alintaenergy | OVEN MOUNTAIN PUMPED HYDRO STORAGE

Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro Project

Summary of the **Response to Submissions Report** and **Amendment Report**

Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro is a critical project for the NSW energy transition.

It's a 900 MW 8-hour pumped hydro energy storage project that will help us replace coal-fired power and support the addition of more renewables to our energy system.

It'll operate like a big water-powered battery, and have big regional benefits, including a $40 million economic boost for the region and hundreds of jobs for the region.

Located roughly halfway between Armidale and Kempsey, the site is ideal for pumped hydro. With a steep drop and short distance between the upper and lower reservoirs, it will be able to generate power quickly and be online and providing energy into the grid within less than a minute when required.

Once built, it could provide reliable power to 600,000 homes for 8 hours (operating at full capacity).

For information visit the Oven Mountain Project website: **www.ompshydro.com**.

What's happened so far

An Environmental Impact Statement for the project was placed on public exhibition from 19 September - 20 October 2023.

Submissions were invited from the community and key stakeholders.

90 submissions were received in total, which included:

62 submissions from the community

17 from government agencies

11 submissions from organisations

Response to Submissions Report explained

The Response to Submissions Report includes;

- an analysis of the number and type of submissions and the issues raised during the Environmental Impact Statement exhibition period,
- a response to those issues including any further environmental assessment or mitigation measures,
- additional community engagement undertaken since preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement, and
- an updated evaluation of the impacts of the project incorporating the findings of any further assessment or community engagement.

The Amendment Report outlines amendments (proposed changes) to the project, and includes assessments of those changes.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Timeline

Critical State Significant Infrastructure designation	September 2020
Scoping Report	January 2021
Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) issued	February 2021
Scoping Report Addendum	April 2022
SEARs Amended	June 2022
EIS site and field investigations	Commenced 2021
EIS Submission to Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)	August 2023
Formal exhibition of the EIS by DPE	19 September – 20 October 2023
EIS Response to Submissions and Amendment Report	October 2023 – August 2024
WE ARE HERE Planning Department prepares Assessment Report	From August 2024
NSW Ministerial determination	TBC
Commonwealth Ministerial determination	TBC
Construction commencement	**Target mid-2025**
Commercial operations	**Target 2030**

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Please visit **www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/oven-mountain-pumped-hydro-energy-storage**

Once accepted by the Department, all reports are made publicly available via the Planning Portal link.

Key themes raised

Submissions were received from local councils and government agencies, organisations, and the community.

Community and special interest groups raised:

- Project justification.
- Project design and operation including access to site and road upgrades.
- Environmental and social impacts.
- Technical approach and modelling presented in the Environmental Impact Statement.
- The level of engagement with the community.

We also received supportive submissions from groups and individuals interested in job creation, the energy transition and skills and training opportunities.

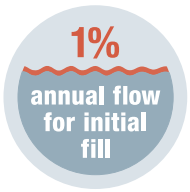
Government agencies raised:

- Concerns about roads and traffic, in particular the upgrading of Kempsey-Armidale Road.
- Concern about the demand for accommodation and services as a result of the project's workforce.
- Consideration of hazards and environmental impacts.
- Social and economic impacts.
- Community benefits sharing.

See section 2.3 of the Response to Submissions Report

Key themes explained

Project justification: Consideration of alternative sites and other long-term energy storage methods.



Design and operation: Including key concerns such as access to site and road upgrades, and flow and pumping rules for water take from the Macleay River, in particular with consideration of drought conditions.

Potential impacts: The concern of potential impacts on aquatic ecosystems and downstream water users, any Aboriginal artefacts, and potential cumulative impact of vegetation loss.

Level of engagement: The need for more consultation with the community.

Technical approach and modelling presented in the Environmental Impact Statement: Surface water modelling and climate change considerations, adequacy of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment field investigations, and deferred management of impacts.

Additional investigations

Key assessments have been updated and provided with the Response to Submissions Report including;

- surface water assessment,
- groundwater impact assessment,
- geochemistry assessment, and
- a climate change risk assessment.

See Appendices section of the Response to Submissions Report

Proposed project design amendments

See Chapter 3 of the Amendment Report

A review of the project design and constructability was carried out following exhibition of the Environmental Impact Statement. This review identified the need for several amendments to the project. Wherever possible, the aim was to continue to avoid and minimise environmental impacts.

Internal roads and bridges

- Realignment of the Eastern Access Road to reduce need for earthworks, improve road safety and address drainage issues.
- A temporary bridge will be utilised prior to the construction of the two permanent bridges near Smiths Bluff.
- A secondary, temporary access is proposed via the construction of a new, temporary bridge crossing of the Macleay River about 600m upstream and north-east of Georges Junction.
- Realignment of the Upper Dam Access Road (including removal of a large north-south connecting section of road) to avoid known habitat and potentially significant impacts to the threatened Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby.

Artist's impressions of the bridge crossing at Smiths Bluff (top) and Eastern Access Road running east from George's Junction.

Construction methods and requirements

- Up to three fly or temporary camps are required and will be located near Smith's Bluff, the intersection of the Main Access Road and the Eastern Access Road and the upper reservoir (within spoil emplacement area).
- Allowing blasting as a construction method for road works and other above-ground works.
- Rock processing/crushing facilities will be required in the lower reservoir and upper reservoir areas to process rock for use in dams.
- Increasing the estimated water requirements for use in construction (e.g. dust suppression, concrete batching, etc) from 1 ML/day to 3 ML/day.

Spoil and materials

- There will be four areas used for stockpiling and material laydown instead of two.
- Two permanent spoil emplacement areas are now proposed, with the areas both having increased in size to accommodate revised spoil estimates, reduced stockpile heights and slope angles.

Underground arrangement and sizing

- The project will provide up to around 900 MW of electricity and at least eight hours of energy storage at full generating capacity. The amended underground arrangement and tunnel sizes reflect greater energy storage capacity.

Next steps

The Department of Planning & Environment will now complete its assessment of the Response to Submission and Amendment Report in accordance with Government legislation, policies and guidelines and will provide an assessment report for the Minister to consider when deciding on the project approval.

The Department of Planning & Environment will publish the decision online and will give public notice of the reasons for the decision and how community views were taken into account in making their decision.

For more information visit **www.ompshydro.com**, email us on **info@ompshydro.com** or call **1800 518 194**.

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