



21. Socio-economic

This chapter includes information from the Socio-Economic Assessment undertaken for the Project. A copy of the full report is included in Appendix N.

21.1 Methodology

The key steps involved in preparing the socio-economic assessment were:

- Data collection and review of the characteristics of the local community;
- Face to face meetings and telephone discussions to gather feedback from affected landowners and key government stakeholders;
- Undertaking surveys with community and business group representatives;
- Reviewing the concerns and suggestions of various stakeholder groups;
- Assessing the potential impacts of the project; and
- Identifying measures to avoid, minimise, mitigate, offset, manage and/or monitor potential impacts.

21.2 Existing environment

21.2.1 Social environment

A study of the existing social and economic environments was completed for areas identified as having the potential to be impacted by the construction and operation of the water pipeline. The Project extends through the LGAs of Wingecarribee Shire Council and GMC, which make up the primary study areas for this social and economic assessment.

The landowners affected directly by the construction and operation of the project, and Goulburn town water users, make up the primary impact area, with properties and towns near the pipeline being secondary receivers. The Wingecarribee and Goulburn Mulwaree LGAs make up the broader community.

The majority of the pipeline alignment passes through land used for agriculture (specifically wool and meat) and undeveloped bushland, however it will also pass through a number of rural and semi-rural residential properties in some places. Towns and villages that lie within the pipeline corridor include Goulburn, Murrays Flat, Towrang, Marulan, Paddys River, Suttons Forest, Exeter, Werai, Moss Vale and Glenquarry.

The City of Goulburn is the most populated settlement within the Project's local study area and would be impacted the most during the construction and operational phases of the Project. As of the 2006 census, the GMC area had a population of 26 962 and experienced a smaller relative population increase than either Wingecarribee Shire (pop. 42 272) or NSW since 2001. The populations of both LGAs are aging at a more rapid rate than the NSW average (ABS, 2007).

The percentage of people living in separate houses in GMC (86.5 per cent) and WSC (89.5 per cent) are both significantly higher than NSW (69.7 per cent) which is consistent with non metropolitan housing



trends in the state, with Goulburn being subject to significantly lower living costs than either Wingecarribee or NSW (ABS, 2007).

Community values are concepts that are sometimes difficult to quantify and measure. Nevertheless, they are important as they indicate how the community feels about its local area, what they value about it, and how they envisage their own future.

Key values identified as being important for those in the Wingecarribee community include:

- Maintenance of a healthy and active physical lifestyle;
- Equality in respect to affordable housing and allocation of resources;
- Workforce diversity; and
- The provision of services to support the elderly.

Key values identified as being important for those in the Goulburn Mulwaree community include:

- The peacefulness of the natural environment and pride in their property;
- The value of water to business, agriculture and tourism;
- Community participation in decision making;
- Participation in sport and recreational activities;
- Taking part in volunteer work; and
- Maintaining a low crime rate.

Furthermore, feedback from community consultation shows that a number of landowners commented that their primary reason for living in the area was to enjoy the peaceful, tranquil lifestyle and privacy that comes with a rural setting. Many appear to value this above the idea of a secure water supply for Goulburn and would rather maintain their current settings than have a pipeline impede on their property. However, a similar number of residents are happy for their peaceful lifestyle and property to be temporarily disrupted in order to benefit the greater community.

Another value identified amongst some landowners was their right to develop their property or land as they see fit. A number of landowners commented on how they intend to develop their land in such a way so that they may be supported in retirement and are concerned with anything that may inhibit their ability to achieve this.

21.2.2 Economic environment

The Goulburn Mulwaree Economic Development Plan (EDP) was finalise in 2008 after the GMC identified the need for a clear and cohesive plan to guide the area's economic growth over the next five to ten years. The broad aim of the EDP is to facilitate a stronger economy and more prosperous local businesses and to identify priorities for action to encourage investment and employment growth, while making sure that the region's attributes are protected. It specifically seeks to target those sectors of the economy identified as having the greatest potential for the future. Tourism was identified as being a priority sector in future years.

