

Meeting Minutes

Meeting name	Borumba Pumped Hydro project Stakeholder Reference Group
Location	28 Channon Street, Gympie
Date and time	Thursday 22 June 2023, 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm
Attendees	<p>Environment group members: Narelle McCarthy (Sunshine Coast Environmental Council), David Arthur (Wide Bay-Burnett Environment Council), Glenda Pickersgill (Save the Mart River Coordinating Group), Ian Mackay (Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee and Conondale Range Conservation Association), Dave Copeman (QCC, joined virtually)</p> <p>Business representative members: Petra Van Beek (Gympie Chamber of Commerce), Dan O'Regan (HQPlantations Pty Ltd), Graeme Elphinstone (Gympie District Beef Liaison Group), James MacDonald (proxy for Luke Barden, Plumbing and Pipe Trades Employees Union, joined virtually), Sotera Trevaskis (Wide Bay-Burnett Regional Development Australia, joined virtually)</p> <p>Community members: Carolyn Harris (adjoining landholder), Bruce Horsfall (Lake Borumba Fish Stocking Association), Don MacAulay (Mary Valley Fishing Club), Ian Stehbens (local community member)</p> <p>Project Representatives: Kieran Cusack (Queensland Hydro), Leah McKenzie (Queensland Hydro), Julie Spencer (Queensland Hydro), Steve Pickering (Queensland Hydro), Leon Beyleveld (Queensland Hydro), Rebecca Powlett (Queensland Hydro), Letisha Lim (Queensland Hydro)</p> <p>Facilitator: Leisa Prowse (meeting facilitator)</p>
Apologies	Senior Constable Bill Greer (Imbil Rural Watch), Gary Rozynski (local irrigator), Janelle Parker (Mary Valley Chamber of Commerce)

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1.0	Acknowledgement of Country
Slide 5	Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country
1.1	Introductions and housekeeping
Slide 5	<p>Queensland Hydro opened the meeting and introduced the meeting's independent facilitator.</p> <p>Facilitator discussed ground rules for the meeting which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat each other and each other's ideas, opinions and observations with respect • Share your thoughts professionally, respectfully and in a civil manner • Commit to frank, honest and transparent discussion and feedback • Be curious • Listen to each other. In a lot of ways, listening earns the right to speak

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One conversation at a time • Be succinct and build on the conversation • Say what you need to say i.e. don't leave the room with things unsaid. frank, honest and transparent discussion and feedback. <p>Participants provided a summary of what they wanted from being part of the group which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for the best solution for the environment and delivering sustainable outcomes • Mitigating adverse effects where they cannot be avoided • To ensure community benefits and other opportunities are considered and integrated across all stages of the Project • To ensure community challenges during construction are considered and addressed • Protecting the interests of landholders and small business • Ensuring best outcomes for the land and the people in the area • Focusing on the safety of workers and the community.
1.2	Terms of Reference
Slide 5	<p>Participants were directed to the updated Terms of Reference (ToR).</p> <p>Facilitator highlighted the amendments including expanding the purpose of the SRG from providing input during the Detailed Analytical Report (DAR) phase to providing input on project design, construction and operation.</p>
	ACTION – ToR agreed to and approved by Borumba SRG for publication.
	<p>Facilitator confirmed there were no new conflicts of interest for SRG members.</p> <p>Facilitator confirmed there was no confidential information being presented by Queensland Hydro.</p>
	<p>Q: can the SRG see a copy of the DAR, a commitment was made by the Department of Energy and Public Works (DEPW) to release the information, which has been available since March 2023?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro representatives confirmed that DEPW had previously discussed providing some of the DAR information and confirmed that Queensland Hydro is working with DEPW on what can be made available and will keep members informed of progress.</p> <p>NOTE: In December Queensland Hydro advised that the Design Principles would be released and they still haven't been provided.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted the Design Principles is a Queensland Government document and Queensland Hydro is following up on the release of the Design Principles.</p> <p>SRG members noted they wouldn't be able to meaningfully contribute without the Design Principles.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted they would follow up and seek a response from DEPW.</p>

