

# **Borumba Pumped Hydro Project Exploratory Works**

## **Social Assessment (SA)**

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Prepared for Queensland Hydro

November 2025

# Borumba Pumped Hydro Project Exploratory Works

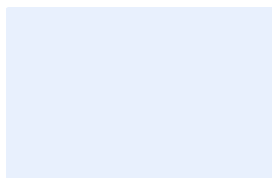
## Social Assessment (SA)

Queensland Hydro

E240300 RP#1

Version	Date	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Comments
V1	14 November 2024	Jessica Lew, Senior Social Scientist	Myf Jagger, Associate Director	Submitted to Queensland Office of the Coordinator-General
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V6	14 November 2025	Amelia Fox, Social Scientist, Sam McCrea, Associate Director	Myf Jagger, Associate Director	Final

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# Executive Summary

## ES1 Purpose

The Borumba Pumped Hydro Energy Storage Project (the Project) has two proposed phases:

1. Exploratory Works – geological investigations to inform the development of the Borumba PHES Project and supporting infrastructure and activities required to support these investigations.
2. Main works – the PHES Project, including the power infrastructure (powerhouse, water and access tunnels), an upper reservoir, and a lower reservoir.

The purpose of this Social Assessment is to:

- summarise the social baseline context of the potentially impacted communities surrounding the area where the Exploratory Works will be undertaken
- identify and assess the social impacts which may occur in local and regional communities during Exploratory Works.

Details setting out the social impact mitigation and benefit enhancement measures (collectively referred to as “management measures”) required to manage the significant social impacts identified in this document are presented in a stand-alone Social Assessment Management Plan (SAMP). The SA and SAMP have been prepared to complement each other and should be read in conjunction.

The purpose of the Exploratory Works is to undertake and facilitate critical geological technical investigations to confirm the suitability of the Borumba PHES Project location and design. Investigations are particularly required in areas where key subsurface Borumba PHES Project infrastructure will be constructed due to the limited technical geological information currently available posing considerable project risk.

During the Exploratory Works phase, Queensland Hydro proposes to progress regulatory approvals for the Main Works. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) approvals process for the Main Works includes the development of a Social Impact Assessment (SIA), Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) and an Indigenous Impact Assessment (IIA) specifically for the Kabi Kabi People. The SIA will identify and assess the social impacts of the Main Works and recommend associated management measures for the development, construction, operation and closure of the Project. These measures will then be fully considered and reflected in the SIMP which is intended to remain in place for the duration of the Project (i.e. decommissioning).

## ES2 Approach

In early 2024, Queensland Hydro identified a need to assess and manage the social impacts of the Exploratory Works. Following consultation with the Queensland Government, it was mutually agreed that a rapid social assessment (SA) and management plan (SAMP) should be developed and implemented for the duration of the Exploratory Works program. Accordingly, this SA and the SAMP now form part of the Queensland Government’s requirements for Exploratory Works Assessments and Management Plans under the Project Works Regulation Report. Development of the SAMP was underpinned by the Coordinator-General’s SIA Guideline (DSDILGP, 2018), with the assessment presented based on the five key matters stipulated in the guideline.

Queensland Hydro’s engagement with key stakeholders has informed the SA and SAMP. During their development, Queensland Hydro sought input from the Stakeholder Reference Group, local accommodation providers, Queensland Government Office of the Coordinator -General and the Department of Housing and Public Works.

Engagement with Gympie and Somerset Regional Councils, police and emergency services, local businesses and Chambers of Commerce, and other affected stakeholders has also informed the SA. Further engagement will continue for the duration of the Exploratory Work program.

Queensland Hydro recognises the Kabi Kabi People, represented by the Kabi Kabi First Nation Traditional Owners Native Title Claim Group (Kabi Kabi), as the Traditional Owners and native title rights holders of the lands and waters on which the Project is located. The government owned entity is supporting Kabi Kabi to prepare an IIA which will inform the EIS for the Project's Main Works. This SA does not attempt, ahead of the IIA being completed, to definitively document potential impacts as they relate to Kabi Kabi People. Queensland Hydro also recognises that Kabi Kabi's participation in the engagement to date does not imply their support for, or endorsement of, the Project in any way.

In accordance with the SIA Guideline, a significance-based approach was adopted for this SA. This process involved:

- identification and description of potential positive and negative social impacts associated with Exploratory Works activities
- an assessment of the likelihood, and magnitude of each identified impact, in line with criteria outlined by the social impact significance matrix (refer to Section 2 for detail)
- the assessment of the likelihood, and magnitude of each identified impact, prior to management measures being applied, followed by a significance assessment after these measures are applied.

Identified magnitude and likelihood ratings and the associated level of significance of each impact and benefit was based upon the best information available at the time of assessment.

## ES3 Key assumptions

This SA and SAMP are based on the following assumptions.

### Exploratory Works scope

The SA considers the scope of social impacts and/or benefits associated with all activities associated with the scope of Queensland Hydro's Exploratory Works.

### Procurement and employment

Queensland Hydro evaluates and awards procurement packages (for goods, services and works required during Exploratory Works), using a range of consistent tendering criteria, consistent with the Queensland Procurement Policy. The criteria include a focus on Local Benefits (including local jobs apprenticeships and trainees and First Nations people) supported by the procurement activity, and use of local community and First Nations businesses (contractors, manufacturers and supply chain) directly relating to the supply of goods and/or services.

For these procurement packages, Queensland Hydro will establish targets for local community and First Nations business participation, employment (workforce diversity), and training and skills development, which the Project will aim to achieve by the end of the Exploratory Works phase. The local employment and diversity targets are scope specific to each package, developed in collaboration with contractors. These targets will be documented in the packages and reported on as part of the quarterly reporting for the SAMP.

### Workforce accommodation and management

The following assumptions regarding workforce accommodation solutions underpin the SA:

- Two temporary camps – Borgan Camp and Walkers Top Camp – will be constructed. The Walkers Top TWACs has a capacity of 336 beds. Parking details for these locations are outlined in Section 7.13 of the Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA).



- Rapid Deployment Camps (RDCs) will be used as a temporary solution while the larger Temporary Workforce Accommodation Camps (TWACs) are built. Borgan Camp will be built later in the program and workforce will stay at the Walkers Top Camp during construction of Borgan Camp. These TWAC are within the Exploratory Works footprint.
- Queensland Hydro's TWAC's are expected to be the primary on site workforce accommodation solution.

Queensland Hydro has committed to avoiding impacts on affordability and availability of housing during the Exploratory Works phase. This commitment extends to:

- requiring Exploratory Works personnel to use the dedicated on-site accommodation when available.
- avoiding use of local rental accommodation for workers, including contractors.
- use of existing short-term accommodation, excluding weekend booking wherever possible, and excluding peak or exclusive booking periods.

The Work Health and Safety Act 2011, and the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 establish the primary legal framework for ensuring safe work and workforce accommodation environments in Queensland. This includes providing and maintaining a safe work environment, ensuring adequate provision of facilities that support the health and welfare of workers, and provision of training and supervision necessary to protect all persons from health and safety risks. The Managing the Work Environment and Facilities Code of Practice 2021 includes detailed guidance for meeting these obligations, including standards for accommodation facilities. Additionally, the Queensland Development Code provides specific requirements for temporary accommodation buildings. Queensland Hydro has designed project works and accommodation arrangements in accordance with all legislative requirements.

#### **Workforce activity and accommodation forecast**

The combined Exploratory Works workforce activities occurring at both the Lower and Upper Reservoirs are assessed based on a Queensland Hydro forecast, issued in September 2025.

The workforce profile and accommodation requirements are dependent on Queensland Hydro securing all regulatory approvals for Exploratory Works. Current assumptions include:

- approvals to commence construction of the lower camps (Borgan) expected by Q3 2026.
- approvals to commence Exploratory Works construction expected in Q1 2026, supporting commencement of substantive works in Q1 2027.
- while the Borgan RDC is not yet constructed, interim workforce accommodation will be available at the Walkers Top Camp. The Walkers Top TWACs offers capacity of 336 beds.

Should there be a delay to assumed approval timeframes, updates to the Exploratory Works forecast will be reported within the SAMP Monitoring Report.

The Project's construction program will be based on the following standard construction hours (unless approved otherwise):

- general construction/surface works activities: Monday to Sunday, 6:30 am to 6:00 pm. No work on public holidays.
- geotechnical drilling: Monday to Sunday, 6:00 am to 6:00 pm for boreholes less than 200 m deep (with some exceptions). 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for boreholes equal to or more than 200 m deep and shallower boreholes by exception.

- underground construction activities and associated enabling works: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Works outside of the above listed construction hours may occur during the Project.

### **Traffic impact and road use management**

Queensland Hydro has commissioned a TIA and developed a Road Use Management Plan (RMP) for Exploratory Works. Assumptions underpinning these assessments are relevant to the SA and SAMP. Of note:

- construction of new access tracks, and upgrades to existing tracks, including waterway crossings, to enable access to geotechnical investigation sites, spoil disposal areas, and supporting infrastructure as well as the realignment of a section of Bella Creek Road, referred to as the Kingaham Creek bypass.
- the Exploratory Works TIA assesses two road network areas for access to site including the northern approach (access to the lower reservoir site from Yabba Creek Road and Bella Creek Road via a network of connecting routes linking with the Bruce Highway and surrounding towns, such as Gympie, Kandanga, and Imbil) and southern approach (access via Kilcoy to the upper reservoir site via Kilcoy Murgon Road, Sunday Creek Road and Yielo Road).
- access to the Exploratory Works Project area from Jimna / Kilcoy will be via Kilcoy-Murgon Road, a State-controlled road, along with Sunday Creek Road and Yielo Road. Minor upgrades to Yielo Road and Sunday Creek Road are required and will be undertaken in consultation with Somerset Regional Council.
- the Exploratory Works RMP presents a range of measures to mitigate and manage road use impacts and addresses road conditions, traffic congestion and road safety. These measures are reflected within the SAMP as appropriate.

### **Community and stakeholder engagement**

Queensland Hydro has developed a Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) for the Exploratory Works phase. This plan supports Queensland Hydro's impact management measures and adopts principles that ensure project information is accessible through different methods and formats, and that engagement activities are tailored to reach diverse audiences including vulnerable groups.

## **ES4 Summary of findings**

This SA assesses the potential for social impacts (both positive and negative) to occur during the Exploratory Works program. The SA is structured according to the key matters within the Queensland Government's SIA Guideline, including:

- community and stakeholder engagement
- workforce management
- housing and accommodation
- local business and industry procurement
- health and community well-being.

This document also presents an assessment of the likelihood and significance of these social impacts if management measures were not applied.

The SAMP sets out the detailed range of appropriate management measures in line with Queensland Hydro's commitments. In this document these measures are coded to allow for quick identification. The impacts are then subsequently assessed once these management measures are applied to establish the residual impact. A summary of the residual impacts that remain of medium to high significance post mitigation is presented in the table below.

**Table ES1**      **Summary of the residual impacts**

Impact area	Residual significant impacts
Community and stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder confidence and trust may decline due to perceived information gaps on project stages, timeframes, and social commitments as well as withdrawal of agreements related to 6 accommodation providers. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Consultation fatigue or confusion due to cumulative project planning processes (Exploratory and Main Works, Queensland Hydro and Council Projects, and Powerlink planning). (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Local stakeholders may feel their input has limited influence on project planning. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Limited awareness and/or uptake of complaint management processes among stakeholders, or poor perception of complaints resolution and outcomes. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> </ul>
Workforce management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased access to employment for skilled and unskilled people. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Visible change to local character, community or tourism values (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Increased access to skill development and training opportunities through procurement, supplier commitments and business capability development. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Increase in workforce health, safety and well-being risks (i.e. fatigue, mental health, stress). (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Increase in workforce health, safety and well-being risks during rostered periods of onsite accommodation. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> </ul>
Housing and accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential disruption to adjacent accommodation facilities and tourism operations (access and amenity impacts) affecting operator, visitors and permitted businesses. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Provision of high-quality accommodation on site supports worker health and well-being. (High (+) post mitigation)</li> </ul>
Local business and industry procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced economic benefits for businesses in the Project Area and Regional Area due to increased procurement and supply opportunities. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Increase in trade and revenue for businesses in the Project Area, particularly nearby communities and First Nations businesses through targeted spend (High (+) post mitigation)</li> <li>Increase in trade and revenue for businesses in the Project Area, particularly nearby communities, due to incidental spending by the workforce (Medium (+) post mitigation)</li> <li>Potential business disruptions and operational challenges for forestry, grazing, and tourism-dependent businesses due to construction activities. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Potential decrease in business from tourists and visitors due to amenity changes around Lake Borumba generated by construction activities. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> </ul>
Health and community well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational disruptions for social infrastructure providers (schools, bus operators, emergency services, community organisations) and prominent businesses. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage values due to disturbance of sites and changes to landscapes of significance. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Improved road conditions following completion of Exploratory Works (High (+) post mitigation)</li> <li>Increase in risk of traffic incidents and decline in road safety within the Project Area. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Delays and congestion affect school bus routes and student connections. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Increased pedestrian safety risk in Imbil and Kilcoy. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> </ul>

Impact area	Residual significant impacts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disruptions to living environment due to amenity changes generated by construction traffic (i.e. noise, dust, vibration). (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Potential disruptions to the learning environment of Marrapatta Memorial Outdoor Education Centre and Mary Valley State College. (Medium (-) post mitigation)</li> <li>Positive contributions to socio-economic well-being in the Project Area through the provision of community benefits and investment opportunities. (High (+) post mitigation)</li> </ul>

Detailed mitigation measures and how they are monitored for effectiveness are outlined in the Social Assessment and Management Plan (SAMP). The SAMP:

- details the social impact mitigation and benefit enhancement measures (collectively referred to as “management measures”) required to manage the significant social impacts identified
- provides a framework for Queensland Hydro and its stakeholders to mitigate, monitor, and assess the effectiveness of measures into the future.

The SA and the SAMP have been prepared to complement each other and should be viewed together.



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## Abbreviations and acronyms

Terms	Description
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIP	Australian Industry Participation
ANCOLD	Australian National Committee on Large Dams
ASGS	Australian Statistical Geography Standard
BTNAC	Butchulla Native Title Aboriginal Corporation
CCQ	Country to Coast Queensland
CEMP	Construction Environment Management Plan
CSEP	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan
DETSI	Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation
DLGWV	Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers
DNRMMRRD	Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development
DPI	Department of Primary Industries
DSDIP	Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning
DTET	Department of Trade, Employment and Training
DWATSIPM	Department of Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, and Multiculturalism
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
EIS	Environmental impact statement
EPBC	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)</i>
Exploratory Works	Borumba PHES Exploratory Works
IIA	Indigenous Impact Assessment
ICN	Industry Capability Network
IRSAD	Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage
IVMS	In-Vehicle Management System
Kabi Kabi	Kabi Kabi People
KKPAC	Kabi Kabi People's Aboriginal Corporation
LGA	Local government area
Main Works Project	Borumba PHES Project Main Works
PHES	Pumped hydro energy storage
PHN	Primary Health Network
Powerlink	Powerlink Queensland
QAS	Queensland Ambulance Service
QFD	Queensland Fire Department

Terms	Description
QGSO	Queensland Government Statistician's Office
QPS	Queensland Police Service
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (Department of Environment, Science, Tourism and Innovation)
RDCs	Rapid Deployment Camps
REIQ	Real Estate Institute of Queensland
RFS	Rural Fire Service
RMP	Road Use Management Plan
RSA	Road Safety Audit
ROI	Registration of Interest
SA1	Statistical Area 1
SAL	Suburbs and Localities
SAMP	Social Assessment and Management Plan
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SIA Guideline	Coordinator-General's Social Impact Assessment Guideline (March 2018)
SIMP	Social Impact Management Plan
SRG	Borumba Stakeholder Reference Group
the Project	Borumba Pumped Hydro Energy Storage Project
TIA	Traffic Impact Assessment
TMPs	Traffic Management Plans
TWACs	Temporary Workforce Accommodation Camps
UCL	Urban Centre and Localities

# Glossary

Terms	Definition
Affected stakeholders	Stakeholders living, working or travelling near the Exploratory Works activities or on material transport routes whose properties, businesses, cultural heritage, employment, health, lifestyle or other interests may change as a direct result of the project.
Exploratory Works components	Key activities that will be undertaken by Queensland during the Exploratory Works stage, detailed in Section 3
First Nations Businesses	Businesses owned and operated by First Nations Peoples, with preference given to Kabi Kabi associated businesses within the Project area.
Impacted landholders	Owners and interest holders of land where Queensland Hydro needs to secure, or directly affects, part or all their land for the delivery of Exploratory Works activities.
Local communities	Members of the community living in postcodes 4515, 4570 or 4574. Includes the following localities: Lake Borumba, Bella Creek, Imbil, Kilcoy, Jimna, Kingaham, Kenilworth, Moy Pocket, Bollier, Melawondi, Upper Kandanga or Kandanga Creek. These local communities are included within the description of nearby communities at Section 4.
Local Content	Queensland Hydro's contractor, workforce and procurement outcomes sourced from Project Area and Regional Area (collectively representing a 125km catchment from site).
No significant adverse impact to tourism	In line with requirements of the Queensland Office of the Coordinator-General, Queensland Hydro has committed to delivering the Exploratory Works program in a way that achieves no significant adverse impact on local tourism operations, whether resulting from project accommodation or transportation and traffic requirements.
Project Area	Combined Gympie and Somerset local Government areas (LGAs). Further described in Section 4 of the SA.
Regional Area	Local Government Areas that are located within 125 km of the Project site, excluding the Project Area LGAs.  The ten LGAs of Regional Area include: Brisbane, Cherbourg Aboriginal, Fraser Coast, Ipswich, Moreton Bay, Noosa, North Burnett, South Burnett, Sunshine Coast, and Toowoomba.
Project stakeholders	Any individual, group of individuals, organisation or government agency with an interest in the Borumba Project and all associated approvals, activities and decisions.
Project workforce	The total workforce supporting delivery of Queensland Hydro's Exploratory Works program is defined as including all contractors, together with Queensland Hydro employees based in Brisbane, and at site and in the Nambour and Imbil site offices.
Rapid Deployment Camps (RDCs)	RDCs are prefabricated, self-sufficient and easily transportable accommodation units used in temporary circumstances for their quick assembly value. These RDCs will be used as a temporary solution while the larger TWACs are built. These units will be located at the same site within the Exploratory Works footprint. The units will provide limited parking, with workforce being transported by bus to site. This interim arrangement will be in place for approximately six months.
Sensitive receptors / receivers	Land uses that are sensitive to potential noise, air and/or visual impacts, such as residential dwellings (inclusive of on-site temporary workforce accommodation), occupied business premises, schools, hospitals and community facilities.
Temporary workforce accommodation camps (TWACs and associated parking)	Two temporary camps – Borgan Camp and Walkers Top Camp (constructed and with a capacity of 336 beds) Borgan, if constructed, will provide accommodation for 168 beds. Parking details for these locations are outlined in Section 7.13 of the TIA.



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This Social Assessment (SA) was prepared by EMM Consulting for Queensland Hydro's Borumba PHES Exploratory Works program.

In early 2024, Queensland Hydro identified a need to assess and manage the social impacts of its Exploratory Works. Under a mutual agreement with the Queensland Government, a rapid social assessment and management plan was developed. The SAMP was intended to form part of the Queensland Government's requirements for Exploratory Works Assessments and Management Plans under the Project Works Regulation Report and with regard for the approach and key matters for assessment, set out by the Coordinator-General's SIA Guideline (DSDILGP, 2018), and recent republish in (2025).

A number of revisions have been made to the scope and scale of the Exploratory Works program, including a notable reduction in the workforce, staging and duration of works, and workforce accommodation management.

During these revisions, Queensland Hydro has sought to prepare the SAMP as two separate documents:

1. The Social Assessment (SA) i.e. this document that sets out the social baseline and outcomes of the social assessment.
2. The Social Assessment Management Plan (SAMP) i.e. a standalone management plan, including identification of residual impacts along with recommended monitoring metrics. These documents are to be read in conjunction.

## 1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this SA are as follows:

- Establish a social baseline against which project impacts and benefits can be measured against over time.
- Identify and assess potential social impacts of the Exploratory Works on local and regional communities.

## 1.3 Consultation

This SA has been developed with early engagement consultation input from a range of key stakeholders. This input has been gathered directly by EMM as author of this SA and supplemented with feedback from Queensland Hydro's ongoing engagement program with key stakeholders. Stakeholder inputs informing the SA include:

- Queensland Hydro's Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) – two dedicated consultation sessions were held on 9 May 2024 and 25 November 2024 to discuss the Exploratory Works social assessment and management measures. Ongoing engagement with the SRG has been managed by Queensland Hydro, with feedback loops and updated consultation reports provided to EMM.
- Queensland Office of the Coordinator -General (OCG) has provided feedback and requested further information about the matters contained in the SA, during 2024 (August and November 2024), and in 2025 (January, March and June 2025).
- Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works provided feedback regarding workforce accommodation and planning principles in May 2024 which have continued to be reflected within the SA and SAMP.
- Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads (as documented for Exploratory Works TIA, and shared with EMM.

- Gympie and Somerset Regional Councils (direct engagement by EMM in August and September 2024, and ongoing engagement managed by Queensland Hydro), on topics such as social impact management, traffic management, community benefits, regional development, housing, and tourism.
- Consultation insights from impacted landholders and licence holders, shared during Queensland Hydro's direct negotiation with individual organisations including HQ Plantations, Seqwater, Lake Borumba Caravan and Campground, Yabba Creek Rural Fire Brigade and Lake Borumba Fish Stocking Association.
- Direct engagement, supplemented with Queensland Hydro engagement with tourism operators (detailed in Section 4.5), inclusive of impacted landholders and affected stakeholders, inclusive of Stirling's Equestrian.
- Direct engagement with Mary Valley, Gympie, and Somerset Chambers of Commerce, through September to November 2024, including select business member meetings and supplemented with ongoing engagement led by Queensland Hydro.
- Local real estate agents as well as short-term accommodation providers within 1.5-hour commute to the project site (undertaken in May 2024, for capacity analysis and proposed monitoring measures).
- Queensland Police and Emergency Services (via Queensland Hydro-led traffic management consultation, on-site health and safety provisions and development of an Emergency Services working group).

Section 4.5 summarises consultation findings informing this SA. The SAMP details the forward engagement plan for Exploratory Works.

## 2 Method

This SA has been developed and presented across the five key assessment matters required by the Queensland Government's SIA Guideline (DSDILGP, 2018) and recent revised publication in June (2025):

1. community and stakeholder engagement
2. workforce management
3. housing and accommodation
4. local business and industry procurement
5. health and community well-being.

These matters are addressed in Section 5. It aligns SIA principles with the overall social assessment process. Further, throughout the assessment process, community and stakeholder consultation data has been integrated with respect to the Exploratory Works.

The management measures outlined in the SAMP are designed to integrate into Queensland Hydro's internal systems, processes, and procedures.

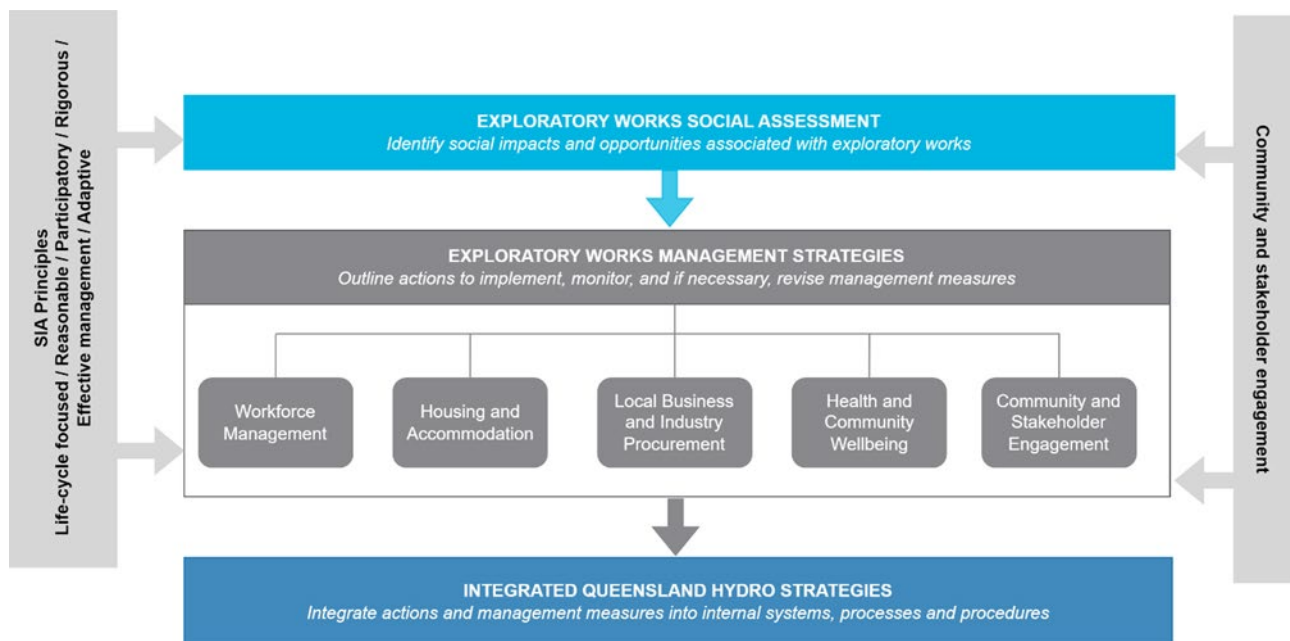


Figure 2-1 SA process

### 2.1 Assessment process

Social impacts were identified and assessed using multiple data sources, including:

- Exploratory Works project description (summarised at Section 3.2)
- Exploratory Works technical studies findings, including traffic, noise and air quality, and environmental controls set out in the CEMP (summarised at Section 3.3 and Section 5)
- demographic, employment, housing, and other community-specific data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), government agencies, and local government (see Section 4.4)

- strategic government policies, plans, and documents (summarised at Section 4.1))
- community and stakeholder engagement insights and outcomes (summarised at Section 4.5 and addressed throughout Section 5))
- websites, databases, and grey literature research, as referenced.

