MRPH
Mount Rawdon Pumped Hydro

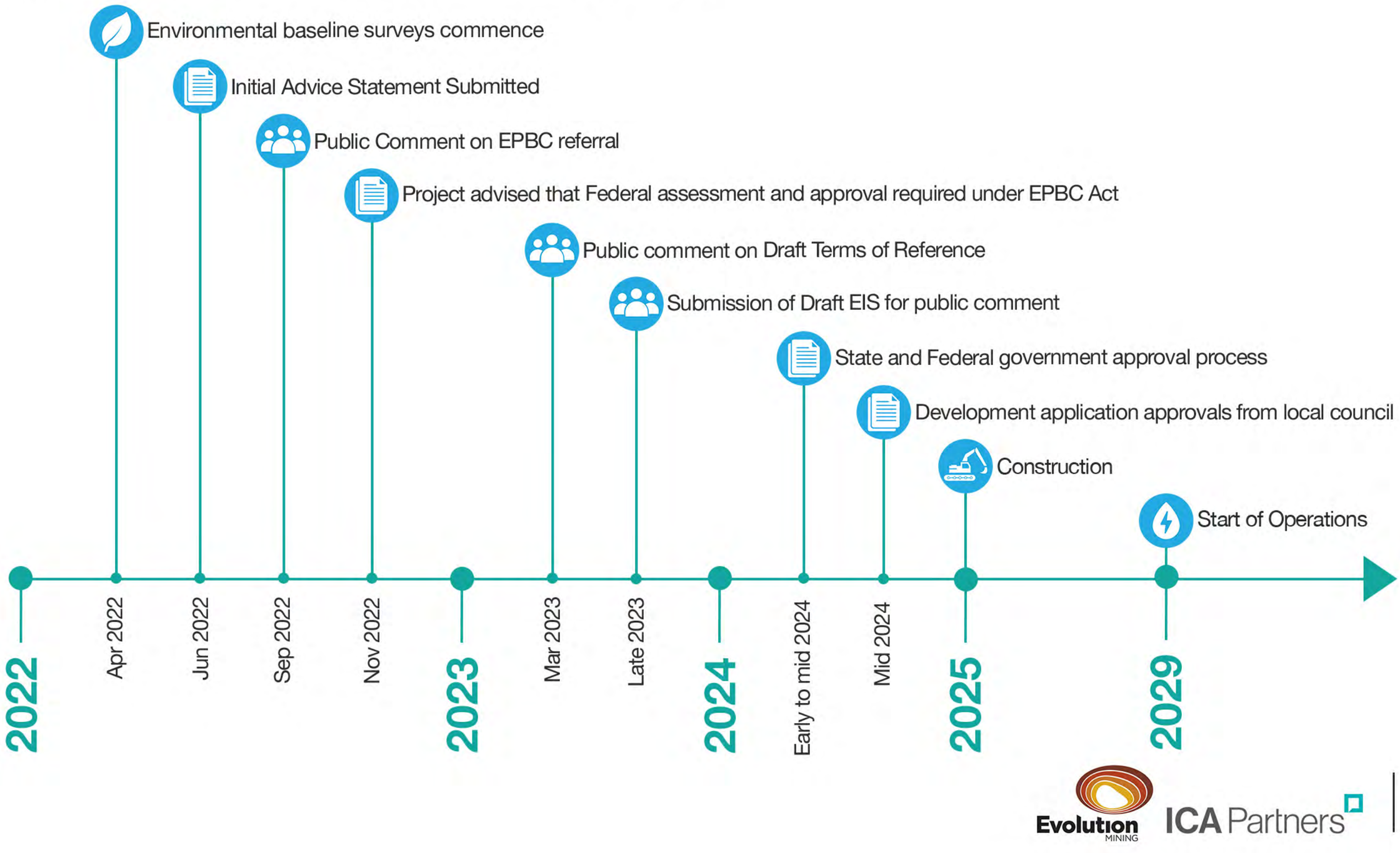
Issue #5 – June 2023

# Mount Rawdon Pumped Hydro Project

Welcome to the Mount Rawdon Pumped Hydro newsletter. This is our fifth newsletter and provides an update on activities, including ongoing environmental baseline studies and stakeholder engagement, and what's next for the Project.

