

## APPENDIX D

# Stakeholder Engagement

D-1 EIS Integrated Communications and Engagement Plan

D-2 Engagement Outcomes Report

NORTHERN  
WATER PROJECT



## Appendix D-1:

# EIS Integrated Communications and Engagement Plan

# Northern Water Project

## Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Engagement Plan

September 2026



**Government of South Australia**  
Department for Infrastructure  
and Transport

**Build.  
Move.  
Connect.**

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| Ana Glavinic   | Executive Director, Northern Water Project Delivery Office | 19/06/2026 |

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Country throughout South Australia 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.

**Build. Move. Connect.**

by Jaylene Ware

Wirangu, Kokatha and Antakirinja  
Matu-Yankunytjatjara Artist

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# Acknowledgement

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We acknowledge that the Northern Water Project is being developed on the traditional lands of the Barngarla and Kokatha peoples, and we recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects Elders past and present and extend that respect to emerging Elders, acknowledging the diversity of cultures and the significance of First Nation contributions, knowledge and stewardship.

We also thank all community members, stakeholders and organisations who have participated in engagement activities over the life of the Project. We appreciate the time and input of the Northern Water Stakeholder Reference Group and other key stakeholders who have engaged consistently and constructively over many years. Their feedback and local knowledge have been invaluable and will continue to inform Project planning, assessment and future phases of delivery and operation.

## About this plan

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This EIS Engagement Plan outlines how Northern Water will engage with communities, stakeholders, Traditional Owners, industry groups and government agencies during the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) phase of the Northern Water Project (the Project).

The purpose of this document is to provide a transparent overview of:

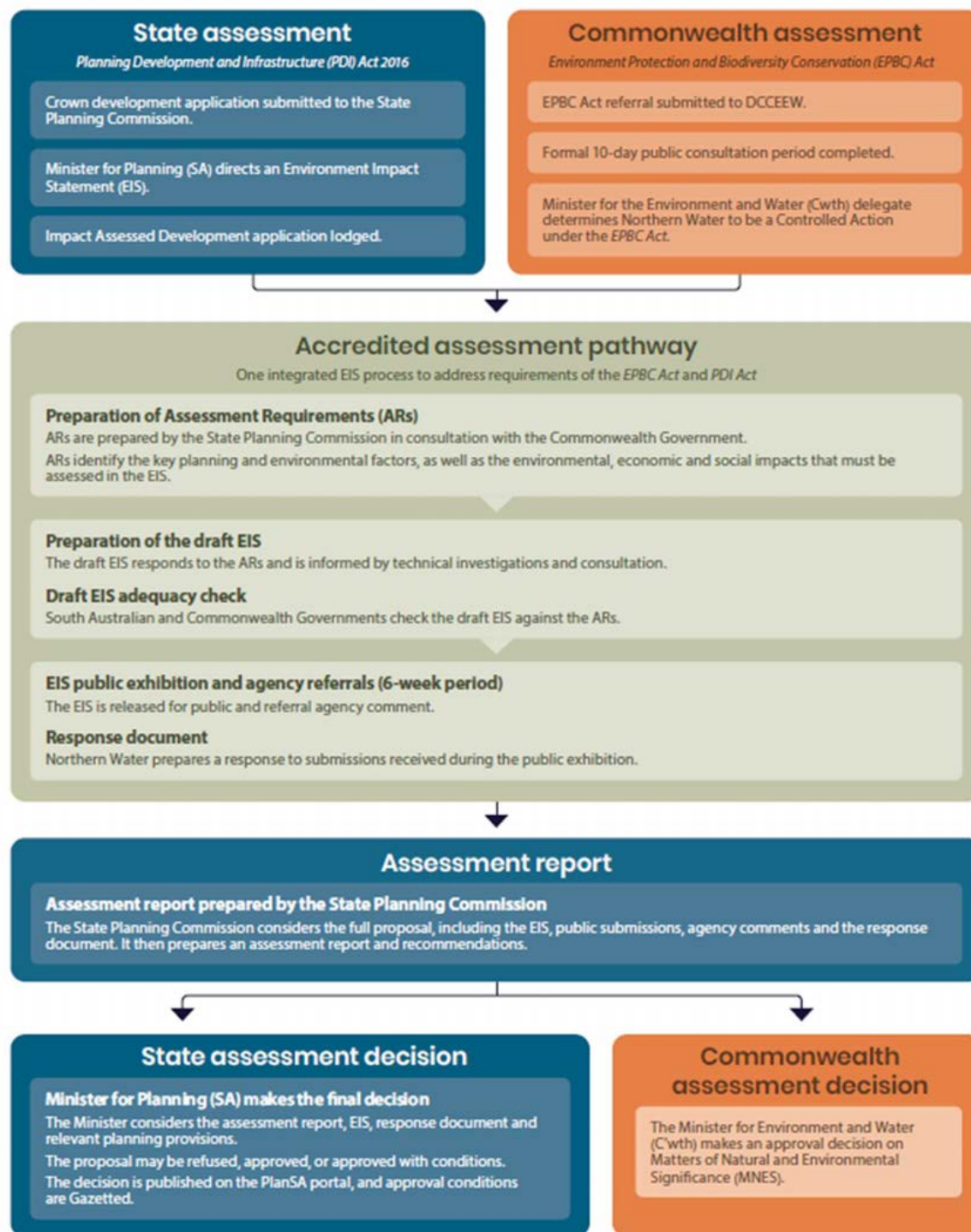
- the Project and EIS process
- how information will be shared
- how stakeholders and communities can participate
- the types of engagement activities proposed
- the key issues and themes raised through engagement to date
- how feedback will continue to inform project planning and assessment.