## 2.2 Significance assessment

The Queensland Government's SIA Guideline (DSDILGP, 2018) and (2025) publication requires a significance-based approach to be applied to the assessment of Project-specific social impact and benefits. The Exploratory Works SA demonstrates this approach, using a magnitude and likelihood assessment matrix outlined in the New South Wales SIA Guideline Technical Supplement (DPE, 2025). Details on the assessment framework, including criteria for the rating levels of 'magnitude' and 'likelihood', are presented in Figure 2.2.

The approach adopted for the SA involved:

- identification and description of potential positive and negative social impacts associated with Exploratory Works activities
- an assessment of the likelihood, and magnitude of each identified impacts, in line with criteria outlined by the social impact significance matrix
- application of symbology to the significance matrix to denote where identified social impacts are positive (+) or negative (-)
- the assessment of the likelihood, and magnitude of each identified impact, prior to management measures being applied, followed by a significance assessment after these measures are applied.

The overall impact significance was assessed by considering the interaction between likelihood and magnitude as presented through the social impact significance matrix in Figure 2.2.

		Magnitude level				
		1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood level		Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
<b>A</b>	<b>Almost certain</b>	Low	Medium	High	Very High	Very High
<b>B</b>	<b>Likely</b>	Low	Medium	High	High	Very High
<b>C</b>	<b>Possible</b>	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
<b>D</b>	<b>Unlikely</b>	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
<b>E</b>	<b>Very unlikely</b>	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

Source: SIA Guideline Technical Supplement, Social impact significance matrix (DPIE, 2023)

**Figure 2.2 Social impact significance matrix**

## 2.3 Assumptions

This SA is based on the following assumptions.

### **Exploratory Works scope**

The SA considers the scope of social impacts and/or benefits associated with all activities associated with the scope of Queensland Hydro's Exploratory Works, described in full at Section 3.2.

### **Procurement and employment**

Queensland Hydro evaluates and awards procurement packages (for goods, services and works required during Exploratory Works), using a range of consistent tendering criteria, consistent with the Queensland Procurement Policy. The criteria include a focus on Local Benefits (including local jobs apprenticeships and trainees and First Nations people) supported by the procurement activity, and use of local community and local First Nations businesses (contractors, manufacturers and supply chain) directly relating to the supply of goods and/or services.

For these procurement packages, Queensland Hydro will establish targets for local community and First Nations business participation, employment (workforce diversity), and training and skills development, which the Project will aim to achieve by the end of the Exploratory Works phase. The local employment and diversity targets will be scope specific, developed in collaboration with contractors and can be found in the monitoring framework for of the SAMP. Progress toward these industry participation and workforce management targets will be included in quarterly SAMP reporting and will be reported as a cumulative total across procurement packages, for the duration of the Exploratory Works program.

### **Workforce accommodation and management**

The following assumptions regarding workforce accommodation solutions underpin the SA:

- Two temporary workforce accommodation camps (TWACs) – referred to for this assessment as “Borgan Camp” proposed at the Lower Reservoir area, and “Walkers Top” Camp located at the Upper Reservoir area. The Walkers Top camp has been constructed, providing a total capacity of 336 beds. The Borgan Camp will be established in line with the revised schedule for Exploratory Works and workforce accommodation demand in the Lower Reservoir area. The Borgan Camp will provide an initial capacity of 168 beds with potential increase to a maximum capacity of 336 beds should this be needed later in the program). Updates to workforce modelling and impact monitoring will continue to be reported as part of Quarterly SAMP monitoring reports. Parking arrangements for workers, and camp locations are detailed in Section 7.13 of the TIA.
- Rapid Deployment Camps (RDCs) have been used by Queensland Hydro as an interim accommodation solution during TWAC construction. Where required, these RDCs have been co-located with the proposed TWAC sites, within the Exploratory Works footprint. The RDCs have included provision of limited on-site parking, with workers being transported by bus to site. This interim arrangement has been in place since early Q2 2025, and has remained in place at Walkers Top, for approximately six months, ramping down in Q4 2025 to be replaced by accommodation at Walkers Top Camp.

Throughout the development of this SA and SAMP, Queensland Hydro has remained committed to avoiding impacts on the affordability and availability of local accommodation stock. This commitment has involved:

- requiring Exploratory Works personnel to use dedicated project on-site accommodation when available
- avoiding use of local rental accommodation for workers, including contractors
- selective use of existing short-term accommodation, excluding weekend booking wherever possible, and excluding peak or exclusive booking periods.



The Work Health and Safety Act 2011, and the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 establish the primary legal framework for ensuring safe work and workforce accommodation environments in Queensland. This includes providing and maintaining a safe work environment, ensuring adequate provision of facilities that support the health and welfare of workers, and provision of training and supervision necessary to protect all persons from health and safety risks.

The Managing the Work Environment and Facilities Code of Practice 2021 includes detailed guidance for meeting these obligations, including standards for accommodation facilities. Additionally, the Queensland Development Code provides specific requirements for temporary accommodation buildings. Queensland Hydro has designed project works and accommodation arrangements in accordance with all legislative requirements, to ensure the health and safety of its workforce and contractors while accommodated on site.

#### **Workforce activity and accommodation forecast**

- The combined Exploratory Works workforce activities occurring at both the Lower and Upper Reservoirs are assessed based on a Queensland Hydro forecast, issued in September 2025 and detailed in Section 3 of the SAMP.
- The workforce profile and accommodation requirements are dependent on Queensland Hydro securing all regulatory approvals for Exploratory Works. Current assumptions include:
  - Approval to commence construction of the Borgan Camp is expected by Q4 2025, while the revised Exploratory Works schedule milestone notes Q3 2026 for the camp's construction
  - Approvals to commence Exploratory Works construction expected in Q1 2026, supporting commencement of substantive works in Q1 2027.
- The use of RDCs ahead of Borgan camp construction may not be required, as interim workforce accommodation will be available at the Walkers Top camp. Updates to workforce modelling and accommodation will be monitored and reported in the quarterly SAMP monitoring report.
- The Walkers Top Camp provides up to 336 beds on site, and when constructed Borgan Camp has potential to add a further 168-336 beds as needed later in the program.

Should there be a delay to assumed approval timeframes or planned activities, updates to the Exploratory Works forecast will be reported within the Quarterly SAMP Monitoring Report.

The Project's construction program will be based on the following standard construction hours (unless approved otherwise):

- general construction/surface works activities: Monday to Sunday, 6:30 am to 6:00 pm. No work on public holidays
- geotechnical drilling: Monday to Sunday, 6:00 am to 6:00 pm for boreholes less than 200 m deep (with some exceptions). 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for boreholes equal to or more than 200 m deep and shallower boreholes by exception
- underground construction activities and associated enabling works: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Works outside of the above listed construction hours may occur during the Project (see detail in Section 3.2.2).

## Traffic impact and road use management

Queensland Hydro has commissioned a TIA and developed an RMP for Exploratory Works. Assumptions underpinning these assessments are also relevant to the SA. Of note:

- construction of new access tracks, and upgrades to existing tracks, including waterway crossings, to enable access to geotechnical investigation sites, spoil disposal areas, and supporting infrastructure as well as the realignment of a section of Bella Creek Road, referred to as the Kingaham Creek bypass
- the Exploratory Works TIA assesses two road networks areas for access to site including the northern approach (access to the lower reservoir site from Yabba Creek Road and Bella Creek Road via a network of connecting routes linking with the Bruce Highway and surrounding towns, such as Gympie, Kandanga, and Imbil) and southern approach (access via Kilcoy to the upper reservoir site via Kilcoy Murgon Road, Sunday Creek Road and Yielo Road)
- access to the Exploratory Works Project area from Jimna / Kilcoy will be via Kilcoy-Murgon Road, a State-controlled road, along with Sunday Creek Road and Yielo Road. Minor upgrades to Yielo Road and Sunday Creek Road are required and will be undertaken in consultation with Somerset Regional Council
- the Exploratory Works RMP presents a range of measures to mitigate and manage road use impacts and addresses road conditions, traffic congestion and road safety. Contractors are also required to produce a Traffic Management Plan (TMP). These measures are reflected within the SAMP as appropriate.

## Community and stakeholder engagement

Queensland Hydro has developed a CSEP for the Exploratory Works phase. This plan supports Queensland Hydro's impact management measures and adopts principles that ensure project information is accessible through different methods and formats, and that engagement activities are tailored to reach diverse audiences including vulnerable groups.

## 2.4 Limitations

Limitations of note within this assessment are as follows:

- The SA addresses the potential social impacts and opportunities associated with Exploratory Works scope only. The Borumba PHES Main Works Project will be subject to further detailed assessment as part of the EIS and will involve a transition plan, as appropriate, for affected communities and stakeholders as these future project phases and timeframes are defined.
- The SA and SAMP are based on best available project information at the time of its preparation, including latest workforce and accommodation needs forecast, as issued by Queensland Hydro in September 2025 and the revised TIA (October 2025).
- Assumptions regarding timeframes, traffic and workforce and accommodation needs may require further adjustment according to Queensland and Commonwealth Government approval timeframes.
- ABS data used to inform analysis of baseline conditions within the community is from the 2021 Census. This data is highly likely to have been affected by COVID-19 trends, and significant changes are likely to have occurred since this time which are not reflected. Where feasible, ABS data has been supplemented by other, more recent sources to address this as of October 2025.

- The SA does not address the potential social impacts and opportunities for Traditional Owners, the Kabi Kabi People, in detail. Queensland Hydro has executed an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) and an Early Works Agreement (EWA) which incorporate measures to address potential impacts to native title and Indigenous cultural heritage matters respectively during the Exploratory Works.
- At the time of preparing this assessment, there was limited publicly available information on occupancy rates and rooms available for all short-term accommodation options near the Exploratory Works footprint. Given the fact that the Exploratory Works workforce will be housed largely in the proposed accommodation camps this data limitation is considered minor during this phase. However, to inform further studies an analysis of short-term accommodation capacity has been undertaken, informed by a combination of:
  - desktop research of -short-term accommodation listings and room/bed capacity
  - consultation with -short-term accommodation providers within 1.5 hours of the project footprint to verify capacity, capture peak periods, and understand existing working arrangements with Queensland Hydro
  - consultation with the Department of Housing and Public Works on principles for housing impact management, including agency confirmation that no existing Workforce Accommodation Camp options were available for project use within 125 km of the project footprint.

### 3 Project context

### 3.1 Background on the Borumba PHES Project

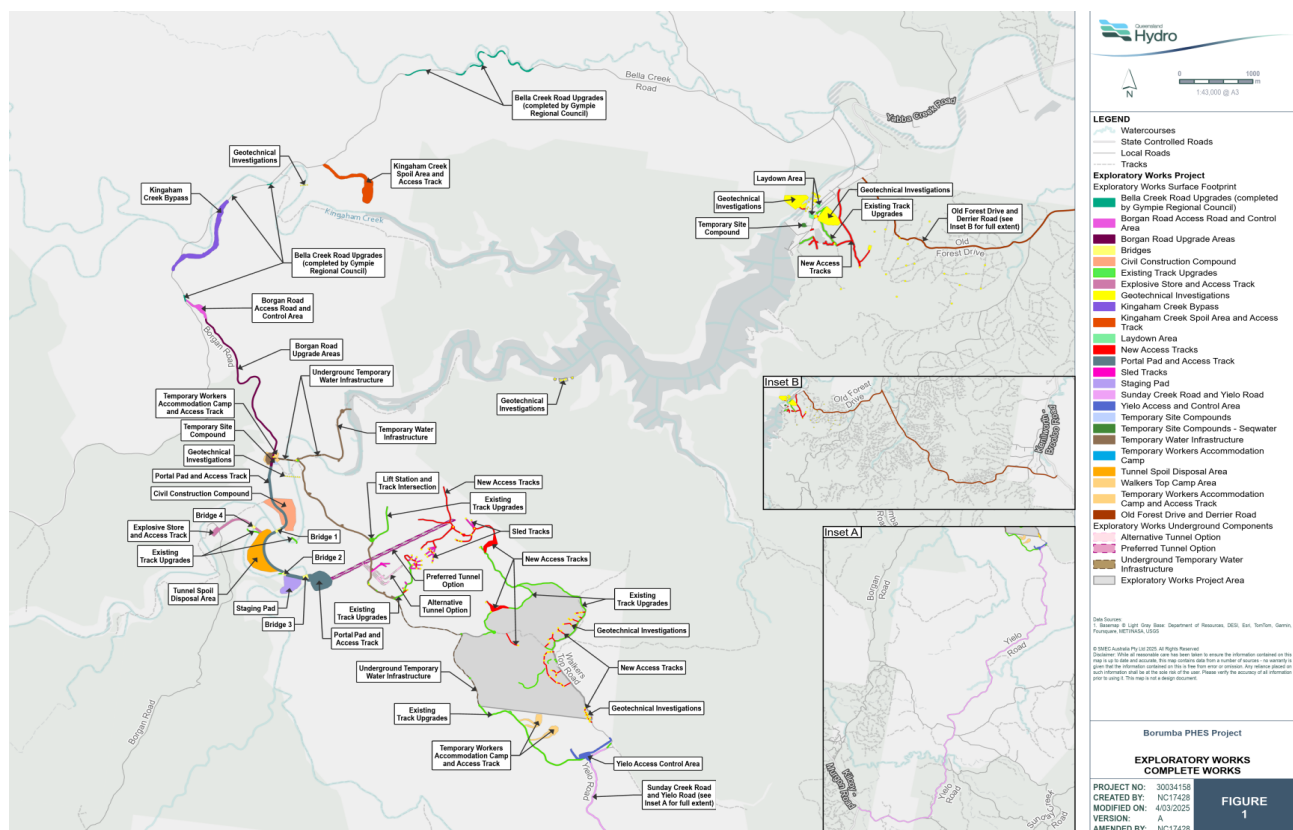
Queensland Hydro is the proponent of the Borumba Pumped Hydro Energy Storage (PHES) Project (the Borumba PHES Project), a 2,000 megawatt (MW), 48,000-megawatt hour (MWh), hydroelectric scheme to store, generate, and supply energy through a pumped hydroelectric structure linked to the existing Borumba Dam (Lake Borumba). It is located approximately 13 kilometres (km) southwest of the township of Imbil, 48 km southwest of Gympie, and 180 km northwest of Brisbane, within the Yabba Creek sub catchment of the Mary River Basin.

Queensland Hydro owns/manages approximately 2,360 ha of land southwest of Lake Borumba, secured in the 1980s for a potential future PHES site. As such, most of the properties impacted by the Borumba PHES Project are either held by Queensland Government departments or Queensland Government-owned corporations.

The Borumba PHES Project includes two phases:

- Exploratory Works – geological investigations to inform the development of the Borumba PHES Project and supporting infrastructure and activities required to support these investigations.
- Main works – the PHES Project, including the power infrastructure (powerhouse, water and access tunnels), an upper reservoir, and a lower reservoir (Lake Borumba).

Figure 3.1 illustrates the Exploratory Works scope.



### Figure 3.1 Exploratory works scope

## 3.2 Exploratory works components

The purpose of the Exploratory Works is to undertake and facilitate critical geological technical investigations to confirm the suitability of the Borumba PHES Project location and design. Investigations are particularly required in areas where key subsurface Borumba PHES Project infrastructure will be constructed due to the limited technical geological information currently available posing considerable project risk.

### 3.2.1 Scope of exploratory works

The Exploratory Works are being delivered in stages (i.e. not all works will occur at the same time), with some early works having commenced, and comprise:

- Exploratory tunnel infrastructure – comprising a portal pad, staging pad, explosives store (magazine) and associated access tracks, and exploratory tunnels.
- Geotechnical investigations (including early investigations) – comprising test pits, boreholes (deep and shallow, including some being converted to groundwater monitoring bores), and geophysics.
- Spoil disposal – two dedicated areas (tunnel spoil disposal area and Kingaham spoil disposal area) for the storage and management of excess material from exploratory tunnelling, geotechnical drilling and construction activities, as well as stockpiling of stripped topsoil.
- Site access (including early works and supporting works) – activities associated with:
  - maintenance of and minor upgrades to Bella Creek Road, Borgan Road, Sunday Creek Road and Yielo Road
  - construction of new access tracks, and upgrades to existing tracks, including waterway crossings, to enable access to geotechnical investigation sites, spoil disposal areas, and supporting infrastructure
  - the realignment of a section of Bella Creek Road, referred to as the Kingaham Creek bypass.
- Other supporting infrastructure (including early works and supporting works) – establishment of temporary workers' accommodation camps, temporary water infrastructure, a civil construction compound (laydown area), security and access control facilities, temporary facilities for site personnel (e.g. demountables for offices, ablutions and crib shed), signage, drainage and scour protection, and telecommunication facilities.
- Works to support planning and environmental approvals, including compliance activities (e.g. cadastral surveys and cultural heritage assessments).

Except for the Kingaham Creek bypass, the Exploratory Works infrastructure is largely temporary in nature. Should the main works not proceed, the Exploratory Works infrastructure will be removed and impacted areas will be remediated where appropriate. Some access tracks will remain for property access and management.

The Exploratory Works do not include activities associated with routine management of Queensland Hydro land (such as fire breaks, property fencing, access track maintenance, and any other similar activities). However, these activities are ongoing and will occur during the Exploratory Works period.



### 3.2.2 Working hours

Works for most Exploratory Works components are expected to occur predominantly during standard construction hours over a seven-day work week with a rotating roster. However, some works outside of standard hours are expected during the Exploratory Works. These include the activities associated with the exploratory tunnels and associated enabling works (e.g. shotcrete batching, spoil relocation and management), and some geotechnical drilling investigations (e.g. deep boreholes at proposed dam locations). Work outside of standard hours is expected to occur 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

The Exploratory Works construction program will be based on the following standard construction hours (unless approved otherwise).

- General construction/surface works activities:
  - Monday to Sunday, 6.30 AM - 6.00 PM
  - No work on public holidays.
- Geotechnical drilling:
  - Monday to Sunday, 6.00 AM - 6.00 PM for boreholes less than 200 m deep (with some exceptions)
  - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for boreholes equal to or more than 200 m deep and shallower boreholes by exception.
- Underground construction activities and associated enabling works:
  - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Works outside of the above construction hours may occur during Exploratory Works for the following reasons:

- movement of staff, as well as arrival and departure of construction staff during shift changes
- transport, assembly, or decommissioning of oversized plant, equipment, components or structures
- delivery of 'in time' material such as concrete, steel, and other construction materials delivered to site by heavy vehicles
- works requiring continuous construction support such as continuous concrete pours, pipe-jacking or other forms of ground support necessary to avoid a failure or construction incident
- on site movements of heavy plant, materials and equipment
- works in a road reserve
- traffic control crews, including large truck mounted crash attenuator vehicles, medium rigid vehicles, and lighting towers
- emergency works and incident response including tow-trucks for light, medium, and heavy vehicles
- alternative construction rosters to suit delivery or in response to industrial relations issues
- various low-intensity activities.

Where work outside the standard hours (including night works) is required, the works will only proceed on an as required basis and with the appropriate approvals.

### 3.3 Integration of technical study findings

A range of technical studies have been undertaken to determine the level of environmental and social impact of the Exploratory Works program. These studies include a Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (NVIA), Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQA), and TIA. These assessments have informed the environmental controls and management measures for the Exploratory Works phase, including CEMP and RMP.

### 3.4 Workforce and accommodation requirement

#### 3.4.1 Key activities and roles

Table 3.1 identifies the main activities for the key exploratory work areas, including the lower reservoir, portal/tunnel area and upper reservoir respectively. The workforce profiles for these activities have been shaped by the scope requirements in each area and are defined in Queensland Hydro's procurement packages.

**Table 3.1 Area, workforce activities and roles**

Indicative roles outlined by Queensland Hydro procurement packages	Lower Res	Portal/Tunnel	Upper Res
Geotech (drillers, support, TSM, wireline, geologists, QH)	✓	✓	✓
Underground Exploratory, TSM, and QH support		✓	
Civil Surface Works Contractors and QH support	✓	✓	✓
Survey Control Network	✓		✓
Road upgrades – Bella Creek Road (staged), Old Forrest Drive (Main Works enabling), Yabba Creek Road (TMR legacy / No regrets works)	✓		
Yield Rd - initial upgrades (curve widening & grids) / Main Works enabling upgrade			✓
Communications infrastructure upgrades	✓	✓	✓
Lower reservoir quarry preparations	✓		
RDC establishment	✓		✓
Cultural heritage monitors and advisors (Kabi Kabi)	✓	✓	✓
General QH support (safety, enviro, compliance, interface)	✓	✓	✓
Environmental investigation consultants	✓		✓
Alternate access to Lake Borumba recreation facilities	✓		
TWAC camp build	✓		✓
Powerlink / Energex investigation and planning	✓		✓

Indicative roles outlined by Queensland Hydro procurement packages	Lower Res	Portal/Tunnel	Upper Res
Camp operators	✓		✓
Medical services and security	✓	✓	✓

### 3.4.2 Histogram

Figure 3.2 illustrates the combined forecast for the Exploratory Works workforce, covering both the Lower and Upper Reservoirs. This forecast, assumes:

- approvals to commence construction of the lower camps (Borgan) are expected by Q4 2025
- approvals to commence Exploratory Works construction are expected in Q4 2025, supporting commencement of substantive works in Q1 2026
- while the Borgan RDC is not yet constructed, interim workforce accommodation will be available at the Walkers Top camp
- the Walkers Top Camp provides an established 336 beds for Exploratory Works, with Borgan Camp proposed in 2027 to offer an initial capacity to 168 beds (with potential increase to the 336 as needed later in the program).

The workforce activity forecast highlights based on the current scheduling and assumptions:

- during 2025, the combined workforce will range between 20 and 80 personnel. The workforce will continue to ramp up through 2026, primarily associated with Upper Reservoir works, reaching 164 personnel in November 2026. During 2027 the combined workforce will range from 240 personnel to 270 personnel and will primarily reflect the ramp up of Exploratory Works in the Lower Reservoir area
- the Lower Reservoir area workforce will remain with less than 10 personnel onsite (accommodated at Walkers Top Camp, until early 2027. By June 2027, Queensland Hydro estimates bed requirements for 221 workers associated with the Lower Reservoir Works area.

Commonwealth and Queensland Government approvals are not yet finalised and the workforce ramp-up for Exploratory Works may be subject to further change. Queensland Hydro's current forecast for accommodation bed provision on-site currently exceeds predicted demand but provides surety that the works program will not adversely or significantly affect the availability or affordability of existing local accommodation options. Updates to the predicted workforce profile and accommodation requirements will be presented in the quarterly SAMP reports.

Figure 3.2 to Figure 3.7 present the workforce and accommodation forecasting issued by Queensland Hydro in September 2025, together with proposed footprint designs for the Walkers Top and Borgan Camps.

