



Community Guide to the Environmental Impact Statement

October 2026



Northern Water acknowledges and respects the First Peoples of this land and their deep ongoing spiritual and cultural connection to Country. We will work together with First Nations peoples to share our collective knowledge and recognise the enduring impact of infrastructure on Country.

We acknowledge the Project is on the traditional lands of the Bargarla and Kokatha peoples and recognise their continuing connection to land and waters. We pay our respects to the diversity of cultures, significance of contributions and to Elders past, present and emerging.

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About this Community Guide

The Northern Water Project Community Guide to the Environmental Impact Statement (the Guide) has been prepared to help community members and stakeholders understand and navigate the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). It provides a plain-language overview of the Project, the matters assessed in the EIS and the key findings of the assessment. The Guide focuses on the issues identified by the community as most important during pre-EIS engagement and is intended to support informed participation in the public exhibition process.

This guide is not the EIS and should be read alongside the full EIS documentation if you are considering providing a submission.

The full EIS contains the detailed assessment of the Project and numerous technical reports, investigations and appendices that provide the evidence base for the EIS conclusions. The information presented in this guide is drawn directly from the EIS and provides a plain-language overview of the key findings and conclusions of the assessment. It does not contain all findings.

During the public exhibition period, community members and stakeholders are encouraged to review the full EIS and supporting information to better understand the Project and provide informed feedback on the assessment.

Hard copies of the full EIS are available for viewing during the public exhibition period at:

- Department for Housing and Urban Development – Level 9, 83 Pirie Street, Adelaide
- Whyalla City Council – 21 Grindel Street, Whyalla Norrie
- Whyalla City Council Library – 19 Ekblom Street, Whyalla Norrie
- Port Augusta Civic Centre – 4 Mackay Street, Port Augusta
- Port Augusta Public Library – 4 Mackay Street, Port Augusta
- Roxby Council – 6 Richardson Place, Roxby Downs

The EIS, supporting documents, detail on how to provide a submission and where to find more information can be found online at: yoursay.sa.gov.au/northern-water-project-EIS

For further information on the planning process or questions relating to providing feedback on the EIS, contact the Department for Housing and Urban Development on:

📞 **Phone:** 1800 752 664

✉️ **Email:** DHUD.CrownImpactAssessment@sa.gov.au

Anyone can make a public submission during the exhibition period from
Thursday, 29 October to Friday, 11 December 2026

The Northern Water Project team is available to assist people who require support accessing information, would like to discuss the Project and environmental assessment process, or have questions about providing feedback on the EIS.

📞 1300 893 196

✉️ northernwater@sa.gov.au

About Northern Water

South Australia's Upper Spencer Gulf and Far North are home to strategic mineral resources, including around 70% of Australia's known copper resources. This positions the region as a key driver of future industries and global decarbonisation. Realising this economic opportunity depends on provision of a secure, climate-resilient alternative water source.

The Northern Water Project is a major investment in South Australia's future, providing water needed to support industry growth, unlock regional opportunities and strengthen the State's economic prosperity. It aims to deliver a climate resilient alternative water source through a proposed desalination plant at Mullaquana Station in the Upper Spencer Gulf and a transfer pipeline connecting to the Far North of South Australia.

While the Project itself will employ a peak workforce of around 1,500 people during construction, its greatest economic contribution is expected to come from the jobs, investment and industrial growth it enables across Whyalla, the Upper Spencer Gulf and the Far North over coming decades. It is also expected to reduce reliance on existing environmental water sources.

Key benefits expected include:



Unlocking mineral resources in the Gawler Craton through reliable access to Project water, and the resulting increased investment and expanded mining sector activity, is expected to create employment and economic growth for the region and State.



Between 2026 and 2062, Gross Regional Product (GRP) in Northern South Australia could be approximately \$3 billion larger on average, and Gross State Product (GSP) \$3.3 billion larger on average.



In average annual terms, between 2026 and 2062, an additional 2,000 full time equivalent positions (FTEs) are expected to be employed across South Australia, with 1,600 in Northern South Australia.



Providing an alternative, climate resilient water supply for industry may create opportunities for future reductions in reliance by industry on existing water sources. This may also create an opportunity to support the long-term protection of culturally significant water sources such as GAB mound springs.



Improved liveability for communities in the Whyalla and Northern South Australia regions associated with increased economic growth.

What is proposed

The Northern Water Project proposes the construction of a desalination plant in the Upper Spencer Gulf and a transfer pipeline connecting to the Far North of South Australia. It will provide a secure, climate-resilient water source to support future mining and industrial development.

Marine infrastructure

The Project includes the construction of:

- a desalination plant located at Mullaquana Station, approximately 25 km south of central Whyalla, with a production capacity of up to 51 gigalitres of water each year at full operational capacity*
- intake and outfall pipeline tunnelled beneath the seabed, avoiding the sensitive coastal environment, to draw and return water to the Upper Spencer Gulf
- seawater intake structures located on the sea floor in deep water, away from seagrasses and other sensitive habitats
- return water diffuser structures installed in deep water, to support effective dispersion of return water into the Upper Spencer Gulf.

Proposed location of desalination plant and marine infrastructure



* 51 gigalitres is approximately half the capacity of the Adelaide Desalination Plant at Lonsdale, South Australia.

