October 2026

New England Renewable Energy Zone Existing Network Access Fees: Approach Paper

Proposed approach for the Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network and the Access Control Network

Important notice

PURPOSE

AusEnergy Services Limited (ASL), acting as the NSW Consumer Trustee, has prepared this paper as part of the exercise of its functions under section 26 of the *Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020* (NSW) (EII Act) to determine access fees for participants in an access scheme. Section 26 of the EII Act requires the Consumer Trustee to determine the fees payable to the Scheme Financial Vehicle, having regard to the principles and requirements set out in the EII Act and the *Electricity Infrastructure Investment Regulation 2021* (NSW).

This paper seeks stakeholder feedback on ASL's proposed approach to determining Access Fees for:

- projects allocated access rights in the Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network, and
- projects granted consent to access the Access Control Network,

under the New England REZ Access Scheme. **This paper does not address access fees payable by future access rights holders connected to the proposed New England Renewable Energy Zone Network Infrastructure Project (RNIP) or to projects connecting to the Access Rights Network that are not early access projects.**

This publication has been prepared by AusEnergy Services using information available at 21 October 2026. Information made available after this date may have been included in this publication where practical.

NOTE ON CONSULTATION PROCESS

ASL has changed its approach to stakeholder consultation as part of its access fee functions. This paper is published instead of draft access fee determinations and draft access fee guidelines, which were consulted on as part of previous access fee determinations.

This paper constitutes ASL's consultation on the proposed approach for the Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network and the Access Control Network under the New England REZ Access Scheme. Stakeholders are encouraged to provide submissions for consideration before ASL makes its determination. Following the Board's determination of access fees, ASL will publish the relevant access fee determinations alongside a statement of reasons, which will explain how ASL has responded to stakeholder submissions.

ASL's primary role in the New England REZ Access Scheme is determining Access Fees under section 26 of the EII Act (refer to Section 1). ASL does not design the Access Scheme, determine eligibility criteria, allocate network access, grant Access Rights or administer the scheme. This paper seeks feedback only on matters relevant to ASL's determination of Access Fees.

DISCLAIMER

This Paper is provided for consultation and general information only. It describes ASL's proposed approach to exercising its functions as Consumer Trustee in relation to access fees under the EII Act and EII Regulation.

This Paper is not an Access Fee Determination and does not create, alter or confer any legal right or obligation. It does not limit or fetter ASL's statutory discretion. ASL may adopt an approach different from that described in this Paper after considering submissions, relevant advice, further information and the matters required by law.

This Paper is not legal, technical, financial or investment advice and should not be relied on as such. To the maximum extent permitted by law, AusEnergy Services excludes liability arising from any use of or reliance on this Paper.

COPYRIGHT

© 2026 AusEnergy Services Limited. The material in this publication is protected by copyright under Australian law.

AusEnergy Services Limited permits this publication to be reproduced and communicated, in whole or in part, provided that AusEnergy Services is accurately attributed, the material is not presented in a misleading context, and no endorsement by ASL is suggested. This permission does not apply to third-party material, confidential material or material for which another person owns the copyright.

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Release date	Changes
#1	23/10/2026	N/A

Executive summary

AusEnergy Services Limited (ASL), acting as the Consumer Trustee, is consulting on its proposed approach to determining Access Fees for the New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Access Scheme, which was declared by the NSW Minister for Energy on 23 October 2026. This paper explains the principles, methodology and proposed fee structures that ASL intends to apply when determining Access Fees for participants receiving an Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network or an access consent to connect to the Access Control Network. It also seeks stakeholder feedback before ASL makes an Access Fee Determination.

This paper does not consult on Access Fees for future allocations of Access Rights in the New England REZ, including to projects connecting to the New England REZ Network Infrastructure Project (RNIP). ASL will consult separately on those fees following any decision to authorise the New England RNIP.

The New England REZ Access Scheme is the third REZ Access Scheme in NSW and introduces design features that have not previously been the subject of an Access Fee Determination. It comprises two access mechanisms:

- an Access Rights Regime applying to the 330 kV and 500 kV Access Rights Network, which includes existing network infrastructure and the proposed New England RNIP, and
- an Access Control Mechanism applying to the 132 kV Access Control Network, which includes existing network infrastructure.

In relation to the Access Rights Regime, the Access Scheme provides for an Early Access Allocation for eligible projects seeking to progress the connection process for connection to only the existing 330 kV Access Rights Network before the proposed New England REZ Network Infrastructure Project (RNIP) is authorised.

ASL's primary role in the New England REZ Access Scheme is to determine the Access Fees payable by scheme participants to the Scheme Financial Vehicle (SFV). ASL does not design the Access Scheme, grant Access Rights, grant access consent, or administer the scheme once fees have been determined. The scheme is designed and administered by EnergyCo as Infrastructure Planner.

ASL's proposed approach reflects three key features of the New England REZ Access Scheme:

- For the Early Access Allocation, projects are expected to receive Target Transmission Curtailment Level (TTCL) related benefits only if and when the conditions specified in the Access Scheme arrangements are satisfied, including any future authorisation of the New England RNIP (should such authorisation occur). ASL proposes to reflect this through a single determination with a two-stage fee formula, in which the Access Rights Benefits component switches on at a defined future date (the Transfer Capacity Benefits Date).
- For the Access Control Network, projects are not expected to materially benefit from the transfer capacity of the New England RNIP and are not subject to a capacity cap. ASL proposes not to include an Access Rights Benefits component in the Access Fee for this network.
- For all components, ASL proposes to apply an approach consistent with previous Access Fee Determinations, adapted to reflect the specific features of each access product.

ASL intends to make final Access Fee Determinations for both networks before the end of 2026.

The tables below summarise the proposed Access Fee components and indicative total fee amounts. The Consumer Trustee may change these amounts in its Access Fee Determinations in response to any changes in the approach set out in this Paper following consideration of stakeholder feedback and in line with its statutory requirements.

Table 1. Summary of components and indicative fee amounts for the Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network, before and after the Transfer Capacity Benefits Date.

Component	Annual quantum per MW pre-Transfer Capacity Benefits Date[1]	Annual quantum per MW post-Transfer Capacity Benefits Date[2]
Community purpose	~$1,809	~$1,809
Employment purpose	~$639	~$639
Administration costs	~$330	~$330
Access rights benefits	N/A	~$1,479
Total	**~$2,778**	**~$4,257**

Table 2. Summary of components and indicative fee amounts for projects with consent to connect to the Access Control Network.

Component	Annual quantum per MW[3]
Community purpose	~$1,809
Employment purpose	~$639
Administration costs	~$158
Total	**~$2,606**

1 Escalating at approximately 2.5% per annum from 1 January 2027.
2 Escalating at approximately 2.5% per annum from 1 January 2027.
3 Escalating at approximately 2.5% per annum from 1 January 2027.

Have your say

Submissions on this Approach Paper can be made via the ASL website. Submissions are invited by close of business Thursday 19 November 2026.

Summary of consultation questions

1. For projects planning to connect to the Access Rights Network, how valuable is holding an Access Right to your project?
2. For projects planning to connect to the Access Rights Network, what are the most significant benefits, and the most significant costs, of participating in the Access Scheme and compared to connecting under open access?
3. For projects planning to connect to the Access Rights Network, what is the expected impact of the proposed Access Fee on your project?
4. Should Access Fees for the Early Access Allocation be broadly consistent with the Access Fees determined for the South West REZ Access Scheme, or is a different level appropriate? Why?
5. Should the Community Purpose and Employment Purpose components of Access Fees be set above the prescribed minimum? Why?
6. Are there implementation matters (including notification, billing or contractual arrangements) that ASL should have regard to?
7. For projects intending to connect to the Access Control Network, what costs or benefits do you anticipate compared to connection under open access?
8. For projects planning to connect to the Access Control Network, what is the expected impact of the proposed Access Fee on your project?
9. Should the Community Purpose and Employment Purpose components for the Access Control Network be set at the same level as for the Early Access Allocation, or at a higher or lower level? What factors should ASL take into account?