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	<p>Q: how do we know the Borumba Pumped Hydro Project stacks up against batteries as an alternate option?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted batteries that provided the same energy capacity as the Borumba project would cost about \$32B and need replacing after about 15 years, meaning that there would be additional replacements costs. Pumped hydro provides energy storage, much like batteries, but is far more cost effective.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro committed to providing additional information about energy generation and the mix of generation and storage.</p> <p>Q: can a sub-group be formed to look at future public amenity? They are needed for tourism and the viability of the Mary Valley. Ideally these would be constructed at the commencement of the project. Lake Boondooma is an excellent example of recreational facilities.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted the specific interests of the members of the group and committed to forming sub-groups to focus discussion on those interests when it was productive to do so.</p> <p>Q: what about the Traditional Owners, how are you engaging with them as they aren't here?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro advised that there are separate ongoing engagement activities with the Traditional Owners and Queensland Hydro has met with Traditional Owners recently.</p>
2.0	Final investment decision
Slide 7	<p>Queensland Hydro welcomed the investment decision and explained \$183.7M was allocated for the 2023/24 Financial Year. This funding would allow for Queensland Hydro to move into the Project's next phase including exploratory works and approvals which would provide geotechnical information as well as installation of a bore network that will provide for groundwater monitoring.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted the members offer to provide additional review of tender package scopes of work. Queensland Hydro also identified that not all tenders are going to the open market due to the specialised nature of some of the work and the limited number of service providers qualified to complete the work.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that some exploratory work can start in areas where approvals are not required. Other work will occur under the relevant approvals.</p> <p>Tunnelling is part of exploratory works. We will drill one of the access tunnels to collect geotechnical information and help us understand the conditions. The tunnel will be about 8.5 m in diameter and is the most extensive part of the exploratory works. It will get us to the location of powerhouse cavern and allows us to better understand underground geology. Targeting start of tunnel drilling works for Q1 2024, subject to approval.</p> <p>Road improvements are required to allow safe access to the work sites. Queensland Hydro is working with Gympie Regional Council to incorporate the upgrades as part of the flood recovery works on Bella Creek Road.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that for exploratory works major road and bridge upgrades are not required, but some more minor upgrades would still be needed. For main works we are looking at access and how we separate heavy vehicles from local traffic.</p> <p>Q: will there be quarry sites?</p>

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	<p>Queensland Hydro noted some potential sites have been identified for investigation and exploratory works will obtain the geological information to confirm suitability. Quarries will not be established for the exploratory works.</p> <p>Q: can you explain the funding again?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted the Queensland Government’s \$6B commitment is part of the \$14.2 billion required for the Project. The \$6B is a direct Queensland Government contribution (equity funded), the balance will be debt funded.</p> <p>In next financial year (2023/24), starting from 1 July 2023 a total of \$183.7M will be released to Queensland Hydro to commence the exploratory works.</p> <p>Exploratory works includes two temporary construction camps, and Queensland Hydro is working on a workforce accommodation strategy in consultation with the relevant councils to provide additional housing for main works. This includes assessing essential services, infrastructure and planning codes.</p> <p>Exploratory works will go for about two years and at its conclusion we hope to progress into main works with EIS approval.</p> <p>There will be two phases of road upgrades – road improvements for exploratory works and major road works for main works.</p>
3.0	Target project schedule
	<p>Discussed the schedule as part of the final investment decision and planning and approvals process discussion.</p> <p>Q: can we have some clarification when the project will be shovel ready?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro’s current target schedule is late 2025.</p>
4.0	Planning and approvals process
4.1	Exploratory works
Slide 12	<p>Commonwealth approvals</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted the exploratory works are progressing through the planning and approvals process with a referral made to Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Cwth) (DCCEEW).</p> <p>DCCEEW determined that the exploratory works are a controlled action that requires assessment under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act).</p> <p>DCCEEW determined that assessment process would be via preliminary documentation which is typical for the type of work included in the referral.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro is targeting Q3 to submit the additional information requested by DCCEEW. Public consultation will occur as part of this process via DCCEEW. Queensland Hydro expects stringent conditions to be attached to the anticipated approvals.</p>

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	<p>Q: can we be advised when the preliminary documentation is submitted and when the public consultation period commences?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro committed to advising the SRG members of both events, noting that Queensland Hydro has no control over the public consultation period timing.</p> <p>Q: can the additional documentation DCCEEW requested be shared with the SRG members?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro took the question on notice and advised that the additional information which is made publicly available will show what DCCEEW requested.</p> <p>Q: can Queensland Hydro explain the project more clearly and spread the word in the community?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that engagement activities are ramping up and will provide opportunities to share project information.</p> <p>Q: when does Queensland Hydro expect excavation of exploratory tunnel to start?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro advised the exploratory tunnel is part of the exploratory works EPBC Act controlled action assessment, and approval is expected late this year with work to start in 2024.</p> <p>Q: what will happen to the spoil from the tunnel, and what if there is contamination?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that spoil management was an important issue for the exploratory works. Spoil would be tested as it was excavated, and the project would try to maximise reuse options wherever possible. Spoil that couldn't be reused would be placed in an engineered disposal area.</p> <p>It was noted by the SRG that the potential spoil site was located on a floodplain and Queensland Hydro advised that any spoil that was found to be contaminated would be taken offsite for treatment and / or disposal.</p> <p>Q: does anyone monitor social media?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that social media is monitored and helps to inform on trends and issues emerging in the community and helps shape frequently asked questions (FAQs) which are available on the website.</p>
Slide 13	<p>State approvals</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that the state approvals pathway is different from the Commonwealth which is covered by one blanket legislation. The state approval process can be described as a patchwork of legislation based on where, what, volumes and other considerations.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted there are multiple approvals needed at a state-level and Queensland Hydro is working with the Office of the Coordinator-General (OCG) on the approach to approvals.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted exploratory works doesn't meet the threshold for a coordinated project EIS process. Queensland Hydro will update the SRG members when the OCG has determined the approval pathway. It was noted some approvals may also fall under the State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) and the Gympie Regional Council planning scheme.</p>

