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15. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

15.1. Construction workforce

A submission to the EIS identified a need to include a profile of imported workers and people who are likely to accompany them, particularly during the construction phase. This should include information on the age, gender and household type.

The construction workforce requirements for the dam and pipeline are presented in Section 14.3.1.2 of the EIS. The project would require a total of between 120 and 145 people for the construction phase. As indicated in the EIS, it is assumed that approximately 30% of workers would be sourced locally, with about 85 to 100 workers sourced from outside the local area. It is expected that some workers would commute from surrounding urban centres (ie Warwick or Tenterfield), while others would operate on a drive-in/ drive-out basis. Typical of many construction projects in regional areas of Australia, the construction workforce is likely to comprise a majority of young men (ie aged about 40 years).

As indicated in Section 14.3.1.3 of the EIS, some workers may move with their families to the region for the duration of the construction project. However, given the relatively short duration of construction phase (up to about 16 months), it is expected that the majority of workers from outside of the region would operate on a drive-in/ drive-out basis and the numbers of people who relocate with their families would be low and would only have a small increase in the population of the region.

As indicated in Section 14.3.1.2, it is expected that demand for accommodation from the construction workforce would be for temporary accommodation such as hotel and guest accommodation. Some workers may also look to source rental accommodation.

15.2. Worker housing and accommodation

A submission to the EIS identified a need to include details on housing/ accommodation near to the construction site and workers likely places of residence (eg Stanthorpe, Tenterfield, Warwick). The submission also identified a need to identify the support services and social infrastructure (eg health, education, etc) likely to be needed by the workforce and the level of demand on these services and infrastructure that is likely to occur from the project.

Details on the level of rental accommodation and tourist accommodation establishments in Stanthorpe are provided in Section 14.2.2.2 and Section 14.2.2.4 of the EIS respectively.

As indicated in Section 14.3.1.2 of the EIS, it is assumed that approximately 30% of workers would be sourced locally, with about 85 to 100 workers sourced from outside the local area. It is expected that some workers would commute from surrounding urban centres (ie Warwick or Tenterfield), while others would operate on a drive-in/ drive-out basis. It is expected that demand for accommodation from the drive-in/ drive-out construction workforce would be for temporary accommodation such as hotel and guest accommodation, although some workers may also look to source rental accommodation. Further, it is expected that the majority of drive-in/ drive-out workers would seek accommodation within or close to the Stanthorpe urban centre, which provides access to a wide range of services and facilities.

Impacts on community services and facilities of the project's construction and operation are described in Section 14.3.3 of the EIS. As indicated, an influx of workers for the project's construction could increase demand

for some health and medical services. The level of demand for day-to-day medical services (ie health, dentist, etc) is not expected to significantly impact on demand for services given the relatively small numbers of the construction workforce.

As previously indicated, it is expected that the majority of workers from outside of the region would operate on a drive-in/ drive-out basis and the numbers of people who relocate with their families would be low and would only have a small temporary increase in the population of the region. As such, increased demand for education and child care services due to children of project workers is likely to be minor and readily serviced.

15.3. Impacts of the picnic/recreation area

Concerns were raised in one submission to the EIS about potential impacts of the proposed picnic area on a property at Fletcher Road. In particular, concerns were raised about noise and disturbance from visitors attracted to the area and increased traffic movements, including of cars, buses, caravans and boats. Issues were also raised that the picnic area would generate noise from overnight campers and party goers given it would be unsupervised; potential for intrusion and safety concerns; due to the location of the dam/ picnic infrastructure. The submission recommended that the location of the picnic grounds should be reconsidered.

The location of the picnic/recreation area has been selected to avoid the clearing of vegetation and to be as close as possible to the dam wall.

The recreation area would be managed by the SDRC. SDRC currently manage the recreation area at Storm King Dam. The activities to be allowed to occur at the Emu Swamp Dam would be determined by Council, but similarly to Storm King Dam, overnight camping would be prohibited. This would reduce the potential for night-time noise impacts from users of the recreation area and potential for intrusion of nearby properties. Day-time noise impacts associated with the use of the recreation area are discussed in Section 12.4.6 of the EIS. In order to mitigate the potential noise impacts from recreation activities, management procedures controlling the use of jet skis and power boats would be administered by SDRC and included as part of the management plans for the area.