Contents

Executive summary 3

Introduction 7

1.1 Purpose of this approach paper 7
1.2 ASL's other roles as Consumer Trustee 7
1.3 Roles and responsibilities within the Access Scheme 8
1.4 Statutory framework 9
1.5 Previous Access Fee Determinations 9
1.6 Other resources 10
1.7 Structure of this paper 10

2. The New England REZ Access Scheme 11

2.1 Two access mechanisms 11
2.2 Allocation processes 12

3. Access Fees for the Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network 14

3.1 Proposed approach 14
3.2 Proposed formula 14
3.3 Community Purpose component 15
3.4 Employment Purpose component 15
3.5 Administration Cost component 16
3.6 Access Rights Benefits component 17
3.7 Two-stage formula 18
3.8 Indicative Access Fee quantum 19

4. Access Fees for Access Control Network 20

4.1 Proposed approach 20
4.2 Proposed formula 20
4.3 Community Purpose component 21
4.4 Employment Purpose component 21
4.5 Administration Cost component 22
4.6 Access Rights Benefits component 23
4.7 Indicative Access Fee quantum 23

5. Next Steps 24

5.1 Consultation process 24
5.2 Indicative timeline 24

Glossary 25

Introduction

AusEnergy Services Limited (ASL) is seeking feedback on its proposed approach to determining Access Fees for the New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network, and for the Access Control Network. This section explains ASL's role, the statutory basis for Access Fees, and the elements of the New England REZ Access Scheme that are the subject of this consultation.

1.1 Purpose of this approach paper

The *Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020* (NSW) (EII Act) creates a framework for the implementation of the NSW Government's Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap (Roadmap). The Roadmap sets out the plan for the creation of REZs within NSW. ASL is appointed as the NSW Consumer Trustee (Consumer Trustee).

Under section 26 of the EII Act, the Consumer Trustee is responsible for determining the Access Fees payable by participants in an Access Scheme (Access Fee Determination) where the NSW Minister for Energy (Minister) declares that an Access Scheme is to apply in a REZ, part of a REZ, an access area or part of an access area. The Minister declared the New England REZ Access Scheme on 23 October 2026.

This Approach Paper sets out, and seeks feedback on, ASL's proposed approach to determining Access Fees for two types of participants of the New England REZ Access Scheme:

- projects allocated Access Rights in the Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network, and
- projects receiving consent to access the Access Control Network.

The paper outlines the relevant features of the Access Scheme, the proposed fee structure and methodology, and the considerations ASL proposes to apply in determining the Access Fees. Feedback received through this consultation will inform ASL's Access Fee Determination.

This paper does not consult on the approach to Access Fees for future allocations of Access Rights in the New England REZ, including to the New England REZ Network Infrastructure Project (RNIP). ASL would consult separately on any such fees if and when a future allocation process is undertaken.

ASL will consider all relevant submissions received by the closing date. Submissions are one input to ASL's independent exercise of its statutory functions and do not bind ASL as to the outcome.

Have your say

Submissions on this approach paper can be made via the ASL website. Submissions are invited by close of business Thursday 19 November 2026.

1.2 ASL's other roles as Consumer Trustee

ASL is the independent NSW Consumer Trustee for the NSW Roadmap. ASL's responsibilities as Consumer Trustee include but are not limited to:

- Long-term system planning: ASL produces the Infrastructure Investment Objectives Report every two years. This is the central planning document for the NSW Roadmap and sets out a 20-year development pathway to meet NSW's electricity infrastructure needs and a 10-year tender plan to incentivise that investment.
- Competitive tenders: ASL designs and conducts competitive tenders for Long-Term Energy Service Agreements (LTESAs). These tenders support the timely development of new generation, long-duration storage and firming infrastructure projects to meet NSW's future electricity needs.
- Network infrastructure authorisation: ASL is responsible for assessing recommendations made by EnergyCo, acting as the Infrastructure Planner, on Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) network infrastructure projects. ASL may only authorise a REZ network infrastructure project where it is determined to be in the long-term financial interests of NSW electricity customers and helps to achieve the objectives of the EII Act.
- Financial oversight and risk management: ASL is responsible for overseeing governance and risk assessment under the statutory Risk Management Framework as it relates to the Consumer Trustee's role in protecting the financial interests of NSW electricity customers.

ASL's role in relation to access schemes and access fees is discussed in detail in Sections 1.3 and 1.4.

1.3 Roles and responsibilities within the Access Scheme

ASL's primary role in the New England REZ Access Scheme is to determine the Access Fees payable by participants in the Access Scheme to the Scheme Financial Vehicle (SFV). EnergyCo, as Infrastructure Planner, is responsible for designing and administering the Access Scheme. ASL's role is confined to those functions conferred on the Consumer Trustee under the EII Act, including determining Access Fees. In particular, ASL:

- does not design the Access Scheme, which is a matter for the Minister on the recommendation of EnergyCo;
- does not grant Access Rights, grant access consent or make decisions on the allocation of network access, which remain matters for EnergyCo;
- is not a party to the contractual arrangements that support the Access Scheme, including Access Right Agreements, Access Consent Agreements, Payment Deeds or Connection Agreements; and
- does not administer or enforce the Access Scheme once fees have been determined.

Table 1 summarises the roles of the entities involved in the New England REZ Access Scheme as they relate to Access Fees. Figure 1 shows ASL's role in the Access Fee Determination process.

Figure 1. New England REZ Access Scheme

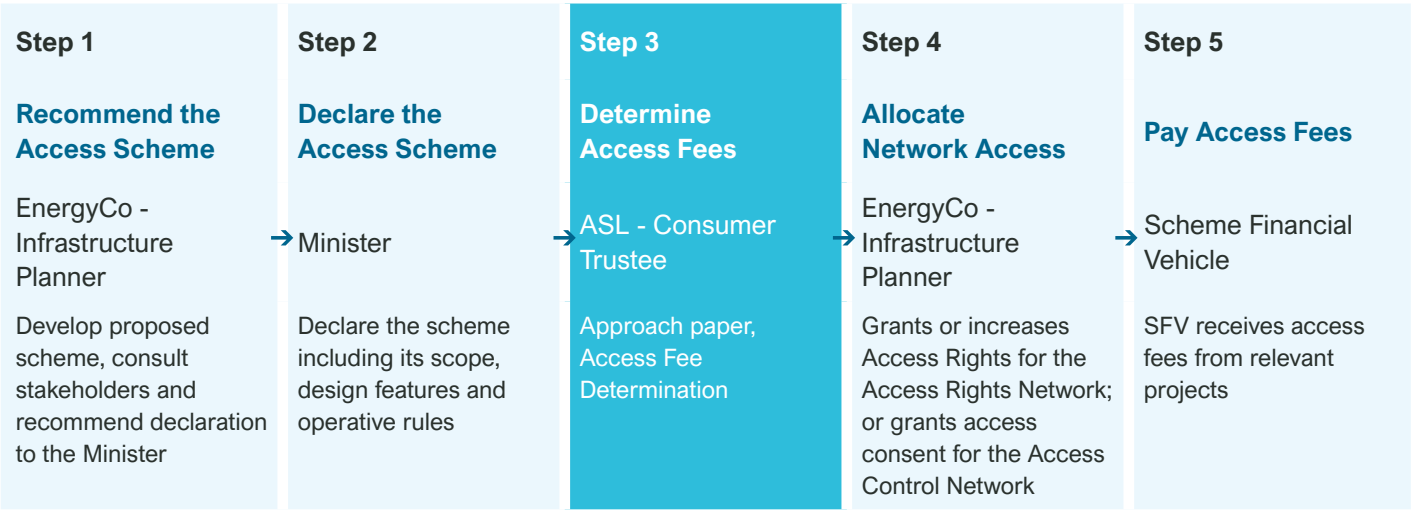


Table 1. Roles in the New England REZ Access Scheme

Role	Table text
Minister for Energy	Declares the Access Scheme, including its scope, design features and any subsequent amendments.
EnergyCo (Infrastructure Planner)	Designs and administers the Access Scheme, including allocation processes, eligibility criteria and the terms of Access Right and Access Consent Agreements. Provides advice to ASL on the administration cost component of Access Fees and, where relevant, on the community and employment purpose components. Administers Access Fees collected for community and employment purposes.
ASL (Consumer Trustee)	Determines the Access Fees payable by participants in the Access Scheme, having regard to section 26 and the objects of the EII Act. ASL does not grant or increase Access Rights.
Scheme Financial Vehicle (SFV)	Receives Access Fees paid by participants and administers payment arrangements under Access Payment Deeds.
Employment Purpose Advisory Committee (EPAC)	Provides advice to ASL on the Employment Purpose component of Access Fees.

