

Part C

Consultation, conclusion and commitments

Googong Township water cycle project

Environmental Assessment

November 2010

16 Stakeholder engagement and consultation

Stakeholder engagement and consultation is an ongoing and vital component of CIC's approach to developing the Googong township. The consultation discussed in this chapter specifically relates to the Project. However, consultation is also occurring in relation to the subdivision and other projects.

16.1 Agency input into the environmental assessment

16.1.1 Planning focus meeting and agency submissions

On 11 December 2008, the Department of Planning (DoP) convened a planning focus meeting at the State Government offices in Queanbeyan. The aim of the meeting was to enable agencies to provide concerns and issues that would help the DoP to formulate the Director-General's Requirements (DGRs).

The meeting included a presentation of the project, a site inspection and a discussion session in which key issues were identified. It was attended by the following organisations:

- Department of Planning (DoP).
- Department of Water and Energy (DWE).
- Queanbeyan City Council (QCC).
- Palerang Council (PC).
- Greater Southern Area Health Service – NSW Health (GSAHS).
- CIC Australia (CIC).
- Manidis Roberts (MR).
- Montgomery Watson Harza (MWH).
- Brown Consulting (BC).
- Elton Consulting (EC).

The key issues raised at this meeting are summarised in the DGRs, attached as Appendix A. Accompanying the DGRs is a collection of submissions made by agencies that contributed to the formulation of the DGRs. Issues raised in these submissions that are not explicitly covered in the DGRs, as well as issues that have been raised through further consultation, and where they have been addressed in the EA, are shown in Table 16.1.

Table 16.1 Issues raised by government agencies at planning focus meeting or in a submission

Issue	Agency	Source	EA ref
Water quality			
Concern raised by residents downstream that use the water from Queanbeyan River for potable purposes – human health impacts.	QCC	Submission (31/12/2008)	Chapter 7 Chapter 8
Water quality must be consistent with the NSW Government's River Flow Objectives, Water Quality Objectives framework and ANZECC Guidelines.	DECC	Submission (24/12/2008)	Chapter 7
Water cycle project design			
Land used for discharge points for recycled water needs to be owned and controlled by the same entity as the operator of the water recycling plant (WRP).	QCC	Submission (31/12/2008)	Chapter 5
Consideration of the possibility of servicing future/existing adjoining development.			
Concern that there needs to be a constant and reliable source of potable water for the development.	GSAHS	Submission (24/12/2008) Meeting (31/03/2009)	Chapter 5
Stakeholder consultation			
There is a need to resolve access to the WRP from Googong Dam Road.	QCC	Submission (31/12/2008)	Chapter 5
Community education			
There is a need for a suitable education program to make residents aware of recycled water uses.	QCC	Meeting (17/03/2009)	Chapter 16
There is a need to maintain signage and ongoing education of residents into the future.	GSAHS	Submission (24/12/2008)	Chapter 16
Human health			
The provision of a safe drinking water supply requires conformity with the <i>Australian Drinking Water Guidelines</i> (2004), particularly in regard to the treatment, storage, reticulation and monitoring of the water supply.	GSAHS	Submission (24/12/2008)	Chapter 8
Aquatic ecology			
Concern regarding impacts on aquatic threatened species, populations and ecological communities listed under the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1994</i> .	DPI	Submission (31/12/2008)	Sect. 11.2
Indigenous heritage			
Concern regarding potential for degradation of exposed Indigenous heritage artefacts and significant sites resulting from increased flow regime to receiving waters.	DECC	Submission (24/12/2008) Meeting (31/03/2009)	Sect. 11.2
Soils			
Areas of soil contamination require remediation prior to proceeding with development. Land contamination is to be documented and managed.	DECC	Submission (24/12/2008)	Chapter 9

16.1.2 Agency comments during the adequacy review of the draft EA

The DoP conducted an adequacy review of the draft EA, which was submitted in February 2010. As part of this, the DoP requested input from the NSW Department of Industry and Investment and the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW), which includes the NSW Office of Water (NOW). The DoP, DECCW (Queanbeyan Office) and NOW separately issued comments on key matters that would need to be revisited by the proponent during the adequacy review period. Key concerns raised by these agencies were:

- How the use of recycled water for irrigation purposes would impact on the surface and groundwater systems in relation to quantity and quality, with particular emphasis on the potential impacts of salt on the existing environment – particularly on soil landscapes, the Queanbeyan River and groundwater.
- The need for clarity on which elements are being approved under concept approval and project approval, as well as which elements of the township are part of the scope of this Part 3A EA and which are being assessed under other approval pathways (eg Part 4).
- How the Project would impact on threatened species and habitats.

