

Borumba Pumped Hydro Energy Storage Project Exploratory Works – Temporary Workers Accommodation Camps

Project Report

July 2023

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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 this report

This report supports amendments to the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Regulation 2020* to facilitate particular works supporting the progression of exploratory works for the Borumba Pumped Hydro Energy Storage 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*.



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Kerry Smeltzer

Assistant Coordinator-General

July 2023

1. Background

1.1 Borumba Pumped Hydro Energy Storage Project

The Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan¹ (QEJP) (September 2022) outlines the State's pathway to a clean, reliable and affordable energy system. It sets renewable energy targets of 50% renewable energy by 2030, 70% by 2032, and 80% by 2035. The Queensland government has taken steps to legislate these targets by releasing the draft Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023 (Draft Bill) on 3 June 2023.

A significant part of this transition to renewable energy is the development of pumped hydro energy storage (PHES) as the key long-duration 'deep storage' component of the transitioned Queensland energy grid.

The proposed Borumba PHES Project is a cornerstone piece of infrastructure under the QEJP and would be capable of dispatching 2,000 megawatts (MW) of stored energy for up to 24 hours. Fully operational, the pumped hydro facility would have the capacity to power up to two million Queensland homes. The project is located 13 kilometres (km) south-west of Imbil, 48 km south-west of Gympie, and 180 km north-west of Brisbane, adjacent to the existing Lake Borumba reservoir in the Gympie and Somerset Regional Council local government areas (LGAs).

The total cost to deliver the Borumba PHES Project is estimated to be \$14.159 billion. The 2023–24 Queensland Budget approved up to \$6 billion in equity funding over the project's construction phase. During construction, project personnel are estimated to peak at over 2,000 workers.

The Queensland Government's plan, outlined in the QEJP, is to deliver the Borumba PHES Project by 2030.

1.2 Borumba Pumped Hydro Energy Storage Project Exploratory works

A program of exploratory works for the Borumba PHES Project is proposed to commence in 2023, providing essential geotechnical data to determine feasibility for the project. Establishment of two temporary workers accommodation camps (TWACs) is required to enable the exploratory works. The 2023-24 Queensland Budget committed \$183.7 million for Queensland Hydro for exploratory works for the project during 2023-24.

This project report identifies particular works required to support exploratory works necessary for progression of the Borumba PHES Project. Findings from exploratory works will determine feasibility for the project and inform design development and future environmental impact assessment.

¹ <https://www.epw.qld.gov.au/energyandjobsplan>

2. Project works

The construction of two TWACs are required to accommodate workers involved in undertaking of exploratory works for the Borumba PHES Project. The use of the TWACs is temporary to support the exploratory works. Should the main works for the main Borumba PHES Project be approved separately, the TWACs will be repurposed for a short time to accommodate workers involved in the construction of the main works accommodation camps.

2.1 The responsible entity

The project proponent is Queensland Hydro Pty Ltd (ACN 661 444 515). Queensland Hydro is a publicly owned proprietary company established by the Queensland Government to design, deliver, operate and maintain long duration pumped hydro energy storage assets in Queensland. All shares of the company are held by the Under Treasurer in trust for the State.

2.2 Location

The two TWACs supporting exploratory works for the Borumba PHES Project, are located as follows:

- 'Borgan Camp' on Lot 1RP193739 accessed via Bella Creek Road at its junction with Borgan Road, ~18 km west of Imbil (Gympie Regional Council LGA)
- 'Walkers Top Camp' on Lot 1RP194600, accessed via Yielo Road near its junction with Walkers Top Road, ~20 km north-east of Jimna (Somerset Regional Council LGA).

Both TWAC locations are previously cleared and levelled for pasture and have been used historically for cattle grazing. There is no pre-existing built infrastructure in the footprint of either camp. Forestry and conservation lands are in the vicinity.

The Borgan Camp is located on freehold land owned by the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (DRDMW) (formerly used for grazing, currently unoccupied). The Walkers Top Camp is located on freehold land owned by Queensland Hydro and currently used for beef cattle grazing under an agistment arrangement with a neighbouring grazier. Queensland Hydro is responsible for obtaining owner consent or other right of access to the TWAC sites.

State Government managed lands and conservation areas in the vicinity include Yabba State Forest, Imbil State Forest and Conondale National Park. Roads intended to be used to access the TWACs do not traverse these lands and areas and direct impacts are not anticipated.

A project locality map is provided in Appendix 1 with the location of each TWAC site provided at Appendix 2.