Water delivery infrastructure

The Project includes the construction of:

- around 360 km of pipeline, mostly constructed underground, from the desalination plant to the Olympic Dam mine
- around 46 km of additional pipeline, branching off from the main pipeline to the Carrapateena mine
- associated pump stations and water storage facilities along the pipeline route
- new electricity supply including new transmission lines and substations to provide power to the desalination plant and pump stations
- temporary construction-related infrastructure that may include construction camps, site offices and amenities, yards, storages and laydown areas
- access tracks, including upgrading existing tracks and establishing new tracks
- road improvements and upgrades to support construction and operation of the Project.



Selecting the preferred site and corridor

The Project footprint and site selection was informed through technical investigations and key stakeholder feedback, and a preference for utilising existing infrastructure corridors and previously disturbed areas.

Desalination plant location

A comprehensive desalination plant site selection process was undertaken to evaluate and compare location options. This process included input from key stakeholders, findings from environmental and technical investigations, economic and cost-comparisons and a data driven multi criteria analysis (MCA).

Mullaquana Station was selected as the site location for the following reasons:



Meets Project strategic objectives

Locating the desalination plant at Mullaquana Station enables the supply of water closer to demand in the Upper Spencer Gulf and Far North.



Performs best in relation to construction and operation costs

The desalination plant and transfer pipeline will be more cost effective to build and operate due to the plant's proximity to available workforce, local industry and existing transport infrastructure (newly redeveloped airport, rail and port facilities) and the pipeline's proximity to water demand.



Unlocks economic growth and proximity to local workers, businesses and services

Mullaquana Station is closer to potential water users, industry, workforce and infrastructure, aligning favourably with the State's aspirations to grow the economy of the Upper Spencer Gulf and Far North.



Performs best in relation to reduced greenhouse gas emissions

Locating the desalination plant at Mullaquana Station will mean lower greenhouse gas emissions and reduced operational energy consumption.



Has lower construction complexity and risk

On and offshore geotechnical investigations found that the ground conditions at Mullaquana Station are predominantly clay, making it favourable to construct the desalination plant and establish underground pipelines / tunnels.

Pipeline corridor

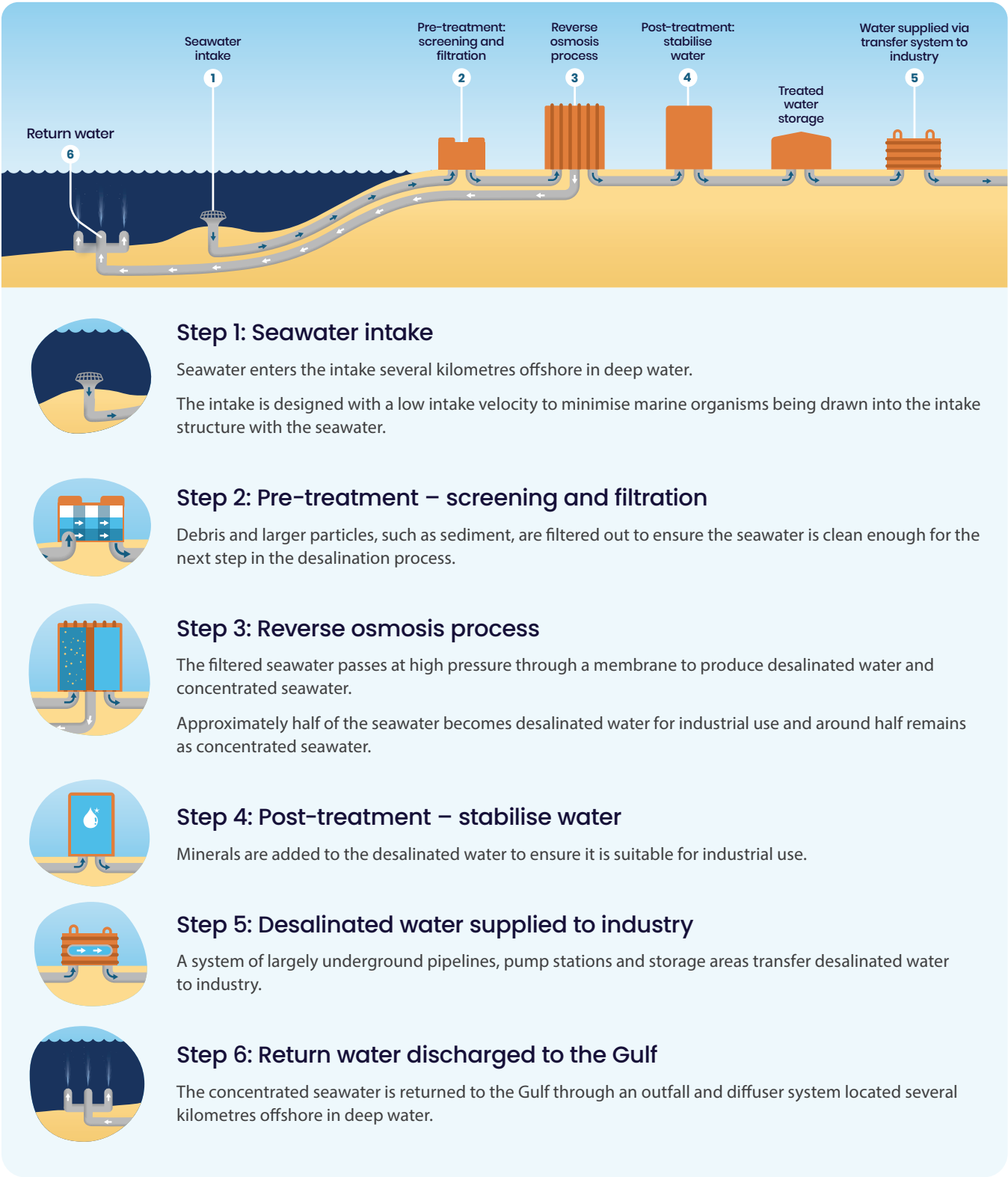
Development of the proposed transfer pipeline corridor involved extensive engagement with Traditional Owners, landholders and government agencies, together with environmental, cultural heritage, engineering and technical investigations. The alignment was progressively refined to balance hydraulic and engineering requirements with the avoidance and minimisation of environmental, cultural heritage and land use impacts. Where possible, the corridor follows existing infrastructure corridors and previously disturbed areas.