1.4 Statutory framework

In exercising its section 26 function, the Consumer Trustee is to determine the fees payable to the SFV by participants in an Access Scheme, taking into account the following principles:

- Maximising financial value for NSW electricity customers.
- Recovering the cost of the operation of the Access Scheme.
- Optimal use of the existing and planned network infrastructure in the REZ or access area.
- Other principles prescribed by the EII Regulation, including:[4]
  - Transparency in total determined or expected fees payable under the access scheme for participants.[5]

The fees determined by the Consumer Trustee must include a component that is to be used for a community purpose and a component to be used for an employment purpose. The definition, minimum and maximum proportions or amounts of the access fee components for community and employment purposes is set out in the EII Regulation.[6]

In setting the employment purpose component, the Consumer Trustee is to seek advice from the Employment Purpose Advisory Committee (EPAC).[7]

ASL is also required to act independently, in the long-term financial interests of NSW electricity customers, and consistently with the objects of the EII Act. In preparing an Access Fee Determination, ASL must exercise its own statutory judgment having regard to the matters required by the EII Act and EII Regulation. While ASL may consider information and advice provided by EnergyCo, EPAC and stakeholders, the determination remains a decision of the Consumer Trustee.

In addition to determining Access Fees, ASL has specified involvement in certain aspects of the Access Scheme. EnergyCo must consult ASL on the terms and conditions of payment deeds between the SFV and Access Right Holders, including bonding arrangements, and on eligibility criteria for the grant or increase of Access Rights. This involvement is distinct from ASL's responsibility for determining Access Fees and does not make ASL responsible for designing or administering the Access Scheme.[8]

1.5 Previous Access Fee Determinations

ASL has previously determined Access Fees for the Initial Allocation of Access Rights in the South West REZ Access Scheme and for Access Right Holders in the Central-West Orana REZ Access Scheme.[9] Both schemes take the form of an Access Rights Regime. Details of previous determinations, including formulae and rationale, are available on the ASL website.[10]

This paper builds on the principles and approach reflected in those determinations. However, the New England REZ Access Scheme introduces design features that have not previously been the subject of an Access Fee Determination. These are described in Section 2.1.

The New England RNIP is not the subject of this consultation. This Access Fee Determination process concerns only the Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network and the Access Control Network described in this paper. Any future consultation relating to Access Fees for allocations associated with the New England RNIP would be undertaken separately.

4 Section 26(1) EII Act.

5 Clause 55A EII Regulation

6 Note that there is currently no prescribed maximum. Clauses 56 and 57 EII Regulation.

7 Section 26(6) EII Act.

8 Clauses 4(a) and 14(2) Schedule 1A, EII Regulation.

9 The Minster for Energy has requested EnergyCo to design, consult on and provide recommendations for a potential access scheme for the Hunter Central-Coast REZ, but an access scheme or access fees have not yet been determined for that REZ.

10 https://asl.org.au/resources/rez-resources

1.6 Other resources

This paper should be read alongside the following documents:

- Final Renewable Energy Zone (New England) Access Scheme Order 2026 - the final declaration published on 23 October 2026,[11]
- New England REZ Access Scheme Design Positions Paper (July 2026)[12] and the Supplementary Positions Paper (October 2026)[13] - EnergyCo's paper explaining the design of the Access Scheme, and
- New England REZ Generation and Storage Consultation Paper (August 2025) - EnergyCo's earlier consultation paper.[14]

1.7 Structure of this paper

This paper is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** describes the key features of the New England REZ Access Scheme relevant to access fee setting, including the two access mechanisms and the allocation processes to which this consultation relates.
- **Chapter 3** sets out ASL's proposed approach to determining Access Fees for the Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network.
- **Chapter 4** sets out ASL's proposed approach to determining Access Fees for projects that receive consent to connect to the Access Control Network.
- **Chapter 5** outlines next steps and the consultation process.

11 https://energyco.nsw.gov.au/industry/access-schemes/new-england-rez-access-scheme

12 https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2026-07/new-england-rez-access-scheme-design-positions-paper-july-2026.pdf

13 https://energyco.nsw.gov.au/industry/access-schemes/new-england-rez-access-scheme

14 https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-08/New%20England%20REZ%20Generation%20and%20Storage%20Consultation%20Paper.pdf

2. The New England REZ Access Scheme

The New England REZ Access Scheme has two access mechanisms which determine how projects seek connection to network covered by the Access Scheme and the rights and benefits they receive. This section outlines the features relevant to setting fees for the Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network and projects connecting to the Access Control Network, which receive different access-related benefits.

2.1 Two access mechanisms

The New England REZ Access Scheme includes two different mechanisms for controlling access to network infrastructure. These are set out in Table 2.

Table 2. Access mechanisms in the New England REZ Access Scheme[15]

Mechanism	Network coverage	Key features
Access Rights Regime (Access Rights Network)	The Access Rights Network comprises: • all New England RNIP infrastructure (330 kV and 500 kV) in the REZ geographical area, • New England RNIP infrastructure operating at 500 kV from the southern boundary of the New England REZ to Bayswater Substation or Bayswater South Substation (outside the REZ geographic area), and • existing and future 330 kV network infrastructure within the REZ geographical area that is not part of a RNIP.	Projects must hold Access Rights to connect. Total capacity is capped by an Aggregate Maximum Capacity Cap. The Access Scheme specifies a Target Transmission Curtailment Level (TTCL) of 4.92% for the Access Rights Network, subject to the applicable conditions and timing arrangements described in Section 3.
Access Control Mechanism (Access Control Network)	Existing and future 132 kV network infrastructure within the REZ geographical area.	There is no cap on connections. Projects must obtain access consent from EnergyCo, subject to a REZ Consent Assessment focused on the project's community engagement track-record. Projects on this network will not materially benefit from the transfer capacity of the New England RNIP.

15 For full details, refer to the New England REZ Access Scheme Declaration: https://energyco.nsw.gov.au/industry/access-schemes/new-england-rez-access-scheme

A distinctive feature of the New England REZ Access Scheme is that it applies to parts of the existing network as well as the new RNIP infrastructure. Within the existing network, the Access Rights Regime applies to the 330 kV network, where projects are expected to benefit materially from the transfer capacity provided by the New England RNIP. The Access Control Mechanism applies to the 132 kV network, where projects are not expected to receive the same material benefit.

Projects seeking to connect to the network therefore receive different rights and benefits depending on the access mechanism that applies:

- The Access Rights Regime controls the aggregate capacity allocated to the Access Rights Network and, once the relevant conditions are met, provides Access Right Holders with a defined network-wide curtailment target.[16]
- The Access Control Mechanism principally regulates connection to the 132 kV network through consent and community engagement requirements.

These differences inform the benefits attributable to each cohort and, in turn, ASL's approach to the Access Rights Benefits component of the fee.

The New England REZ Access Scheme Declaration also outlines exemptions for certain projects. This includes, but is not limited to, projects that have received an offer to connect from a network operator at the time of declaration, or have entered into a long-term energy services agreement (LTESA) or capacity investment scheme agreement (CISA) by 31 December 2026, or have entered into a CISA pursuant to CIS Tender 10 by 31 May 2027. Exempt projects are not subject to Access Fees.

