

# EnergyAustralia Lithgow Region Community Consultative Committee Meeting Minutes – 20 August 2024

## Member attendees:

- Julie Favell
- Jim (Cricket) Whitty
- Jamie Giokaris
- Aunty Helen Riley
- Alex Preema
- Rob White
- Shaun Elwood – Lithgow City Council
- Steve Marshall – EnergyAustralia
- David Wilson– EnergyAustralia
- Ben Eastwood – EnergyAustralia

## Also present:

- Lauren Stevens – Lithgow City Council
- Robert Setter – EnergyAustralia
- Justine Loe - EnergyAustralia

## Apologies:

- Cr Maree Statham

## Presenters

- Michael de Vink – EnergyAustralia
- Martin Ryzak – Energy Australia
- Alex Frolich – EMM Consulting

## Chair:

- Brendan Blakeley

Item	Discussion Point
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1	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>
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- The meeting began at 5:03 pm
- The Chair welcomed all members
- The Chair acknowledged Country
- The Chair asked for declarations of interest:
  - The Chair noted he chaired a similar group for EnergyAustralia at Tallawarra Power Station
  - The Chair declared payment received from EnergyAustralia for role as independent chair of this CCC
  - No other interests were declared.

2	<b>Minutes</b>
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- A hard copy of the minutes of the previous meeting was distributed.
- There were no comments on the previous minutes.
- There were no actions arising from the previous meeting.

3	<b>Mt Piper and Pine Dale Update</b>
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Site safety – Steve Marshall

*See slides 9 & 10*

- Site safety is tracking well.
- One lost time injury in July.
- As with all injuries, the incident has been investigated to identify how it happened, and what can be put in place to prevent it from happening again.

Operation in the market

*Slides have been redacted due to confidentiality. Only high-level discussion points are reported below.*

Operation

- With increasing generation from solar panels, the trend for peak demand has progressively moved to winter.
- Demand has been high over the recent period due to a wind drought with the station having very high levels of generation over the past few months.
- The reliability of plant at Mt Piper has been good.
- Recently Unit 1 was taken out of service for a short while to repair tube leaks.
- The coal situation is improving with consistent deliveries from Centennial.
- The quality of coal received from various sources has been good. Currently deliveries are equal to what the station is using.
- The Water Treatment Facility has also been very reliable and consistent at around 36-38 megaliters (ML) per day.
- Energy Australia would like this to be higher at around 42 ML a day as this would enable the levels of water that is currently being stored underground in old mine workings to be progressively brought down.

People

Steve noted

- That the apprentice intake presentations were very well attended, and 86 applications were received
- Recruitment is underway for an engagement lead for the Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro and Mt Piper Battery projects.

*A CCC member asked about where the apprenticeship intake was coming from.*

- Steve responded that the applications were primarily local, drawing from the Blue Mountains and Lithgow areas.
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### Pine Dale and Enhance Place

*See slide 18*

- There were no changes to those noted at the last meeting.
- The predominant activity is cattle grazing on privately owned land.
- EnergyAustralia is looking at installing habitat breeding boxes in rehabilitated areas, targeting species including nightingales, eastern rosella and kookaburras. The team was also considering installing small boxes suitable for glider possums.

*A CCC member asked if there were any plans to mine at Pine Dale.*

Steve noted as per previous responses to this question:

- There are no current plans to re-establish operations at Pine Dale.
- There are still coal reserves at Pine Dale, but water is a challenge
- The license remains and leases would stay under review.

*A CCC member asked if acid mine drainage was a problem at Pine Dale.*

**ACTION: The question was taken on notice for a response at the next meeting.**

### Community

*See slide 20*

Community grants:

- Round 2 is open between 1 September and 30 September 2024.
- Sponsorship requests have been received from several local organisations and these are currently being considered.
- Events supported were:
  - Wang Warriors Trivia Night
  - The Share the Dignity Drive [www.sharethedignity.org.au](http://www.sharethedignity.org.au)

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## 4 **Project updates**

The Mt Piper Battery Energy Storage Scheme (BESS)

*See slides 21,22 & 23*

- The BESS application has come off public exhibition with:
    - 41 submissions received from the public
    - 13 submissions detailing advice from agencies.
  - The project team is now preparing a Response to Submissions Report (RTS).
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Item	Discussion Point
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- The RTS requires EnergyAustralia to address the detail of issues raised in the feedback received and outline any changes to the application that may be needed to accommodate material matters raised in submissions.
- Following completion of the RTS report the NSW government will make a final decision about the project.
- The Rural Fire Service has also agreed to EnergyAustralia undertaking a Fire Safety Study once the detailed design is known. The scope of the study will be refined following input from the RFS.

### Questions comments from the CCC

*Will gas be used to recharge the batteries?*

Steve responded that:

- The batteries will be recharged at times when there is excess low-cost power in the grid.
- Typically, this will be at times when there is a lot of solar in the mix.
- The batteries will draw from the grid at these times with electricity generated from a range of sources.
- They will discharge power into the grid at high demand times.
- The idea is to have a range of sources such as batteries, pumped hydro and peaking gas plants that can provide electricity into the grid at times of high demand.
- The Mt Piper battery would be able to discharge at a power of 500 MW for up to 4 hours.

### **Dam safety compliance**

*See slides 24 ,25 26 & 27*

Steve Marshall introduced Martin Ryzak who has taken over the dam safety role from Michael Starkey.

Martin noted:

- There was a minor earthquake on 08 March 2024.
  - Even though the quake was below the threshold of triggering a full dam surveillance regime, EnergyAustralia undertook a detailed assessment.
  - No problems were detected at either Lake Lyell or Thompsons Creek Dam.
  - All reporting is up to date and has been submitted to Steve Marshall and the company secretary for signoff.
  - The reporting process is independent of EnergyAustralia and was prepared by Aurecon.
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- The dam safety regulator recently did a risk review of assets and EnergyAustralia is pleased that all the regulator's requirements were met.
- Thompsons Creek Dam is checked daily and Lake Lyell 3 times per week. The reason for the daily inspection regime at Thompsons Creek Dam is that it has a higher risk consequence rating than Lake Lyell.
- EnergyAustralia has recently completed stabilisation works on the eastern foreshore of Thompsons Creek Reservoir to repair a landslip that occurred in 2022. While it was a reportable incident it posed no risk to the dam wall.
- The work entailed excavating the slumped area and putting in new rock. Other work included restoring access paths to fishing areas. It was interesting that when the team excavated the slumped area around 1 meter down the team found very large smooth river rocks on this part of the foreshore.
- Routine concrete repairs of the Lake Lyell spillway are planned for September.
- The water level in Lake Lyell is being lowered in anticipation of the repairs. The water level is currently down around 400 mm and soon will be brought down by another 100 mm. This will allow the concrete to dry out for spillway inspection and any remedial works that may need to be undertaken.
- A key part of future maintenance works will be a 25-year seal inspection of the fuse gates. For this inspection the water level will need to come down by 3.5 meters.
- It is anticipated that these inspections will occur after summer around March / April in 2025. The current scope of works is saying the inspection will take around 2 months.
- The fuse gates can only be inspected one at a time hence the long duration of works.
- The fuse gates afford around an extra 3 meters of spillway and are an important part of flood mitigation at Lake Lyell.