## Approvals Schedule

The Project is currently undertaking a number of engineering, environmental and community studies which will be used to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS is anticipated to be available for public review and comment later this year.



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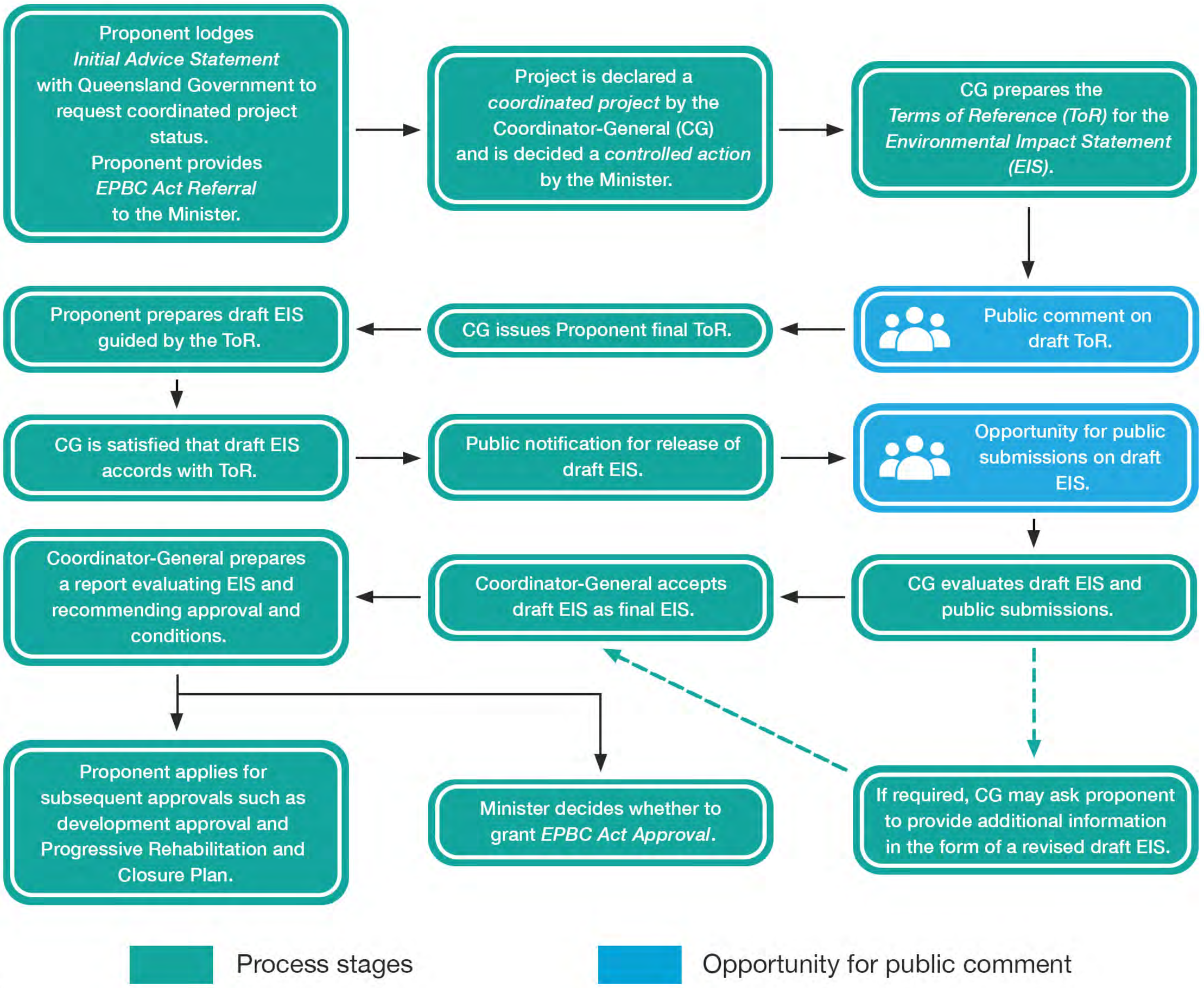
# Environmental Impact Assessment

The purpose of Environmental Impact Assessment is to thoroughly assess the potential environmental, social and economic impacts of a project before a decision is made about whether the project should be allowed to proceed. Environmental Impact Assessment also provides project proponents with an opportunity explore options to reduce the impacts of a project through, for example, changes in project design or the incorporation of measures to avoid or minimise potential impacts.

