### Meeting notes

#### EnergyAustralia

Project	EnergyAustralia Lithgow CCC	Date	18 April 2023
Chair	Brendan Blakeley	Recorder	Lucy Dinn
Attendees	Julie Favell, CCC member	Apologies	Rob Cluff, CCC member
	Cr Maree Statham, CCC member		Mick Hanly, EnergyAu
	Lauren Stevens, Council Member support		
	Rob White, CCC member		
	Aunty Helen Riley, CCC Member		
	Clr Cass Coleman, CCC member		
	Jim Whitty, CCC member		
	Steve Marshall, EnergyAustralia		
	Michael De Vink , EnergyAustralia		
	Virginia Burns, EnergyAustralia		
	Ben Eastwood, EnergyAustralia		
	Donna Field, EnergyAustralia		
	Ray Smith, Observer		

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#### Item Discussion Point

#### Welcome and introductions

- The meeting began at 5.05pm.
- The Chair welcomed all members and acknowledged Country.
- The Chair ran through the agenda for the meeting and noted apologies from Mick Hanley and Robert Cluff.

#### Review of previous meeting minutes

- The Chair called for comments on the previous meeting minutes.
- No comments were noted, the meeting minutes were adopted.

#### Actions from Previous Meeting

A review of EnergyAustralia's feral animal control programs.

- EnergyAustralia undertakes feral animal control programs on a periodic basis in consultation with landowners.
- Pig traps will be implemented at Lake Lyell.
- A CCC member noted that feral pigs breed rapidly and asked what is specifically done for the feral pig problem around Lake Lyell.
- Steve responded that a trapping program is about to commence.
- Michael noted that two weeks ago National Parks were doing a baiting program for pigs on Mount Walker Road.
- It was recognised that there is improvement to be made in feral animal control in the region.
- A CCC member asked if the shooting noises heard on Mount Piper were from any Energy Australia shooting program.
- Steve confirmed that the shooting noises are not being made by EnergyAustralia.

#### Site safety

See slides 8 and 9 of the presentation.

- Steve noted it was encouraging to see that more hazards are being identified by people.
- It has been a couple of months without a lost time injury.
- The total injury frequency rate target is 4.78, with the actual rate being 4.73.

#### Water management

See slide 11 of the presentation

- Oberon Dam level is at 98.3%
- Total active storage is at 97.1% with:
  - Lake Lyell at 99.6%
  - Lake Wallace at 105.3%
  - Thompsons Creek Dam at 93.3%.

Discuss the frequency of bluegreen algae alerts at Lake Lyell at the next CCC meeting.

Actions

 Discuss feral pig trapping program at next CCC meeting.

em	Discussion Point	Actions
	<ul> <li>There was an amber alert for blue-green algae at Lake Lyell, this has been changed to a red alert based on results received just before the meeting. This means Lake Lyell will be closed for recreational purposes.</li> </ul>	
	— The Chair asked how the red/green/amber system works.	
	<ul> <li>Ben responded that it's based on the concentration of blue-green algae detected in the water samples. A green alert considers the water safe. With amber being on alert and red being unsafe requiring a public notification and weekly testing regime put in place.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>If the concentration of blue-green algae increases to a red alert level, recreational activities must cease.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>EnergyAustralia has responsibility to monitor the water quality within the lake. It does not, however, have control of water flows into the lake across its very wide catchment.</li> </ul>	
	— A CCC member asked if there's signage around the lake to inform people of blue-green algae presence.	
	<ul> <li>Ben confirmed there is signage which Lithgow City Council manage.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>EnergyAustralia noted that the frequency of monitoring changes depending on the alert level, for example EA must receive two consecutive results in the green alert level before downgrading the red alert.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>A CCC member commented that temperature and heat might contribute to an increase in algae concentration.</li> <li>The CCC member asked what else might increase algae concentration.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>Ben responded that it could be a number of things such as water quality, level of inflows and nutrient levels.</li> </ul>	
	— A CCC member asked if nutrients are running off into Lake Lyell.	
	<ul> <li>Ben responded that with such a large catchment there may be elevated nutrient loads being carried into the lake.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>A CCC member noted that there has been a lot of inflow and also it hasn't been very warm of late, so is it unexpected to have a red alert at this stage.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>Ben responded it is hard to pinpoint the exact reason for the algae levels at the moment, but there could be high levels of nutrient flowing into the lake from somewhere in the catchment. Its not uncommon to see red alerts in April in the Upper Cox River catchment.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>A CCC member noted that they don't want the lake to keep being closed for recreational usage and asked what is being done to mitigate it.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>It was noted that an aerator operates close to the dam wall and this lessens the algae level of the water in this area compared to the upper reaches of the lake. Ben clarified that water in the lake was owned by WaterNSW with EnergyAustralia owning the surrounding land, infrastructure and water access rights.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>A CCC member noted that compared to various dams around the state, Lake Lyell seems to disproportionately have more problems with algae. The CCC member asked why this is and whether they have information on how often the lake is red, orange or green? TAKEN ON NOTICE FOR RESPONSE AT NEXT MEETING.</li> </ul>	
	Market update	
	No notes were taken due to the commercially sensitive nature of the content.	