#### CCC member discussion

*Was there any damage from the earthquake?*

Martin responded:

- The immediate assessment entailed looking along the crest of the wall for any damage. If the safety barriers are out of alignment that provides a good indication of whether any further investigation is needed. When we looked there was nothing out of alignment.
- EnergyAustralia also looked at the seepage points in Lake Lyell and Thompsons Creek Dam and there was no detectable increase in flow from seepage points.

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**Item****Discussion Point**

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- If in this instance there were signs of deformation or additional seepage the surveyors would be called in.
- The surveyors check the wall once a year as per requirements.

*The CCC member suggested it would be prudent to do a full survey after any seismic activity.*

Martin noted that this would only be undertaken if any changes were found.

*A question was asked about the extent of the inundation area below Thompsons Creek Dam given its high consequence rating.*

Martin noted that the inundation area is predominantly in the low-lying areas of Pipers Flat.

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**6****Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Study- project update**

*Refer slides 28-40*

Michael provided a status update on the EIS for the Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro scheme.

- The EIS is well underway with reports being finalised across the various disciplines within the team.
- EnergyAustralia recently held a series of workshops to look at the Community Benefits Scheme that would accompany the project.
- Representatives from over 50 different local tourism, environment, education, business and community services organisations were invited. Council was also involved.
- Two workshops were held focusing upon:
  - Tourism, recreation and environment
  - Community services and support.
- At each workshop the ideas were prioritised for further investigation. These will be taken forward should the project proceed.
- Some of the ideas included:
  - Signage for improved tourism access.
  - A youth hub.
  - Improved recreational facilities and amenities at Lake Lyell.
  - Training programs, skill development and ticketing for renewable energy projects.
- EnergyAustralia is looking to further refine these ideas and will bring them back to test with the CCC out of session.

*CCC discussion*

*A CCC member noted that the Acclimatisation Society was not represented at the workshops.*

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Michael responded that Ray Tang from Wallerawang Acclimatisation (WA) was at the workshop.

Addendum to minutes:

EnergyAustralia has confirmed the current President, Secretary and Treasurer of Wallerawang Acclimatisation (WA) were invited to the workshop.

A CCC member requested this addendum also note that neither the President or Treasurer of WA attended the workshop and that the WA representative who attended was an employee of EnergyAustralia. In the review of the minutes additional matters related to representation at the workshops (but beyond the focus of this addendum) were raised.

**Action: The Chair has noted that these additional matters be discussed at the next meeting.**

*A CCC member expressed concern that the workshops excluded immediate neighbours who are the most impacted by the project. They felt that neighbours should have been invited to have their say about the project in the community benefits workshops.*

Michael responded that EnergyAustralia has other forums to engage with neighbours and work with them to understand very locally specific issues and impacts, and to look at how these matters could be resolved or mitigated. He acknowledged that some neighbouring landholders have chosen not to engage with EnergyAustralia.

*The CCC member noted they felt EnergyAustralia's intent was to "divide and conquer and disagreed that the workshops and immediate neighbour's programs were two totally separate items but were in fact related items and should not be treated in isolation.*

The Chair commented:

- That community benefit schemes were a feature of most major infrastructure projects within NSW.
- There is an established process for identifying community benefits in consultation with community stakeholders.
- Typically, the development of a community benefits program is quite distinct from the work a proponent undertakes with directly impacted landholders and businesses.

Michael noted:

- With additional input from various studies, a preliminary design for Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro has now been finalised.
- This design presents a further refinement of the concept design and has more detail.
- Information on the preliminary design is now on the website.

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Item	Discussion Point
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- While it is specific enough to advise EMM on what should be written up in the EIS, it is still not a final detailed design.
- This next level of detailed design work will only commence after a planning determination is made and the internal EnergyAustralia business case is approved.
- EnergyAustralia is also advancing discussion with Transgrid about how the station will be connected to the grid. This is a relatively straightforward exercise given there are existing high voltage transmission lines in the vicinity of the lake.

*A CCC member asked if the existing lines around Lake Lyell will require upgrading.*

Michael replied that the transmission lines have adequate capacity and will not need to be upgraded, but new infrastructure will be required to link these lines up to the station. The details of the connection will be outlined in the EIS. The presence of high voltage transmission lines near the lake was part of the reason to investigate pumped hydro in this location.

EnergyAustralia also noted that there is a project to upgrade a small section of transmission line between Mt Piper and Wallerawang to augment the connection between the Sydney basin to the Central West Orana REZ. This work will take place on the line easement that is on EnergyAustralia land, but it is not being undertaken by EnergyAustralia.

Michael noted that a request for a temporary excision of the camp location from Council's long-term lease of the Lake Lyell recreation area was originally approved by Council but has since been rescinded. EnergyAustralia was looking to engage further with Council on this matter to understand Council's needs and seek a resolution.

*A CCC member noted the Concerned Lithgow Community group had asked Council to not approve this request as the location was an 'appalling' option as it is highly visible from the road frequented by tourists and therefore not a suitable location for a long duration workers camp.*

*Another CCC member supported this position agreeing that location intruded upon a key view of the lake from the surrounding area.*

Michael noted that the intent was to have the camp near the work site but also look at what infrastructure within the construction workers camp could be used for recreational benefits and tourism down the track when the temporary housing was removed. He noted that consideration was also being given to opportunities for re-use of accommodation units for low-cost housing.



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Item	Discussion Point
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He explained that understanding and minimising the impacts of the construction village was something EnergyAustralia wanted to discuss with neighbours as part of the neighbour consultation program.

*A CCC member noted that EnergyAustralia had not talked with many neighbours as most were opting not to engage and that EnergyAustralia should speak with them as a group. Talking to people individually was creating suspicion between neighbours and a “divide and conquer” approach was not good for the community. They also felt that through these discussions EnergyAustralia was requesting a lot of unnecessary personal information from neighbours.*

*A CCC member asked if Pipers Flat was off the cards as a location for worker housing.*

Michael indicated that other sites such as Pipers Flat, whilst not preferred, were not yet off the table.

Michael responded that the way EnergyAustralia was engaging with impacted neighbours was typical for such projects and the needs of each neighbour were different. To date EnergyAustralia has followed relevant NSW guidelines and the information being sought was to understand what mitigations could be developed on a personalised case by case basis.

Michael then provided a response to a question regarding changes in the project’s overall generation capacity that was asked in advance of the meeting.

