



OVEN MOUNTAIN PUMPED HYDRO STORAGE



PROJECT NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2021

Our Project

The Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro Energy Storage project is a 600MW 'off river' development located near the Macleay River between Armidale and Kempsey.

Situated within the New England Renewable Energy Zone, the project will provide clean energy generation and storage capabilities, ensuring a reliable, resilient and renewable future energy supply for NSW.

The Oven Mountain project will be constructed on private land. Being an 'off river' scheme means that once filled, the project will have little additional need for water over its operational life.

Water from the Macleay River will be used for the initial fill - a one-off event during the construction period. This fill will only take place under high river flow conditions and is expected to utilise a small percentage of total river flow.

The project will include upgrades to the existing electricity transmission network enabling ready transport of power to the grid. It will also include upgrades to existing local and regional roads, allowing for safe construction and operation access.

The Oven Mountain project acknowledges the Thunggutti people, Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We also extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across this nation.

Planning Work Underway

Our team is currently preparing an Environmental Impact Statement for the project, with a number of site and field investigations having commenced on the lower and upper reservoir areas.

Investigations include groundwater monitoring, flora, fauna and aquatic assessments, cultural heritage, and geotechnical investigations. These investigations will ensure the project considers the current environmental conditions, minimises impacts to flora and fauna, and delivers the best outcome for the region.

The project team is committed to safe work practices and will continue to engage with the community to provide up to date information. If you would like to speak to our team, please contact 1800 518 194, or email info@ompshydro.com.





Talking with the Community

Our team has been out and about meeting with landowners, community groups, government agencies, and local councils. We enjoy talking about the project and better understanding the needs, concerns and expectations of the local community.

We recently met with Armidale Regional Council, Save Our Macleay River, Lower Creek Local Area Committee, and landowners in the Georges Junction, Lower Creek and Carrai areas. We thank everyone for their continued engagement, and we especially thank the landowners who took the time to host us.

In the coming weeks we will look to hold community information sessions, where you can meet our team. We will also update our website with new information.

Our team appreciates all the feedback we receive from the community. If you would like to speak to us, please contact 1800 518 194, or email info@ompshydro.com.



Road Safety on the Carrai Road

Our team has engaged SMEC to complete geotechnical work at the project's upper reservoir site. This work is anticipated to continue into early 2022. You may notice increased vehicle movements on the Kempsey-Armidale and Carrai roads.

Some of the road safety measures that we have implemented on Carrai Road include:

- All heavy project vehicles using Carrai Road will be escorted by a pilot vehicle to notify oncoming vehicles.
- Heavy project vehicle movements will be scheduled - Monday and Thursday, 6:00 am to 3:00 pm.
- Signs have been installed at locations along the road.
- All project drivers will be required to maintain UHF (CH40) communication while driving on Carrai Road.

We are also working to reduce the need for trucking project water and will continue to liaise with the community.

Spotlight on Geotechnical Work

Geotechnical investigations are critical to understanding the type and strength of ground conditions. Our engineering geologists and drilling team work hard to drill bore holes and later analyse and log soil and rock samples.

While the natural terrain at Oven Mountain 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.

It can be challenging work, with workers having to deal with changing conditions underfoot and weather conditions above.

Geotechnical investigations on the Oven Mountain project include drilling a deep bore hole on the upper reservoir site, and completing shallow bore holes on the lower reservoir site. The time taken to drill bore holes can vary according to conditions, but averages around 20m per day.

As always, safety remains at the front of our minds, with the site being clearly cordoned off during drilling work. We have also scheduled all heavy project traffic on Carrai Road - Monday and Thursday, 6:00 am to 3:00 pm - and installed signage at key locations.

The information gathered will help the project team assess the feasibility of ongoing design work. Once completed, the drill pad areas will be rehabilitated.



Our geotechnical drilling team (above) hard at work on site near the Oven Mountain lower reservoir.

We don't only love rocks and soil! Our groundwater monitoring team (below) is also busy completing investigations.



Get Involved in Planning

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is an important part of NSW's environmental and planning approval process. It is also central in ensuring that a project delivers the best outcome for the community and region.

Oven Mountain's EIS will assess the project's anticipated environmental, social and economic effects, as well as provide any mitigating measures. The EIS will be based on the project's Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs), which were issued by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) in February 2021.

The SEARs outline the key matters the project team is required to assess in the EIS. This includes areas such as biodiversity, water, heritage, transport, and community consultation.

Over the coming months, our team will complete a range of site and field investigations across the project site. They will also hold community engagement opportunities, such as drop-in sessions and face-to-face meetings.

All findings and feedback will be considered as part of the project's EIS and the ongoing design process.

It is anticipated that the EIS will be submitted to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment in late 2022. Following submission, the Department will then publicly exhibit the EIS for a minimum of 28 days.

The exhibition of the EIS is an important part of the planning process. It allows all landowners, interested community members, and government representatives the opportunity to provide feedback on the project.

Oven Mountain will subsequently be required to formally respond to all submissions received during the exhibition of the EIS.

Following this, the Department will then assess the project and provide a determination. Construction can not commence until formal approval is received.

For more information on the project's planning process, including access to all relevant documents, please visit <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects> and search 'Oven Mountain'.

Next Steps	
Site selection and early consultation	✓
Scoping Report submitted to DPIE	✓
SEARs for the EIS issued by DPIE	✓
Studies, assessments and design	We are here
EIS lodged with DPIE	Late 2022
EIS on public exhibition for comment	Early 2023
Response to public submissions	Mid 2023
Assessment by DPIE	Mid 2023
Determination	H2 2023



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“Pumped hydro is a key aspect of our Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap and will help to provide the families and businesses of NSW access to some of the cheapest electricity anywhere on the planet”

- NSW Government

Regional Benefits

With NSW set to lose 86% of its aging coal-fired power generation over the next 20 years, efforts are underway to transition the state’s power supply.

Pumped hydro energy storage is a mature technology that has been widely deployed across the world. It is a perfect complement to wind and solar power, allowing excess renewable energy to be stored and then released when the power is needed to meet consumer demand.

The New England region has been recognised as having some of the best natural energy resources in the country, including some of NSW’s best potential sites for pumped hydro development.

In October 2020, the Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro Energy Storage project was declared Critical State Significant Infrastructure (CSSI). It is expected that the project will play an essential part in transitioning NSW’s power grid towards renewable, reliable and affordable energy delivery and prices.

It is anticipated that the project will also deliver local economic and community benefits. During construction, which will span over three years, the project will create at least 600 direct jobs spanning a wide range of skills and activities.

Once constructed, around 30 operational jobs will also be required to support the project over its 50-plus year life span.

Stay Connected

The Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro Energy Storage project is being delivered by OMPS Pty Ltd in partnership with Alinta Energy.

The Oven Mountain project team have over 60 years of combined electricity generation development experience spanning hydro-electric, wind, solar and battery storage technologies.

Alinta Energy has over 20 years experience in the energy industry and boast over one million gas and electricity retail customers. Alinta Energy is a fast growing national energy retailer with a purpose to make energy more affordable for its customers.

To find out more, visit www.ompshydro.com. You can also contact the team at info@ompshydro.com or on 1800 518 194.