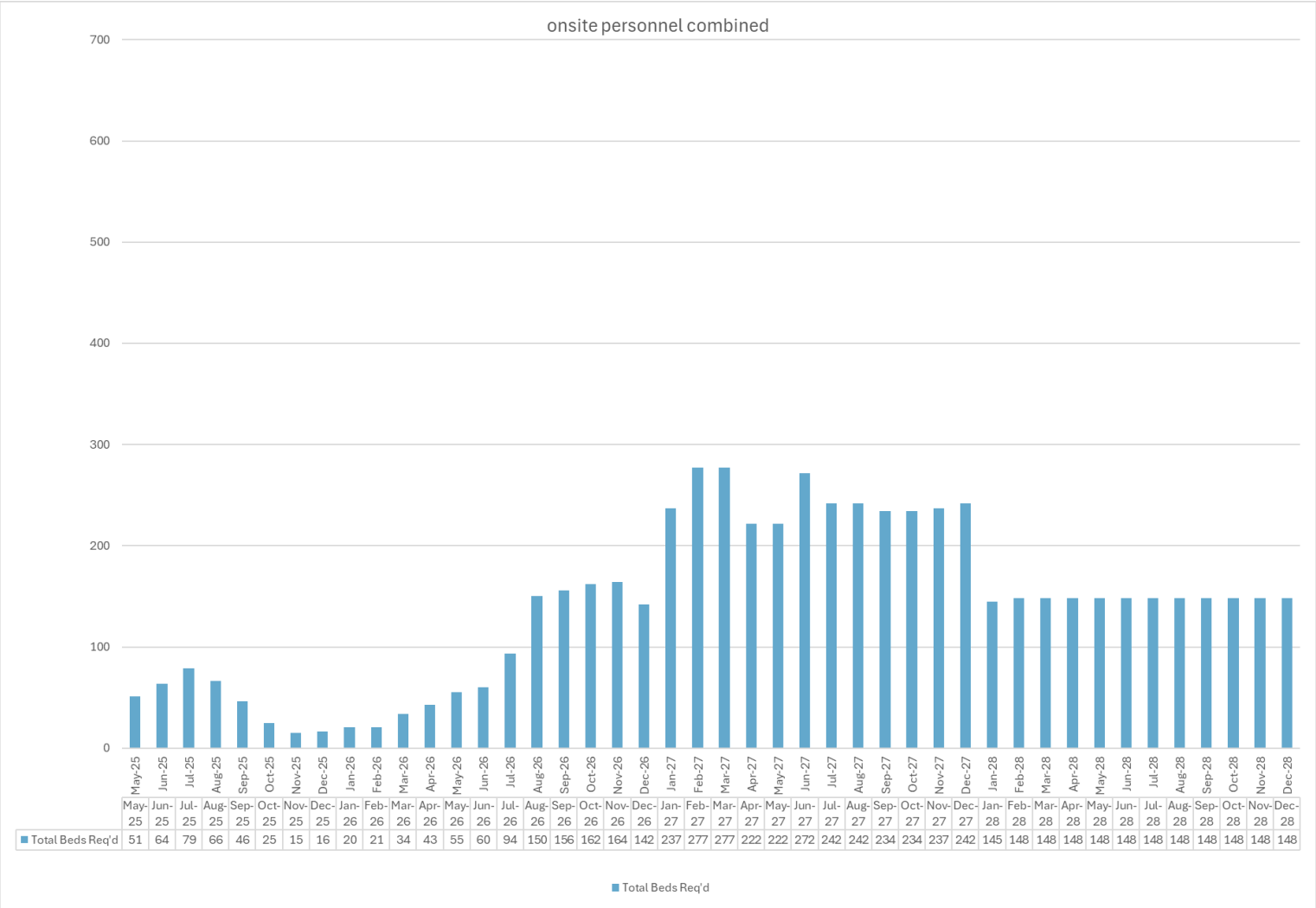
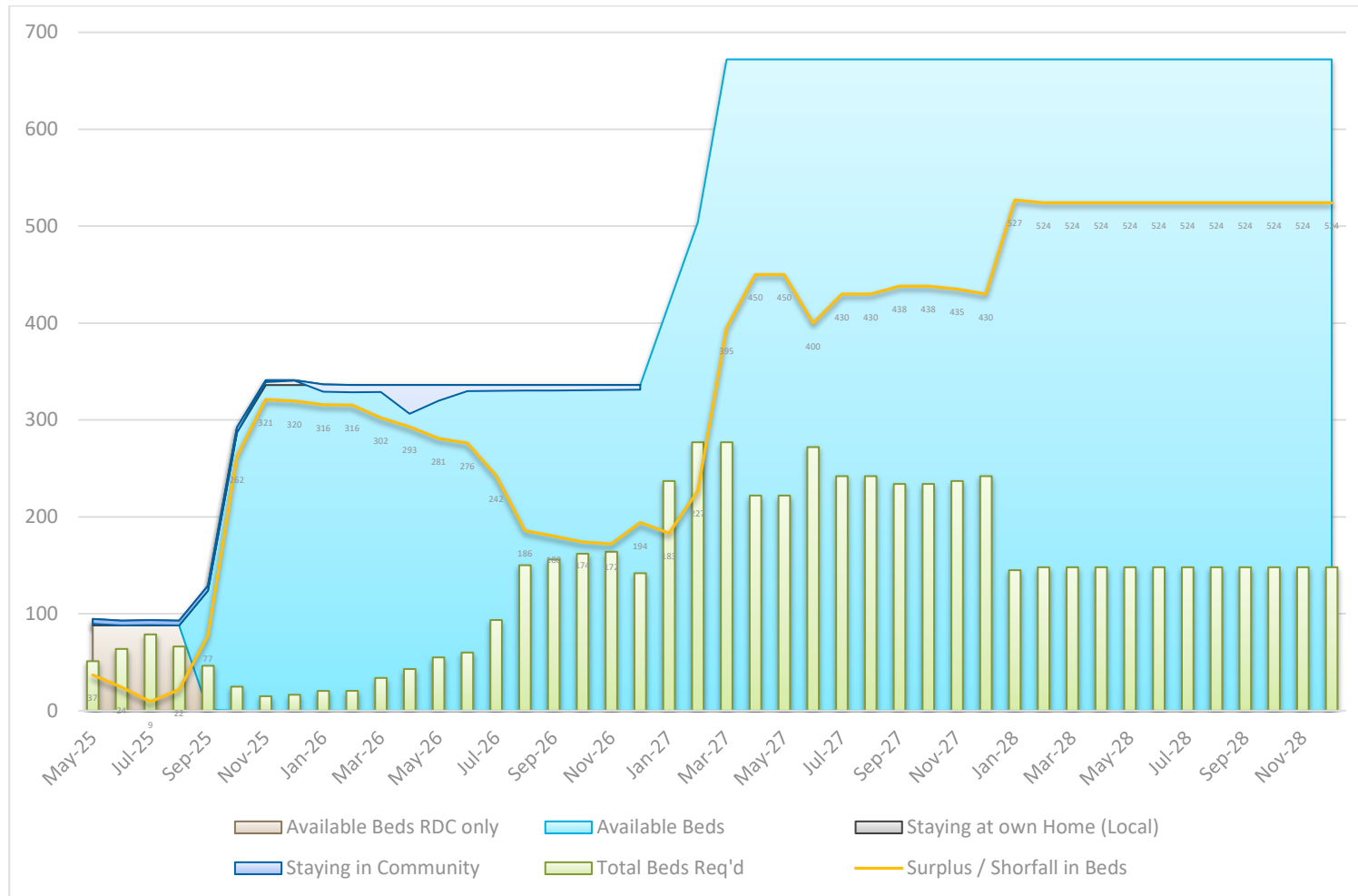
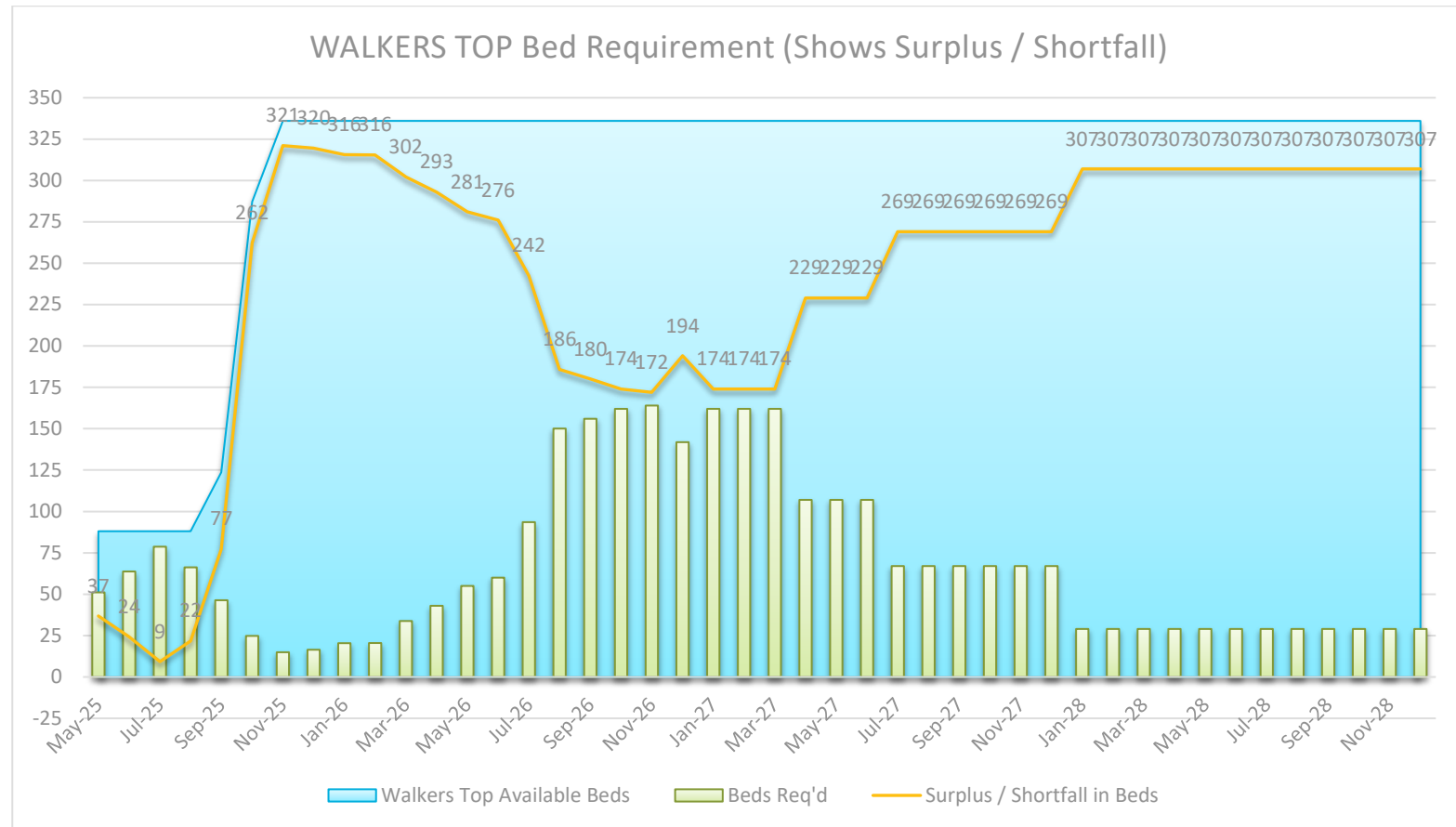


Figure 3.2 Exploratory Works manning forecast – maximum reasonable assessment

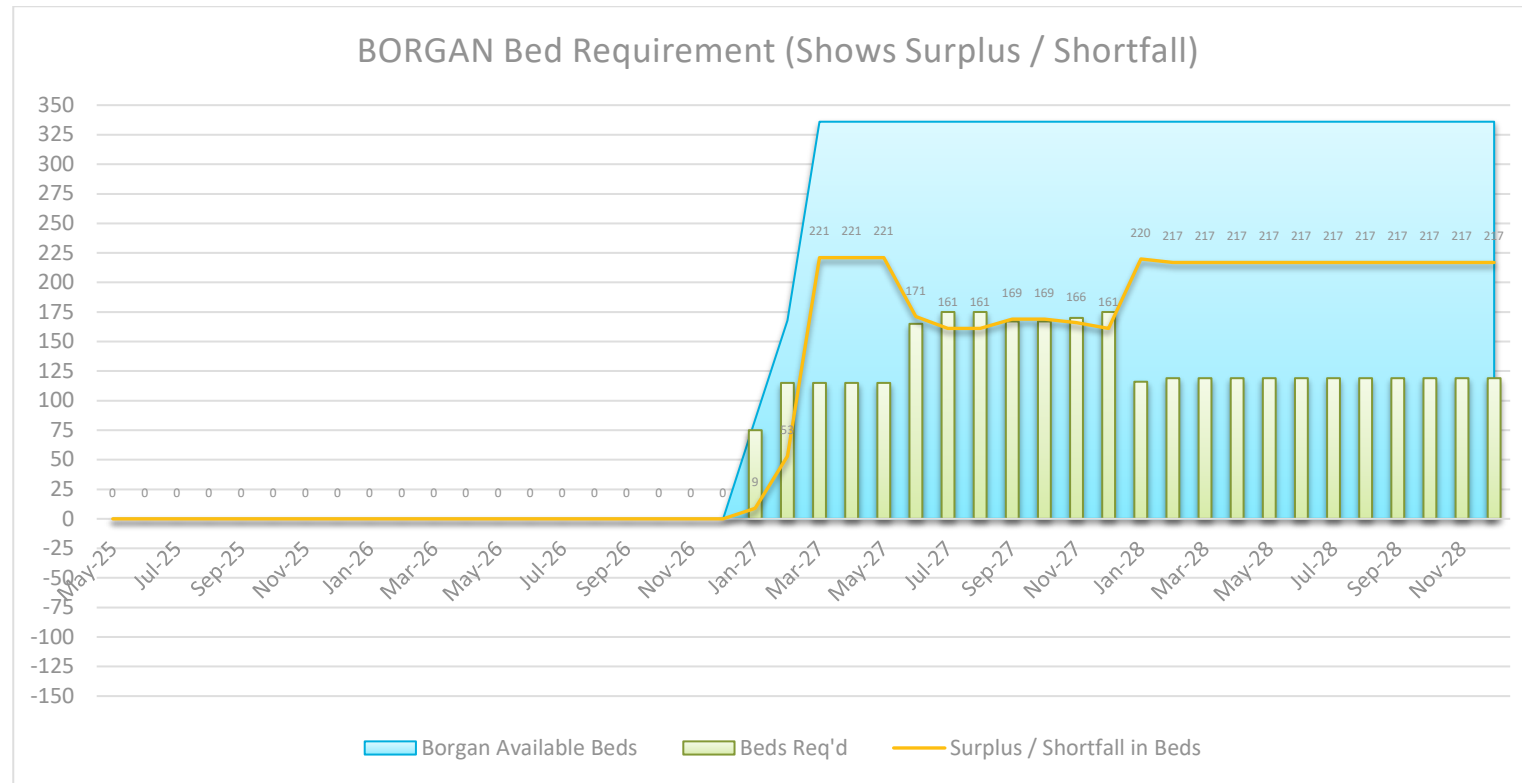


**Figure 3.3 Combined Exploratory Works bed requirement forecast – maximum reasonable assessment**

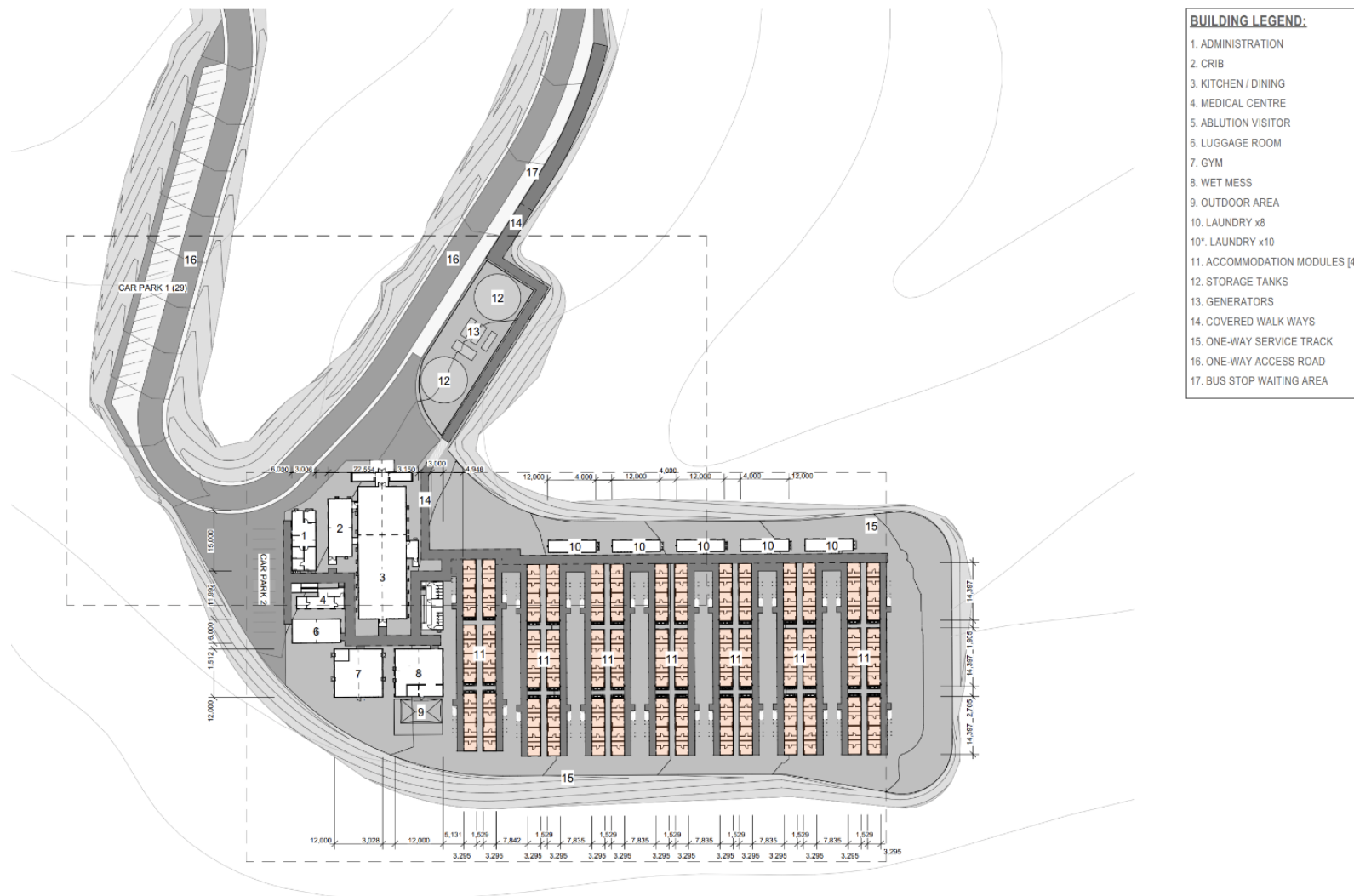




**Figure 3.4 Upper Reservoir (Walkers Top) Exploratory Works bed requirement forecast – maximum reasonable assessment**

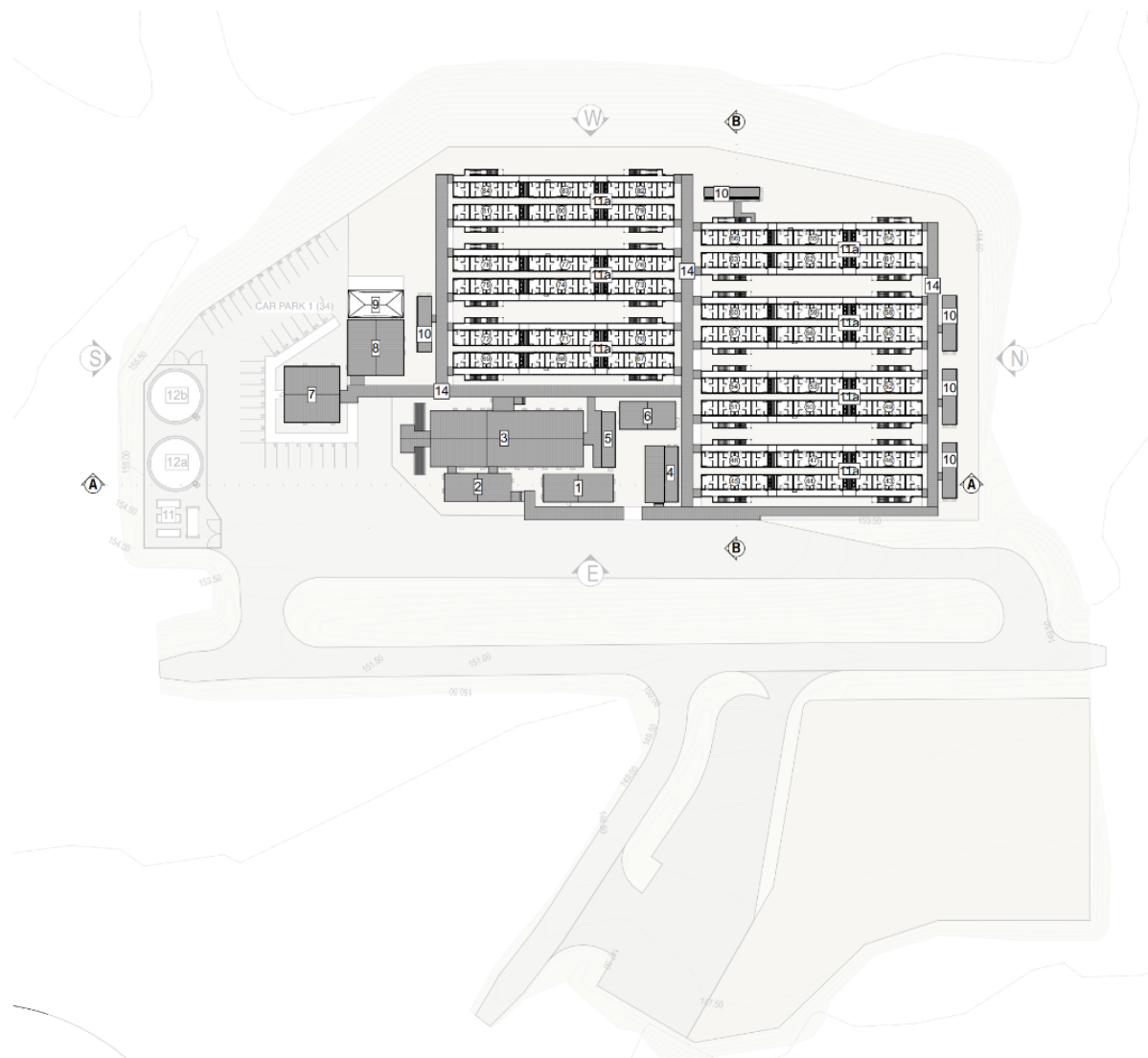


**Figure 3.5 Lower Reservoir (Borgan) Exploratory Works bed requirement forecast – maximum reasonable assessment**



**Figure 3.6** TWAC configuration for Upper Reservoir works area (indicative)

BUILDING LEGEND:	
1.	ADMINISTRATION
2.	CRIB
3.	KITCHEN / DINING
4.	MEDICAL CENTRE
5.	ABLUTION VISITOR
6.	LUGGAGE ROOM
7.	GYM
8.	WET MESS
9.	OUTDOOR AREA
10.	LAUNDRY x8
11a.	6x 4 Person Accommodation
11b.	2x 4 Person Accommodation + 4x 2 Family Accommodation
12a.	SEWAGE STORAGE TANK
12b.	POTABLE WATER STORAGE TANK
13.	3x GENERATORS + FUEL TANK + GMSB
14.	COVERED WALK WAYS



**Figure 3.7** TWAC configuration for Lower Reservoir works area (indicative)

## 4 Social study area

### 4.1 Local and regional planning context

Table 4.1 provides an overview of the social and economic policies and strategies relevant to the Project area. This table describes how the Project may contribute to or align with these local and regional directions. This local and regional planning context was current at the time of submission of the Exploratory Works SA and SAMP to Queensland Government. The regulatory context for Exploratory Works is described in Section 2.2.

**Table 4.1 Policy and planning context**

Strategy / policy	Alignment
Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan 2023 (DSDILGP, 2022a)	The Wide Bay Burnett region has experienced strong uptake in renewable energy development and anticipates further and significant growth inclusive of the Borumba PHES Project. Queensland Hydro's Exploratory Works will lay the foundations to inform the Borumba PHES Project and support the region's renewable energy transition.
Gympie Region Community Plan 2030 (Gympie Regional Council, 2011)	<p>The Gympie Region Community Plan 2030 (Gympie Regional Council, 2011) sets priorities for the future of the LGA, based on the results of a comprehensive community engagement program. Engagement outcomes include an action to:</p> <p>“3.1.e Mary Valley and South: Increasing the capacity of people and organisations, maintaining and enhancing services that are available, encouraging social cohesion, and increasing economic activity within small communities.”</p> <p>The plan also includes priorities around supporting diversification of agricultural businesses to improve viability and, critically, an advocacy priority to “Encourage the development of further accommodation for visitors” in the Mary Valley.</p> <p>The Community Plan also identifies support for implementation of the Mary Valley Community and Economic Action Plan (Mary Valley Renewal Team, 2010). The Action Plan sets a business objective of developing more accommodation and provides cabins as an example of desirable accommodation types.</p>
Gympie Region Economic Development Strategy 2025 – 2029 (Gympie Regional Council, 2025)	<p>Endorsed in November 2024, this Strategy provides the framework for fostering economic prosperity, business diversity, and community vibrancy in the Gympie region over the next five years and beyond. The strategy guides investment and business growth while identifying 44 priority actions under four key pillars:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Attracting investment and innovation across established industries</li><li>2. Supporting business diversity to ensure local enterprises can thrive</li><li>3. Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce that meets needs of the region</li><li>4. Enhancing Gympie's appeal as a desirable place to live, work and learn.</li></ol>
Gympie Environment Strategy 2018–2023 (Gympie Regional Council, 2018)	This strategy sets the direction for retention of high-value natural environments in the region and recognises the importance of renewable energy sources, biodiversity, water quality, awareness in the community, and education opportunities for landholders.