*See slide 32*

Key points included:

- The sizing of the pumped hydro unit has been based on an upper reservoir capacity that could support 8 hours of generation.
  - Detailed studies have shown that a higher level of generation is possible across a shorter duration with overdrive production of up to 430 MW across 4.5 hours decreasing progressively to around 400 MW and exhausting the storage capacity by 6.5 hours.
  - In effect this gives a 28% power boost albeit across a shorter time at around 80% roundtrip efficiency (the energy from pumping that comes back into actual generation).
  - The peak generation combines 430 MW into the grid with 10 MW used to power the station plant itself.
  - A reduction in head can be compensated for by opening the inlet valves to ensure a consistent minimum flow rate.
  - Whatever the regime, all up over the 8 hours or 6.5 hours it tallies up to around 2680 MWh of generation.
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Item	Discussion Point
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- This affords a lot of flexibility as to how the pumped hydro can fill in gaps within the system in terms of power but also assisting to maintain and boost frequency across the grid.

*There was general discussion clarifying the impact that these changes had on generating times and processes. The changes increase the power generating level but with more rapid use of the water contact meant that generating time was lower. The overall outcome of full cycle power generation remains at 2680 MWh.*

*A CCC member asked why not construct more batteries as they provide 2000 MW across four hours with much less impact on the environment compared to pumped hydro. The member also noted the following points:*

- *that batteries are recyclable, possibly cost less and wouldn't leave redundant hydro infrastructure in 80 years' time.*
- *that in 2018 when pumped hydro was first mooted, grid scale batteries were not yet technically or financially feasible, but they now were.*
- *the Concerned Lithgow Community Group supports battery projects over pumped hydro.*

*Another CCC member noted that there are still 18 months before a business decision will be made and any new technologies could be reviewed over that time.*

Michael responded that batteries last around 15 years whereas Lake Lyell has a much longer project life and that the services batteries and pumped hydro provide are subtly different. Steve Marshall added that EnergyAustralia needs to have diverse forms of power storage across its portfolio rather than rely on one technology.

*A CCC member noted the Battery Energy Storage Scheme EIS stated the project had a service life of 20 years.*

Alex Frolich from EMM provided an update on the various studies being undertaken as part of the EIS.

*See slides 33 & 34*

- Surveys and field work are largely completed but water monitoring will continue.
  - The team has a good understanding of what is there or may be there in terms of biodiversity and heritage but is still doing a lot of work around appropriate mitigations.
  - Social Impact Assessment engagement is underway.
  - Cultural values mapping and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Archeology have been completed and the report is back with Knowledge Holders for comment and review.
  - There are no listed or potential non-Indigenous heritage items
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Item	Discussion Point
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- The project has been declared Critical State Significant Infrastructure by the NSW Government.
- Lodgment is anticipated late in 2024 with exhibition in early 2025.

### Biodiversity

*See slides 35 & 39*

Several ecological studies have been conducted over the past year with field work (including direct observation and monitoring methods) occurring across different times. This work was undertaken according to relevant guidelines and expert advice from the department where guidelines did not exist.

Field surveys used remote monitoring as well as observation times of around 20 minutes per identified tree.

A list of targeted species was shared. *See slide 35.*

*CCC members asked questions about several species and methods used.*

EnergyAustralia's responses are below:

- A powerful owl was sighted. There was a chance some may have been missed via visual observation, so owl call backs were used to locate trees for subsequent observation.
- The team took a conservative approach and where a threatened species wasn't seen but likely habitat existed there is an assumed presence of that species.
- The copper butterfly was surveyed in September and October. The team found *Bursaria* and the symbiotic ant species, with habitat being assessed as impacted.
- Koala detection dogs were used and while there were no sightings, scat was detected near the Mt Walker fire trail.
- For the purposes of the EIS the area has been mapped as koala habitat.
- Targeted reptile species were the pink tailed legless lizard and striped legless lizard.

*A CCC member suggested that EnergyAustralia should undertake ongoing monitoring if the project goes into operation to understand the impacts of the project. They also suggested that habitat enhancement activities should be undertaken across EnergyAustralia's land in the vicinity of the project. They added that there is likely to be more species than the relatively narrow range that the surveys and assessments would indicate. As an example of why ongoing monitoring is important, they noted the Lithgow Environment Group's four-year project that confirmed the presence of the Eastern Pygmy Possum and Feathertail Glider within the area although these species had not been observed in decades of*

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Item	Discussion Point
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*environment operational reports. They then asked if state or federal government assessment was being completed as some of the species identified came under the EPBC Act.*

Alex Frolich responded that the team is using the NSW assessment methodology and the EBPC referral requirements have been followed.

*A CCC member expressed concerns that animals and birds may be poached from the area now the studies have identified they are present.*

#### Aquatic ecology

Alex Frolich noted:

- *A major focus of the aquatic studies was the platypus.*
- *Environmental DNA analysis was used to test for the presence of types of fish and was also used to assess the areas of reach for platypus.*
- *The team also used acoustic and radar tracking for platypus detection.*
- *The surveys found 10 females and 7 males in Farmers Creek and Coxs River with platypus also coming into the lake to forage.*

*A CCC member asked if platypus were DNA tested?*

Alex Frolich replied that no DNA testing was done. eDNA was analysed only to check for evidence of platypus activity / presence within an area.

*A CCC member who participated in the survey thanked EnergyAustralia for the opportunity to be involved.*

Michael acknowledged the contribution of community members who assisted with the survey. The process brought together local knowledge with the expertise of one of Australia's leading platypus researchers.

*A CCC member expressed concerns about the impact of the diversion across Farmers Creek as this:*

- *will create a very sudden transition from the shallow creek to a deep lake environment.*
- *this change in depth will make it unsuitable for platypus habitat and it will be a long time before feed species regrow in the channel - if they ever do.*

Alex noted that the platypus expert was looking at ways to make the diversion channel as conducive as possible for the platypus. The report will present results, describe potential impacts and impact pathways, and then identify a range of mitigation opportunities.

*There was general discussion around concerns for the Farmers Creek platypus population during construction and post-construction.*

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**Item****Discussion Point**

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*A CCC member suggested that EnergyAustralia should consider taking platypus out of the environment during construction. While they are described as an abundant species within this system everything needs to be done to ensure they remain this way.*

Alex Frolich noted this would be looked at in the report and mitigation strategies.

*A CCC member noted that there is a strong platypus population within the lake system. They expressed concerns that the biggest threat to population viability was habitat destruction, and the project proposed major changes to habitat in both the creek system and the lake itself. They also noted that while the focus was on construction there were also threats during ongoing operation. These include fluctuations in water levels and safety around the pump intake/discharge areas. They also noted operations would also impact upon recreational activities and fishing.*

Alex Frolich noted that both construction and operational impacts will be described and addressed within the EIS. Social and recreational impacts would be assessed through SIA.

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**7****General discussion**

*A CCC member asked why there was no response to the matter they raised at the last meeting regarding access to Thompsons Creek Dam for anglers with disability or mobility issues.*

Steve noted that the team was looking at the risk and safety implications of this request and there had recently been a few concerning incidents where security staff had to rescue people accessing the dam.

