



## Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro Energy Storage

July 2024



# Community Benefit Sharing Workshop

Kempsey Workshop – 19 June 2024



## Acknowledgement of Country

The Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro Energy Storage project (the “Project”) pays its respect to the Traditional Custodians of the Project area, Elders—past and present, and acknowledges their ancestral connection to the land, seas, and waterways.

The Project honours the collective knowledge, experiences, cultures, and traditions of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who for thousands of years have shared and exchanged knowledge, nurtured, and loved Country for the benefit of all.



## Setting the scene: An introduction

Benefit sharing is an important link between major renewable energy projects and the communities in which they will operate. It's about creating a positive legacy in the community and seeking to bring ongoing and lasting value to the region.

Sharing project benefits with local communities is not only the right thing to do, but it's important to ensure we create opportunities to actively listen to and better understand the needs of the community when we start to imagine what this should look like.

This is why Alinta Energy hosted a workshop at the Kempsey RSL on 19 June 2024, with 27 members of the Kempsey and Upper Macleay River communities. The aim of this workshop was to discuss ways in which the Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro Energy Storage project (the Project) could share benefits with the local communities.

Participants were tasked with generating ideas for ways the Project could share benefits with the community. Each table was asked to list initiatives as smaller and larger projects. The feedback received shapes future conversations and the co-design of the Project's Community Benefit Sharing Program.

## Why did we hold this workshop?

This workshop was designed to start the conversation to co-design potential initiatives to share benefits with the communities of Kempsey and the Upper Macleay Valley if the Project is approved.

Participants were encouraged to think about initiatives that would have long-term beneficial impacts for the community as the Project could have an operational life of 100 years.

Examples of benefit sharing initiatives that have been successfully implemented in other projects were discussed to provide context and show the breadth of ideas that could be considered.







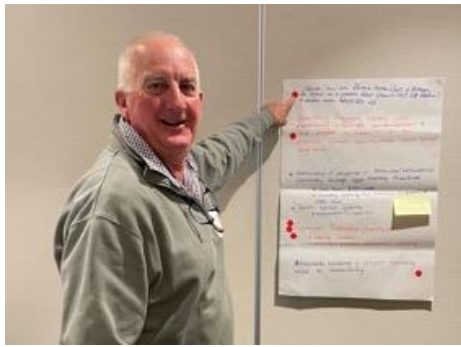
## Who was involved?

The workshop captured a good representation of stakeholders (27 in total) including council, community groups, First Nation community members, and education/service providers.

The following 22 participants consented to having their name shared within this report. The remaining five participants wished to remain anonymous.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Community interest</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Community interest</b>
Uncle Grahame Quinlan	<i>Dunghutti Elder</i>	Adam Matchett	<i>Country Universities Centre</i>
David Austin	<i>Kempsey TAFE</i>	Gary Scott	<i>Macleay Valley Business Chamber</i>
Brittisha Davis	<i>Kempsey TAFE</i>	David Duff	<i>NSW Farmers Federation, Macleay Valley</i>
Rewa Baillie	<i>Bellbrook resident</i>	Chris Hodgson	<i>National Trail</i>
David Griffin	<i>Bellbrook Hotel</i>	Uncle Clarence Hoskins	<i>Dunghutti Elder</i>
Rupert Milne-Home	<i>Save our Macleay River</i>	Karen Donaldson	<i>Macleay Valley Business Chamber</i>
Aunt Shirley Cohen	<i>Dunghutti Elder</i>	Liesa Davies	<i>Kempsey Council</i>
Andrew Sutton	<i>Lower Creek Resident</i>	Jesse Poole	<i>All Saints Anglican Church</i>
Amie Jacky	<i>Dunghutti Elders council</i>	Paul Reinbott	<i>Kempsey Families</i>
Richard O'Leary	<i>Rotary West Kempsey</i>	Christa Schwoebel	<i>Save our Macleay River</i>
Caitlyn Beattie	<i>Kempsey Council</i>	Paul Smith	<i>Community Member</i>

The broad range of interests represented in the workshop was designed to ensure the diversity of community needs were reflected in the deliberations and outcomes of the workshop.



