

EnergyAustralia Lithgow Region Community Consultative Committee (CCC)

Meeting Minutes – 30 September 2025

Member attendees:

- Jim (Cricket) Whitty
- Rob White
- Auntie Helen Riley
- Cr Ray Smith – Lithgow City Council
- Jonathon English – EnergyAustralia
- Cath Russell – EnergyAustralia

Also present:

- Dave Simpfendorfer – EnergyAustralia
- Harley McNamara – EnergyAustralia
- Leanne Walding - EnergyAustralia
- Sandra Politi – Lithgow City Council

Apologies:

- Julie Favell – Lithgow Environment Group

Presenters:

- Michael de Vink – EnergyAustralia
- Chris Gwynne – EDF Power Solutions Australia (EDFA)
- Chris Holloway – EMM Consulting

Chair:

- Brendan Blakeley

Item	Discussion Point
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| 1 | <p>Welcome and introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The meeting began at 6:02 pm.• The chair welcomed all members.• The chair gave an Acknowledgment of Country.• The chair asked for declarations of interest:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The chair declared he chaired a similar group for EnergyAustralia at Tallawarra Power Station.- The chair declared payment received from EnergyAustralia for his role as independent chair of this CCC.- No other interests were declared.• The chair noted the purpose of this meeting was to provide an orientation to the Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro proposal prior to EnergyAustralia undertaking a final round of community consultation. The EIS will then be finalised, and the Critical State Significant Infrastructure application will be lodged, later in 2025. |
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| 2 | <p>Project background and need (see slides 4 to 9)</p> <p>Michael de Vink outlined the rationale behind pumped hydro as a storage and as a firming source of energy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Storage is needed to capture excess energy created by solar and or wind power during the day. |
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- While batteries are an important and growing form of storage they need to be supported by other forms of storage.
 - Pumped hydro is a large-scale, mature technology that enables storage and ready dispatch of power when needed. It also brings inertia into the system. Energy stored in pumped hydro can be used at times when there is a need for more power in the system. It can also help to avoid blackouts or brown outs during shoulder periods or when there are extended and widespread wind droughts.
 - Michael outlined the key components of the project as it stands (see slide 7). He also provided a timeline of the evolution of the Lake Lyell concept (see slide 8):
 - 2021 - project commenced with a community meeting.
 - 2022 - project qualified for the NSW Government Recoverable Grants Program.
 - 2023 - the initial proposal for a 335 MW station and an upper reservoir on the eastern edge of Mt Walker was announced.
 - Later in 2023 - the proposal was modified with the upper reservoir relocated to a less prominent site on the southwest flank of Mt Walker. This also enabled for greater use of site earned rock in constructing the reservoir and associated infrastructure.
 - Throughout 2024 and into 2025 - the concept was value engineered to deliver a new generation capacity of 385 MW within the same project footprint.
 - Mid-2025 - EDFA entered the project as partner.
 - July 2025 - the Scoping Report was revised to reflect the new generation capacity and project status as CSSI. The new SEARs also reflected updated regulatory requirements that have changed over the course of the planning process.
 - Across Q.4 2025 - EnergyAustralia and EDFA are now looking to finalise the EIS over the next few months and lodge the EIS for CSSI application with DPHI later this year. This includes a focused period of community consultation from 15 October to 30 November.
 - It is anticipated that in Q.1 2026 - DPHI will assess the application and supporting EIS for completeness and place the application on public exhibition early in 2026. Once lodged the assessment and determination process is independent of EnergyAustralia and EDFA.

Cath Russell noted the following points about community engagement (see slides 10 to 18):

- Over the forthcoming pre-lodgement consultation period EnergyAustralia and EDFA will present insights from key studies along with measures/mitigations that have been incorporated into the proposal to respond to issues raised.
 - The next round of engagement is an opportunity for people to:
 - learn more about a complex project
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- understand likely impacts (positive and negative) and potential mitigations.
 - Community engagement has been conducted in a range of different forms throughout the course of the project and feedback has been used to:
 - inform changes to the design
 - identify and plan mitigations
 - adjust construction and operating approaches.
 - EnergyAustralia and EDF has valued the feedback that has been received.
 - EnergyAustralia and EDF acknowledges there is opposition to the project and some in the community are seeking more detail on the project now, as there is limited time during the exhibition period (which is at minimum 28 days). The timing for exhibition is determined by DPHI, not EnergyAustralia or EDF.
 - In addition to the feedback directly related to the proposal, EnergyAustralia and EDF has heard about what community benefits people wish to see deriving from the project.
 - At a more targeted level EnergyAustralia and EDF has also engaged with neighbouring residents and business who may be directly impacted by the project to develop neighbour agreements.

Discussion

Rob White asked Chris Gwynne about the company's hydro projects within Australia and if any were at the scale of Lake Lyell.

Chris Gwynne replied:

- EDF currently have no operating projects in Australia, but a number of projects are in development.
- Two projects are being developed in NSW. Lake Lyell and another in the New England area. There is another project under development in Queensland that is being delivered in partnership with the QLD Government.

Chris added:

- That at a system level batteries can't do what pumped hydro does.
- The system needs as many batteries as possible, and batteries are very good at an immediate frequency response; hydro not only stores energy but also provides stabilising inertia within the system. This is why a diversity of storage types is important.
- The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) 2024 Integrated System Plan sets out different roles for various types of generation and storage ([final-2024-integrated-system-plan.pdf](#))

Rob White asked about the nature of the other projects particularly the extent of head and horizontal displacement.

Chris replied:

- The other planned projects are of similar scale. They have a fractionally higher head than Lake Lyell, but this was offset at Lake Lyell by less horizontal displacement.
- Overall, Lake Lyell balances out to be very efficient. Effectively it is as efficient as the Snowy Hydro which has extensive head but also lengthy horizontal displacement.

Rob White raised the feedback about the 1,000-page length of the EIS.

Chris Holloway responded that the EIS was a very large document that comprised:

- a summary of the EIS that will be around 20 pages
- a main EIS report that will be around 300 pages
- approximately 20 supporting reports of varying lengths.

Cath Russell added that the intent of the forthcoming pre-lodgement consultation was to increase community understanding of the project before the EIS is lodged. The consultation aims to inform people about key elements of the forthcoming EIS and how some of the issues raised by the community and impacts identified in the studies are being addressed.

Councillor Smith asked if Lake Lyell will be a seasonal storage.

Chris Gwynne replied that it won't be. The station is proposed to operate as needed throughout the year. The earlier reference to seasonal storage relates to the role of conventional generation and stored power to balance out differing seasonal demand profiles.

Councillor Smith asked what would happen to the community benefits program after 20 years.

Cath Russell noted:

- The timeline for community benefits package has been restructured in line with community feedback.
- This resulted in bringing forward expenditure so that the allocated \$20 million is available over the first 20 years of the project.
- \$5 million of this amount will be spent during the construction stage.
- After 20 years the community benefits program will end, and it is likely that a program similar to the Mt Piper community grants will be put in place.
- The guidelines for shared benefits program outline that it should be run independently of the project.

Rob White noted that the last point differed from a statement Michael de Vink had previously made where he stated that the program would be administered by a member of the project and a member of the community.

Michael de Vink noted he had no recollection of the statement referenced by Rob White.

3

Cultural Heritage (See slides 21 and 22)

Key points in presentation:

- 21 registered parties have been engaged
- Issues identified to date include:
 - Cultural health and wellbeing
 - Caring for Country
 - Improving cultural understanding
 - Respect for sacred sites and cultural landscapes
 - Handling artifacts with respect
 - Set up long term protection agreements.

