

Project approvals fact sheet

Borumba Pumped Hydro Project

About the project

The Borumba Pumped Hydro Project is the proposed development of a pumped hydro energy storage system at Lake Borumba, located southwest of Gympie near Imbil. It forms part of the Queensland Government's commitment to transitioning to 80% renewable energy by 2035.

Exploratory works and main works

The project is intended to be delivered in two stages: exploratory works, followed by main works.

Exploratory works will comprise detailed geological investigations including geotechnical drilling and excavation of an exploratory tunnel to the proposed underground powerhouse cavern. Associated works will include minor road improvements, construction of access tracks, and construction of temporary exploratory workers' camps and supporting infrastructure.

Main works for the project will include construction of a new lower Borumba dam, the upper reservoir dam, tunnels and underground powerhouse, and associated construction facilities such as access roads, quarries, and construction camps.

What have we done so far?

In March 2023, Queensland Hydro submitted the Borumba Pumped Hydro Project's Detailed Analytical Report (DAR) to the Queensland Government for its consideration and investment decision. The DAR assessed the feasibility of the proposed project by undertaking preliminary engineering, environmental, social and economic studies.

We have started geotechnical drilling in locations that do not trigger approvals.

What is the approvals process for this project?

The Borumba Pumped Hydro Project will require assessment under State and Commonwealth legislation for both the exploratory works and main works.

Exploratory works

The exploratory works have been referred to the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), and require assessment via preliminary documentation under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). A range of permits and approvals will also be required at a State level, and Queensland Hydro is currently working with the Office of the Coordinator-General to progress the necessary State approval pathways.

Main works

The main works will also be referred to DCCEEW, and it is assumed that the project will require EPBC Act assessment. It is assumed that the EPBC Act assessment would be via an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process.

The project will also submit an application for coordinated project status under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* (SDPWO Act) to the Office of the Coordinator-General. Should this application be approved, the project would also require a State EIS under the SDPWO Act.

Both the Commonwealth and State assessment for the main works would be progressed under a bilateral agreement which provides for a single, integrated EIS process that encompasses both Commonwealth and State assessment requirements.

Following completion of the EIS process, the project would also need to obtain a range of additional permits and approvals before construction can commence.

These two processes are outlined on the following page.

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Environmental and planning approvals process

Exploratory works approvals

	Controlled Action submitted to DCCEEW	Controlled Action referral under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) submitted to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)	Planning approvals documentation required under the <i>State Development</i> <i>Public Works Organisation Act</i> 1971 (SDPWO Act) and the <i>Planning Act</i> 2016 are submitted to relevant approval bodies (decided on by the State Government)
~		Action was declared a Controlled Action to be assessed under Preliminary Documentation process	
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		Queensland Hydro will respond to the Department's information request	
	HAVE YOUR SAY Opportunity for public input	Public display and comment on all information supplied to Minister	
		Revision of Preliminary Documentation (PD) information	Planning approvals granted by relevant State approvals bodies
		Minister makes an approval decision	
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Exploratory works may begin

	Commonwealth Government approval step
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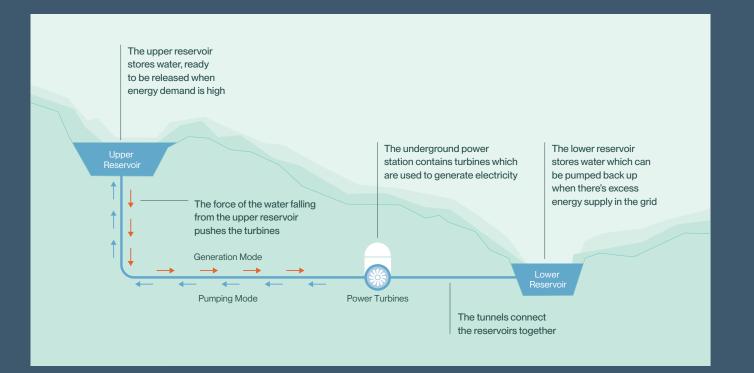
- State Government approval step
- Bilateral (Commonwealth and State Government agreement
- (B) Opportunities for input
- * These are the assumed processes. Actual processes will be determined by Commonwealth and State Government.



Main works approvals

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	EPBC Act Bilateral Agreement begins	Controlled Action referral under the EPBC Act submitted to DCCEEW	Application for Coordinated Project status under the SDPWO Act submitted to the Office of the Coordinator-General.
	Commonwealth and State Governments determine assessment process *	Project declared a Controlled Action	Project declared a Coordinated Project
	Environmental Impact Statement Terms of Reference (ToR)	Coordinator-General drafts Terms of Reference for EIS, with input from DCCEEW	
83	HAVE YOUR SAY Public comment on draft ToR	Draft ToR is issued so that the public can h on the scope of the EIS study	have an opportunity to comment
	State Government issues final ToR	Coordinator-General considers all submissions, including from government, industry and the public, and issues a final ToR	
	Draft EIS	Studies are undertaken to inform the EIS, and a draft EIS document is prepared	
	Adequacy review of preliminary draft EIS	Preliminary draft EIS is reviewed for adequacy by Commonwealth and State government agencies, and is updated before public notification	
	HAVE YOUR SAY Public comment on draft EIS	Draft EIS is issued for public comment	
	Revised EIS	The EIS is updated in accordance with fea notification period	edback received during the public
	EIS Evaluation	Commonwealth Government evaluates EIS	State Government evaluates EIS
	Coordinator-General's Evaluation Report	Coordinator-General issues Coordinator- selected conditions of approval	General's Evaluation Report, including
	Post-EIS approvals	Controlled Action approval is obtained under the EPBC Act	Additional secondary permits and approvals are obtained under State and Local legislation





What is pumped hydro?

Pumped hydro energy storage is a closed water system that moves water between two large reservoirs constructed at different heights to generate and store potential energy.

The Borumba Pumped Hydro Project requires expansion of the existing Lake Borumba reservoir (the lower reservoir), as well as construction of new dams in the hills south of Lake Borumba to create an upper reservoir. When energy is needed, water will pass from the upper reservoir to the lower reservoir via turbines in an underground power station. When there is excess energy available in the network, the water will be pumped back up from the lower reservoir to the upper reservoir where it will be stored until energy is needed again.

When constructed, the Borumba Pumped Hydro Project would be capable of producing up to 2,000 MW of continuous power for a period of up to 24 hours.



Opportunities to have your say

There will be various opportunities for public input over the course of the approvals process for both the exploratory works and the main project works. Queensland Hydro will keep stakeholders informed of these opportunities as the processes progress.

To find out more

Queensland Hydro will continue to engage and work with the community and our stakeholders throughout the approvals process.

If you have any questions or would like to receive project email updates, please speak with our communications and stakeholder team via borumba@qldhydro.com.au.

Get in touch

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