How desalination works

The Northern Water Project proposes to use proven seawater reverse osmosis desalination technology to produce a reliable source of water from seawater. Reverse osmosis is the most widely used desalination technology in Australia and around the world to provide climate resilient water supplies.

The key steps in the desalination process for Northern Water include:



About the Environmental Impact Statement

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a detailed assessment of the potential environmental, social and economic impacts of the Northern Water Project. It examines how the Project could affect the environment, communities, businesses and cultural heritage values, and identifies measures to avoid, reduce and manage impacts. The Northern Water Project is currently at the public exhibition stage of the assessment process.

In December 2025, the South Australian Minister for Planning directed that an EIS be prepared for the Project under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*, due to its scale, complexity and potential environmental, social and economic impacts. The Project was also determined to be a Controlled Action under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* due to the potential for impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance.

An EIS is the most comprehensive form of impact assessment available under South Australian planning legislation. The Northern Water Project EIS has therefore been prepared to address both State and Commonwealth assessment requirements through a single assessment process.

The EIS brings together detailed technical investigations undertaken by specialists across a broad range of disciplines and provides a single assessment document for consideration by government agencies, stakeholders and the community.

The purpose of the EIS is to:

- describe the Project and its components
- identify potential environmental, social and economic impacts
- assess the significance of those impacts
- identify measures to avoid, minimise and manage impacts
- outline monitoring and management commitments
- support informed decision-making by assessment authorities.

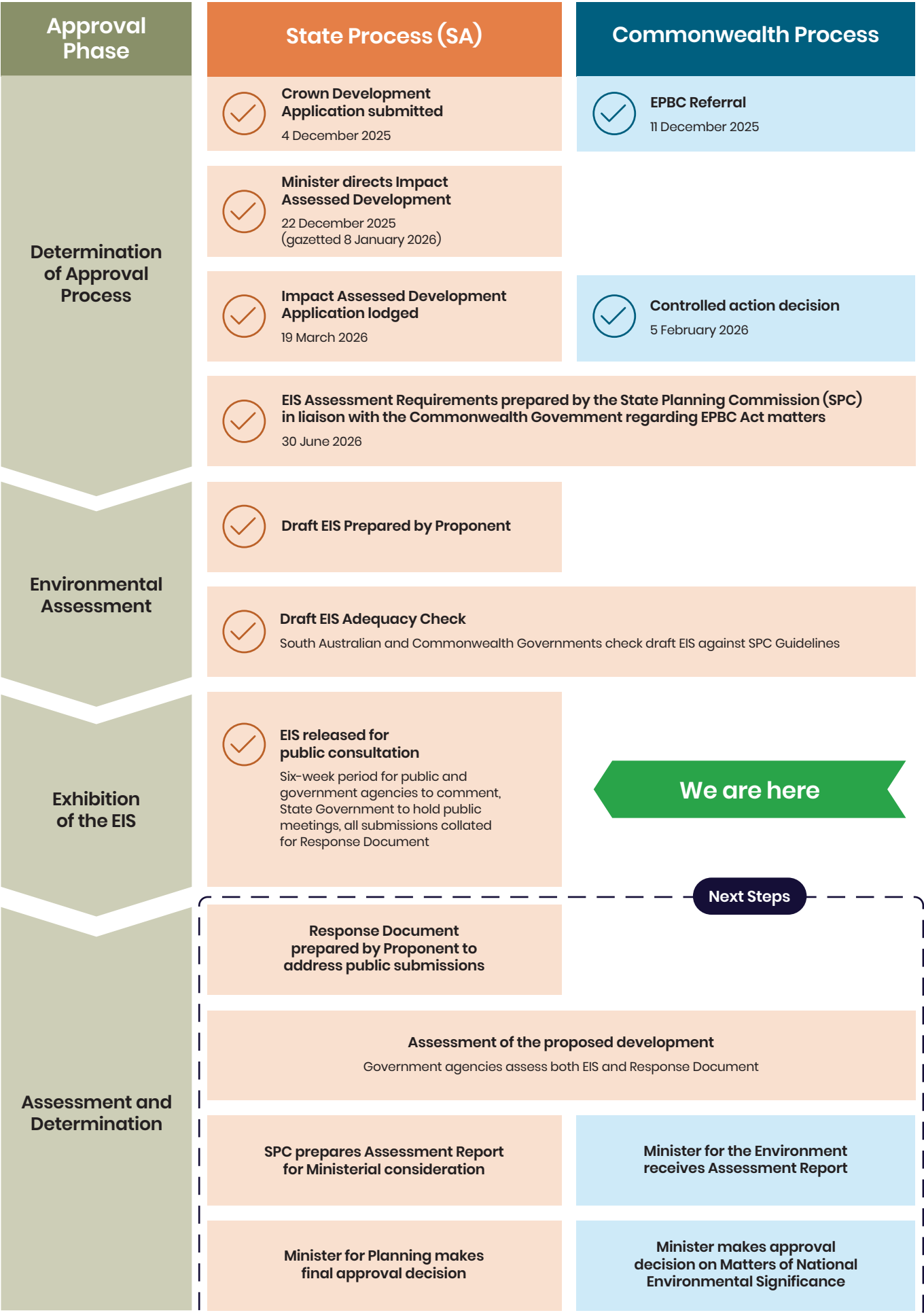
The EIS has been informed by extensive environmental investigations, field surveys, cultural heritage studies, technical assessments and stakeholder engagement undertaken over several years.