#### Item Discussion Point

#### People

See slides 18 of the presentation.

Since the committee last met, a new maintenance leader has been appointed. EA has also hired:

- Mechanical Fitter
- Electrician
- 7 apprentices. It was noted this is the highest apprentice intake in 10 years, with four staying with EA after their apprenticeship.
- Upcoming hires include:
  - QA Officer
  - Planning and Scheduling Leader
  - Workshop Team Leader
  - Boiler Engineer
- A CCC member asked if EnergyAustralia is having difficulties hiring staff like they're experiencing at Council.
- Steve responded EnergyAustralia had approximately 80 applicants for apprenticeships which was
  really encouraging.
- Steve noted EnergyAustralia is however having problems attracting people to the coal generated
  part of the industry due to the phase out of coal over the medium term. Some specialist suppliers
  and technicians are starting to exit the market as coal fired power stations close.

#### Pine Dale Mine and Enhance Place

See slides 19 of the presentation.

- There was no non-compliance at the Pine Dale Mine.
- No community complaints were recorded for Enhance Place or Pine Dale Mine.
- Monthly reports as required under the Pine Dale EPL have been uploaded on the EA website.

#### Ash Placement Areas

No notes were taken due to the commercially sensitive nature of the content.

Ben and Steve noted:

- Monitoring of ground water in proximity to the ash placement areas is continuing.
- The best way to stop leaching is to stop water entering the ash placement areas. This is achieved through capping to stop inflows and in active workings, placing the ash within lined deposition areas as shown in the photographs.
- A CCC member asked about the durability of the lining material.
- Steve noted the material was the same as what is used in landfill. It is very tough and was designed to last for a long time.
- A CCC member expressed concern the leaching was still occurring and flowing into local waterways.

#### Actions

#### Item Discussion Point

#### Community update

See slides 24-27 of the presentation.

- 11 applications for community grants were received.
- Evaluation of applications is being conducted soon.
- EA sponsors Portland Art Show
  - EA sent staff to the show and had them vote on their favourite artwork.
  - 5 pieces of art were bought with the sponsorship money.
- EA supported the following events:
  - Rydal Show
  - Lithgow Show
  - Portland Art Show.
- Soon EA will participate in the wreath Laying for ANZAC day.
- EA has a sponsorship for 6 months with Nannas Touch Community Connections Lithgow Inc Soup Kitchen.

#### Project update - Mt Piper Battery Energy Storage

See slide 28 of the presentation.

- The Scoping Report was submitted to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) on 16/11/22.
- The SEARS was issued by DPE on 23/12/22.
- The Scoping Report and SEARS can be accessed at <u>https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/mt-piper-battery-energy-storage-system</u>
- EIS studies have commenced.
- EnergyAustralia expects the social and environmental impacts of this project upon the local area to be minimal.
- Subsurface investigations of site are proposed for H2 2023. This will assess whether there are any
  old underground workings below the proposed site.
- Archaeological survey of the site to be conducted on 27/4/23.