## What did we hear from the community?

Community members were asked to develop ideas for benefit sharing initiatives. Initiatives were identified across the following sectors:

- Community services or infrastructure
- Housing and accommodation
- Energy programs
- Environment programs
- Tourism
- Parks and recreation
- Health services and infrastructure
- Education and research
- Arts or cultural programs
- Services or programs for First Nations people
- Other services or programs that benefit the local community.

Issues raised by the participants aligned with the concerns/opportunities raised in previous engagement to date, as well as the Project's Social Impact Assessment, which can be accessed via the Major Projects Portal [here](#). From more than 50 ideas, the following initiatives were prioritised by community members as being the most important:

Larger Projects	
<b>Communications infrastructure</b>	Improve the mobile phone coverage for the Upper Macleay Valley where there is no coverage currently.
<b>Housing</b>	Invest in community housing with a shared ownership model and target essential workers and First Nations community members.
	Consider re-using housing constructed for the Project's construction camp as temporary accommodation for homeless community members, with investment in permanent community housing as a longer-term solution.
<b>Emergency infrastructure</b>	Build an emergency building at Blackbird Flat or Lower Creek to support residents in times of emergency evacuation from fire or flood.
<b>Road safety</b>	Upgrade of Kempsey-Armidale Road and transfer road ownership to State Government's Transport for NSW for ongoing maintenance.
	Additional river crossing at George's Junction should be considered to remove most dangerous sections of road.
<b>Youth</b>	Establish new Youth Centre (a 'hub') to support local kids.
<b>Community services</b>	Build new refuge for men and women in the local area.
	Establish a local drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre.

<b>Smaller Projects</b>	
<b>Employment &amp; Training</b>	Create employment opportunities through the project utilising local workers including providing traineeships to local young people.
	Increase tertiary education participation, aspiration and reduce barriers to accessing education by engaging with local universities and vocational colleges. providing bursaries and scholarships and financial support for Country Universities Centre.
	Work closely with Registered Training Organisations in the Kempsey LGA to develop skills of local workforce.
	Support for a small business coaching and an accelerator program to help entrepreneurs set up new businesses with support for registration, insurance, Criminal History and Working with Children checks and basic qualifications such as First Aid.
<b>Youth</b>	Financial support for bus trips for local students to attend University Open Days.
	Ongoing support for science and engineering challenge (STEM scholarships) in local schools.
	Financial support for breakfast clubs for local school students.
	Refurbishment and improvements to local parks and playgrounds to encourage fun, adventure, education and outside play.
<b>Farmers</b>	Farmer mentor program to pair young famers with more experienced farmers and First Nations people.
<b>Tourism</b>	Support for the National Trail through sponsorship of a section of the trail map, and funding for basic infrastructure such as long drop toilet facilities and horse yards at significant camp sites in the Macleay Valley.
<b>Indigenous</b>	Funding to support training and ongoing employment of a female and male indigenous cultural officers to preserve knowledge of men's and women's business and protect local men's and women's cultural sites.
<b>Community</b>	Establish a Community Steering Committee to guide funding of local community initiatives.

## How was this workshop evaluated by participants?

This workshop was independently facilitated by InfraFuture.

Feedback from the workshop was positive with many participants asking for more workshops in future, ongoing engagement, and more project information to be made available.

**26** evaluations were received with only one participant choosing not to provide comments.

**96%** of participants reported that the workshop met or exceeded their expectations with **81%** of participants stating they were satisfied or very satisfied with the workshop.

**100%** of participants felt the facilitator engaged effectively with the audience and **92%** of participants indicated they would like to be involved in future discussions on community benefit sharing.