Fletcher Road would be used to provide access to the recreation area. As indicated in Section 13.1.5 of the EIS, the additional traffic accessing the recreation area is not expected to have a significant impact on the surrounding road network. As indicated in Section 14.3.4 of the EIS, an increase in the use of Fletcher Road could impact on safety for local road users, including pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic management measures such as road signage and visibility improvements, would be implemented to ensure safety for road users and surrounding residents.

There are not expected to be significant noise impacts from any increase in traffic using Fletcher Road to access the day-time recreation area uses.

15.4. Impacts on recreational and leisure pursuits

Issues were raised in submissions about potential impacts on residents in Stanthorpe and other towns/ communities near the Project in relation to recreational and leisure pursuits. The need for appropriate mitigation strategies to address these impacts was also identified.

Impacts of the Project on recreational uses are discussed in Section 14.3.5.4 of the EIS. As indicated, a recreation area is proposed to be developed adjacent to the dam that provides picnic facilities and potential opportunities for some water based activities. This would provide improved access to recreational and leisure pursuits for residents in surrounding towns and communities. The recreation area would be managed by the SDRC, who currently manages the recreation area at Storm King Dam.

A temporary influx of workers for the construction of the Project could also have benefits for local community facilities such as sporting clubs, through opportunities to increase membership and participation.

15.5. Impact on residential amenity

A submission to the EIS raised concerns about the potential for dust impacts during construction to cause health problems (ie chronic asthma) and pollution of water tanks for properties on Fletcher Road. Concerns were also raised about disturbance of residents from construction noise, including during both the day and night.

As indicated in Section 3.2.5 of the EIS, normal working hours for the construction of the dam will be between 6 am and 6 pm, Monday to Saturday. However, limited night-time activities would be required during the construction of the RCC wall to enable the concrete laying process. This would occur for a period of about 3-4 months.

Noise impacts may be experienced at properties near to the dam wall from construction activities, particularly due to the rural nature of the Project area and low ambient noise environment. However, as indicated in Section 12.4.1.5 of the EIS, noise levels from day-time construction activities for the dam wall will comply with all noise criteria at all noise sensitive receptors outside of the inundation area. During night-time construction of the Left Half RCC Wall, the sleep disturbance criterion will be exceeded by up to 6 dB(A) at the closest noise sensitive receptor. As such, noise mitigation measures would be required to reduce the internal noise level to meet the sleep disturbance criterion for this receptor.

The air quality objectives for the construction of the Project are presented in Table 12-1. The air quality objectives are based on the air quality goals established in the *Environmental Protection (Air) Policy 2008* (EPP (Air)). The ambient air quality goals established in the EPP (Air) have been set to protect human health and wellbeing. Mitigation measures would be implemented at the construction site to minimise potential dust impacts. These would include measures such as watering of haul roads, minimising the size of cleared areas, consideration of meteorological conditions when conducting excavation works and blasting activities and limiting the speed of haul trucks. SDRC will undertake continuous air quality monitoring throughout the construction period to determine compliance with the air quality objectives.

15.6. Impact on housing costs

Submissions to the EIS identified a need for project impacts on house purchase and rental costs in surrounding towns/ communities to be addressed, along with possible ameliorative responses. The submission also identified a need for the mitigation measures identified in the EIS (relating to consultation with community support agencies about impacts on housing for low income earners) to be included as a Coordinator-General condition.

Impacts on housing and accommodation are addressed in Section 14.3.1.2 of the EIS. This includes the identification of possible mitigation measures.