Proposed mitigations/responses include:

- Engagement of Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs).
- Developing a Cultural Heritage Management Plan.
- Expanding investigations to include a Cultural Values Study, particularly the values associated with the platypus as an iconic species.
- Heritage Interpretation Strategy to ensure information is captured and available for future generations.
- A Platypus Management Plan.
- Specific Shared Benefits initiatives for Aboriginal people.

Chris Holloway noted that many of the above go beyond what guidelines require.

Discussion

Rob White asked for details about the Traditional Owners engaged.

Chris Holloway noted the relevant process was followed to consult with RAPs. He also stated that there are multiple points of involvement with RAPs over the course of the study. In this instance there were 21 parties involved. The Bathurst Land Council was consulted and deferred to Mingaan. Barangang also had input. Details of RAPs cannot be disclosed as they haven't yet signed off on the document. All required information will be in the ACHA report.

Auntie Helen noted that not all RAPs are necessarily Traditional Owners or knowledge holders. They should have connections and knowledge of the area. But she acknowledged that this is a government process that must be followed.

Jim Whitty noted it was important to respect privacy.

Rob expressed reservations about being able to comment on this process, when exactly who has been engaged can't be disclosed.

The chair suggested that if Rob was aware of any Aboriginal people/organisations who would like to be included he could provide their

contacts to EnergyAustralia and EDFA or encourage them to get in touch directly with EnergyAustralia and EDFA. The chair also noted that engagement on community benefits for the BESS project was separate to the engagement process about cultural heritage at Lake Lyell.

4

Environment (See slides 23 -27)

Key issues raised in previous consultation were:

- Health of the lake and waterways.
- Protecting native plants and animals.
- Looking after aquatic species including fish and platypus.
- Meaningful environmental offsets.
- Managing erosion and sediment.
- Long term monitoring and care for the environment across construction and operation.

Chris Holloway noted the following additional points:

- Only one non-stocked native species, a type of Gudgeon, was identified in the lake.
- Platypus is the key species, and a specialist was engaged to conduct a study and develop a species-specific management plan.
- There was a high level of biodiversity, but no Ecologically Endangered Communities were identified.
- A number of threatened species were identified or assumed to be present. The ecologist took a conservative approach to assume presence of some species even when there wasn't much direct evidence of these species during the field studies. Key species include:
 - Southern Myotis bat
 - Glossy black cockatoo
 - Purple Copper Butterfly
 - Gang Gang
 - Platypus
 - Powerful and sooty owls.
- Around 10 hectares of the lake and 130 hectares of bushland will be impacted.
- Offsets will be required, and the team is currently looking for suitable stewardship sites that meet offset obligations.
- Long term, EnergyAustralia and EDFA may look at the possibility of community and First Nations management of stewardship sites.
- EnergyAustralia owned land around Lake Lyell is close to Marangaroo National Park. The team is exploring the opportunity for some residual EnergyAustralia land as buffer and connection to the national park.

Discussion

Councillor Smith asked about the process for offsets?

Chris Holloway replied:

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- The program is administered by the NSW Government under the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme.
 - There are established methodologies and requirements for identifying the need for offsets, finding stewardship sites, buying credits and long-term management of stewardship sites. [The Biodiversity Offsets Scheme | Environment and Heritage](#)
 - The obligation generated by impacting 100 hectares and associated threatened species is considerable.
 - The team is looking at opportunities to go beyond required obligations and is looking at nature positive initiatives such as bat roosting places in the dam wall and better understanding the dam and the reservoirs as sources of food for bats.

Rob White asked if koalas were found.

Chris Holloway replied that while not directly sighted, one scat was found, and the team is assuming they are present.

Addendum: EMM has noted that in checking the survey data, three scats were found in a similar location.

Rob White also noted the purple copper butterfly is hard to find but would definitely be around Lake Lyell.

Chris Holloway agreed with Rob and noted that again they are being assumed as present even though they were not found in the discrete survey period within the project area but were found around 300m away.

Rob White and Councillor Smith expressed reservations about the offset framework.

Chris Holloway noted that they are required to work within the existing framework. He noted the existing approach is a matter for debate amongst experts within the field and was reviewed in 2023. A set of reforms responding to the review have been developed and are being implemented. [Biodiversity Offsets Scheme reforms | Animals and Plants | Environment and Heritage](#)

5

Jobs and Economic Activity (See slides 28 -34)

Feedback from consultation focused on:

- Need for local jobs.
- Support for youth training and apprenticeships.
- Encouraging new technology and innovation including renewables.
- Boost to the local economy during construction.
- Create lasting jobs beyond construction.
- Building local knowledge and skills.

Discussion

Jim Whitty asked about the preferred location for workers accommodation.

Michael de Vink responded that:

- There is a preference for accommodation to be located by the lake as EnergyAustralia owns the land and locating the workforce close to the construction site resolves several transport issues.
- Two options are being put forward and there are positives and negatives to both options.
- The town-based village is being explored in response to feedback that basing workers in town could bring more economic activity into Lithgow itself.

Councillor Smith commented that:

- *the design of the workers village didn't add to the town.*
- *it was made of dongers that would be taken away when the workers left.*
- *workers would use meal rooms on site (if provided) rather than the town.*

Michael responded that:

- some core infrastructure and possibly some cabin style residential dwellings could remain.
- having the workers village in town would give workers the option of eating in the village or using restaurants in town.
- the economic benefit the camps provide will be outlined in the EIS.

Councillor Smith responded that the Lithgow needs long term jobs and new industries, not a short-term construction project. He commented that when operating, the station would not deliver a great deal of additional employment to the area. Creating employment opportunities is a priority for Lithgow with Mt Piper and the mines closing over the next 15 years.

Rob White questioned the creation of local employment given Lithgow has close to full employment now.

Michael responded that:

- there are less jobs when the station is operating than provided through construction. However, in addition to core station staff, there will be a need for trades and services to support the new station and associated infrastructure.
 - if the construction workforce isn't available in Lithgow, they would look for people to come to Lithgow for the lengthy construction program.
 - the build program for the station and dam could create 40 places for apprenticeships across a range of trades. The target is to have a 30% local workforce but recognise that the employment market is currently quite competitive.
 - economic impacts are covered in one of the reports which discusses direct and indirect economic contribution of the project, local expenditure and expenditure within NSW.
 - the lengthy construction period with a large workforce provides a significant economic boost for Lithgow.
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Rob White stated it would be reasonable to assume that the town-based camp would have greater economic benefit.

Chris Holloway agreed that would be a fair assertion.

Jim Whitty suggested that when looking at apprenticeships these shouldn't be only focussed on school leavers. Many people in their 40's and beyond were looking to re-train and they should have opportunities to be involved and learn new skills.

6

Recreation on the lake (See slides 34 - 40)

Key issues raised during previous consultation include:

- Keep the lake accessible.
- Upgrade and provide additional facilities early on.
- Provide predictable water level information.
- Clearly communicate the lakes' energy role.
- Prioritise safety with good information and signage.

Michael also noted that:

- during the construction period the fuse gates would be opened to lower the lake level by 3 meters for about 4 years.
- this will help to manage flood safety and access while the inlet structures and diversion channels are being built.
- this temporary change returns the lake to its original operating level before the fuse gates are added to the dam wall.
- this level would also be within the normal working range when the station is operating.
- EnergyAustralia and EDFA are looking to conduct some improvements in such a way that recreational infrastructure (e.g. boat ramps etc) can remain in use during construction, and the lake can stay user friendly.
- one exception to this will be the area around Farmers Creek and the inlet zone. This will be a no-go zone for recreation during construction, and the inlet zone will remain closed when the station is operating.

Discussion

Rob White asked how access to this area of the lake would be managed during construction.