The EIS will also assess the potential impacts of the Project on environmental matters protected under the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (which is commonly known as the EPBC Act). The EPBC Act seeks to protect environmental matters in which the Federal government has a particular interest. This Project requires approval under the EPBC Act because it has the potential to affect Federally listed threatened species and communities.

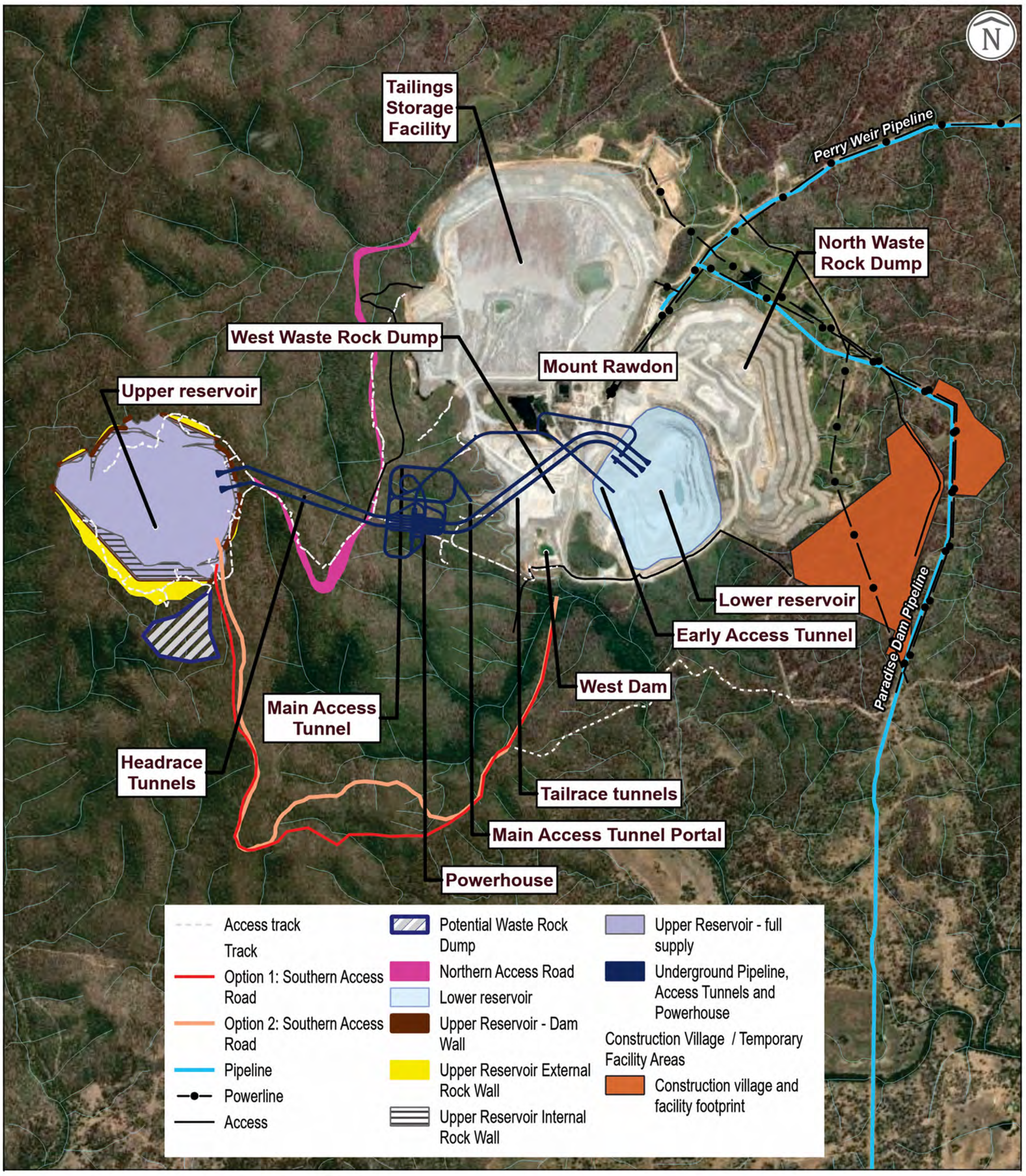
The EIS process involves a number of steps which provide the public with the opportunity to have input into the process. Most recently the Coordinator-General invited the public to comment on the draft Terms of Reference (ToR). The ToR details the information that the proponent is required to address in the EIS. Following the completion of the draft EIS the public will be invited to provide comment on the EIS and the Coordinator General will consider these comments in preparing its assessment report.