It is expected that demand for accommodation from drive-in/ drive-out workers would generally be for temporary accommodation such as hotel and guest accommodation, although some workers may also look to source rental accommodation. Given the likely level of demand and levels of rental accommodation available in Stanthorpe and the surrounding area, it is not expected that the project would significantly impact on rental costs. However, as indicated in Table 14-28 of the EIS, consultation with community support agencies would be undertaken to ensure housing impacts for local income earners are appropriately managed.

It is not expected that construction workers would buy a house in the local area. As such, impacts on house purchase prices from the project are unlikely.

15.7. Land use and farming – dam buffer

A submission to the EIS indicated that further assessment and information was required about restrictions on land use or farming practices in the buffer area.

Land within the buffer area would be acquired by the SDRC for the Project and be reserved for ecological purposes.

15.8. Community consultation

Concerns were raised in submissions about consultation with land owners. In particular, the submission identified concerns that no opportunity was provided for all landowners to be brought together at a common meeting and advised whether landowners were going to be treated equitably in relation to compensation. Concerns were also raised about an apparent disregard for valuable knowledge, informed community input and genuine participation in community outcomes and for SDRC to acknowledge the perceived shortcomings of the consultation process.

An overview of consultation activities undertaken for the EIS is provided in Appendix D to the EIS, along with a summary of the key issues raised.

The consultation process for the EIS was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the *State Development and Public Works Act 1971* and the Terms of Reference for the EIS. This included notification of the draft Terms of Reference in March and April 2007 for review and comment and release of the EIS in January and February 2008 for public review and comment.

Consultation was also undertaken during preparation of the EIS to gather community feedback on the Project for consideration in the EIS investigations. This included meetings with potentially affected landowners. Meetings with landowners were conducted individually so that landowners could discuss issues or concerns about property

acquisition relating to their specific situation. Meetings were also held with various interested or affected stakeholders groups, including representatives of the agricultural industry and government agencies.

Consultation held during the EIS notification period included meetings with key government agencies, distribution of the EIS at local libraries, other locations near the project and at the Stanthorpe Shire Council stall at the Stanthorpe Agricultural Show. Following the closure of the EIS notification period, a public meeting about the project was conducted at the Stanthorpe Civic Centre on Tuesday, 11 October 2011 by the (then) Mayor, Ron Bellingham. Consultation activities subsequent to the release of the EIS are detailed in Appendix A.

Information about the Project has been continuously available on the SSC/SDRC websites and there have been regular articles on the Project in the local newspapers.

Information collected through community and stakeholder consultation informed the EIS investigations.

15.9. Cost of Irrigation Water

A number of submissions requested further details on the potential cost of irrigation water.

The cost of irrigation water has not been finalised at this stage. In 2013, T. Sargeant Services undertook a survey of 48 growers in the Emu Swamp Dam catchment to determine the price growers might be willing to pay for irrigation water. The potential price ranged from less than \$500/ML up to more than \$1,500/ML. The median price was \$1,000/ML.

An economic analysis of the Project was prepared by T. Sargeant Services. The potential economic benefits of the Project are presented in Section 2.3.3 of the Supplementary Report. The Project is expected to deliver substantial economic benefits for the region and the State.

The benefit to cost ratio for the Project was assessed as 2.7 over a 15 year period and 7.8 over a 30 year period (T. Sargeant Services, 2013). A benefit to cost ratio more than one delivers a net positive return for the investment.

15.10. Dam Funding

An issue was raised in one submission that if the project cannot be delivered on a fully commercial basis, it would need to comply with the Policy Framework for Community Service Obligations and be consistent with the then Government's Cabinet Budget Review Committee (CBRC) requirements.

The obligations under the CBRC process relate to projects that are funded through Queensland Treasury. SDRC have indicated that the Project would be funded independently of Queensland Treasury. As such, the CBRC process is not relevant.

15.11. Compliance with SIA Guidelines

The SIA guideline was released by the Queensland Government Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning in 2013. The guideline sets out the process for assessing social and community impacts of resource and non-resource projects.

The SIA for Emu Swamp Dam was completed prior to the release of the guideline. However, the Office of the Coordinator General has requested that the SIA be reviewed for compliance with the guideline.

