

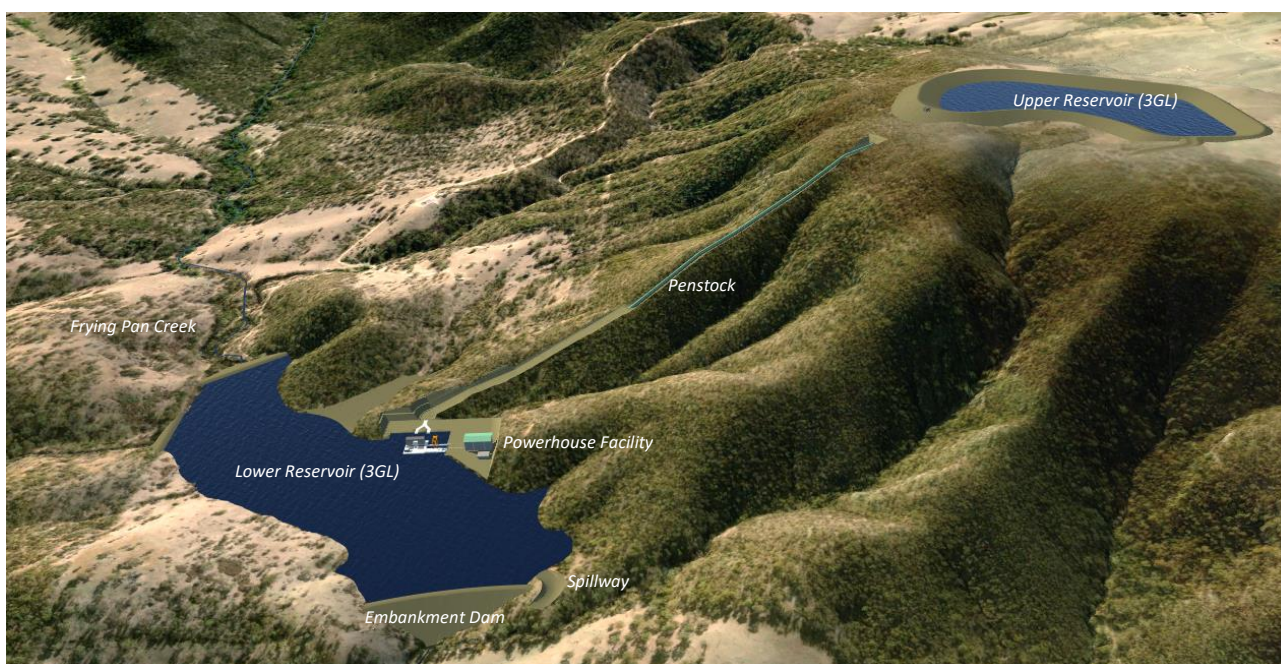
Central West Pumped Hydro

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

The Central West Pumped Hydro Project (the project) is a nominal 325MW pumped hydro facility with approximately eight hours of storage capacity.

The key elements of the permanent project infrastructure comprise of:

- Turkey's nest embankment dam forming an upper reservoir;
- A rock-filled embankment dam forming a lower reservoir;
- Penstock (or pipeline) connecting the upper and lower reservoir;
- Sub-surface powerhouse enclosing two pump-turbine units; and
- Transmission connection infrastructure with the preferred option being an underground transmission cable connecting to the nearby TransGrid 330kV system.



Project visualisation

The **Upper Reservoir** of approximately 30ha and typically 15 metres deep. It will be constructed by excavating material obtained from the site to create an earthen embankment dam around the perimeter. The reservoir will include an engineered liner to prevent seepage.

The **Lower Reservoir** of approximately 30ha will be constructed via a rock fill embankment dam. The dam will be operated as a 'through-flow/transparent' structure, allowing flows to pass through the reservoir and continue downstream.

The reservoirs have an elevation difference of approximately 360m and are connected by a 1,400m primarily surface [penstock](#) of approximately 5m diameter, which will be designed to blend with the environment.

The [powerhouse](#) (approximately 60m deep) will be constructed from concrete and contain two pump-turbine units. The final structure will sit adjacent to the lower reservoir.

The project will connect into an existing Transgrid 330kv transmission line about 6.5km to the north of the project site. The preferred connection infrastructure option is an [underground 330kV transmission cable](#), rather than an overhead 330kV transmission line.