## Project Layout

Engineering and environmental studies continue to gather information which are used to refine the Project layout. This is an iterative process based on the results of studies and stakeholder engagement.

Since the March newsletter, additional studies have been undertaken regarding the location of the access road to the upper reservoir. Flora and fauna studies of the southern access route identified a number of cycads (*Cycas megacarpa*) which are listed as being Endangered under the EPBC Act and *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and can be successfully relocated nearby. Additional studies of alternate access routes were undertaken and a route utilising parts of the existing track to the upper reservoir has been identified. Stockpile locations (both temporary and permanent) are currently being reviewed to maximise the use of already cleared areas from mining activities. Changes to the layout of one potential location of the construction village as well as the location of the concrete batching plant are currently being refined to minimise impacts to human health, waterways and native flora and fauna.



# Current and Upcoming Activities

Since the March newsletter earlier this year, there has been significant activity to progress the technical studies.

### Groundwater Assessment

The groundwater modelling work has progressed to the stage where the calibration phase of the process has been completed. Calibration of the model includes the adjustment of model parameters or variables to best fit with real world observations. A number of meetings have been held with the independent peer reviewer to discuss the preliminary results. The next stage of the model is to commence the predictive phase, where the model will be used to predict future scenarios and inform the management plan for construction and operation of the Project.

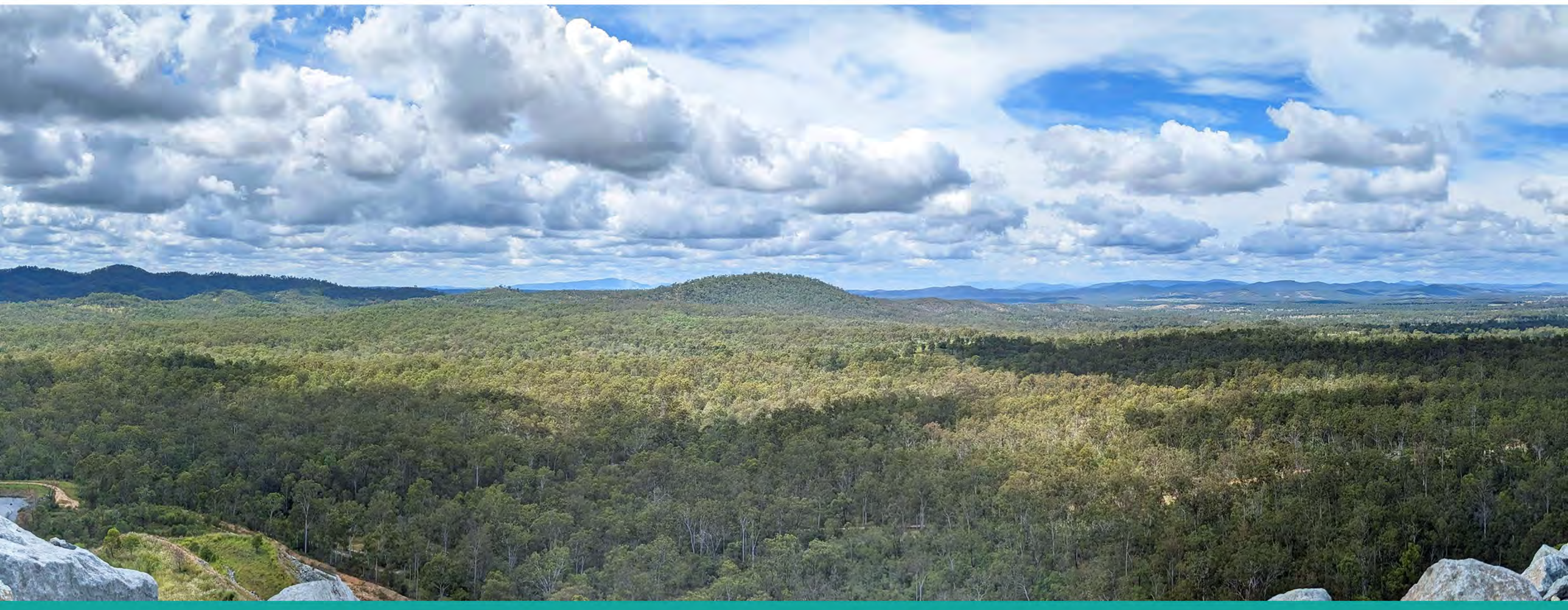
### Reservoir Water Quality and Water Balance