Ongoing consultation with DECCW and the Office of Water has been conducted during the adequacy review period to resolve any issues and update them on any design alterations. Consultation during this period has also been undertaken with the Commonwealth Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) and QCC.

Outcomes of these consultation activities and responses to the issues raised by these agencies are included in this EA.

16.2 Status of agency consultation

16.2.1 Queanbeyan City Council

There has been ongoing consultation with QCC. Several meetings have been held to update QCC on the water cycle design process and outcomes of the Googong Water Cycle Project. These meetings generally include CIC team members from a variety of areas, including engineering, civil works, business planning and environmental assessment. The meetings have covered:

- The design of the recycled water scheme, particularly the water recycling plant. Discussions included the preferred concept for the water recycling plant and the discharge method for excess non-potable water.
- An update on the assessment of odour and acoustic impacts and an identification of an appropriate buffer for the water recycling plant.
- All aspects of the Googong development, including key issues surrounding the Project.

The most recent of these meetings was on 2 September 2010, when QCC provided feedback on the engineering aspects of this Part 3A environmental assessment, particularly the Concept Design Report prepared by MWH (refer to Appendix B).

Furthermore, QCC has been included in workgroup discussions between key Googong Dam Foreshores stakeholders designed to identify short and long term management measures to protect Googong Dam and its surrounding environment. These workgroup meetings have occurred in October and November 2010 with management commitments to be included in the forthcoming EPBC referral.

16.2.2 Palerang Council

There has been no further consultation with Palerang Council since its attendance at the planning focus meeting; due to local government boundary changes, Palerang is no longer the local government authority for this development. However, issues from council's submission are included in the EA.

16.2.3 NSW Department of Planning

Since the planning focus meeting, there has been ongoing consultation with the DoP, which has been involved in the proposed management of environmental issues raised by other agencies. The DoP has been consulted with regards to EA fees and its calculation, the value of the project (concept and part of project applications), potential conditions of consent and likely timeframes for approval.

In June 2009, the DoP was also involved in a briefing of DECCW on the odour study and outcomes.

The DoP is regularly updated on the progress of the EA and the preparations for exhibition. The most recent meeting with the DoP was in November 2010.

16.2.4 NSW Health – Greater Southern Area Health Service

On 31 March 2009, a meeting was held with the NSW Health GSAHS to discuss human health issues associated with the Project, particularly concerning the use of recycled water. The GSAHS was provided with background information on the overall Googong township and an update on the status of the EA. Issues discussed were drinking water quality, design of the water recycling plant, community education, and broader community wellness matters (this is recognised as a side issue).

16.2.5 NSW Department of Water and Energy – Queanbeyan/Wagga office

In March 2009, following the planning focus meeting, discussions with the DWE recommenced, and a meeting was held in early June 2009.

Prior to this meeting, the DWE was provided with the preliminary hydrogeological study conducted in 2004 by CMJA. The DWE outlined its key issues in relation to groundwater impacts. Based on its expressed concerns, CIC commissioned a revised groundwater study (Appendix E).

16.2.6 NSW Office of Water

The NOW is now part of the DECCW (discussed below) and was formed largely from the water section of the former NSW Department of Water and Energy (discussed above). The NOW operates as a unit separate from DECCW, so CIC sought to engage with NOW in specific discussions.

As discussed in Section 16.1.2, NOW raised certain specific concerns during the adequacy review of the draft EA. A meeting was held in late March 2010 to discuss and clarify these concerns. This was followed by a period of further modelling and assessment, which was discussed in a letter to NOW in early June 2010. The most recent meeting with NOW was held on 19 August 2010, when the improved environmental outcomes and value management project amendments were presented.

16.2.7 NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water

Discussions were held with the DECCW (formerly DECC) throughout the project development stages, and more recently during the preparation of the EA. A meeting was held with the DECCW on 31 March 2009, as representatives were unable to attend the planning focus meeting. At the meeting, the DECCW was provided with background information on the overall Googong township, and more specifically an update on the key issues related to the Project. Key issues discussed were water quality (including likely

licence and discharge monitoring points for the water recycling plant), threatened species, Indigenous heritage, and odour and noise buffers.

On 3 June 2009, Sydney DECCW representatives were also briefed on the odour study for the Project.

CIC project team members met with Queanbeyan DECCW officers to discuss the issues raised during the adequacy review and a subsequent site visit was held on 24 April 2010. Follow up meetings have occurred with DECCW in October 2010 to provide an update on the EA process.

16.2.8 NSW Department of Primary Industries

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) was contacted in April 2009 to discuss any further issues regarding the Project, other than those raised in the submission letter (received in December 2008). Key issues raised in the submissions letter were restated. The DPI stated that it was satisfied with the level of consultation on the Project and proposed to await the findings of the EA before providing further comment.

