

Cethana Pumped Hydro Project



Issue 3 | December 2025

It's been a busy year as we progress the work needed to understand community views about the project and measure the potential impacts and opportunities. In this issue, we take a look at the approvals process, what we've heard from the community and progress on planning to house a future workforce.

Update on project approvals

There is still a lot of work to do before a final investment decision will be made to proceed with delivering the project.

For example, there are approvals needed from all levels of Government, including Kentish Council, the Tasmanian Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the Commonwealth government. We will also seek approval from the Tasmanian Parliament.

The chart below shows the local and state approvals process for the Development Application (DA) and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

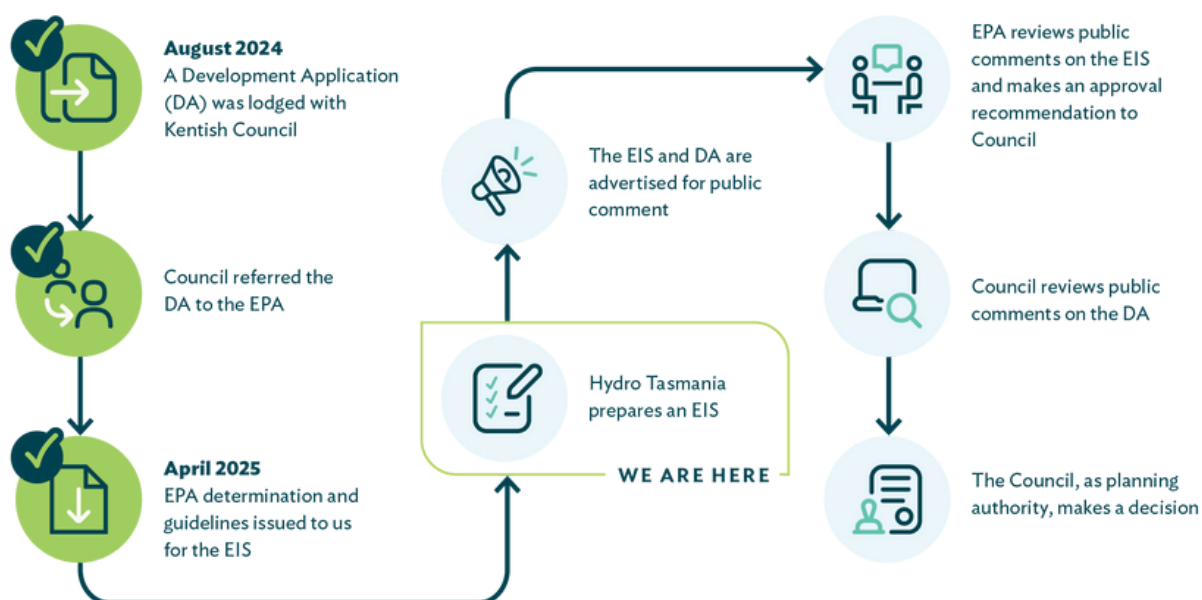
A Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is being completed as part of the EIS. Together, these form a comprehensive and balanced view of the impacts and benefits the project might bring.

Commonwealth approval

The Commonwealth deals with environmental matters that are of national significance (called Matters of National Environmental Significance or MNES).

We are working on our updated referral and will provide an update when there's more information on next steps.

The local and state approvals process



Hearing what is important

Thanks to everyone who has shared their views so far! We want to understand how the project might affect people and what's important to you.

Over the past few months, we've continued the conversation by hosting workshops and pop-up sessions to gather further insights from the local community to inform our SIA.

Moina:

- In August, we held a community pop-up, inviting residents to come along and chat with us about the proposed Workforce Accommodation Facility (WAF) and held a webinar on the same topic.
- In September, we met with 36 landowners who live near the project site and the proposed WAF location at Middlesex.

Sheffield:

- In September, we met with 16 community representatives from organisations including the arts centre, council, emergency services, businesses and the tourism industry.

We have one more session scheduled for Lorinna before wrapping up our SIA engagement. We'll then review what you've shared and use it to guide our SIA. The SIA will be published online in 2026 and you'll be able to comment on it during the combined public exhibition of the DA and EIS.



*Above: Set up and ready to welcome visitors to our Moina pop-up in August.
Below and left: Great discussions about the SIA with the local community.*



The workshops helped us confirm the issues, gauge their level of impact, and test ideas on how to reduce those impacts.

We presented the SIA's social values framework, which has four themes:

1. **Community identity:** How people see themselves as part of a community.
2. **Local economy and livelihood:** How people earn a living and how businesses and industries support the local economy.
3. **Infrastructure and services:** Things that support daily life such as roads, health care, childcare and digital access.
4. **Individual wellbeing and capacity:** The health, skills and knowledge that helps people participate in work and community life.

Key themes raised in the workshops were:

- potential impacts on the peace and tranquillity of the local area
- concerns about increased traffic and safety on the roads
- what might happen to housing availability and affordability
- how to manage emergencies when emergency services are already under strain
- how to ensure the contractor meets conditions and community expectations
- how to manage environmental impacts (such as weeds, roadkill, waterways)
- how to create long-lasting community benefit.

What is an EIS?

This EIS looks at how the project might affect the natural environment — things like water, air, plants, animals, and noise levels.

It focuses on the technical details and how any impacts will be managed.



What is an SIA?