The EDP identifies water security, among others, as a key challenge in the development of the Goulburn Mulwaree economy, particularly for any business requiring water for its operations. The EDP also



recognises the HSP as the primary solution to securing water supply in the region and identifying the development opportunities that a sustainable water supply would bring to the region.

In Goulburn Mulwaree in 2006, the workforce was counted as 10 300, and the working population as 11 097. These two groups overlap, with many residents working within Goulburn Mulwaree, and many of the workforce living here. The difference means that Goulburn Mulwaree was a net exporter of 797 workers, equivalent to 8 per cent of the working resident population (The Public Practice Pty Ltd, 2006).

Unemployment was identified as a issue in Goulburn Mulwaree, with the rate of unemployment at 6.1 per cent in 2006, which was slightly higher than the NSW average (5.9 per cent), but significantly higher than other communities in the region such as Wingecarribee (4.3 per cent) and more than double that of localities situated at the southern end of the corridor between Sydney and Canberra (2.8 per cent) (DoP 2008: 9).

Between 2001 and 2006 there was a consistent rise in income for residents in both the Goulburn Mulwaree and Wingecarribee areas, however the median income for those in Goulburn Mulwaree is approximately 10 per cent lower than that of Wingecarribee and the NSW state average. This may be reflective of lower living costs for the area and the occupations in which people are employed. Goulburn Mulwaree was identified as the fifth most disadvantaged LGA out of 13 LGAs in the Southern Highlands Area (GMC, 2009b).

21.3 Impact assessment

The nature and scale of the Project's construction and operational activities is likely to give rise to several impacts on individual landowners and the community as a whole. The potential social impacts have been categorised into those impacts associated with the overall project objectives and those experienced during the construction and subsequent operation of the Project.

21.3.1 Social impacts

Construction

The key impacts anticipated to effect landowners during the construction stage of the Project include:

- ▶ *Land restoration*- Landowners might be dissatisfied with restoration work that is undertaken for the Project, which could result in complaints. This impact is possible, but unlikely, as any damage is to be repaired and properties restored as close as is practical to their original state;
- ▶ *Damage to stock and property*- Construction on properties has the potential to damage or cause injury to property, stock or crops. Any disturbance or injury to stock could have social and financial impacts, by causing extra time to be expended (e.g., if needing to lock stock up or change feeding routines), and possibly cause stress for the owners;
- ▶ *Damage to services or utilities*- Pipeline construction has the potential to impact on power, gas, telephone, internet and sewer services for nearby properties and towns. However, as any disturbance would be short term this impact would only be minor;
- ▶ *Land use*- The occupation and isolation of lands for the Project will involve impacts to existing uses of some land and limit access to sections of landowners' property for the duration of the construction. These impacts will vary depending on the current land use. The occupation of land during the construction phase may also limit the access of emergency services to certain areas, with the

severity of the impact dependent on the location of the area, the need for safety fencing during construction and existing levels of access;

- *Weeds*- There is a possibility that the seeds of weeds may be transferred from one property to another, either on construction vehicles or machinery, or construction crew clothing and footwear. The introduction of weeds to crops may have a serious impact on the income of the landowner and future land usage if the weeds are not properly managed;
- *Local amenity values*- Vibration, noise, dust and artificial light pollution may potentially impact on the amenity of some landowners during the course of construction; however these impacts are expected to be minor due to the shortness of exposure and implementation of mitigation measures. Refer to Chapter 18; Noise, vibration, dust and air quality for more detailed findings;
- *Damage to cultural and heritage property*- There is a possibility that construction may directly or indirectly impact items of cultural heritage significance. Sites may be directly impacted by construction activities that damage or disturb heritage features. Furthermore, during construction, dust and vibration might adversely affect the heritage value of items within close proximity to the pipeline corridor. Refer to Chapter 11; Indigenous Heritage and Chapter 12; Non-Indigenous heritage for more detailed findings; and
- *Transportation and safety*- The transportation of large construction vehicles and machinery throughout the Project area and a general increase in the number of vehicles using the roads for the duration of the Project construction may cause a minor increase in travel time for other road users and cause a decrease in the perceived and actual levels of safety for other road users such as motorists, pedestrians and stock. Refer to Chapter 22; Traffic and Transport for more detailed findings.