#### Project in focus - Pumped Hydro

See slides 31 – 40 of the presentation

- EnergyAustralia is in the very early-stages of investigating a proposal for a 335 MW 8-hour duration pumped hydro storage facility.
- The facility will use Lake Lyell as a lower reservoir, with an upper reservoir to be created on EnergyAustralia's land on the southern side of Mount Walker.
- The upper reservoir would discharge water through an underground turbine station before it is sent back into the lake.

Item	Discussion	Point
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- The idea is to re-purpose existing infrastructure for storage and support the urgent need for dispatchable renewables.
- Pumped hydro can stabilise the grid and deliver reliable energy when the sun goes down or the wind isn't blowing.
- 2023 is about investigating project feasibility with EnergyAustralia making a decision about moving forward with the project to be made in 2025. Currently looking at geotechnical studies and preparing the scoping report which will kick off the EIS required by the Department of Planning.

Progress update: Geotechnical Investigation.

- Current geotechnical program commenced in September 2022 and concluded in March. Data processing is underway.
- Total of 8 boreholes drilled, 6 have been cemented and sealed, 2 are retained for water monitoring.
- Lab work now underway investigating properties of rock at different layers and depth. These
  investigations will inform EnergyAustralia about the strength and stability of the rock and its
  suitability as a building material.

Investigation of cloudy water in Farmers Creek.

- Energy Australia requested GHD to provide a professional opinion on this matter. GHDs advice concluded it was almost impossible for drilling fluids to enter the creek therefore highly unlikely that the cloudy water was caused by drilling.
- Routine water monitoring has not identified any drilling related contaminants.
- Water quality can be impacted by surrounding urban and semi-industrial environments that can flow through to the creek especially with recent heavy rainfall.
- EnergyAustralia encourages anyone that sees something that doesn't look quite right to take a
  photo or get a water sample and contact EnergyAustralia so it can be investigated.
- A CCC member noted their continued concern for the water quality and had raised the issue of the creek's water quality to Council from an EA referral and was referred back to EA. They asked how this issue can get resolved? TAKEN ON NOTICE.
- They also noted that GHD was very adamant about it not being drilling related, yet this type of contamination
  has not been seen in the creek before and coincided with drilling.
- A CCC member asked if drilling is finished.
- Michael responded there will be more drilling in the future. This would be to establish a more comprehensive groundwater monitoring network to inform the engineering design.

Site program will involve:

- Drilling four groundwater monitoring bores on existing drill pads, and three twinned bores within the approved disturbance footprint.
- As part of the site selection process EA is looking for areas that are previously disturbed and already have access tracks in place to minimise further disturbance.
- A CCC member asked what the depth of the drilling is.

Item	Discussion Point	Actions
	<ul> <li>Michael responded the deepest hole under the earlier geotech program is 360m deep.</li> </ul>	

- A CCC member asked on what basis the sites are chosen.
- Michael responded that the hydrogeologists who specialise in groundwater came back with recommendations on sites for additional groundwater monitoring.
- A CCC member asked if EnergyAustralia was looking for something in particular?
- Michael responded that it was important to understand what the groundwater conditions are at different locations around the proposed infrastructure.
- A CCC member asked whether the borehole drills have been completed.
- Michael responded that drilling for geotechnical studies and some associated monitoring boreholes subject to the existing approved DA has been completed, and the data has gone to a design partner.
- EnergyAustralia has now submitted a modification application amend the approved DA to cover this ground water investigation activity.
- A CCC member asked what the importance is of establishing additional groundwater monitoring.
- Ben responded this is part of the approval process for the project. Groundwater is one environmental aspect that needs to be fully understood before starting the project and to establish a baseline data set.
- Michael noted that this information is needed for engineering too, to inform underground structures and ensure any underground facilities are waterproof. Ben added that Farmers Creek indicated the base groundwater level for the area and was the low pressure point to which any water would express itself in the catchment. For this reason, no boreholes need to be drilled on the other side of Famers Creek.
- A CCC member noted that if the point of groundwater water flow was into Farmers Creek, how can GHD be so
  conclusive that the cloudy water wasn't caused by drilling materials getting into the groundwater system and
  then into Farmers Creek?
- Michael responded that when drilling occurs drilling fluids are used. However, the professional view is that there is too much rock between drill locations and the creek for the fluids to come out in a concentrated form that would manifest as a visible pool of cloudy water.
- A CCC member asked whether EA has identified the neighbouring people who will be impacted by the next round of work on drilling these boreholes.
- Virginia responded that there will be a dedicated letterbox drop to people within the area and a traffic management plan will be in place.
- A CCC member asked where the statement comes from that the proposed modification has minimal environmental impacts.
- Ben responded that ecologists did an ecological assessment, with an aim to select sites that could deliver the best hydrogeological information with minimal environmental disturbance. This was done by using existing drill pads where possible, and where it was not, locating drill areas along access tracks ideally where there already was disturbance.
- Virginia noted the Scoping Report is being finalised and this will be lodged in the next few months.
   The Scoping Report will be used by the Department of Planning and Environment to inform the