**ACTION: The Chair noted he would contact Alex Preema to better understand the nature of access he was seeking and to what areas it could be provided.**

*A CCC member raised the issue of shooting on the area near Blackmans Flat on the haul road to Blue Lagoon. As per EnergyAustralia's previous direction they had called the police who took over two hours to respond. They asked if EnergyAustralia could make representations to the owner of this land to advise neighbours prior to undertaking shooting.*

Steve stated that where shooting occurs under EnergyAustralia's direction on EnergyAustralia's land, they will notify neighbours. EnergyAustralia is not able to direct what other landowners do on their own land. Steve stated that he understood EnergyAustralia had formally corresponded with the CCC member about this matter and that he would check the status of that correspondence.

**Item Discussion Point**

**Addendum to minutes:**

EnergyAustralia corresponded with the CCC member regarding this matter in August 2024.

*A CCC member asked if EnergyAustralia had any interest in being involved in environmental programs to address mange in the wombat population upon their land?*

Ben stated that EnergyAustralia wasn't currently involved in any such program but would be keen to learn more about them.

**ACTION: The CCC member undertook to provide Ben with the relevant information.**

*A CCC member noted that pigs were still a problem around Mt Walker, and they were coming onto neighboring properties via EnergyAustralia's land.*

Ben replied that EnergyAustralia was part of a land management group with LLS and NPWS. Recent culls by this group were quite successful. The trapping program wasn't very effective, but the shooting program was.

**Addendum to minutes.**

The Local Land Services conducted an aerial shooting program targeting pigs which included EnergyAustralia land at Mt Walker, Marangaroo National Park and Marangaroo State Forests. A summary of the NSW State wide results are included below, more information can be found at the following link

[https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/1567215/20240613-FPP-stakeholder-update-July-2024-A4-web.pdf](https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1567215/20240613-FPP-stakeholder-update-July-2024-A4-web.pdf)

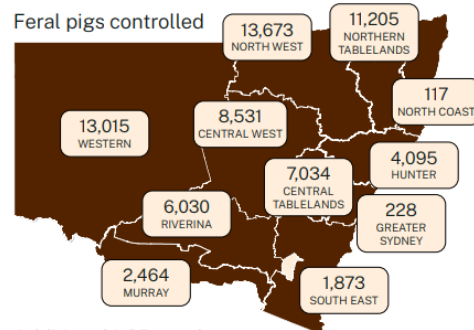
**Across all regions**

Every Local Land Services region was involved, with targeted feral pig programs to focus on hotspots and high density populations.

40 per cent of the feral pigs culled under this program were within known hotspots across 3 priority landscape scale control zones in the North West, Central West, Riverina and Western NSW.

A successful example of coordinating control effort across a broadscale area is the Coonabarabran and Coolah Landscape Scale Project (LSP2), located within the Central West region.

Over 8 months, 13,456 pigs were removed from the half million hectare area, helping knock down numbers and complementing local baiting and trapping efforts.



**Additional LSP results**

Landscape Scale Project Zones	Feral pigs
1. Riverina, Western & Central West	15,075
2. Central West	13,456
3. North West	16,092

Item	Discussion Point
	<i>The CCC member observed that these activities seemed to have dispersed pigs onto neighbouring properties and EnergyAustralia needs to look at a constant feral animal management program.</i>
8	<b>Meeting close</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="384 398 552 432">• 7:00 pm</li><li data-bbox="384 434 1177 474">• Next meeting to be on <b>Tuesday 19 November 2024</b></li></ul>

# EnergyAustralia Lithgow Region

## Community Consultative Committee

20 August 2024

Steve Marshall – Head of Mt Piper



**EnergyAustralia**

LIGHT THE WAY



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# Agenda

1. Welcome – Acknowledgement of Country – Declarations of Interest
2. Minutes and Actions
3. Mt Piper and Pine Dale Update
4. Project Updates
  - Mt Piper Battery
  - Dam Safety
5. Project in Focus: Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro
6. General Discussion
7. Meeting close

# Acknowledgement of Country

I would like to acknowledge the Wiradjuri people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and future

Artwork done by Wurundjeri Traditional Owner, Mandy Nicholson



# Declarations of Interest

# Minutes and Actions

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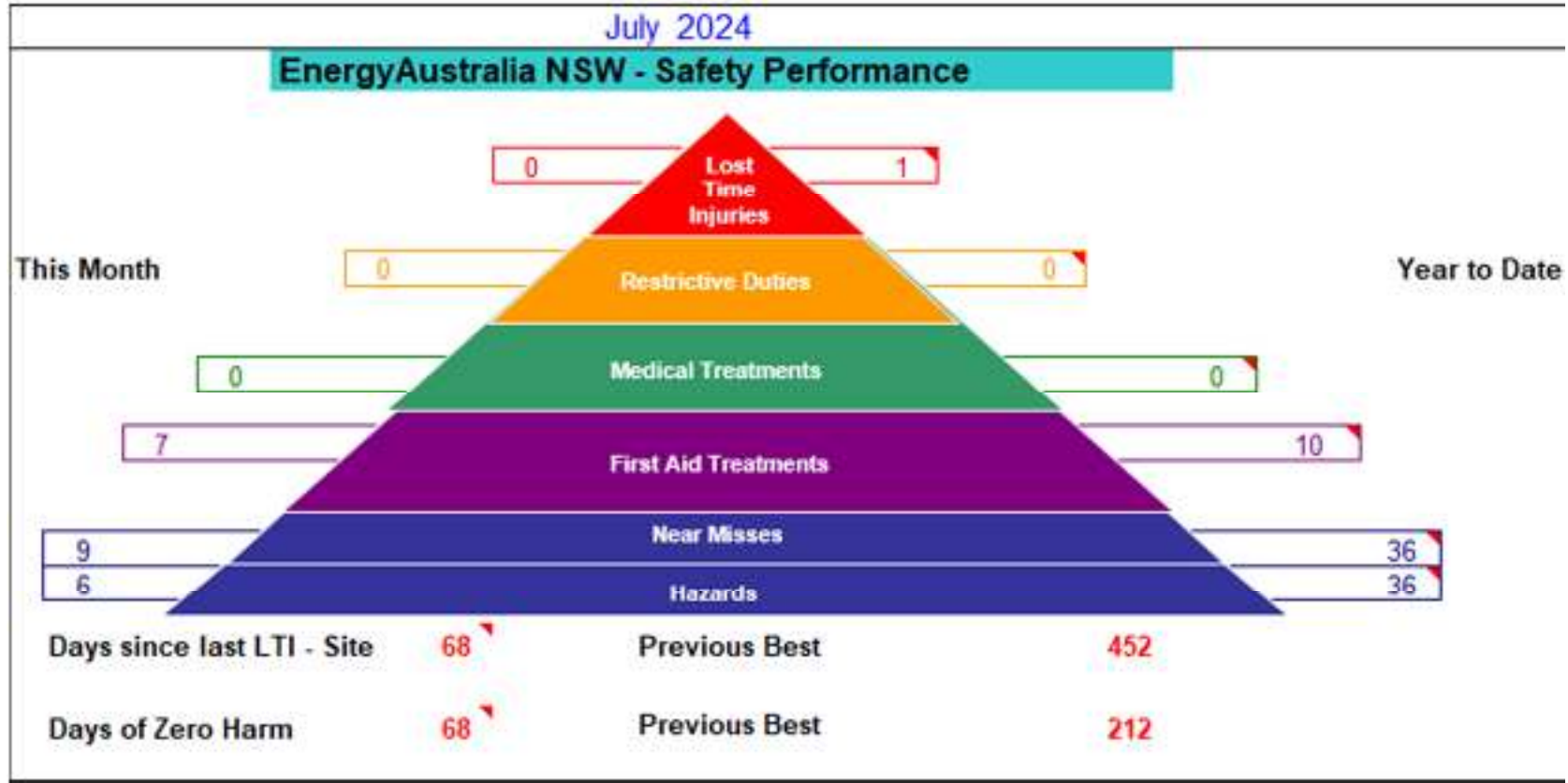
# Actions from Previous Meeting

