

PROJECT NEWSLETTER



March 2024

Project Update

The Environmental Impact Statement was placed on exhibition during September and October 2023.

During exhibition, a total of 76 public submissions were received, including responses from residents, community groups, other organisations and 16 submissions from government and regulatory authorities such as Armidale Regional and Kempsey Shire councils, the Environmental Protection Authority and the Rural Fire Service.

We are now preparing our Response to Submissions report which is provided to the Department of Planning showing how we have addressed all of the issues raised in the submissions.

To address some concerns raised in the submissions, we are looking to make some changes to the scope of the Project to ensure we minimise as practically as possible impacts associated with the Project.

Providing safe access to the Oven Mountain project is a key priority.

The proposed Eastern Access Road will provide reliable access to the project site and take advantage of the flatter terrain on the southern side of the Macleay River—helping to eliminate many of the tight turns and blind corners found on the Kempsey-Armidale Road.

To view all the submissions on the NSW Government's Major Projects Portal, visit:

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

www.ompshydro.com



Applications for community grants now open

Local charities and not for profits are invited to apply for Alinta Energy's Community Grants Program.

Alinta Energy provides up to \$250,000 each year to grass roots organisations to make a positive and lasting contribution across the community.

Focused on addressing social disadvantage and environmental sustainability, Alinta has been running the program since 2020.

2024 applications for community grants up to \$20,000 per organisation are now open.

To be eligible for a community grant, you must:

- Be a registered not-for-profit organisation with the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission (excluding individuals, professional associations, research bodies, political groups and activist organisations)
- Be a size that is classified as small or medium with the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission (under \$3 million in annual revenue)
- Have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- Have a plan or an idea for a project that will be implemented within Australia that requires less than a \$AU20,000 donation

- Be able to demonstrate that your project will have a positive impact on either:
 - Social disadvantage (e.g. projects that assist members of the community in need) or
 - Environmental sustainability (e.g. projects that restore natural ecosystems, reduce the consumption of natural resources and/or reduce waste)
- Be a project that is located where we operate including WA, VIC, QLD, NSW, SA and ACT
- Agree with the terms and conditions outlined in the Alinta Energy Community Grant Agreement
- Please note that eligible applicants can apply to multiple rounds.
- Grant application forms can be submitted at any time; however, the community grant selection process occurs every six months.

Applications close on 5 April 2024.

For more information and to apply, head to www.alintaenergy.com.au/about-us/community-and-sponsorship/community-development-program

Geotechnical investigations – Upper Reservoir

It's also been a busy time for our geotechnical contractors, who've completed an investigation of the geotechnical conditions at the upper reservoir in the Carrai area.

This involved drilling bore holes to extract soil and rock samples and will help us understand the type and strength of ground conditions and feed into detailed designs for the project.

Some geotechnical investigations were undertaken back in 2021, but due to severe wet weather, these could not be completed at that time.

We were more fortunate this time, and the team was able to complete its work towards the end of 2023. Work is now underway to remediate any impact to the access roads used for this work.

A big thank you to the landowners of the Carrai and surrounds as we moved heavy vehicles and drill rigs in and out. Safety remains at the forefront of all our actions, and we appreciate all the efforts of the community members as we navigated the roads and a complex set of investigations.



Geotechnical investigations – Lower Reservoir

Residents and landowners along the Kempsey-Armidale Road may have noticed an increase in light and heavy vehicles this month as we prepare to commence further investigative drilling works at the proposed site of the lower reservoir.

Currently, we are looking to better understand the geological conditions of the Project area. With geotechnical drilling now complete in the proposed Upper Reservoir location we are now looking to undertake geotechnical drilling in the proposed location of the lower reservoir. Drilling rigs are scheduled to be onsite from April through to June this year. This geotechnical information will inform more detailed designs for the Project – particularly related to underground works such as the power station, access tunnels and waterways.

As with the upper reservoir geotechnical investigations, these works will occur wholly on private land with consent from Armidale Regional Council. It is proposed that access to the site will be via the Kempsey-Armidale Road, from Kempsey, through to George's Junction where we will cross the river.