n i	Discussion Point	Actions
	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEAR's). These set out everything	
	EnergyAustralia needs to do to undertake and EIS to support the project application.	
_	- The Chair clarified the SEARS outlines the full range of studies that will be necessary for the Department to make a full assessment of the proposal. When the proposal is lodged the Department will assess it for adequacy against the SEARS before placing the application on exhibition. During exhibition the community has access to those reports/studies to inform their submissions.	
_	- A CCC member asked if the pumped hydro project would be referred under the EPBC Act.	
_	- Virginia noted it was subject to a EPBC Act referral.	
G	eneral discussion.	
_	- A CCC member asked if EnergyAustralia has considered concentrated solar power as an alternative to pumped hydro?	
_	- Steve responded that this technology isn't under consideration by EnergyAustralia.	
	- A CCC member asked if EnergyAustralia is supportive of Mount Piper sending residual water to the McPhillamys Mine in Blayney.	
_	- Steve responded EnergyAustralia has been in discussions with the operator of the mine about taking water and is supportive of the project using surplus water.	
_	- The CCC member noted they disagreed with this proposed action.	
	<ul> <li>A CCC member asked what would happen if Mt Piper went into caretaker mode, would EA lease their land for a Waste to Energy project?</li> </ul>	
_	- Steve responded that EnergyAustralia had withdrawn the application for the proposed RFD facility and would not be looking at any future Waste to Energy projects at Mt Piper Site.	
_	- In response to the minutes the CCC member asked that this question be taken on notice for a more detailed response at a future meeting. <b>QUESTION ON NOTICE.</b>	
_	A CCC member asked if EnergyAustralia's Mt Piper station still provides 16% of the state's power?	
_	- Steve responded that it varies, however Mt Piper is averaging about 12%.	
	Next steps	<ul> <li>Send dates or</li> </ul>
	- The next meeting will most likely be held on Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> July.	placeholders
		1
	- The Chair thanked Michael and Virginia for travelling from Melbourne.	
	The meeting closed at 6:57pm.	

## EnergyAustralia Lithgow Region

## **Community Consultative Committee**

18 April 2023

Steve Marshall – Head of Mt Piper



# Acknowledgement of Country

I would like to acknowledge the Wiradjuri people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and future

Artwork by Wiradjari Elder and Mingaan Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation

### Agenda

- 1. Welcome and introductions
- 2. Acknowledgement of Country
- 3. Actions from Previous Meeting
- 4. Site Update from EnergyAustralia
- 5. Project Update Battery Storage
- 6. Project in Focus Pumped Hydro
- 7. General Discussion
- 8. Meeting Close





# **Welcome and Introductions**

## Actions from Previous Meeting

### **Actions from Previous Meeting**

Feral animals –Lake Lyell - A CCC member asked what EnergyAustralia's position on feral animals is. It was noted that there are substantial comments made within the community about the feral animals around Lake Lyell.

EnergyAustralia undertakes feral animal control programs on a periodic basis for pigs, foxes, wild dogs, goats and rabbits in consultation with adjacent landowners. Targeted programs are often coordinated with the Local Land Services Division of DPE. EnergyAustralia supports local and regional campaigns to control feral animals on its property. Planning is underway to have pig traps placed at Lake Lyell within the coming months.