Strategy / policy	Alignment
Gympie Region Tourism Strategy (GRTS) 2019–2024 (Gympie Regional Council, 2019)	<p>The GRTS recognises Lake Borumba as a tourism asset of the Mary Valley, with the potential to generate new or additional tourism and recreation opportunities. The Gympie Region Tourism Strategy 2019-2024 (Gympie Regional Council 2019) identifies key strategies for the Mary River region include development of a boutique accommodation option, with investment from an outside interest. This strategy is intended to support overarching objectives to target key group markets, including business, leisure, and weddings. Strategy actions include:</p> <p>Action 1.5: “Investigate new tourism revenue options and segment including First Nations cultural experiences, voluntourism and environmental tourism internships.”</p> <p>Action 2.5: “Work with Mary Valley Stakeholders to broaden the tourism experience in food, lifestyle and entertainment.”</p> <p>Action 2.8 “Encourage tourism operators to improve and enhance their tourism experiences in response to consumer demand.”</p> <p>Action 4.6 “Encourage and facilitate an ethos of “You’re welcome” in the region’s culture and approach including those from different backgrounds and with accessibility needs.”</p>
Somerset Social Plan (Somerset Regional Council, 2023)	<p>Key concerns for improvement of the social fabric in the Somerset LGA include finding ways for their aging population to remain healthy, connected, and active within the community, with access to suitable housing, and exploring alternative education for young people disengaging from high schools and capitalising on regional growth e.g. tourist visits. Identified strategies include:</p> <p>HW 3. Advocate for and encourage local programs and services to prevent mental illness and social isolation.</p> <p>HW 4. Promote health and well-being through sporting and recreation activities.</p> <p>DI 1. Encourage a welcoming and inclusive Somerset community by working with businesses and community.</p> <p>AP 1. Promote active aging in the community and aging in place through programs and activities that support people to safely and confidently stay in their own homes and be part of the community.</p> <p>AP 3. Recognise and utilise the skills and talents of older members of the community.</p> <p>FCY 2. Increase opportunities for alternative education and training.</p> <p>HA 1. Plan and advocate for diverse housing options in the Somerset region.</p> <p>CR 1. Lead post-pandemic recovery responses and plan to build resilience to better respond to future emergencies and crisis situations.</p>
Somerset Tourism Strategy 2021–2025 (Somerset Regional Council, 2021)	<p>This strategy aims to promote the Somerset Region as a premier regional visitor destination defined by a diversity of authentic experiences built on its natural features, iconic attractions, and its recreational, heritage, and cultural assets. As such, quality of the natural environment, infrastructure, and services is paramount.</p>

## 4.2 Social study area

The social study area of Queensland Hydro's Exploratory Works activities is determined by:

- the scale and nature of Exploratory Works activities
- the regional and local development context
- key community characteristics that may be affected by Exploratory Works, whether positively or negatively
- how social impacts, whether positive or negative, may be reasonably perceived or experienced by different stakeholders.

Distinct localities within this social study area have been defined using the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), a hierarchy of social geography developed to reflect the location of people and communities. These geographies are used by the ABS for the publication and analysis of official socio-economic statistics, including the ABS Census of Population and Housing (ABS, 2023).

Analysis of baseline characteristics for each of the social study areas within the broader Mary River Catchment, are described in the following sub-sections. This is important context to understanding community identity and values within the social study area.

**Table 4.2 Exploratory Works social study area**

Study area	Statistical geography	Relevance to Exploratory Works scope and footprint
Exploratory Works footprint and immediate surrounds	SA1 31903151403 Jimna SAL 31443	Includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>proposed new Borumba Dam and reservoir</li> <li>proposed new upper dam, reservoir, and underground infrastructure</li> <li>properties along Yabba Creek Road and Bella Creek Road</li> <li>properties along Yielo Road.</li> </ol> Excludes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imbil town centre.</li> </ol>
Nearby communities	Imbil UCL	Imbil (east of the project site in the Gympie LGA) and Jimna (south-west of the project site in Somerset LGA) are the towns closest to the project.
	Brooloo SAL	
	Kandanga UCL	The closest regional population centre and service hub is the town of Gympie, in Gympie LGA.
	Amamoor SAL	
	Dagun SAL	Kenilworth is located south-east of the project site in the Sunshine Coast LGA, on the route toward Brisbane.
	Gympie UCL	
	Kenilworth UCL	Imbil, Brooloo, Kandanga, Amamoor, Dagun, and Kenilworth are part of the Mary Valley tourism region (along with Conondale and Crystal Waters, which are further from the project), and are located along the route from Lake Borumba to Gympie.
	Jimna SAL	
	Kilcoy UCL	
Project Area	Gympie LGA	The Exploratory Works footprint, and most of the potentially affected nearby communities, fall within the Gympie and Somerset LGAs.
	Somerset LGA	
Catchment Study Area	Mary River Catchment	The Mary River Catchment spans across the four LGAs of Gympie, Somerset, Fraser Coast, and Sunshine Coast.
Regional Area	LGAs outside of Project Area and within 125 km of Lake Borumba	The Regional Area comprises LGAs outside the Project Area and within a 125 km radius of Lake Borumba, adhering to the Queensland Procurement Policy 2023 (State of Queensland, 2023). The ten LGAs in the Regional Area include: Brisbane, Cherbourg Aboriginal, Fraser Coast, Ipswich, Moreton Bay, Noosa, North Burnett, South Burnett, Sunshine Coast, and Toowoomba.
Area of reference (benchmarking)	Queensland	Socio-economic data for Queensland provides a comparator which informs an understanding of social trends and characteristics across the social study areas.



## 4.3 Social study area characteristics

### 4.3.1 Exploratory Works footprint and immediate surrounds

The Exploratory Works footprint, encompassing Lake Borumba and its surroundings (SA1 31903151403), primarily lies within the Gympie Local Government Area (LGA). The southern portion, including the southern access route along Yielo Road, falls within the Jimna Statistical Area Level 1 (SAL) in the Somerset LGA. This southern area has a relatively small population, including the nearby community of Jimna (further discussed in Section 4.3.3). The Exploratory Works footprint and its immediate surroundings include large national park and state forest areas, attracting recreational users and visitors. According to the 2021 Census, the statistical area encompassing the Exploratory Works footprint had 731 residents and 358 private dwellings. Properties within this area are largely rural residential or used for cattle grazing.

The population in the Lake Borumba area has notably increased over the past five years, increasing by 130 people between the 2016 and 2021 Censuses. Conversely, the population of the Jimna SAL declined by 21 people during the same period, from 91 in 2016 to 70 in 2021 (ABS, 2021). Jimna is a small rural residential community with limited facilities, including a public hall, a tourist information centre, and Jimna Base Camp, which offers short-stay accommodation, as well as a campground area to accommodate large-group bookings and events.

Borumba Dam was constructed in 1963 and subsequently upgraded in 1997 and 2009. The dam, which is part of the Mary Valley Water Supply Scheme owned and operated by Seqwater, provides water for both drinking and irrigation.

Lake Borumba is a popular site for tourism and recreation, with activities such as kayaking, fishing, paddleboarding, rowing, camping, trail bike riding, bushwalking, birdwatching, and picnicking. Nearby recreational facilities include a boat ramp, a day-use area with BBQs, public toilets, and shelters, which are open seven days a week (SEQ Water, 2024). Two commercial campgrounds are located near Lake Borumba: Lake Borumba Caravan and Camping Ground (800 metres downstream of the dam) and Borumba Deer Park (2.5 km downstream).

The area also serves as an important site for outdoor education, with the Marrapatta Memorial Outdoor Education Centre, operated by Brisbane Girls Grammar, hosting activities such as camping, mountain bike riding, canoeing, and hiking for students. Annual events near the dam include the “Borumba Dam Freshwater Fish-Off,” hosted in February by the Sunshine Coast Sportfishing Club.

### 4.3.2 Impacted land and road network

At the time of this assessment, impacted landholders comprised several State Government and private landholdings impacted by the Exploratory Works program (see also Glossary). These impacted landholders include:

- the State of Queensland represented by the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI)
- the State of Queensland represented by the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (DLGWV)
- Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development (DNRMMRRD)
- Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority (Seqwater)
- private landholders.

Queensland Hydro will continue to assess and monitor impacts to private landholders and any further changes to impacted landholdings will be included in the quarterly SAMP reports.

Other stakeholders affected by Exploratory Works are identified as stakeholders living, working or travelling near the Exploratory Works activities (see Figure 3.1) or on access routes where properties, businesses, cultural heritage, employment, health, lifestyle or other interests may change as a direct result of the Project.

The TIA for Exploratory Works program identified local roads that will experience more than a 5% increase in traffic due to the Exploratory Works. In total, Queensland Hydro has identified 794 land parcels along these affected access routes. Section 3.3 provides more information on the methodology and findings.

Table 4.3 shows the breakdown of impacted land parcels along these roads.

**Table 4.3**      **Number of land parcels impacted by traffic**

Road name	Number of land parcels
Kilcoy Murgon Road	181
Moy Pocket Road	82
Mary Valley Road	374
Imbil Brooloo Road	13
Western Creek Road	8
Yabba Creek Road	58
Bella Creek Road	24
Borgan Road	17
Mary Valley Link Road	15
Yielo Road	19
Sunday Creek Road	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>794</b>

#### 4.3.3      Nearby communities

This section summarises key characteristics and baseline indicators for each nearby community identified as potentially affected by the Exploratory Works program, either due to proximity to the Exploratory Works footprint or by proximity to the workforce and material transport routes to and from each reservoir area.



Located 13 km north-east of Lake Borumba, Imbil is the nearest town to the dam and part of the Gympie LGA. Founded during the 1868 gold rush, Imbil features several heritage-listed buildings. Despite its small size, the town has a range of amenities, including a hardware store, gallery, pharmacy, bakery, and hotel. Recent changes in the local business landscape include the closure of the Friendly Grocer store and increased fruit and vegetable availability at the service station.

The town's social facilities include parks, the Imbil Showgrounds, Imbil Community and Sports Club, Imbil Mary Valley Scout Hall, and Imbil Uniting Church. Accommodation in the area includes the Railway Hotel, Borumba Deer Park, Imbil Motel (currently close and under redevelopment), Imbil Country Cabins, Imbil Camping Retreat, and Airbnb rentals. Imbil is also the starting point of the Mary Valley Rail Trail.

Surrounded by state forests, Imbil regularly hosts outdoor events like the Queensland Rally Championship and Jungle Love Festival. The town's 2021 population was 467, with a total First Nations population of 18, and a median age of 51—significantly higher than the Queensland median of 38. Imbil's aging population is likely to contribute to the high proportion of lone-person households, people needing assistance, and long-term health conditions. Almost a third of households earn less than \$650 per week, with no households earning more than \$3,000 per week. This highlights a particularly high level of socioeconomic disadvantage among elderly residents.

#### i Brooloo



Located 16 km east of Lake Borumba, Brooloo is a small rural community. The town is the endpoint of the Mary Valley Rail Trail and features the Brooloo Bluff hiking trail. Community facilities include the Numabulla Men's Shed and Brooloo Fire Station.

Brooloo had a population of 369 in the 2021 Census, with a median age of 52. A small number of residents identified as Indigenous (12 in total), and only 7 residents reported speaking a language other than English at home. Just over half of the resident population participated in the labour force (50.7%), and the local unemployment rate was 5.5%. Of note, the female unemployment rate was higher than the state average (15% compared to 9.7%).

A high proportion of people own property in this area, with 45.1% owning their house outright and contributing to a combined total of 85.1% of people owning their dwelling either outright or with mortgage. The area also had a high proportion of unoccupied dwellings (16.6% compared to 9.3% across Queensland), which may be an indicator of a higher number of investment properties and properties used as holiday or visitor accommodation.

Brooloo had twice the average rate of arthritis, with 18.2% of people having this long-term health condition. The population also had higher rates of asthma, kidney disease, lung conditions, mental health conditions, and strokes than the state average.

#### ii Kandanga



Kandanga is a small town 20 km north of Lake Borumba. Although there is a string of towns with the name Kandanga (Upper Kandanga, Kandanga Creek, Kandanga), this section focusses solely on the urban centre of Kandanga. The town under its present name began when a railway and post office opened in 1914. Now, the town hosts the Kandanga State School and a few stores including a post office, farm store, snack bar, and beauty services. Community facilities include a tennis club, a country club and golf course, and Kandanga Hall and Swimming Pool. The Kandanga Hotel and an RV Park provide accommodation. The Mitchell Creek Rock 'n' Blues Fest, which is hosted in Upper Kandanga in September, is a draw for tourism in the region.

Kandanga's 2021 population of 234 were slightly older than the state average, with a median age of 42. The town had no people who identified as Indigenous on the Census, and 3.8% who spoke a language other than English at home. Half of the working age population participated in the labour force, but only 33.3% of youth and 39% of females. The town had a relatively even spread of reported occupations, with the most common being technicians and trades workers at 18.8%. Median weekly household income was low, at \$1,078 and 18.3% of households earned less than \$650 a week. In Kandanga fewer people (17% less than the state average) reported none of the assessed long term health conditions. Only 44.9% of people reported that they had no long-term health conditions. Furthermore, 10.3% of the population had need for assistance.

### iii Amamoor



Amamoor is a small town 15 minutes' drive south of Gympie and is located adjacent to Amamoor State Forest and Forest Reserve, which are home to more than 120 species of birds. The town offers a railway station, a heritage style general store and post office, a state school, cafes, and a pharmacy. Social facilities include parks and playgrounds, a community hall, and the Gympie Model Flyers Club.

In August, the town hosts the region's most famous event, the Gympie Music Muster. The annual muster is held at Amamoor Creek and attracts more than 23,000 people. Boasting live country music for four days, it is Australia's second largest country music festival and a massive boon to the area's tourism, community development, cultural significance, and economic development (Edwards, 2012; Gibson, 2016). Since its inception in 1982 as a fundraising event, the Gympie Music Muster has returned over \$20 million to community and charities (Muster, n.d).

In 2021 the locality was home to 720 permanent residents, who had a median age of 47. Other key characteristics of the population included that only 2.9% of the population is between 20 and 29 years old, Compared to 6.3% in broader Queensland. The top three industries of employment in Amamoor were primary education (3.7%) combined primary and secondary education (3.7%), and aged care and residential services (3.4%).

### iv Dagon



Dagon is a small town 39 km north of Lake Borumba and 17 km south of Gympie. Key features of the township are a railway station, Dagon State School, and the Mary Valley Timbers yard. In 2021 the locality was home to 137 permanent residents, who had a median age of 52. Other key characteristics of the population included a relatively high proportion of males (56.9%), an extremely low number of people between 15 and 24 (2.2%, compared to Queensland's 18.7%), and a high number of older people over 65 years (28.5%, compared to 17% of Queensland's population).

### v Gympie



The regional city of Gympie is 170 km north of Brisbane and 50 km inland from Noosa along the Bruce Highway. Gympie is the main service centre of the region and namesake for the broader LGA.

Gympie is a relatively large rural town, with a retail centre, recreation facilities, and accommodation options. Gympie has a range of health services, including a hospital, medical centres, allied health clinic, women's health clinic, mental health services, community health centre, and dental clinics. It also has a train that connects to Brisbane via a three-hour train ride and an aerodrome. Given that the town was built along a river, Gympie is susceptible to flooding and has been victim to 12 major floods since establishment, with flooding that has been over 20 m deep. The most recent flood in 2022 was the largest in over a hundred years at 22.96 m, just shy of the record 1893 flood which reached 25.45 m.

The town was initially established along the Mary River after gold had been discovered in 1867. Once gold had been discovered, a rush of people came to the town and buildings were erected in a characteristically irregular layout. The discovery of gold in the area is claimed to have saved Queensland from bankruptcy.

Mining in Gympie historically brought many educational, transport, financial, religious, and health institutions to the town, and many of these buildings have now become heritage listed. The historical museum is a popular destination for local history buffs and families, hosting regular community events like weekend markets, historical activities for school holidays, and 'The Steam Festival'.

Gympie had a population of 22,424 in 2021 and a median age of 43, which like the rest of the region is higher than the state average. Gympie had a high proportion of one parent families (23.6%) compared to the state average (16.8%) and lone person households (29.9% compared to 24.7%). Slightly over half of the working age population (50.1%) participated in the labour force (compared to the state average 61.6%). Female participation in the workforce was significantly lower than the state average (48.4%) at 39%. The median household income was also lower than the state average (at \$1,165) at \$1,129. The area experienced higher rates of every assessed long-term health condition and 11.2% of people had need for care assistance.

#### vi Kenilworth



Kenilworth is a small town 32 km south of Lake Borumba and known for its dairy products. This town is part of the Sunshine Coast LGA and is part of the region's rural hinterland. Conondale National Park and Imbil State Forest surround this town, making it a hub for tourists and day trippers looking to experience outdoor recreation. The town hosts small events such as monthly/weekly markets, Kenilworth Artfest (April), Kenilworth Show and Rodeo (September).

Kenilworth had a population of 272 people on Census night 2021 and is growing at a relatively high rate. Similar to many towns in the study area, the average age was high at 50, with 26.5% of people being over the age of 65. The town has a low labour force participation rate, especially for women (39.6%) and youth (36.4%). There was a relatively high percentage of people who worked in the manufacturing industry at 11.6%, likely due to the presence of local cheese manufacturer Kenilworth Dairies. The median weekly household income was very low in this region (\$979) compared to the state average (\$1,675), as was the proportion of people who had completed year 12 or equivalent. There were also higher rates of arthritis, asthma, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and mental health conditions than the state average, although it is possible that these high incidences are associated with the higher-than-average age of the population.

#### vii Jimna



Jimna is the closest town to the south-west of the project at 14 km from the southern portion of the Exploratory Works site, which is proposed to be accessed via Yielo Rd. Jimna is a small rural town and locality in the Somerset LGA, and the Jimna SAL constitutes part of the Exploratory Works footprint. On Census night 2021, the SAL was home to 70 permanent residents, 63.2% of whom were male, and the area had a median age of 46. Another key characteristic was the relatively low median weekly household income of \$749. The town has a strong character focused on its heritage buildings and natural setting within the Jimna State Forest, which offers camping facilities and walking trails connected to eucalypt forests, and the many local creeks and streams. In Jimna there is a community hall, a tourist information centre, and a fire tower and forestry office located just outside the township. The old state school, which closed in 2009, is now known as 'Jimna Base Camp' and offers accommodation, camping, and an events venue.



Kilcoy is a regional service centre 120 km south of Lake Borumba, within the boundary of the Somerset LGA. The town initially began as a sheep station but now is primarily known for its abattoir. The town had a population of 2,351 according to the 2021 Census, which was 23.9% greater than the previous Census in 2016. The town has a high proportion of people who speak a language other than English at home (23.1%), especially compared to other towns in the area.

It is known as the region's multicultural centre, with various multicultural restaurants and grocery stores, and 33.9% of the population's parents were both born overseas, compared to 27.9% of Queensland. Of the total population, 56.1% were born in Australia and 21.9% (514 residents) were born in the Philippines. Kilcoy Global Foods (operating as Kilcoy Pastoral Company) is an abattoir and key local business known for its culturally diverse workforce. The population of Kilcoy are closer in age to the state average compared to the rest of the region, with the median age of the town being 37. This likely influences the labour force participation rate, which is higher than other nearby communities at 56.8%. Kilcoy also has a low unemployment rate (4.0%), and a very high proportion of people employed in manufacturing at 42.3%. This town also had the highest proportion of households earning more than \$3,000 a week amongst the nearby communities at 14.0%.



Winya is a rural locality, approximately 58 km south of the proposed Upper Reservoir area, within the Somerset LGA. The locality lies along the D'Aguilar Highway, with Winya Road serving as the main local road that also connects to Kilcoy Murgon Road, bypassing Kilcoy township. At the 2021 Census, Winya had a population of 127 people – a significant increase on its reported population of 55 people in 2016. The population is generally older, with a median age of 41 years, and over a quarter of residents aged 65 or older. The population also comprised more males than females, and a higher proportion of lone-person or group households compared to Queensland averages.

There is no social infrastructure in Winya with residents typically travelling to Kilcoy for services. Kilcoy Global Foods, located within Winya, is a key employer for Kilcoy residents. The labour force in Winya was very small in 2021, comprising just 67 people, with a participation rate of 58.8% and no recorded unemployment. Winya recorded a higher median weekly individual income (\$959) compared to Queensland (\$787), but a lower median weekly household income (\$1,437) compared to the state (\$1,675).

#### 4.3.4 Project Area

The broader Project Area relevant to the Exploratory Works scope takes in both the Gympie and the Somerset Local Government Areas.



Gympie is a regional Local Government Area (LGA), with its main population centre sharing the same name. It lies within the Kabi Kabi (Gubbi Gubbi) language region, and the name "Gympie" is derived from gimpi-gimpi, a local stinging tree that is highly venomous. The region is known for its many sporting, culinary, recreational, and lifestyle events.

Gympie LGA stretches to Rainbow Beach on its eastern edge, a popular tourist spot alongside Tin Can Bay, known for its multicolored sands and proximity to the World Heritage-listed K'gari. The western boundary reaches Goomeri, and Lake Borumba lies to the south. The region includes state forests, national parks like Kingaham Gorge, Stehbens Chute, and Bottom Pool, along with agricultural, forestry, and equestrian lands.



According to the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), which measures the social and economic conditions of geographic areas in Australia, Gympie LGA shows significant socio-economic disadvantage. The SEIFA index focuses on income, education, unemployment, and access to vehicles, with lower scores indicating a higher disadvantage. Based on the 2021 Census, Gympie's population was 53,242, with 25.3% of the population aged over 65, higher than the state average.

Gympie ranks in the “most disadvantaged” category on the SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD). Contributing factors include lower workforce participation (especially for females, where only 39.4% were employed or looking for work), low weekly incomes, and low educational attainment. Health outcomes are also poor, with 35.8% of the population reporting one or more long-term health conditions, a rate higher than the state average and more than just the elderly population (QGSO, 2024).

Community activism has been notable, particularly around the Traveston Crossing Dam project, proposed in 2006 and canceled in 2009 (Howells, 2009), which united farmers, environmentalists, and retirees (Rijke, 2012). The community also frequently comes together to address frequent flood events in the area (Bolton, 2023).

Gympie's economy has shifted away from gold mining, though 8.2% of the population remains employed in mining. The leading industries are health care and social assistance (13.6%), retail trade (10.8%), and construction (10.4%).

## ii Somerset LGA



The Somerset LGA lies south of Gympie and north-west of Brisbane, about an hour from Brisbane's CBD. The closest town to Lake Borumba is Jimna, a small and sparsely populated area. Somerset is known for being the water source for Brisbane, with Somerset and Wivenhoe Dams providing water to the city. Wivenhoe Dam also hosts a 500-megawatt pumped hydro plant, and the Brisbane River originates in the region.

Somerset's primary land use is agriculture, and most of the population is concentrated in five main townships. The LGA had a population of 25,057 in the 2021 Census, with a median age of 45, higher than the state average of 38. The SEIFA index indicates that Somerset experiences slight socio-economic disadvantage, particularly in income, education, employment, and housing.

Despite its agricultural reputation, the largest employer in Somerset is manufacturing, with 12.9% of workers employed in this sector. Health care and social assistance employ 11.9%, and construction employs 9.1%. The region also reports low household incomes and educational attainment, with only 44.3% of the population having completed year 12, compared to the state average of 61.6%. Tertiary education levels are also below the state average. Health issues are prevalent, with the population reporting higher instances of long-term health conditions than the state average.

### 4.3.5 Mary River Catchment



The Mary River Catchment area (see Figure 4.1) encompasses almost 979,950 hectares, comprising more than 53,660 individual properties across 4 LGAs - Gympie, Somerset, Fraser Coast and Sunshine Coast (Queensland Reconstruction Authority, 2020). As of 30 June 2023, the estimated resident population for the region was 566,299 persons, with an average annual growth rate of 2.4% over five years (QGSO, 2024). The population is growing rapidly as new residents are attracted to the region for a range of lifestyle, employment, and financial reasons.