The lower reservoir (also referred to as pit lake) water quality and water balance model is well underway. These assessments will look at the quality of water that will be circulated between the upper and lower reservoirs, as well as how much water might be lost from evaporation and seepage from the system. Inputs into the models include the source water quality, the water quality of the existing water in the lower reservoir as well as any potential inputs from the surrounding rocks. Changing weather patterns as a result of climate change will also be incorporated into the assessment. This study is being undertaken in collaboration with the groundwater modelling team as well as the Project engineers.

### Geotechnical Drilling

The geotechnical drilling activities have progressed with the completion of the second deep drill hole program, and analysis of core samples to develop the detailed design. The recent activities involved drilling at the upper reservoir, underground waterway and the powerhouse. The drill core will be tested to help understand the characteristics of the rock that will house the underground waterways and powerhouse.

*Geotechnical drilling rig*



*View from the West Waste Rock Dump looking East over the area where the camp, offices and workshops will be located*

**Geochemistry Assessment**

Geochemical testing, which gathers information on the elemental composition of the rock, has been completed for the Project. Analysis of the surface rock samples and drill core indicate that any material that will be excavated from the upper reservoir and the tunnels is unlikely to require any specific management.

**Traffic Assessment**

Baseline traffic data has been collected which has included inspection of proposed traffic routes and collection of traffic data. A traffic impact assessment report will be prepared which will look at the capacity and condition of roads in the project area and determine what traffic effects might be associated with the project or what traffic and road management mitigations might be required.

**Upcoming Studies**

Further ecological studies along the transmission line are scheduled for mid-2023 (subject to agreement from landholders). The ecological studies will collect baseline information along the proposed transmission line alignments collecting information on flora, fauna and aquatic data. Information obtained from the baseline surveys will help to develop a better understanding of which animal species use the area. This will ultimately inform the mitigation measures for the Project. A small area of the transmission corridor was assessed for fauna habitat in March. The survey did not find any species of significance.

A visual impact assessment is also about to commence. This study will produce a number of photomontages of the visual appearance of the Project as viewed from different perspectives.

## Community Engagement

In April 2023, the proponents of the Project received public submissions on the draft ToR for the Project's EIS. The draft ToR were released by the Office of the Coordinator-General for public consultation and were open for comment from the 4th of March until the 11th of April. This provided the opportunity for interested parties to provide comment and ensure their interests are addressed in the final ToR. These submissions will ultimately guide the EIS.

The Project team has also commenced social and economic studies to help understand the potential impacts and benefits of the Project to the local (Gin Gin, Mount Perry, Bundaberg) communities. This involves targeted stakeholder interviews which will provide insights that will facilitate the social impact assessment. This information will also be used to better understand how the Project can mitigate social and economic impacts.

## Site Visit by Government Agencies

On Wednesday 29 March 2023, Evolution Mining and the Mount Rawdon Pumped Hydro Project Team hosted a visit from a number of state government representatives. The tour covered the active areas of the mine as well as the upper reservoir site. This was a great opportunity for government agencies, who will be assessing the EIS to visit the site in person and ask questions.

*Mount Rawdon open pit that will form the lower reservoir*

## Community Information Evening

Evolution Mining will be hosting an information evening in Mount Perry to answer questions about the Mount Rawdon Operations and to provide an update on the Project study to convert the mine into a pumped hydro facility.

The event will begin at 5:00 pm with presentations from Evolution Mining and Mount Rawdon Pumped Hydro Project representatives, and a Q&A from 6:00pm to 7:30pm. A sausage sizzle and light refreshments will be provided.

**When:** Friday 9th June, 2023
5:00 pm to 7:30 pm

**Where:** Mount Perry Town Hall,
62 Heusman Street, Mount Perry

## Please contact us on:

+61 2 9133 9000

info@mtrawdonhydro.com.au