The assessment process

The assessment process allows the EIS, government agency advice and community feedback to be considered before decisions are made on the Project. Public exhibition is an important part of this process, providing an opportunity for community members, stakeholders and government agencies to review the EIS and make submissions.

Following exhibition, a Response Document will be prepared that outlines the feedback received, addresses issues raised during consultation and identifies any changes made in response to the assessment process. The Response Document, together with the EIS, submissions and agency comments, will inform the preparation of an Assessment Report for the Minister for Planning.

The Assessment Report will inform decision-making on whether the Project may proceed and any conditions that may apply to its approval.



What the EIS assessed

The EIS considered a broad range of environmental, social and economic matters associated with the Project.

The EIS draws together the findings of numerous technical studies and specialist reports covering the marine environment, terrestrial environment, cultural heritage, social impacts, economics and engineering.

The assessment examined potential impacts during both construction and operation and identified measures to avoid, minimise and manage impacts wherever practicable.

Assessment area	Matters assessed
Coastal and marine environment	Coastal and marine habitats, marine fauna, marine flora, water quality, hydrodynamics and marine ecological processes
Terrestrial environment	Native vegetation, fauna, biodiversity values and ecological communities
Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage	Cultural heritage places, values and cultural landscapes
Traffic and transport	Construction traffic, road network performance, access and safety, and how this will change through operation
Noise and vibration	Construction and operational noise and vibration impacts
Air quality	Dust generation, emissions and air quality management
Landscape and visual amenity	Potential changes to views, landscape character and visual setting
Social and economic environment	Community, workforce, accommodation and economic impacts during construction and operation
Climate and sustainability	Climate resilience, sustainability, and long-term environmental performance

Further details about these assessment areas are available in the following sections of this guide, under the following headings:

- Coastal and marine environment
- Terrestrial environment
- Aboriginal and cultural heritage
- Climate and sustainability
- Community amenity and social impact

Community and stakeholder engagement

Engagement has been an important part of the Northern Water Project since investigations commenced.

Northern Water has engaged with:

- Traditional Owners
- land and leaseholders
- community members
- local residents
- businesses
- industry representatives
- commercial and recreational fishing groups
- environmental organisations
- local government
- State and Commonwealth government agencies.

Stakeholder feedback has helped inform:

- site investigations
- environmental studies
- project planning
- design development
- impact assessment
- mitigation and management measures.

Throughout the engagement process, stakeholder feedback centred on the following key themes:



Marine and coastal environment protection,
including potential impacts associated with intake and outfall infrastructure, salinity and dilution, water extraction, flushing rates, marine migration pathways, aquaculture interactions and cumulative impacts within the Upper Spencer Gulf.



Economic benefits, local employment and business participation,
particularly during the construction phase of the Project. There was also significant support from industry towards the Project’s ability to generate long term economic prosperity for the region through increased industry investment.



Terrestrial environment protection,
including potential impacts on flora, fauna, groundwater, soils, landscape values, transport routes and construction-related impacts.