2.3 Construction

Layout of the camp facilities within the footprint will be determined by the camp contractor under a design, fabricate, construct and operate contract, which is yet to be procured by Queensland Hydro. Each camp will be fenced, and located on a levelled, all-weather, gravel hardstand. All buildings for both TWACs are modular units and will be transported to site via State and local government roads. Non modular facilities such as covered walkways and outdoor under cover areas will be constructed on site. Stormwater run-off will be managed by constructing diversion drains and channels, as well as designing

the carpark and roads to drain stormwater towards waterways. There is no requirement to remove large trees for the construction works and all work will be at least 20 metres away from any waterway.

Both TWACs will be constructed in accordance with the Queensland Development Code MP3.3 – Temporary accommodation buildings and structures.

2.4 Operations

The TWACs will be managed and operated by a registered and accredited contractor. The camps may operate on a 24/7 roster. The preferred transport option is for buses to transport work crews from the camps to work sites and back daily. It is preferred for vehicle movement on local roads, and within the camp compound, to be limited to deliveries (e.g. catering, water), maintenance subcontractors, external subcontractors, project visitors, rubbish collection, and work crew arriving and departing in buses from rest and recreation. Electricity will be generated using an on-site generator and a communications facility will be also be installed.

Potable water will be trucked to each of the TWACs and stored on-site. Plumbing is to be installed throughout the camp facilities to separate grey and black water. Both grey and black water will be stored onsite before being periodically trucked offsite to an appropriately licensed disposal and treatment facility. No releases of water to land or waterways are proposed in association with wastewater treatment. Waste will also be trucked from site to appropriately licensed waste facilities.

2.5 Decommissioning

On completion of the exploratory works and the establishment of accommodation camps for the main Borumba PHES Project, the TWACs will be decommissioned, dismantled and removed from site. The ground will be rehabilitated back to pre-existing condition or incorporated into the main works for the Borumba PHES Project, if approved separately.

Should there be a decision for the Borumba PHES Project to not proceed, the above decommissioning requirements would be met within 12 months of the decision to not proceed.

3. Reserved works

The Coordinator-General has functions and powers to facilitate large-scale and complex projects, while ensuring their environmental and social impacts are properly managed.

To enable heavy vehicle access required for the TWACs, upgrades to council-controlled roads are required – in particular, but not limited to, Bella Creek Road, Borgan Road and Yielo Road.

Given the time constraints of the project in order to meet the legislative carbon reduction targets, the Coordinator-General will provide assistance to Queensland Hydro through the use of functions and powers under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* (SDPWO Act), including for road works.

4. Conclusion

The scope of the project works is limited to TWAC construction, operation and decommissioning and the scope of the reserve works is limited to works that can only be carried out with the exercise of power by the Coordinator-General under the SDPWO Act to support those project works and does not extend to Queensland Hydro's wider program of exploratory works.

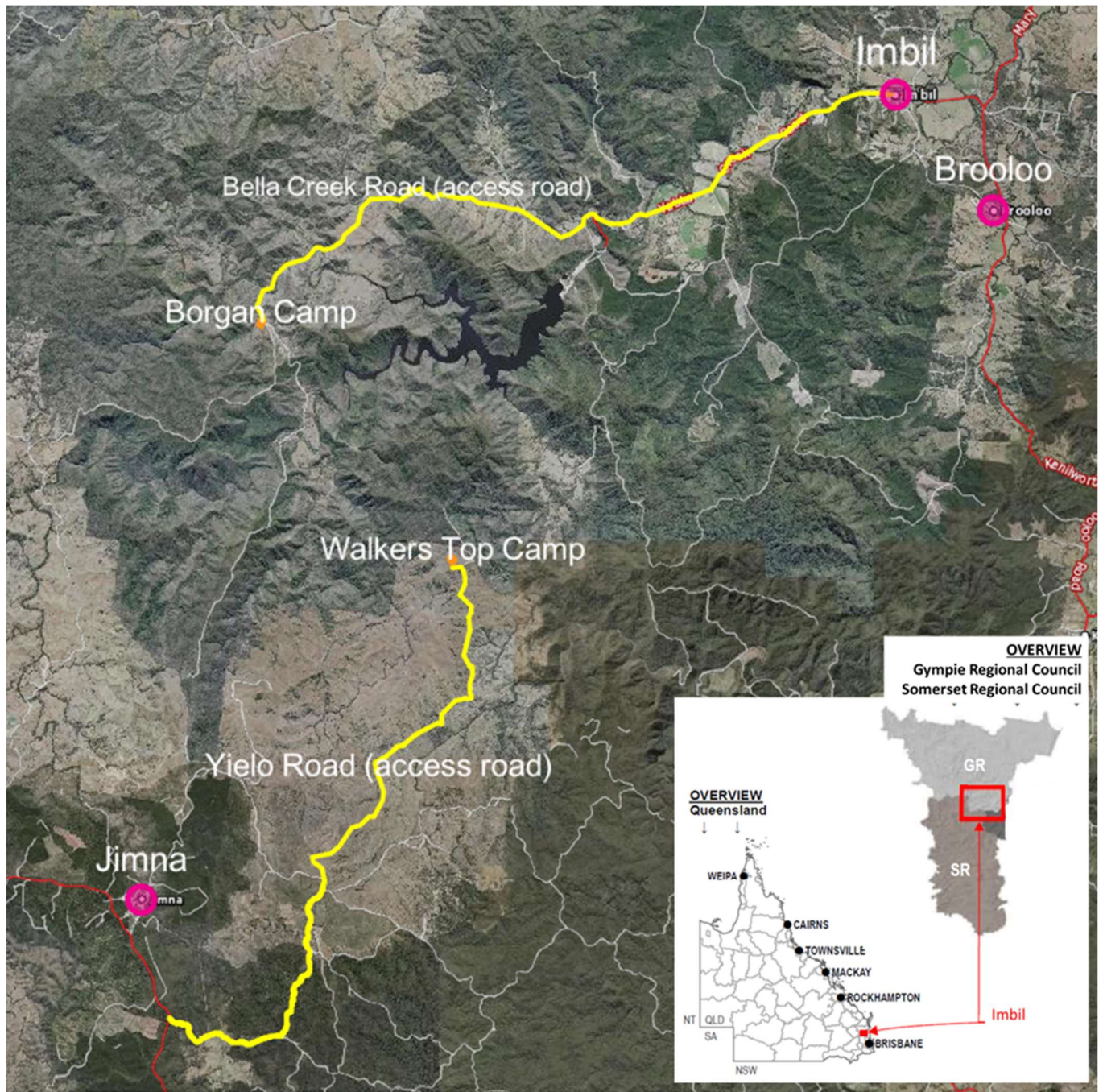
Future support of other activities within the wider program of exploratory works for the Borumba PHES Project may be considered separately.