# Site Safety

### Site Safety – 2023





### Site Safety 2023

YTD – TIFR (As of 31st March 2023) Actual = 4.78 Target = 4.73



# Water Management

### **Update on Water Management**

- Oberon Dam level is at 98.3%
- Total Active Storage is at 97.1% with:
  - Lake Lyell at 99.6%
  - Lake Wallace at 105.3%
  - Thompsons Creek Dam at 93.3%



- Amber alert for blue-green algae at Lake Lyell
- Controlled release from TCR is ongoing for level management

# Market Update

Commercially Sensitive - Not for Website Display

### **Operation in the Market**

# **Operations (Site) Update**

**Commercially Sensitive - Not for Website Display** 

### **Operations update – April**



**Commercially Sensitive - Not for Website Display** 

### **Unit 1 Outage**

### **Unit 1 Outage**

### People

- Maintenance Leader (Retirement vacancy)
- Mechanical Fitter (Transition to Retirement)
- Electrician (Vacancy)
- Apprentices
  - 3 Electrical
  - 4 Mechanical
- Graduate Engineer Program
- Upcoming
  - QA Officer
  - Planning and Scheduling Leader
  - Workshop Team Leader
  - Boiler Engineer

# Pine Dale Mine and Enhance Place

### **Pine Dale Mine and Enhance Place**

- No non compliances at the Pine Dale Mine
- No community complaints recorded for Enhance Place nor Pine Dale Mine
- Monthly reports as required under the Pine Dale EPL have been uploaded onto the EnergyAustralia website
- Annual site rehabilitation surveys were completed in November 2021
- Continues in care and maintenance
- Future mining activities continue to be evaluated

#### Enhance Place Groundwater bore decommissioning

- Three groundwater bores decommissioned and rehabilitated in Mining Lease 1458 in March 2023
- No further rehabilitation or maintenance is proposed to be undertaken at the former Enhance Place Mining area.
- Rehabilitation has achieved the land use completion criteria for stability, erosion, infrastructure removal, vegetation species composition and land capability.
- An application to relinquish Mining Lease 1520, 1442 and 1458 has been submitted to DPE Resource Regulator



## Lamberts North Ash Placement Project

Commercially Sensitive - Not for Website Display

#### Lamberts North Ash Placement Project October 2022 to February 2023

# **Community Update**

- Round 1 Community Grants closed 31 March 2023
- 11 applications received
- Evaluation of applications being conducted later this week. Delayed due to staff leave.

#### **Portland Art Show**

- EA representatives attended Sponsor's evening to vote on artwork to be purchased with sponsorship money.
- 5 pieces selected







### **Supported Events:**

- Rydal Show
- Lithgow Show
- Portland Art Show

### **Upcoming Events:**

• Anzac Day – wreath laying



### Nanna's Touch Community Connections Lithgow Inc Soup Kitchen



It was identified that a "social kitchen – a place to connect with wellbeing activities" was needed in our community. So, the Nanna's Touch group have set out to fill that need. They have access to a hall with a fitted kitchen, and volunteers who are ready to support a project that provides food security, creates community connection and is an opportunity to increase social capital.

The Soup Kitchen will provide a weekly sit-down meal with refreshments for those doing it tough, along with a take home hamper of dry staples and fresh produce.

There will also be the option of an alternate packaged meal for those unable to access the service in person, provided by a drop off delivery. The drop off meal will support those living rough and be conveniently packed containing non-perishable food items and fresh produce.

To kick start this initiative, EnergyAustralia is providing sponsorship for 6 months with an aim to assist the group to develop a sustainable program, without major funding.

## **Project Update**

## **Mt Piper Battery Energy Storage**
#### **Project Update**

- Project Scoping Report submitted to DPE on 16 Nov 2022.
- Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARS) issued by DPE on 23 December 2022.
- EIS studies have commenced. Scheduled to exhibit EIS in 2024.
- Due to development site proposed and studies completed to date, we expect social and environmental impacts in the area to be minimal.
- We do not anticipate that approval from Commonwealth under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act will be required as not likely to have environmental impact on matters of national environmental significance.

