

# Notice of decision – Snowy 2.0 Exploratory works (SSI 9208)

Section 2.22 and clause 20 of Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

<b>Application type</b>	Critical State significant infrastructure
<b>Application number and project name</b>	Snowy 2.0 Exploratory Works (SSI 9208)
<b>Proponent</b>	Snowy Hydro Limited
<b>Approving authority</b>	Minister for Planning

## Decision

The Minister for Planning has, under s. 5.19 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (**the Act**) approved the infrastructure application subject to the recommended conditions.

A copy of the Department of Planning and Environment's Assessment Report and infrastructure approval is available [here](#).

## Date of decision

7 February 2019

## Reasons for decision

The following matters were taken into consideration in making this decision:

- the relevant matters listed in the statutory context section of the Department's assessment report;
- the objects of the Act;
- all information submitted to the Department during the assessment of the application;
- the findings and recommendations in the Department's Assessment Report; and
- the views of the community about the project (see Attachment 1).

The findings and recommendations set out in the Department's Assessment Report were accepted and adopted as the reasons for making this decision.

The key reasons for approving the application are as follows:

- the project would provide a range of benefits for the region and the State as a whole, including:
  - capital investment of \$325 million
  - creation of 200 construction jobs
  - providing an understanding of the geological conditions that may facilitate the development of the broader Snowy 2.0 project which, if approved, would add 2,000 MW of dispatchable generation to the NEM;
  - and the;
- the works can be undertaken without any significant impacts on the biodiversity, recreational and conservation values of the Kosciuszko National Park and recreational opportunities for local residents or visitors to Talbingo, subject to the implementation of mitigation, management and substantial offsetting measures; and
- the issues raised by the community during consultation and in submissions have been considered and adequately addressed in the Department's Assessment Report; and
- weighing all relevant considerations, the project is in the public interest.

## Attachment 1 – Consideration of Community Views

The Department exhibited the application and Environmental Impact Statement for the Exploratory Works from 23 July 2018 until 20 August 2018 and received 59 submissions. This included 8 submissions from government agencies, 4 from special interest groups and 47 from the general public.

The Department also held a number of meetings with government agencies, community and environment groups including National Parks Association, The Colong Foundation for Wilderness and the Talbingo Progress Association, community information sessions and visited the site on a number of occasions.

The key issues raised by the community and considered in the Department's Assessment Report and by the decision maker include the benefits of renewable energy and the economic benefits for the region, concerns about the impacts of additional infrastructure in the Kosciuszko National Park and the associated impacts on the biodiversity, recreational and conservation values of the Kosciuszko National Park, tourism impacts and loss of recreation opportunities in Talbingo and at Talbingo Reservoir.

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Consideration</i>
<b><i>Kosciuszko National Park</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impacts on terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity, geodiversity, heritage values, recreation.</li> <li>Impact of infrastructure on the values of the KNP.</li> <li>Staging the assessment of the Snowy 2.0 and Transmission Project</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Assessment</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While Snowy Hydro has sought to avoid and minimise the impacts of the project, particularly on the KNP, the Department acknowledges the works would require clearing of native vegetation, modification of key fish habitat within Talbingo Reservoir, potential impacts from sedimentation, water discharges, management of excavated material and impacts to heritage items and areas of geodiversity.</li> <li>The Department considers that these impacts would not be significant and can be effectively managed, mitigated and/or to achieve an acceptable environmental outcome.</li> <li>Planning legislation allows for the assessments of complex projects to be staged. This application is a stand-alone stage and does not rely on Snowy 2.0 Main Works or Transmission Connection progressing, and assumes the site would require rehabilitation to remove all infrastructure.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Conditions/Response</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The conditions require Snowy Hydro to prepare a range of management plans in consultation with NPWS relating to biodiversity, water quality, heritage, traffic and rehabilitation.</li> <li>The Department has also recommended that Snowy Hydro be required to pay \$10.5 million to NPWS to offset the impacts of the project on the KNP.</li> <li>These funds would be used by NPWS to implement conservation measures for threatened species and ecological communities impacted by the project, offset the loss of recreational values of Lobs Hole, and improve overall catchment health within the KNP.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Talbingo</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of access to Talbingo spillway recreational area and boat ramp impact interactions between recreational boating and project barging.</li> <li>Adequacy of proposed new recreational facilities.</li> <li>Impacts on tourism opportunities in Talbingo and impact of traffic using Miles Franklin Drive.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Assessment</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Snowy Hydro would need to close the existing spillway recreational area for the barge transport infrastructure, have occasional temporary restrictions on access to the boat ramp. Snowy Hydro is proposing to construct a replacement recreational area. Access for recreational boats to the reservoir would not be closed other than for temporary restrictions.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Conditions/Response</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Department has recommended conditions requiring Snowy Hydro to prepare a detailed plan for the new recreational area and consider the feasibility and merits of incorporating a small area of the KNP to enhance the new recreational area, minimise disruption associated with the closure of the existing facilities, keep the local community informed and minimise disruption associated with the closure of the existing facilities.</li> <li>While the Department acknowledges the concerns of the local community, it considers that the replacement facilities along with the implementation of the management plan would ensure there would be no material loss of recreational opportunities for local residents or visitors.</li> <li>The Department considers that with a Traffic Management Plan the project would not result in significant impacts on road network capacity, efficiency or safety.</li> </ul>