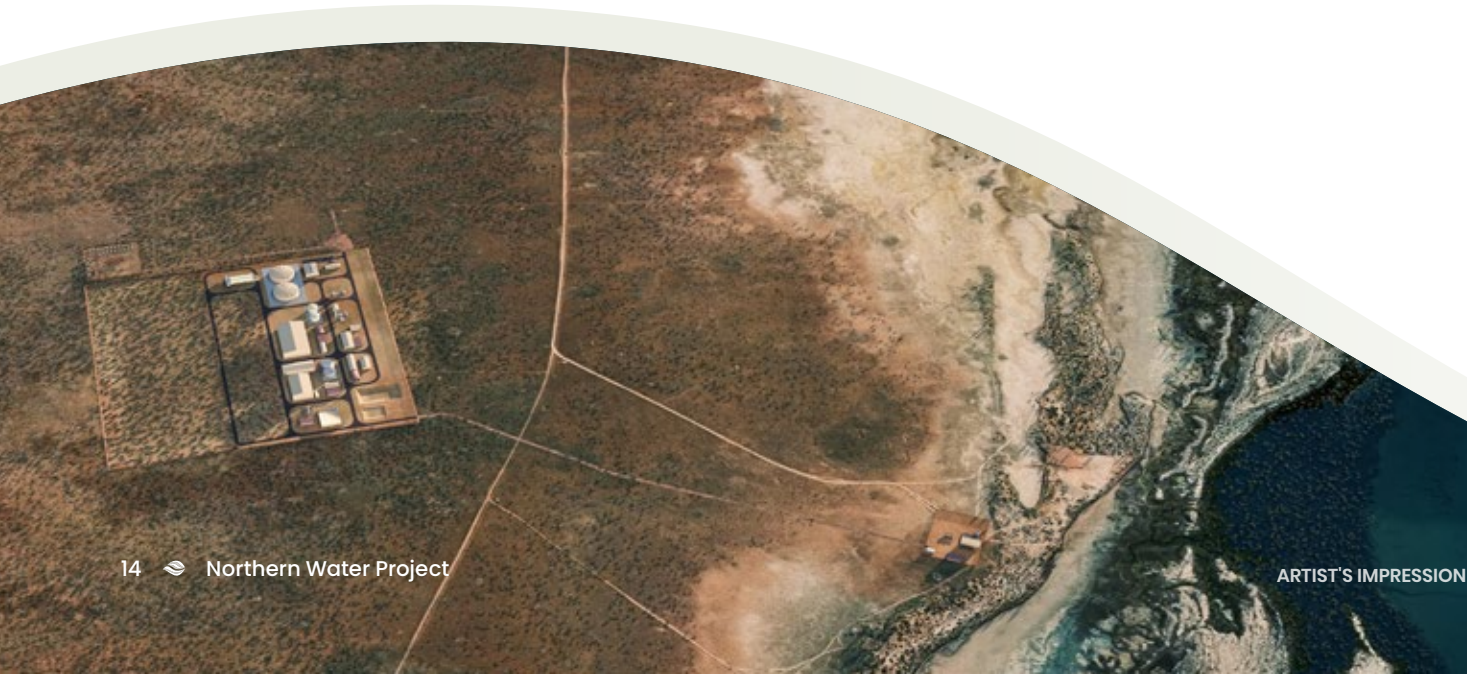


Aboriginal cultural heritage and Aboriginal participation,
including protection of cultural heritage values, ongoing consultation processes and opportunities for Aboriginal employment, procurement and participation.



Social and amenity impacts,
including community benefits, construction traffic, workforce accommodation pressures, amenity impacts and broader cumulative pressures associated with regional industrial development.

Northern Water remains committed to ongoing engagement throughout the environmental assessment process and, subject to approvals, the future detailed design, construction and operation of the desalination plant and transfer system pipeline.



Coastal and marine environment

In depth marine investigations and assessment have informed the design to minimise impacts. The environmental values of the Upper Spencer Gulf and marine environment have been a critical consideration in the Project's design and central to the Environmental Impact Statement.

What was assessed

The EIS includes extensive investigations of the Upper Spencer Gulf marine environment and how it could be affected by construction and operation of the desalination plant. This includes an assessment of:

- marine water quality and hydrodynamic processes such as tides, currents and water movement
- the performance of the intake, outfall and diffuser system
- marine plants and habitats, including mangroves, intertidal flats and seagrass beds
- marine animals, including the Giant Australian Cuttlefish, marine mammals, fish and other marine species
- commercial and recreational fisheries and aquaculture
- the potential for cumulative impacts on the marine environment.

Detailed baseline studies, investigations and modelling informed both the Project design and the environmental impact assessment. This included modelling of the unique tides, currents, seasonal patterns and water movements within Upper Spencer Gulf and assessment of how the diffuser system would perform.

Independent peer review

The marine ecology assessments, hydrodynamic modelling and outfall diffuser design were independently peer reviewed by experts from Adelaide University, CSIRO and University of New South Wales.

Independent peer reviews provide an additional level of assessment by experts who were not involved in preparing the studies and EIS. The reviewers assessed the methods, assumptions and conclusions used in the investigations and provided recommendations where appropriate. Comments and observations from the peer reviewers were considered and addressed in the final technical reports and EIS.

Key EIS findings

The assessment found that:

Coastal and marine impacts have been minimised through project design and construction method. Primarily, this is tunnelling of the intake and outfall pipelines under the seabed to beyond 3 km from shore, with the intake and outfall structures located on the seabed in deep water. No disturbance of the intertidal areas, coastal dunes, mangroves or Posidonia seagrass meadows is required.

Construction of the offshore intake and outfall structures may cause some temporary disturbance to the seabed and occasional underwater noise. These impacts will be limited to the construction area in deep water and are not expected to result in significant impacts to marine plants, animals or coastal conditions.

Modelling predicts that the desalination plant intake is expected to have a very small effect on larvae populations in the Upper Spencer Gulf. Even under conservative worst-case modelling scenarios, the proportion of larvae in Upper Spencer Gulf predicted to enter the desalination plant intake is likely to be very low.

Modelling predicts that return water will disperse rapidly and remain within the relevant environmental performance criteria. Any changes to marine water quality are expected to be highly localised to the immediate vicinity of the diffuser, with negligible impacts beyond that area.

Modelling also predicts that salinity beyond the immediate vicinity of the diffusers would remain within the range of seasonal variability in the Upper Spencer Gulf.