Michael replied there will be a series of barriers, such as signage and floating booms, as you get closer to the construction zone. The barriers will need to allow operational access and flooding debris to pass.

Rob White noted that lowering the dam by 3 metres would expose a lot of mud flat along the upper part of Farmers Creek.

Michael agreed there would be a tidal area in Farmers Creek during construction and when the station is operating.

Chris Holloway added that the most likely operating scenario will not be a full draw down of 3 metres but a tidal range of around 1 meter, as the

station won't always operate on a full 8–10-hour cycle. These changes in level would occur twice a day – up to 1 meter during the morning and afternoon/early evening peak when the water is running from the reservoir through the station and returning to the lake.

Rob White expressed concerns about platypus in Farmers Creek during construction and operation. They burrow and feed along creek banks and if this is gone, they will be at risk. He added that platypus would be unlikely to cross mud flats.

Chris Holloway noted the diversion will create connectivity between the creek and the lake and the experts are looking at how the channel is shaped. The diversion will not be a habitat, but it will maintain connections between the creek and the lake.

Jim Whitty noted that, with time, platypus are able to move in response changing water levels.

Rob White noted that the times of peak change in water levels between 10.00 am - 4.00 pm coincided with times the lake was used for recreation.

Councillor Smith commented that fishers and canoeists frequently use Farmers Arm Creek, and that this location which has been used since 1989 would now be closed to the community.

7

Design and views (See slides 40 and 41)

Michael de Vink noted that:

- with the relocation of the upper reservoir the visual impacts are now limited to the southwest quadrant around Mt Walker.
- there is now very limited visibility of the reservoir from Lithgow or Bowenfels.
- the rock wall will initially be very visible but will age over the years when moss and lichen grow on it.

Rob White commented that this process would take some time.

Discussion

Councillor Smith asked what would be done with excess rock.

Michael responded that:

- the design principle was to secure a cut and fill balance across the project.
- much of the excavated rock will be used to build the reservoir, switchyard platform and other operating areas.
- in the first 12 months some rock may need to leave the site. The team is currently engaging with nearby sites/projects that may want to take clean fill for a while.
- after that storage pads will be built from the rock and it will be used build the dam, switchyard etc.

Councillor Smith asked if there would be any filling in the river and Farmers Arm Creek.

Chris Holloway noted that there would be some filling in the lake around the inlet area as well as the Farmers Creek arm of Lake Lyell to create the diversion. The natural section of the creek will not be filled. Creating the dam wall for the upper reservoir across a deep gully will take a very large amount of rock.

8

Roads and traffic (See slides 42-44)

Key matters for consideration regarding traffic include:

- Access to the site for construction and operation.
- Capacity of existing roads and any changes that may be needed.
- Management of large numbers of truck movements during construction.
- Support to keep roads in good condition during construction.
- Making roads safer.
- Safety for young and learner drivers.
- Minimising disruption to traffic flows during construction.

Michael de Vink added:

- Thomas Mitchel Drive will be the primary access for workers and deliveries during construction and into operation.
- Sir Thomas Mitchell Drive will need upgrading, as will sections of Magpie Hollow Rd.
- Traffic lights may be needed at the intersection of Great Western Highway and Magpie Hollow Rd.
- If the camp is located on Lake Lyell, the lower part of Magpie Hollow Rd will also come into play.
- The transport of 400-600 workers is a challenge and brings several roadside residences into the construction impacts zone.
- If the camp is in town, improvements to local streets and intersections will also be needed.

Discussion

Rob White noted that:

- *While the roads could do with some improvements, they are mostly OK for the level of use they are getting.*
- *EnergyAustralia is being dishonest in presenting this as something people in the area are asking for – this is “creating a problem to solve a problem”.*
- *The need to change the road is there to serve the project.*

Jim Whitty commented that the lake side workers accommodation proposal would result in less traffic movements than having workers access the construction site from the town-based village.

Chris Holloway replied that there are arguments for and against each of the proposed locations, and whatever option is chosen will result in some trade-offs.

Councillor Smith noted Council is not in control of roads and EnergyAustralia will need to liaise with TfNSW on this matter.

Michael responded that was correct. TfNSW will be reviewing the EIS and will determine if signalisation is required.

9

Additional matters

Rob White asked about the neighbour payments and the number of people who had entered into agreements.

Michael de Vink replied:

- that this information was confidential and would not be provided.
- Stage 1 agreements have been rolled out and can be taken up until commercial operation commences.
- Stage 2 agreements are going to stay open until commercial operation commences.

Councillor Smith noted that some people who want out, may not be able to wait for up to 7 years.

Michael replied that the Stage 2 agreements are where people can negotiate an outcome based on their specific circumstances and the likely impacts on their property. There may be a range of options to respond to personal circumstances that come out of these discussions. Depending on the circumstances and level of impacts, this could range from assistance, improvements, temporary accommodation or agreeing to acquire.

Councillor Smith asked when this next round of agreements would commence.

Michael responded that EnergyAustralia and EDFA were looking to start this in the next six weeks.

Rob White noted that he knew a lot of people who had not signed.

Michael replied that:

- different people were impacted in different ways and how they respond is up to them.
 - the process is about starting a dialogue that recognises for some there may be uncertainty, distress and discomfort about the proposal.
 - through discussion we can look at what can be done to mitigate impacts and where required compensate for impacts.
 - the department will be reviewing this process to see how Energy Australia & EDFA conducted this process and how we responded.
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- the offer to negotiate a Stage 2 agreement will remain open until commencement of operations for people to take up later if they choose.

Rob White asked for information on air quality and noise.

Chris replied that investigation is being conducted on dust and greenhouse gases for construction. Work to date indicates that dust will be the primary air quality issue, but this is mainly a local impact in areas nearby construction.

Rob White commented that with the predominant western winds this would create more than a local dust impact. He noted that during the test drilling there were complaints about noise and dust. Minimising dust assumes that people will do the right thing, and this doesn't always happen.

Rob White asked about working hours for construction.

Michael replied that:

- the likely times would be:
 - Underground 24 hours a day
 - Surface works 12 hours a day.
- blasting hours will be controlled.
- traffic and deliveries will predominantly occur through the day.
- essential activities will occur on weekends, but these works are likely to be less intensive.
- in determining construction works and periods for higher impact activities, the contractors will need to be sensitive to shoulder periods where people are going to sleep and waking up.

the technical reports will explore in detail the measures to limit construction impacts.

10 **Next steps**

- Consultation will commence in mid-October and will run through to 30 November.
- In addition to consultation via pop ups and Project HQ, EnergyAustralia will be convening sessions to dive deeper into certain topics.
- Targeting mid-December for EIS lodgement.
- It is expected that agencies will take up to 3 months to review the EIS. This means exhibition will likely occur around March 2026.

Rob White asked if EnergyAustralia has any influence over the exhibition duration.

Cath Russell replied that DPHI determines the public exhibition period and runs the public exhibition.

