



Issue 4 – December 2023

10 min read

# COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

## Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Project

Welcome to our December Community Newsletter. In this edition, we'll focus on the release of the Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Project's Concept Design.

### Concept Design

We have just released a Concept Design for our proposed Pumped Hydro Project. This provides more detail on the project, including where key elements will be located.

Key features of the Concept Design include:

- **Upper reservoir location**  
The upper reservoir's location in the gully on the southwest flank of Mt Walker responds to community feedback, ensuring it remains out of sight for the majority of Lithgow. It will be constructed from rock sourced from Mt Walker. Underground penstock waterways will be tunnelled to connect the upper reservoir down to the powerhouse.
- **Underground powerhouse**  
The powerhouse will be situated underground, reducing both visual and noise impacts. Access to the powerhouse will be via two tunnels from portals built on the north side of Farmers Creek.
- **Site access roads**  
Parts of Sir Thomas Mitchell Drive will be widened and straightened to facilitate site access. Entering from Sir Thomas Mitchell Drive, a double-lane road on land owned by EnergyAustralia, will bring access to the project site, cross Farmers Creek and continue on up Mt Walker to the upper reservoir. Most of the road will be shielded from view by the natural ridgelines.
- **Water intake and Farmers Creek diversion**  
A diversion connecting the upper arm of the lake to Farmers Creek will be created to allow construction of the water intake, and to help avoid impacts on local platypus and fish.
- **Permanent bridge**  
A permanent bridge to access the upper reservoir will be built across the diversion. Temporary cofferdams will be installed to enable dewatering of the intake location for the duration of construction. The water intake will be cut into the north side of Farmers Creek Arm to connect the tail race waterway tunnels to the powerhouse.
- **Switchyard location**  
The 330kV switchyard, connecting to existing transmission lines, will be located at the lakeside on the south side of the Farmers Creek Arm, below the entry road, largely shielded from view from Sir Thomas Mitchell Drive.
- **Material management**  
Excess material from excavating the upper reservoir, tunnels and underground powerhouse will be repurposed. Some will be used to infill a section of the lake to separate the water intake from Farmers Creek, while the rest will be revegetated to blend with the environment.
- **Temporary accommodation**  
Approximately 400 construction workers will be housed in temporary accommodation. We are still considering the appropriate location for the camp, and community feedback will form part of that decision.



We'll use the Concept Design to seek more community input on how we might improve the design further.

Artist's impression only. Renders are for illustration purposes and may be subject to change.

**The Project Director, Mike de Vink, says**



The Concept Design emphasises our commitment to maintaining the lake's recreational use, mitigating environmental, cultural heritage and other important impacts, through site-sensitive design - working with the site's natural geography and making informed adjustments based on community feedback and environmental studies. The Concept Design now allows us to plan further environmental impact studies, and supports our progress with more detailed engineering design work."

**Visit our new EnergyAustralia Project HQ**

Our Project HQ at 124 Main Street, Lithgow (formerly home to Reliance Bank) is now open:

**Mon & Tues, 9am-5pm | Wed, 9am-2pm | Thur & Fri, 9am-5pm**

Pop by to check out our displays and videos, and pick up some information. Leanne is keen to meet you and hear your views on the proposed project.

**Join a December info session!**

We'll share the project's developments, including where it'll be and how it'll look, and we'll have a chance to chat together on your questions and feedback.

**Leanne, our Community Liaison Officer**



**Online webinar**  
On laptop/phone!



**Wednesday, 13 Dec**  
7pm-8pm

Register with this QR code



**In-person sessions**  
Meet our team!



**Tuesday, 12 Dec**

10am-1pm - The Foundations – Annex building, Williwa St, Portland  
2pm-6pm - Wallerawang Library, 40 Main St, Wallerawang

**Wednesday, 13 Dec**

10am-3pm - EnergyAustralia Project HQ, 124 Main St, Lithgow

**Thursday, 14 Dec**

9am-12pm - Lithgow Valley Plaza, corner of Lithgow St & Bent St, Lithgow

## Environmental Impact Statement progress

Right now, we have experts out around Lake Lyell and Mt Walker, conducting studies as part of the project's Environmental Impact Statement.

Some of the things they've been investigating recently are:

- Aboriginal cultural heritage assessments, including surveys and cultural values mapping.
- Ecology and biodiversity field studies to identify and count flora, fauna, and insects, during the day and at night.
- Aquatic ecology surveys looking at the inhabitants of Lake Lyell, including the platypus population. Read more on this below.
- Preliminary visual impact studies, which are investigating how key elements of the project will look from different viewpoints.

The findings from these studies will help the project team understand the impacts that may require special consideration. The team's aim is to avoid impacts where we can – and if it can't be avoided, the studies will recommend the best way to mitigate environmental impacts.

Results from the studies will be included in the project's Environmental Impact Statement, which will be shared with the community late next year.



**Environmental studies are currently underway at Lake Lyell and Mt Walker.**



## Platypus studies underway

We know there are platypuses living at Lake Lyell. That's why we're now undertaking a comprehensive study to better understand their movements and habits in the lake.

Leading the platypus study are experts from the University of New South Wales, working together with aquatic ecologists, Austral Research and Consulting. And we're pleased to have some community members involved with the study that have a particular interest in the platypus.

The study will take about 12 months to complete and will help us understand the population's behaviour across all seasons. This will form part of the Environmental Impact Statement which will go on public exhibition for community feedback later in 2024.

## Delivering benefits to Lithgow

EnergyAustralia understands the importance of sharing the benefits of energy transition projects like ours with the community and Traditional Owners. We know that meaningful benefit sharing investment needs to be co-designed with the local community. This will involve work to recognise and offset the impact on the community hosting the project, identifying community needs and priorities, and fair and genuine benefits over the life of the project.

EnergyAustralia is a long-term member of the Lithgow community and we are aligned with its Regional Economic Development Strategy to drive local capability, attract local investment, cultivate a local culture of entrepreneurship, create local labour force, prioritise lifestyle infrastructure and contribute to a visitor economy. We have a commitment to employ and buy local where we can so we can keep the benefits in the region.

Sharing ideas for community benefits at a workshop with tourism and recreation leaders.



For example, earlier this year, we teamed up with 24 local tourism and recreation leaders in Lithgow for a brainstorming workshop. We asked for their thoughts on ways to increase the connection that residents and tourists have to the area, and new opportunities for recreation and tourism. Some great ideas were discussed, including:

- Improving connectivity, paths, and signage between attractions
- Celebrating Lithgow's industrial heritage
- Developing a foodie destination
- Improving transport links.

Early next year, we'll build on this, consulting further with the community to share our approach. This will involve identifying further areas for investment that can deliver meaningful benefits and economic prosperity to the region if the Lake Lyell Project proceeds.

## We're here to help

If you have a question please don't hesitate to contact us. You can also keep updated by following us on Facebook at Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Project.

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 **Lake Lyell  
Pumped Hydro**  
by EnergyAustralia

Supported by



**Public acknowledgement and disclaimer:** This project is proudly funded by the NSW Government's Pumped Hydro Recoverable Grants Program. The views expressed herein are not necessarily the views of the NSW Government. The NSW Government does not accept responsibility for any information or advice contained herein.