

EnergyAustralia Lithgow Region Community Consultative Committee

Final Meeting Minutes – 18 February 2025

Member attendees:

- Julie Favell
- Jim (Cricket) Whitty
- Jamie Giokaris
- Brian Fitzgerald
- Rob White
- Rob Cluff
- Cr Ray Smith – Lithgow City Council
- Jonathon English – EnergyAustralia
- David Wilson – EnergyAustralia
- Ben Eastwood – EnergyAustralia

Also present:

- Lauren Stevens– Lithgow City Council (support)

Presenters

- Michael de Vink – EnergyAustralia

Chair:

- Brendan Blakeley

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| 1 | <p>Welcome and introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The meeting began at 5:03 pm• The chair welcomed all members• The chair acknowledged Country• The chair asked for declarations of interest:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- the chair noted he chaired a similar group for EnergyAustralia at Tallawarra Power Station- the chair declared payment received from EnergyAustralia for role as independent chair of this CCC- no other interests were declared.• The chair welcomed Councillor Ray Smith and Jonathon English to the CCC• All CCC members verbally agreed to the code of conduct for 2025.• The chair noted a suggestion from a CCC member that there be more structure around discussions and that people hold off on questions until each section of the presentation was complete• CCC members agreed to this. |
| 2. | <p>Police Rescue and Bomb Disposal Response Unit Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sergeant Luke Bergan noted the unit would be conducting training exercises over the next fortnight.• Some of their training would take place at Pine Dale mine opposite the RFS station in Blackmans Flat. |

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- The exercise was not likely to cause any disturbance as it will be mostly shielded by the mine bank.
- The work involves training on a high-pressure water device to disrupt electronically detonated bombs.
- The unit's work is critical to protect public safety during bomb incidents.
- The device is taken close to the bomb by a robot and acts so fast and with such high pressure it disintegrates the bomb parts before detonation takes effect.
- The team appreciates being able to do this training in such close proximity to Sydney.
- Community members were welcome to come and visit the team at the RFS station and members of the unit was hoping to doorknock neighbouring properties before the exercises take place.

CCC discussion

- *Julie Favell asked if it worked for all types of bombs?*
- Sargeant Bergan noted that it was only for electronically activated devices.
- *Rob Cluff noted he supported the work the team does in protecting the community and it was good that they could use the land, and the presence of the team contributed to the local economy and community.*
- *Julie Favell asked who funded emergency response work.*
- Sargeant Bergan noted the team received funding from both state and federal Governments.

2 Minutes

Actions from the previous meeting were:

1. *Julie Favell requested a photo of the rehabilitated area (Pine Dale Mine) be provided at the next meeting. (see slides 7.8 and 9)*
- Ben noted the following points:
 - The photo was of area 8 on the entrance road into the mine
 - The previously affected area was relatively small and is located opposite the site office at Pine Dale Mine
 - Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) is caused by oxidation of pyrite. It is typically seen as a reddish colour around the edge of water bodies and exposed rock surfaces.
 - There is no ongoing evidence of AMD or active management required at Pine Dale Mine for AMD.
 - Ben noted around twenty nesting boxes have been installed in this area.

CCC Discussion

- *Jim Whitty asked for more information on the nesting boxes.*
 - Ben responded that there were five boxes of each type to cater to the needs of differing species.
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- *Julie Favell asked about the species mix in the revegetated areas and whether the growth was predominantly acacia.*
 - Ben responded that acacia comes up first, but a number of eucalypts were growing up through the wattle.
 - *Julie Favell asked if there was a Pollution Reduction Program (PRP) in place for AMD.*
 - Ben noted that there is no other evidence of AMD at the site. He noted that Pine Dale is not under a PRP, however rehabilitation is required under the consent. He also noted the team visually monitors the site for signs of AMD.
 - *Julie Favell asked about the size of the area where AMD was found.*
 - Ben responded that the area of AMD wasn't large, and the issue appears to be associated mainly with the old washery reject associated with the former underground mine.
2. Disabled Fishing access at Thompson Creek Reservoir (TCR) *(see slides 7&8)*
- Jonathon and Ben updated the CCC as follows:
 - EnergyAustralia has negotiated a new access deed with DPI. It is undergoing legal review before it is finalised and comes into effect.
 - EnergyAustralia has discussed access arrangements for limited mobility anglers with DPI. DPI have suggested that the current arrangement (access facilitated through the security guards) remains the most appropriate.
 - Anglers have the security phone number through which to arrange access.
 - New signage will also be placed around the reservoir
 - The reservoir is not safe for general access as the roads are narrow, access is limited, and contractors are often working in and around the dam.
 - *Rob Cluff and Brian Fitzgerald noted that there seem to be more members of the public who are not anglers visiting the dam.*
 - Ben and Jonathon responded that:
 - the reservoir is not accessible to the public and the deed is for DPI to enable access solely for anglers subject to the terms and conditions of the deed.
 - there had recently been some safety breaches at TCR.
 - *Jim Whitty and Julie Favell asked if there was a requirement to provide disabled access.*
 - Ben noted that the arrangement is not for general public access. EnergyAustralia makes the land available to DPI's invitees and on the DPI's terms and conditions.
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- The chair added that as per discussion at previous meetings the dam is on private land and therefore not subject to the access requirements that public facilities are bound by.
 - *Brian noted that members of the Acclimatisation Society were keen to support fellow anglers with limited mobility to continue with the sport and often they just needed a bit of help getting closer to the dam.*
3. Wombat Mange Management Program (see slide 11)
- Ben noted that EnergyAustralia is looking to engage a qualified land management group that has the required certificates and experience in implementing native wild-life management programs on its lands.
 - *Julie Favell asked about the timeframe for bringing such a group on board.*
 - Ben responded that the project is still being scoped out internally and is likely to be implemented within the next 3-6 months and he would keep the CCC updated on progress.
 - *Jim Whitty and Rob Cluff commented on the increase in kangaroo numbers across the area.*

Action 1: The CCC be updated regularly on the progress of this matter.

4. *Provide Information on number of apprenticeships given to local young people. (see slide 11)*
- Jonathon explained that most apprentices live in the Lithgow LGA. For Health & Safety reasons around work travel and fatigue, applicants must reside within 50 minutes' drive of Mt Piper Power Station.
 - He noted that in:
 - 2025 - 6 of the 7 apprentices hired were from within the Lithgow LGA
 - 2024 – all 4 of the apprentices hired were from within the Lithgow LGA
 - 2023 – 6 of the 7 apprentices hired were from within the Lithgow LGA
 - For the last recruitment, there was a very strong field of around 100 applicants for roles including electricians, boiler makers and mechanical fitters.
 - An apprenticeship lasts for 4 years with the final year working as an independent worker under supervision.
 - The requirements for supervision means that EnergyAustralia cannot take on larger numbers of apprenticeships
 - Mt Piper has a strong record of apprentices staying on and going up through the ranks within the station workforce.
 - *Rob White asked if any station workers are employed under a 457 visa.*
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- Jonathon responded that for everyday station operations EnergyAustralia employees must have full working rights within Australia. However, for very specific tasks such turbine repairs during outages, specialist workers may come in from overseas.
- *Julie Favell asked if there were any specialist training programs for people to develop skills in renewables.*
- Jonathon noted that the skills learnt in electrical trades were in demand and quite transferable to renewables. Even with boiler making these skills can be used in fire safety systems put in place for large batteries etc.
- David Wilson added that EnergyAustralia had undertaken a large piece of work at Yallourn with local universities and TAFE to look at common training pathways to transition from work in coal fired power stations to the renewables space. (Note document attached)
- *Julie Favell asked if this type of program could be implemented at Lithgow.*
- David responded that EnergyAustralia was starting discussions with TAFE, Charles Sturt University and Western Sydney University about a similar program which may support EnergyAustralia projects.