Most participants left comments for the Project team. The range of comments included:

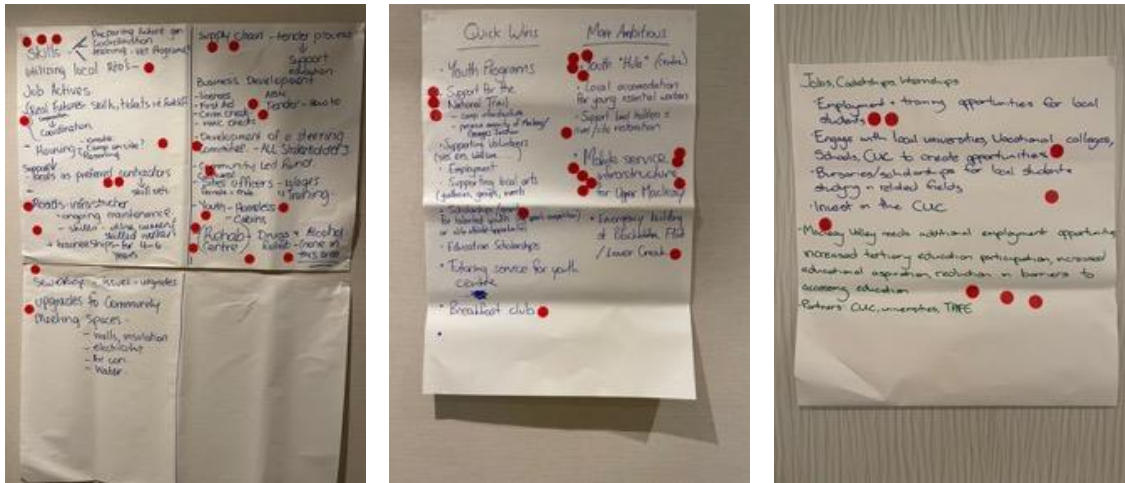
*Well done. We are a complicated community of communities, and the workshop drew together diverse representatives.*

*Continue as you are. Don't leave too much time between workshops and thus creating a question of if it's a tick-a-box.*

*It is questionable whether it is the right time for this kind of discussion.*

*Community can be quite resistant to change. [We] will need strong, clear arguments for community benefit.*

*A lot more information is needed to let the wider community know where the project is at. Market stalls, emails, radio, print media.*



## How will we use the feedback we have collected?

This feedback will shape the conversations and co-design of the Project's Community Benefit Sharing Program.

This feedback will be used for:

- Reviewing the Project's Engagement program to build on momentum created by the workshop.
- Planning for future opportunities to talk to the community about the co-design of Community Benefit Sharing initiatives.
- Informing our step forward to become a Sponsor Partner at the upcoming Social Impact in the Regions conference, which is being held in Kempsey from 4-6 September 2024.
- Reviewing the Project design to assess whether some of the initiatives generated at the workshop can be built into the design before it is approved.
- Considering community-based initiatives when preparing Project Management Plans prior to the start of construction.
- Presenting the range of feedback to the Kempsey Shire Council as the first stage in working together and understanding the communities' thoughts and priorities for benefit sharing.
- Developing the suite of agreed Benefit Sharing initiatives for future delivery in the event the Project is approved.

The workshop demonstrated how the Project could respond to community needs including via the Response to Submissions process.

Importantly, this was the first of many discussions about the Project's Benefit Sharing Program highlighting the need for broader and ongoing engagement, particularly among skills and education providers.

**On behalf of the team, we would like to thank the Kempsey and Upper Macleay Valley community members for their enthusiastic participation and collaboration in the lead up and during this Community Benefit Sharing workshop.**



## Stay connected

If you have any feedback or questions, or to register for SMS notifications you can:

Reach us toll-free on 1800 518 194

Email us at [info@ompshydro.com](mailto:info@ompshydro.com)

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