2.2 Allocation processes

EnergyCo will initially run two separate allocation processes under the Access Scheme:

- **Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network:** a non-competitive process for eligible projects seeking to connect to existing 330 kV network infrastructure within the REZ.

In future, EnergyCo may run further allocation processes to the Access Rights Network. The timing and implementation of any such process will depend on future circumstances and are not the subject of this consultation. If a future allocation process is undertaken, ASL may consult separately on any relevant Access Fees at that time.

- **Allocations to the Access Control Network:** a non-competitive process for eligible projects seeking to connect to 132 kV network infrastructure within the REZ.

ASL proposes that its Access Fee Determination for the Access Control Network would apply to projects granted access consent during a defined eligibility period to be specified in the Access Fee Determination.

2.2.1 The Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network

The Early Access Allocation is a non-competitive process for eligible projects seeking to connect to existing 330 kV network infrastructure within the REZ geographical area, before the New England RNIP becomes operational. To be eligible for the Early Access Allocation, at the date the Access Scheme is declared a project must have either:

- submitted a complete and valid application to connect the project to Transgrid in accordance with clause 5.3.4 of the National Electricity Rules, or
- had the environmental impact statement prepared for the project under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)* published on the NSW Planning Portal for public exhibition.

A project must also commit under its Access Right Agreement to a first commissioning date before the expected energisation of the first network element of the New England RNIP, currently anticipated by EnergyCo to occur in 2032.

16 The Target Transmission Curtailment Level (TTCL) is the forecast average level of technical curtailment across the Access Rights Network. It is used to determine the amount of generation capacity that can be allocated while maintaining curtailment within the target level. The TTCL provides Access Right Holders with an indication of the level of network-related curtailment expected across the network.

Early Access projects will receive some benefits of the Access Rights Regime from the outset, including a formal allocation of capacity and the right to connect to the Access Rights Network, but the benefit of the TTCL will not be received until certain conditions have been satisfied, including any future development and energisation of the New England RNIP. This timing distinction is relevant to ASL's assessment of the Access Rights Benefits component of the fee, considered in Section 3.6. The availability and timing of those benefits remain dependent on future events and the satisfaction of the conditions specified in the relevant contractual arrangements.

For clarity, references in this Paper to a project "receiving" a benefit describe ASL's assessment for fee-setting purposes. They do not constitute a representation, warranty or guarantee regarding actual curtailment, dispatch, revenue, connection timing or project performance.

2.2.2 The allocation to the Access Control Network

The Access Control Mechanism applies to projects seeking to connect to existing and future 132 kV network within the REZ geographical area. Its relevant features are that:

- there is no aggregate cap on connections, so an eligible project may be granted access consent if it satisfies the REZ Consent Assessment criteria,
- projects receive access consent rather than Access Rights,
- the mechanism does not provide a TTCL or otherwise seek to manage aggregate curtailment or use of transfer capacity, and
- projects connected to this network are not expected to materially benefit from the transfer capacity of the New England RNIP.

The principal benefit provided through the Access Control Mechanism is therefore access to the 132 kV network within a framework designed to establish consistent community engagement standards across the REZ. It does not provide the capacity allocation and curtailment-related benefits associated with the Access Rights Regime. This distinction is relevant to ASL's assessment of the Access Rights Benefits attributable to projects seeking access consent to the Access Control Network.

ASL's assessment that these projects are not expected to receive a material transfer-capacity benefit is an assessment for the purpose of determining Access Fees and is not a representation about the circumstances or performance of any individual project.

ASL proposes that its Access Fee Determination for the Access Control Network would apply to projects granted access consent during a defined eligibility period.[17] A project granted access consent during that period would remain subject to the determination for the term of its access consent. Projects granted access consent after the end of the eligibility period would be covered by a subsequent Access Fee Determination. The relevant end date or milestone for the eligibility period will be specified in the determination.

2.2.3 The differences between the two mechanisms inform ASL's fee-setting approach

The Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network and the allocation of consent to the Access Control Network involve different rights, obligations and expected benefits for participating projects. These differences are relevant to the application of the Access Fee principles in section 26 of the EII Act and inform ASL's proposed approach to determining Access Fees. Chapter 3 sets out the proposed approach for the Early Access Allocation, while Chapter 4 sets out the proposed approach for the Access Control Network.

17 The defined eligibility period will enable EnergyCo to grant access consents subsequent to the initial allocation without ASL having to make additional Access Fee Determinations.

3. Access Fees for the Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network

ASL proposes to determine a single Access Fee for projects that are granted Access Rights in the Early Access Allocation process, calculated on a $/MW basis and comprising four fee components. Reflecting that Early Access Projects will not receive the benefit of the TTCL until the New England RNIP is operational, the Access Rights Benefits component will only apply from a defined future Transfer Capacity Benefits Date. This chapter explains ASL's proposed approach to determining each component.

3.1 Proposed approach

ASL proposes to determine Access Fees for the Early Access Allocation using four fee components to reflect the specific features of the early access arrangement. The proposed fee will comprise:

- a Community Purpose component,
- an Employment Purpose component,
- an Administration Cost component, and
- an Access Rights Benefits component, applying from a defined future Transfer Capacity Benefits Date.

ASL proposes a single formula applying to all Early Access Projects, using the maximum capacity of each project's Access Right as recorded in the Access Rights Register. This reflects that project-specific fees are not necessary where projects share broadly similar circumstances.

3.2 Proposed formula

ASL proposes a formula in the following form. The numerical values stated in this Paper are indicative only. Final values, formulae and defined terms will be specified in the relevant Access Fee Determination.

Access Fee_Q = (C&E Fee + Non-C&E Fee) × Maximum Capacity × Fixed Indexation

Where:

- **Access Fee_Q** = the Access Fee payable for the relevant calendar quarter (Relevant Quarter)
- **C&E Fee** = the sum of the Community Purpose and Employment Purpose components
- **Non-C&E Fee** =
  - before the Transfer Capacity Benefits Date, the Administration Cost component, and
  - from the Transfer Capacity Benefits Date, the sum of the Administration Cost component and the Access Rights Benefits component
- **Maximum Capacity** = the maximum capacity value for the relevant Early Access Allocation Access Right, as set out in the Access Rights Register and as amended from time to time
- **Fixed Indexation** = $(1 + 0.00625i)^n$, where n is the number of calendar quarters that have passed from the indexation start date of 1 January 2027 to the start of the Relevant Quarter,[18] and
- **Transfer Capacity Benefits Date** = the date defined as discussed in Section 3.7.2 below.

18 A single indexation start date applies across all components, consistent with the South West REZ Access Scheme. The proposed indexation start date is 1 January 2027 as it is the expected first quarter following any Access Fee Determination, and the fixed indexation rate is 1.00625 per quarter (approximately 2.5% per annum).

3.3 Community Purpose component

3.3.1 Purpose and statutory basis

Access Fees must include a mandatory component to be used for a community purpose. The Community Purpose component is intended to fund benefits for communities in and around the REZ that host the network infrastructure and generation and storage projects supported by the Access Scheme.

The EII Regulation requires a minimum proportion of the annual Access Fee to be applied to community purposes. The minimum amount is $1,700/MW per annum where the annual Access Fee is $2,600/MW or more, or otherwise 60% of the annual Access Fee. No maximum applies during the term of the Access Scheme. This component is separate and additional to any relevant state voluntary planning agreements.

3.3.2 Proposed approach

ASL proposes to set the Community Purpose component at the prescribed minimum amount of $1,700/MW per annum, plus indexation to ensure consistency with the South West REZ Access Scheme. The South West REZ Access Fee Determination applied 0.625% indexation quarterly from 1 July 2024. For comparison, applying this approach up to 1 January 2027 results in an indexed amount of approximately $1,809/MW per annum.

