

Renewable energy inspection program

Why are renewable energy projects important and how are they regulated?

Renewable energy projects generate and store clean energy while also supporting jobs and investment, particularly in regional areas.

The NSW Government supports the development of a sustainable renewable energy industry in the state. NSW has valuable solar, wind and hydro resources, with many of the best areas for these projects located near already existing electricity transmission infrastructure.

It is important that this developing industry constructs and operates projects responsibly.

The potential impacts of renewable energy projects are managed to ensure they are accurately identified, and any adverse outcomes are minimised. This is a major focus of the department during its assessment of state significant renewable energy projects and is reflected in the strict conditions of consent for these assessments.

As the consent authority for state significant renewable energy projects, the department is also responsible for monitoring compliance with these conditions of consent.

When are renewable energy projects classed as state significant developments (SSD)?

Under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021, renewable energy projects are classified as SSD when the capital investment value of the project exceeds \$30 million (or \$10 million in a prescribed environmentally sensitive area).

All SSD applications must go through a comprehensive assessment process. For more information about this process, visit the [department's SSD process page](#).

How many renewable energy projects have SSD consent?

- Solar – 61
- Wind – 25
- Hydro – 1
- Battery Storage – 6

What is the focus of the renewable energy inspection program?

The renewable energy inspection program is focused on undertaking inspections of renewable energy projects across NSW, including proactive, reactive and surveillance inspections. Since January 2020, the department has undertaken 117 of these inspections to monitor compliance with conditions of consent.

We liaise with relevant local, state and Australian government agencies when undertaking our work to ensure a whole-of-government approach.

In addition to monitoring general compliance with conditions of consent, we also focus on particular conditions, such as:

- flora and fauna management
- site management, including weed management and erosion and sediment controls
- visual management
- Aboriginal and European cultural heritage management and protection
- emergency response plans
- road upgrades and the use of approved transport routes
- ensuring construction works are not commencing prior to meeting requirements
- other amenity impacts.

Additionally, the department reviews required reports and independent audits to ensure applicants are complying with their conditions of consent. These reports and audits can be found on applicants' websites and via the [department's major projects portal](#).

What has the department found through the compliance program?

Our program has found that projects are generally constructing or operating in accordance with their conditions of consent, however, some formal enforcement actions have been undertaken. The department publishes formal enforcements on our [inspections and enforcements webpage](#).

The department has also identified and communicated opportunities for improvement directly to applicants where required.

What are the ongoing monitoring requirements and future actions?

We will continue to monitor renewable energy developments across NSW and investigate allegations of non-compliance to ensure projects comply with their conditions of consent. The department publishes compliance and enforcement activities on our [inspections and enforcements webpage](#).

Where can I find more information?

Email compliance@planning.nsw.gov.au