

# Paradise Dam Improvement Project – Early Works

## Project Report

April 2025

**The Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, connects industries, businesses, communities and government (at all levels) to leverage regions' strengths to generate sustainable and enduring economic growth that supports well-planned, inclusive and resilient communities.**

### Acknowledgement of Country

The department acknowledges the First Nations peoples in Queensland: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their connections to the lands, winds and waters we now all share. We pay our respect to Elders, past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the continuous living culture of First Nations Queenslanders – their diverse languages, customs and traditions, knowledges and systems. We acknowledge the deep relationship, connection and responsibility to land, sea, sky and Country as an integral element of First Nations identity and culture.

The Country is sacred. Everything on the land has meaning and all people are one with it. We acknowledge First Nations peoples' sacred connection as central to culture and being. We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of First Nations peoples and commit to shaping our state's future together. The department recognises the contribution of First Nations peoples and communities to the State of Queensland and how this continues to enrich our society more broadly.

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# Purpose of the report

This report supports amendments to the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Regulation 2020* to facilitate the undertaking of early works for the Paradise Dam Improvement Project. The amendment regulation is provided for under ss. 99, 100, 108, 109 and 173 of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*.



.....  
Shaun Ferris  
**Assistant Coordinator-General**  
**Industry and Infrastructure Development**  
(as delegate of the Coordinator-General)  
17 April 2025

# 1. Background

The Paradise Dam (previously called the Burnett River Dam) is located 80km south-west of Bundaberg and is a concrete gravity-based structure on the Burnett River. The left bank of the Burnett River at Paradise Dam abuts the Goodnight Scrub National Park and is on land of the Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, Taribelang Bunda People, within the Bundaberg Regional Council local government area. The right bank is on Wakka Wakka Country and is in the North Burnett Regional Council local government area. The dam was constructed between 2003 and 2005 to provide a reliable source of water to support the future growth of the agricultural industry in the Bundaberg and Burnett regions.

Following significant flooding events in 2010, 2011 and 2013, technical investigations were conducted which identified structural problems with the dam. The investigations identified a risk of dam failure under certain extreme weather scenarios. Subsequently, essential works were completed as a short-term risk reduction exercise to lower the dam wall height reducing the risk of dam failure.

In 2022, the Queensland and Australian Governments agreed to jointly fund the restoration of the dam to its original 300,000ML full supply level.

In early 2024, a \$13 million roadwork contract was awarded as enabling works to upgrade a 10-kilometre section of the road to Paradise Dam to improve safety and allow for increased traffic movements in preparation for construction of the replacement dam wall.

In December 2024, the Queensland Government reaffirmed support for the proposed Paradise Dam Improvement Project (PDIP) involving the construction of a new dam wall, returning the structure to its original full supply level, which is required to ensure a safe and secure water supply for the Bundaberg and Burnett regions for future generations.

To support construction of the PDIP, vital early works are required to ensure timely delivery of this key piece of water infrastructure. A works regulation for early works has been identified as the appropriate approval pathway to meet current project timeframes.

The works regulation removes the requirement for development permits such as material change of use and operational works for earthworks under the local planning schemes.

Importantly, the works regulation does not impact:

- the need for an assessment of matters of national environmental significance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth); or
- the general environmental duty under the *Environment Protection Act 1994*; or
- the need to meet the requirements under the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth); or
- obtaining permits or approvals such as for vegetation clearing, water or sewage connections, or road or rail works under the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994*; or
- the requirement to comply with any other law.

## 2. The Project

### 2.1 Responsible entity

The PDIP proponent is Sunwater Limited (Sunwater - ACN 131 034 985). Sunwater is a bulk water infrastructure developer and manager, and a statutory Government Owned Corporation under the *Government Owned Corporations Act 1993*.

Sunwater became the owner and operator of Paradise Dam after taking ownership from the original developer of the dam, Burnett Water Pty Ltd in 2005.

### 2.2 Early Works

The scope of the early works are:

- construction and associated earthworks for the temporary project accommodation village (TPAV), including but not limited to:
  - standard facilities constructed in accordance with industry best practice such as accommodation for personnel, mess, commercial kitchen, laundry, recreation rooms, meeting rooms, offices and car park
  - connections to onsite potable water, wastewater treatment and electricity
- construction, testing and commissioning of concrete batching plants works including:
  - a roller-compacted concrete batch plant
  - a conventionally-vibrated concrete batch plant
  - a trial embankment to ensure stringent strength and stability standards
- establishing laydown areas for stockpiling and storage of plant, equipment and materials and similar activities during early works and main construction
- quarry investigations for a secure source of material on properties located nearby to the project site including but not limited to:
  - site surveys, environmental and cultural heritage investigations, and land access
  - geotechnical investigations including percussion drilling, core drilling and small-scale trial blasts and extractions
- geotechnical investigations including but not limited to geotechnical drilling, trenching and soil sampling
- any and all works that are ancillary, necessarily required or incidental to the works described above (for example, establishing site services such as temporary power supply).