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	<p>It was noted SRG members wanted to understand the opportunities and avenues to comment throughout the process.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted we would work with the SRG members to ensure adequate and appropriate communication processes were in place once the approvals pathway was confirmed.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted some low impact exploratory works activities don't require approvals and these works will start in July. Queensland Hydro confirmed DCCEEW and OCG had been informed of these activities.</p> <p>Q: what are the depths of the geotechnical drilling (Note: this question was taken on notice)</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that the upcoming geotechnical drilling would focus on understanding foundation conditions for the dam walls, including establishing the depth of solid foundation rock. Queensland Hydro anticipates drilling to depths in the range of 60m - 150m below surface to understand conditions around the dams, but notes this may vary based on the actual site conditions. Deep drilling for the cavern and tailrace tunnels may be hundreds of metres.</p> <p>Some bores would also be installed specifically to monitor groundwater, and these would typically be shallower than some of the geotechnical bores (tens of metres, rather than hundreds). But the depth for each bore will vary dependent on which aquifers are being targeted at each location.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted the geotechnical cores will be retained for analysis over the Project's life. They will be retained for the contractors for greater understanding of the ground conditions.</p> <p>Q: what is the spacing of the cores?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted these details were being confirmed. It was noted that they would need to be more densely spaced in areas where significant infrastructure is planned. Work with geological specialists is ongoing to understand ground conditions in greater detail. Assessment of the core samples will confirm, validate or otherwise assumptions and the design, and location of additional core drilling sites, will be refined in response to what is found.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted very limited ground condition data had been captured and significant work was still required. The group discussed the area's geology and vegetation.</p> <p>Q: Would Queensland Hydro consider revegetating with native flora</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted this was being considered.</p> <p>Q: Are you monitoring dust (air quality) and noise?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that air and noise modelling was expected to be a requirement for the main works EIS, but that it was not proposed for the exploratory works assessment. However, dust and noise mitigation measures would still be detailed in the exploratory works management plan. The specific measures would depend on the nature of the activities at each location, and the risk to surrounding receptors (people, flora, fauna).</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that work to assess the air and noise impacts for the main works would commence in the near future, once the relevant consultants had been engaged.</p>

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	<p>Q: will Queensland Hydro advise local residents when you are going to start the work?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted start of work notification would be provided prior to commencement of site activities.</p> <p>Q: how will Queensland Hydro manage dust particulates, particularly silica dust, resulting from the excavation works?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted dust would be managed as a priority, and shared that from 1 July 2020 the national workplace exposure standards for silica dust were halved. The onus is on Queensland Hydro to put in place management procedures to ensure workers and neighbours are protected. It was noted dust management was a critical part of the Project's safety program and a key concern for Safe Work. Chemical analysis would be undertaken on tunnel spoil understand what contaminants may be present.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted during the exploratory tunnelling, horizontal boring would occur ahead of tunnel excavation, so it will be known ahead of time what was being drilled into.</p> <p>It was noted that various rock types are found in the area, some of which may contain naturally occurring asbestos. It was noted this wasn't unusual for this type of work and controls would be put in place depending on the circumstances.</p>
4.1	Main works environmental impact statement
Slide 14-15	<p>The main works meet the criteria for coordinated project status under the <i>State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971</i> (Qld) (SDPWO Act) and are expected to be a controlled action under the EPBC Act requiring an EIS.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro will request that assessment of the main works is under the bilateral agreement. This means that one EIS will be produced to meet the requirements of both the State and Commonwealth.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro is looking to submit the EPBC Act referral and coordinated project application for the main works in July/August and SRG members will be advised when this has occurred.</p> <p>There will be multiple opportunities for public comment over the course of the process.</p> <p>Public comment will be sought by the OCG on the draft ToR. The ToR will be available for a minimum (statutory requirement) 20 days. OCG will finalise and publish the ToR.</p> <p>There will be a period of public comment when Queensland Hydro submits its main works EPBC Act referral for 10 business days (statutory public notification period). This public comment period is to determine if the main works should be a controlled action.</p> <p>Environment Impact Statement (EIS)</p> <p>The first technical studies completed for the DAR form the starting basis of the EIS and we will build from these.</p> <p>Once the draft EIS has been prepared there is an adequacy process. The OCG and other departments assess the documentation is ready for public display. This assessment is against the ToR.</p>