The SIA supports the EIS. It focuses on how the project might affect people and communities — how they live, work, connect, and value their surroundings.

It also considers environmental changes but from the perspective of how people value their environment (i.e. tranquillity) and how changes may impact people (i.e. how noise might impact sleep).

Housing a future workforce

To support the future construction workforce, we've chosen a site in Middlesex for a temporary WAF.

The local community told us there isn't enough suitable housing to meet rising demand. This will become a bigger issue if other major projects are built at the same time.

Therefore, a dedicated facility is the best option to house workers without adding pressure to local rental or visitor accommodation markets.

We ran an Expression of Interest (EOI) process, starting with identifying landowners willing to nominate their land for purchase or lease. A local land agent advertised widely in the target area, resulting in 49 enquiries and 9 formal submissions.

Sites that met our selection criteria were assessed, and from that process we selected the Middlesex site, locally known as Daisy Dell.

Why not build at Gowrie Park?

We're often asked about Hydro-owned land at Gowrie Park and why the WAF can't be built there.

Prior to conducting an EOI, we considered our own land but found it to not be suitable for the following reasons:

- due to several site constraints, there is insufficient land area for the development
- zoning under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme does not support a WAF. The land is zoned 'utilities' and not available for residential use
- safety concerns due to challenging road conditions on Cethana Road, extended travel times for workers contributing to fatigue, greater volume of traffic on local roads and increased risk of roadkill.

The Gowrie Park site has potential advantages in terms of greater opportunities for local workforce participation, but these benefits are substantially outweighed by the safety, environmental, operational, and regulatory constraints.

We've added a fact sheet on our project page, which has more detail about the assessment.



Housing a future workforce

Key reasons for selecting this site include:

- Proximity to the project site (less than a 10-minute drive)
- Reduced traffic impact on Cradle Mountain Road and surrounding local roads
- Easy access from Cradle Mountain Road
- Little environmental impact by using land that has already been disturbed
- A suitable size and relatively flat terrain, making construction simpler
- Potential to minimise visual impacts on the surrounding landscape
- Access to outdoor recreational opportunities
- Adequate distance from residential neighbours to reduce disruption.

What we’ve heard

Our team has had insightful conversations with locals about the WAF. Common themes are around possible impacts from noise, light pollution and changes to traffic. We’ve had questions around bushfire risk, how wastewater will be managed and responding to emergencies.

There is a dedicated webpage for the WAF which answers these commonly asked questions. From there, you can also view our webinar.

Check it out here:

<https://connect.hydro.com.au/workforce-accommodation>

Or scan the QR code >>



KEY	
A	ACCOMMODATION
B	WATER AND WASTEWATER
C	HELIPAD & ACCESS ROAD
D	DOVE RIVER ROAD
E	SETBACK & BUFFER ZONE

Assessing potential impacts

For both the WAF and the pumped hydro project, we are committed to careful planning so that any impacts on the community are considered, minimised, and avoided, if possible.

We're doing a range of technical studies to better understand and manage potential impacts:

- Traffic (including access to and from the sites)
- Noise
- Visual impact
- Water and sewerage management
- Natural values
- Aboriginal heritage
- Hydrology
- Bushfire risk
- Economic impacts and opportunities.

Our team will be back out talking to the community in early 2026 about what we found in our studies and how we plan to mitigate any potential impacts.

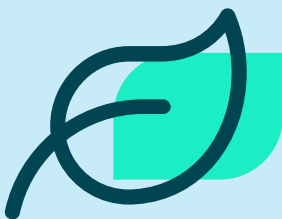
The technical reports will be available during the public exhibition of our EIS and DA documents in 2026 (expected to be mid year).



What's coming up?

Engagement on technical study findings and mitigation measures (to inform the final EIS)

Anticipated early 2026



Project EIS / DA exhibition and supporting community engagement

Anticipated mid 2026



Welcoming Kentish Council to site

We welcomed staff from Kentish Council for a tour of the Cethana site. Nine Councillors and staff visited the existing Cethana Power Station, Lake Cethana and the proposed upper storage site above the lake.

The tour was a great opportunity for the council members to ask questions and familiarise themselves with where major infrastructure is proposed to be built.

Members of our planning, environment and engagement teams accompanied the council staff.

There were questions around our proposed planning application, engineering design, engagement with neighbours and community, and environmental assessments.

We discussed environmental monitoring undertaken for threatened flora and fauna, and the range of technical studies that will form part of our Environmental Impact Statement.

The Council was interested to learn what we have been hearing from the community and to understand the social impacts and opportunities for Kentish.

The group toured the upper storage area and ventured down to Lake Cethana's shores to see where the new intake will be located.

Our team described the civil works that will take place in each location, including:

- the new storage
- the connecting tunnels
- the underground power station.

With a comprehensive geotechnical program completed, the group was able to get a first-hand look at the rock core samples and better understand the geology of the area.

Geotechnical investigations are important to understand the site geology and will influence the design of the power cavern that will be located deep underground.





Did you know that a commercial diving school operates on Lake Cethana?

The water is up to 100 metres deep, making it an ideal dive site for deeper offshore diver training.

Our photo shows a moody Lake Cethana.

Want to learn more?

Project updates are posted online on our project webpage. We also like to keep people informed by sharing our project newsletters.

Registering your email is a great way to ensure you receive the latest updates and invitations to our upcoming events.

If you don't want to miss out, please register your email address by emailing us (details below). We look forward to hearing from you!

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