

PROJECT UPDATE

Project gets environmental tick of approval

Nathan Dam and Pipelines Project has been granted the final environmental impact statement (EIS) approval, marking a significant milestone in determining the viability of the project.

On 13 July, the Federal Government approved the EIS, subject to conditions, following the Coordinator-General's approval of the project and release of the evaluation report in May this year.

SunWater Chief Executive Officer Ms Nicole Hollows said she was pleased with the outcome of the EIS process and SunWater is now well positioned to supply water to industry when demand returns.

"Throughout the EIS process, SunWater has been committed to undertaking rigorous, independent and transparent processes to ensure we have the required checks and balances to make considered and responsible decisions about future water infrastructure.

When the project proceeds, SunWater will take all the required steps to preserve long-term health, function and viability of the natural environment", said Ms Hollows.

A number of conditions have been applied to the EIS approval to address key themes such as no additional water for agriculture, pre-clearance surveys, water quality monitoring program, Great Artesian Basin Springs monitoring program, offset management plan, Boggomoss Snail management plan, and a turtle management plan. These conditions will be progressed when the decision to advance the project has been made.

Next steps

The next step in the process is the development of a Detailed Business Case, which will be undertaken by Building Queensland. This will be initiated when projected market demand supports progressing the project.

Given the current downturn in mining, there is insufficient industry demand to support construction of the project at this time, however SunWater is confident that demand will increase in the coming years.

SunWater plans to regularly review the market to remain well-informed of the likely water demands of customers and potential future customers to determine when there is sufficient demand to progress the project.

It is anticipated that construction of the Nathan Dam and associated pipelines would take nearly three years following finalisation of a Detailed Business Case.

An artist's impression of the proposed Nathan Dam



PROJECT FAST FACTS

- The proposed dam site is located just upstream of Nathan Gorge on the Dawson River, approximately 70 km downstream of Taroom and 315 km upstream of where the Dawson and Fitzroy rivers meet.
- The dam will have a capacity of 888,312 ML, an inundation area of 13,508 ha (with an additional 316 ha of islands created) and a catchment area of 23,185 km².
- The dam wall will consist of an earth and rockfill embankment spanning 1240 m. The main spillway will be situated on the right abutment.
- Water yield will be approximately 66,011 ML per annum (high priority water).
- The Nathan Pipeline will be approximately 220 km in length, extending from Nathan Dam through the Dawson-Callide and Surat Coal Basin area to Warra.

PROJECT HOT TOPICS

Boggomoss Snail

The critically endangered Boggomoss Snail delayed the Nathan Dam and Pipelines Project due to an early survey conducted in 1997 finding that there were only two known sites at which the Boggomoss Snail existed in very small numbers - Mt Rose (the dam inundation site) and Isla Delusion (well downstream of dam site).

Later surveys have found the snail at 19 sites and speculated it would also live in other locations, confirming the population is well established outside of the Mt Rose inundation area.

Conditions have been set in State and Federal approvals to protect and manage the impacts on the snail, including the requirement for offsets and relocation of a population directly in the dam footprint.



The Boggomoss Snail (*Adclarkia dawsonensis*)

A Recovery Plan for the Boggomoss Snail (*Adclarkia dawsonensis*) was prepared by the Queensland government, and has recently been adopted under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) as the national recovery plan for this Critically Endangered species.

ABOUT SUNWATER

SunWater is the proponent for the Nathan Dam and Pipelines Project. For more than 80 years, SunWater has specialised in the investigation, design, construction, management and operation of water infrastructure.

SunWater is Queensland's largest bulk water service provider currently owning and managing water infrastructure assets with a replacement value of around \$13 billion and supplying 40 per cent of all water used commercially in Queensland.



Water for Agriculture

Based on considerable concern regarding the impacts of irrigated agriculture on the Great Barrier Reef, an EPBC Act approval of an earlier dam on this site was successfully challenged in the High Court. The EIS for the earlier proposed dam had not appropriately considered the consequential impacts of provision of water to irrigated agriculture. As a result and to avoid a similar outcome, the Nathan Dam and Pipelines Project EIS needed to be clear with respect to the amount of water provided to agriculture.

Condition 1 of the approval for the project granted under the EPBC Act states "the approval holder must ensure that no additional water is provided to agricultural users in the Dawson Valley Water Supply Scheme." While there is no specific new allocation to agriculture from the project, the dam will provide greater reliability of supply to existing downstream irrigators and graziers along the pipeline route may also seek stock and domestic supply from the pipeline as part of the easement agreement.

Should significant demand from agriculture be identified in the future, additional assessment and approvals would be considered. Such approvals would necessitate further studies that consider the consequential impacts on water quality and the Great Barrier Reef.

Project Benefits

When construction of the Nathan Dam and Pipelines Project commences, it will offer the following benefits:

- direct employment during design and construction (up to 525 people at peak)
- direct employment during operations
- indirect employment and economic flow on during construction
- training and procurement opportunities for local communities and businesses
- recreational facilities (the dam includes two major camping areas with boat ramps)
- water supplied from the project to support mines, landholders along the pipeline and downstream irrigators who benefit from increased supply reliability
- the local, regional, state and national economies as the project will inject approximately \$1.19 billion over the construction period.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact the project team via the following:

Phone: 1800 158 651

Email: nathandam@sunwater.com.au

Visit: www.sunwater.com.au

Write to: Nathan Dam and Pipelines Project Manager
Reply Paid 15536
City East Brisbane QLD 4002