To manage environmental and cultural heritage matters in accordance with good environmental practice, Sunwater will prepare and submit a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to the Coordinator-General for endorsement. The CEMP must be endorsed prior to construction and published on Sunwater's website within 10 business days of endorsement. The CEMP is to remain current as the early works progress, and until they are completed.

## 2.3 Location

The PDIP is located in the North Burnett Regional Council area and the Bundaberg Regional Council area. A project locality map is provided at Appendix 1.

Early works for the PDIP will be undertaken within the project area and in surrounding areas. The early works described as the TPAV, laydown area, concrete batching plant and geotechnical investigations are identified in the map at Appendix 2.

The location of the quarry investigation area is shown in Appendix 3.

## 3. The Coordinator-General

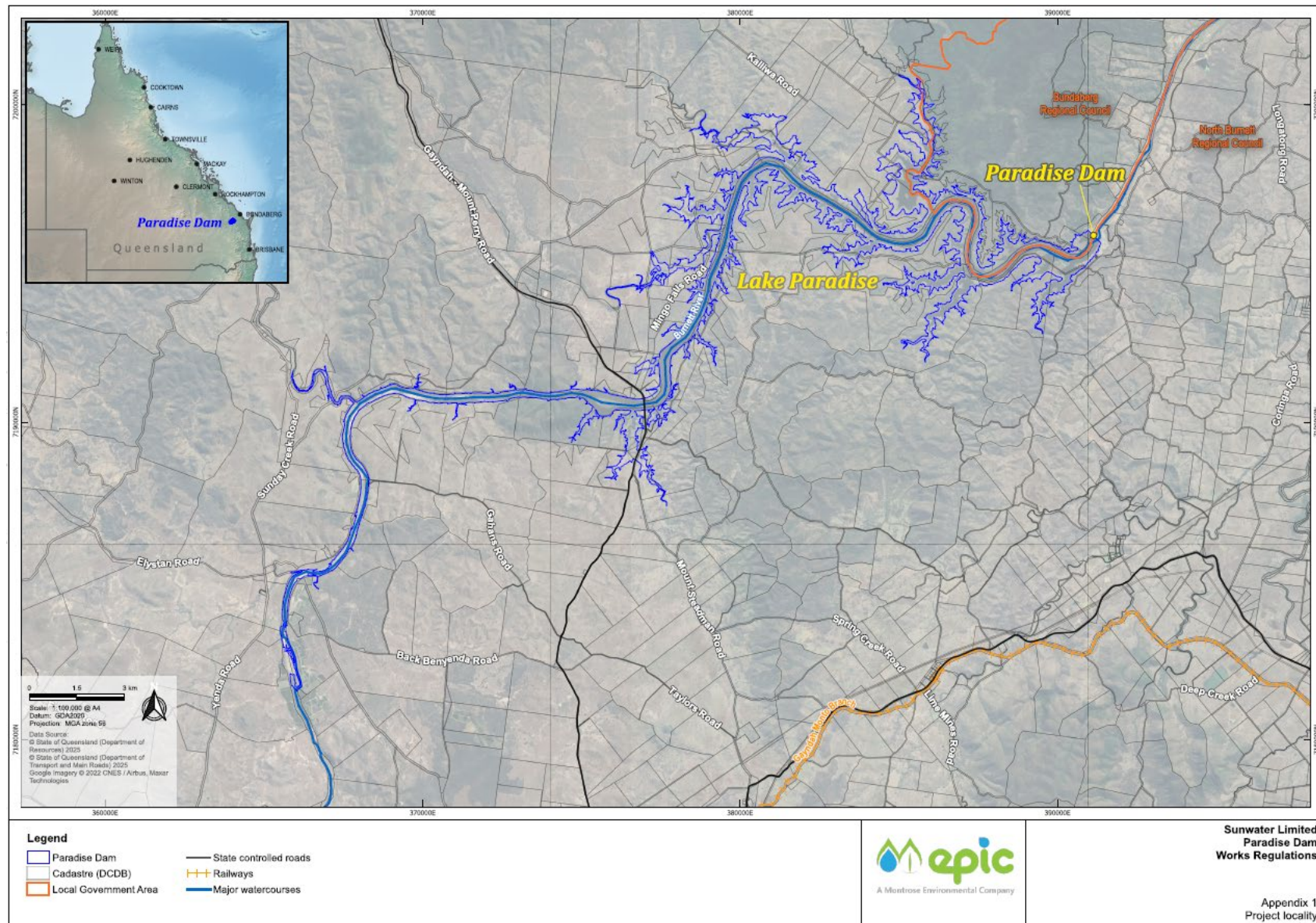
The Coordinator-General has functions and powers under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* to facilitate large-scale and complex projects, while ensuring their environmental and social impacts are properly managed.

