

Burdekin Falls Dam Raising Project

Fact sheet: Environmental Impact Statement process

Updated December 2022

The Burdekin Falls Dam Raising Project is a proposal to raise the existing dam to increase water supply and security in the Burdekin and surrounding regions.

Due to the nature and complexity of potential impacts, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is required and will provide the basis for statutory approvals for the project. The EIS will describe and assess:

- the current environment around the dam
- potential environmental, economic and social impacts and benefits of the project
- how potential impacts can be avoided, minimised, mitigated and/or offset.

Potential impacts include direct, indirect and cumulative impacts resulting from the construction, commissioning and ongoing operation of the dam.

Declaration of a 'coordinated project' and Terms of Reference

The Queensland Coordinator-General (CG) declared the Burdekin Falls Dam Raising Project a 'coordinated project' in July 2020 under Part 4 of the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 (SDPWO Act). A 'coordinated project' signifies that a rigorous impact assessment involving whole-of-government coordination is required. In April 2021, the CG issued the final EIS Terms of Reference (ToR) to Sunwater and we subsequently commenced work to prepare a draft EIS addressing the ToR requirements. Further information on the ToR is available on the [CG's website](#).

Declaration of a 'controlled action' under Commonwealth legislation

To conserve and protect Matters of National Environmental Significance, an action that will have, or is likely to have, a significant impact on those matters must be referred to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Water for assessment.

Sunwater's referral notice and supporting documents under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) are available on the Australian Government's [website](#) (reference number 2020/8705). The Burdekin Falls Dam Raising Project has been declared a 'controlled action' meaning it will require approval under the EPBC Act. This will be assessed under bilateral agreement with the Queensland Government through the EIS process.

EIS public notification period

State Government advisory agencies and the public will have the opportunity to review and make submissions on the draft EIS in relation to the assessment of impacts and commitments. The CG will then consider these submissions and may request additional information from Sunwater (a supplementary report).

At the end of the impact assessment process, the CG will release an evaluation report either approving with or without conditions) or refusing the project. The CG’s evaluation report will be provided to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Water who may rely on the outcomes of the CG’s assessment process, including any public submissions, in making a decision under the *EPBC Act*. The length of the public notification period is not prescribed but it typically runs for at least 30 business days. As the project is a 'controlled action' under the *EPBC Act*, the public notification period must be at least 28 calendar days. Further information is available on the [CG’s website](#).

The process



* Queensland Coordinator-General