Northern Water recognises the importance of early, transparent and accessible engagement throughout the EIS process (refer to Figure 1). Engagement activities undertaken to date have identified strong interest in environmental protection, cultural heritage, local industry impacts, regional economic opportunities and the long-term management of water resources within the Upper Spencer Gulf and Far North regions.

This Plan outlines a public-facing engagement approach intended to support informed participation during the EIS process and ensure stakeholders and communities have opportunities to understand the Project, ask questions and provide feedback.

Figure 1 – Northern Water assessment process

## Northern Water assessment process



# EIS engagement objectives

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The objectives of engagement during the EIS process are to:

- Communicate clearly to build understanding of the Project, the EIS process and the associated benefits.
- Provide engagement opportunities for the Traditional Owners, stakeholders, community and the public before and during public release of the EIS.
- Identify and address issues early through targeted engagement with stakeholders.
- Clearly explain technical investigations, assessment outcomes and how impacts will be avoided where possible, mitigated and managed.
- Build understanding of the Project's environmental commitments by addressing key concerns such as how desalination works and how the marine environment will be protected.
- Foster trusted relationships with Traditional Owners, communities, stakeholders and government agencies through ongoing and regular engagement.
- Demonstrate how feedback has influenced decisions to close the engagement loop.

## Engagement principles

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Northern Water's engagement approach is guided by recognised engagement frameworks and principles, including:

- the South Australian Community Engagement Charter
- the South Australian Government's Better Together Principles of Engagement
- the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum
- guidance relating to engagement with First Nations people and communities.

Engagement activities will aim to be:

- genuine and transparent
- inclusive and respectful
- accessible and easy to understand
- timely and responsive
- informed by community and stakeholder feedback.

## The Community Engagement Charter – State Planning Commission

The [Community Engagement Charter](#) outlines principles for effective and meaningful community engagement in South Australia. The Northern Water engagement approach has been developed to align with these principles throughout the EIS process.

## SA Government's Better Together: Principles of Engagement

The South Australian Government's [Better Together: Principles of Engagement](#) support engagement processes that are inclusive, transparent and focused on improving decision-making through community participation.

### IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

The [IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation](#) is an internationally recognised framework used to guide community engagement activities and identify appropriate levels of participation.

Figure 2 IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

| INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                   | INFORM                                                                                                                                                   | CONSULT                                                                                                                                          | INVOLVE                                                                                                                                                                                   | COLLABORATE                                                                                                                                                               | EMPOWER                                                    |
| PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL         | To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions. | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.                                                                            | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.                                        | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.                     | To place final decision making in the hands of the public. |
| PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC             | We will keep you informed.                                                                                                                               | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. | We will implement what you decide.                         |

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## Commonwealth Guidance on Engaging with First Nations People

Northern Water is continuing to engage with Traditional Owners and surrounding Aboriginal community groups throughout the EIS process.

Engagement activities are informed by the Commonwealth guidance relating to engagement with First Nations people and communities and focus on:

- cultural respect and safety
- early and ongoing engagement
- relationship building
- appropriate communication methods
- respectful participation processes.

# Need for the project

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Northern Water aims to provide a secure, climate-resilient water source for industry in South Australia's Upper Spencer Gulf and Far North regions.

