

Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Energy Storage

8 March 2023

Progress Update for Lithgow City Council

Geotechnical Investigation Program

- The onsite activity for the geotechnical investigation program has now concluded with all plant and equipment now demobilised and the rehabilitation of the shoreline drilling site completed.
- A total of 8 boreholes were drilled, with 6 fully grouted and sealed and 2 retained for ongoing water monitoring. Seismic and resistivity testing was also undertaken at the end of the program, and data acquisition and analysis is now underway.
- Final site inspections will take place next week. We continue to work with community members and land holders on various matters including the access track near Girraween Drive and the lakeside area at the bottom of Sir Thomas Mitchell Drive.
- We are also exploring an additional site investigation program and will engage further with Council on this in the coming weeks.

Community Response – Geotechnical Investigation Program

- We understand that there were some concerns raised at Council's meeting on 27 February regarding the appearance of cloudy water in the Farmers Creek arm of Lake Lyell.

Context

- Farmers Creek runs through Lithgow before reaching Lake Lyell. We are aware that from time to time, the creek water quality can be impacted by the urban and semi-industrial environment that it flows through. This means that there is the potential for multiple sources of water quality impacts.
- As Farmers Creek nears Lake Lyell, the past three years of heavy rain fall has contributed to a build up of silt and other naturally occurring debris which is in turn impacting what the local community experiences in terms of creek water quality from time to time.
- Water quality at Lake Lyell is critical to EnergyAustralia both as a source of water for Mount Piper Power Station and as a community asset. We conduct regular water testing in the Lake and in the surrounding creeks including Farmers Creek. We have not identified any specific issue for concern.

Cloudy water and Geotechnical Work

- EnergyAustralia takes our compliance across all areas of our business very seriously, and our compliance with the environmental approvals associated with our geotechnical work on Mt Walker is no exception.
- Our contractor GHD has provided assurance that all works completed under DA070/22 are compliant. We have sought and received assurance from our contractor GHD that the appearance of cloudy water in the Farmers Creek arm of Lake Lyell was not as a result of our work.
- When we spoke with Mr White and Mr Smith, we advised them to contact the Environment Protection Authority on 131 555 and EnergyAustralia's Community Line on 1800 574 947 immediately should they see the same cloudy water in Farmers Creek. The EPA will independently investigate as deemed appropriate.

Engineering Design

- We have appointed ACCIONA and McConnell Dowell to undertake the preliminary engineering design for the project.
- This design work commences this month and the data obtained through the Geotechnical Investigation Program will be a key input into our assessments of technical feasibility.
- The first phase of design will extend through most of this year.

Planning and Environment

- The project is considered State Significant Development (SSD).
- We expect to receive the Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment in April and will keep Council informed of any developments.
- We are in the process of appointing an environmental consultant to undertake the technical studies and prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for submission. On site surveys and studies are scheduled to commence in the next month or so.

- We expect detailed impact assessments will be required in relation to water, visual amenity, biodiversity, social impacts and Aboriginal cultural heritage, and standard assessments for hazards, historical heritage, land use, noise, traffic, air quality and economic impacts.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- We continue to implement the project’s engagement plan including consulting with stakeholders and community members and opening up new communication channels (Facebook page, webpage).
- Community drop-in sessions were held in Lithgow (20/2/23) and Portland and Wallerawang (21/2/23).
- The project team participated in Cultural Awareness Training with Mingaan Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation on 22 & 23/2/23, with one day in classroom and one day on Country.
- We are also looking to open a project hub on Main St Lithgow, which will provide a physical presence in town for the project and means for the community to seek more information and ask questions. We also intend to use this space for stakeholder meetings and events.
- We are progressing our framework approach for community benefits sharing and look forward to sharing more with Council as this develops.

Indicative timeline:



On Country Cultural Awareness Training



Seismic testing provides additional regional geological data



Key Contacts

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