Social impacts experienced through the construction period would be temporary. Implementation of the CEMP and community engagement and stakeholder management plan (CESMP) would assist in minimising these impacts.

Operation

The key impacts anticipated to effect landowners during the construction stage of the Project include:

- *Impacts on water users*- Under either the raw or treated water transfer scenario, there may be some change to the aesthetic composition of the water being supplied to Goulburn. The project may introduce some new water quality risks to the Goulburn supply, but these would not be beyond what could be expected from a typical surface water supply system, and would be manageable. A change in the aesthetics of the water may impact on sensitive water users (hospitals, hairdressers etc); however impacts would be managed by identifying and informing them of the anticipated changes in aesthetic water quality so that each could develop its own approach to prepare for the changes. Economic development and having the ability to use water for more lifestyle and recreational activities would be the major benefits for town water users;
- *Impacts on landowners*- Acquisition of a pipeline easement and the affect the easement has on the value of the property are the biggest concerns identified by landowners throughout the consultation process, and have the potential to impact on the future financial security of some landowners. The impact this has on landowners would depend on the overall size of the property, the pre-construction usage of the easement area, the location of the easement within the property and any permanent restrictions on use and attendant loss of production value of the land. Landowner privacy may be

compromised by workers conducting maintenance on the pipeline. However the degree to which landowner privacy will be impacted would be dependant on their proximity to the pipeline and the regularity of pipeline maintenance. Any noise or safety impacts related to the operation of the pipeline can be considered very minor due to the implementation of mitigation measures.

- ▶ *Local amenity values-* The construction of a pumping station at Wingecaribee Reservoir, air pressure release valves along the length of the pipeline are expected to impact on the amenity values of the various locales. The main concern is that the structures will look out of place with the natural environment, but mitigation measures such as appropriate site selection will render these impacts minor.

There would be both positive and some negative social impacts experienced through the operation of the project. Implementation of the OEMP and CEMP would assist in minimising these impacts.

21.3.2 Broad community impacts and benefits

The broad impacts and benefits for the community resulting from the Project are anticipated to be:

- ▶ *Decrease the need for severe water restrictions.* The critical level of water in the Goulburn Mulwaree Water supply dams has in the past, and may in the future, require the imposition of Level 5 water restrictions on the community. Securing an alternative source of water would decrease the potential need for water restrictions as severe as Level 5 to be required in Goulburn Mulwaree region into the future.
- ▶ *Increased recreational facilities in Goulburn.* A secure supply of water would enable GMC to allocate water for use on local sporting fields and the community swimming pool, allowing them to permanently stay open and provide residents with additional opportunities to participate in recreational and sporting activities;
- ▶ *Increase in economic growth and tourism in and around Goulburn.* Having a sustainable supply of water will contribute to the economic growth of Goulburn, primarily through the attraction and establishment of businesses to the area, particularly manufacturers with factory operations. The predictability and confidence of having a secure water supply, and the lifestyle that comes with this, may encourage business owners and their families to stay in or move to Goulburn. This would result in increased employment opportunities. The flow on economic and employment benefits would help grow the Goulburn Mulwaree economy;
- ▶ *A continued water levy for ratepayers in Goulburn.* In order to fund the cost of the project, GMC has chosen to charge ratepayers a \$75.00 annual water levy. A portion of the community may struggle to pay the levy, resulting in a negative impact on the already strained financial well-being of some Goulburn residents. This may in turn place pressure on local support services;
- ▶ *Some change in resident water use habits in Goulburn.* A secure and constant supply of water to homes and businesses on town water will in effect lower the potential need to implement level 3 or higher water restrictions. This in turn will allow residents and businesses to utilise water for a wider range of uses than they have previously been able to, such as washing cars and buildings and watering lawns and gardens. Community consultation reveals that many residents are keen to continue their water-saving habits even if the water supply is secured; and



- *The ability to meet future water needs in and around Goulburn.* A reliable source of water will enable the region to meet and surpass future water requirement projections, allowing the region to cater for the current population, as well as anticipated population increases in the future.