Nil actions from previous meeting

# Mt Piper Update

# Site Safety

# Site Safety – July 2024



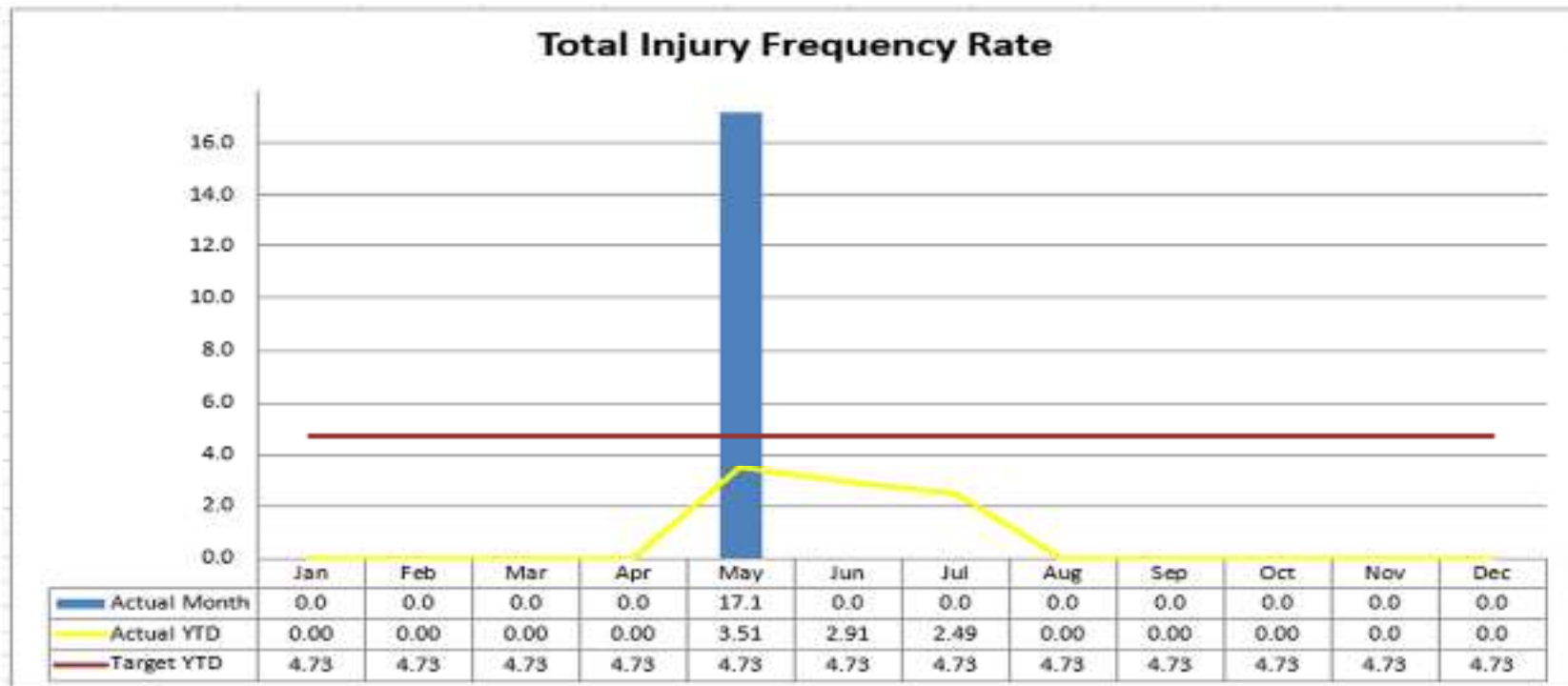


# Site Safety July 2024

YTD – TIFR (As of July 2024)