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	<p>The length of adequacy process varies depending on the project and the needs of the project – it may take one round or multiple rounds of amendments to satisfy the OCG.</p> <p>During the public display period feedback is received by the OCG from submissions. Typically, feedback is deidentified by OCG to protect people's confidentiality.</p> <p>The EIS is amended based on the feedback and the OCG determines that the amended EIS either goes back on public display or the OCG can determine it is satisfied the feedback has been adequately addressed.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the submissions period, the Coordinator-General determines if the project is being rejected or approved at a state level.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that the adequacy process is a determination that the EIS is adequate for public notification. Adequacy does not indicate that OCG approves the EIS or that a formal assessment has occurred.</p> <p>Once the EIS is accepted as final, the evaluation stage starts. The Coordinator-General's Evaluation Report is prepared. This is a publicly available document and includes conditions of approval.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro would progress into the post-EIS phase which includes EPBC Act approval, and a wide range of state permits and approvals. Targeting shovel ready status by 2025.</p> <p>Q: Avoidance is always the best, but what work has been done on offsets? What is happening for the hectares of national park required for the project?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted work is continuing and detail will be provided at a later date. Offsets for the exploratory works are relatively straightforward; however, the main works are more complex and extensive. It is likely Queensland Hydro will have an extensive offset liability. It is a priority; a lot of planning and work is being done in anticipation and offset specialists are being engaged to assist.</p> <p>There will be a lot of engagement on the offsets, what is proposed will have to go to government for acceptance.</p> <p>It was noted there are local environmental benefits of the scheme. There are impacts but there are also significant benefits that should be captured, including bushfire management.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that the EIS will include a climate change study that includes risks and potential micro climatic effects.</p> <p>Q: there are two aquatic species that are noxious that we don't want in the dam. We need to think about how to remove the species and we need to avoid introducing them.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that it is a valid issues and consultation is ongoing with Department of Agriculture and Fisheries on fish passage and biosecurity matters.</p>
5.0	Stakeholder engagement process
Slide 17-18	Queensland Hydro noted community information sessions will be taking place from July and industry engagement briefings were also scheduled from 5 July, including an industry briefing on 7 July in Gympie. These briefings will provide an

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	<p>overview of our industry engagement approach as we release work packages to the market. Registration for the events is on the Queensland Hydro website.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted Powerlink’s Borumba Pumped Hydro Project Transmission Connection Draft Corridor Selection Report is available for public comment until 3 July.</p> <p>Q: when will the transmission line project will be shovel ready?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro does not have a detailed understanding of Powerlink transmission line activity schedule but noted the transmission line construction timeframe is much shorter than the construction time required for pumped hydro so Powerlink doesn’t need to be as advanced as Queensland Hydro.</p> <p>Q: will the Industry Capability Network (ICN) be used to release the work packages?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that ICN will be used for registration of interest and QTenders will be used to release the work packages. Queensland Hydro is engaging with industry to ensure work packages are tailored so local suppliers can participate.</p> <p>Q: does the \$14.2 billion project cost include the transmission connection</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted the project cost was for the Borumba Pumped Hydro Project only.</p> <p>Q: how will the clearing of the forest in the inundation area be done?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that level of detail isn’t available at present.</p> <p>It was noted that the Lake Borumba Fish Stocking Association would prefer the remnant forest was left there for fish habitat.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted leaving the forest in place may result in water quality issues. Assessment would need to be completed before a decision could be made.</p>
6.0	Next steps
Slide 20	<p>Dates proposed for the remaining SRG meetings for 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 September, plus Project site tour • 28 November
	<p>It was noted installing the boat ramp early would be beneficial and may be needed for emergency access. It was asked if recreational facilities could be pre-planned and accelerated where possible.</p> <p>Q: will there be a camp for main works?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted there are two small camps for exploratory works. There is a need to accommodate workers for the main works. Options for this are being assessed including expanding the capacity of the exploratory works camps while the main works temporary workers camps are established.</p> <p>Q: can we do lessons learned from the Curtis Island experience in Gladstone? The housing market was severely impacted.</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted that a workforce accommodation strategy would be developed and any opportunities to learn from past experiences would be welcomed.</p>

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	<p>Q: has the tender process started?</p> <p>Queensland Hydro noted the industry briefings would take place in early July and work packages would be progressively released once they were complete.</p> <p>It was noted that maintaining communication and considering transport and access through the forest was a priority.</p> <p>It was noted that the SRG members would like a site tour of the upper reservoir. Queensland Hydro suggested adding a site tour to the 7 September meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that working groups would be welcomed.</p> <p>It was noted that the Design Principles and Detailed Analytical Report documents were requested from the Queensland Government again.</p>
	<p>Meeting closed at 4.00pm</p>