11 **Meeting close**

- The meeting closed at 8.10 pm.
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- The next standing CCC meeting will be held in early December 2025. The focus of this meeting will be EnergyAustralia's Mt Piper Power Station environmental reporting.
 - The chair thanked members for their participation.
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Lake Lyell PHES EIS Preview

Extraordinary
Lithgow Community Consultative
Committee Meeting

30 September 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

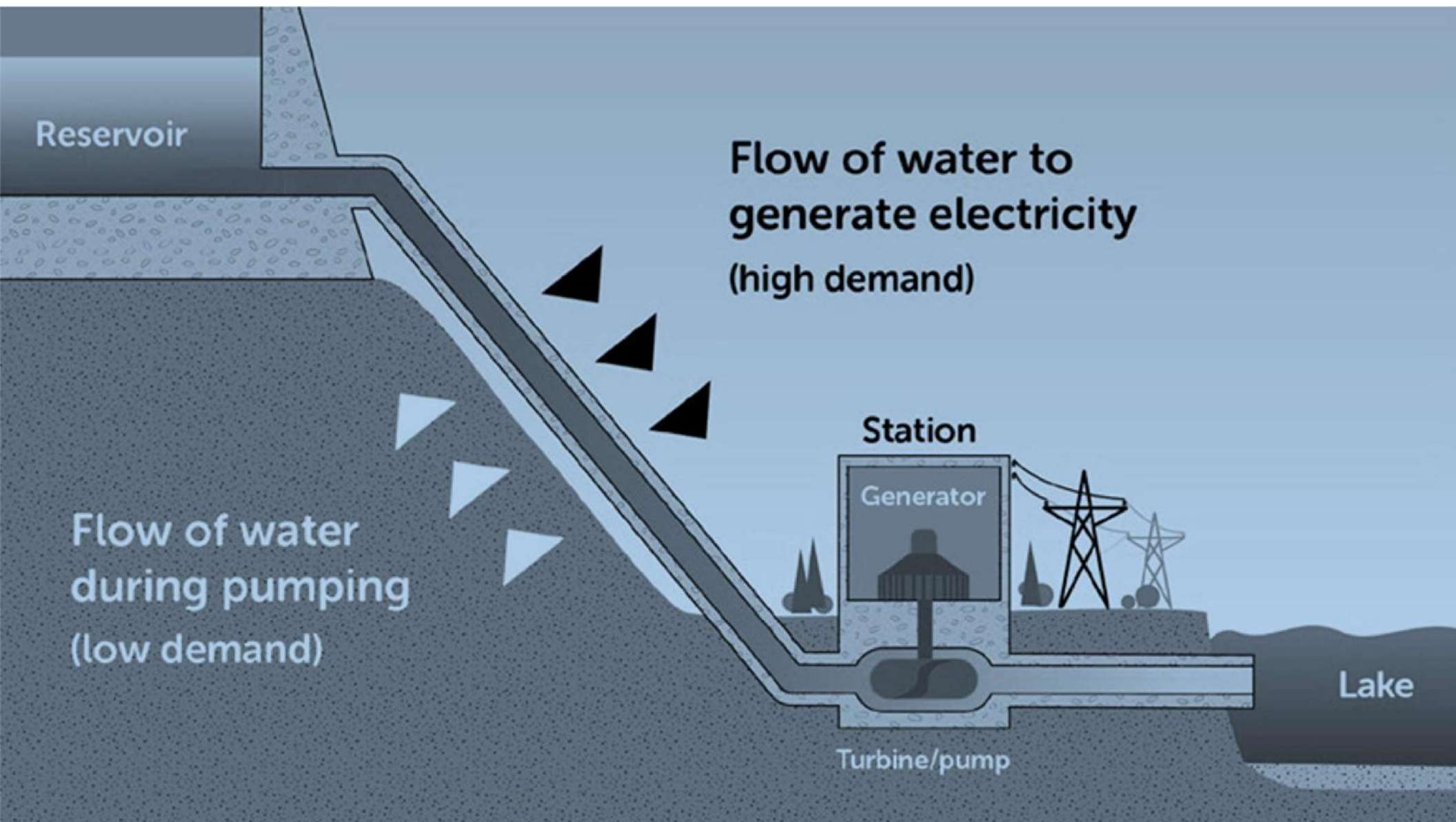
We would like to acknowledge the Wiradjuri people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, and recognise and respect their connection to culture, land and unity.

We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Declarations of interest

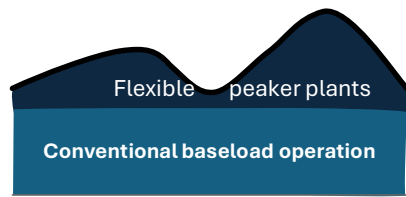
Project Overview





Why Pumped Hydro? As more renewables are integrated into the system, energy storage is becoming increasingly important

Past:
Baseload operation

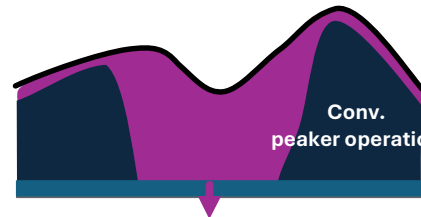


0:00 24:00

In the past, stations with **limited flexibility** operated as baseload plants, while flexible plants followed the changes in the demand curve



Present:
Peaker operation



0:00 24:00

As **renewables** produce more in daytime, even baseload conventional plants increasingly need to turn down their production during the day



Near future:
Emergence of storage

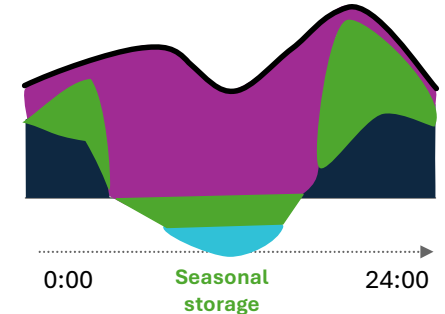


0:00 24:00

Storage is expected to take over some of peaker and short-term balancing positions from conventionals, which will see even shorter and volatile running pattern