The Project team has been speaking with residents around Lower Creek about these works but, as always, if you have any questions about site access or any other aspect of the Project, please call us on **1800 518 194**, drop into the Community Hub in Kempsey, or email the team at info@ompshydro.com.



Let's drill down on geotech investigations

Geotechnical investigations are critical to understanding the ground conditions for the Project footprint. The engineering geologists and drilling team will drill bore holes to collect soil and rock samples for analysis.

The boreholes will have a diameter of less than 30 cm, with a maximum depth range of between 25 to 250 metres (see small rig at Figure 1). From this, the geotechnical expert will assess the 'core' produced (the material that comes from drilling investigations – see example at Figure 2 below). The time taken to drill bore holes can vary according to conditions but average about 20m per day.

Geotechnical drilling for this project is focussed on minimising any impact on the natural environment and will be used in combination with other complementary investigation techniques.

While the natural terrain near the Oven Mountain project is great for pumped hydro energy storage, it can pose logistical challenges. Especially when you have to move drilling rigs, support vehicles, and supplies in-and-out to site.

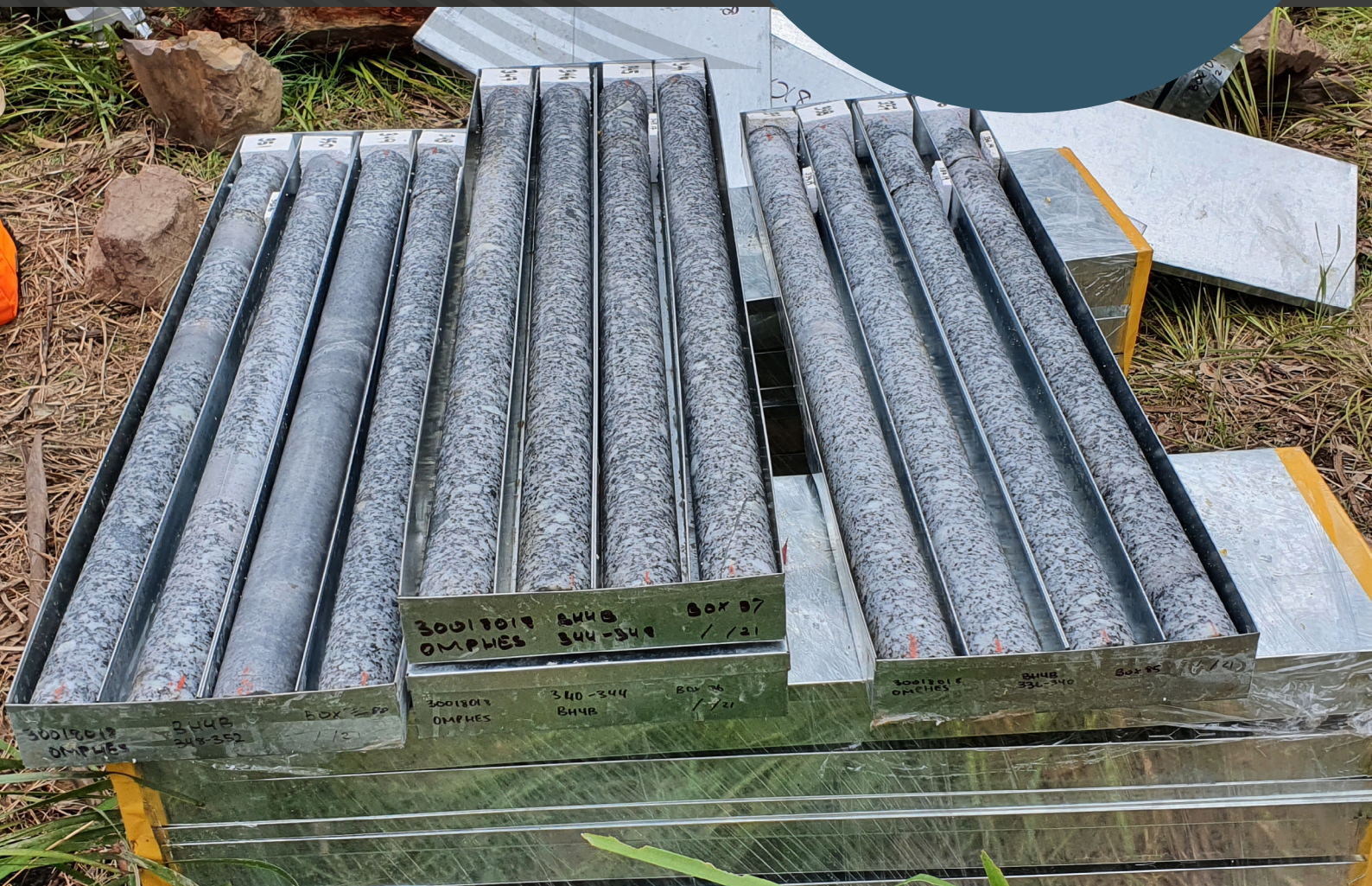
We are committed to creating safe work environments. For more information about project activities and vehicle movements, please subscribe to our mailing list by visiting: www.ompshydro.com or register for SMS notifications at info@ompshydro.com.