Appendices

- Appendix 1. Locality of project
- Appendix 2. Location of each proposed TWAC site

Appendix 1. Locality of project

Figure A1.1 Locality of project



Appendix 2. Location of each proposed TWAC site

Figure A2.2 Borgan Camp location

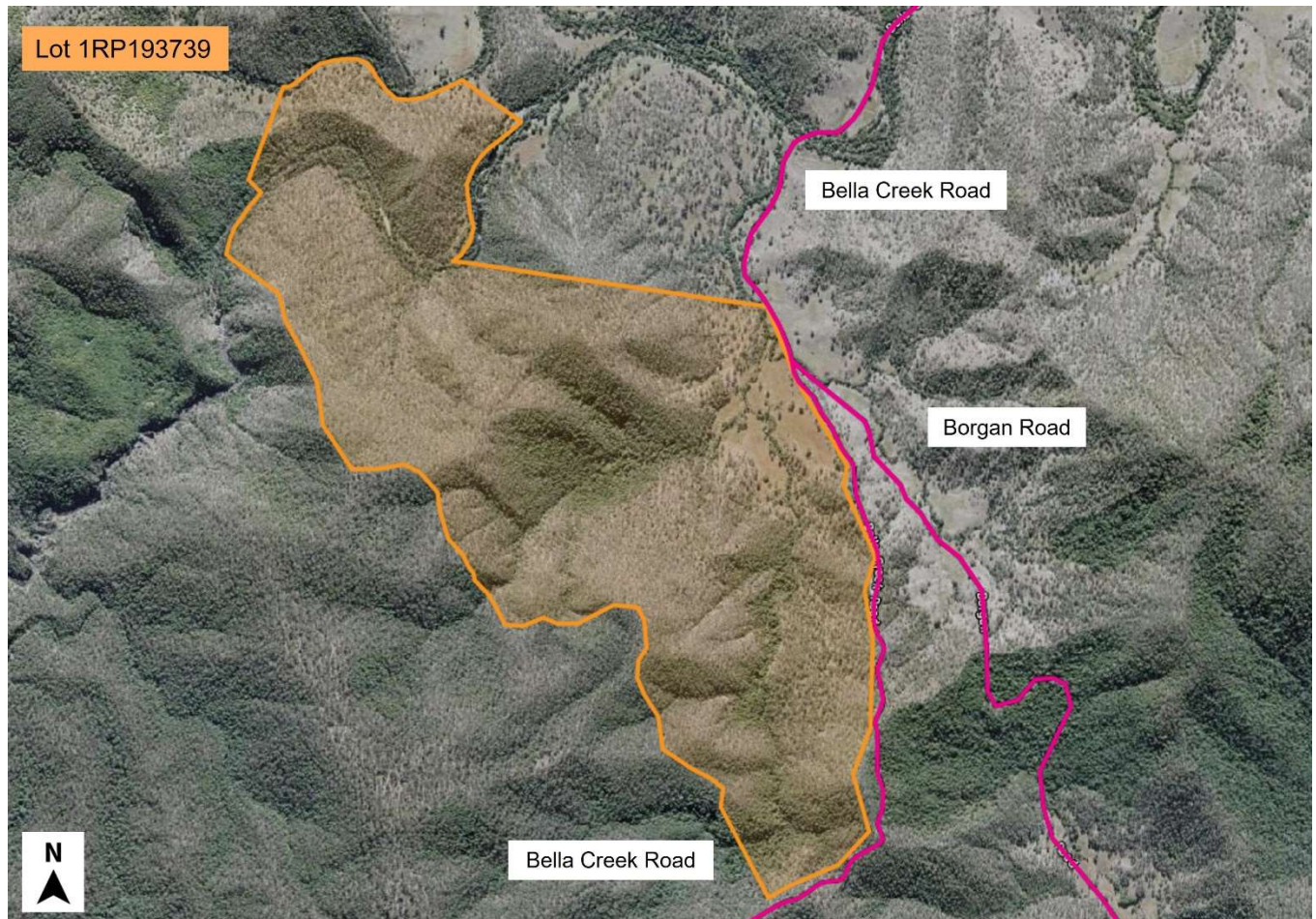
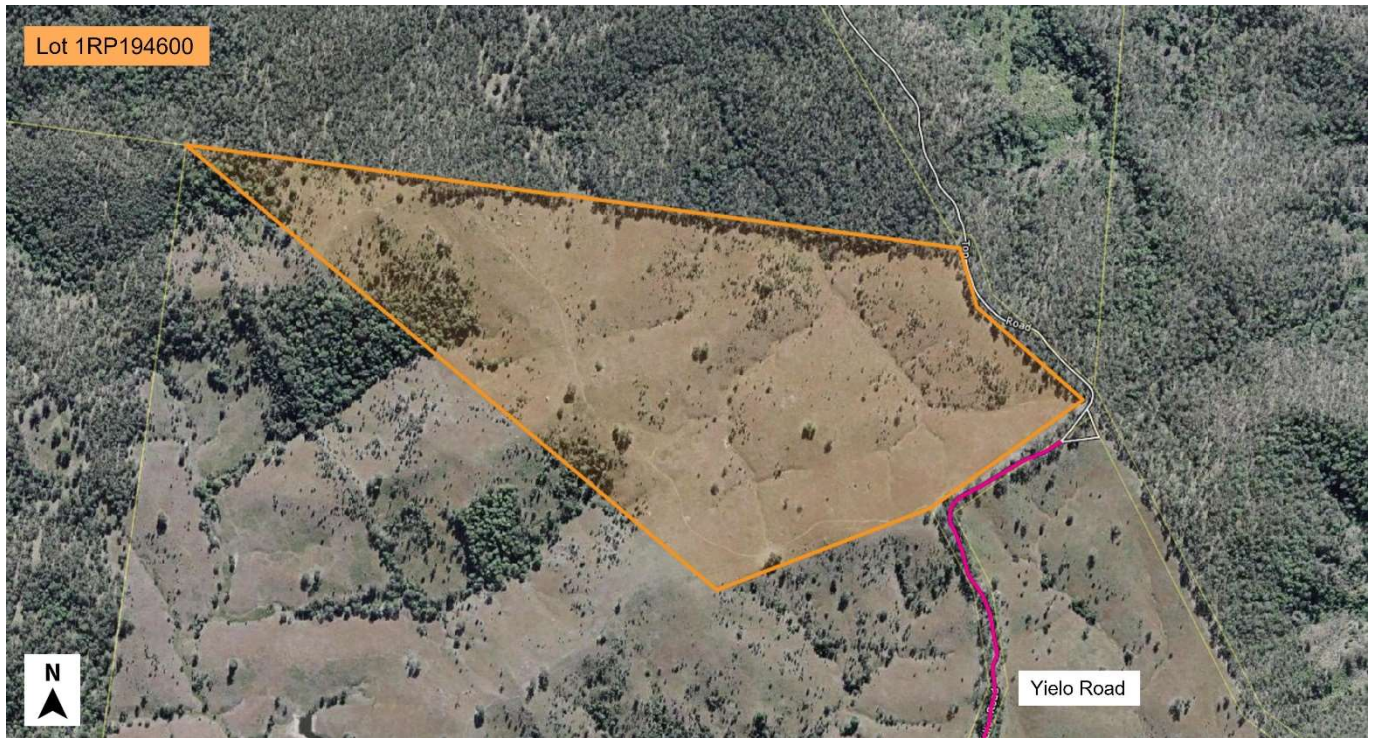


Figure A2.3 Walkers Top Camp location



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