ASL does not propose to set the component above the prescribed minimum, other than to adjust it for inflation. The following considerations informed this position:

- the prescribed minimum is consistent with the Community Purpose components determined for the Central-West Orana and South West REZ Access Schemes,
- adjusting the prescribed minimum amount for inflation is not required by the EII Regulation but is consistent with the South West REZ Access Scheme and is appropriate to ensure that the amount of this component does not reduce over time in real terms which would reduce the value of community benefits that it could fund, and
- the New England REZ is not materially different from other REZs in a way that would justify requiring projects to make a higher contribution on a per MW basis.

ASL also considered whether to adopt a lower overall fee structure under which the Community Purpose component would be calculated as 60% of the total annual Access Fee if the total Access Fee is less than $2,600/MW, as permitted by the EII Regulation.[19] ASL does not propose that approach. ASL considers that projects participating in NSW REZ Access Schemes should make broadly consistent contributions to support host communities where their community-facing impacts are comparable. Applying the proportional minimum would result in Early Access Projects making a lower contribution than comparable projects in other NSW REZs, without a clear difference in community impact to justify that outcome.

ASL welcomes submissions on this proposed approach, including whether circumstances specific to the New England REZ justify setting the Community Purpose component above the prescribed minimum.

3.4 Employment Purpose component

3.4.1 Purpose and statutory basis

Access Fees must also include a mandatory component to be used for an employment purpose. The Employment Purpose component is intended to support employment outcomes associated with the delivery of the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap.

The EII Regulation requires a minimum proportion of the annual Access Fee to be applied to employment purposes. The minimum amount is $600/MW per annum where the annual Access Fee is $2,600/MW or more, or otherwise 20% of the annual Access Fee. No maximum applies during the term of the Access Scheme. ASL is required to seek advice from the EPAC before determining this component.

19 For example, if the total access fee was set at $2,500/MW per annum, the Community Purpose component would be at least $1,500/MW, equivalent to 60% of the total access fee.

3.4.2 Proposed approach

ASL proposes to set the Employment Purpose component at the prescribed minimum amount of $600/MW per annum, plus indexation to ensure consistency with the South West REZ Access Scheme. The South West REZ Access Fee Determination applied 0.625% indexation quarterly from 1 July 2024. Applying this approach up to 1 January 2027 results in an indexed amount of approximately $639/MW per annum.

ASL does not propose to set the component above the prescribed minimum, other than to adjust it for inflation. The following considerations informed this position:

- the prescribed minimum and approach to adjusting it for inflation is consistent with the Employment Purpose component determined for the South West REZ Access Scheme,
- the New England REZ is not materially different from other REZs in a way that would justify requiring projects to make a higher contribution, and
- ASL must seek and consider EPAC's advice before determining the component. EPAC has advised that an Employment Purpose component of $600/MW per annum would meaningfully contribute to addressing overall workforce and training needs in the New England REZ and did not recommend an alternative amount. In the absence of EPAC advice supporting a higher amount, ASL considers that the prescribed minimum provides the appropriate starting point.

ASL also considered whether to adopt a lower overall fee structure under which the Employment Purpose component would be calculated as 20% of the annual Access Fee if the total Access Fee is less than $2,600/MW.[20] ASL does not propose that approach. ASL considers that projects participating in NSW REZ Access Schemes should make broadly consistent contributions to employment purposes where their circumstances are comparable. Applying the proportional minimum would result in Early Access Projects making a lower contribution than comparable projects in other NSW REZs, without a clear difference in circumstances to justify that outcome.

ASL will consider EPAC's advice, together with submissions received through this consultation, before determining the Employment Purpose component.

3.5 Administration Cost component

3.5.1 Purpose and statutory basis

The Administration Cost component gives effect to the section 26 principle of recovering the cost of the operation of the Access Scheme. The component is intended to recover the ongoing costs of administering the Access Scheme, including EnergyCo's administration functions.

3.5.2 Proposed approach

ASL proposes to determine the Administration Cost component using information provided by EnergyCo as the Infrastructure Planner responsible for administering the Access Scheme. This includes:

- EnergyCo's estimate of the costs attributable to administering the Early Access Allocation,
- the basis on which those costs have been estimated, including any assumptions,
- the allocation of any costs shared across different parts of the Access Scheme, and
- any material uncertainty associated with the estimates.

ASL will assess whether the proposed costs are sufficiently supported, relate to the operation of the Access Scheme and are appropriately allocated to Early Access Projects, consistent with the statutory principle of recovering the cost of the operation of the Access Scheme. EnergyCo is responsible for identifying and estimating the costs of performing its administration functions. ASL does not propose to independently reproduce EnergyCo's cost estimate but will consider whether the information provided gives ASL a reasonable basis for determining the component.

EnergyCo has advised that the Administration Cost component for the early access allocation should be set at $330/MW per annum.

The proposed Administration Cost component for the Early Access allocation differs from the proposed Administration Cost Component for the allocation to the Access Control Network (see Section 4.5), reflecting differences in the effort required to administer each mechanism.

20 For example, if the total access fee was set at $2,500/MW per annum, the Employment Purpose component would be at least $500/MW, equivalent to 20% of the total access fee.

3.6 Access Rights Benefits component

3.6.1 Purpose and statutory basis

The Access Rights Benefits component gives effect to the section 26 principles of maximising financial value for NSW electricity customers and optimal use of existing and planned network infrastructure. This additional component is intended to ensure the total Access Fee reflects the value that Access Scheme participants receive from participating in the Access Scheme, compared to connection under open access arrangements.

3.6.2 Proposed approach

ASL proposes to set the Access Rights Benefits component by balancing the benefits of maximising financial value for customers (which tends towards a higher component) against the risk of setting the component so high that it deters projects from connecting to the Access Rights Network, distorts locational signals in the wholesale market, or reduces competition in generation and long-duration storage tenders.

In previous Access Fee Determinations, ASL included components intended to recover a contribution from Access Rights Holders in recognition of the benefits and opportunities provided by the relevant access scheme and network investment. These were called the Network Infrastructure Contribution in the Central-West Orana REZ and the Contribution to the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap in the South West REZ. ASL has had regard to the approach adopted in the South West REZ Access Fee Determination as a relevant precedent. However, ASL will independently assess the appropriate component having regard to the design of the New England REZ Access Scheme and the statutory principles in section 26. Given this, ASL considers that an Access Rights Benefits component of $1,479/MW per annum is appropriate to ensure consistency with the total Access Fee in South West REZ.

The following considerations inform ASL's proposed approach:

- The additional benefits that Early Access Projects are expected to receive compared with connection under open access. This includes, once the relevant conditions are met, the controlled aggregate capacity allocation that limits connections to the network and the TTCL benefits and additional transfer capacity provided by the New England RNIP. ASL has also considered how benefits and opportunities provided to Access Right Holders have been recognised in previous Access Fee Determinations.
- The need to avoid setting the component at a level that undermines efficient participation in the Access Scheme. A component that is too high could discourage projects from connecting within the REZ, encourage development outside the REZ or reduce the pipeline of generation and storage projects. These outcomes could weaken competition in generation and long-duration storage tenders and increase costs for NSW electricity customers. CSIRO's *GenCost 2025-26* estimates 2025 capital costs for large-scale solar PV and onshore wind projects at approximately $1.6 million/MW and $3.2 million/MW respectively.[21] Relative to these investment costs, ASL considers that fee contributions set at levels consistent with the South West REZ would be unlikely to materially affect participation in the Access Scheme.
- The timing of the relevant benefits. Projects receiving early access will not receive the TTCL benefits from the outset, which informs when the Access Rights Benefits component should apply.

21 CSIRO and AEMO, *GenCost 2025-26 Final Report*, Appendix Table B.1. The table reports 2025 capital costs of $1,621/kW for large-scale solar PV and $3,248/kW for onshore wind, equivalent to $1.621 million/MW and $3.248 million/MW respectively.

3.6.3 Application to the Early Access Allocation

Projects participating and receiving Access Rights in the Early Access Allocation connect to the existing 330 kV network before the New England RNIP is delivered. These projects will receive Access Rights and a formal allocation of capacity from the outset. However, they will not receive the benefit of the TTCL until the New England RNIP reaches the state of readiness at which point projects in the Early Access Allocation are expected to begin receiving the benefits of the new transfer capacity it provides.