Actual = 2.49

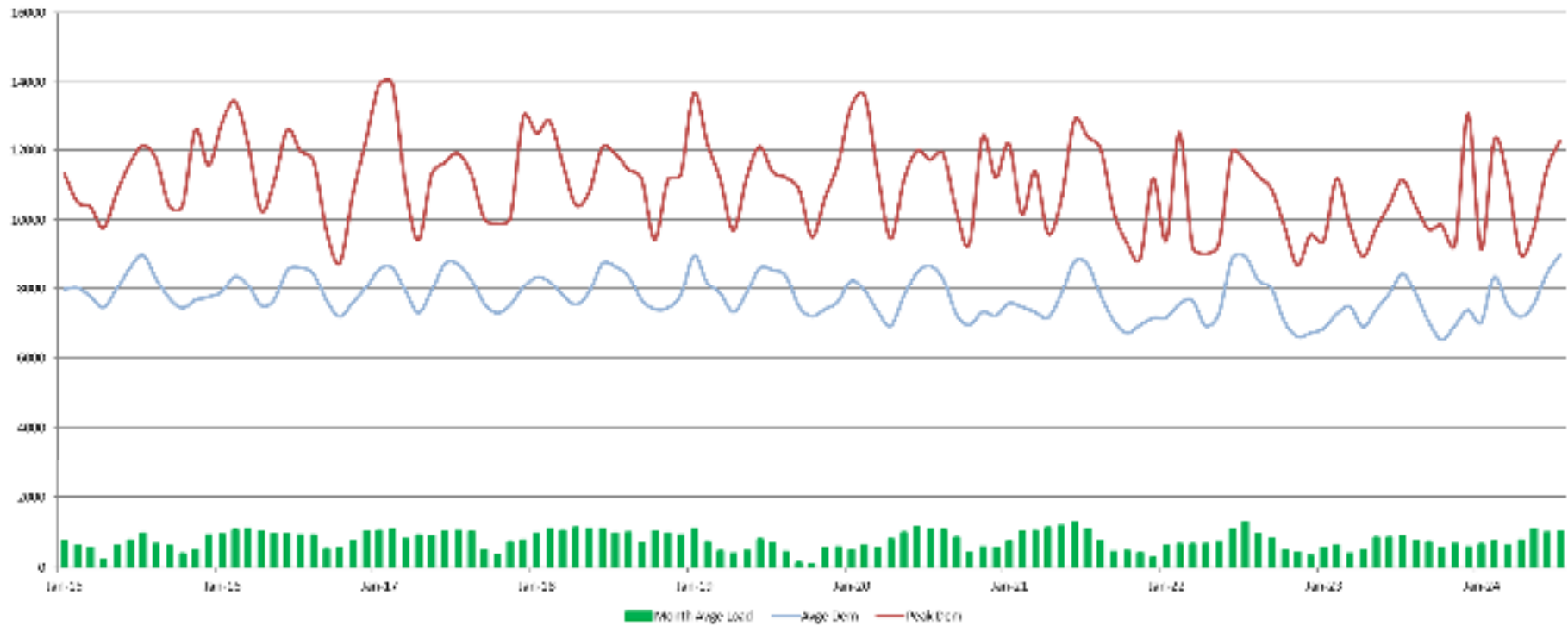
Target = 4.73



# Market Update

# Operation in the Market

## Mount Piper in the NSW Market



# **Operations (Site) Update**

# Operations update – August

Redacted

# Operations update – August

Redacted

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## People

- Apprentice Intake presentations were held in late June.
- Restructure of the community engagement team following the departure of Mick Hanly ongoing.
- Recruitment for Project Engagement Lead (NSW) to focus on LL PHES and Mt Piper BESS nearing completion



# **Pine Dale Mine and Enhance Place**



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## Pine Dale Mine and Enhance Place

- No non compliances at the Pine Dale Mine
- No community complaints recorded for Pine Dale Mine, related to its activities
- Continues in care and maintenance
- Future mining activities continue to be evaluated
- Monitoring of rehabilitated areas is ongoing
- Installation of wildlife nesting boxes being considered in rehabilitates areas next year



# Community Update

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# Community

- Round 2 Community Grants open between 1 September – 30 September 2024.
- Latest round of sponsorship requests currently being reviewed

## Supported Events

- Wang Warriors Trivia Night – merchandise
- Supporting Share the Dignity drive



# **Project – Mt Piper Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)**

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## Project Update - BESS

- Project's EIS was on public exhibition from 31 May to 27 June. We received 41 submissions (a number of which were for a completely different project) as well as 13 agency submissions.
- We appreciated the supportive submissions we received.
- Specifically, we received submissions from the Rural Fire Service and Fire and Rescue NSW. The fire authorities agreed with the project's proposed measure to prepare a Fire Safety Study as part of detailed design, according to FRNSW guidelines. The scope of the study has been refined further based on the fire authorities' feedback.

## Project Update - BESS

- The project team is in the process of responding to all the submissions in a report which will be published ahead of the NSW Government making a final decision on the project's approval.



# **Dam Safety Compliance**

**Presenter: Martin Ryzak**

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# Dam Safety Compliance

- All dam surveillance and reporting up to date
- No non compliance for both Lyell Dam and Thompsons Creek Dam





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## TCD Bank Stabilisation Works Complete

- Civil earthworks completed, restoring the stability of the bank on the Eastern foreshore
- Returned public access in the area and improvement to the fishing ramps amenity



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## Upcoming – Lake Lyell Spillway Routine Repairs

- Preparations underway ahead of routine concrete repairs on the spillway in September
- Lake Lyell water level will be lowered 500mm to provide safety to work crews



Project in Focus

**Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro**

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## Questions on Notice

- More information on animals looked at in the wildlife study i.e. gliders, platypus etc. How were these monitored/looked for, monitoring locations and times, initial findings.
  - Responding as part of the EIS Update 20/8/24
- More information on how the changes brought by the diversion of Farmers Creek will impact on platypus habitat, breeding and range/migration along the creek as well as any proposed mitigations to support platypus in the lake and Farmers Creek.
  - Responding as part of the EIS Update 20/8/24

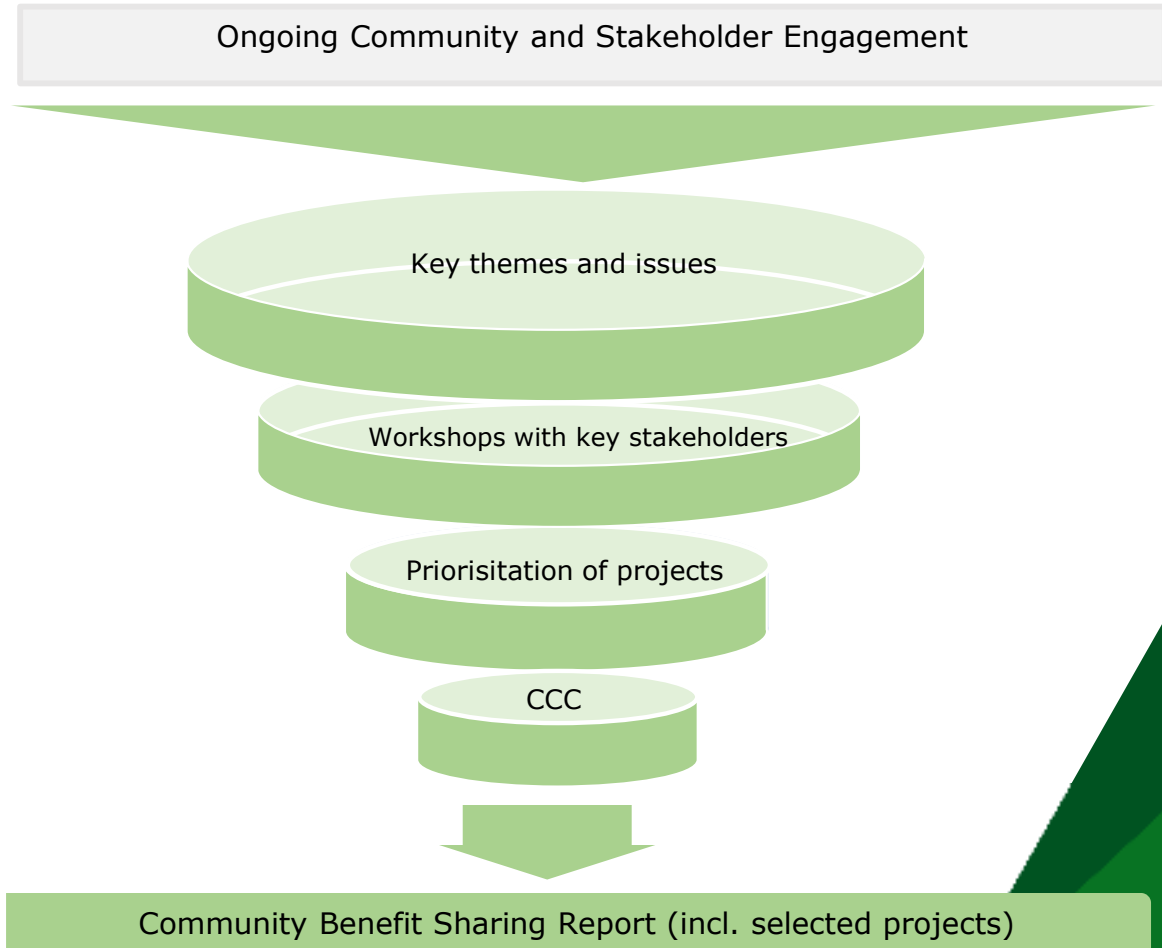
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## Lake Lyell PHES update