5. *The overall volumes of ash that can be stored in the repositories.*

- Ben explained that the forecast estimates for total ash storage volumes within the currently approved footprint were:
 - 24Mt Mt Piper Ash Repository
 - 8Mt Lamberts North Ash Repository
- *Julie Favell queried the timeframe for this forecast capacity to be reached.*
- Ben noted that the projected capacity was dependent upon several variables including:
 - the amount of power generated which directly correlates with the amount of coal used and ash produced.
 - the amount of ash that can be reused for other purposes such as concrete and diverted from the repository.
- Modelling supports capacity going out to station closure in 2040, but under some scenarios it may be reached sooner than that.
- *Julie Favell noted her support for as much being done as possible to reuse ash and that even the ash being laid down in the repositories now, could be used as a resource in the future.*

6. Mod 5 and Mod 8 for Angus Place West

- Ben noted that EnergyAustralia supports Mod 5 and Mod 8 which would allow for the transfer of water to and from Angus Place:
 - *Julie Favell asked how this would work, given the earlier discussion about the need to use TCR for managing excess*
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water and concerns about increased salinity within the overall water system.

- *Julie Favell also asked for an outline of Centennial Coal and EnergyAustralia's respective roles and responsibilities for water management between Angus Place and Mt Piper. (see slide 14)*
- *There were general questions from CCC members seeking clarification about what water went where.*
- Ben confirmed the discharge point for excess water released during emergencies is lower down in Thompsons Creek and that any discharges from TCR are for dam safety purposes.
- If needed there is capacity to pump water from Lake Lyell into TCR but this was quite energy intensive.
- *Jim Whitty asked about the balance of water from the treatment plant going into the station.*
- Jonathon responded that this varies. The treatment plant output is constant. Water is used in cooling and conditioning the ash going into the repository. If there is excess water, it is sent to TCR. Typically, the water going into TCR is treated, except for outages as per Modification 11 which seeks approval to transfer water from the treatment plant and filtered water from Springvale during outages at MPPS.

3 Mt Piper and Pine Dale Update

Site safety (See slide 19)

- Jonathon English noted:
 - There have been two restrictive work injuries since the last meeting
 - These are shown as spikes in the graph on slide 19 which shows maps the injury frequency rate as total number of injuries per million hours worked.
 - The spikes show monthly rate of 31.50 against the target of 2.85.

Operation in the market

Slides have been redacted due to confidentiality. Only high-level discussion points are reported below.

- Jonathon English noted:
 - Demand is fluctuating
 - The consistent pattern is that solar is supplying a lot of power through the day meaning that there is lower demand for coal fired generation in daytime hours.
 - To address this at Mt Piper, the team has experimented with getting the turbines down from 730 MW and 700MW respectively to 150 MW at lunchtime when solar is at its peak.
 - The operations team can now do this very reliably at Mt Piper. As a newer coal fired plant, the units can more readily flex between
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high and lower output. Not all generators can run their plants low and then step up the units to meet the evening peak demand.

CCC discussion

- *There were some general questions about pricing and how the station knows when to lower or raise production.*
- Jonathon explained that EnergyAustralia and other generators are in communication with AEMO about the level of demand. Generators bid to dispatch power into the grid at five-minute intervals.
- There are regulated pricing structures depending on level of demand so when there is abundant power in the system prices are low or at times when there is a shortage of power in the grid prices can be very high.
- Jonathon also noted that:
 - Centennial is expected to have completed the longwall move by the end of this month. EnergyAustralia built up a good stockpile in anticipation of the move.
 - EnergyAustralia will use the stockpile while the first few cuts along the new longwall are assessed to understand the quality and nature of the coal from this new part of the mine and determine if any adjustment to treatment is required.
 - The outage will be starting soon. During these works a team will replace the fill medium that the cooling water trickles through as it goes down the cooling tower. Some of the fill medium has arrived and is being stored on site.
 - The outage will see a peak of an additional 500 people on site.

Planning updates (see slides 28,29 & 30)

- Jonathon noted the following
 - The Modification Report for MPPS - Modification 9 (MPAR Capping & Zone 2) has been updated in response to comments from the Department of Planning
 - The report was submitted to the Department of Planning for assessment and determination
 - MPPS – Modification 10 (Coal Settling Pond Augmentation). The biodiversity surveys have been completed and now the Modification Report is being prepared
 - *Julie Favell asked what is the brown material on the outer edges of the MPAR?*
 - Ben responded that the white is ash, and the brown is clean mine spoil that is used as a cap to cover the edges of the repository
 - Jonathon spoke to the Water Treatment Plant, noting:
 - It is a partnership between Centennial, Veolia and EnergyAustralia.
 - The commissioning process has been quite protracted but is now finalised.
 - The terms of the operating agreement can now be fully set.
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- In addition, the Public Exhibition SWTP - Modification 11 (Transfer of water to TCR during MPPS Outages) finished on 7 Feb 2025
- The Response to Submissions (RTS) report is being prepared and is likely to be submitted to the department by the end of Feb 25
- There were 111 objecting and 26 supportive submissions
- The RTS will be looked at by the department and the IPC.
- *Julie Favell noted the LEG's opposition to Mod 11 that proposes to send excess water into TCR during outages.*
- *She tabled LEG's submission to the department and asked it to be distributed for the information of members.*

Action 2: Chair to distribute LEG submission to CCC members

- *She criticised the lack of forward planning on this matter that has now led to this being the only option and that alternatives such as placing a portable treatment plant at Springvale Mine weren't considered.*
 - *Julie Favell asked what would happen if excess water could not be sent to TCR.*
 - Ben responded that if water couldn't be sent into TCR for some reason after around 50 days of an outage it would result in the flooding of Springvale mine which is the primary source of coal for the station.
 - *Julie Favell asked what other sources of coal are being looked at?*
 - Jonathon responded that a lot of work has been done to look at coal from elsewhere, but the preference is to source coal locally where possible.
 - *Julie noted disappointment that this wasn't looked at years ago to allow a range of solutions to be developed rather than increasing the salinity load on TCR.*
 - Ben responded that EnergyAustralia believes Mod 11 is a workable and low risk response to a unique circumstance when both units are offline.
 - *Julie Favell concluded that this wasn't a good outcome for the environment and would increase the overall conductivity in water across the storage system. She felt EnergyAustralia, Centennial and the government should come together with a better solution that would benefit local waterways.*
 - *There were some general questions from other CCC members seeking clarity on the RTS and next stages of the assessment process.*
 - EnergyAustralia noted the following:
 - Many the objections were form responses, and where these raised general issues, they are dealt with on a thematic basis in the RTS. All matters still need to be responded to.
 - More detailed matters that are raised in agency submissions need to be specially addressed in the RTS
 - The RTS is prepared in accordance with Department guidelines.
 - The Department can accept or challenge the RTS.
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- *Rob White expressed concerns that if the bulk of objections are dealt with thematically, then the nuance of the issues may not be fully addressed, and important local perspectives could be glossed over*
- Ben noted that usually matters are responded to in some detail, and that the Department and the IPC look at the adequacy of responses. They also have access to the full submissions.
- The chair said he would provide a link outlining this stage of the process.