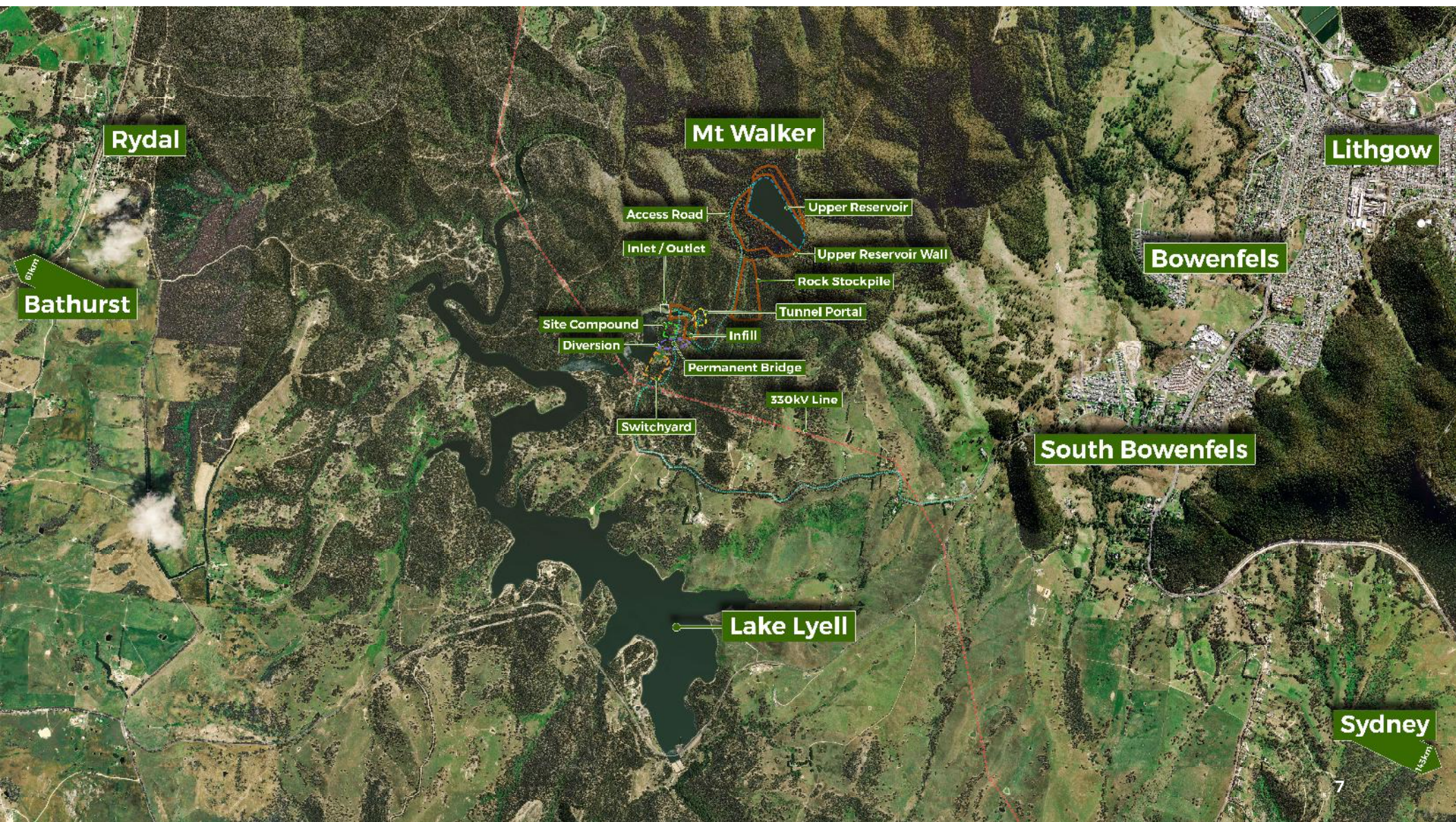
Long-term future:
Seasonal back-up



0:00 24:00

Conventionals will be utilized in **seasonal balancing**, renewable over generation may be stored through new technologies such as Power-to-Gas/H₂

— Electricity demand ■ Peaker production ■ Baseload production ■ Renewable production ■ Storage ■ Seasonal storage



Concept evolution

2021



Potential shared
with community

2022



Qualifies for NSW
Government
recoverable grant
program

2023



335MW
Initial concept released to community

Upper reservoir relocated following
community feedback

2024



335MW
Defined footprint for
technical and
environmental
studies

2025



385MW
Same footprint more
energy

Concept improved
through value
engineering

Planning process – 4 main steps

1 Scoping Report and SEARs

The Project team submitted a scoping report to Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) in 2023 and received the project's SEARs in July of that year. There have been two amendments to the project's SEARs since then:

3. The first was in June 2024 when the NSW Government declared the project CSSI.
4. The second was in July 2025 when the partnership between EDF power solutions Australia and EnergyAustralia was announced.

2 Prepare EIS – (WE ARE HERE)

Since receiving the project's SEARs in July 2023, scientists, engineers and independent experts have been developing the concept design and identifying the potential impacts of the project and mitigation measures for biodiversity, aquatic ecology, social impact, water, climate effects and more. Collectively, this information forms the EIS.

Community and stakeholder feedback over the last several years has also helped inform the development of the EIS and other relevant technical studies.

3 Public Exhibition

In the coming months, the EIS will be submitted to DPHI. The EIS will be publicly exhibited for at least 28 days, allowing the community and stakeholders to view it and make submissions.

4 Assessment and Determination

After public exhibition, and submissions are received, the project team will prepare a 'response to submissions' report, which outlines how the project has considered community and stakeholder feedback and made changes to the project where possible.

The NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces will then evaluate the merits of the project, paying attention to the economic, environmental, and social impacts, the issues raised during consultation and in submissions, and the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

After considering the project, the Minister will publish a notice setting out the decision and how community views were considered in making the decision.

Draft EIS Preview – 15 Oct to 30 Nov

- More time for community to understand complex project
- Validate/add to what has been heard
- Insights from key studies
- Understand impacts and proposed mitigations



Impact

Any change—positive or negative—from the proposed project.



Proposed mitigation

An action or measure suggested to avoid, reduce, or offset a potential negative impact of the project on the environment or community. Mitigations listed here include those identified in the draft EIS and other initiatives proposed for the Project.



Engagement to date

Year	Engagement Activities
2021	Initial Community town hall meeting
2022	Wave 1 – Pop-up engagements at local community events and locations
	Project website and newsletter launched
2023	Wave 2 – Pop-up engagements at local community events and locations
	Initial upper reservoir design for community feedback
	Upper reservoir design changed in response to community feedback
	Neighbour engagement beings
	Community participation in ecological studies
	ProjectHQ opens
	Virtual community and industry town hall meeting
	Concept design released
	Wave 3 – Pop-up engagements at local community events and locations
2024	Wave 4 – Pop-up engagements at local community events and locations
	Ongoing community and neighbour engagement
	Recognised Aboriginal Parties involved in Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment
	Artefacts temporarily entrusted to archaeologists for analysis
	Co-design workshops held to develop the Shared Benefit Program
	Release of the initial Neighbour Agreement Guide for feedback
2025	Wave 5 – Pop-up engagements at local community events and locations
	Ongoing community and neighbour engagement
	Recognised Aboriginal Parties welcome the return of artefacts to Wiradjuri Country
	Release of draft Shared Benefit Program Report for feedback
	Release of final Neighbour Agreement Guide
	Neighbour agreement process begins

How feedback informs the project

How feedback informs the Project	Feedback categories								
	Consultation and engagement	Community benefits	Cultural heritage	Jobs and economic activity	Environment	Roads and traffic	Recreational use	Project design and viewpoints	Workers accommodation Voluntary neighbour agreements
Apply to design			*	*		*	*	*	*
Inform reference design								*	
Considered in project scope refinement		*				*	*	*	
Considered in locating infrastructure			*			*	*	*	*
Identify and plan for mitigations during the planning and environmental assessment	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Enhanced understanding of the local environment, potential issues and opportunities		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Considered in preparing impact assessments			*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Considered in development mitigations		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Informs community and consultation approach	*	*	*						*
Informs performance requirements for construction and operations		*		*	*				
Adjust construction and operations	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Considered in construction methodology, timing and impact mitigation		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Informs communication and consultation approach	*		*		*	*	*		*

What we have heard



Consultation and engagement

We have carefully listened to feedback about the engagement process and adjusted to improve transparency and accessibility. By responding to concerns about timing and information clarity, we've worked to ensure all voices are heard and those most impacted receive the support they need throughout the project.

Acknowledging opposition

We respect anyone's right to oppose the project, which is especially understandable for neighbours who may be more directly affected than others in the community.

Providing more detail, when its ready

There's strong interest from the community in the detailed information about potential impacts and mitigation measures, and people have shown patience while the technical and environmental studies—where this detail is developed—have been underway.

Providing more time

There's concern that the minimum 28-day EIS exhibition period is too short given the complexity and amount of detail in the project.

Taking care of people most impacted

People want to understand what support will be provided to those most affected by the project.

Accessible face to face opportunities

We've heard that people lead busy lives and appreciate the chance to connect with us at community events or by dropping into the Project HQ to learn more and share their thoughts.

Value information sharing

The community values ongoing, transparent communication to build trust and ensure all voices are considered throughout the project.



Presentation name goes here

What we have heard



Community benefits

Throughout all engagement activities, you have clearly indicated a desire to see a wide range of community benefits and social legacy outcomes from the project and the revenue sharing arrangements. Five key themes emerged by early 2024 which were explored in co-design workshops that shaped the draft Shared Benefit Program released in early 2025. Additional feedback was received about the proposed initiatives and when the shared funding would be available.

We want better visitor infrastructure and wayfinding

People are keen to see new facilities in Lithgow and clearer signs that attract events, tourists, and enhance the visitor experience.