The adoption of the low impact buried transmission infrastructure aims to alleviate bush fire risk, minimises the impact on the local ecology by significantly reducing easement widths, and addresses concerns about visual aesthetics.

A new [switchyard](#) will be built at the point of connection to the electricity grid.

[Why is pumped hydro needed?](#)

The national electricity system is transitioning. Rooftop solar, wind and solar farms are the forms of new generation and are already cleaner, greener energy for Australian energy consumers. As our coal-fired power stations age and retire, the energy system will need new firming resources to complement wind and solar generation.

The primary role of the project will be to store energy during periods of surplus electricity generation in the electricity network and generate electricity during periods of high demand using the stored energy. Building this capability will further enable the expansion of low-cost renewable energy generation.

The project is consistent with the Commonwealth and State Government's climate change initiatives, and the energy, employment, regional development, and infrastructure strategies being implemented to deliver them.

[The New South Wales Government's 2020 Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap](#) states we will need about 2.3 Gigawatts (GW) of energy storage with 4 -12 hours of duration to keep the system reliable and secure. This new capacity is in addition to the Commonwealth-lead 2GW Snowy 2.0 project currently in development.

This need, in part, is driven by the progressive retirement of four of the five coal-fired power stations in NSW over the next 10 years, beginning with Liddell in 2023, closely followed by the Eraring Power Station in 2025 at the earliest.

The NSW Government, through its 2020 Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, will facilitate investment in more pumped hydro infrastructure to electricity supply remains reliable. The Central West Pumped Hydro Project is one of a number of projects across the state which will deliver this reliability.

This project is also well placed to support the State's new [Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone \(REZ\)](#); a key element in the NSW Government's Electricity Strategy, building on the NSW Transmission Infrastructure Strategy and supporting the implementation of the Australian Energy Market Operator's Integrated System Plan.

What's happened since the last community open day?

- The Scoping Report was submitted end of April 2022.
- The SEARs were issued in June 2022.
- Baseline environment and heritage assessments largely complete and will inform the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). It is intended that the EIS will be submitted and on display for public comment in early 2023.
- The Project has received \$9.44 million in funding as part of the NSW Government's Pumped Hydro Recoverable Grants Program.

The receipt of the recoverable grant from the NSW Government is a great sign of confidence from the Government on our plans to deliver sustainable, reliable energy as we transition to a net zero future.

The NSW Government's Pumped Hydro Recoverable Grants Program is a key initiative in the Government's Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, which aims to transform the electricity system as it moves away from a system reliant on fossil fuels.

Locally, it means that the Bathurst region will play a significant role in the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. The Roadmap is enabled by the [Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020](#), which passed into law in December 2020.

The Recoverable Grants Program allows developers, like ATCO, to recover a portion of the upfront investment associated with the development of pumped hydro projects

Water Access

The project requires an *initial once-off fill* of about 3.3 gigalitres (GL) of water. Ongoing, the project will require additional annual water over the life of the project, to replace any evaporation or seepage from the reservoirs. This is expected to be no more than 400ML per year.

The most appropriate water source for the project is from the Fish River. This would be delivered via an underground pipeline to the project area and can be staged to access water during higher flow events, or associated with dedicated releases from upstream water storages, and is expected to use only a small percentage of total flow.

It is important to note the following:

- 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 NSW Department of Planning and Environment (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 EIS will provide the technical, independently prepared information to demonstrate how this will be achieved, including detailed hydrologic modelling results to define conditions to ensure these outcomes.

Preparation of the Project’s Environmental Impact Statement

The EIS is expected to be submitted for assessment by the DPE early 2023. This is also when the community will have the opportunity to review the EIS and comment on the submission during the period of public exhibition that is typically open for 28 days.

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 completed as part of the EIS process include:

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

The results of the studies will be shared with the community during the public exhibition period as part of the EIS process. It will also be widely available via ATCO’s online platforms, at the local ATCO Office at 1-52 Keppel St, Bathurst, and in person at the next Community Information Sessions.

For more information

For further information, please visit the Q&A section at atco.com/cwph

If you would like to speak to an ATCO representative, please don’t hesitate pop into the ATCO Office at 1-52 Keppel Street, Bathurst. You can also send an email to centralwesthyrdo@atco.com