[Respond to submissions | Planning Portal - Department of Planning and Environment](#)

Pine Dale Mine and Enhance Place Update (*see slide 32*)

- Ben noted:
 - Around 10 days ago there was an event in Wangcol Creek where the water along the length of the Pine Dale Mining Lease area was cloudy and discoloured.
 - EnergyAustralia advised the EPA about the event. Water samples were taken and are being analysed.
 - No activities at PDM contributed to event.
 - The event appears to have originated outside of EnergyAustralia's land where the creek runs close to the highway.
- *Jim Whitty commented that recently there was an accident on this section of the highway.*
- *Julie Favell asked about the extent of the event.*
- Ben responded that the discoloration was observed along the full length of the creek within the lease area and down to the Coxs River.
- *Julie Favell expressed concerns about the health of the creek and the long-term impacts of materials used to clean up after accidents.*

Community (*see slide 35 and 36*)

- David noted:
 - The first round of community grants will be underway from 01 March 2025.
 - The Sackville Park BBQ area has been completed as part of a community grant. EnergyAustralia is considering holding a community BBQ to mark completion of the project.
 - Events support included the Australia Day Event at Portland Pool, Rydal Show, Lithgow Show, Portland Art Show and the Black Rose Business Awards
 - EnergyAustralia uses its presence at some of these events (such as the shows) to talk about power station operations as well as projects such as Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro and the battery.

4 **Project updates – BESS** (*see slides 35-40*)

The Mt Piper Battery Energy Storage Scheme (BESS) has received formal approval.

Question on Notice - Jim Whitty asked about fire safety with batteries and what plans will be put in place.

- As a requirement of the project consent conditions, prior to construction EnergyAustralia will prepare and submit a Fire Safety Study for approval by the Planning Secretary and send this to Fire and Rescue NSW.
 - The study must align with fire safety guidelines, describe the final battery storage design, include worst-case fire scenarios and management plans, and outline measures to prevent fire spread, such as fire safety systems, water supply, battery unit separation, and incident control strategies.
 - EnergyAustralia must implement these measures after approval by the Planning Secretary.
 - Michael de Vink added:
 - that with battery fires the process was to isolate the burning module and prevent any spread through reducing heat build-up in a controlled zone around the fire.
 - The modules are spaced to prevent fire spreading and fire suppression systems are also in place.
 - The detailed Fire Safety Plan will be developed in consultation with relevant agencies.
 - Michael noted that there have been several recent news reports of fires starting from batteries in small appliances and that one way to minimise the risk of fires in domestic batteries is to ensure that once they are recharged, they are disconnected from the charger, and do not leave an appliance on an indoor charger while sleeping.
 - *Rob White observed that with the Victorian big battery fire the affected battery was left to burn out. He also noted that:*
 - *EnergyAustralia should focus on delivering more battery storage rather than pumped hydro.*
 - *With a footprint of 10 hectares the battery project has much less impact and environmental risk for power stored than Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro.*
 - *Rob White then asked about the timeframe for the project.*
 - David Wilson responded:
 - that with the approval in place EnergyAustralia will make an investment decision later in 2026.
 - EnergyAustralia has also placed a bid with a Commonwealth investment scheme for the battery.
[Capacity Investment Scheme - DCCEEW](#)
 - In the interim EnergyAustralia will progress procurement.
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- Across April, May and June, EnergyAustralia will support a STEAM education program in local schools with a display model of grid scale batteries.

6 Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Study

Refer slides 41-47

There was a question on notice from Rob White about the changes to the SEARs now that the project is had been designated as Critical State Significant Infrastructure.

- Michael de Vink outlined the key changes for the EIS to provide additional information related to:
 - the strategic justification of the project.
 - the capability of the project to add to the security and reliability of the electricity system and the National Electricity Market.
 - justification against other firming technologies such as batteries.
 - changes in updated guidelines, policies, legislation, and regulations since the original SEARs were issued for an SSD approval pathway in 2023.
- Michael cited the Southern Miotis Bat as an example of this change. It wasn't listed when the SEARs were issued but following its listing in 2024 EnergyAustralia now must include it and do the relevant survey work. The survey occurred recently, ecologists said they did not observe the bat but will also check if any call back was found on the recording devices.
- *Rob White asked about the methodology for assessing the presence of the bat and the determining the location of the recording devices.*
- Michael responded that the ecological consultant identified potential roosting sites in the escarpment as per recommendations and the recording devices were placed in locations along the likely flight path between the roosting areas and Lake Lyell where the bats may feed above the water.
- *Rob White asked if Mt Walker was looked at as roosting area.*
- Michael responded that the ecologists follow the relevant guidelines for ecological assessment and had not heard if Mt Walker was identified as a potential roosting area.
- *Rob White noted he felt the answer provided by Michael was inadequate and that it was odd to be searching for a bat in a location where no construction was planned.*
- *A series of questions were submitted by Rob White prior to the meeting, they were:*
 - *Indigenous Artifacts – at the last meeting, it was noted that artifacts had been removed. Seeking further clarification on:*
 - *The specific location of the artifact research area.*
 - *Whether the artifacts were randomly selected or sourced from designated test beds.*
 - *If test beds were used, how many were there, and what physical area did they cover?*

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- *Waste & Excess Rock Storage – There is limited information on the proposed storage area for waste and excess rock. While the valley below the reservoir has been mentioned as a potential fill site, further details are needed, including*
 - o *Estimated volume of rock and fill to be disposed of*
 - o *The specific area that will be impacted*
 - o *Environmental Considerations associated with this aspect of the project.*
 - *Farmers Creek Infill – More details are needed on the planned infill of Farmers Creek*
 - o *near the inlet and outlet areas. Understanding the scale of the infill and its potential*
 - o *environmental impacts would be valuable*
 - Michael responded that he would not respond to these specific questions at this time as all these matters are still the subject of ongoing investigative work to support the project's Environmental Impact Statement, to be placed on public exhibition later this year.
 - *Rob noted that EnergyAustralia's failure to respond to questions submitted well before the meeting was a cop out.*

 - Michael de Vink added that
 - A lot of optimisation work was being done to reduce the impacts across all aspects of the project including different options to minimise generation of waste rock or to re-use spoil and rocks.
 - The detail of this is still being worked on and not able to be discussed until it is finalised.
 - Once finalised these matters will be fully outlined in the EIS documents.
 - A key focus of EnergyAustralia's current work is to improve the project and look at minimising waste and impacts.