A marine exclusion zone will be required to protect desalination plant marine infrastructure located on the seabed and the safety of marine waters. Within the context of the Spencer Gulf, the exclusion zone is expected to have a negligible impact on the area available for marine activities, including commercial fishing. Northern Water will continue to consult with commercial and recreational fisheries regarding exclusion zones.

The Giant Australian Cuttlefish

The Giant Australian Cuttlefish is an iconic species of the Upper Spencer Gulf and has been the subject of significant recent community and scientific interest following reports of a reduced 2026 breeding aggregation. The species was a specific focus of investigations undertaken as part of the EIS.

The Giant Australian Cuttlefish Sanctuary Zone, which has supported the well-known breeding aggregation, is located approximately 34 km north-east of the proposed desalination plant site and well beyond the area where Project-related ecological effects are predicted to occur.

A Giant Australian Cuttlefish assessment was completed as part of the EIS and included 12 months of marine ecology surveys. No Giant Australian Cuttlefish were recorded within the Project Area during surveys, although individual animals may occasionally occur in the area while foraging or resting.

The assessment concluded that construction and operation of the desalination plant are not expected to materially affect the Giant Australian Cuttlefish population or the Giant Australian Cuttlefish Sanctuary Zone National Heritage Place. Modelling indicates salinity changes would remain highly localised around the diffuser and are not expected to affect cuttlefish movement, behaviour, breeding or spawning areas.

Harmful Algal Bloom

The EIS considered the recent Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) event that affected parts of South Australia's marine environment and resulted in impacts on marine ecosystems and species.

The HAB event occurred during the Project assessment process and informed investigations undertaken as part of the EIS. Baseline marine studies included data collected before, during and after the HAB event, providing an understanding of existing marine conditions and environmental variability within the Upper Spencer Gulf.

The Project design includes provisions to maintain reliable plant operation during periods of degraded source water quality, including treatment processes capable of managing elevated organic matter and suspended solids associated with algal bloom events. These measures are intended to support continued plant performance and operational resilience should future HAB events occur.



Where to find more information in the EIS

- 🔖 Chapter 9 – Use of Land and Marine Waters
- 🔖 Chapter 10 – Coastal Processes
- 🔖 Chapter 11 – Marine Environment
- 📄 Appendix F – Coastal Process Assessment
- 📄 Appendix G – Marine Environment (includes independent peer reviews)

Terrestrial ecology

Where possible, the Project has been designed to avoid or minimise disturbance to vegetation, habitats, protected biodiversity values and threatened plant and animal species.

What was assessed

Terrestrial assessments were undertaken to examine landforms, soils, surface and ground water, vegetation, threatened or vulnerable plants, and animal species and their habitats.

Extensive desktop and field investigations were carried out over several years and seasons and have included:

- ecological assessments
- soils analysis
- topographical surveys
- geological investigations
- hydrology mapping
- vegetation mapping
- threatened species surveys
- habitat surveys.

Vegetation mapping and habitat surveys focused on species that are threatened and listed in the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*, including Plains Mouse, Western Grasswren and migratory birds.

The Project also interfaces with Aboriginal heritage and areas of cultural significance. We will continue to work with the Traditional Owners on the Project in identifying these areas and how best to manage potential impacts, for example through design and construction constraints.

The location of the desalination site, transfer pipeline corridor and associated infrastructure, such as pumping stations, storage tanks and transmission lines, have been influenced by the studies, engagement with Traditional Owners and wider engagement. Other design considerations include using existing infrastructure corridors and previously disturbed areas to minimise and avoid sensitive areas where possible. The proposed alignment will be subject to ongoing refinement as the design phase progresses.

The EIS assessed the following potential impacts:

- Disturbance of key terrestrial flora and fauna values, vegetation communities, fauna habitats and threatened species due to construction and operation of the desalination plant, transfer pipeline and associated infrastructure.
- Biosecurity risks from potential increase of pest fauna species through inappropriate waste management, temporary increase in surface water and the creation of access tracks and installation of linear infrastructure.
- Potential for soil erosion via wind or runoff due to the disturbance of soil and vegetation from construction.
- Impacts to watercourses and groundwater due to construction of the transfer pipe and the desalination intake and outfall tunnels.

Key EIS findings

The assessment found that:

Terrestrial environmental impacts have been minimised through a project design that avoids or minimises vegetation clearance, threatened species and protected conservation areas, where possible.

The majority of vegetation disturbance associated with the pipeline corridor is temporary and natural regeneration will be encouraged, with offsets provided where required.

The Project is not expected to have a significant impact on EPBC listed species besides Western Grasswren (listed as Vulnerable). Where possible the Project has avoided locations where there is high quality habitat. Any significant impacts can be compensated by implementation of offsets.

There are no significant or long-term impacts to State-listed flora and fauna, and the Project will not significantly increase habitat fragmentation.

Construction impacts on flora and fauna from light and noise are expected to be short-term and localised.

Measures will be implemented during construction and operation to minimise the risk of introducing or spreading weeds, pests and plant diseases.

The EIS concludes that terrestrial impacts can be managed through implementation of the proposed environmental management measures and rehabilitation programs. Construction and operational management plans will ensure the risks to terrestrial ecology are monitored and managed.

The Project will continue to work with government agencies, Traditional Owners, communities and other stakeholders as planning progresses and will provide information regarding construction activities and environmental management measures.