16.2.9 NSW Roads and Traffic Authority

The RTA Wollongong office was contacted in May, when potential concerns surrounding the use of Old Cooma Road and Googong Dam Road were discussed. The RTA stated that it has no concerns regarding these roads, as neither come under its direct responsibility.

16.2.10 Commonwealth Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

A meeting was held with DEWHA on 6 April 2009 to discuss any key Project issues, particularly endangered ecological communities and threatened species. The DEWHA was also provided with relevant background information on the Googong development via email and in hard copy.

The DEWHA has also been contacted specifically about requirements for surveying potential threatened species and in relation to other matters that are connected with the Project (such as the transfer of ownership of the Googong Dam Road).

Recently, consultation has occurred with DEWHA as part of the EPBC Act approval process. DEWHA has been included in workgroup discussions between key Googong Dam Foreshores stakeholders designed to identify short and long term management measures to protect Googong Dam and the Foreshores. These workgroup meetings have occurred in October and November 2010 with management commitments to be included in the forthcoming EPBC referral.

Ongoing consultation will be required with DEWHA (now the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities) to finalise approval for development under the EPBC Act.

16.2.11 ACTEW and ActewAGL

From mid 2008, ACTEW Corporation and ActewAGL have been consulted on an ongoing basis, specifically in relation to technical issues relating to water cycle infrastructure, as well as at an executive level in relation to potential commercial arrangements for the Project.

Written correspondence has been entered into to confirm ACTEW's ability to provide bulk potable water to the new community, with an in principle agreement documented by ACTEW in January 2009.

Since that time, meetings have been held to progress discussion on potential impacts on ACTEW's resource – the Googong Reservoir – and the provision of bulk water. Liaison with ACTEW and ActewAGL is continuing, especially in relation to the final design of the bulk water pumping station.

ACTEW has been included in workgroup discussions between key Googong Dam Foreshores stakeholders designed to identify short and long term management measures to protect Googong Dam and its surrounding environment. These workgroup meetings have occurred in October and November 2010 with management commitments to be included in the forthcoming EPBC referral.

16.2.12 ACT Territory and Municipal Services

The ACT Government agencies, including TAMS, have been consulted regarding the township and the water cycle project at various stages over the past 10 years. CIC has recently been undertaking further consultation with TAMS and further meetings proposed prior to and during exhibition of the EA. TAMS has been included in workgroup discussions between key Googong Dam Foreshores stakeholders designed to identify short and long term management measures to protect Googong Dam and its surrounding environment. These workgroup meetings have occurred in October and November 2010 with management commitments to be included in the forthcoming EPBC referral.

16.2.13 Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority

Following a discussion with the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority (MCMA) in April 2009, a letter with a copy of the preliminary EA and DGRs was mailed to the MCMA. (Prior to this letter, the MCMA had stated that it did not see any need to comment, as it was to be excluded under future rezoning.) CIC received a letter from the MCMA in early June 2009 in which it raised key natural resource management matters. These matters have been noted, addressed, and cross-referenced in the EA.

16.3 Aboriginal consultation

Since 2003, Navin Officer Heritage Consultants has undertaken a number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous archaeological assessments in the study area. The most recent was in 2009. Section 12.3 and Appendix G provide details of Aboriginal consultation.

16.4 Community consultation

A community meeting was held on 28 January 2009 and was attended by a number of Wickerslack Lane residents. Questions raised in regards to stormwater and sludge management by residents were responded to via email in February 2009. A link to the DoP website, where residents could access planning documents, was emailed to all residents who attended.

A community education strategy would be implemented as part of the Neighbourhood 1A (NH1A) development approval process. This would cover all relevant health and community related issues surrounding the end-use of recycled water.

16.5 Combined consultation strategy and commitments

A combined consultation strategy has been prepared to ensure that all stakeholders are fully briefed throughout the development (including the design component, the Part 3A approvals component, and the commercial component of the integrated water cycle). The strategy aims to streamline the process

and ensure consistent messaging is maintained, highlighting any gaps or opportunities for future consultation.

Future consultation throughout the various stages of development would involve:

- Maintaining the website for the Googong township (www.googong.net).
- Conducting community information sessions and other consultation during the exhibition phase of this EA, as well as receiving and responding to submissions.
- Ensuring that all affected stakeholders are kept informed of the construction schedule. During construction, affected communities would be informed prior to the start of any works in their area and notified at regular intervals throughout the construction process according to a project-specific community engagement and stakeholder management plan (construction phase).
- Liaison with key government stakeholders (including beyond the program for Stage 1 of the Project). CIC would establish a framework for ongoing liaison with representatives of the DECCW, DEWHA and DoP (prior to and during construction).