 - *Rob White noted that under the concept plan there was a huge amount of waste generated which would need to be transported, and areas such as Farmers Creek will be subject to 1.5 kilometres of being filled in.*
 - Michael responded:
 - that the length of the Farmers Creek that Rob had noted to be filled in was an overestimate.
 - That a lot of work is being done to minimize waste and requirements for infill. Several options were still being looked at with no final decision as yet.
 - The team is also looking at where waste can be used to create pads for infrastructure such as the switchyard
 - *Rob again noted his dissatisfaction at the response provided by EnergyAustralia. He asked Michael to provide a more accurate estimate which was not given. He suggested that if the project is changing then EnergyAustralia should be providing all available*
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information to the community so they could make an informed assessment of the project.

- *Julie Favell commented that this is what the public exhibition of the EIS was for. She also noted that DPHI provide details of a planning officer within the department that people can contact.*

Chairs note – contact details are on the portal: [Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Energy Storage | Planning Portal - Department of Planning and Environment](#)

- *Rob White asked about the timeframe for finalising the EIS.*
 - Michael explained that the process has fallen behind with some of the additional studies and the work that is going into looking at options under the optimisation process.
 - He stated the EIS may be ready to be submitted to the Department for an adequacy review in July at the earliest, but August or September may be more likely.

 - *Cr Smith noted that Council has voted to oppose the project on the basis that there is not enough information being provided by EnergyAustralia to the community. It is important that the community understands exactly what is being proposed.*
 - Michael de Vink responded that the concept design of the project hasn't changed. The changes due to optimisation are what should happen during the preparation of an EIS, where the team is asked to look at the best way to deliver the project and reduce impacts as much as possible.
 - The chair added that it is typical for projects to change throughout an EIS. The Scoping Report requires a concept to be put forward to enable SEARs to be issued. The concept outlined in the Scoping Report acts like a "reference scheme" against which ideas and options are tested. The whole EIS process is about identifying impacts. The planners and experts then look at different ways to reduce these impacts or address these issues. Once the EIS is lodged and on exhibition this is when there is a firm proposal that people can respond to.
 - *Cr Smith added that the storage of waste is a critical problem.*
 - *Rob White supported this. He asked that more detail be provided on the quantity and type of waste that will be generated across the 160-hectare affected area, and quantities of what will be reused or dumped on site, and what will be exported from the site are identified.*
 - Michael responded that the optimization process is looking at different ways to reduce volumes and re-use as much material as possible. He noted that EnergyAustralia is incentivised to re-use:
 - material excavated on Mt Walker to build the dam.
 - material from underground works to create flat pads for project infrastructure such as the switchyard at the Farmers Creek diversion.
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- *Jim Whitty observed that when Lake Lyell was being built a lot of waste was created but now none of it is visible.*

Question from Rob White re the workers' camp – Michael de Vink previously highlighted the importance of the workers' camp within the EIS. While this was briefly discussed in earlier meetings, there have been no further updates on its planning or proposed locations. Please provide an update on this aspect of the proposal.

- Michael spoke to the following points:
 - The lake side location is the preferred location for the workers accommodation camp and will be included in the EIS when it is submitted.
 - EnergyAustralia is open to considering an alternative accommodation site nearer to the main street of Lithgow following community feedback on this topic.
 - EnergyAustralia is open to discussions with Lithgow City Council about its suggestions for alternative sites, including near the Lithgow TAFE on Hill Street.
 - *Cr Smith asked where the idea for accommodation nearer the main street came from.*
 - Michael responded that it was feedback received from community consultation as some people felt that accommodation in town would benefit shops and business in the CBD. It is something EnergyAustralia could consider and is open to discussing with Council.
 - He added that a range of locations have been looked at, with some sites too small or too far from the work site.
 - *Julie Favell asked if Pipers Flat was still being considered as a possible location.*
 - Michael noted this was still an option but was the third preference.
 - *Rob Cluff noted that it would be good if the villages could benefit from the proximity of a camp. He also added that even without the pumped hydro project there is a shortage of accommodation across the region.*
 - *A question was asked about the future of the camp post construction.*
 - Michael responded that EnergyAustralia was open to the accommodation being repurposed for community benefit. Eventual use would depend on where it was located. If it was at the lake some of the infrastructure could be used for tourism. If it was in town, it may be more suited for housing.
 - *Rob White noted that Lake Lyell was the worst location for the camp as the lake is the area's prime tourist attraction. He also:*
 - *noted there would be logistical problems with accommodation at the lake as there are no shops in the area and workers would need to travel into town to access services.*
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- *questioned the process as one that put up a series of undesirable options to lead to EnergyAustralia's desired conclusion which is an accommodation camp at Lake Lyell.*
 - *Jim noted that he felt the accommodation would need to be close to the construction site and that it would be good to have information on how workers would be transported from the camp to work sites.*
 - *Julie Favell questioned whether long-term, having facilities close to the lake could provide a benefit for tourism.*
 - *Rob Cluff added that if the accommodation was built right, it could be a benefit for both the community and visitors.*
 - *Jamie Giokaris agreed with Rob Cluff about the shortage of accommodation and added that there was no land available in town that would be of sufficient size to accommodate such a large number of people.*
 - *Michael noted that if the accommodation was not in town, then necessary services would have to be provided in the camp.*
 - *Rob White reiterated his view that a camp at Lake Lyell particularly in the proposed location does not value the importance of tourism to the area. He suggested that a less obvious and more discrete location needs to be found.*
 - *The final question submitted by Rob White was "as the project approaches the end point, it would be beneficial to receive some information regarding the total estimated cost of the proposal.*
 - *Michael responded that it is a multibillion-dollar project, but detailed cost estimates are commercial in confidence and won't be shared.*
 - *Rob White then asked how the increase in output to 385 MW over 8 hours would be achieved as given the relationship between head and volume this would require an increase in volume of the reservoir.*
 - *Michael replied:*
 - *that as part of the project optimisation, generation of 385 MW was found to be possible.*
 - *the concept remains the same, with the upper reservoir volume being increased to around 5.3 GL without any change to the proposed height of the dam wall. The draw down range in Lake Lyell over the 8 hours would also change from around 2.1 meters to 2.5 meters depending on starting water level.*
 - *the main changes to enable this increase in generation output occur in the underground works and station and they will not be visible above ground.*
 - *Rob White requested more detail on how this increased would be achieved and would this mean bigger pipes?*
 - *Michael replied the main changes are underground and when finalised will be in the EIS.*
 - *Rob White suggested that project factsheets and information on the website be updated to reflect this significant change in*
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generation capacity and that the community shouldn't need to wait until the EIS is released to learn about this change.

- *Cr Smith commented that if the underground pipes were bigger this would create even more excavated material and mean even more waste material stowage on site.*

The discussion then moved onto the community benefits scheme.