Vegetation offsets

Where impacts to native vegetation and habitat cannot be avoided, vegetation offsets will be implemented to compensate for residual impacts. Offset opportunities are continuing to be explored in consultation with relevant stakeholders and may involve partnerships with third-party providers and landholders.



Where to find more information in the EIS

- 🔖 Chapter 12 – Soils, Landform and Geology
- 🔖 Chapter 13 – Surface Water
- 🔖 Chapter 14 – Groundwater
- 🔖 Chapter 15 – Terrestrial Flora and Fauna
- 📄 Appendix I – Terrestrial Ecology

Aboriginal cultural heritage

The Project aims to protect and minimise impacts on areas identified as having cultural heritage significance in collaboration with the Traditional Owners, Kokatha and Barngarla. Aboriginal cultural heritage surveys, undertaken in collaboration with the relevant Traditional Owners, are integral to informing the Project's design, construction methods and location of infrastructure.

What was assessed

The key stakeholders for Aboriginal cultural heritage are the Traditional Owners and Native Title holders across the Project area. Both the Kokatha People and the Barngarla People have had areas of Native Title determined by the Federal Court and are the primary Traditional Owners for consultation on the Project.

Cultural heritage specialists have undertaken cultural heritage surveys in partnership with Barngarla and Kokatha Traditional Owners across their respective determination areas, including the land parcels associated with the desalination plant, marine works, transfer pipeline system and ancillary infrastructure. The survey outcomes are informing the development of an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Agreement and Management Plan to capture all requirements and protocols relating to the protection of cultural heritage.

The cultural heritage surveys will also inform the development of detailed Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) for the construction and operational phases of the Project. The CHMPs will set out heritage identification, protection and management processes and protocols to be applied over the life of the infrastructure.

Authorisation under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* will also be sought to provide a clear process for managing any unexpected heritage discoveries during construction.

Key EIS findings

The assessment found that:

No known Aboriginal cultural heritage sites are expected to be impacted by the Project. This is the result of careful site and route selection through ongoing engagement with Traditional Owners and detailed heritage surveys.

Measures will be in place to protect cultural heritage during construction and operation. These measures will ensure any unexpected Aboriginal heritage discoveries are managed appropriately and in accordance with legal requirements.

Ongoing activities will be limited to areas that have already been assessed or disturbed, with agreed heritage protection measures in place.

A formal heritage management framework will be established. Cultural Heritage Management Plans will be developed in consultation with Barngarla and Kokatha Traditional Owner representatives to guide project activities during construction, operation and maintenance.

Traditional Owners will continue to play an important role throughout the Project.

Where to find more information in the EIS

📖 Chapter 16 – Aboriginal Heritage



Climate and sustainability

Climate resilience and sustainability considerations have been incorporated into Project planning, design and environmental assessment.

What was assessed

Northern Water has undertaken investigations to understand future climate conditions and their potential implications for Project infrastructure and operations.

These considerations have informed engineering design, environmental management and long-term operational planning.

Northern Water will continue to refine climate resilience measures during detailed design and implement monitoring and management programs throughout the life of the Project.

Key EIS findings

The assessment found that:

The primary climate variables with potential to impact the Project are:

- increased ambient temperatures
- increased frequency and intensity of heatwaves
- increased rainfall intensity and surface water flooding
- changing marine conditions.

Climate adaptation design and system controls have been planned and incorporated into the Project.

No residual extreme or high risks for the Project are expected from projected climate change impacts.

Residual risks from climate change to the Project have been assessed as low to medium and acceptable.

During detailed design, further consideration will be given to changing climate conditions relevant to Project infrastructure components and evaluation of the appropriateness of design and engineering changes.

Where to find more information in the EIS

📖 Chapter 24 – Climate Change and Sustainability



Community amenity and social impact

Through innovative design and the application of best-practice construction management, the Project's impacts will be minimised while contributing to significant economic benefits for the regional communities in the Upper Spencer Gulf and Far North, and to South Australia.

What was assessed

The scale of the Project's footprint means that impacts to community amenity (e.g. noise, vibration, air quality and traffic) are likely to be experienced across a broad area. However, due to the Project's remote setting, there are relatively few sensitive receptors* that may experience direct impacts.

Social impact addresses the potential impacts of the Project on the existing lifestyles and amenity of local communities, landholders and individuals. There is a clear interrelationship between economic impacts and benefits, and community and social wellbeing.

The EIS considered potential community amenity and social impacts to nearby communities, landholders and road users during construction of the:

- desalination plant
- transfer pipeline
- power infrastructure
- supporting facilities including site offices, temporary accommodation camps.

Assessments examined:

- traffic and transport
- workforce accommodation (including temporary camps)
- noise and vibration
- dust and air quality
- visual amenity
- land access
- broader community wellbeing
- benefits to regional, state and national economies.

Key EIS findings

The assessment found that:

The Project has the potential to support economic growth across the Upper Spencer Gulf and Far North region. During construction the Project will support a peak workforce of approximately 1,500 people and an operational workforce of approximately 45 people.

Short-term impacts on housing are expected to be limited. Most non-local construction workers will be accommodated in temporary workforce accommodation or existing short-stay accommodation, reducing pressure on local housing availability. Construction workforce impacts will be minimised by early and ongoing community engagement.

