

Issue 3 – August 2023

10 min read

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Project

Welcome to our third Community Newsletter which includes updates on a new location for the upper reservoir and how we are exploring options to share benefits with the community.

New upper reservoir location

In response to feedback from the community, we've come up with a solution that will substantially reduce visual impacts and will see the upper reservoir moved to behind the southern ridge of Mount Walker.

It is now expected that many homes and businesses in Lithgow, Bowenfels, South Bowenfels and Hillcrest Estate will not be able to see the upper reservoir at all.

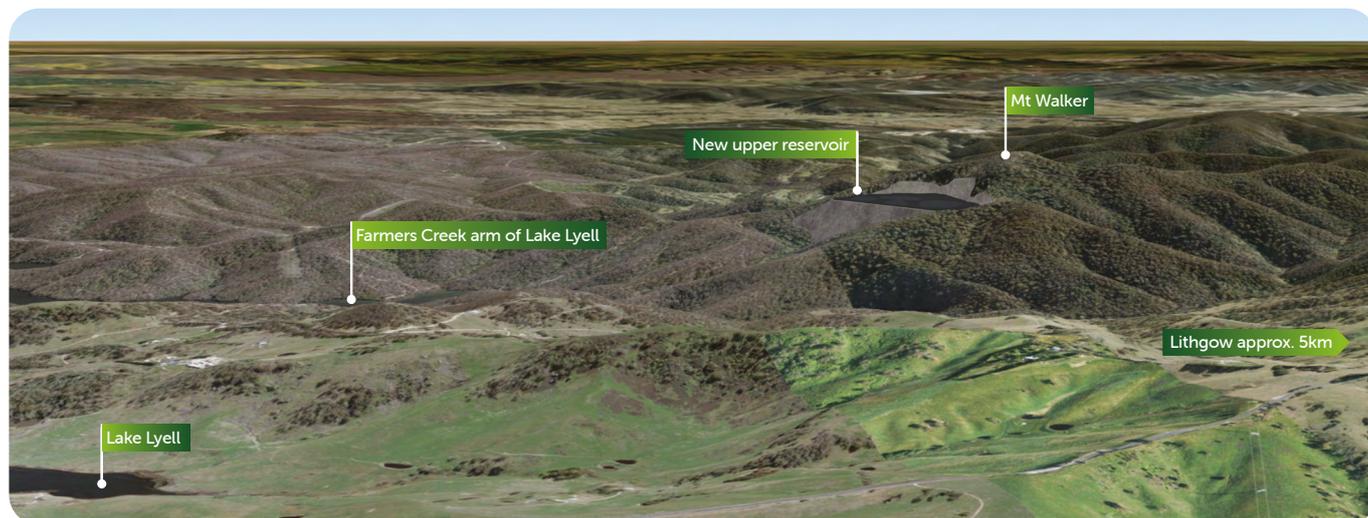
An additional benefit of this new location is that the reservoir wall will be built from natural rock rather than concrete. This is a big plus in reducing the carbon emissions associated with the project, given concrete's large carbon footprint.

The project's pumphouse will also be located underground, further reducing visual impacts and ensuring minimal noise associated with running the pumped hydro facility.

An artist's impression of the new reservoir is below. You can also watch a video of the announcement on the new reservoir location on our website at lakelyellpumpedhydro.com.au

How is the project progressing?

Details of the new upper reservoir and other elements of our proposed pumped hydro project are now available on our website in our Project Scoping Report. This document also includes a description of environmental matters we will study as we prepare our Environmental Impact Statement.



Environmental studies will take place over the next 12 months. Findings will inform the project team helping them better understand issues that require special consideration. They will also be shared with the community.

If needed, our concept design for the project will be further adjusted to avoid impacts. If an impact cannot be avoided, studies will then recommend the most appropriate action to limit environmental impacts over the life of the project.

Studies being undertaken will include:

- Terrestrial biodiversity and aquatic ecology (including a platypus study)
- Aboriginal heritage
- Historic heritage
- Social and economic impact
- Surface water and groundwater
- Landscape and visual impact
- Land, soil and erosion and bushfire risks
- Contamination and waste
- Noise, vibration, air quality and greenhouse gases
- Climate risk
- Health risk.