- David Wilson tabled the consultation report. He outlined that the report:
 - described the process for engaging communities and stakeholders,
 - collated the feedback into a series of key themes that would be used to further refine and target investment in community benefits.
- David invited members to review the report, and he welcomed members' feedback.
- He noted at this point it is estimated that over the life of the project there will be around \$20 million available for community benefits

Action 3: The chair to email the report to members for their review.

- *Rob White reiterated the Concerned Lithgow Community Group's support for battery technology over pumped hydro at Lake Lyell. He noted that a comparable sized battery (in contrast to the pumped hydro proposal) wouldn't impact as large an area and would have a very low impact on the environment, amenity, tourism and Indigenous heritage. He added that the Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro will close at least two businesses that he knows of.*
 - *Rob concluded by stating that battery technology was improving rapidly and that a 15-hectare battery could provide the equivalent output of what Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro could supply with nowhere near the level of negative impact.*
 - *Jonathon English replied that batteries were important as part of mix of power storage solutions. All the storages have different durations, operating requirements and differing impacts; therefore, a mix including pumped hydro is better.*
 - *Cr Smith noted that within the next 20 years the Lithgow local government area will lose the power station and the mines. \$20 million will not address the impacts of these closures on the economy and community. He added that Lithgow needs long term industry investment in new business and shops that can provide jobs. He also expressed concerns that it would be overseas companies constructing and operating the project rather than local companies.*
 - *Jim Whitty noted that the station is going to close anyway, and a \$20 Million contribution is better than nothing.*
 - *Cr Smith noted that he supported pumped hydro projects like Snowy 2.0.*
-

| Item | Discussion Point |
|------|------------------|
|------|------------------|

- *Rob White agreed that hydro in the right location like Snowy could provide large amounts of power across a long duration. Lake Lyell could not do this and is in the wrong location.*
-

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| 8 | Meeting close |
|---|----------------------|

- The meeting ran around 30 minutes over time and closed at 7.30 pm.
 - There was discussion about the timing of the next meeting. Tentative dates for the next meeting would be either 6 or 13 May 2025.
 - The chair noted that it would be important for the CCC to receive a briefing on the finalised EIS before it is exhibited. This meeting may be out of the cycle.
 - The chair thanked members for their participation.
-

EnergyAustralia Lithgow Region

Community Consultative Committee

18 February 2025

Jono English - Head of Mt Piper



EnergyAustralia
LIGHT THE WAY

Agenda

1. Welcome – Acknowledgement of Country – Declarations of Interest
2. Presentation by NSW Police Rescue & Bomb Disposal Unit (late entry)
3. Minutes and Actions
4. Mt Piper and Pine Dale Update
5. Project Updates
 - Mt Piper Battery
5. Project in Focus
 - Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro
6. General Discussion
7. CCC Operations
 - Meeting schedule for 2025
8. Meeting Close

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 done by Wurundjeri Traditional Owner, Mandy Nicholson



Presentation –

**NSW Police Rescue & Bomb
Disposal Unit**

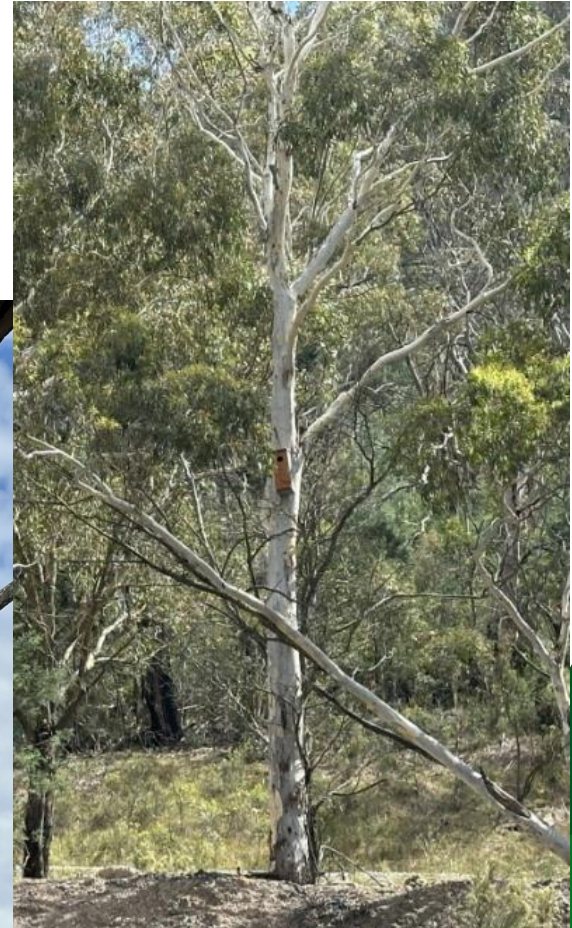
Declarations of Interest

Minutes and Actions

Actions from Previous Meeting

Julie Favell requested a photo of the rehabilitated area (Pine Dale Mine) be provided at the next meeting.

Area 8



PDM Rehabilitation – Visual bund



PDM Rehabilitation – Eastern Mining Lease area



Actions from Previous Meeting

Disabled Fishing Access at Thompsons Creek Dam (TCD) – EnergyAustralia to review Alex Preema’s correspondence regarding access for a member of the Acclimatisation Society and respond.

- EnergyAustralia is in the process of providing a formal response to Alex’s letter.
- Renewed Angler's Access Deed with Department of Primary Industries (DPI) currently under final legal review.
- Under the Deed, EA offer the land to the DPI and Anglers enter as the DPI's invitees and on the DPI's terms and conditions.
- We have discussed access arrangements for limited mobility anglers with the DPI and they have suggested that the current arrangements (access facilitated through the security guards) is the most appropriate.
- Updated signage will be installed once Deed is finalised.

Actions from Previous Meeting

Wombat Mange Management Program – Julie Favell requested the CCC be updated regularly on the progress of this matter

EA is looking to engage a suitably qualified land management group that has the required certificates and experience in implementing native wild-life management programs on its lands. We will update the CCC on the progress of these programs.

Provide Information on number of apprentices given to local young people.

The majority of our apprentices reside in the Lithgow LGA. When we advertise for a position it states within the advertisement “***for Health & Safety reasons around travelling and fatigue management, applicants must reside within 50 minutes drive of Mt Piper Power Station.***”

- 2025 - 6 of the 7 apprentices hired were from within the Lithgow LGA
- 2024 – all 4 of the apprentices hired were from within the Lithgow LGA
- 2023 – 6 of the 7 apprentices hired were from within the Lithgow LGA

Questions on Notice

- **LNAR Stage 2 Update:** Julie Favell asked about the overall volumes of ash that can be stored in the repository.