ASL proposes that the Access Rights Benefits component apply only once the New England RNIP reaches the state of readiness at which point Early Access Projects are expected to begin receiving the relevant TTCL (referred to in this approach paper as the Transfer Capacity Benefits Date).

Reflecting this, the proposed Access Rights Benefits component would apply in two stages:

- prior to the Transfer Capacity Benefits Date, the component would not apply, reflecting that the associated benefits have not yet been realised, and
- from the Transfer Capacity Benefits Date, the component would apply to reflect the additional benefits that projects receiving early access are expected to receive once the New England RNIP reaches the relevant state of readiness. The two-stage design is discussed further in Section 3.7.

3.7 Two-stage formula

3.7.1 A single determination covering both stages

ASL proposes to include both the pre-Transfer Capacity Benefits Date and post-Transfer Capacity Benefits Date fee levels in a single Access Fee Determination. Under this approach:

- the total expected fees payable across the life of the Access Scheme are known and transparent at the point of determination, consistent with the requirement on ASL to take into account the principle of fee transparency,[22]
- the change in fee level at the Transfer Capacity Benefits Date does not require a subsequent re-exercise of ASL's discretion, because the step-up has been considered and provided for in the original determination, and
- Early Access Projects have greater visibility regarding the fee structure that would apply over time.

3.7.2 Trigger for the Access Rights Benefits component

ASL proposes that the Access Rights Benefits component increase from the milestone specified in the relevant New England REZ access payment deed (called the Transfer Capacity Benefits Date in this Paper). This would align the fee trigger with the contractual arrangements governing delivery and connection of the network, rather than creating a separate ASL defined readiness date.

The Access Fee Determination will specify the trigger objectively and with sufficient certainty to determine when the increased fee becomes payable.

The trigger is proposed to correspond to the point at which the relevant contractual and scheme conditions for availability of the TTCL-related benefits have been satisfied. Early Access Projects are expected to begin receiving these benefits upon any future energisation of the New England RNIP. The final terminology will be aligned with the Access Scheme declaration and applicable contractual arrangements.[23]

ASL considered whether the Access Rights Benefits component should commence by reference to earlier milestones under the Access Scheme arrangements. ASL does not propose those approaches because they may occur before Early Access Projects begin to receive the relevant benefits that the component is intended to reflect.

The relevant contractual notification mechanism would be used to notify the SFV and adjust billing from the applicable date.

22 Clause 55A, EII Regulation: Transparency in total determined or expected fees payable under the access scheme for participants

23 EnergyCo will consult separately on the terms of the access payment deed, including the definition of the Transfer Capacity Benefits Date.

3.8 Indicative Access Fee quantum

The table below summarises the quantum of the proposed Access Fee components and total fee amount. The Consumer Trustee may change these amounts in its Access Fee Determination in response to any changes in the approach set out in this section following consideration of stakeholder feedback.

Table 3. Summary of components and indicative fee amounts for the Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network, before and after Transfer Capacity Benefits Date.

Component	Annual quantum per MW pre-Transfer Capacity Benefits Date[24]	Annual quantum per MW post-Transfer Capacity Benefits Date[25]
Community purpose	~$1,809	~$1,809
Employment purpose	~$639	~$639
Administration costs	~$330	~$330
Access rights benefits	N/A	~$1,479
Total	**~$2,778**	**~$4,257**

Box 1: Have your say: Access Fees for the Early Access Allocation

1. For projects planning to connect to the Access Rights Network, how valuable is holding an Access Right to your project?
2. For projects planning to connect to the Access Rights Network, what are the most significant benefits, and the most significant costs, of participating in the Access Scheme and compared to connecting under open access?
3. For projects planning to connect to the Access Rights Network, what is the expected impact of the proposed Access Fee on your project?
4. Should Access Fees for the Early Access Allocation be broadly consistent with the Access Fees determined for the South West REZ Access Scheme, or is a different level appropriate? Why?
5. Should the Community Purpose and Employment Purpose components of Access Fees be set above the prescribed minimum? Why?
6. Are there implementation matters (including notification, billing or contractual arrangements) that ASL should have regard to?

24 Escalating at approximately 2.5% per annum from 1 January 2027.

25 Escalating at approximately 2.5% per annum from 1 January 2027.

4. Access Fees for Access Control Network

ASL proposes to determine a single Access Fee for the Access Control Network calculated on a $/MW basis and using the Community Purpose, Employment Purpose and Administration Cost components. ASL does not propose to include an Access Rights Benefits component, reflecting that projects on this network are not expected to materially benefit from the transfer capacity of the New England RNIP. This chapter explains ASL's proposed approach to determining each component.

4.1 Proposed approach

ASL proposes to determine Access Fees for projects receiving access consent to connect to the Access Control Network comprising:

- a Community Purpose component,
- an Employment Purpose component, and
- an Administration Cost component.

For the reasons set out in Section 4.6, ASL does not propose to include an Access Rights Benefits component. ASL proposes a single formula, expressed on a $/MW basis, for projects receiving access consent under this determination, as set out in Section 4.2.

ASL proposes that this Access Fee Determination applies to projects granted access consent during a defined eligibility period.[26] A project granted access consent during that period would remain subject to the determination for the term of its access consent. Projects granted access consent after the end of the eligibility period would be covered by a subsequent Access Fee Determination. The relevant end date or milestone for the eligibility period will be specified in the determination.

4.2 Proposed formula

ASL proposes a formula in the following form. The numerical values stated in this Paper are indicative only. Final values, formulae and defined terms will be specified in the relevant Access Fee Determination.

$$\text{Access Fee}_Q = (\text{C\&E Fee} + \text{Non-C\&E Fee}) \times \text{Maximum Capacity} \times \text{Fixed Indexation}$$

Where:

- **Access Fee$_Q$** = the Access Fee payable for the relevant calendar quarter (Relevant Quarter)
- **C&E Fee** = the sum of the Community Purpose and Employment Purpose components
- **Non-C&E Fee** = the Administration Cost component only
- **Maximum Capacity** = the maximum capacity value for the relevant Access Consent, as recorded by the Infrastructure Planner and as amended from time to time, and
- **Fixed Indexation** = $(1 + 0.00625i)^n$, where n is the number of calendar quarters that have passed from the indexation start date to the start of the Relevant Quarter.[27]

The formula does not include a Transfer Capacity Benefits Date step-up, as the Access Rights Benefits component does not apply to the Access Control Network (see Section 4.6).

26 The defined eligibility period will enable EnergyCo to grant access consents subsequent to the initial allocation without ASL having to make additional access fee determinations.

27 A single indexation start date applies across all components, consistent with the South West REZ Access Scheme. The proposed indexation start date is 1 January 2027 as it is the expected first quarter following any Access Fee Determination, and the fixed indexation rate is 1.00625 per quarter (approximately 2.5% per annum).

4.3 Community Purpose component

4.3.1 Purpose and statutory basis

The purpose and statutory basis of the Community Purpose component are set out in Section 3.3.1 and apply equally to the Access Control Network.

The New England REZ Access Scheme is the first NSW Access Scheme to combine an Access Rights Regime and an Access Control Mechanism. ASL has considered whether the Community Purpose component should apply uniformly across both networks or be set to reflect the different characteristics of each mechanism (see Section 4.3.2).

4.3.2 Proposed approach

ASL proposes to set the Community Purpose component at the prescribed minimum amount of $1,700/MW per annum, plus indexation to ensure consistency with the South West REZ Access Scheme. The South West REZ Access Fee Determination applied 0.625% indexation quarterly from 1 July 2024. For comparison purposes, applying this approach up to 1 January 2027 results in an indexed amount of approximately $1,809/MW per annum. This is the same approach proposed for the Early Access Allocation.