Community amenity impacts will generally be temporary, localised and largely confined to active work areas. Construction of the desalination plant will be confined to land near Mullaquana Station. Construction of the transfer pipeline will occur progressively along the alignment.

Traffic, including heavy vehicles and occasional oversized loads, will increase during construction but can be managed through traffic management plans, road authority coordination and construction scheduling.

Temporary construction noise, lighting, vibration, dust and air quality impacts can be reduced through established construction methodology, controls and management plans. Operational noise and vibration impacts are expected to be minimised through design and will need to be maintained within licence requirements.

Temporary visual impacts associated with construction compounds, equipment lighting, camps and laydown areas will reduce following completion of works and rehabilitation. Most permanent infrastructure is expected to have a minor impact overall on landscape character and visual amenity for onshore and offshore sensitive receptor locations.

Temporary access to land and construction corridors will be required for pipeline installation and supporting infrastructure, with property-specific management measures developed in consultation with affected landholders. Easements and land management plans will be implemented to manage the ongoing operational requirements of the Project.



Where to find more information in the EIS

- ▢ Chapter 18 – Air Quality
- ▢ Chapter 19 – Noise and Vibration
- ▢ Chapter 20 – Landscape Character and Visual Amenity
- ▢ Chapter 21 – Traffic and Transport
- ▢ Chapter 22 – Economic Environment
- ▢ Chapter 23 – Social Environment

* Receptors can be people, communities, species, habitats, or environmental features affected by a project's impacts.

Making a submission

The Northern Water Project EIS is on public exhibition from **Thursday, 29 October to Friday, 11 December 2026**. Community members, stakeholders and organisations are invited to review the EIS and make a submission.

The EIS can be viewed:

- online via the:
 - South Australian Planning Portal (plan.sa.gov.au)
 - yourSAy website (yoursay.sa.gov.au)
- by contacting the Project team for assistance:
 - Phone 1300 893 196
 - Email northernwater@sa.gov.au
- in person at:
 - Department for Housing and Urban Development – Level 9, 83 Pirie Street, Adelaide
 - Whyalla City Council – 21 Grundel Street, Whyalla Norrie
 - Whyalla City Council Library – 19 Ekblom Street, Whyalla Norrie
 - Port Augusta Civic Centre Council – 4 Mackay Street, Port Augusta
 - Port Augusta Public Library – 4 Mackay Street, Port Augusta
 - Roxby Council – 6 Richardson Place, Roxby Downs.

How to make a submission

Online

plan.sa.gov.au
OR
yoursay.sa.gov.au/northern-water-project-EIS

Email

spcreps@sa.gov.au
Subject: Northern Water Project Environmental Impact Statement

Post

Attention: Minister for Planning
c/- Mr Robert Kleeman
Manager – Crown and Impact Assessment,
Department for Housing and Urban Development,
GPO BOX 1815, ADELAIDE SA 5001

For assistance with making a submission, please contact the Project team on 1800 752 664.

Your feedback matters

Community and stakeholder feedback is an important part of the environmental assessment process.

Following the exhibition period:

1. All submissions received will be reviewed and considered.
2. An EIS Response Document will be prepared responding to issues raised during exhibition.
3. The EIS, submissions, agency comments and Response Document will be considered as part of the assessment process.
4. An Assessment Report will be prepared for the Minister for Planning.
5. Relevant State and Commonwealth decision-makers will determine whether the Project may proceed and under what conditions.

Northern Water is committed to ongoing engagement with communities, stakeholders and Traditional Owners throughout the assessment process and, subject to approvals, during detailed design, construction and operation.

Privacy

The Northern Water Project is being assessed through an Environmental Impact Statement process under section 131(25) of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 (SA)*.

Submissions received during the exhibition period will be provided to the Department for Housing and Urban Development and may also be provided to relevant government agencies as part of the assessment process.

Submissions are generally treated as public documents and may be published, summarised or referenced in publicly available assessment documentation, including:

- the EIS Response Document
- the Department for Housing and Urban Development's Assessment Report
- other assessment documentation prepared during the approvals process.

Personal information will be managed in accordance with applicable privacy requirements.

What to include in a submission

Submissions should include:

- your name and contact details
- the name of the Project
- whether you support, object to, or wish to comment on the Project
- the reasons for your views and any information you would like considered during the assessment process.

Next steps

The Northern Water Project will progress through the following stages:

1

Environmental Impact Statement public exhibition

Community, stakeholder and government agency review of the EIS and supporting documentation.

2

Community and stakeholder submissions

Submissions received and considered as part of the assessment process.

3

EIS Response Document

A Response Document is prepared addressing issues raised during exhibition.

4

Assessment Report

The EIS, submissions, agency comments and Response Document are considered as part of the assessment process and preparation of an Assessment Report for the Minister for Planning.

5

Ministerial and regulatory decisions

Relevant State and Commonwealth decision-makers determine whether the Project may proceed and, if approved, under what conditions.

6

Detailed design and procurement

Detailed engineering, planning and delivery arrangements are finalised.

7

Construction

Construction of the desalination plant, pipeline network and supporting infrastructure.

8

Environment Protection Authority licence

Prior to commissioning and operation of the desalination plant, the operator will be required to obtain an Environment Protection Authority licence.

9

Commissioning and operation

The water supply infrastructure becomes operational and begins supplying water to customers.



Connect with us

For more information about the Northern Water Project:



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