Forecast estimates for total ash storage volumes within the currently approved footprint are:

- ~ 24Mt Mt Piper Ash Repository
- ~ 8Mt Lamberts North Ash Repository

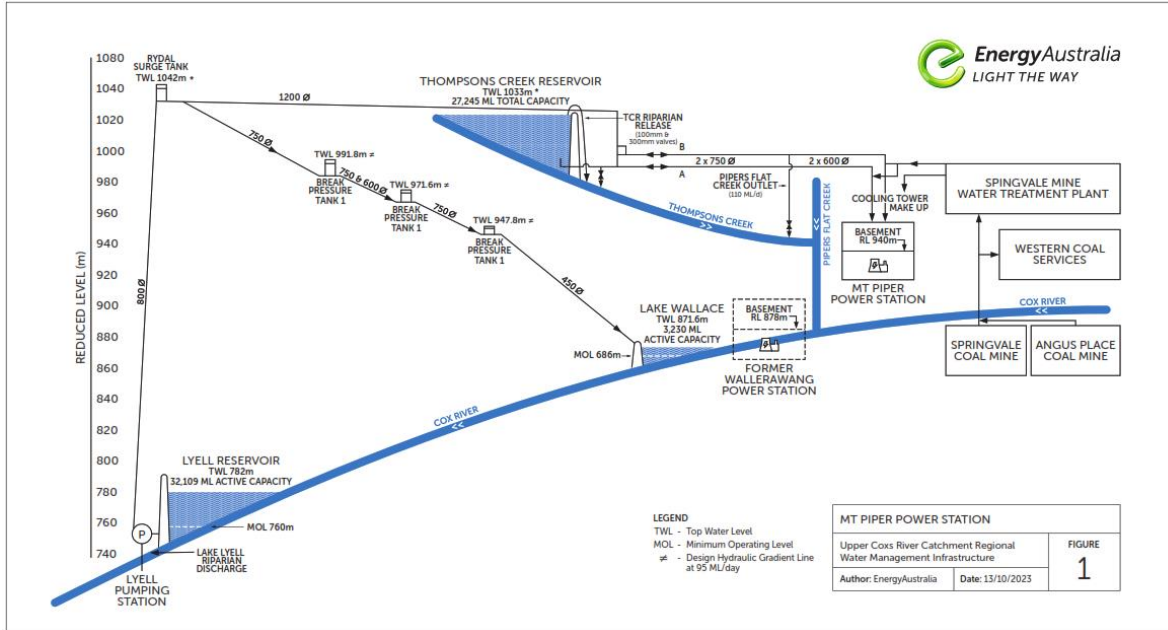


Questions on Notice

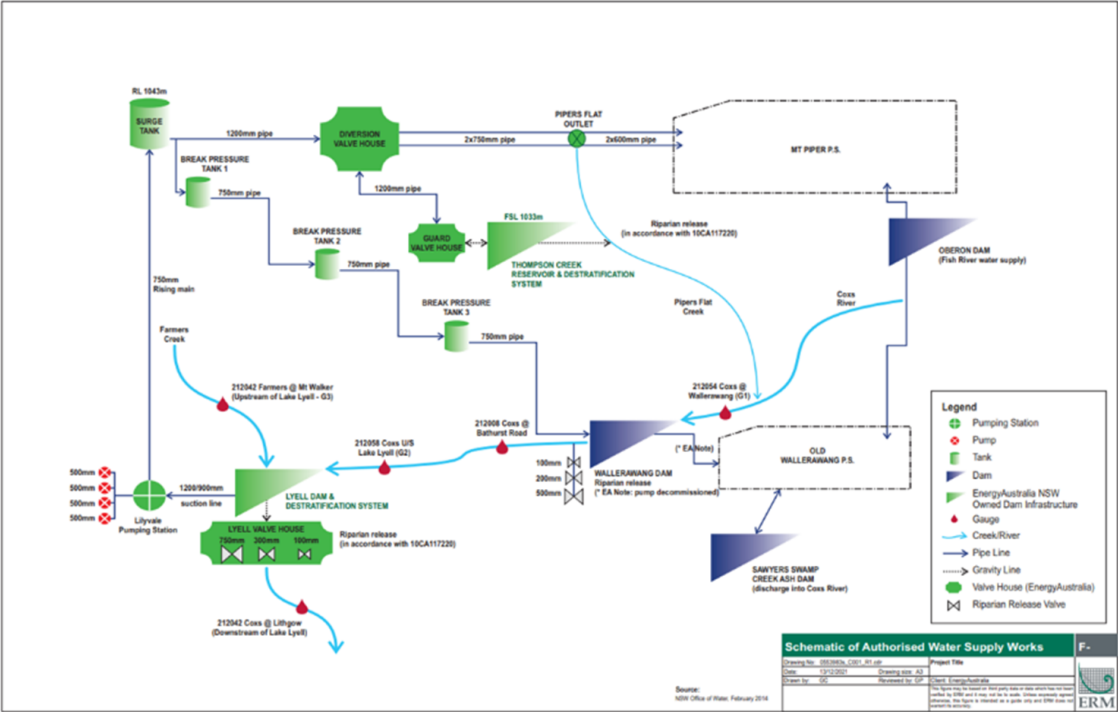
In relation to EnergyAustralia supporting Mod 5 and Mod 8 for Angus Place West and David Wilson's response that we did support these modifications which would allow for the transfer of water to and from Angus Place:

- *Julie Favell asked how this would work given the earlier discussion about the need to use TCR for managing excess water and concerns about increased salinity within the overall water system.(see slide 13)*
- *Julie also asked for an outline of Centennial Coal and EnergyAustralia's respective roles and responsibilities for water management between Angus Place and Mt Piper.(see slide 14)*