ASL does not propose to set the component above the prescribed minimum. The following considerations have informed this position:

- the prescribed minimum is consistent with the Community Purpose components determined for the Central-West Orana and South West REZ Access Schemes,
- the New England REZ is not materially different from those REZs in a way that would justify requiring projects to make a higher contribution on a per MW basis, and
- ASL has not identified circumstances specific to projects connecting to the Access Control Network that would justify an amount above the prescribed minimum.

ASL also considered whether to adopt a lower overall fee structure under which the Community Purpose component would be calculated as 60% of the total annual Access Fee if the total Access Fee is less than $2,600/MW.[28] ASL does not propose that approach. ASL considers that projects with broadly comparable community-facing impacts should make broadly consistent contributions to support host communities. Applying the proportional minimum would result in Access Control Projects making a lower contribution than comparable projects in other NSW REZ Access Schemes, without a clear difference in community impact to justify that outcome. It could also result in New England Access Control Projects making a lower community contribution than New England Access Rights Network projects, which ASL does not consider to be appropriate without a clear difference in community impact in different parts of the New England REZ.

ASL welcomes submissions on this proposed approach, including whether there are differences in the community impacts of projects connecting to the Access Control Network that justify a different Community Purpose contribution.

4.4 Employment Purpose component

4.4.1 Purpose and statutory basis

The purpose and statutory basis of the Employment Purpose component are set out in Section 3.4.1 and apply equally to the Access Control Network.

As with the Community Purpose component, the coexistence of two access mechanisms in the New England REZ Access Scheme raises the question of whether the Employment Purpose component should be uniform across both networks or set to reflect the different characteristics of each mechanism.

28 For example, if the total access fee was set at $2,500/MW per annum, the Community Purpose component would be at least $1,500/MW, equivalent to 60% of the total access fee.

4.4.2 Proposed approach

ASL proposes to set the Employment Purpose component at the prescribed minimum amount of $600/MW per annum, plus indexation to ensure consistency with the South West REZ Access Scheme. The South West REZ Access Fee Determination applied 0.625% indexation quarterly from 1 July 2024. For comparison purposes, applying this approach up to 1 January 2027 results in an indexed amount of approximately $639/MW per annum. This is the same approach proposed for the Early Access Allocation.

ASL does not propose to set the component above the prescribed minimum. The following considerations informed this position:

- the prescribed minimum is consistent with the Employment Purpose components determined for the Central-West Orana and South West REZ Access Schemes,
- the employment activity associated with a project does not depend principally on whether the project connects to the Access Rights Network or the Access Control Network,
- ASL has not identified circumstances specific to projects connecting to the Access Control Network that would justify an amount above the prescribed minimum, and
- ASL must seek and consider EPAC's advice before determining the component. EPAC has advised that an Employment Purpose component of $600/MW per annum would meaningfully contribute to addressing overall workforce and training needs in the New England REZ and did not recommend an alternative amount. In the absence of EPAC advice supporting a higher amount, ASL considers that the prescribed minimum provides the appropriate starting point.

ASL also considered whether to adopt a lower overall fee structure under which the Employment Purpose component would be calculated as 20% of the annual Access Fee if the total Access Fee is less than $2,600/MW.[29] ASL does not propose that approach. ASL considers that projects with broadly comparable employment-related impacts should make broadly consistent contributions to employment purposes. Applying the proportional minimum would result in projects connecting to the Access Control Network making a lower contribution than comparable projects participating in other NSW REZ Access Schemes, without a clear difference in circumstances to justify that outcome.

ASL will consider EPAC's advice, together with submissions received through this consultation, before determining the Employment Purpose component.

4.5 Administration Cost component

4.5.1 Purpose and statutory basis

The purpose and statutory basis of the Administration Cost component are set out in Section 3.5.1 and apply equally to the Access Control Network.

The costs recovered under this component differ between the two networks, reflecting differences in the nature of each mechanism. For the Access Control Network, administration costs relate primarily to:

- administering the REZ Consent Assessment process for new access consent applications,
- monitoring compliance with community engagement commitments made by access consent holders, and
- maintaining the register of access consent holders.

The Access Control Mechanism does not involve the administration of a competitive tender process for Access Rights, an Aggregate Maximum Capacity Cap or a TTCL, which reduces some administrative effort compared to the Access Rights Regime.

4.5.2 Proposed approach

ASL proposes to determine the Administration Cost component using the approach set out in Section 3.5.2.

EnergyCo has advised that the Administration Cost component for the Access Control Network should be set at $158/MW per annum. The Administration Cost component differs from the component for the Early Access Allocation, reflecting differences in the level of effort required to administer each mechanism, as described in Section 4.5.1.

ASL will assess the information provided by EnergyCo to determine whether the proposed costs are sufficiently supported, relate to the operation of the Access Scheme and are appropriately allocated to projects connecting to the Access Control Network.

29 For example, if the total access fee was set at $2,500/MW per annum, the Employment Purpose component would be at least $500/MW, equivalent to 20% of the total access fee.

4.6 Access Rights Benefits component

4.6.1 Approach for the Access Control Network

ASL does not propose to include an Access Rights Benefits component in the Access Fee for projects connecting to the Access Control Network. The following considerations informed this position:

- projects on the Access Control Network are not expected to materially benefit from the transfer capacity of the New England RNIP,
- the Access Control Mechanism does not include an Aggregate Maximum Capacity Cap or provide a TTCL and therefore does not provide the capacity allocation and curtailment related benefits associated with the Access Rights Regime,
- projects connecting to the Access Control Network receive access consent rather than an Access Right, and
- the primary purpose of the Access Control Mechanism is to regulate connection to the 132 kV network through the REZ Consent Assessment and in doing so, ensure consistent community engagement standards across the REZ, rather than to allocate scarce network capacity.

Having regard to the statutory principles in section 26 of the EII Act, ASL's preliminary view is that the benefits received by projects connecting to the Access Control Network are not sufficiently material to justify a separate Access Rights Benefits component. ASL therefore considers that projects connecting to the Access Control Network do not receive access-related benefits comparable to those supporting the proposed Access Rights Benefits component for Early Access Projects.

4.6.2 Consideration of indirect benefits

Projects on the Access Control Network may nonetheless receive some indirect benefits from the broader coordination and social licence outcomes delivered by the Access Scheme. However, these benefits are different in nature from the capacity allocation, curtailment-related and network transfer benefits provided through the Access Rights Regime and ASL does not consider these benefits material enough to justify setting an Access Rights Benefits component.

4.7 Indicative Access Fee quantum

The table below summarises the quantum of the proposed Access Fee components and total fee amount. The Consumer Trustee may change these amounts in its Access Fee Determination in response to any changes in the approach set out in this section following consideration of stakeholder feedback.

Table 4. Summary of components and indicative fee amounts for the Access Control Network.

Component	Annual quantum per MW[30]
Community purpose	~$1,809
Employment purpose	~$639
Administration costs	~$158
Total	**~$2,606**

Box 1: Have your say: Access Fees for the Access Control Network

7. For projects intending to connect to the Access Control Network, what costs or benefits do you anticipate compared to connection under open access?
8. For projects planning to connect to the Access Control Network, what is the expected impact of the proposed Access Fee on your project?
9. Should the Community Purpose and Employment Purpose components for the Access Control Network be set at the same level as for the Early Access Allocation, or at a higher or lower level? What factors should ASL take into account?

30 Escalating at approximately 2.5% per annum from 1 January 2027.

5. Next Steps

ASL intends to make final Access Fee Determinations for both the Early Access Allocation and the allocation to the Access Control Network before the end of 2026.

5.1 Consultation process

Submissions on this Approach Paper are invited by close of business Thursday 19 November 2026. Submissions may be made via the ASL website. ASL may consider a late submission at its discretion but cannot guarantee that a late submission will be considered.

In preparing the final determinations, ASL will consider submissions received through this consultation, together with advice from the EPAC and information provided by EnergyCo, and will independently assess that material in exercising its statutory functions. ASL will explain in its Statement of Reasons how it considered stakeholder submissions and other information relevant to the determination, and the reasons for the final determination. The Statement of Reasons will be published alongside each determination following the Consumer Trustee's decision.