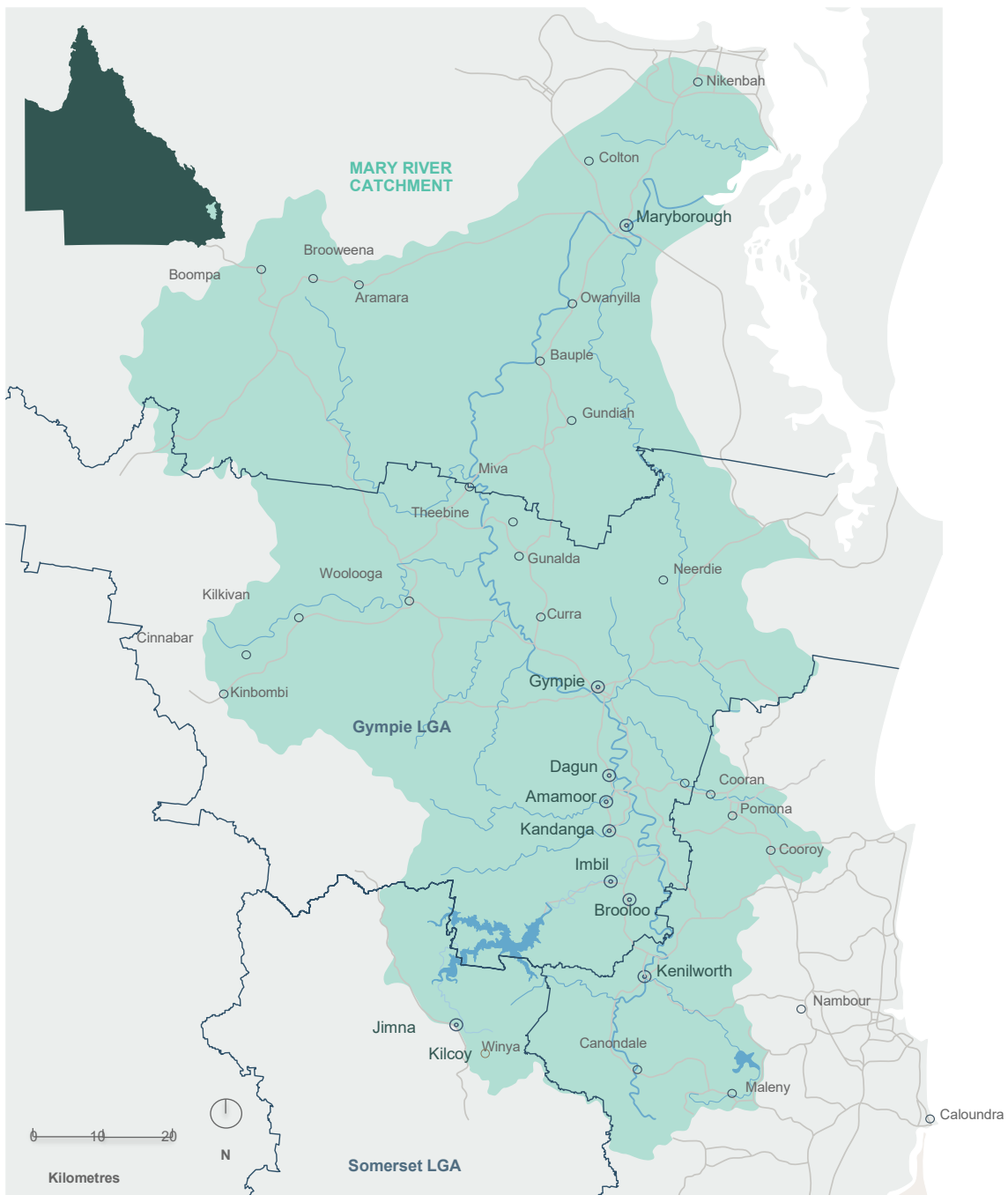
The Kabi Kabi and Butchulla People are the Traditional Owners of the majority of the land and waters within the Mary River Catchment. The Project infrastructure is located within the traditional country of the Kabi Kabi People who are the determined Native Title holders. The Butchulla People are the determined Native Title holders further downstream of the Project (north of Gympie).



Today, the region includes a broad cross-section of communities including small settlements and villages, service towns and hinterland towns, rural production areas, state forests, national parks, and plantations, through to major urban settlements such as Gympie and Maryborough.

Townships in the upper Mary region include Montville, Maleny, and Mapleton at the top of the catchment. Kenilworth and Kandanga are in the central valley area. The lower Mary region is approximately double the size of the upper reaches of the catchment, stretching from Gympie to Tiaro and through to Maryborough, then to the river mouth at River Heads. Whilst the population of the Mary region is diverse, it shares many unifying factors which extend beyond just geographic or catchment-based location such as shared key economic activities and industries, shared value sets, and historical linkages. From an economic perspective, the primary sectors producing the largest industry output in the Mary region over recent years are construction, real estate services, and manufacturing. Growth industries across the region include mining, financial, and insurance services, and health care and social assistance sectors. Noting the region's increased proportion of the population aged over 65 years, relative to the state average, it is unsurprising that health and social industries continue to experience growth.

The Mary Valley Chamber of Commerce Inc. (2023) identifies the Mary Valley tourism region within the Mary River Catchment, and affirms the communities of Imbil, Dagun, Brooloo, Kandanga, Amamoor and Kenilworth as areas of interest for tourists as part of this region. The 'Mary Valley Country' is located less than 2 hours from Brisbane and 40 minutes from Noosa, and hosts nature-based holiday activities including camping, horse riding, hiking, fishing, bike riding, water skiing, mountain climbing, and 4WDing. Trips can range in duration from day trips, weekends or longer holidays, and the region is home to accommodation types including hip camps, bush camping, quaint B&Bs, and larger quality accommodation including group accommodation and school camps. The Chamber of Commerce plays a significant role in regional advocacy.



**Figure 4.1** Catchment Study Area – Mary River Catchment

## 4.4 Summary of existing social environment baseline

Section 4.4 presents a summary of key workforce and labour market, housing and accommodation, business and industry and health and wellbeing characteristics to better understand the existing social environment and consider the impact of Exploratory Works on these conditions.

### 4.4.1 Workforce management

Key workforce and labour market characteristics across the Project Area include the following:

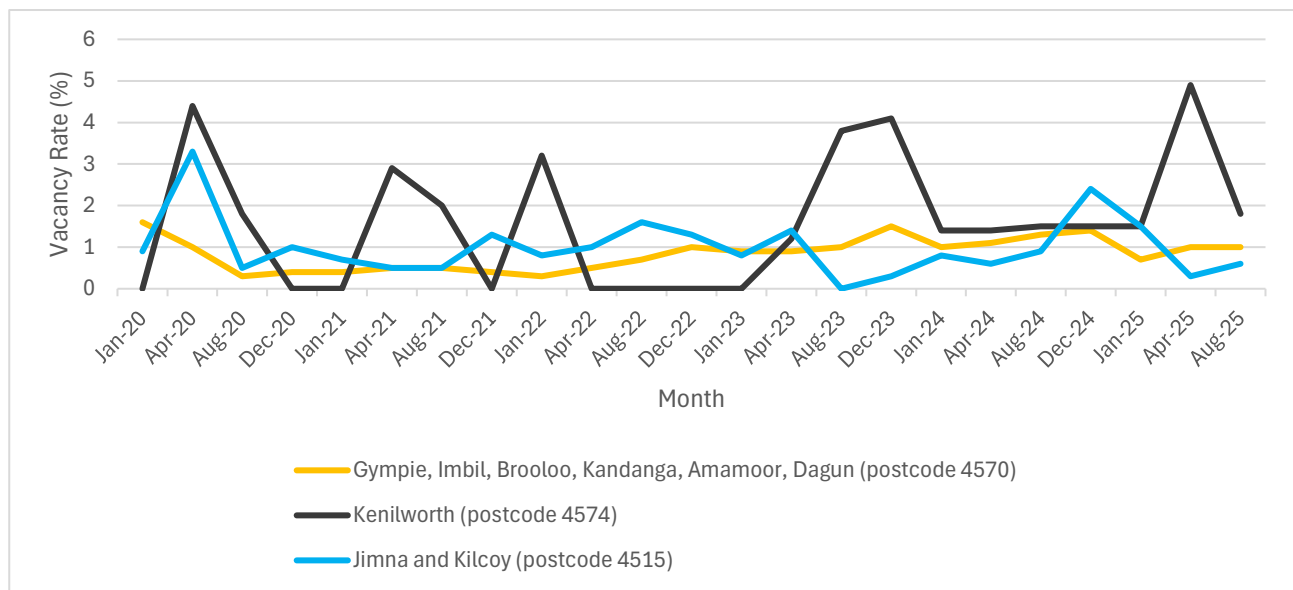
- **Labour force participation:** The Gympie and Somerset LGAs show lower labour force participation rates compared to Queensland overall, with 48.7% and 52.9% of residents aged 15 and over participating in 2021, versus Queensland's 61.1%. This aligns with the older age profile of these LGAs. Female participation in Gympie was notably low, at 39.4% compared to Queensland's 48.4%. Meanwhile, Somerset LGA had reduced youth labour force participation at 60.8%, below Queensland's 67.0% in 2021 (ABS, 2021).
- **Unemployment rates:** Both LGAs have higher unemployment rates than Queensland. As of March quarter 2025, Gympie's unemployment rate stood at 6.0% (1,592 people), and Somerset's at 4.8 % (597 people), compared to Queensland's 4.1% (Jobs and Skills Australia, 2025). Over the last decade, these rates have consistently been higher than those for Queensland.
- **Youth and indigenous unemployment:** Youth and Indigenous unemployment rates contributed significantly to overall unemployment in 2021, with rates of 11.2% and 12.9% in Gympie LGA, and 13.1% and 13.9% in Somerset LGA, respectively. Both categories have seen a decline in unemployed persons over the past five years, with youth unemployment recording the largest decrease.
- **Occupation and skills profile:** Engineering and related technologies are prevalent skillsets of Project Area residents, with 16.9% of Gympie residents and 17.5% of Somerset residents aged 15 and over holding qualifications in this field in 2021. Other major skills include management and commerce, as well as society and culture (QGSO, 2024). Common occupations include technicians, trades workers, labourers, community and personal service workers, and managers. In Queensland, management and commerce are the leading non-school qualifications, with key occupations among professionals, trades workers, and clerical staff.
- **Key industries of employment:** In 2023/24, the leading industry in Gympie LGA was health care and social assistance, employing 16.9% of residents, followed by retail trade (10.6%) and construction (10.4%) (economy.id, 2024). In Somerset LGA, manufacturing led with 21.4%, followed by healthcare and social assistance (16.4%), and agriculture, forestry and fishing (16.0%) (economy.id, 2024).
- **Cumulative considerations:** Cumulative demand for construction-related workers is anticipated during the Exploratory Works period noting four major road projects are planned within the Gympie LGA, and an expansion of major employer operations at Kilcoy Global Foods. Initial works for the Gympie Regional Council's Imbil Streetscape program are also expected, though exact workforce requirements are yet to be determined.
- **Community and stakeholder feedback:** Consultation by Queensland Hydro on the Exploratory Works and SAMP development revealed mixed views. While stakeholders see the broader potential for economic benefits and have strong interest in project updates, concerns include potential impacts on local business capacity and labour draw to the project putting pressure on local businesses.

In summary, the Project Area is anticipated to have some capacity to supply workers with relevant skills for the Exploratory Works, with greater capacity expected from the Regional Area (the combined total of Project Area and Regional Area represents Queensland Hydro’s Local Content catchment). As noted in Section 3.2 delivery of the Exploratory Works program relies on the procurement of specific work packages rather than direct employment. These procurement opportunities are promoted on the Queensland Government’s tender platform Vendor Panel and Gateway by ICN supplier portals and are expected to support varying rates of participation and employment outcomes for residents.

#### 4.4.2 Housing and accommodation

Key housing and accommodation characteristics across the Project Area include the following:

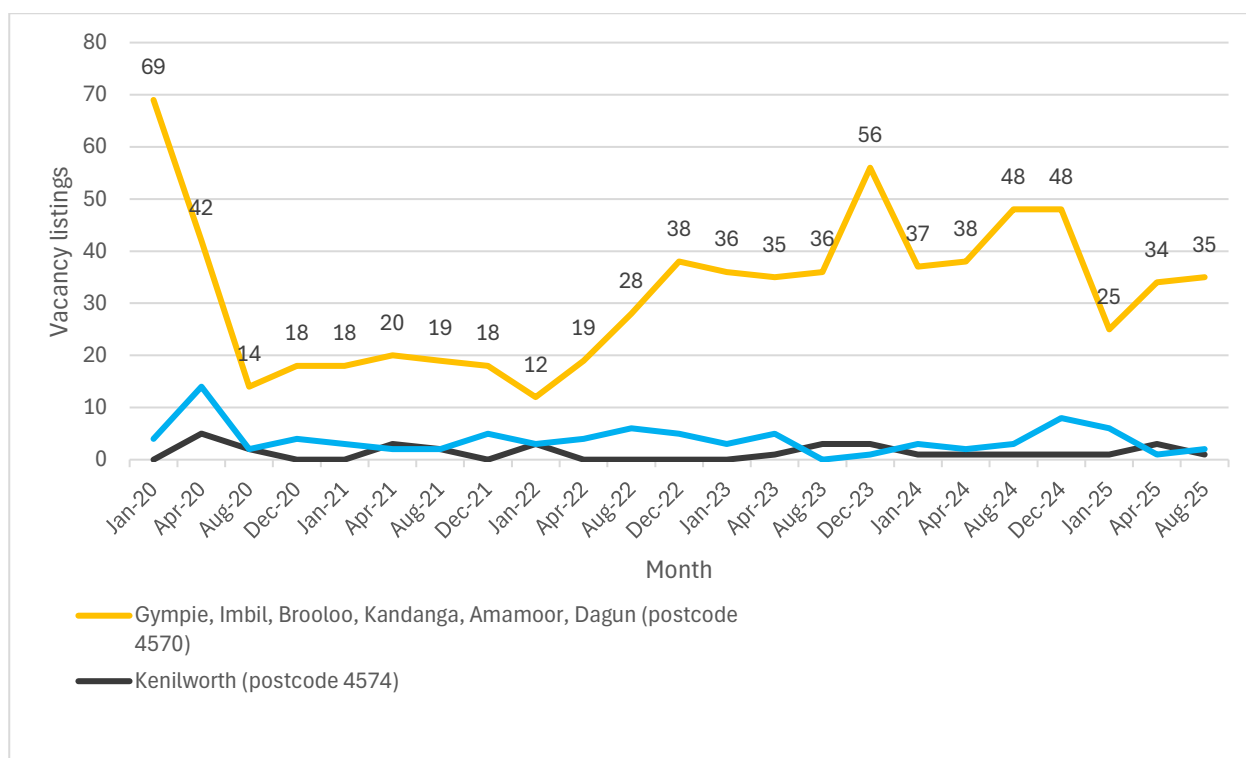
- **Housing and tenure characteristics:** The Project Area had a total of 200,967 dwellings, with 10.8% unoccupied. Most homes were separate houses, making up 91.2% of housing in Gympie LGA and 96.8% in Somerset LGA. The area showed higher rates of homeownership and lower rates of renting compared to the state average. Public housing rental rates were also lower than the state average.
- **Rental vacancies:** Towns near the lower reservoir area including Imbil, Kandanga, Brooloo, Amamoor, and Dagon, fall within Gympie postcode 4570, where rental vacancy rates indicate a very tight market<sup>1</sup>. Since December 2018, vacancy rates have consistently remained below 2.5% across Gympie postcode, with the latest data from December 2024 showing a vacancy rate of just 1.5% (Figure 4.2) and 51 vacant listings (Figure 4.3). This vacancy rate was consistent with the adjacent postcode of 4574 (Kenilworth) in December 2024. The rental vacancy rate near the upper reservoir areas, including Jimna and Kilcoy has increased since June 2024, with a latest vacancy of 2.3% (8 vacant listings) in December 2024 (SQM, 2025).



Source: SQM Property Index (SQM, 2024)

**Figure 4.2 Vacancy rate by postcode**

<sup>1</sup> Typically, a vacancy rate around 3% (i.e. between 2.6% to 3.5%) indicates a healthy rental market (balanced supply and demand). In contrast, a residential vacancy rate of below 2.5% is considered a ‘Tight’ rental market by the Real Estate Institute of Queensland (REIQ, 2023). At or below this rate, there is more demand than the available supply, and some applicants may be unable to access suitable rental housing as a result of competition for available stock.



Source: SQM Property Index (SQM, 2024)

**Figure 4.3 Vacancies by post code**

- Rental costs:** For the week ending 20 February 2025, the weekly asking price for rent in the Gympie postcode (4570) was \$553.79, increasing 7.8% in 12 months, and remaining steady with just 7.8% growth in the previous three years. For Kilcoy postcode area (4575) the weekly asking price remained lower at \$476.35, with negative change in rates over the previous twelve months (-1.9%) and an average 7.5% growth over the past three years, consistent with growth in the Gympie market for the same period. Kenilworth postcode (4574) reported a higher average asking rent \$611.41 increasing by 16.7% over 12 months, but with limited change over the previous three years (0.1%) indicating existing vulnerability to fluctuation (SQM, 2024). At the 2021 Census, the median weekly rent in the Gympie postcode (4570) was \$225, with higher rental prices in adjacent Kenilworth postcode of 4574 (\$250) and Kilcoy postcode 4515 (\$280). While this measure does not represent the same median rent value as reported in the Census, it does provide a rolling estimate of asking rents and illustrates the variation in project area rental markets.
- Short-term accommodation:** This assessment identified approximately 65 short-term accommodation providers approximately 125 km (or within 1.5 hrs commute) of the lower reservoir area, and 25 providers surrounding the upper reservoir area. These listings exclude Airbnb.
  - Localities captured within a 1.5-hour drive to the lower reservoir footprint include (but are not limited to) Imbil, Kandanga, Amamoor, Gympie and Eumundi. Bed and room listings within this catchment surrounding the lower reservoir area ranged from boutique, one-bedroom providers in close proximity, and access to larger-scale providers of up to 40 rooms in closer proximity to the coast. Imbil is the closest township to Lake Borumba; however, its short-term accommodation capacity is predominantly used for existing tourism and recreation purposes.

- Localities captured within a 1.5-hour drive to upper reservoir footprint include Jimna, Kilcoy, Woodford, Caboolture and Morayfield. Listings within a 1.5-hour commute to the upper reservoir catchment area also ranged from one-bedroom providers in close proximity, and up to 35 rooms available within 1.5 hours of the upper reservoir area. Jimna is the closest township to the upper reservoir works area with a base camp offering campgrounds for large events and group bookings, including a combination of accommodation solutions. This provider has identified sufficient capacity to support a proportion of the project's needs on an ongoing basis, without adversely affecting business capacity to meet existing visitor needs. Residents of Jimna have also expressed support and interest in supporting the project's temporary accommodation needs.
- **Socio-economic factors:** A composite index drawn from results of the 2021 Census show that Imbil (population 1,071) and Brooloo (369) ranked in the lowest quintile for socioeconomic disadvantage. In comparison, Kenilworth (604) and Kandanga (659) were in the second-lowest quintile. Changes in local rental capacity are likely to disproportionately affect vulnerable low-income households, leading to potential rent hikes.
- **Unemployment:** Gympie had a higher unemployment rate at the Census of 5.9% compared to the Queensland average of 5.4%. Women face lower employment rates with 11.6% unemployed, and youth unemployment was notably high, reaching 11.2% in Gympie and 13.1% in Somerset. Lower employment rates, especially for youth and women, can reflect social disadvantage and have implications for housing access and affordability.
- **Low-income households:** In 2021, both Gympie and Somerset LGAs had a higher proportion of low-income households (25.0% in Gympie and 20.3% in Somerset) compared to the state average of 16.4%. Average individual and household incomes in these areas were also consistently lower than the Queensland average (\$1,675) at \$1,115 in Gympie and \$1,312 in Somerset (ABS, 2022). Housing stress is a significant issue, occurring when households in the lowest 40% of income distribution spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs (AHURI, 2023).
- **Homelessness:** The Queensland Government Statisticians Office (QGSO 2024) estimated that 359 people in the Gympie LGA and 52 people in the Somerset LGA were experiencing homelessness at the time of the 2021 Census. Due to the transient nature of homeless populations, these estimates can sometimes underrepresent the true scale of people experiencing homelessness.
- **Community and stakeholder engagement:** Key concerns raised during stakeholder engagement, as well as Queensland Hydro's consultations for the Exploratory and Main Works programs, focused on the pressure placed on low-income households, essential workers, and the general workforce. This included the following:
  - General interest from short-term accommodation providers in supplying the project to supplement their existing business model. Consultations with a sample of 30 short-term accommodation providers within a 1.5-hour drive of the Exploratory Works site reported fluctuations in demand, particularly around the upper reservoir area of Jimna, Kilcoy and surrounds. Providers in proximity to the upper reservoir site described their consistent demand periods over weekends and long-weekend stays, with fluctuating demand over school holiday periods where business demand is typically concentrated toward to the coast. In the lower reservoir area and surrounds, accommodations described more consistent occupancy (60–75%). In instances where short-term accommodation providers reported existing booking arrangements for Queensland Hydro and/or contractors, generally positive feedback was shared regarding Queensland Hydro's weekday booking arrangements to avoid conflicts with weekend trade.

- Concern from some residents of Imbil and surrounds about the Exploratory Works activities and potential workforce strain on existing limited rental capacity, effects on affordability, and availability of short-term accommodation options. Others emphasised the need to balance workforce camps with long-term residential housing, and opportunities for legacy assets to improve local accommodation.

Social service providers in Gympie highlighted the existing challenges faced in providing crisis accommodation for vulnerable and at-risk groups, including older women facing homelessness, victims of family and domestic violence, and at-risk young people. Crisis accommodation stock was reported at capacity with limited short-term and rental accommodation options to meet additional demand. Social service stakeholders have encouraged Queensland Hydro to explore Airbnb stock, to reduce competition for hotel/motel accommodation in Gympie. Strong interest was also expressed in potential future access to de-mobilised accommodation assets, following the Exploratory Works and/or main works phase.

#### 4.4.3 Local business and industry procurement

The construction industry plays a central role in the Gympie LGA, contributing 21.0% of total economic output in 2022/23. In the Somerset LGA, manufacturing dominates, accounting for 34.0% of total economic output during the same period. Below are key characteristics of local businesses and industries within the project area:

- **Registered businesses:** As of June 2023, Gympie LGA had 4,963 registered businesses and Somerset LGA hosted 2,267 registered businesses. In both LGAs, over 60% were non-employing businesses, primarily sole traders. Nearly one-quarter of businesses had one to four employees (ABS, 2023). The largest business category in both areas was agriculture, forestry, and fishing, with around one quarter (or 909 businesses) in Gympie LGA and around one third (or 356 businesses) in Somerset LGA.
- **Construction businesses:** Construction businesses held the second highest proportion of total businesses registered in Gympie (18.3%) and Somerset LGA (15.7%). Reflecting its function as a key service centre, around 67.6% of registered businesses in the Gympie LGA were based in or around Gympie City (ABS, 2023).
- **Nearby community businesses:** Imbil, the closest town to Lake Borumba, hosts various small businesses, including a pharmacy, butcher, post office, hardware store, grocer, bakery, food outlets, and short-term accommodation. Similar businesses are found in Kandanga and Amamoor, with a broader range in Kenilworth.
- **Industry productivity:** Value add by industry is a measure of business productivity and economic structures within the project area. In 2022/23:
  - construction was the most productive industry in the Gympie LGA, generating a value add of \$305 million (13.6% of the LGA's total output)
  - manufacturing was the most productive industry in the Somerset LGA with a value add of \$215 million (20.2% of the LGA's total output)
  - agriculture, forestry and fishing were the second most productive industry across both LGAs, with a value add of \$291 million (13.0%) in Gympie LGA and \$188 million (17.7%) in Somerset LGA (economy.id, 2024).



- **Agriculture industry:** Agriculture is an important industry and contributor to the economies of Gympie and Somerset LGA. In 2020/21, the total value of agricultural output in Gympie and Somerset were \$150 million and \$140 million respectively, with livestock slaughtering being the largest commodity produced across both LGAs. Other key agricultural commodities produced include vegetable and crops for hay in Somerset LGA and dairy and citrus fruit in Gympie LGA (economy.id, 2024).
- **Tourism industry:** Tourism is also an important industry to both the economies of Gympie and Somerset LGAs. In 2021/22, more than 650,000 domestic tourists visited the Gympie LGA (majority overnight visitors) and contributed around \$180.2 million towards Gympie's economy (economy.id, 2024). In the Somerset LGA, more than 400,000 domestic tourists visited the region, with the majority also overnight visitors, and a contribution of around \$52.7 million to Somerset's economy in 2021/22 (economy.id, 2024).
- **Indigenous businesses:** In June 2024, searches of the Black Business Finder and Indigenous Business Direct (Supply Nation) identified eight Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses in Gympie LGA and two in Somerset LGA (Black Business Finder, 2024). These businesses offer services such as building and civil construction, equipment hire, earthmoving, labour hire, workforce training, electrical trades, First Nations consultancy, and digital marketing.
- **Community and stakeholder feedback:** During consultation on the Exploratory Works program and SAMP development, project stakeholders raised concerns about the potential for labour shortages. Concerns identified existing levels of competition, delays in accessing goods and services such as trades locally and in the context of cumulative major project developments across the Regional Area, together with the anticipated demands of the Exploratory Works, which could affect existing employers' operations. Notably, consultation with Gympie Chamber of Commerce reported longer wait times for trade services (up to three months) to address community and local business needs, which was attributed to the cumulative effect of procurement arrangements servicing local BESS, Powerlink, Train production, Taubman Lee and Queensland Hydro contracts. Engagement regarding First Nations business opportunities continues through Queensland Hydro's established business engagement channels, together with direct engagement with Traditional Owners and others who have expressed interest.