Protect the natural environment

There's strong support for grant programs that fund environmental projects and ongoing efforts to care for biodiversity and water quality.

Create more skills, training, and education opportunities

The community wants workforce readiness programs, scholarships, and investments in education and innovation.

Improve local services and infrastructure

Many have suggested repurposing the workers' accommodation village to provide more services and activities for young people, plus grants to support local events.

Partner with First Nations

People want to see stronger cultural understanding, care for the environment and opportunities for immersion, like a cultural centre within the local government area.

Increase shared revenue and bring it forward

There's a clear call for shared revenue to be available during construction and for it to start in the early years of operation.



What we have heard



Voluntary neighbour agreements

Neighbours are important to us. We want to ensure they are provided with fair and reasonable supports to manage the changes presented by the project to their properties and livelihoods. Between July 2023 and March 2025, we engaged with neighbours to develop the voluntary neighbour agreement program that includes meaningful financial offerings.

Resilience and readiness for change

Most neighbours expressed a need for support to adapt to changes from the proposed project and were open to the support payments outlined in Neighbour Benefits Guide for resilience and wellbeing.

Construction noise

Neighbours would like more information on noise impacts, with many sharing examples of noise in the area. They suggested various noise mitigation measures, including double glazing, noise-cancelling headphones, landscape screening, temporary walls, relocation, respite periods and adjusted construction timings.

Visual impacts

Neighbours discussed how the project would impact property viewpoints and suggested mitigation measures such as window reorientation, landscaping, and screening, tailored to each property.

Property value

Neighbours noted potential property value loss and suggested independent valuations before and after construction to assess impacts and inform compensation.

Business sustainability

Business-owning neighbours shared how the project would affect their operations and considered sustainability or continuity payments, including timing and evidence of impact.

Clear guidance

Neighbours suggested renaming the Neighbour Benefit Guide to the Neighbour Agreement Guide and adding more details on the property valuation process.

Key focus areas





Presentation name goes here

What we have heard



Cultural heritage

In accordance with the Heritage NSW Code of Practice, we have respectfully engaged with 21 Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs). The RAPs included locally based Wiradjuri Traditional Owners, the local Aboriginal Land Council, and several regionally based individuals and organisations with Wiradjuri heritage, a strong personal connection to country in the Lithgow area in cultural heritage management.

Since the beginning of technical and environmental studies in 2023, RAPs have played an active and valued role in investigating, assessing, and managing cultural heritage associated with the Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Project. Their knowledge, guidance and leadership continue to help shape how cultural values are recognised, respected and protected throughout the project.

Protect our cultural health and wellbeing

It's vital the project supports both the spiritual and physical connection First Nations people have to Country.

Care for Country properly

People want to see land, water, and biodiversity looked after in a way that respects Aboriginal custodianship.

Improve cultural understanding

There's a strong call for genuine engagement, education, and making sure Aboriginal perspectives are truly included in decisions.

Respect sacred sites and cultural landscapes

We've heard how important it is to identify, protect, and avoid disturbing places of cultural significance.

Handle artefacts with respect

The community wants cultural materials to be carefully managed, stored securely, or returned where appropriate.

Set up long-term protection agreements

People want binding agreements that help ensure cultural heritage is looked after well beyond the life of the project.

Draft EIS Preview Insights

Proposed mitigations

- Registered Aboriginal Party informed
- Design to minimise impacts including moving the upper reservoir
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan
- Heritage Interpretation Strategy
- Platypus Management Plan
- Specific Shared Benefits



What we have heard



Environment

Throughout engagement, we've consistently heard that protecting the local environment is a top priority for the community, stakeholders, and experts. People have emphasised the importance of carefully managing the project's environmental footprint, with a strong focus on avoiding or helping to minimise impacts, creating meaningful and lasting offsets, and maintaining the health of ecosystems connected to Lake Lyell and surrounding areas.

Keep the lake and waterways clean and healthy

People want to make sure water quality is protected so the lake and connected rivers stay safe for wildlife and people.

Protect our native plants and animals

There's a strong desire to help minimise habitat loss and help local species recover and thrive.

Look after platypus and fish

Many have stressed the importance of special measures to protect sensitive species like the platypus and local fish.

Make environmental offsets meaningful

We want offset programs that truly restore or improve the natural environment, not just tick a box.

Stop erosion and sediment problems

People are concerned about soil and waterway damage, especially during construction, and want strong controls in place.

Keep watching and caring long-term

The community expects ongoing monitoring and management to protect the environment well beyond when the project finishes.

Draft EIS Preview Insights

Identified impacts

- No threatened aquatic species detected
 - Sensitive fish habitats present
 - Local platypus population identified
- Potential impact
 - Habitat loss
 - Water quality impact
 - Disruption to wildlife
- Approx 100 hectares bushland to be cleared
 - Habitat for threatened species such as Gang-Gang Cockatoo and Powerful Owl
- Construction will result in loss of 10 hectares of fish habitat
- Changes to water levels and quality may impact:
 - Local flora and fauna
 - Fish and platypus populations
- Potential impacts on:
 - Hollow-bearing trees
 - Wildlife movement corridor

Notable species



Southern Myotis



Glossy Black Cockatoo



Purple Copper Butterfly



Gang-gang Cockatoo



Platypus



Powerful owl

Draft EIS Preview Insights

Proposed mitigations

- Project design avoids sensitive areas
- Setbacks for Marrangaroo National Park
- Preservation of wildlife corridors
- Flora and Fauna Management Plan
- Water Management Plan including a Riverkeeper Ranger to help manage lake safety and environmental protection
- Construction Environmental Management Plan
- Offset strategy to be developed with DPI Fisheries can include regular fish restocks
- Potential platypus relocation

Offsets include:

- Stewardship sites on project-owned land
- Biodiversity credit purchases from local landholders
- Offset strategy for fish habitat
- Use of NSW Biodiversity Conservation Fund as a last resort



What we have heard



Jobs and economic activity

Economic impact has been a consistent and important discussion point throughout engagement, particularly with local businesses and industry groups. From the early stages of planning, stakeholders have expressed strong interest in how the project can help support local jobs, create opportunities for small and medium enterprises, and contribute to long-term economic growth in the region.

We want local jobs first

People want to see local workers and businesses given priority throughout construction and operation.

Support youth training and apprenticeships

There's a real push to create pathways for young people to learn skills and find steady, long-term jobs without having to leave the local area.

Encourage new technology and innovation

Folks are excited about opportunities to bring in new renewable energy industries and support regional innovation.

Boost the local economy during construction

Many have highlighted how important it is for local services, suppliers, and accommodation providers to benefit while the project is being built.

Create jobs and growth that last

People want stable employment and ongoing investment that extends well beyond just the construction phase.

Help us build skills and knowledge locally

There's strong support for training programs and knowledge-sharing that improve local workforce capabilities over time.

What we have heard



Workers accommodation

We have actively listened to the community's feedback as we considered suitable and well-located workers accommodation to support the workforce needed for the Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Project. Initially, the lakeside site at Magpie Hollow Road was proposed in 2024 as our preferred location, with the former Pottery Estate later identified in 2025 as an alternative option. Importantly, we have engaged closely with residents, the broader community, and key stakeholders to understand their concerns and priorities, helping to shape the design and operation of the accommodation to help minimise any adverse effects.

We want the site close to the town centre

It's important for us that accommodation is near the Central Business District so workers can easily access local services and shops.

We're concerned about noise

People want to know how noise from the accommodation will be managed to keep things peaceful for nearby residents.

Traffic needs to be carefully managed

There's a lot of worry about the extra vehicles, especially around shift change times, and how that will affect local roads.