### 3.1 Facilitation Works

The scope of the facilitation works are works required for parts of the early works that can be carried out by the exercise of Coordinator-General powers or functions under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* and works reasonably required to support the early works.

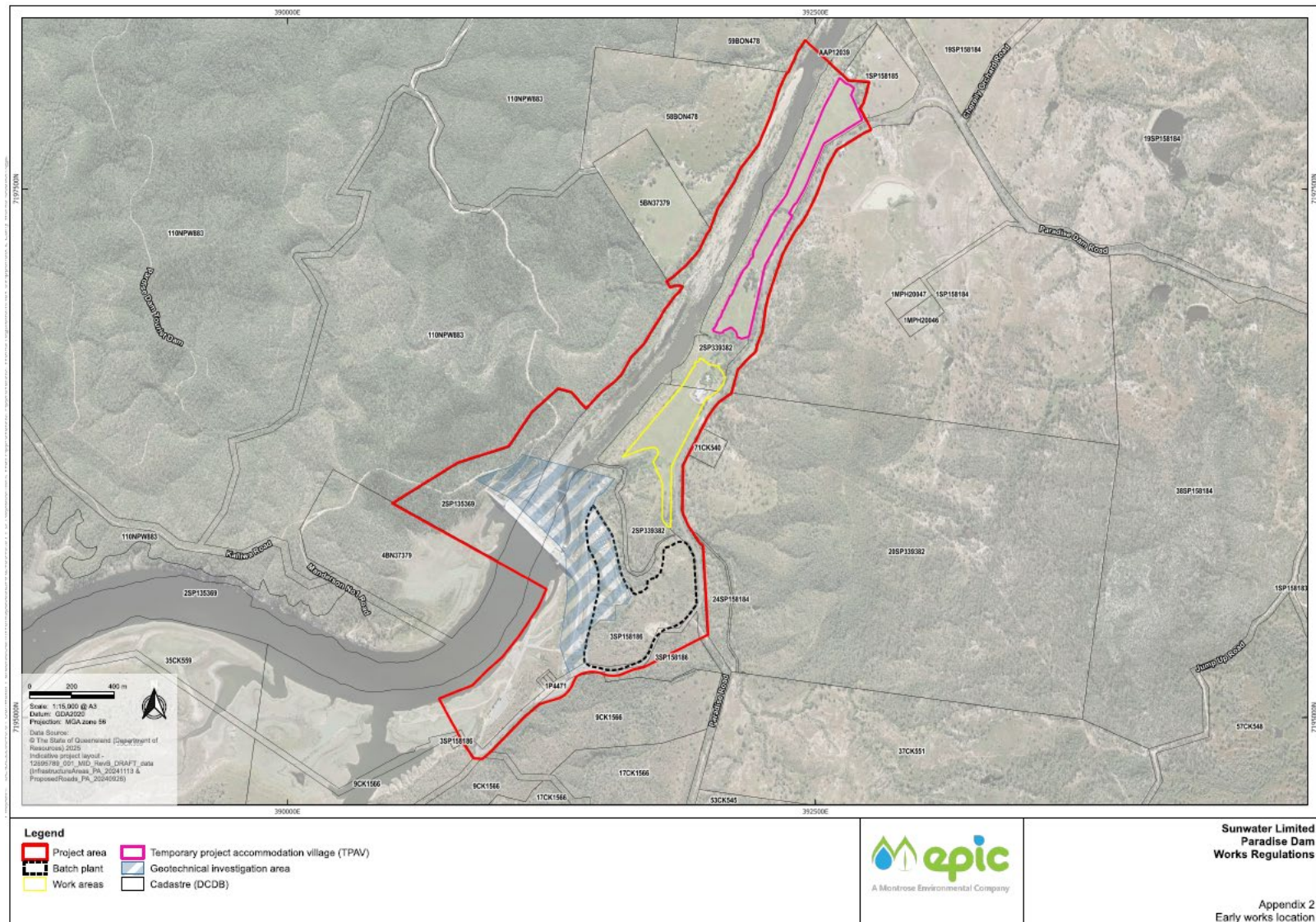


# Appendix 1. Project locality

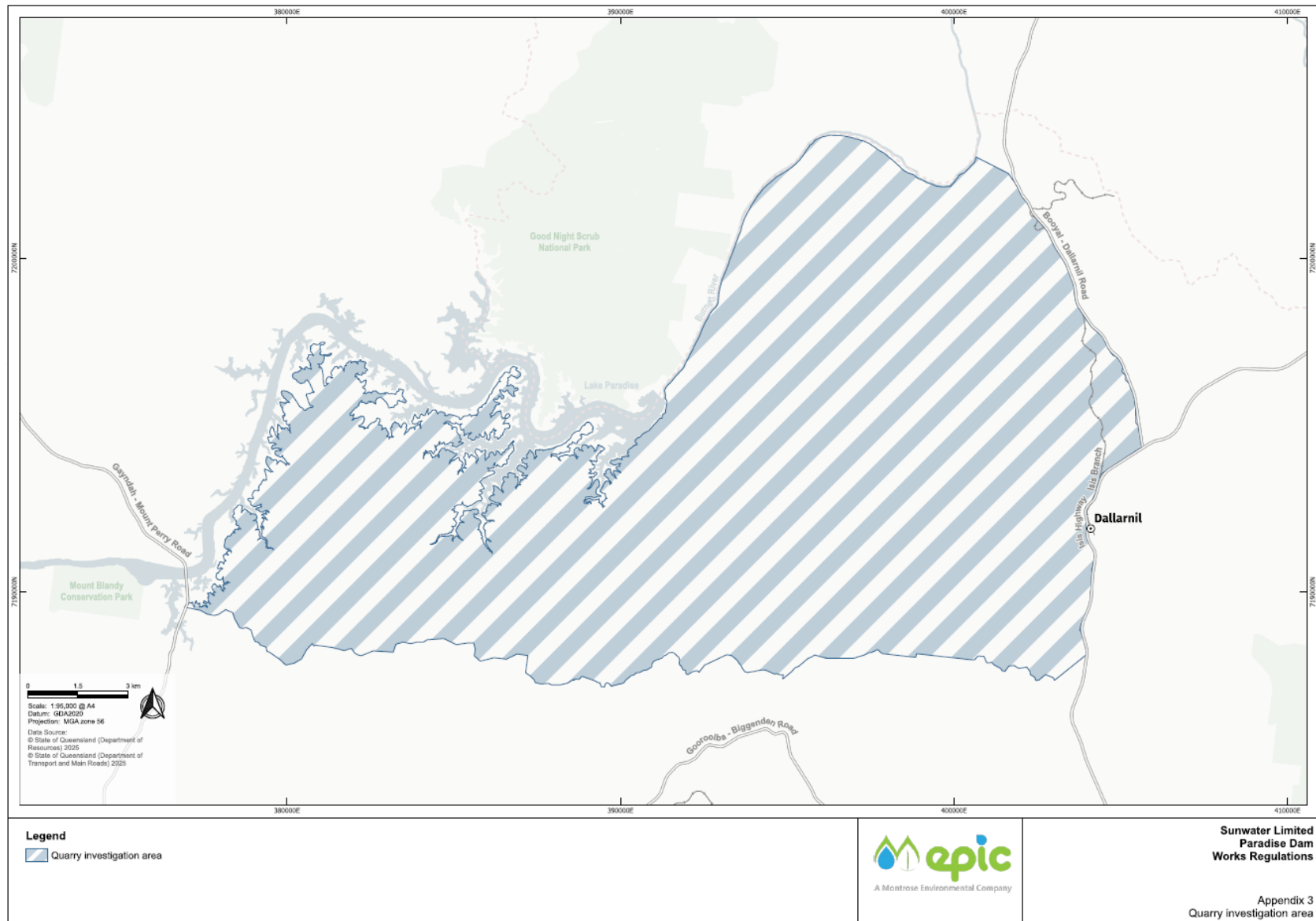




## Appendix 2. Early works: TPAV, laydown area, concrete batching plants and geotechnical investigations



## Appendix 3. Early works: quarry investigation area



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