The Great Dividing Range was formed from volcanic uplift as the Australian Tectonic Plate passed over a stream of super hot magma flowing beneath.

Remnants of major volcanic activity are still clearly visible throughout the Great Dividing Range especially in the Warrumbungles and at Mt Warning.

The geotechnical surveys of the Project area to date are showing good signs that the site chosen for the underground works is predominantly solid granite. This will provide a stable environment in which to excavate the tunnels and turbine chamber.



Supporting students study stem

Applications have now closed for the Country Universities Centre Macleay Valley 2024 STEM Student Bursaries.

This initiative provides financial support to students from the Macleay Valley area interested in pursuing tertiary qualifications in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and demonstrates Alinta Energy's commitment to investing in regional communities.

As one of many community development programs, the Oven Mountain Project is proud to sponsor the initiative and provide a total of \$10,000 in bursary funding to four students.

Over the coming weeks, applications will be assessed by a panel of representatives from the Country Universities Centre Network, our Project, as well as a Macleay Valley Community member.

Kinne Ring, Manager of Macleay Valley Country Universities Centre shared students were often balancing a range of simultaneous commitments including study, work and life responsibilities.

"Having access to financial support can often mean the difference between a student successfully completing their studies or having to face the prospect of withdrawing," she said.

We would like to commend the students on the high quality of applications received this year and we look forward to reviewing what we expect will be an outstanding and competitive pool of applications.

Successful applicants will be announced in a future newsletter.



NEED MORE INFORMATION

Following the exhibition of the Environmental Impact Statement, feedback highlighted the need for more ongoing information about the project, delivered in different ways.

While community information sessions are a great way to deliver project updates, not everyone was able to attend community information sessions or visit the Community Information Hub.

In the coming months, we will be working directly with the community to develop an ongoing calendar of events and opportunities to meet the team and discuss the project.

The Oven Mountain Project team is also available to provide presentations and Q&A sessions on request. If your organisation would like more targeted information or to get involved, please contact us via:

- **Free call on 1800 518 194,**
- **Email info@ompshydro.com**
- **Drop in to the **Community Information Hub at 2/28 Clyde St Kempsey** and speak to **Annie Tuesdays-Thursdays.****





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1800 518 194



Registrations for jobs and supplier opportunities

Individuals and businesses can now register their interest in future employment or procurement opportunities for the Oven Mountain Project.

Register online to be one of the first to know about opportunities. Final procurement and hiring decisions will be made by the project principal contractor, however, we will be working with them to support the engagement of local people and suppliers.

Expressions of interest (EOI) for all works packages will now remain open until 31 December 2024.

For businesses, head to gateway.icn.org.au and search **Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro**. Go to the work packages to submit an expression of interest. You will need to create a free profile on the ICN Gateway.

For individuals, head to www.ompshydro.com/community and complete the registration form.

If you have already registered your details, there is no need to register again.

If you need help with registering, drop into the Community Information Hub.

To find out more about the **Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro Project**, or to sign up for our mailing list visit: www.ompshydro.com

You can also contact the team at: info@ompshydro.com or on 1800 518 194.



OVEN MOUNTAIN
PUMPED HYDRO STORAGE