Upper Cox River Regional Water Management System



EnergyAustralia Water Management Assets



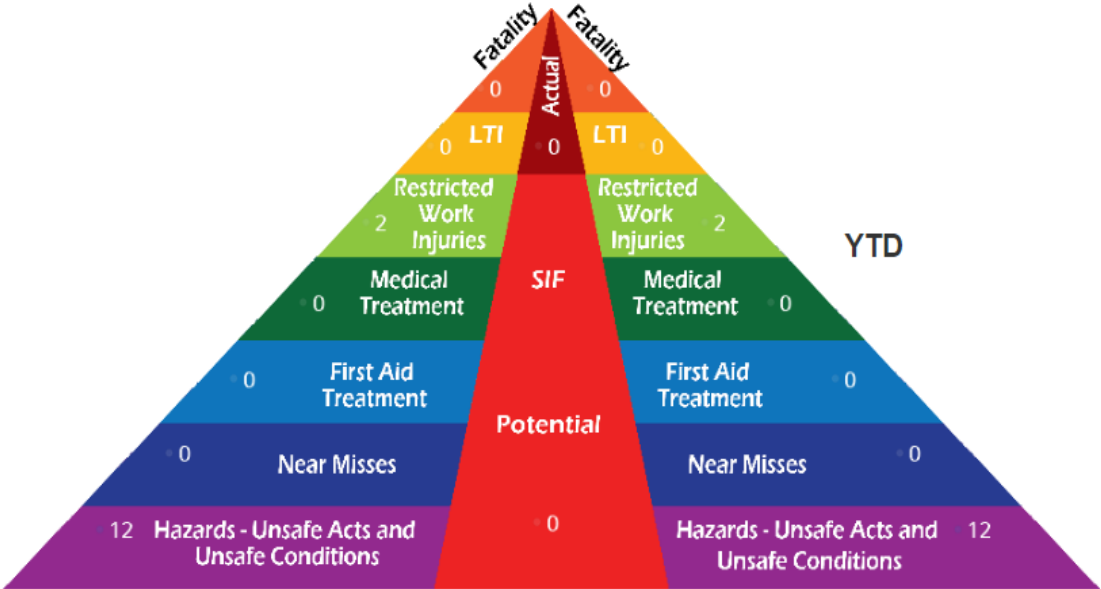
Mt Piper Update

Site Safety

Site Safety – January 2025

Safety Triangle

Jan 25



YTD

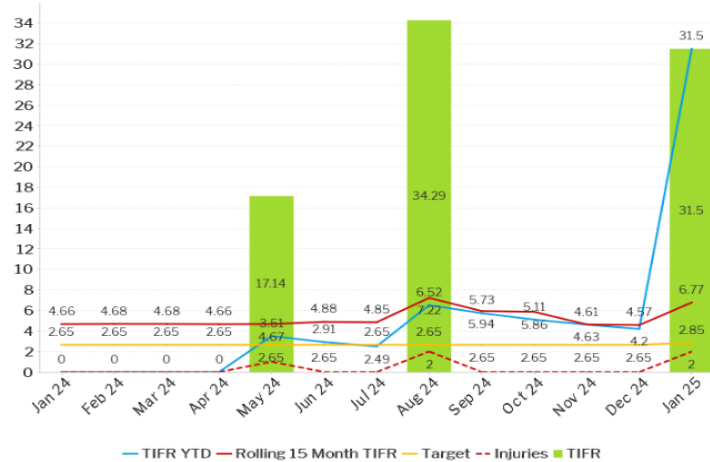
YTD is calculated to the end of the previous month

Site Safety January 2025

YTD – TIFR (As of January 2025)

Actual = 31.50

Target = 2.85



January seen us have 2 restricted work injuries, both relating to hands.

| Month | TIFR | TIFR YTD | Rolling 15 Month TIFR | Target | Injuries |
|--------|-------|----------|-----------------------|--------|----------|
| Jan 24 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 4.66 | 2.65 | 0 |
| Feb 24 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 4.68 | 2.65 | 0 |
| Mar 24 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 4.68 | 2.65 | 0 |
| Apr 24 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 4.66 | 2.65 | 0 |
| May 24 | 17.14 | 3.51 | 4.67 | 2.65 | 1 |
| Jun 24 | 0.00 | 2.91 | 4.88 | 2.65 | 0 |
| Jul 24 | 0.00 | 2.49 | 4.85 | 2.65 | 0 |
| Aug 24 | 34.29 | 6.52 | 7.22 | 2.65 | 2 |
| Sep 24 | 0.00 | 5.73 | 5.73 | 2.65 | 0 |
| Oct 24 | 0.00 | 5.11 | 5.86 | 2.65 | 0 |
| Nov 24 | 0.00 | 4.61 | 4.63 | 2.65 | 0 |
| Dec 24 | 0.00 | 4.20 | 4.57 | 2.65 | 0 |
| Jan 25 | 31.50 | 31.50 | 6.77 | 2.85 | 2 |

Market Update

Operation in the Market

Redacted

Operation in the Market

Redacted

Operations (Site) Update

Operations update – February

Redacted

Operations update – February

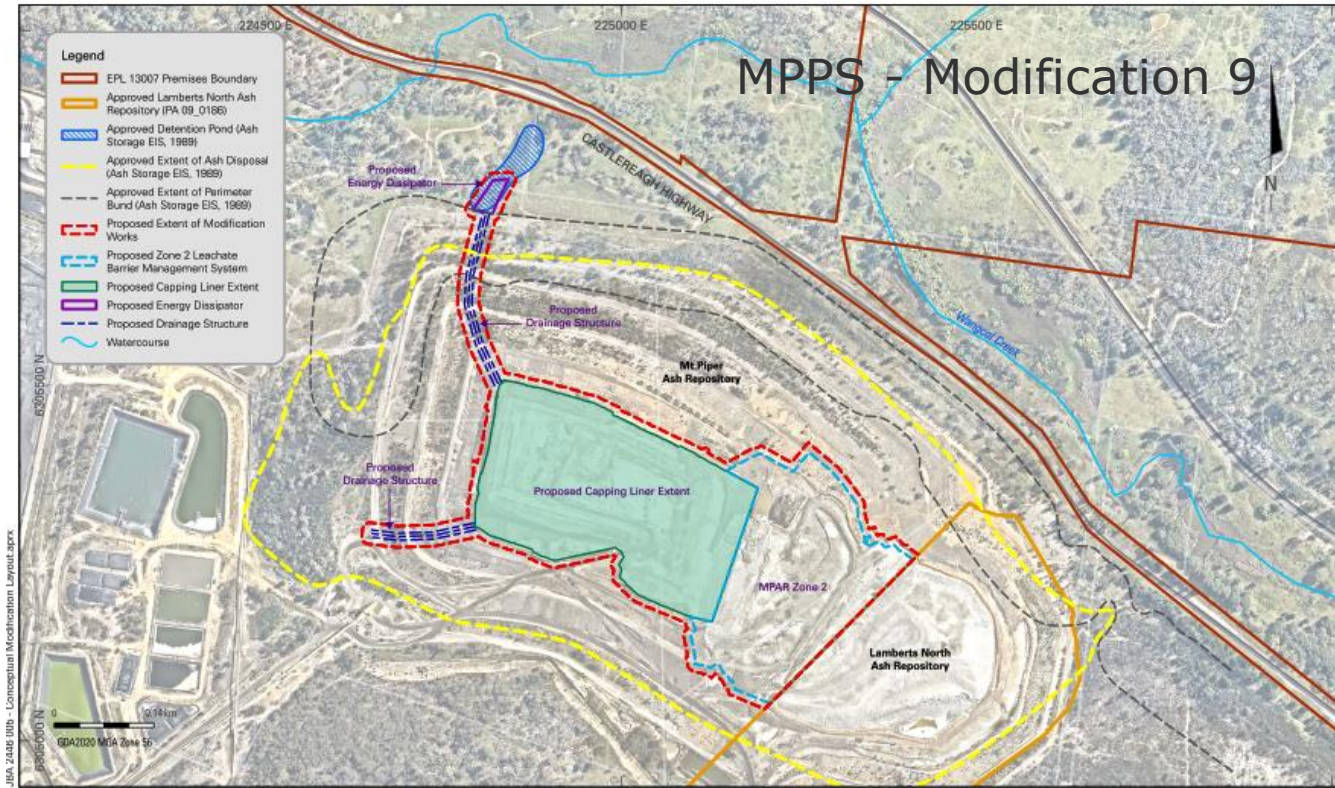
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Planning Approvals