We want the site to blend in visually

People don't want the accommodation to stand out or spoil the look of the area.

Think about what happens after construction

Many of us want the accommodation to be designed so it can be used for other community needs once the project is done.

Be clear about utilities and worker behaviour

People want to know how water and energy will be used responsibly, and that workers will be respectful and well-managed.

Draft EIS Preview Insights

Economic impact*	Value (\$)	
Project construction	Regional economy (Lithgow)	State economy (NSW)
Annual direct and indirect output	400M	566M
Annual direct and indirect value-added	166M	276M
Annual direct and indirect household income	72M	102M
Direct and indirect jobs	658	912
Project operation		
Annual direct and indirect output	290M	306M
Annual direct and indirect value-added	237M	246M
Annual direct and indirect household income	4M	8M
Direct and indirect jobs	50	72

*Figures are estimates only

Local job creation & skills investment

Apprenticeships Scholarships Workforce targets

Estimates from the Project's workforce planning for the project provides the following:

- \$4.8M or approx. 40+ apprenticeships
- \$200K in scholarships for young engineers
- 30% local workforce target
- 3% First Nations workforce target
- 22.4% Women in trades workforce targets
- 21.2% learning workforce target

Draft EIS Preview Insights

Identified impacts

- Job creation
- Local supply
- Workforce transition opportunity
- Community benefits
- Energy reliability

Proposed mitigations

- Apprenticeships, scholarships, workforce targets
- Grants and incentives - \$8M+
- Local pilot programs and supply chain readiness - \$1M+
- Local investment for local manufacturing - \$700K
- Training partnerships - \$350K
- Innovation grants - \$150K
- Sustainable community grants – \$500K



Switchyard

Upper Reservoir

What we have heard



Recreational use

Recreational use of Lake Lyell has been a key area of community interest and feedback. People have told us they value the lake for activities like boating, water skiing, fishing, and kayaking, and want to see continued public access and safe use during both construction and operation of the pumped hydro project. We've also heard that many visitors and residents were not previously aware that Lake Lyell is an operational energy asset, and there's strong interest in clear communication around how water levels will change and what this means for recreation.

Keep the lake accessible during construction and operation

People want to be able to keep enjoying the lake safely, without too much disruption while work is happening.

Upgrade and add facilities

There's a clear call for better boat ramps, jetties, and access paths so we can reach the water even when levels change.

Give us predictable water level info

Locals and visitors want regular, clear updates about when the lake will be lowered or raised so they can plan their activities.

Support fish restocking

Many fishers want to see ongoing efforts to replenish fish stocks, so the lake stays great for fishing.

Be clear about the lake's energy role

People want to understand that the lake is both for recreation and energy, and they appreciate honest communication about this balance.

Make safety a priority with signage and info

We've heard that good signs and clear communication are important to keep everyone safe, especially as water levels and conditions change.

Lake Lyell water levels

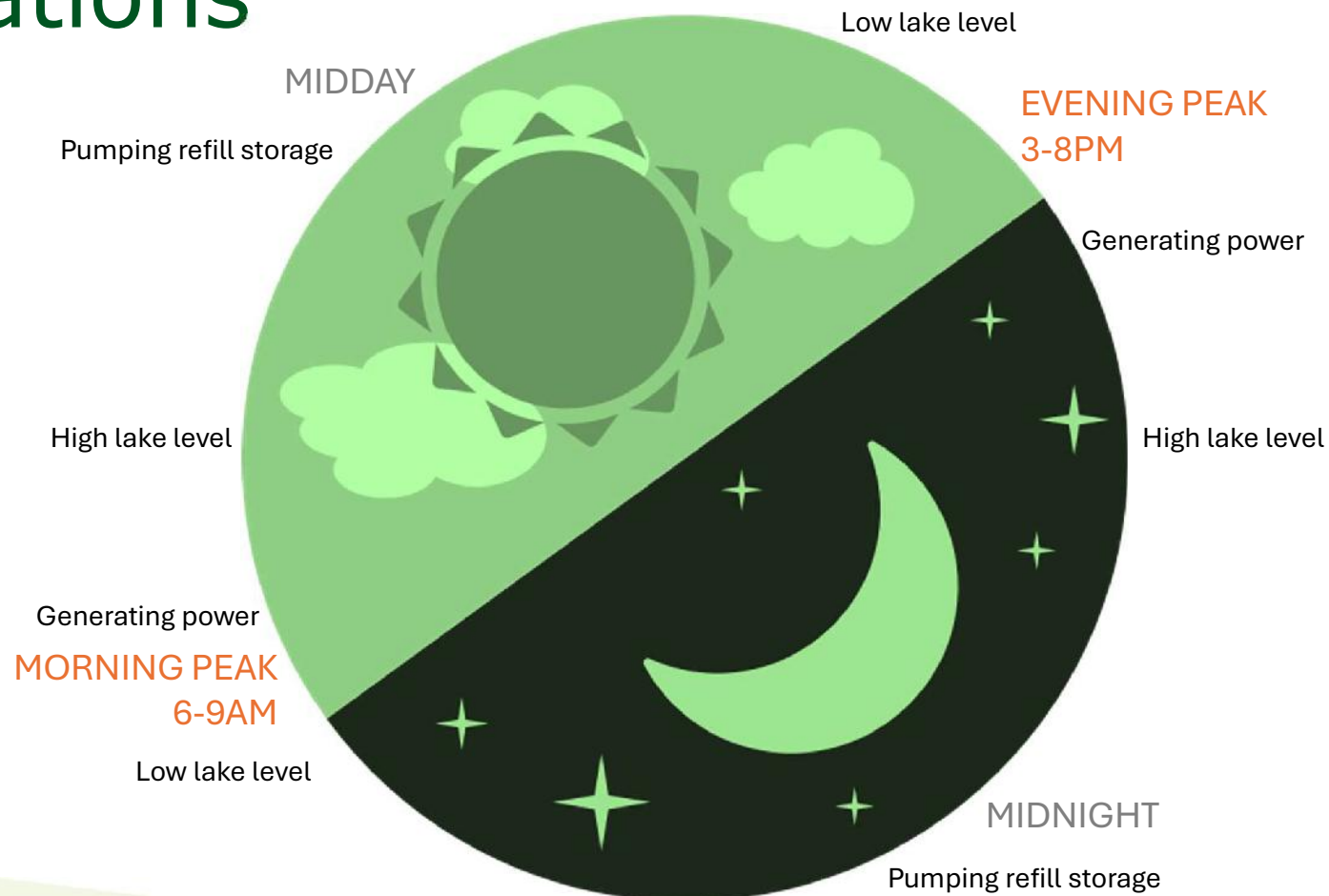
During construction

- Lake lowered by **3 metres** to manage flood risk up to **4 years**
- Removal of one or more fuse gates
- Public and boat access to upper end Farmers Creek Arm restricted

During operations

- Average **2.5 metre daily** water level changes
- Drops over 9-10 hours
- Refills over 7-8 hours

Operations



Draft EIS Preview Insights

Identified impacts

- Boating, fishing and general lake use can continue but temporary changes may occur
 - Varied water levels
 - Limited access in some areas
- Temporary impacts to amenity:
 - Construction traffic
 - Visible works and equipment
 - Elevated noise levels
- Sitelines and public views to Mt Walker will change during construction
- Increased watercraft activity likely – barges

Draft EIS Preview Insights

Proposed mitigations

- **Fully maintained lake for community use**
- Advance notice of water level changes via signage, text alerts, social media etc
- Riverkeeper Ranger to help manage lake safety and environmental protection
- Upgrades – picnic areas, swimming beach, playgrounds, boat ramps and pontoons
- New amenities – mountain biking, walking and hiking trails
- Regular fish restocks

What we have heard



Project design and viewpoints

Project design and visual impact have been central to community feedback, especially for those living near or visiting the Lake Lyell area. In 2023, the initial concept design placed the upper reservoir facing the town of Lithgow. After hearing concerns about how this would affect scenic views and the character of the surrounding mountains, the design was significantly revised. People have told us they want infrastructure that respects the landscape, considers how it looks during and after construction, and preserves the visual appeal of the area.