21.3.3 Employment and other economic impacts and benefits

The workforce during project construction is expected to involve approximately 100 to 120 workers for the main project components. It is expected that approximately half the construction workforce would be sourced locally or from nearby areas, most likely from Goulburn, Canberra, Queanbeyan or Moss Vale with the remainder sourced from Wollongong or Sydney or further afield. Any benefits or pressures on accommodation would therefore likely fall on Goulburn, Marulan or Moss Vale where accommodation pressures are not expected to be significant. It is expected that workers would stay (and therefore seek entertainment and services) in the Goulburn-Mulwaree and Wingecarribee districts, and that adoption of codes of behaviour would manage and avoid significant impact on the local community.

Workers involved with the construction would contribute to the local economy through retail and accommodation spending, however the contribution of the workforce to the local economy is not expected to be significant due to the relatively small size of the workforce to be employed on the Project and the relatively short timeframe for which they would be present in the community.

It is also expected that employment would be generated in NSW, from businesses supplying construction materials, however this has not been estimated.

The operational phase of the project would provide a very minor increase in opportunities for employment in the region, through employment in pipeline maintenance activities. A more likely source of increased employment would be from new businesses drawn to the region because of a secure water supply.

21.4 Summary of results

Both positive and negative social impacts would result from the construction and operation of the project.

Beneficial impacts as a result of operation include improved water security and the resultant economic benefits to the Goulburn Mulwaree region. Improved water security means increased security for beneficial uses of water and to fuel regional economic growth.

Where the impacts are negative, they have been assessed as being moderate in significance, and able to be minimised and managed to a large degree by the adoption of best practice construction management. The majority of the negative impacts relate to the social values attached to the physical environment and the impacts on these features such as; impacts on people's land and land uses; and, social values of the character and amenity of their environment.

The acquisition of land for permanent easements is recognised as a moderate impact to individual landowners during the operation of the Project. The acquisition process would need to be managed sensitively and in accordance with the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991*, with a commitment to amicable discussions that aim for a suitable outcome for all parties.

The project is expected to provide economic development opportunities to the Goulburn Mulwaree region through securing a sustainable water supply for the foreseeable future. Employment would be generated by the project, both directly and indirectly, and would also bring some short-term benefits to the local and regional communities.



During the construction phase, potential social impacts would be minimised through careful planning and the adoption of appropriate mitigation measures.

Construction has the potential to impact negatively on the amenity of private properties located along the pipeline route. The increase in traffic, noise and disturbance to property access would all modify the quiet rural ambience along much of the pipeline route to a moderate degree, however the Hume Highway would facilitate much of the proposed traffic increases and the local roads proposed to be used for access to the pipeline construction corridor would manage the proposed increase in traffic. Additionally, the proposed increase in traffic during the construction period would be spread out along the 83 km pipeline. Some short-term lane or road closures could occur during construction however would be managed by clear communication with the impacted local road users. These impacts would be of a limited duration. While the local community in general would be affected by this altered amenity, those primarily impacted would be landholders where the pipeline runs through or adjacent to their property.

GMC would work with community members to identify potential community mitigation measures and would ensure that the wider community is consulted. This would offset to a degree the potential negative impacts of the project on the local community.

21.5 Mitigation measures

A number of mitigation measures would be applied to avoid, minimise, mitigate, offset, manage and/or monitor potential impacts resulting from the project. A summary of the measures proposed to mitigate the higher level impacts include:

- ▶ Consultation with the community and agency stakeholders throughout the project planning and construction phases to ensure that community members are adequately informed about the project and the timing and scope of activities in their area;
- ▶ Consultation with affected and adjacent landowners with crops and farm animals to determine mechanisms to reduce noise, disturbance or injury to animals, disruption of visual amenity and the spread of noxious weeds;
- ▶ Erect safety fencing at construction sites where required;
- ▶ Undertake extensive dial before you dig services search, pre work potholing and liaise with individual landowners to prevent disruption to services or utilities;
- ▶ Traffic management measures to cater for the increased flow of traffic and construction vehicles;
- ▶ The implementation of attenuation measures to screen sensitive receivers from excessive light or noise; and
- ▶ Negotiations with individual landowners on a case by case basis in regards to land access and acquisition, in order to identify specific mitigation measures for each property to achieve desirable outcomes for all parties.