

Media release

5 June 2021

EnergyAustralia excited about pumped hydro possibility near Mt Piper

EnergyAustralia has today announced its Lake Lyell dam, which supplies water to Mt Piper power station in Lithgow, New South Wales, could be home to a new pumped hydro energy storage facility.

Energy Executive, Liz Westcott, said early estimates suggest a Lake Lyell pumped hydro energy storage facility would be capable of producing 350 megawatts of electricity with around eight hours of storage, enough to power over 150,000¹ households during peak demand.

"Initial studies show that a Lake Lyell pumped hydro energy storage facility has enormous potential to become a major piece of infrastructure for New South Wales in a transitioning energy system," Ms Westcott said.

"Pumped hydro will continue to play an important role in providing reliable, affordable and cleaner power for homes and businesses into the future. One of the benefits of Lake Lyell is that it's already located near major transmission lines," she said.

"It's a low-emission technology that can store large volumes of electricity for quick release, helping to provide cover at times when renewables aren't available and fill a large gap that will be left by the retirement of coal power plants. The ability to operate in seconds will ensure the lights stay on and energy costs are kept down for customers."

Lake Lyell would be used as a lower reservoir, and the upper reservoir would be located on the south side of Mt Walker, all on land owned by EnergyAustralia.

Head of Mt Piper, Greg McIntyre, said the facility would provide a welcome economic boost for the region and support Lithgow in becoming a future renewable energy hub.

"A new pumped hydro facility at Lake Lyell would ensure Lithgow's legacy in energy generation is preserved well into the future," Mr McIntyre said.

"If the project goes ahead, we anticipate hundreds of jobs would be created during construction, with roles also needed to oversee the facility's ongoing operation," he said.

"Detailed assessments will follow, including environmental impacts and planning approvals, before any firm decisions can be made; however, the first step is consulting with our community."

EnergyAustralia has a goal of being carbon neutral by 2050. Recent announcements include underpinning the 250-megawatt Kidston pumped hydro facility in Queensland, the commitment to a 350-megawatt battery in Victoria, and the 300+ megawatt Tallawarra B power station in New South Wales, which will be Australia's first net zero emissions hydrogen and gas capable power plant.

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¹ Based on a POE10 demand of 1.97kW for EnergyAustralia's portfolio of NSW residential customers at 350MW of generation.