Minimising impact on Mt Walker

People want the natural views of the mountains, especially from around Lithgow, to be protected as much as possible.

Preserving iconic vantage points

Locals and visitors alike have said it's important to preserve the views from popular spots around Lake Lyell.

Managing construction-phase visual impacts

There's a strong interest in understanding what the site will look like before and after vegetation has regrown, and how long that will take.

Using natural screening and vegetation

Many have suggested replanting native trees and shrubs to help screen infrastructure and return the area to a more natural look.

Designing infrastructure with the landscape in mind

We've heard that the look and feel of the project should respect the natural surroundings, using materials and colours that blend in.

Refining the design based on community feedback

People appreciated that the design changed after initial feedback, especially moving the upper reservoir away from the town's main viewpoint.

Draft EIS Preview Insights

Identified impacts

- Project design selects site that
 - Uses natural geography
 - Carefully places infrastructure
- Visual changes will occur
- Construction:
 - Land clearing
 - Increased traffic
- Operational
 - Changes around Mt Walker and Lake Lyell
 - Visible infrastructure
 - Fluctuating water levels

Proposed mitigations

- Relocated reservoir to less visible gully site
- Switchyard placed in narrow valley with limited visibility
- Use of subtly, harmonious colours and materials
- Retention of existing vegetation
- Progressive revegetation in disturbed areas
- Support for neighbours

What we have heard



Roads and traffic

Roads and traffic management have been a consistent focus of community and stakeholder feedback, especially in relation to construction impacts and long-term safety. We've heard the importance of upgrading local roads, managing truck movements responsibly, and ensuring that road improvements leave a lasting benefit for the community. Supporting safe travel—particularly for and inexperienced drivers—has also been a strong theme.

We need better, wider roads

Many of us want the roads improved beyond just single lanes to make travel safer and easier for everyone.

Manage truck movements carefully

People are concerned about heavy vehicles and want clear plans to reduce risks by controlling routes, timing, and speeds.

Support for local councils to maintain roads

We've said it's important that councils get the resources they need to keep roads in good shape during and after construction.

Make roads safer for everyone

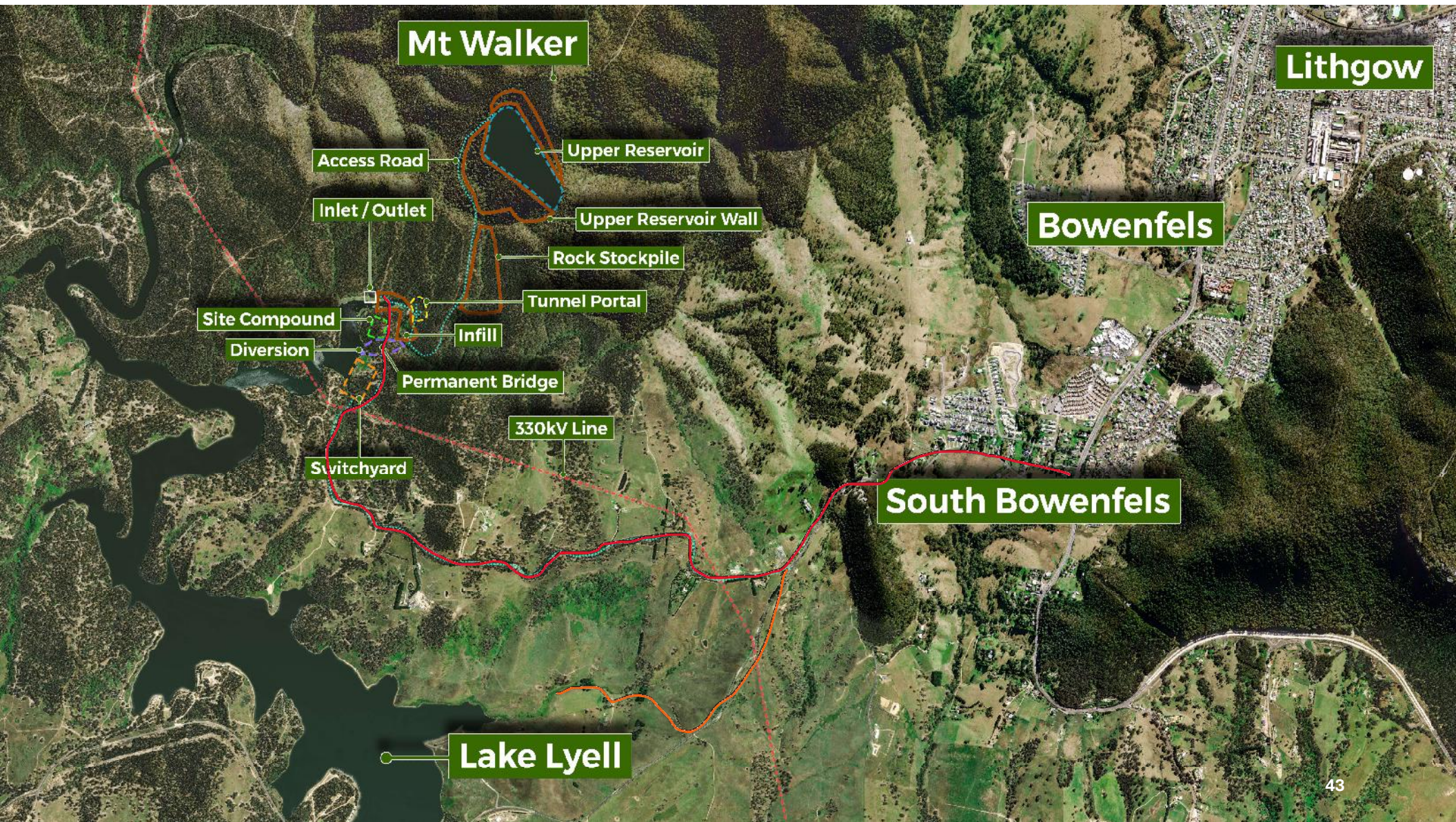
Locals want road upgrades that take into account pedestrians, cyclists, and all kinds of drivers.

Keep young and learner drivers safe

There's real concern about road safety for younger people, and we want extra measures to improve their safety.

Minimise disruption while work's happening

We expect to be kept informed and for traffic changes to be managed so construction doesn't cause too much inconvenience.



Draft EIS Preview Insights

Identified impacts

- Significant vehicle movements required for construction
 - Includes heavy and oversized trucks transporting materials and equipment
- 400-600 workers
 - 1200 daily vehicle movements
 - 300 heavy vehicles
 - 800 light vehicles
 - 100 shuttle buses
- Potential impacts of traffic safety and travel times
- Temporary traffic flow changes during construction
- Operational phase traffic expected to be minimal

Proposed mitigations

- Construction Traffic Management Plan
 - Prioritises safety for all road users
 - Includes public information/notifications
 - Complaint management system
- Significant invest in road and upgrades
 - Magpie Hollow Road and Sir Thomas Mitcheel Drive
- New road upgrades include:
 - Realigned intersections
 - Road widening
 - Revised speed limits
 - Vegetation trimming
 - Warning signage



Thank you

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