## **Project Update (Cont.)**

- Subsurface investigations of site proposed for H2 2023.
- Subsurface activities will include geotechnical investigations, contamination testing and soil testing.
- Application for development consent for subsurface investigations currently being prepared and likely to be submitted shortly.
- Archaeological survey of site to be conducted on 27 April 2023.

## **Project in Focus:**

# **Pumped Hydro**

#### Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Energy Storage: 335 MW, 8 hours

- Early-stage proposal for a ~335MW 8-hour duration pumped hydro energy storage facility at Lake Lyell near Lithgow
- Located wholly on EnergyAustralia land zoned for electricity generation with strong transmission connection available
- Directly supports the urgent need for dispatchable energy storage to support the NSW Government's electricity roadmap and the transition to net zero carbon emissions
- Can deliver reliable electricity when renewables are not available and grid stability through frequency and voltage support

## **Development Timeline**

- Very early stages of investigating project feasibility
- Feasibility studies to extend through 2023 and 2024 before a decision can be made in 2025 on whether to proceed with the project
- In 2023 the focus is on assessing technical feasibility, early-stage design and commencing environmental studies



#### **Progress update: Geotechnical Investigation**

- Current geotech program commenced in September 2022 and concluded in March. Data processing underway
- Total of 8 boreholes drilled, 6 cemented and sealed, 2 retained for water monitoring
- Program confirmed previously published data that the project area geology comprises Upper Devonian Lambie Group, characterised by metamorphosed quartz sandstone, siltstone and mudstone



## **Progress update: Geotechnical Investigation**

- Program went smoothly with some delays to access track maintenance due to wet weather.
- Program delivered with satisfactory health and safety outcomes.
- Report of the appearance of cloudy water in Farmers Creek arm of Lake Lyell in February 2023 investigated by project team:
  - The appearance of the cloudy water is not related to the Geotech program or other works by EnergyAustralia at Lake Lyell
  - Routine water quality monitoring has not identified any specific concern
  - Water quality can be impacted by surrounding urban and semi-industrial environment that it flows through as well as the build up of sediment with recent heavy rainfall
  - Encourage anyone that sees something that doesn't look right, take a photo or get a water sample and let us know so that we can investigate

## **Hydrogeological Investigation**

- Additional site investigation program to enable us to establish a more comprehensive groundwater monitoring network and inform engineering design
- Modification to the development approval issued by Council for the Geotechnical Investigation Program (DA070/22) – submitted on 12 April 2023
- The proposed modification involves minimal environmental impact with overall disturbance footprint still well within the approved DA.

## **Hydrogeological Investigation**

The site program will involve:

- Drilling four groundwater monitoring bores on existing drill pads within the approved disturbance footprint
- Drilling 6 groundwater monitoring boreholes at three new drill pads outside the disturbance footprint (a set of twinned boreholes - one shallow, one deep, at each new drill pad)
- Drilling up to four additional geotechnical boreholes within the investigation envelope



## **Progress update: Engineering Design**

- Early feasibility assessment and engineering design by ACCIONA and McConnell Dowell
- Geotech data and hydrogeological data are key inputs for assessing feasibility and early engineering design





## **Progress update: Planning and Environmental**

- Project scoping underway with NSW Department of Planning and Environment, SEARs expected in the coming months
- Environmental consultant engaged with technical studies to commence on site in the coming weeks
- A referral under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) has been determined by the Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water:
  - Proposed project is considered a "Controlled Action" with assessment to be undertaken through the NSW planning process as per the Bilateral Agreement

## **Progress update: Engagement**

- Recent activities:
  - Community sessions in Lithgow, Wallerawang and Portland
  - Cultural awareness training with Mingaan Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation
  - Launched dedicated Facebook page
  - Ongoing stakeholder engagement with local groups, Traditional Owners, Council and Government
- Upcoming activities:
  - Project hub on Main St Lithgow by mid year
  - Dedicated website in early May
  - Dedicated engagement with nearby residents with potential visual impact
  - Facilitated workshops for community benefits sharing framework
- Later in 2023:
  - Begin implementing dedicated EIS consultation plan

# Thank you

