaby-Gugaa, Gugaa-Maragle, Maragle-Bannaby) form a 'Y' configuration along its transmission route, with each transmission line converging near Wondalga in New South Wales.

AEMO has identified the Switching Station Near Wondalga project as an actionable ISP project in the Draft 2026 ISP. To increase the transfer capacity between SNSW and CNSW and optimise the sharing of low-cost renewable energy, additional transmission network augmentation to increase the transfer from SNSW to CNSW, local generation and/or load reductions within CNSW and Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong (SNW), and/or energy storage within CNSW and SNW is needed.

The matter for consultation is a call for non-network options for the Switching Station Near Wondalga project. This consultation notice:

- Describes the identified need that the Switching Station Near Wondalga project (including any non-network option) is addressing; and
- Provides detail on the required technical characteristics that non-network options must meet for the Switching Station Near Wondalga project.

Identified need for investment

The identified need for this project is to realise net market benefits by:

- *increasing the capability of the transmission network between southern and central New South Wales,*
- *enabling access to lower-cost generation from Victoria, South Australia and southern New South Wales to meet demand in the New South Wales major load centres.*

Technical characteristics

During periods of high SNSW generation and/or high import from Victoria and South Australia and/or high pumped hydro generation from Snowy 2.0, the transfer capacity between southern and central New South Wales may be restricted by the capacity of HumeLink transmission line. These network constraints provide opportunities for strategically placed battery storage and/or local generation. These solutions could defer or reduce the scale of proposed transmission network augmentation near Wondalga.

AEMO is not prescriptive at this early stage of the regulatory process regarding the role of non-network options and operating profiles for these solutions. AEMO is interested to hear from parties regarding the potential for non-network options to satisfy, or contribute to satisfying, the identified need, and from potential proponents of such non-network options.

AEMO encourages proponents of potential non-network solutions to make a submission to this consultation, as any new credible non-network options received must be considered in the Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) for the actionable ISP project.

Information to be provided by proponents of a non-network option

The types of non-network services mentioned above are not intended to limit the potential non-network services that may meet the identified network need. AEMO welcomes all non-network service providers to provide a submission for proposed non-network options they believe can address the identified need outlined above.

To aid the RIT-T proponent identified in the 2026 ISP for the Switching Station Near Wondalga project, Transgrid, in its consideration of non-network option proposals, AEMO recommends that submissions include the following details:

- Organisational information and key contact details.
- Relevant experience to demonstrate the capability and current utility-scale delivery of the technology.
- Technical details of the service, including location (transmission substation), size, operating profile and limitations, and availability.
- Total cost and scalability of service, separating capital and operating expenditure.
- Confirmation of any timelines involved in providing the service, including construction, grid connection, testing, and commissioning dates.
- Responsibility and liability arising directly or indirectly from the operation or failure of the non-network solution.
- Demonstration of the proponent's financial viability.
- Evidence of external funding contributions (such as from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) or government).

The consultation process

The consultation process is outlined below.

Process stage	Date of publication
Publication of notice of consultation	10 December 2025
Closing date for submissions	20 March 2026
Project Assessment Draft Report (PADR) publication	30 April 2027

Following the receipt of non-network option submissions, AEMO and the relevant RIT-T proponent, Transgrid, will conduct a preliminary review of the submissions. RIT-T proponents are required to consider any credible non-network options that AEMO subsequently assesses in the ISP meet, or are reasonably likely to meet, the identified need.

Invitation to make submissions

AEMO invites written submissions on the matter under consultation.

Please identify any parts of your submission that you wish to remain confidential, and explain why. AEMO may still publish that information if it does not consider it to be confidential, but will consult with you before doing so. Copies of all submissions received by AEMO will be provided to Transgrid as the RIT-T proponent.

Closing date and time

Submissions in response to this Notice Consultation should be sent by email to isp@aemo.com.au by 5.00 pm (AEST) on 20 March 2026. All submissions must be forwarded in electronic format (PDF preferred). Please send any queries about this consultation to the same email address.

Publication

All submissions will be published on AEMO’s website, other than confidential content.

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