Environment Planning Approvals

| | Approval Process - Stage | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|-------------------|----------------------------|--|
| | Project Description/Introduction (SEARs or Mod briefing, application briefing) | Complete Environmental Studies & Prepare report (SEE, EIS or Mod report) | Lodge Application with Determining Authority (DPHI or LCC) | Public Exhibition | EA Response to Submissions | Determining Authority Assessment & Project Determination |
| EA Project | Community Consultation | | | | | |
| Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Site Investigation Geotech (Council DA) | | | | | | Approved |
| Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Site Investigation Geotech Mod 1 (Council DA) | | | | | | Approved |
| Mt Piper Battery Energy Storage System (SSD) | | | | | | Approved |
| Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro (CSSI) | | | | | | |
| Lamberts North Ash Repository Mod 2 (SSD) (extension of operating hours) | | | | | | Approved |
| Mt Piper Mod 9 (SSD) (Ash repository capping) | | | | | | |
| Mt Piper Mod 10 (SSD) (Coal settling pond augmentation) | | | | | | |
| Springvale Water Treatment Plant Mod 11 (SSD) (Transfer of water from SVWTP to TCR) | | | | | | |

Environment Planning Approvals



MOUNT PIPER POWER STATION MOD 9

Conceptual Modification Layout

Environmental Planning Approvals



MPPS - Modification 9 (MPAR Capping & Zone 2)

- Modification Report has been updated in response to comments from Planning
- Modification Report has been submitted to Planning for assessment and determination

MPPS – Modification 10 (Coal Settling Pond Augmentation)

- Biodiversity surveys have been completed
- Modification Report is being prepared

SWTP - Modification 11 (Transfer of water to TCR during MPPS Outages)

- Public Exhibition finished on 7 Feb 2025
- Response to Submissions being prepared, intention to submit RTS to Dpt. Planning before end of Feb 25
- Summary of Public submissions 111 objections, 26 supportive

Pine Dale Mine and Enhance Place

Pine Dale Mine

- No non-compliances at the Pine Dale Mine reported
- Annual Return has been submitted to the EPA
- Community enquiry was received regarding discoloration of water in Wangcol Ck, EA notified the EPA, source of discoloured water was confirmed to be upstream of the PDM Lease area. EPA investigation is on-going. No activities at PDM contributed to the event



Plate 1: Example of discoloured water in Wangcol Creek in the Pine Dale Mine licenced premises area.

Community Update

Community Grants

- BBQ Facilities in Saville Park – completed as part of an EnergyAustralia Community Grant.
- Defibrillator installed - Uniting Church Lithgow funded by EnergyAustralia Community Grant
- First round of Community Grants commences March 2025



Community

Supported Events / Upcoming Events

- Australia Day Event at Portland Pool
- Rydal Show
- Lithgow Show
- Portland Art Show
- Black Rose Business Awards



Project – Mt Piper Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

Questions on Notice

Jim Whitty asked about fire safety with batteries and what plans will be put in place.

- As a requirement of our consent conditions, prior to construction we will prepare and submit a Fire Safety Study for approval by the Planning Secretary and send this to Fire and Rescue NSW.
- The study must align with fire safety guidelines, describe the final battery storage design, include worst-case fire scenarios and management plans, and outline measures to prevent fire spread, such as fire safety systems, water supply, battery unit separation, and incident control strategies. EA must implement these measures after approval by the Planning Secretary.

Questions on Notice

EnergyAustralia to compile a summary table of key differences in the new SEARs for Brendan to distribute to the CCC.

- *As advised, the revised SEARs for the project's CSSI spoke to additional information to be included in the project's EIS, such as:*
 - *strategic justification of the project*
 - *a detailed consideration of the capability of the project to the security and reliability of the electricity system in the National Electricity Market*
- *All other changes related to updated guidelines, policies, legislation, and regulations since the SEARs for the project were first issued using an SSD approval pathway in 2023.*

Mt Piper BESS – Overview



- The Mt Piper BESS is a 500MW/4-hour grid-scale battery to be constructed on EnergyAustralia land adjoining the Mt Piper Power Station.
- Made a bid into the Capacity Investment Scheme tender in December. Awaiting Commonwealth Gov review and assessment which is expected to conclude in March 2025.
- Currently procuring a battery supplier

Community Engagement

Launching in April, we are supporting local schools with their STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics) curriculum using the Mt Piper BESS as the subject area.



Project – Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro

Questions on Notice

- ***EnergyAustralia to compile a summary table of key differences in the new SEARs for Brendan to distribute to the CCC.***
- *As advised, the revised SEARs for the project's CSSI spoke to additional information to be included in the project's EIS, such as:*
 - *strategic justification of the project*
 - *a detailed consideration of the capability of the project to the security and reliability of the electricity system in the National Electricity Market*
- *All other changes related to updated guidelines, policies, legislation, and regulations since the SEARs for the project were first issued using an SSD approval pathway in 2023.*

Questions Received (1)

Indigenous Artifacts – *at the last meeting, it was noted that artifacts had been removed. Rob White would appreciate further clarification on:*

- *The specific location of the artifact research area.*
- *Whether the artifacts were randomly selected or sourced from designated test beds.*
- *If test beds were used, how many were there, and what physical area did they cover?*

Waste & Excess Rock Storage – *There is limited information on the proposed storage area for waste and excess rock. While the valley below the reservoir has been mentioned as a potential fill site, further details are needed, including (from Rob White):*

- *Estimated volume of rock and fill to be disposed of*
- *The specific area that will be impacted*
- *Environmental Considerations associated with this aspect of the project.*

Farmers Creek Infill – *More details are needed on the planned infill of Farmers Creek near the inlet and outlet areas. Understanding the scale of the infill and its potential environmental impacts would be valuable (from Rob White).*

Questions Received (1)

All these matters are still the subject of ongoing investigative work to support the project's Environmental Impact Statement, to be placed on public exhibition later this year.

Questions Received

Workers' Camp – *Michael de Vink previously highlighted the importance of the workers' camp within the EIS. While this was briefly discussed in earlier meetings, there have been no further updates on its planning or proposed locations. Rob White would appreciate an update on this aspect of the proposal.*

- The lake side location remains the intended workers accommodation camp location and will be included in the EIS when it is submitted.
- EnergyAustralia has previously advised that it is open to considering an alternative accommodation site nearer to the main street of Lithgow following community feedback on this topic.
- EnergyAustralia is open to discussions with Lithgow City Council about its suggestions for alternative sites, including its suggestion of a site adjoining the Lithgow TAFE on Hill Street.

Questions Received

Project Cost – *As the project approaches the end point, it would be beneficial to receive some information regarding the total estimated cost of the proposal (from Rob White).*

- The Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro project is a multi-billion dollar project. Project estimates remain commercial-in-confidence and will not be disclosed.

Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Energy Storage

Highlights

- 💰 \$\$ multi-billion project
- 👉 \$\$ multi-million-dollar Community Benefit Sharing
- 👤 500+ construction jobs
- ↔️ 80+ year lifespan
- 🕒 385 mega-watts for 8 hours



General Discussion

CCC Operations

- Meeting Schedule for 2025

Thank you