- EIS – Update on progress from EMM (follows)
- Community – Benefits Sharing Workshops held 1-2 July '24.
- Prelim Design - sufficient to inform EIS
- Grid Connection – work in progress
- Construction camp – concept to inform EIS
- Neighbour benefits program – commenced
- 440MW capacity increase – included

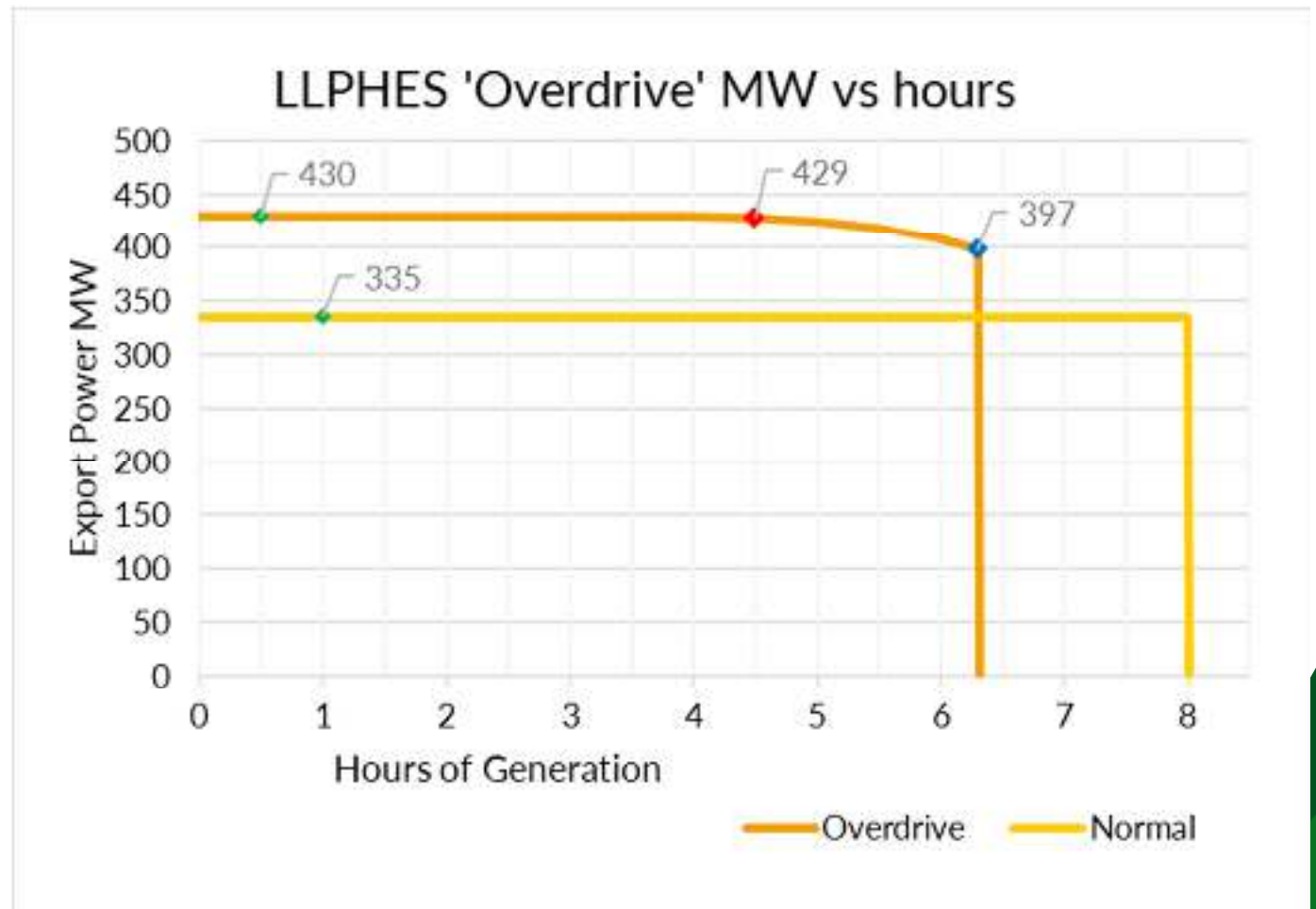
## Lake Lyell PHES update

- Community Benefits Sharing Workshops  
1-2 July 2024



## Lake Lyell PHES update

- 440MW "Overdrive" (gross generation)
- 28% Power boost
- 430MW net to grid
- 80% Round Trip Eff.
- 2680MWh



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## Lake Lyell PHES EIS update – Overview / General

- Detailed field surveys largely completed – some continue as needed, e.g. monitoring
- Technical studies – draft impact assessment and reporting phase underway
- Some additional engagement and feedback still to be completed for input to assessments and mitigation (e.g. SIA)
- EIS still under preparation, ready for lodging planned for Q4 2024, exhibition in 2025
- Minister has declared the project as CSSI





## Lake Lyell PHES EIS update– Heritage

### Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal studies

- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment – pedestrian survey and archaeological test excavation completed, draft report currently with knowledge holders and then RAPs for review
- Cultural values mapping and report prepared and reviewed by participants (summary in ACHA)
- Non-Aboriginal heritage assessment completed. No local, State or National heritage items known or identified during research or survey



## Lake Lyell PHES EIS update – biodiversity

- Rapid vegetation assessments, detailed vegetation integrity surveys, habitat assessment and targeted threatened species surveys ~July 2023 to July 2024

Scientific name	Common name	Recommended survey period
<i>Acacia meiantha</i>	-	July to October
<i>Asterolasia buxifolia</i>	-	September to November
<i>Eucalyptus aggregata</i>	Black Gum	All year
<i>Eucalyptus cannonii</i>	Capertee Stringybark	All year
<i>Eucalyptus pulverulenta</i>	Silver-leafed Gum	All year
<i>Eucalyptus robertsonii</i> subsp. <i>hemisphaerica</i>	Robertson's Peppermint	All year
<i>Leucochrysum albicans</i> var. <i>tricolor</i>	Hoary Sunray	January, February, March, April, September, October, November, and December.
<i>Persoonia marginata</i>	Clandulla Geebung	January to March
<i>Thesium australe</i>	Austral Toadflax	January, February, November, and December
<i>Veronica blakelyi</i>	Veronica blakelyi	January, February, and December