A review of existing socio-economic conditions in the study area confirms there is likely to be capacity for some businesses in the Project Area to support construction of the Exploratory Works with the greatest supply capacity within the Regional Area (representing Queensland Hydro's local content catchment).

#### 4.4.4 Health and community wellbeing

Key characteristics of health and wellbeing in the key communities and project area include the following:

- **Population growth:** The estimated resident population (ERP) for both Gympie and Somerset LGA have steadily increased over the ten-year period to 2023, with higher population growth observed in the Gympie LGA. As of June 2023, the ERP for the Gympie LGA was 56,166 persons, reflecting an average annual growth rate of 1.5% in line with Queensland's average growth rate of 1.6% per annum (QGSO, 2024). Somerset LGA, with an ERP of 26,251 as of June 2023, had a slower growth rate of 1.1% per annum. Population numbers across key communities were relatively stable until 2016, with gradual increases afterward. Imbil's population peaked in 2023 at 539 residents (QGSO, 2024).
- **Projected population:** Somerset is expected to see the fastest population growth between 2021 and 2046, with an annual growth rate of 1.3% and a projected population of 34,836 by 2046 (QGSO, 2024). In comparison, Gympie LGA's growth rate is expected to be slower at 0.5% per annum, though it will still have a larger projected population of 60,836 in 2046.

- **Ageing population:** Both LGAs have a higher proportion of residents aged 65 and older (nearly a quarter of the ERP) and family households without children (over 45% of total families) compared to the Queensland average. This age profile reflects an ageing population that is likely to become less economically active, require greater access to age-appropriate health and support services, and likely more susceptible to major changes/disruptions in their living environment and community.
- **Income levels:** Both Gympie and Somerset LGAs have consistently recorded lower average individual and household incomes compared to Queensland. At the 2021 Census, 25.0% of Gympie and 20.3% of Somerset households were classified as low-income, compared to the state average of 16.4%. These lower income levels have been a trend since 2016 (ABS, 2021).
- **Community cohesion:** Residents surrounding Lake Borumba and Imbil highlight the area as a close-knit community that exhibits strong social cohesion. Imbil township is revitalising and growing with the in-migration of new residents from coastal cities attracted to the lifestyle and surrounding natural environment offered. Residents have expressed the importance of tourism to the Mary Valley area, both from an economic generation and community perspective. At the regional level, residents of the Gympie LGA value the scenic environment, strong sense of community, friendly people, strong economy, and the level of services and facilities available (Gympie Regional Council, 2023).
- **Social infrastructure and services:** Imbil hosts a small number of social infrastructure and services including a primary/secondary school, outdoor education centre, day care centre, and limited capacity emergency service. Health/medical services are currently limited in Imbil with the nearest service located in Kenilworth (general practice) and Gympie (hospital as well as health and medical centres). As the main population and service centre of the Gympie LGA, a wide range of social infrastructure and services can be accessed in Gympie (city) including local and state government services as well as community support services. Kilcoy is the closest population and service centre to the southern access of Lake Borumba, with a hospital, emergency services, schools, and community support services available.
- **Local road networks and access:** Yabba Creek Road is the main road through Imbil town centre and is the main access route connecting Lake Borumba to Imbil and other key communities in the Gympie LGA. Yabba Creek Road reduces from two lanes to a single lane at a number of crossings across Yabba Creek and can be susceptible to flooding. Bella Creek Road is accessed from Yabba Creek Road and traverses the northern part of Borumba Dam. The road is a rural gravel road that is susceptible to frequent flooding.
- **Community and stakeholder feedback:** Traffic and community safety are key concerns for stakeholders in Imbil and surrounds, while access considerations and potential for traffic delays were front of mind during engagement with Jimna stakeholders. Pedestrian safety has been raised as a concern by both Project Area councils, in addition to maintaining community character and cohesion. Stakeholders have raised flood islands as a critical issue with lived experience of being cut off from Imbil during flood events due to inaccessible roads. Jimna stakeholders also noted potential for isolation of road networks and access routes.

## 4.5 Project stakeholders

This section presents a baseline of project stakeholders (as defined by the glossary of agreed terms, page vi), and engagement interests and issues relevant to the Exploratory Works program, with a particular focus on social impacts and benefits of the proposed activities.

The key stakeholders and groups and their primary interest considered in this SA are outlined in Table 4.4 .

**Table 4.4 Key stakeholder groups**

Stakeholder group	Stakeholders	Primary interest
State Government agencies	Office of the Coordinator-General, DSDIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exercise of functions and powers to facilitate the activities required to support Exploratory Works necessary for progression of the Borumba PHES Project.</li> <li>Oversight of activities through requirement of Management Plans including the SAMP to ensure environmental and social impacts are properly monitored and managed and outcomes for the project are achieved.</li> <li>Coordination of the EIS process for the Main Works phase of the Borumba PHES Project.</li> </ul>
	DETSI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental compliance</li> <li>Impacts to National Park and State Forest</li> </ul>
	DWATSIPM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment, training and skills development, and business supply opportunities for First Nations peoples</li> <li>Social and community infrastructure capacity</li> </ul>
	Department of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health infrastructure capacity</li> <li>Anticipated demand on services</li> </ul>
	Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education, skill development and training opportunities</li> <li>Anticipated demand on services</li> </ul>
	Department of Trade, Employment and Training (DTET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment and training and skills development opportunities</li> <li>Competition for skilled labour</li> </ul>
	Department of Housing and Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anticipated demand for local and social housing</li> <li>Impacts on housing availability and affordability</li> </ul>
	Department of Primary Industries (DPI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interface with HQ Plantations (licence area within State Forest)</li> </ul>
Government-owned Corporations	Powerlink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project interface</li> <li>Stakeholder engagement and communication</li> </ul>
Local Government	Gympie Regional Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic management planning and changes to road infrastructure</li> <li>SRG, community and landholder engagement and complaints</li> <li>Community benefits framework</li> <li>Emergency and disaster response</li> <li>Koala mapping, planning and environment</li> <li>Regional development and community enabling infrastructure opportunities</li> <li>Accommodation, housing and tourism</li> </ul>

Stakeholder group	Stakeholders	Primary interest
	Somerset Regional Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic management planning and changes to road infrastructure</li> <li>• Landholder engagement and community complaints</li> <li>• SRG and stakeholder engagement</li> <li>• Housing and accommodation</li> <li>• Cattle grid management</li> <li>• Somerset disaster preparedness</li> <li>• Community benefits framework</li> <li>• Regional development and community enabling infrastructure opportunities</li> <li>• Business supply opportunities</li> </ul>
Social infrastructure and service providers	Emergency services including Queensland Police Service (QPS), Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), and Queensland Fire Department (QFD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand on service and impact on emergency response</li> <li>• Workforce behaviour</li> <li>• Construction traffic impacts</li> </ul>
	Hospital and health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand on services</li> </ul>
	Schools in nearby communities, including school bus operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction traffic impacts and impacts on learning environment</li> <li>• Training and community investment opportunities</li> </ul>
Housing and accommodation providers	Short-term accommodation providers in Project Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in patronage and impacts on availability during peak seasons</li> </ul>
	Real estate agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on housing affordability and availability</li> </ul>
Business and industry groups	Chamber of Commerce in Project Area (i.e. Mary Valley Chamber of Commerce, Gympie Chamber of Commerce, Somerset Business Chamber)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business supply opportunities</li> <li>• Competition for labour</li> <li>• Potential impacts on tourism and recreation businesses</li> </ul>
Businesses	Project Area businesses (e.g. HQ Plantations, Lake Borumba Caravan and Camping Grounds, Borumba Deer Park, Superior Wood sawmill)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts on business operations</li> <li>• Construction traffic impacts</li> </ul>
	Regional Area businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business supply opportunities</li> </ul>
	Tourism and recreation businesses (e.g. Stirling's Crossing Equestrian Complex, Gympie Muster, Mary Valley Rattler, Kandanga Farm Store, Sunshine Coast Ballooning, Imbil Bull Bronc and Barrel, Woollahra Homestead, Wild Vine Café, Mary Valley Adventure Trails)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to amenity and potential impacts on tourism and recreation</li> <li>• Community and regional development planning</li> </ul>

Stakeholder group	Stakeholders	Primary interest
Traditional Owners - Project footprint	Kabi Kabi People represented by the Kabi Kabi Peoples' Aboriginal Corporation (KKPAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural heritage identification (including the role of Kabi Kabi in inspections and cultural monitoring)</li> <li>• Cultural heritage impact assessment and management (including the role of Kabi Kabi in determining culturally appropriate mitigation measures)</li> <li>• Potential environmental impacts, including to water, flora and fauna (and the cultural implications of these impacts)</li> <li>• Impacts to native title rights and interests</li> <li>• Participation in environmental studies for all phases of the Project</li> <li>• Participation in offset planning and implementation</li> <li>• Identifying, exploring and progressing business / employment opportunities during Exploratory Works</li> </ul>
	Kabi Kabi First Nations businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business supply opportunities</li> </ul>
Traditional Owners – downstream	Butchulla Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (BNTAC). Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation (BAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential downstream environmental and Aboriginal cultural heritage impacts</li> <li>• Opportunities to be engaged in the Project and the environmental assessment process</li> </ul>
Other First Nations People – Project Area and region	Community members, businesses and other First Nations Groups including Kabi Bunya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment and business supply opportunities</li> <li>• Impacts to cultural heritage values.</li> </ul>
Sensitive Receptors / Receivers	Land uses that are sensitive to potential noise, air and/or visual impacts, such as residential dwellings (inclusive of on-site temporary workforce accommodation), occupied business premises, schools, hospitals and community facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts to sensitive land use and/or operation as a result of potential noise, air and/or visual impacts</li> </ul>
Project Area communities	Residents within Exploratory Works Footprint, Nearby Communities, and Project Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to amenity and community cohesion</li> <li>• Changes to road infrastructure and access</li> <li>• Employment, training and skills development, and community investment opportunities</li> <li>• Construction traffic, noise and air quality impacts.</li> </ul>
Tourists/visitors	Visitors and tourists to the Mary Valley Recreational users of Lake Borumba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to landscape and amenity around Lake Borumba</li> <li>• Access to short-term accommodation</li> <li>• Changes to road access, parking and recreational facilities during road upgrades and construction.</li> </ul>

Stakeholder group	Stakeholders	Primary interest
Impacted landholders	The State of Queensland represented by the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (DLGWV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approvals and licences for spoil stockpile area and access road; Kingaham Creek bypass of Bella Creek Road; Temporary Workers Accommodation Camp; geotechnical investigation work; offsets</li> <li>• Land use and land management</li> <li>• Construction traffic, noise and air quality or other impacts to leaseholder Samuel Holdings Pty Ltd and tenant</li> </ul>
	The State of Queensland represented by the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts to National Park and State Forest</li> <li>• Approvals for access and work within National Park and State Forest</li> <li>• Interface with HQ Plantations (licence area within State Forest)</li> <li>• Interface with grazing permittee in State Forest</li> </ul>
	Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development (DNRMMRRD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts to DNRMMRRD-owned land and unallocated state land</li> <li>• Approvals for access and work within DNRMMRRD-owned land and unallocated state land</li> </ul>
	Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority (Seqwater), including agreement and permit holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputation and social licence management</li> <li>• Impacts on Lake Borumba and facilities</li> <li>• Impact to agreement holders (Lake Borumba Caravan and Campgrounds, Lake Borumba Fish Stocking Association, Yabba Creek Rural Fire Service) and permit/deed holders (Touchwood Coffee, Sustainable Adventures Pty Ltd)</li> </ul>
	Private landholders (Bella Creek Road, Imbil; Yielo Road and Sunday Creek Road, Jimna)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic management planning and changes to road infrastructure or alignment</li> <li>• Impacts to property use and access</li> <li>• Construction traffic, amenity, noise and air quality impacts</li> </ul>
Affected stakeholders	Marrapatta Memorial Outdoor Education Centre (Brisbane Girls Grammar School)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student outdoor safety</li> <li>• Impacts on outdoor curriculum and activities</li> <li>• Construction traffic, noise and air quality impacts</li> </ul>
	Stakeholders living, working or travelling near the Exploratory Works activities or on access routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction traffic, noise and vibration, and changed air quality</li> <li>• Changes to amenity and community cohesion</li> <li>• Changes to road infrastructure and access</li> <li>• Employment, training and skills development, and community investment opportunities</li> </ul>

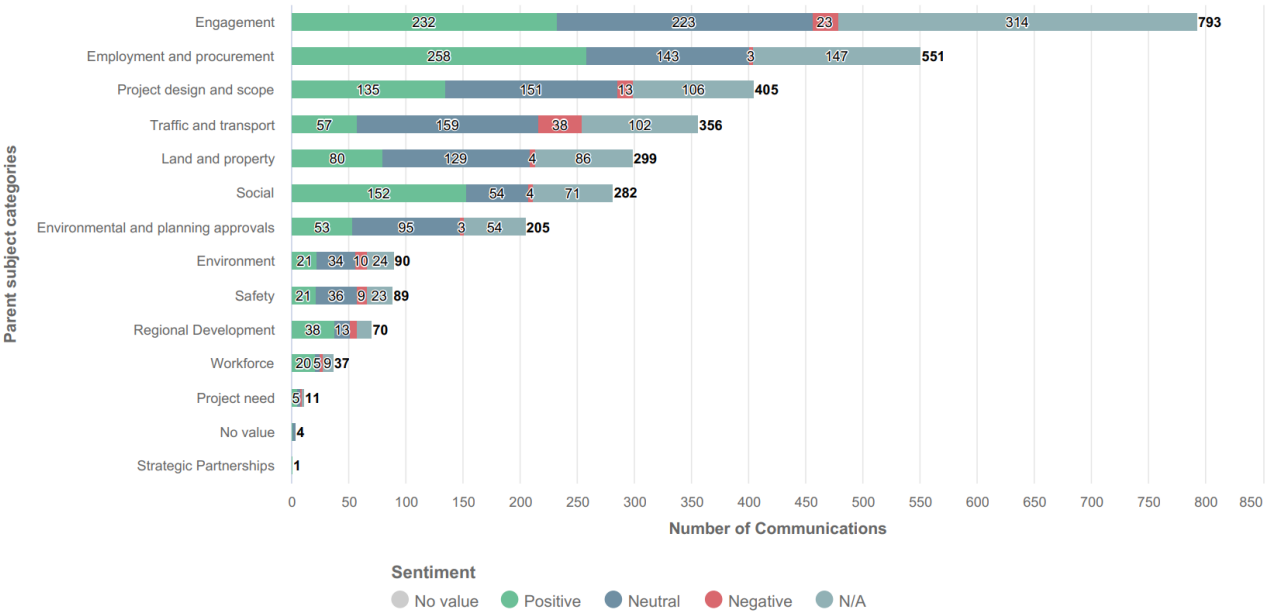
#### 4.5.1 Project stakeholder engagement – priority topics

Engagement with communities and stakeholders in the Project area has been ongoing since 2022, initially led by Powerlink, and transitioning to Queensland Hydro in 2023. To provide an overview of stakeholder interests and concerns relevant to Exploratory Works activities, the following sections report on Queensland Hydro's engagement program for the period from January 2024 to September 2025.

Figure 4.4 outlines the key areas of stakeholder interest and sentiment for the period leading up to and including SA and SAMP development, from January 2024 to September 2025. The most common topics raised included:

- Queensland Hydro engagement activities (raised in approximately 793 outgoing and incoming interactions). Of the incoming interactions, 48% were positive, 40% were neutral, and 3% were negative.
- Employment and procurement (raised in approximately 551 outgoing and incoming interactions). Of the incoming interactions, 62% were positive, 37% were neutral, and 1% were negative.
- Project design and scope (raised in approximately 405 outgoing and incoming interactions). Of the incoming interactions, 41% were positive, 56% were neutral, and 3% were negative.
- Traffic and transport (raised in approximately 356 outgoing and incoming interactions). Of the incoming interactions, 25% were positive, 70% were neutral, and 5% were negative.
- Land and property (raised in approximately 299 outgoing and incoming interactions). Of the incoming interactions, 37% were positive, 61% were neutral, and 2% were negative.
- Social (raised in approximately 282 outgoing and incoming interactions). Of the incoming interactions, 74% were positive, 22% were neutral, and 3% were negative.

Communications by Subject Category and Sentiment - Incoming and Outgoing



Communications by Subject Category and Sentiment

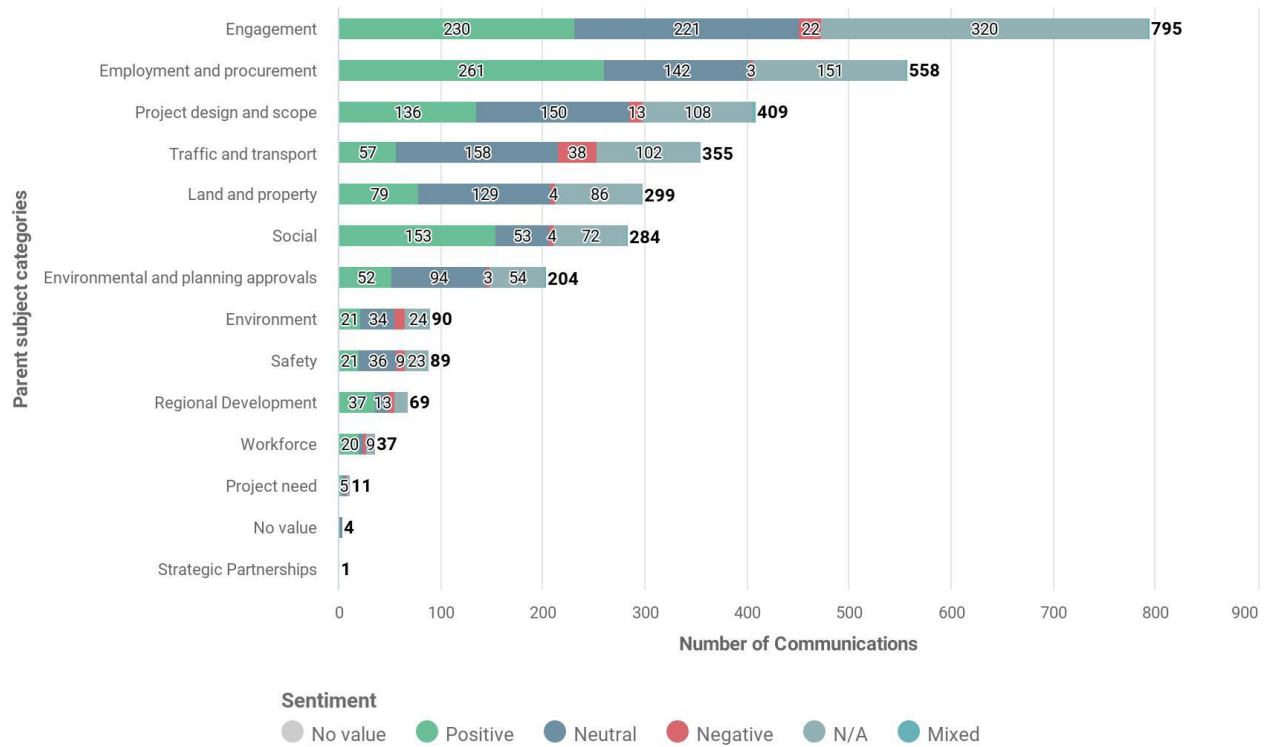


Figure 4.4 Key topics raised, January 2024 to September 2025



The following sub-sections summarise engagement that has occurred to inform the SA and SAMP and/or address common issues and topic areas raised by community and stakeholders between January 2024 and September 2025.

#### i Traditional Owner interests

Since December 2021, Queensland Hydro (and formerly Powerlink) has been engaging with the Kabi Kabi people, who are the determined native title holders and the cultural heritage party for the land and waters on which the project is located. Engagement was initially with the Registered Native Title Claimants on behalf of the Kabi Kabi First Nation Traditional Owners Native Title Claim Group. Following Kabi Kabi's successful native title determination in July 2024 consultation has continued with the Board of the Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation (KKPAC) as the Registered Native Title Body Corporate.

This has included engagement in relation to both the Exploratory Works and Main Works stages of the Project. Specific to the Exploratory Works phase of the Project, Queensland Hydro and Kabi Kabi have entered into an Early Works Agreement and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement to manage cultural heritage and native title matters respectively.

A February 2025 consultation session provided a detailed overview of the Exploratory Works Preliminary Documentation to Kabi Kabi representatives and advisors. Regular engagement with Kabi Kabi has continued since this time, which has included further updates on the progression of the Exploratory Works design and approvals.

To guide further engagement with Kabi Kabi and meet the requirements of the EIS Terms of Reference, Queensland Hydro has prepared a Consultation Sub-plan that provides a framework for ensuring that Kabi Kabi are involved and engaged throughout the EIS process. The Consultation Sub-plan is designed to support the development of the Social Impact Management Plan and the Kabi Kabi led Indigenous Impact Assessment (IIA). This SAMP does not attempt, ahead of the IIA being completed, to definitively document potential impacts or management measures as they relate to Kabi Kabi's IIA. As documented in the Consultation Sub-plan, Queensland Hydro acknowledges that participation in the EIS process does not imply Kabi Kabi support for, or endorsement of, the Project in any way.

In October 2024, Queensland Hydro also met with the Butchulla Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (BNTAC). Queensland Hydro has attended a community meeting with BNTAC representatives to provide a project overview.

Both BNTAC and BAC were advised of the commencement of the public display period of the Preliminary Documentation for Exploratory Works.

Queensland Hydro has prepared CSEP sub-plans to guide further engagement with both BNTAC and BAC over the course of the Project (both Exploratory Works and Main Works stages).

#### ii Broader community and stakeholder engagement

The Exploratory Works CSEP identifies the following activities undertaken prior to Exploratory Works commencing:

- distribution of communication materials on anticipated traffic and transport impacts, including fact sheets, work notifications, emails, website updates, social media posts, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
- targeted engagement with impacted residents, businesses, local councils, TMR, OCG, and industry proponents.
- broader community engagement through drop-in information sessions, Community Connect events, local meetings, and focus group discussions.

These engagements have included progressive updates on project design and scope, reflected in the interaction records shown in Figure 4.5.

### iii Employment and procurement

Since January 2024, over 551 interactions have been recorded regarding employment and procurement opportunities with Queensland Hydro, making this a frequent topic of engagement. Interest has primarily come through Queensland Hydro's community events and online portals (Queensland Government Supplier Portal (formerly QTenders), and Gateway by ICN).

### iv Land and property engagement

Since January 2024, more than 299 interactions have been recorded with a focus on land and property interests. This includes dedicated engagements with impacted and adjacent landholders regarding access for Exploratory Works activities, as well as scoping discussions capturing surrounding land use and concerns. During targeted consultation for the SAMP, a small number of impacted and adjacent landholders sought a formalised process for capturing the land use, co-existence, notifications on weed management and bio-security, property access and communication preferences of surrounding landholders (discussed at Section 5).

### v Social impact consultation themes

Approximately 2,82 interactions between January 2024 to September 2025 have included a focus on social impact themes. These results reflect Queensland Hydro's engagement interactions, in addition to capturing the integrated engagement activities undertaken by EMM Consulting to inform the SAMP and scope of social impacts and benefits for Main Works. These consultation activities included community benefits discussions in July 2024, a drop-in session in Imbil in August 2024, an integrated program of semi-structured interviews with impacted landholders and affected stakeholders, local councils, and social infrastructure providers through October and November 2024, and dedicated sessions on Exploratory Works hosted by Queensland Hydro in Imbil and Jimna in November 2024.

This consultation identified a number of potential positive and negative impacts associated with the Exploratory Works program, as described below (including SAMP section where each topic is addressed).

**Table 4.5 Summary of impacts and benefits**

Impact theme	Negative Impacts	Positive benefits
Employment and Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour draw from local businesses (Section 5.4 )</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local suppliers and the local business economy including for local accommodation businesses (Section 5.4)</li> </ul>
Environment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wildlife strikes along Bella Creek Road and Yabba Creek Road affecting local environment and conservation values (Section 5.5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early activation of environmental rehabilitation and Landcare initiatives (Section 5.5)</li> </ul>
Community Benefits and Legacy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legacy opportunities associated with Queensland Hydro's broader program of works including skills development, stronger accommodation capacity</li> </ul>
Community Benefits and Legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns about Queensland Hydro's community benefits framework, viewed by some as divisive (Section 5.1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment through the community benefits framework (Sections 5.4 and 5.5)</li> </ul>

Impact theme	Negative Impacts	Positive benefits
Social Amenity and Cohesion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-social behaviour by non-local workers (Section 5.5)</li> <li>• Noise and dust affecting residential and local amenity (Section 5.5)</li> <li>• Concern regarding impacts to local infrastructure (health services, roads, water, and sewerage) (Section 5.5)</li> <li>• Concern regarding impacts to local infrastructure (health services, roads, water, and sewerage) (Section 5.5)</li> <li>• Workforce accommodation demand affecting local housing affordability (Section 5.3) (Social Amenity and Cohesion)</li> </ul>	
Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic impacts on property owners and community connectivity (Section 5.5)</li> </ul>	

## vi Traffic consultation themes

Traffic and transport matters have been a strong focus on community consultation in the reporting period to September 2025, with approximately 356 recorded interactions. Key concerns raised include:

- road safety and impacts on biodiversity
- changes to road access and connectivity
- contractor driver behaviour affecting residential areas.

