The Central BESS

Community Update: Increased capacity & community benefits

September 2026



An update from the Central BESS project team

We'd like to share an important update on the Central Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). Since the Project was approved in October 2025, it has taken some important steps forward. Most recently, some changes have been approved to improve Project outcomes and deliver greater benefits. We are pleased to share details of these changes, along with updates to the Benefit Sharing Program.

What's changing?

Rockhampton Regional Council has approved a change to the 500 MW Central BESS Project, increasing its storage capacity from 1,000 MWh to 2,000 MWh. This changes the Project from a two-hour to a four-hour battery system, allowing it to store more energy when it is available and supply electricity to the grid for longer when needed.

The approved 24-year life remains unchanged and continues to run from the Project's original approval in October 2025.

Key changes include:

- Increasing the storage duration from two hours (1,000 MWh) to four hours (2,000 MWh)
- A minor increase in battery containers, from 352 to 360
- A minor increase in power conversion units, known as Medium Voltage Power Stations, from 176 to 180
- Increased funding for the Community Benefit Fund, Neighbour Benefit Program and Flexible Support Fund

What isn't changing?

There are **no significant changes** to the Project's physical footprint or key assessed impacts.

In particular:

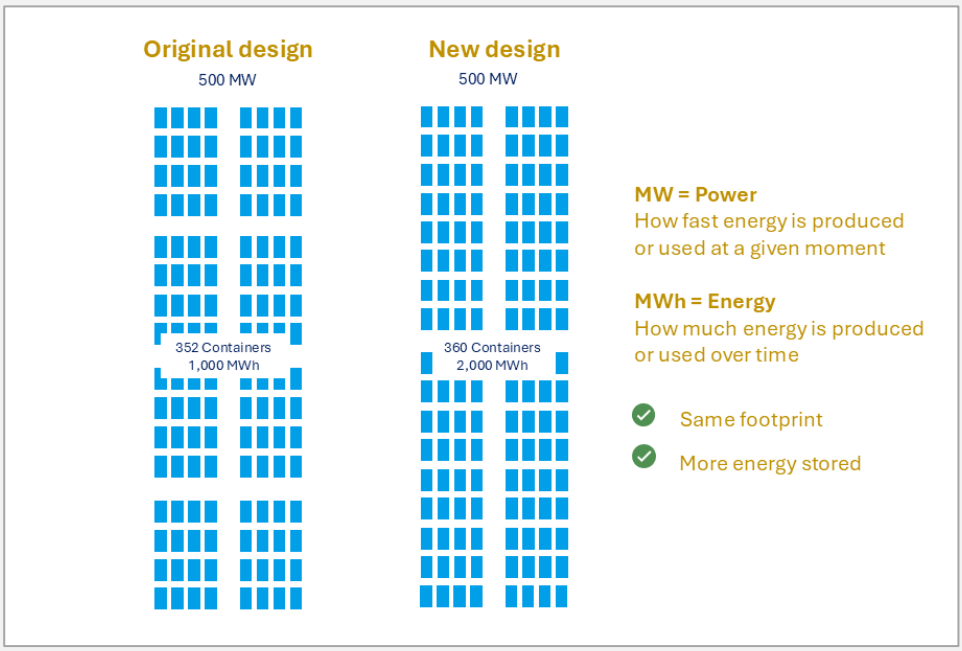
- The approved Project life, operating hours and overall purpose **remain unchanged**
- **There is no change** to the Project's approved 500 MW capacity
- No additional land disturbance is required, and the site footprint **will not expand**
- There will be **no material change** to visual impacts, with the battery units remaining similar scale and appearance to those previously approved.
- The Project **remains compliant with all applicable noise standards**. While the increased storage capacity may allow the battery to operate for longer periods when required, noise levels for nearby residents are expected to remain consistent with those assessed under the original approved design. Advances in battery technology help ensure the Project can deliver the additional storage capacity without increasing predicted noise levels.
- Traffic, construction, operational and other assessed impacts **remain consistent with the approved Project**.
- All environmental and planning conditions attached to the original approval will continue to apply.

More storage, not more infrastructure

Battery technology is improving quickly. Modern battery systems have a **higher energy density** (more storage per unit) and improvements in internal battery design mean **more efficient use of space**.

Supporting equipment, such as cooling and safety systems and inverters, are also becoming more compact and efficient.

This means that we can increase the amount of energy stored without doubling the physical infrastructure. **In practice, you may not notice any difference in how the project looks or operates.**



Greater benefits for the community

It is important that the approved change also creates additional value for the local community. We have increased the Project's Benefit Sharing Program, delivering more support for Project neighbours, the Bouldercombe community and First Nations groups.

A bigger fund for local priorities

As part of the updated Benefit Sharing Program, the **Project's Community Benefit Fund will increase from $1.5 million to $3 million**. This will create more opportunities to invest in initiatives that matter most to the local community. The expanded Fund will provide greater support for community-led projects, local partnerships, and programs that deliver lasting benefits across the region.

We will work closely with the Community Reference Group (CRG) to shape the Fund guidelines, including funding priorities, eligibility criteria and the application process. By giving the community a direct role in how the Fund is designed and delivered, we can help ensure investments reflect local priorities and create meaningful impact.

We will provide ongoing updates as this work progresses and share further details about the Fund, including how and when to apply, to ensure the community is well informed and ready to participate when applications open.

More support for our closest neighbours

We will also deliver greater value to those living closest to the Project. We are increasing payments under the **Neighbour Benefit Program so that our closest neighbours share directly in the benefits of the Project**.

We have informed eligible neighbours about the updated Program and will continue to work closely with them to support their participation and answer any questions as the Program progresses.

Project timeline

Construction is expected to begin in mid-2027, with the main construction period anticipated to take approximately 15 months. Operations are expected to commence in early 2029.

We will continue to keep the community informed as the Project progresses and these timeframes are confirmed**.**

Staying connected

We understand you may have questions about these changes, and our team is always available to speak with you. We've also prepared a range of FAQs about the increase in storage capacity, available on the **Central BESS Project webpage.**

As the Project progresses, we'll continue to keep you informed and share updates at key milestones.

To learn more, access the FAQs, or get in touch with the project team, you can visit Project webpage or contact us via info@thecentralbess.com.au or 1800 548 589