

# Nathan Dam and Pipelines Project

PROJECT NEWSLETTER

## PROJECT NEWS

Since July 2007, SunWater has been undertaking detailed engineering, financial and environmental studies for the Nathan Dam and Pipelines Project. Part of SunWater's role has been to develop an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess the natural environment, cultural, social and economic impacts of the Project.

The EIS requires a thorough understanding of what environmental values are present within the project area in order to understand how they may be impacted. To do this, SunWater commissioned a series of baseline surveys across the dam and pipeline areas for terrestrial flora and fauna, aquatic flora and fauna and cultural heritage. These surveys are now complete and have produced some interesting findings particularly in relation to the identification of the Boggomoss Snail (*Adclarkia dawsonensis*).



*Nathan Dam and Pipeline survey investigations took into account any potential flora, fauna or cultural heritage impacts.*

## BOGGOMOSS SNAIL

SunWater engaged Dr John Stanistic, author of the Recovery Plan for the Boggomoss Snail, to undertake extensive field investigations to determine the snail's current status, in terms of location in the inner basin area and identify potential habitats for translocation. As a result of the surveys undertaken by Dr Stanistic, two new populations, each consisting of only a very small number of Boggomoss Snails, were discovered on boggomosses on Mt Rose Station. Previous estimates of the Mt Rose population of less than 100 individuals were also revised to greater than 350 individuals.

It was also found during the surveys that the long-term viability of the population was at risk because of predation and its limited distribution, even without the threat of the dam being constructed. A translocation trial was found to be a suitable option in order to determine whether the species could be relocated to an alternative habitat. Dr Stanistic found that the population size was sufficiently robust to withstand the movement of some individuals.

The work undertaken to date has culminated in the development of a proposal to conduct a translocation trial to assess the viability of permanently relocating the snails outside of the Nathan Dam inundation area. The trial itself is regarded as a controlled action under the *Environmental Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, requiring approval from the Department of Environment Water Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA). An application to undertake the translocation trial was lodged in May 2009 and this proposal is currently being assessed by DEWHA.



The critically endangered Boggomoss Snail  
(*Adclarkia dawsonensis*)

The translocation trial will involve the movement of individuals from the Mt Rose population to two sites considered to be suitable habitat and not to be directly affected by the proposed Nathan Dam inundation area. The purpose of these translocation trials is to determine whether the snail can be translocated successfully and if so, this would be proposed as a means to mitigate the impacts of the dam.

The translocation trial will take a minimum of three years, as it needs to demonstrate the snails can breed and produce viable young for two generations. This extended timeframe for the translocation trial has meant that the current EIS studies are now on hold until such time that the translocation trial appears to be successful.

### Implications for the Nathan Dam Project:

The translocation trial will extend the business case by a minimum of two years. Subsequently SunWater will focus its efforts in the short term on successfully completing the trial, with the intention of resuming the remaining technical studies when the translocation trial is underway and initial results have been obtained. SunWater currently anticipates that they will complete the feasibility studies, EIS and Business Case in mid 2012 and dam construction by 2015.

SunWater remains of the view that the Nathan Dam and Pipelines Project is the best long-term water supply solution for the Dawson-Callide sub-region.

## TOR FINALISED

The draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the project's EIS was released in September 2008 for public review and comment.

The Coordinator-General's office received 32 formal submissions in relation to the draft ToR, with the most common issues being:

- social and economic impacts;
- impacts on the riverine environment;
- downstream water use;
- availability of water for local consumption;
- inter-basin water transfers; and
- co-location of infrastructure with other projects.

After the Coordinator-General's office reviewed the issues raised in the submissions, some adjustments were made before the Final ToR were issued to SunWater on 13 February 2009.

You can download the ToR for the Nathan Dam and Pipelines Project EIS from the Queensland Government's website at [www.dip.qld.gov.au/projects/water/nathan-dam-and-pipelines.html](http://www.dip.qld.gov.au/projects/water/nathan-dam-and-pipelines.html)

## ENGINEERING DESIGN

SunWater has undertaken a significant amount of preliminary design activity over the past 12 months. The design has been informed by the geotechnical investigation program that SunWater has undertaken at the dam site, which has assessed the foundations of the dam and the influence of the groundwater aquifer over the construction and operation phases of the project. The geotechnical activities have extended to nearby areas in order to locate suitable sources of rock and sand for the dam's construction.

SunWater is continuing to examine the viability of various dam designs that will suit the geological and water flow conditions of the site. A number of options are being developed including various heights, capacities, and construction types (e.g. rockfill, concrete, etc). The final design will be determined as the technical studies are completed following positive results from the snail translocation trial.

## CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

### COMMUNITY LIAISON GROUP

As part of the project's public consultation program, a Community Liaison Group (CLG) was formed in September 2008. The CLG provided a forum for local interest group representatives to identify and discuss issues associated with the EIS.

The CLG comprised of 12 representatives from key stakeholder and interest groups in the local area including landowner, business, environment, community and local government representatives.

Members of the CLG were taken on a tour of the proposed dam wall location and inspected one of the many boggomoss sites. This trip proved valuable by providing members with a greater understanding of some of the project impact areas and the range of issues to be addressed as part of the EIS process.

While CLG meetings are closed to the general public, you can download the minutes from the meetings by going to [www.sunwater.com.au](http://www.sunwater.com.au) and following the link to Nathan Dam.

## CULTURAL HERITAGE

SunWater has been working with traditional owners to survey the Nathan Dam impoundment area and pipeline route in order to assess the level of impact from the project on indigenous cultural heritage. The vast majority of the area and part of the pipeline route have now been surveyed, providing the basis for the development of Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) with the traditional owners. CHMP discussions will commence along with the remaining technical studies following positive results of the snail translocation trial.

## THANK YOU

SunWater wishes to thank all of those people who have participated in consultation activities so far. The input from the community to the EIS process has been invaluable.

SunWater looks forward to working with the community over the coming years as the Boggomoss Snail translocation trial progresses and depending on success of the trial, the project recommences.



*Extensive geotechnical drilling was carried out by SunWater as part of the project investigation.*

## MORE INFORMATION

If you would like more information about the Nathan Dam and Pipelines Project you can contact the project team by:

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