Anticipated traffic movements and management measures will be communicated to stakeholders proactively as detailed in the project's Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP). Queensland Hydro will also, through existing forums with the road authorities monitor and receive feedback on the impacts of exploratory work traffic and the effectiveness of management measures and adjust where required.

In response to stakeholder concerns, Queensland Hydro's engagement program aims to ensure nearby communities are informed of traffic impacts via:

- targeted engagement with residents and businesses along key transport routes
- Community Connect events (focused on Exploratory Works and Traffic Management)
- ongoing engagement with key stakeholders such as TMR, OCG, and local councils to address parking and road use concerns.

Queensland Hydro's RMP includes management and mitigation measures to address vehicle movement, road safety and driver behaviour, and to guide the Contractor's TMPs. The measures in the RMP were developed taking into consideration feedback from stakeholders during the above engagement activities. Queensland Hydro will manage and monitor the effectiveness of the traffic management measures outlined in the RMP and in contractor TMPs, and will adapt and update measures if required, as Exploratory Works progresses, consistent with the principles of adaptive management.

Community feedback has also been used to revise Queensland Hydro's alternative carparking arrangements, to enable car space availability at the new Imbil Medical Centre without adversely affecting parking availability on Yabba Creek Road.

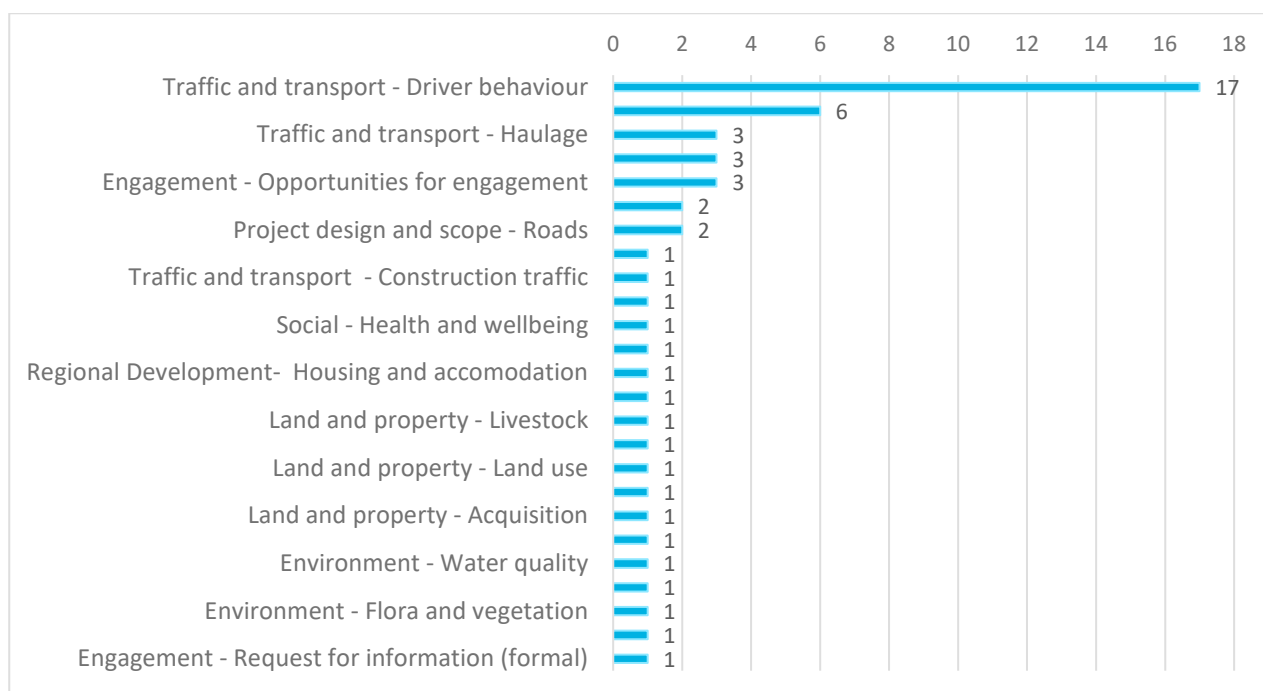
#### 4.5.2 Negative interactions and/or complaints received since January 2024

Queensland Hydro has received and resolved 37 complaints since January 2024, including concerns about:

- road works and safety on Bella Creek and Borgan Roads
- driver behaviour on Kilcoy Murgon Rod and Yielo Road
- community safety
- biosecurity management
- Giant Rats Tail Grass and vegetation removal on Bella Creek Road
- agistment negotiations
- conflicting project information
- property access issues
- PPE requirements for site tours
- construction vehicle parking.

All complaints were addressed according to Queensland Hydro's Complaints, Enquiries and Feedback Policy, published in October 2023. A revised policy, incorporating required management of environmental nuisance and other complaint matters relevant to the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, is being finalised and will be published in Q4 2025.

Figure 4.5 outlines the primary themes of stakeholder concerns, with traffic and environmental impacts being most prominent. These concerns, while not always lodged as a formal complaint, have contributed to Queensland Hydro's adaptive management strategies, as detailed throughout this SAMP.



**Figure 4.5 Negative consultation interactions by issue**

Community feedback and complaints received by Queensland Hydro to date have led to adaptive management initiatives, such as:

- a Heavy Vehicle Driver Code of Conduct, which all contractors' personnel are required to sign
- a Project Code: *Living and Working on the Borumba Project* to mandate expected standards of behaviour
- installation of a call point signs and handheld UHF radio for neighbouring residents to improve road safety and assist in managing vehicle interactions
- improvements and maintenance of impacted roads (e.g. Bella Creek Road) including grading to improve the road surface condition and slashing of vegetation to improve visibility
- installation of in-vehicle management system (IVMS) in Queensland Hydro and contractor vehicles, which are digital devices that record events such as speeding, harsh braking or acceleration, and which can detect unsafe driving practices
- a mandate that all project vehicles are fitted with dashcams ahead of Exploratory Works to assist Queensland Hydro in investigating road-related incidents.
- reduced the speed limits on Bella Creek Road in a small section.
- placed several VMS boards around Kilcoy-Murgon Road to provide ongoing updates about upcoming and current vehicle movements.
- all Project related convoys travel with a lead vehicle at the front of the convoy up and down the Kilcoy-Murgon Road range and into the project site

- **Toolbox Talks & Safety Messaging:** Ongoing communication with drivers reinforces expectations around speed limits, lane discipline, and safe convoy behaviour, particularly on winding or narrow road sections. Project-related deliveries are prohibited during school bus operating hours to reduce interaction with student transport routes.

Further information on community and stakeholder engagement measures is described in the SAMP.

## 5 Assessment of social impacts and benefits

### 5.1 Community and stakeholder engagement

Key issues and concerns raised by project stakeholders, including affected stakeholders and local community members between January 2024 and September 2025 are reported at Section 4.5 and have been analysed to identify potential social impacts and benefits associated with the Exploratory Works program. Priority topics raised during engagement such as traffic and contractor management, project employment, and procurement are addressed within subsequent sections of this SA (Section 5.5, Section 5.2, Section 5.4).

Social impacts identified in relation to Queensland Hydro's overarching Community and Stakeholder Engagement program are addressed here, and include:

- **Stakeholder confidence and trust:** Stakeholder confidence may decline due to perceived information gaps and/or confusion about project timing, stages and associated social commitments. This assessment draws on issues reporting (Section 4) and early engagement feedback from stakeholders to EMM highlighting the effect of project uncertainty on stakeholder relationships and confidence, including alignment of accommodation commitments with Main Works scheduling. Without effective management, the significance of this social impact is evaluated as High (likely / highly probable, moderate but extended duration).
- **Consultation fatigue and confusion:** Overlapping planning and engagement processes (Queensland Hydro's Exploratory and Main Works, Council and TMR programs, and Powerlink infrastructure) have been directly described by stakeholders as causing confusion, and/or consultation fatigue. Section 6 reports the project's cumulative inter- and intra-project considerations. Although the intensity of project and program overlaps has reduced (April 2024 – October 2025), the pre-managed social impact continues to be evaluated as a High negative social impact (likely / highly probable, moderate but extended duration).
- **Perceived limited stakeholder influence:** During early engagement for Exploratory Works, some local stakeholders expressed a perception that their input to Queensland Hydro planning processes has had limited influence on project decisions and/or there has been expressed frustration regarding feedback loops on project consultations that locals have participated in. Evidence from Section 4 and direct feedback to EMM indicate concerns about decision transparency across Exploratory Works and broader program planning. The pre-management significance of this social impact is a High negative rating.
- **Awareness and uptake of complaints process:** Limited awareness or use of Queensland Hydro's complaints process may reduce stakeholder confidence in issue resolution. Evidence is drawn from monitoring of enquiry and complaints data (Section 4). Without management, this remains a High negative impact (likely / highly probable, and with moderate but extended duration).

Key features of Queensland Hydro's proposed management of these significant social risks and impacts are detailed within the SAMP01 and refer specifically to the implementation of the Exploratory Works Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) which covers:

- Planning and delivery of the Exploratory Works Program CSEP including:
  - Timely and accessible project information and updates
  - Formal notification processes for affected stakeholders regarding Exploratory Works activities
  - Publication of this SA and associated management plan (SAMP) including all commitments to improve transparency

- Broad and inclusive stakeholder engagement approach:
  - Publication of the CSEP for Exploratory Works
  - Multi-method engagements including community information and drop-in sessions, regular face-to-face meetings, individual stakeholder relationship management plans where appropriate to inform contractor planning, Stakeholder Reference Groups and Community Focus Group meetings
  - Coordinated engagements regarding cumulative impact management and third-party interface management involving other proponents and agencies (e.g. Powerlink, Seqwater, Gympie and Somerset Regional Council, Transport and Main Roads, and affected businesses, event programs and facilities)
- Incorporating stakeholder input into decision making:
  - Establishing multiple accessible feedback channels (SRG, Focus Groups, Working Groups, Local Office and 1800 Number, Project Email and Website contact links)
  - Internal governance for SAMP monitoring and contractor management with quarterly public reporting on SAMP implementation and monitoring results.
- Managing and resolving stakeholder concerns and complaints:
  - Promotion of feedback and complaints management processes
  - Transparent publication of complaints procedure and references across all forms of Exploratory Works engagement materials
  - Publication of quarterly reporting of feedback and complaints, including outcomes and adaptive management strategies by Queensland Hydro.

Additionally, the Exploratory Works phase offers key social benefits identified during engagement and addressed in other sections of this SA including:

- positive economic contributions through procurement-driven local employment and local business participation
- community investment through a range of social and environmental initiatives.

Table 5.1 provides a summary of identified social impacts associated with Community and Stakeholder Engagement. It also provides an assessment of impact significance, prior to, and following the implementation of management measures (detailed within associated management plan, SAMP).



**Table 5.1 Social impact summary for community and stakeholder engagement**

Exploratory Works activity	Social impacts	Impact significance (pre-management)	SAMP reference	Residual impact significance (post-management)
Planning and delivery of the Exploratory Works program	Stakeholder confidence and trust may decline due to perceived information gaps on project stages, timeframes, and changes to social commitments.	High (-)	SAMP01 - CSEP	Medium (-)
Engagement across a broad base of project stakeholders	Consultation fatigue or confusion due to cumulative project planning processes (Exploratory and Main Works, Queensland Hydro and Council Projects, and Powerlink planning).	High (-)	SAMP01 - CSEP	Medium (-)
Incorporating stakeholder input into decision-making	Local stakeholders may feel their input has limited influence on project planning.	High (-)	SAMP01 - CSEP	Medium (-)
Managing and resolving stakeholder concerns and complaints	Limited awareness and/or uptake of complaint management processes among stakeholders, or poor perception of complaints resolution and outcomes.	High (-)	SAMP01 - CSEP	Medium (-)

## 5.2 Workforce development and management

The Exploratory Works program is expected to generate both positive and negative social impacts in relation to workforce development and management. Social impacts have been identified based on early impact scoping and engagement in April 2024, an analysis of procurement and construction workforce assumptions, together with consultation feedback (Section 3.4), and consideration of relevant baseline data regarding regional labour markets and workforce capacity in the Gympie and Somerset LGAs.

Baseline findings indicate that the Project Area's and the Project Region's labour markets are characterised by a high proportion of trade-based employment, existing competition for skilled labour, and limited availability of local training and apprenticeship programs. The Exploratory Works workforce is expected to include both local (encompassing Project Area and Project Region LGAs), together with broader non-local specialist teams that are procured under scope-specific subcontractor arrangement. With the revised scale and extended duration of the Exploratory Works program, it is unlikely that Queensland Hydro's procurement practices will lead to significant competition with other local businesses and industries.

All workers and contractors will be accommodated in dedicated workforce accommodation facilities, currently established as Walkers Top Camp (enabled by interim RDC accommodation) and in the future Borgan Camp for the Lower Reservoir Area (enabled by interim accommodation at Walkers Top, and/or Lower Reservoir RDCs if required).

Table 5.2 summarises identified social impacts, affected stakeholder groups, and the significance of these impacts.

- Employment opportunities:** Baseline labour force data for the Gympie and Somerset LGAs (Section 3.4) indicates relatively high trades-based employment and underrepresentation of women, youth (15–24 years) and First Nations people in construction and infrastructure sectors, which suggest capacity and alignment to civil works contract opportunities during the Exploratory Works phase. Exploratory Works procurement is anticipated to create employment for both skilled and unskilled workers through subcontractor supply chains, however, opportunities will vary according to the procurement package and scope, with a strong likelihood that specialist services (such as Exploration Drilling and Tunnelling) will be sought from providers outside of the local area. Queensland Hydro will work with its contractors to agree appropriate workforce participation including diversity targets that are scope specific. Queensland Hydro will also engage with the Gympie and Somerset Regional Councils and local Chambers of Commerce to inform these targets. Prior to management measures in place, the significance of Project Area and Project Region employment is Medium(positive), the residual is High (+).
- Skills development and training:** Baseline data identifies limited local training providers and apprenticeship pathways in the project region (Section 3.4). While the Exploratory Works phase will draw on a combination of local and specialist services for temporary periods, Queensland Hydro will continue to engage through its local stakeholder networks and with education and training providers, to identify early pathway opportunities for the future Main Works program. This will include Queensland Hydro engaging with the local Regional Councils and Regional Development Councils to inform the development of skills and training initiatives that meet the needs of the local area. The pre-management significance of this social impact is evaluated as Medium (positive), and with Queensland Hydro’s contractual and engagement commitments in place, the residual impact is assessed as Medium (positive).
- Local character and values:** Baseline community profiles describe the Mary Valley as a quiet, rural tourism area with strong local identity and visual amenity values (Section 3.3). The scale and scope of the Exploratory Works program, with a peak of 227 in 2027, and on-site accommodation that exceeds this demand profile, means that a visible influx of workers may have a moderate magnitude on local character and values. The forecast light vehicle and heavy haulage movements is likely to have an ongoing contribution to changed traffic conditions and visible activity that will taper by the end of 2027. Traffic generation and temporary deterioration of road conditions may alter local amenity and affect tourism and community character, particularly during school holiday periods during 2026 and 2027. The pre-management significance of this social impact is evaluated as High (negative) due to the extended duration of Exploratory Works activities. Queensland Hydro’s commitments to road use management, contractor-specific traffic management plans, and a risk-based approach to managing impacts on school bus routes will all form part of measures to reduce the magnitude of this social impact. In addition, Queensland Hydro will continue to support measures to positively enhance local community character and values through administration of the Community Benefit Fund, and other initiatives including a pedestrian crossing at Imbil. With all measures in place, the residual effect of Exploratory Works activities on local character and values is assessed as Medium (negative).

- Workforce health and well-being:** The Exploratory Works workforce will be primarily accommodated on site for the duration of their roster, with bus commute arrangements in place to limit vehicle movements to and from site, and to reduce the risk of fatigue from this additional commute. Workers accommodated at TWACs and/or RDCs may experience temporary noise, vibration, and dust exposure during their roster period, associated with adjacent construction works. The Work Health and Safety Act 2011, and the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 establish the primary legal framework for ensuring safe work and workforce accommodation environments in Queensland. This includes providing and maintaining a safe work environment, ensuring adequate provision of facilities that support the health and welfare of workers, and provision of training and supervision necessary to protect all persons from health and safety risks. The Managing the Work Environment and Facilities Code of Practice 2021 includes detailed guidance for meeting these obligations, including standards for accommodation facilities. Additionally, the Queensland Development Code provides specific requirements for temporary accommodation buildings. Queensland Hydro has designed project works and accommodation arrangements in accordance with all legislative requirements, to ensure the health and safety of its workforce and contractors while accommodated on site. Queensland Hydro's CEMP also details specific environmental controls to manage dust, noise and vibration exposure for workers while on site, and for surrounding properties and sensitive receptors. Without these management controls in place, the effect of Exploratory Works on workforce health and wellbeing is evaluated as High (negative), due to the extent of potential impact across the workforce and potential exposure risks. With all management controls in place, the residual impact on workforce health and wellbeing during Exploratory Works is evaluated as Medium (negative).

**Table 5.2 Social impact summary on workforce management**

Exploratory Works activity	Social impacts	Impact significance (pre-management)	SAMP reference	Residual impact significance (post-management)
Generation of employment opportunities	Increased access to employment for skilled and unskilled people.	Medium (+)	SAMP02 - WMP	High (+)
	Visible change to local character, community or tourism values	High (-)	SAMP02 - WMP	Medium (-)
Provision of skills development and training opportunities	Increased access to skill development and training opportunities through procurement, supplier commitments and business capability development.	Medium (+)	SAMP02 - WMP	Medium (+)
Roster and shift arrangements influencing the physical and mental health and well-being of the workforce	Increase in workforce health, safety and well-being risks (i.e. fatigue, mental health, stress).	High (-)	SAMP02 - WMP	Medium (-)

Exploratory Works activity	Social impacts	Impact significance (pre-management)	SAMP reference	Residual impact significance (post-management)
Construction works associated with: -site establishment (i.e. vegetation clearing, road realignment, construction and upgrade of access tracks, and construction of TWAC) -geotechnical investigations (i.e. vegetation clearing, drilling and excavation) -exploratory tunnels (i.e. vegetation clearing, excavation, and tunnelling via drilling and blasting methods)	Increase in workforce health, safety and well-being risks during rostered periods of onsite accommodation	High (-)	SAMP02 - WMP	Medium (-)

### 5.3 Housing and accommodation

This summary of social impacts takes account of the project's forecast accommodation demand and accommodation solutions (Section 3.4) together with baseline conditions (Section 4.4) and consultation (Section 4.5 and referenced within).

Based on the analysis of the latest workforce forecast (September 2025) and available onsite accommodation, the likelihood of increased demand for rental or short-term accommodation is assessed as low, mitigating potential impacts on the availability and affordability of local accommodation for existing users.

Queensland Hydro continues to engage with local accommodation providers, particularly in Jimna, Kilcoy and Imbil and surrounds where there has been a strong expressed appetite to supply the project and derive a supplementary local economic benefit for accommodation provision. Queensland Hydro has committed to principled use of short-term accommodation options to facilitate ad-hoc and incremental use of short-term accommodation for visiting Queensland Hydro staff. All Queensland Hydro contractors will be required to be accommodated in on-site accommodation options unless with the express approval of Queensland Hydro.

From 2027, there is potential for Exploratory Works to affect the amenity of accommodation providers in proximity to Exploratory Works activities in the Lower Reservoir area, including Lake Borumba Caravan and Campground. Where possible, the siting of Exploratory Works facilities and works has been designed by Queensland Hydro to avoid visual and/or environmental nuisance (noise, vibration, and dust) to visitors of the campground. Hydro is also working closely in agreement with Seqwater and licence holders to provide ongoing operational certainty for the duration of Exploratory Works phase, and with agreed notification periods regarding upcoming Exploratory Works activities and predicted impacts in proximity to Lake Borumba.

To ensure effective adaptive management, the measures presented in the SAMP will be the subject of quarterly monitoring with local stakeholders and public reporting. This process will facilitate the identification of emerging social impacts and instigate proactive interventions as necessary.

Table 5.3 provides a summary of possible social impacts and benefits, along with relevant affected stakeholder groups, and an initial assessment of impact significance, prior to and post the implementation of management measures.

**Table 5.3 Social impact summary on housing and accommodation**

Exploratory Works activity	Social impacts	Impact significance (pre-management)	SAMP reference	Residual impact significance (post-management)
Increase in non-resident workforce	Potential for increased demand for housing and permanent rental accommodation in the local and regional area to accommodate workers	Low (-)	SAMP03 – H&A	Low (-)
Short-term accommodation use	Increased trade and revenue for short-term accommodation providers due to increase in patronage.	Low (-)	SAMP03 – H&A	Low (+)
	Increase in competition for short-term accommodation resulting in constrained access for tourists/visitors, particularly during peak periods (i.e. during holidays and events/festivals).	Low (-)	SAMP03 – H&A	Low (-)
Temporary facilities established on Seqwater land at Lake Borumba	Potential disruption to adjacent accommodation facilities and tourism operations (access and amenity impacts) affecting operations, visitors and permitted businesses.	High (-)	SAMP03 – H&A	Medium (-)
Improvements to workforce health and well-being as a result of best-practice workforce management	Provision of high-quality accommodation on site supports worker health and well-being.	Medium (+)	SAMP03 – H&A	High (+)

## 5.4 Local business and industry procurement

The Exploratory Works will generate both positive and negative impacts relating to local business and industry procurement. The Exploratory Works is expected to generate moderate economic benefit for the Project Area, Regional Area (representing Queensland definition for Local Content procured from LGAs within 125 km of the Exploratory Works footprint), and for First Nations businesses through targeted procurement activities. These benefits are most likely to be realised through Queensland Hydro's procurement packages and promoted supply opportunities, and evaluated as Medium significance (positive).

Incidental spend in Project Area communities is expected to be of medium positive significance, increasing to a high positive value with structured spend arrangements on catering and ad-hoc short-term accommodation.

Tourism-dependent businesses and forestry businesses, particularly in Imbil and Jimna, may experience negative impacts associated with changed levels of access, connectivity and amenity during Exploratory Works activity and associated traffic accessing the lower and upper reservoir areas. Queensland Hydro will continue to monitor and report on emerging impacts through engagement with local businesses and particularly during the peak of Exploratory Works in 2027. Due to the temporary nature of procurement contracts during Exploratory Works phase, it is unlikely that businesses in the Project Area and Project Region will experience significant competition for labour or labour draw. However, Queensland Hydro's CSEP and ongoing monitoring for the SAMP will identify emerging impacts in this regard, and report on adaptive management measures undertaken should they be required.

Table 5.4 provides a summary of social impacts and benefits, along with the relevant affected stakeholder groups, and the assessed significance of the impact prior to and post the implementation of management measures.

**Table 5.4 Social impact summary on local business and industry procurement**

Exploratory Works activity	Social impacts	Impact significance (pre-management)	SAMP reference	Residual impact significance (post-management)
Generation of supply opportunities for provision of goods, services, and works	Enhanced economic benefits for businesses in the Project Area and Regional Area due to increased procurement and supply opportunities.	Medium (+)	SAMP04 – LB&IP	Medium (+)
	Increase in trade and revenue for businesses in the Project Area, particularly nearby communities and First Nations businesses through targeted spend	Medium (+)	SAMP04 – LB&IP	High (+)
Generation of employment opportunities	Potential decrease in capacity and viability of businesses in the Project Area due to increase in labour draw and competition.	Low (-)	SAMP04 – LB&IP	Low (-)
Temporary influx of workers in nearby communities and the Project Area	Increase in trade and revenue for businesses in the Project Area, particularly nearby communities, due to incidental spending by the workforce	Low (+)	SAMP04 – LB&IP	Medium (+)
Construction works associated with: -site establishment (i.e. vegetation clearing, road realignment, construction and upgrade of access tracks, and construction of TWAC) -geotechnical investigations (i.e. vegetation clearing, drilling and excavation) -exploratory tunnels (i.e. vegetation clearing, excavation, and tunnelling via drilling and blasting methods).	Potential business disruptions and operational challenges for forestry, grazing, and tourism-dependent businesses due to construction activities.  Potential decrease in business from tourists and visitors due to amenity changes around Lake Borumba generated by construction activities.	High (-)	SAMP04 – LB&IP	Medium (-)

## 5.5 Health and community wellbeing

The Exploratory Works will generate both positive and negative impacts relating to health and community well-being. Works are anticipated to result in some pronounced traffic and amenity impacts while positive effects on health and well-being is expected to be generated through increased community benefits and investment opportunities.