The Consumer Trustee will make its final determination independently, having regard to the matters required by the EII Act and EII Regulation and acting in the long-term financial interests of NSW electricity customers. Nothing in this Paper limits or fetters ASL's statutory discretion.

5.2 Indicative timeline

The indicative timeline below sets out the key steps in ASL's consultation and determination process for the Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network and the Access Control Network. The timing of some activities may change as the Access Scheme is implemented and further information becomes available.

Table 5. Indicative timeline

Date	Activity
22 October 2026	Publication of this Approach Paper
19 November 2026	Consultation closes
December 2026	Final Access Fee Determinations published with Statement of Reasons

Questions about this Approach Paper may be directed to engagement@asl.org.au

Glossary

Term	Definition
Access Consent	An authorisation granted under the Access Control Mechanism permitting a project to connect to the Access Control Network in accordance with the Access Scheme and the relevant Access Consent Agreement.
Access Consent Agreement	An agreement governing the terms on which a project is granted access consent to connect to the Access Control Network. EnergyCo, as Infrastructure Planner, is responsible for the terms of Access Consent Agreements.
Access Control Mechanism	The mechanism under the New England REZ Access Scheme that regulates connection to the Access Control Network through access consent, the REZ Consent Assessment and community engagement commitments. It does not impose an aggregate capacity cap or provide a Target Transmission Curtailment Level.
Access Control Network	The existing and future 132 kV network infrastructure within the New England REZ geographical area to which the Access Control Mechanism applies.
Access Fee	A fee determined by the Consumer Trustee under section 26 of the EII Act and payable by a participant in an Access Scheme to the Scheme Financial Vehicle.
Access Fee Determination	A determination made by the Consumer Trustee under section 26 of the EII Act specifying the Access Fees payable by participants in an Access Scheme.
Access Right	A right granted under the Access Rights Regime permitting a project to connect to the Access Rights Network, subject to the terms of the relevant Access Right Agreement and the Access Scheme. An Access Right includes a formal allocation of capacity that counts towards the Aggregate Maximum Capacity Cap.
Access Right Agreement	An agreement governing the terms on which an Access Right Holder holds and exercises an Access Right under the Access Scheme.
Access Rights Benefits component	A component of the Access Fee intended to reflect the additional value participants receive from access rights. ASL proposes that this component apply to the Early Access Allocation from the Transfer Capacity Benefits Date, but not to projects connecting to the Access Control Network.
Access Right Holder	A person or entity that holds an Access Right under the Access Rights Regime.
Access Rights Network	The network infrastructure to which the Access Rights Regime applies. It comprises the New England RNIP infrastructure specified in the Access Scheme, including relevant infrastructure extending to Bayswater Substation or Bayswater South Substation, and existing and future 330 kV network infrastructure within the New England REZ geographical area that is not part of a RNIP.
Access Rights Regime	The mechanism under the New England REZ Access Scheme that controls access to the Access Rights Network through the allocation of Access Rights. Aggregate capacity is limited by the Aggregate Maximum Capacity Cap and Access Right Holders receive the benefit of the TTCL once the relevant conditions are met.
Access Scheme	A scheme declared by the Minister under the EII Act to regulate access to specified network infrastructure in a REZ or access area, including through an access rights regime, an access control mechanism, or both.

Administration Cost component	The component of the Access Fee intended to recover the ongoing costs of operating and administering the Access Scheme, including EnergyCo's administration functions.
Aggregate Maximum Capacity Cap	The maximum aggregate capacity that may be allocated through Access Rights on the Access Rights Network under the New England REZ Access Scheme. Capacity allocated to Early Access Projects counts towards this cap.
Allocation to the Access Control Network	The non-competitive process for eligible projects seeking access consent to connect to existing or future 132 kV network infrastructure within the New England REZ.
Approach Paper	This paper setting out ASL's proposed approach to determining Access Fees for the Early Access Allocation to the Access Rights Network and for projects receiving access consent to connect to the Access Control Network.
C&E Fee	For the purposes of the proposed Access Fee formula, the sum of the Community Purpose component and the Employment Purpose component.
Community Purpose component	A mandatory component of an Access Fee to be used for a community purpose in accordance with the EII Act and EII Regulation. It is intended to fund benefits for communities in and around the REZ that host relevant network, generation and storage infrastructure.
Consumer Trustee	The person appointed under the EII Act to perform the Consumer Trustee functions. ASL is the appointed NSW Consumer Trustee and is responsible for determining Access Fees under section 26 of the EII Act.
Early Access Allocation	The non-competitive allocation process for eligible projects seeking Access Rights to connect to existing 330 kV network infrastructure within the New England REZ.
Early Access Project	A project that receives, or is seeking to receive, an Access Right through the Early Access Allocation.
EII Act	Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020 (NSW).
EII Regulation	Electricity Infrastructure Investment Regulation 2021 (NSW).
Employment Purpose Advisory Committee (EPAC)	The committee established under the EII Act that provides advice to the Consumer Trustee on the Employment Purpose component of Access Fees.
Employment Purpose component	A mandatory component of an Access Fee to be used for an employment purpose in accordance with the EII Act and EII Regulation. It is intended to support employment outcomes associated with delivery of the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap.
EnergyCo	The Energy Corporation of New South Wales, acting as Infrastructure Planner for the New England REZ Access Scheme. EnergyCo designs and administers the Access Scheme and conducts the allocation processes.
Fixed Indexation	The indexation factor applied to the proposed Access Fee components under the fee formula. The paper proposes a common indexation start date and fixed quarterly indexation rate.
Infrastructure Planner	EnergyCo in its statutory role of designing and administering the New England REZ Access Scheme, including conducting allocation processes, establishing eligibility criteria and setting the terms of Access Right and Access Consent Agreements.

Maximum Capacity	The capacity value used to calculate a participant's Access Fee. For an Early Access Project, it is the maximum capacity recorded for the relevant Access Right in the Access Rights Register. For an access consent holder, it is the maximum capacity recorded by the Infrastructure Planner for the relevant access consent.
Minister	The NSW Minister for Energy, who declares the Access Scheme, including its scope and design features, on the recommendation of the Infrastructure Planner.
New England REZ	The New England Renewable Energy Zone established under the EII Act.
New England REZ Access Scheme	The Access Scheme applying to specified network infrastructure in the New England REZ. It combines an Access Rights Regime applying to the Access Rights Network and an Access Control Mechanism applying to the Access Control Network.
New England RNIP	The proposed New England Renewable Energy Zone Network Infrastructure Project, References in this paper to the New England RNIP are for the purposes of describing features of the New England REZ Access Scheme and do not indicate any view as to future decisions that may be required under the EII Act.
Non-C&E Fee	For the purposes of the proposed Access Fee formula, the components of the Access Fee other than the Community Purpose and Employment Purpose components. For Early Access Projects, it comprises the Administration Cost component before Transfer Capacity Benefits Date and the Administration Cost and Access Rights Benefits components from that date. For the Access Control Network, it comprises the Administration Cost component only.
Payment Deed	An agreement governing payment of Access Fees to the Scheme Financial Vehicle, including relevant payment and bonding arrangements.
Relevant Quarter	The calendar quarter for which an Access Fee is calculated and payable under the proposed fee formula.
Scheme Financial Vehicle (SFV)	The entity that receives Access Fees paid by Access Scheme participants and administers payment arrangements under relevant Payment Deeds.
Target Transmission Curtailment Level (TTCL)	The forecast average level of technical curtailment across the Access Rights Network. It is used to determine the amount of generation capacity that can be allocated while maintaining forecast technical curtailment at or below the specified target. The New England REZ Access Scheme Declaration specifies a TTCL of 4.92 per cent, subject to the applicable timing conditions.
Transfer Capacity Benefits Date	The contractual milestone specified in the relevant New England REZ access contract and referred to as the Transfer Capacity Benefits Date in this Approach Paper. ASL proposes to use this date to commence application of the Access Rights Benefits component for Early Access Projects.

ASL