



# Central West Pumped Hydro Project

## COMMUNITY UPDATE – JULY 2022

Welcome to the July edition of the Central West Pumped Hydro Project e-newsletter.

The Central West Pumped Hydro Project (CWPH) continues to advance through the assessment and development stages and we're happy to share our latest activities.

### DPE issues the Project's Environmental Assessment Requirements

Following the submission of the Project's Scoping Report to the NSW Government's Department of Planning and Environment (DPE), which considers the assessment requirements for State Significant Development, we are pleased to report that the DPE issued the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) - an important milestone for the Project.

The SEARs specify the assessment criteria required to be addressed within the Project's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). It can be viewed [HERE](#).

### Preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement

The EIS is expected to be submitted in September. Field and desktop-based assessments conducted by a team of technical, independent specialists over the last 12 months will be presented in the EIS.

Technical studies include:

• Biodiversity	• Historic Heritage	• Land and Soil
• Surface Water	• Aquatic Ecology	• Social
• Ground Water	• Noise and Vibration	• Visual
• Aboriginal Heritage	• Traffic and Transport	• Air Quality
• Hazard and Risk	• Economic	

The results of the studies will be shared with the public in the Public Exhibition period as part of the EIS process, and will also be widely available via ATCO's online platforms, at the local ATCO office, and in person at the next Community Information Sessions, planned for 23, 24 and 25 September at Bathurst, Yetholme O'Connell respectively. More details below.

## Topics of interest

### *Initial Fill of the Reservoir*

- Water for the initial fill of the reservoirs will be sourced from the Fish River and is a one-off take of 3.3GL. It is not ongoing. It is projected that the gradual fill could take up to 12 months or more.
- Stringent water access conditions will be developed and implemented to protect other water users downstream and environmental flows.
- These conditions will see a 'commence to pump' rate determined to ensure the project will only extract water from the river when there is enough water available in excess of what is required to meet the needs of downstream users and ensure a healthy environmental flow of the river.
- The commence to pump rate is determined through catchment hydrologic (water) modelling using the DPE model for the Macquarie Valley and takes into account data from the river for the past 100 years, including the recent years affected by drought.
- **Extraction of water will not occur when there is not the required level of flow in the river. These conditions will form part of our water licensing requirements.**
- The pending EIS submission will provide the technical, independently prepared information to demonstrate how this will be achieved, including detailed hydrologic modelling results to inform conditions to ensure these outcomes.

### *Operational Water*

- Any water required to replace evaporation and seepage losses (up to 400ML/yr) from the reservoirs during operations will be consistent with the current State Government's water sharing plan and licensing arrangement, with ATCO regulated by the same rules as other water access licence holders.

### *Impact on local ecology*

- Extensive studies have been conducted to ensure we have detailed information about the ecology on and near the project site. These assessments are required and will be shared as part of the EIS process. The approach of the project is to avoid and minimise disturbance to ecological communities as far as practicable.
- The project's development approach will see large areas surrounding the project designated for biodiversity offsets. Our biodiversity stewardship commitments will protect and preserve environmentally sensitive sites close to the project area for perpetuity.
- Without the project, these areas which will contribute to forming a biodiversity corridor between nearby nature reserves, would not be formally conserved.



**Surveyor on site conducting ecological surveys**

## Save the date for the next Community Information Sessions

ATCO values the input and contribution of the local communities and interested parties. One of the many ways we engage with the community is at the CWPB Community Information Sessions. To date, we have held two open days in Yetholme and one in Bathurst, along with various briefings to local councils, interest groups and individuals.

Whilst the formal stages of the project are still ahead of us, talking and listening to members of the community has been instrumental in ensuring our project can be informed by this feedback. It has resulted in changes to the project design elements such as transmission cabling, Frying Pan Creek restoration partnership, establishing local biodiversity areas and more.

The next Community Information Sessions aims to share the key survey results and information that will be presented in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We are planning the next Information Session for Saturday, 24 September and O'Connell on Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> September. An alternative session will be held at the ATCO office in Keppel St, Bathurst on Friday, 23 September 2022.

Further details about the Community Information Session will be shared closer to the date.

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## ATCO's Communities Fund delivering local benefits: Centacare Bathurst's Healthy Ears Project



**Gumbaynggirr, Dhungatti, Yamatji and Bibbulman woman, Emma Donovan with her daughter Jirriga (left) with Wiradjuri man, Luke Carroll and his son Enzo (right).**

Centacare Bathurst is one of the eight recipients of the ATCO Communities Fund and has been quick to put the funds to work, developing and delivering the first sessions of the Healthy Ears project.

Providing a range of social welfare services to children and families across the region, Centacare has teams devoted to developing Indigenous community health programs, supporting the Bathurst and Lithgow communities.

The Healthy Ears project focuses on aural health and hearing checks for Aboriginal children aged 2-13 years in Bathurst and Lithgow.

Centacare launched the program in April, conducting the first sessions of hearing tests with pre-school aged children.

Robert George, Director of Centacare Bathurst said, "Health related matters are a significant barrier for First Nations people, with aural health a common and serious issue for Aboriginal children. Early detection and intervention helps to ensure positive outcomes in all aspects, particularly health and education outcomes."

"Poor hearing and associated ear health issues are often left undetected, resulting in serious disadvantage in relation to speech and language development, learning, socialisation and general wellbeing."

"The Healthy Ears program is conducted in a fun, family setting offering face painting, games, community mural painting and opportunities to learn more about aural health, all in accessible locations. We aim to make it an enjoyable and easy experience to ensure the children and their families are comfortable in the setting."

"The aim of the Healthy Ears program is to conduct testing with at least 50 percent of Indigenous children in the target age group in Bathurst and Lithgow. We are well on track, with our first sessions in Bathurst and Lithgow very well attended, with people on a waiting list for the next sessions," added Robert.

"We are extremely grateful for the support offered by ATCO Communities Fund, which has made it possible for the Healthy Ears program to positively impact the lives of many young Indigenous children in our area," said Robert.

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## Thank you!

Thank you to everyone for your contribution, feedback and interest in the CWPH Project. We look forward to seeing you again in person in September at the Community Information Sessions, when hopefully the weather is warmer and the community is not so affected by COVID and Influenza.

In the meantime, if you have any questions please visit the Q&A section on the [ATCO website](#) or reach out to us at [centralwesthydro@atco.com](mailto:centralwesthydro@atco.com).

ATCO's Communication and Engagement Manager, Kimbalee Clews, can also be reached directly on mobile 0407 888 407 or by email: [kimbalee.clews@atco.com](mailto:kimbalee.clews@atco.com). Don't forget that you can always pop into the ATCO Office at 1-52 Keppel Street, Bathurst. We would love to welcome you and have a chat. The office is opened Monday - Thursday during business hours.