Impact to community safety, health and wellbeing associated with the Exploratory Works program include the following:

- **Traffic and road safety:** Increased vehicle movements (light and heavy) associated with the Exploratory Works may elevate accident risks on key routes, including Yabba Creek Road, Bella Creek Road, Kilcoy Murgon Road, and Yielo Road. Social impacts from traffic generation are expected through to the end of 2027, aligned to the TIA forecast. This is based on modelling for on-site and internal traffic generation post-2027, with limited forecast external activity on local road networks. A Road Safety Audit (RSA) was conducted as part of the Exploratory Works TIA, identifying safety concerns for drivers, pedestrians, and

cyclists due to the road and roadside environment. The RSA prioritised Yabba Creek Road (between Brooloo Road and Bella Creek Road) as this section is expected to experience the highest traffic increase, with all major routes converging here. The Exploratory Works TIA outlines these risks, with management measures detailed in Queensland Hydro's RMP. Additionally, project-related restrictions on local access, increased travel times, and heightened construction traffic visibility may contribute to increased stress and frustration for local landholders and businesses, including tourism operators along Yabba Creek Road. These concerns are being addressed through Queensland Hydro's engagement and notification program, which includes regular updates to stakeholders and modifications to the Exploratory Works program in response to feedback. Without management measures in place, the Exploratory Works effect on traffic and road safety is assessed as high (negative), however with all risk assessments and controls in place the residual social impact will remain of medium (negative) significance through 2026 and 2027.

- **Student connectivity and school bus routes:** Traffic from the Exploratory Works program is expected to increase congestion and alter access arrangement on local roads including Yabba Creek Road, Bella Creek Road, Little Bella Creek Road, near the lower reservoir works area; and Yielo Road and Sunday Creek Road near the upper reservoir works area. This road network also supports student connectivity as pedestrian access and/or school bus routes. There is potential for a high significant impact without effective management in place. With Queensland Hydro's controls, including risk-based contractor traffic management plans, and Queensland Hydro oversight and contractual advice regarding social constraints, the residual effect remains of medium negative significance. The residual rating considers the extended duration of activities to end of 2027. Approximately 5 individual bus operators serve the Project area, including:
  - Lorraine Creevey Bus Service, Karrabee, and Polleys Coaches operate routes through Imbil and the surrounding region, with Polleys services and TransLink extending into the Gympie area. These operators have shared their route details and advised on connecting services that may experience traffic delays. All relevant information has been incorporated into the TIA. Queensland Hydro has committed to quarterly monitoring of service and operational impacts during the Exploratory Works phase.
  - Christensens Bus Service runs 12 routes across Somerset and Moreton Bay, covering areas such as Mary Smokes Creek, Neurum, Villeneuve, Jimna, Sandy Creek, Mt Kilcoy, Hazeldean, Gregors Creek, Kilcoy, and Caboolture. The Jimna and Kilcoy routes may be affected by changes in traffic conditions, which have been accounted for in the TIA. However, this provider has declined further engagement regarding impact management during the Exploratory Works phase.
- **Pedestrian safety in Imbil and Kilcoy:** the Exploratory Works TIA identifies an increased risk to pedestrian safety in Imbil and Kilcoy, particularly on Yabba Creek Road, D'Aguilar Highway and Kilcoy Murgan Road. Both towns of Imbil and Kilcoy have concentrated pedestrian activity including the Mary Valley Rail Trail, a key active transport route. Imbil currently lacks pedestrian crossings or refuges on Yabba Creek Road, while in Kilcoy, there are pedestrian refuges but no formal pedestrian crossings at the D'Aguilar Highway exit/entry to Kilcoy and surrounding Kilcoy State High School. Pedestrian safety management measures for the Exploratory Works phase are outlined by the TIA and RMP and will be implemented through Contractor-specific Traffic Management Plans. To address safety concerns in Imbil, TMR has secured funding for a raised pedestrian crossing on Yabba Creek Road between Diggings Street and Williams Street. Queensland Hydro is supporting the process through the Community Benefits Fund and contributions to Imbil Master Plan. No additional measures are proposed for Kilcoy during Exploratory Works phase, but pedestrian safety impacts will be reassessed for the Main Works phase. Without management, the social risk to pedestrian safety is assessed as High, and with management measures including additional risk assessments, contractor IVMS monitoring, and pedestrian safety provisions, the residual impact is assessed as Medium (negative).



- Operational disruptions for social infrastructure providers and prominent businesses:** Without appropriate mitigation, the Exploratory Works program is expected to cause temporary disruption to the operations of the Yabba Creek Rural Fire Service, Lake Borumba Fish Stocking Association, Lake Borumba Caravan Park and Campground, Stirling's Equestrian, BGGGS Marrapatta Outdoor Learning Centre, Mary Valley State College, and HQ Plantations. Disruptions are expected to result from changed local-level amenity associated with increased local traffic and congestion affecting learning environments, changed access arrangements on local road networks and surrounding key facilities, visibility of construction activities and workers particularly around Lake Borumba affecting visitor experience, and changed land use arrangements (HQ Plantations). Queensland Hydro has tailored a suite of management measures to be formalised through dedicated stakeholder agreements to manage and mitigate potential impacts (property-specific management plans and agreements as described in Section 5.1.3). Known social constraints and sensitivities will be documented and issued on a scope-specific basis to contractors to ensure coordinated management. With controls in place, the significance of this impact is reduced from a high (negative) to a medium (negative).
- Increased demand for health and emergency services:** With a reduced workforce, and longer duration of Exploratory works, together with on-site accommodation provision and medical service support, the Exploratory Works phase is not expected to cause undue strain on local social infrastructure, including health, police, ambulance, fire and rescue services. Queensland Hydro has established regular consultation with emergency service providers throughout the Exploratory Works program to monitor change and implement adaptive management measures in agreement with key stakeholders. Queensland Hydro also supports the Imbil Medical Centre by covering rent and utilities. The pre-managed significance of this social impact is assessed as Medium (negative) and a Low residual impact.
- Residential and local amenity:** Disruptions to living environment due to amenity changes generated by construction traffic (i.e. noise, dust, changed traffic conditions, and road use safety). These impacts are more likely to be experienced at a greater and enduring intensity for adjacent landholders living along transport routes and nearby onsite blast or drilling activities as noted in the Noise and Vibration Assessment. The nearest residential receptor to onsite works is 140 metres east of the proposed Kingham Creek Bypass, with two others located 800 metres northeast. The assessment concludes that construction activities will largely comply with noise and vibration criteria during the daytime but there is potential for night-time noise exceedances under select nighttime conditions. The report discusses mitigation strategies like limiting the size of blast charges and avoiding nighttime work. Queensland Hydro provides regular and advance works notices to adjacent property owners. They will also establish vehicle movement controls and exclusion zones and maintain direct UHF communications for traffic control. Controls for noise, dust and vibration are stipulated within Queensland Hydro's CEMP and will be supported by Queensland Hydro's engagement program and adaptive management measures to be developed with affected stakeholders. Queensland Hydro will identify impacted landholders and affected stakeholders and develop property-specific management plans in consultation with these stakeholders, inclusive of agreed management measures associated with predicted noise, vibration and dust impacts at affected properties.



- Tourism and recreational values:** Increased visibility of workers accessing the Exploratory Works footprint, increased traffic, and potential activity around temporary facilities located on Seqwater land adjacent Lake Borumba and the Lake Borumba Caravan and Campground, all increase the potential for change to existing tourism and recreational values at Lake Borumba and in nearby townships of Imbil and Jimna. Queensland Hydro's revised workforce peak of 227 personnel in 2027, supported by dedicated on-site accommodation, workforce commute arrangements with contractors, and primarily on-site works program will substantively address impacts to tourism and recreational values in nearby townships. However, Queensland Hydro will also be required to maintain regular engagement with Councils, Chambers of Commerce, its Stakeholder Reference Group and topic-specific Focus Groups to monitor and address emerging impacts to local tourism and recreational values. Dedicated relationship and impact management measures are also proposed for key stakeholders, facilities and operators that are co-located at Lake Borumba, or impacted by Exploratory Works at the upper reservoir. With these measures in place, the potential impact of Exploratory Works on tourism and recreational values is reduced from Medium (negative) to Low (negative).
- Human health considerations:** A number of potential impact pathways have been considered to determine associated risk of Exploratory Works activities to human health. Technical assessments for air quality, noise and vibration have proposed a range of mitigation measures to reduce likelihood of exceedance of regulatory and industry criteria for dust, noise and vibration impacts at nearby sensitive receptors. The Exploratory Works program is also confirmed to not have implications to the Lake Borumba water body. However, the potential for noise and dust to affect residential and local amenity, and be experienced as a nuisance, remains a social impact requiring mitigation as noted above. For impacted landholders and affected stakeholders, this is recommended to be addressed as part of property-specific management plans. A Social and Health Impact Assessment will also be undertaken for the future Main Works program when all potential impact pathways will be reassessed. With all environmental and wellbeing controls in place, the risk to human health as a result of Exploratory Works activities is reduced from Medium (negative) to Low (negative).

Table 5.5 documents the identified social impacts associated with Exploratory Works, affected stakeholder groups, and the significance of these impacts both before and after the implementation of management measures.

**Table 5.5 Social impact summary on health and community wellbeing**

Exploratory Works activity	Social impacts	Impact significance (pre-management)	SAMP reference	Residual impact significance (post-management)
Temporary influx of workers in nearby communities and the Project Area	Community concerns around perceived decline in community cohesion, privacy, safety and security due to presence of construction workers and introduction of TWACs.	Medium (-)	SAMP05 – H&CWB	Low (-)
	Increase in demand for health and emergency services to respond to increased risk of traffic and workplace accidents at construction work sites or the TWACs.	Medium (-)	SAMP05 – H&CWB	Low (-)

Exploratory Works activity	Social impacts	Impact significance (pre-management)	SAMP reference	Residual impact significance (post-management)
Construction works associated with: -site establishment (i.e. vegetation clearing, road realignment, construction and upgrade of access tracks, and construction of TWAC) -geotechnical investigations (i.e. vegetation clearing, drilling and excavation) -exploratory tunnels (i.e. vegetation clearing, excavation, and tunnelling via drilling and blasting methods)	Operational disruptions for social infrastructure providers (schools, bus operators, emergency services, community organisations) and prominent businesses.	High (-)	SAMP05 – H&CWB	Medium (-)
	Increase in the negative environmental risk factors to health due to increased dust deposition, diesel generator emissions, reduced air quality, naturally occurring asbestos, and storage of hazardous material.	Medium (-)	SAMP05 – H&CWB	Low (-)
	Impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage values due to disturbance of sites and changes to landscapes of significance.	High (-)	SAMP05 – H&CWB	Medium (-)
	Potential disruption to recreational and tourism values due to changes in amenity.	Medium (-)	SAMP05 – H&CWB	Low (-)
	Improved road conditions following completion of Exploratory Works	Medium (+)	SAMP05 – H&CWB	High (+)
Generation of additional light and heavy vehicle traffic along identified site access and transport routes	Increase in risk of traffic incidents and decline in road safety within the Project Area.	High (-)	SAMP05 – H&CWB	Medium (-)
	Delays and congestion affects school bus routes and student connections.	High (-)	SAMP05 – H&CWB	Medium (-)
	Increased pedestrian safety risk in Imbil and Kilcoy.	High (-)	SAMP05 – H&CWB	Medium (-)
	Disruptions to living environment due to amenity changes generated by construction traffic (i.e. noise, dust, vibration).	High (-)	SAMP05 – H&CWB	Medium (-)
	Potential disruptions to the learning environment of Marrapatta Memorial Outdoor Education Centre and Mary Valley State College.	High (-)	SAMP05 – H&CWB	Medium (-)

Exploratory Works activity	Social impacts	Impact significance (pre-management)	SAMP reference	Residual impact significance (post-management)
Generation of community benefits and investment opportunities	Positive contributions to socio-economic well-being in the Project Area through the provision of community benefits and investment opportunities.	Medium (+)	SAMP05 – H&CWB	High (+)

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# Appendix A

Social baseline data tables

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A.1 Social baseline data

A.1.1 Population characteristics

Table A.1 Population characteristics – nearby communities

Indicator	Year and data source	Dagun (SAL)	Brooloo (SAL)	Amamoor (SAL)	Jimna (SAL)	Kilcoy (UCL)	Imbil (UCL)	Kandanga (UCL)	Kenilworth (UCL)	Gympie (SUA)	Queensland
Population (#)	2021, ABS	137	369	720	70	2,351	467	234	272	22,424	5,156,138
Population change 2016-2021 (%)	2016 & 2021, ABS	-8.7%	6.0%	13.2%	-23.1%	23.9%	5.4%	4.9%	22.0%	7.0%	9.6%
Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (#)	2021, ABS	3	12	32	3	72	18	-	7	1,141	237,303
Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (%)	2021, ABS	2.2%	3.3%	4.4%	4.3%	3.1%	3.9%	0.0%	2.6%	5.1%	4.6%
Males (%)	2021, ABS	56.9%	49.3%	47.4%	68.6%	52.7%	48.8%	54.3%	47.1%	47.6%	49.3%
Females (%)	2021, ABS	40.9%	50.9%	53.1%	40.0%	47.4%	51.0%	44.9%	51.1%	52.4%	50.7%
Median age (#)	2021, ABS	52	52	47	46	37	51	42	50	43	38
Aged 14 years or younger (children) (%)	2021, ABS	16.1%	13.8%	19.9%	20.0%	18.8%	15.0%	20.5%	17.6%	18.0%	18.7%
Aged 15 to 24 years (youth) (%)	2021, ABS	2.2%	7.0%	9.9%	10.0%	9.5%	10.9%	9.0%	8.1%	11.9%	12.4%
Aged 25 to 64 years (adults) (%)	2021, ABS	54.0%	53.4%	43.6%	67.1%	42.8%	47.3%	40.2%	41.9%	41.1%	45.1%
Aged 65 years or older (elderly) (%)	2021, ABS	28.5%	23.3%	20.4%	24.3%	18.7%	26.8%	18.8%	26.5%	23.6%	17.0%
Number of families (#)	2021, ABS	34	109	194	18	542	125	51	80	5,997	1,366,657
Has a need for assistance (%)	2021, ABS	2.2%	6.8%	6.7%	7.1%	6.9%	11.1%	10.3%	6.3%	11.2%	6.0%
Has a long-term health condition (%)	2021, ABS	24.1%	37.7%	29.2%	28.6%	26.3%	38.3%	29.5%	40.4%	37.4%	28.8%
Engaged in voluntary work (%)	2021, ABS	22.2%	13.1%	25.3%	6.8%	13.3%	20.6%	15.9%	22.4%	15.4%	14.1%
Median weekly household income (\$)	2021, ABS	1187	1,141	1,100	749	1,401	1,022	1,078	979	1,129	1,675
Completed Year 12 or equivalent (%)	2021, ABS	54.4%	54.3%	49.3%	37.3%	50.8%	37.1%	44.4%	39.2%	44.5%	61.6%
Households earning less than \$650 per week (%)	2021, ABS	12.2%	20.4%	26.4%	25.0%	15.6%	29.7%	18.3%	15.8%	23.1%	15.2%
Lone person households (%)	2021, ABS	28.6%	27.5%	29.6%	54.2%	24.6%	31.3%	29.3%	29.2%	29.9%	24.7%
Speaks other language at home (%)	2021, ABS	-	1.9%	2.4%	0.0%	23.1%	2.1%	3.8%	3.7%	3.1%	11.7%



Table A.2      Population characteristics – project area

Indicator	Year and data source	Gympie LGA	Somerset LGA	Project Area total	Queensland
Population (#)	2021, ABS	53,242	25,057	78,299	5,156,138
Population change 2016-2021 (%)	2016 & 2021, ABS	7.4%	1.9%	5.6%	9.6%
Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (#)	2021, ABS	2,331	1,172	3,503	237,303
Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (%)	2021, ABS	4.4%	4.7%	4.5%	4.6%
Males (%)	2021, ABS	49.6%	50.5%	49.9%	49.3%
Females (%)	2021, ABS	50.4%	49.5%	50.1%	50.7%
Median age (#)	2021, ABS	48	45	-	38
Aged 14 years or younger (children) (%)	2021, ABS	16.6%	18.3%	17.1%	18.7%
Aged 15 to 24 years (youth) (%)	2021, ABS	9.8%	10.2%	9.9%	12.4%
Aged 25 to 64 years (adults) (%)	2021, ABS	43.6%	44.7%	44.0%	45.1%
Aged 65 years or older (elderly) (%)	2021, ABS	25.3%	21.5%	24.1%	17.0%
Number of families (#)	2021, ABS	14,713	6,932	21,645	1,366,657
Has a need for assistance (%)	2021, ABS	9.7%	8.3%	9.3%	6.0%
Has a long-term health condition (%)	2021, ABS	35.8%	35.7%	35.8%	28.8%
Engaged in voluntary work (%)	2021, ABS	16.0%	14.6%	15.6%	14.1%
Median weekly household income (\$)	2021, ABS	1,115	1,312	-	1,675
Completed Year 12 or equivalent (%)	2021, ABS	42.4%	44.3%	43.0%	61.6%
Households earning less than \$650 per week (%)	2021, ABS	22.9%	18.4%	21.5%	15.2%
Lone person households (%)	2021, ABS	27.3%	23.0%	26.0%	24.7%
Speaks other language at home (%)	2021, ABS	2.7%	4.5%	3.3%	11.7%

Table A.3      Population characteristics – regional area

Indicator	Year and data source	North Burnett LGA	Cherbourg Aboriginal LGA	Fraser Coast LGA	Noosa LGA	Sunshine Coast LGA	Moreton Bay LGA	Brisbane LGA	Ipswich LGA	Toowoomba LGA	South Burnett LGA	Total Regional Area	Queensland
Population (#)	2021, ABS	10,068	1,194	111,032	56,298	342,541	476,340	1,242,825	229,208	173,204	32,996	2,675,706	5,156,138
Population change 2016-2021 (%)	2016 & 2021, ABS	-3.9%	-5.9%	9.4%	8.0%	16.4%	12.0%	9.9%	18.3%	7.7%	2.5%	11.4%	9.6%
Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (#)	2021, ABS	708	1,151	5,647	933	8,332	18,616	22,940	12,509	8,677	2,045	81,558	237,303
Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (%)	2021, ABS	7.0%	96.4%	5.1%	1.7%	2.4%	3.9%	1.8%	5.5%	5.0%	6.2%	3.0%	4.6%
Males (%)	2021, ABS	50.6%	48.4%	48.9%	48.6%	48.1%	48.9%	49.2%	49.4%	48.4%	50.0%	49.0%	49.3%
Females (%)	2021, ABS	49.3%	51.4%	51.1%	51.4%	51.9%	51.1%	50.8%	50.6%	51.6%	50.0%	51.0%	50.7%
Median age (#)	2021, ABS	49	23	51	50	43	39	36	33	39	48	-	38
Aged 14 years or younger (children) (%)	2021, ABS	15.8%	35.1%	15.1%	14.8%	17.4%	19.8%	17.4%	23.4%	19.6%	17.0%	18.3%	18.7%
Aged 15 to 24 years (youth) (%)	2021, ABS	9.7%	17.3%	9.2%	8.8%	10.9%	12.0%	13.8%	13.3%	12.6%	10.3%	12.7%	12.4%
Aged 25 to 64 years (adults) (%)	2021, ABS	42.6%	35.9%	41.2%	44.6%	44.3%	44.1%	47.0%	43.8%	42.1%	41.4%	45.1%	45.1%
Aged 65 years or older (elderly) (%)	2021, ABS	27.0%	3.6%	30.2%	27.7%	21.7%	17.7%	13.5%	11.4%	19.5%	26.4%	16.7%	17.0%
Number of families (#)	2021, ABS	2,566	269	31,087	16,091	95,412	132,607	324,833	60,293	45,859	8,604	717,621	1,366,657
Has a need for assistance (%)	2021, ABS	8.0%	4.3%	10.8%	5.6%	6.2%	7.1%	4.6%	6.6%	7.0%	10.0%	5.9%	6.0%
Has a long-term health condition (%)	2021, ABS	33.2%	23.3%	40.3%	29.6%	30.1%	32.9%	25.4%	30.3%	32.3%	36.6%	29.1%	28.8%
Engaged in voluntary work (%)	2021, ABS	22.5%	3.7%	13.1%	17.0%	15.7%	12.6%	15.7%	11.1%	16.6%	16.7%	14.8%	14.1%
Median weekly household income (\$)	2021, ABS	1,021	793	1,062	1,467	1,595	1,648	2,068	1,668	1,461	1,045	-	1,675
Completed Year 12 or equivalent (%)	2021, ABS	39.8%	25.7%	41.0%	61.6%	60.2%	57.7%	78.0%	58.7%	55.3%	39.7%	66.7%	61.6%
Households earning less than \$650 per week (%)	2021, ABS	25.5%	34.5%	23.4%	17.3%	15.4%	14.7%	12.4%	13.4%	17.1%	24.5%	14.4%	15.2%
Lone person households (%)	2021, ABS	31.4%	22.5%	27.6%	24.4%	23.5%	22.0%	25.6%	22.0%	27.4%	30.2%	24.7%	24.7%
Speaks other language at home (%)	2021, ABS	4.8%	2.2%	3.7%	5.6%	5.8%	7.8%	20.8%	12.7%	7.7%	2.9%	13.7%	11.7%

## A.1.2 Housing characteristics

**Table A.4** Housing characteristics – nearby communities

Indicator	Year and data source	Dagun (SAL)	Brooloo (SAL)	Amamoor (SAL)	Jimna (SAL)	Kilcoy (UCL)	Imbil (UCL)	Kandanga (UCL)	Kenilworth (UCL)	Gympie (SUA)	Queensland
Number of private dwellings (#)	2021, ABS	48	169	316	46	819	214	86	130	9,481	2,061,855
Unoccupied dwellings (%)	2021, ABS	0.0%	16.6%	11.7%	41.3%	6.8%	10.7%	9.3%	9.2%	7.6%	9.3%
Separate house (%)	2021, ABS	100.0%	100.0%	98.2%	125.0%	95.2%	93.3%	87.8%	92.5%	88.0%	74.8%
Owned outright or with a mortgage (%)	2021, ABS	81.3%	71.6%	70.9%	52.2%	63.4%	66.7%	64.6%	71.7%	65.6%	63.5%
Rented (%)	2021, ABS	12.2%	9.9%	16.1%	16.7%	32.9%	28.2%	22.0%	21.7%	31.7%	33.1%
Median rent (\$)	2021, ABS	280	325	270	225	342	270	290	320	295	365
Social housing (%)	2021, ABS	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%	11.5%	11.6%	9.9%

**Table A.5** Housing characteristics – project area

Indicator	Year and data source	Gympie LGA	Somerset LGA	Project area total	Queensland
Number of private dwellings (#)	2021, ABS	22,956	10,294	33,250	2,061,855
Unoccupied dwellings (%)	2021, ABS	10.9%	11.9%	11.2%	9.3%
Separate house (%)	2021, ABS	91.2%	96.8%	92.9%	74.8%
Owned outright or with a mortgage (%)	2021, ABS	74.3%	75.0%	74.5%	63.5%
Rented (%)	2021, ABS	22.0%	20.7%	21.6%	33.1%
Median rent (\$)	2021, ABS	290	300	-	365
Social housing (%)	2021, ABS	8.4%	2.1%	6.5%	9.9%

**Table A.6**      **Housing characteristics – regional area**

Indicator	Year and data source	North Burnett LGA	Cherbourg Aboriginal LGA	Fraser Coast LGA	Noosa LGA	Sunshine Coast LGA	Moreton Bay LGA	Brisbane LGA	Ipswich LGA	Toowoomba LGA	South Burnett LGA	Total regional area	Queensland
Number of private dwellings (#)	2021, ABS	4,813	319	48,896	26,658	141,059	181,241	501,707	83,392	70,496	14,700	1,073,281	2,061,855
Unoccupied dwellings (%)	2021, ABS	18.9%	3.8%	10.2%	18.0%	9.3%	5.6%	7.3%	6.4%	8.3%	13.7%	7.8%	9.3%
Separate house (%)	2021, ABS	93.7%	88.3%	86.9%	79.5%	73.1%	81.1%	62.6%	88.7%	82.7%	92.4%	72.5%	74.8%
Owned outright or with a mortgage (%)	2021, ABS	68.3%	0.0%	71.5%	74.9%	68.5%	65.9%	59.0%	58.3%	64.7%	70.5%	62.8%	63.5%
Rented (%)	2021, ABS	23.6%	99.0%	24.4%	20.9%	27.3%	31.1%	38.3%	39.4%	31.8%	25.0%	34.1%	33.1%
Median rent (\$)	2021, ABS	200	100	300	470	440	360	408	330	300	245	-	365
Social housing (%)	2021, ABS	11.3%	102.3%	10.8%	7.6%	7.7%	8.9%	9.1%	8.3%	7.9%	8.0%	8.9%	9.9%

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