Robust planning

Complex projects like the Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Project must be assessed and approved by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment before they can go ahead. As part of this process, we will submit detailed technical reports, studies, and evidence to show how the project will be ecologically and economically sustainable.

Planners and regulators will then thoroughly and independently assess this evidence and the project proposal. Community feedback will be taken into consideration. The final decision on whether the project can proceed will rest with the NSW Minister for Planning and the Environment.

As this project may also impact environmental matters of national significance, Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Project will be assessed at the same time by the Commonwealth Government.



Full plans are expected to be exhibited for public comment in 2025, once detailed assessments and planning are complete.



Geotechnical investigations

Over the past 10 months, the project team has drilled a small number of exploratory geological boreholes at the project site to better understand if ground conditions will suit potential development. We recently received approval to conduct drilling of additional bores to gather further geotechnical information and to establish a comprehensive groundwater monitoring program.

These new drilling activities will be similar to the original works and have been designed to have minimal impacts on neighbours and the environment.

These new works will take about three to five months to complete and should be completed by the end of 2023.





Developing a benefit-sharing approach

As a long-term business in the Lithgow region, EnergyAustralia wants to continue our support for the community. A key part of planning for the Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Project is looking at how we can provide fair and genuine benefits over the life of the asset.

We're also keen for benefits to align with the community's needs. When talking with the residents and stakeholders, we've been pulling together a picture of where we might direct support to create lasting impact.

In the coming months, we will be exploring community support options more closely. We will also be hosting a workshop with local tourism and recreation leaders to seek their views on potential initiatives to promote residents' and tourists' connection to the area.

If you have a strong interest in this topic, please get in touch with us. We'd love to hear from you.



Listening to your views

Our team has been out in the community, listening and collecting feedback. We'll continue to have a presence in the region, giving you the opportunity to participate in planning and ensuring the project benefits the region.

To get in contact with us, please email community@energyaustralia.com.au or call us on 1800 574 947.



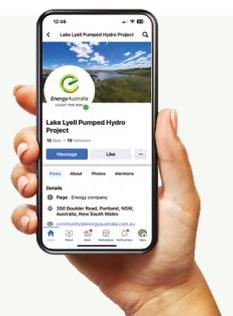
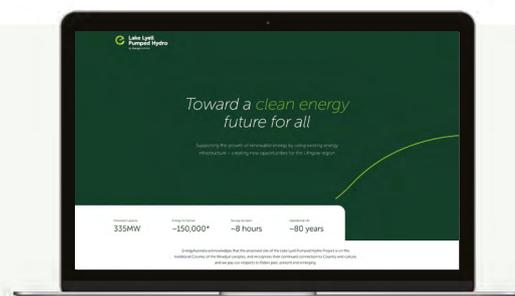
Knocking on doors to provide more information to residents in Rydal, Bowenfels and South Bowenfels.



Stay tuned. A new Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Project shop hub will open in Lithgow in coming months. Drop in to meet the team!

New website and Facebook page

You can read more about the project on our website lakelyellpumpedhydro.com.au or follow us for regular updates on Facebook at Lake Lyell Pumped Hydro Project.



Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some of the questions we've received when engaging with the community.



Will the project affect boat mooring on Lake Lyell?

We will maintain Lake Lyell as a public area for recreation and tourism – boat ramp access and mooring will also continue. We'll also look at new lake infrastructure to preserve and improve accessibility to the lake and foreshore.



What will be the impacts on native species, like the platypus?

We will be engaging field experts to assess potential impacts on native species. These studies are important, as they will inform the design of the project, including the location of infrastructure. Where possible, we will adopt an avoidance approach, choosing to avoid sensitive, ecologically and culturally important areas, and we will develop strict protocols for the ongoing preservation of key flora and fauna on site.



Will the pumped hydro facility be noisy?

The facility will produce no noise or vibrations, as turbines will be located underground and set within rock. Water intake and outlets will also produce little noise, as water flows will be controlled with low velocities entering and exiting the lake – avoiding the 'whooshing' sound of fast-flowing water.



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.

✉ community@energyaustralia.com.au

☎ 1800 574 947

📍 350 Boulder Road, Portland NSW 2847

🌐 lakelyellpumpedhydro.com.au

Supported by



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