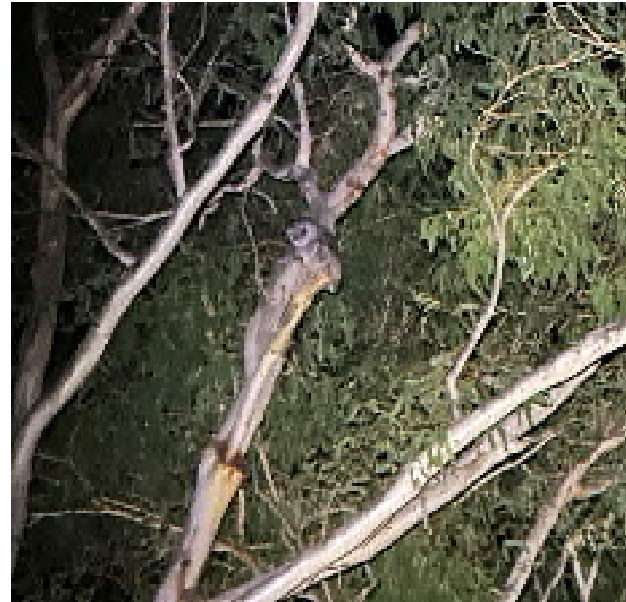
Target species group	Target species	Survey methods employed	Recommended survey period
Birds	Bush Stone-curlew	Call playback, spotlighting, watching and listening surveys.	All year
	Superb Parrot	Area and transect searches, watching and listening surveys	September to November
	Gang-gang Cockatoo	Nest tree searches, area and transect searches, listening surveys, watching individuals and flocks when found	December to January
	Glossy Black-Cockatoo (Breeding)	Area and transect searches, watching and listening surveys.	January to September
	Little Eagle (Breeding)	Nest tree searches, area and transect searches, and vantage point surveys.	August to October
	Square-tailed Kite (breeding)		September to January
	White-bellied Sea-Eagle (Breeding)		July to December
	Barking Owl (Breeding)	Targeted nest tree searches, spotlighting, stag watching, call playback, passive acoustic monitoring and listening surveys	January to August
	Masked Owl (Breeding)		January to August
	Powerful Owl (Breeding)		January to August
Sooty Owl (Breeding)		January to August	
Mammals - marsupials	Eastern Pygmy-possum	Remote camera surveys	October to March
	Southern Greater Glider	Spotlighting surveys	All year
	Squirrel Glider	Remote camera surveys	All year
	Brush-tailed Phascogale	Spotlighting surveys	December to June
	Koala	Remote camera surveys	December to June
		Spotlighting surveys Koala detection dogs Spotlighting surveys Passive acoustic monitoring	All year
Mammals - bats	Large-eared Pied Bat	Anabat detection, roost searches	November to January
	Large Bent-winged Bat (Breeding)	Anabat detection, roost searches	December to February
	Southern Myotis	Anabat detection	October to March
	Grey headed Flying-fox (breeding)	Camp sites for flying foxes were searched for throughout the site on foot.	October to December
Reptiles	Pink-tailed Legless Lizard	Diurnal rock turning searches	September to November
	Striped Legless Lizard	Active searches	September to December
Insects	Bathurst Copper Butterfly	Searching <i>Bursaria spinosa</i> bushes, in sunshine >15°C.	September, October, and December

## Lake Lyell PHES EIS update - biodiversity

- No threatened flora species were recorded during the threatened flora surveys
- Threatened fauna species were recorded:

Target species group	Target species
Birds	Gang-gang Cockatoo
	Glossy Black-Cockatoo
	White-bellied Sea-Eagle
	Powerful Owl
	Sooty Owl
Mammals - marsupials	Koala (scat)
Mammals - bats	Large Bent-winged Bat
	Eastern Coastal Free-tailed Bat
Reptiles	None recorded
Insects	Bathurst Copper Butterfly*

\* Species not recorded in project area but recorded nearby



- Mitigation options being developed
- Both ecosystem and species offsets will be required

## Lake Lyell PHES EIS update– aquatic

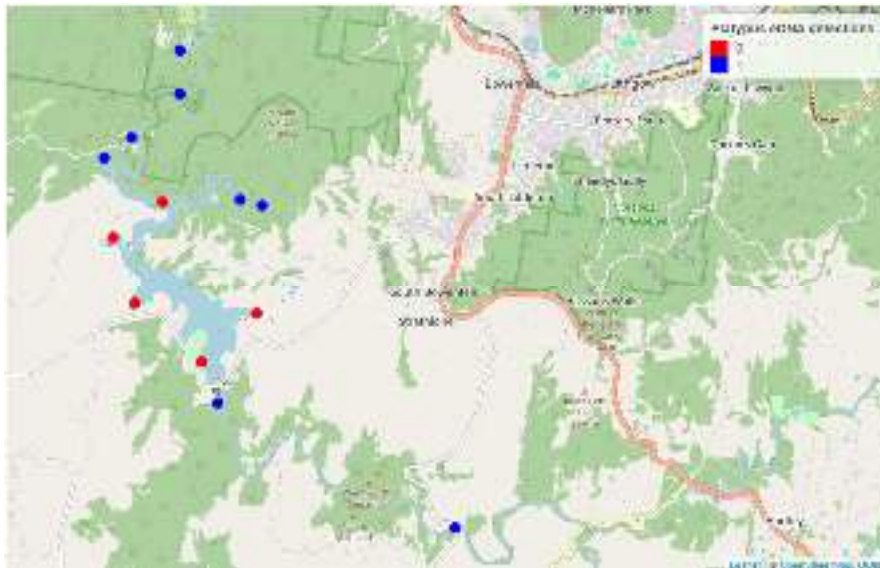
- Austral Research and Consulting and UNSW (Dr Gilad Bino)
- eDNA sampling
- Fish surveys (no threatened species identified)
- Platypus surveys (live trapping and tagging)
  - Two rounds of six nights each (12 total nights)  
Nov 2023 and Feb 2024
  - Mesh nets and fyke nets
  - Platypuses were processed following established protocols ([Bino et al. 2018](#))
  - Each platypus was sexed and weighed and had body measurements taken
  - Acoustic and radio tracking
- Macroinvertebrate surveys



# Lake Lyell PHES EIS update - aquatic

## Platypus – preliminary findings

- Platypus in Farmers Creek and Coxs River
- Burrows predominantly upstream of lake in creek system
- Foraging preferred in lake most of the time



Surveys	Site	F	M
2023	FC1	2	0
	FC2	5	2
	FC3	0	0
	CR1	0	0
	CR2	0	1
	CR3	0	0
2024	FC1	1	0
	FC2	0	2
	FC3	0	0
	CR1	2	1
	CR2	0	1
	CR3	0	0
<b>Total</b>		10	7



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## Lake Lyell PHES EIS update - aquatic

Aquatic ecology (incl platypus) – potential impact pathways

- Potential (direct and indirect) impacts during construction
  - loss of habitat
  - noise and vibration (construction activities)
  - water quality
- Potential impacts during operation
  - intake operation – disturbance of foraging and breeding behaviour, erosion and sedimentation
  - water level changes – changes to macroinvertebrate assemblages

Mitigation options being developed as impact assessment progresses

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## Lake Lyell PHES EIS update– other

Other studies –

- Amenity impacts being assessed through traffic impact assessment, noise and vibration assessment, air quality assessment, landscape and visual impact assessment, and others
- Water impacts being assessed with consideration of existing catchment and operating regime
- Social and recreational impacts being assessed through additional interviews and review of results and findings from all other EIS studies

**Thank you**