The SIA prepared for the Emu Swamp Dam generally satisfies the requirements of the SIA guideline.

Components to be considered as part of the SIA as outlined in the guideline include:

- Community and stakeholder engagement
- Workforce management
- Housing and accommodation
- Local business and industry content
- Health and community well-being.

Table X outlines the findings of the SIA against each of these components.

Component	Relevant section of the EIS	Comment
Community and stakeholder engagement	14.1.2	<p>The SIA was informed by the outcomes of community and stakeholder consultation, including with affected property owners, undertaken for the EIS by Stanthorpe Shire Council. The key outcomes of that consultation are provided in Appendix D of the EIS.</p> <p>In addition, consultation was undertaken specifically for the SIA to identify potential impacts and benefits of the Project for specific stakeholders. Consultation for the SIA was undertaken with community service providers, environmental groups, business and industry representatives, Council officers and elected representatives and State agencies.</p>
Workforce management	14.3.2,1	<p>Section 14.3.2.1 outlines the employment requirements for the Project's construction phase, including the number of management and professional staff and labourers.</p> <p>Where possible, construction workers would be sourced locally to maximise the employment benefits for local residents and communities. However, the existing availability of appropriately skilled and qualified workers, may impact on the ability for construction workers to be sourced locally and the level of benefit would be dependent on access to appropriate skilling and employment programs prior to construction.</p> <p>Construction workers will be required to complete worker induction and training. This will include procedures and protocols to be followed in relation to health and safety and worker behaviour.</p>
Housing and accommodation	14.2.2.4 14.3.1.2	<p>Impacts on housing and accommodation due to an influx of construction workers for the Project are described in Section 14.3.1.2 of the SIA. This included an estimate of the number of workers expected to require accommodation in Stanthorpe on a weekly basis (ie Monday to Friday).</p> <p>The SIA identified that demand for accommodation from construction workers would be for temporary accommodation, such as hotel and guest accommodation, as well as rental housing.</p> <p>As indicated in Section 14.2.2.4, accommodation occupancy rates in Stanthorpe vary on a weekly basis, with motel and guest accommodation generally experiencing lower occupancy rates mid-week and higher</p>

Component	Relevant section of the EIS	Comment
		<p>occupancy rates on weekends. Accommodation occupancy also varies throughout the year.</p> <p>The use of some of the available, under-utilised tourist accommodation for construction workers would provide economic benefits for accommodation owners by providing a base load demand. This would also help minimise potential impacts on rental accommodation.</p> <p>The SIA also identified the need for early consultation with accommodation providers and tourist development associations to ensure accommodation demands can be managed, particularly during peak tourist times.</p>
Local industry and business content	14.3.2.2 14.3.5.2	<p>Section 14.3.2.2 describes impacts of the Project's construction and operation on business enterprises, while section 14.3.5.2 describes potential impacts for local manufacturing industries.</p> <p>The construction phase is expected to provide a range of opportunities for local contractors and suppliers, including plant operators and hire, transport services and accommodation services.</p> <p>The Southern Downs Regional Council is committed to maximising opportunities for local business and industry from the Project. As indicated in the SIA, construction materials would be sourced from local industries and manufacturers, where possible. Consultation would also be undertaken with local contractors and suppliers to identify potential opportunities during the construction phase and how these can maximise benefits for local residents.</p>
Health and community well-being	14.3.1.3 14.3.4	<p>Potential impacts associated with potential changes in demography are described in Section 14.3.1.3. This includes potential impact on community services and facilities from changes in population and demography.</p> <p>Potential impacts on residents from changes in access and connectivity are described in Section 14.3.4. This includes potential increased travel times for residents on Emu Swamp Road north of the dam who want to travel south. Impacts on safety and delays and disruptions for road users during construction are also outlined in Section 14.3.4.</p> <p>Impacts on social amenity for residential and recreational uses are described in Section 14.3.5.3 and 14.3.5.4 respectively. This includes impacts from increased noise, dust and traffic from construction activities for residents nearest to the proposed works.</p>