The Project is intended to support existing and future industries by reducing reliance on traditional inland water sources, including the Great Artesian Basin and the River Murray. It is also intended to support regional economic development, employment opportunities and industries that will contribute to Australia's decarbonisation and energy transition.

## Project description

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The Project proposes the construction and operation of a 51 GL/year (or approximately 140 ML/Day) seawater reverse osmosis desalination plant located at Mullaquana Station on the Upper Spencer Gulf near Whyalla.

Key components include an intake pump station, and intake and outfall tunnels extending beneath the seabed into the Spencer Gulf and diffuser structures for discharge of return water into the Spencer Gulf.

Water will be transported via a transfer system comprising approximately 360 km of main transfer pipeline, an approximate 46 km lateral branch to the Carrapateena mine site, and a series of associated transfer pump stations and storage tanks to transfer desalinated water to the delivery point at the Olympic Dam copper-gold mine. Supporting electricity infrastructure includes high-voltage powerlines and both network and facility substations, to service the desalination plant and associated transfer pump stations.

Figure 3 – Project location



# Native Title and Traditional Owner engagement

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The Northern Water Project is located on the traditional lands of the Barngarla and Kokatha peoples.

Northern Water has engaged with the Barngarla Determination Aboriginal Corporation (BDAC) and Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation (KAC) throughout project planning and assessment activities, including cultural heritage investigations and discussions relating to Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs).

Engagement with Traditional Owners will continue throughout the EIS process and will inform project planning, environmental assessment, socio-economic opportunities and cultural heritage management.

## Site selection

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An extensive site selection process was undertaken for the proposed desalination plant location. This process included environmental, technical, engineering, social and economic investigations, together with engagement with stakeholders and communities.

Multiple potential locations were assessed, with Mullaquana Station and Cape Hardy identified for more detailed investigation.

Assessments of the two sites considered:

- environmental impacts
- technical and engineering feasibility
- social and community considerations
- economic and operational factors
- project deliverability.

Following these investigations, Mullaquana Station was identified as the preferred location for the desalination plant.

Key reasons included:

- proximity to future water demand
- access to existing infrastructure and workforce
- favourable construction conditions
- alignment with regional economic development objectives
- lower estimated operational energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.

Feedback from Traditional Owners, landholders, government agencies and stakeholders also informed refinement of the proposed transfer pipeline corridor and associated infrastructure locations.

# Stakeholders and communities

Northern Water recognises that a wide range of communities, organisations, industries and government agencies have an interest in the Project and the EIS process. Engagement with the stakeholder has been ongoing throughout each phase of the project since 2022.

Stakeholder groups may have different interests, priorities and information needs. Engagement activities will therefore vary depending on the stakeholder group and the nature of their interest in the Project.

Table 1 Stakeholder groups and interests

| Stakeholder group                                | Key stakeholders                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Areas of interest                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Registered Native Title Body Corporates (RNTBCs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barngarla Determination Aboriginal Corporation (BDAC)</li> <li>• Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation (KAC)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Native Title and ILUA agreements</li> <li>• Environmental protection</li> <li>• Social and economic benefits</li> <li>• Protection of Cultural Heritage</li> <li>• Employment and procurement opportunities</li> <li>• Benefit sharing</li> <li>• Community wellbeing</li> </ul>                    |
| Broader Aboriginal stakeholder groups            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arabana</li> <li>• Nukunu</li> <li>• Narungga</li> <li>• Nauo</li> <li>• Dieri</li> <li>• Kuyani</li> <li>• Adnyamathanha</li> <li>• Gawler Ranges</li> <li>• Whyalla Aboriginal Corporation</li> <li>• Port Augusta Community Council</li> </ul>                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of the Great Artesian Basin (GAB) and Cultural Mound Springs</li> <li>• Environmental protection</li> <li>• Social and economic benefits</li> <li>• Cultural Heritage protection</li> <li>• Employment and procurement opportunities</li> <li>• Community wellbeing</li> </ul>           |
| Local MPs                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Member for Giles</li> <li>• State Member for Stuart</li> <li>• Federal Member for Grey</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental impacts</li> <li>• Regional economic growth</li> <li>• Employment opportunities</li> <li>• Protection of key industries – tourism, aquaculture and fishing</li> <li>• Community sentiment</li> </ul>                                                                                  |
| Local Government                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whyalla City Council</li> <li>• Outback Communities Authority</li> <li>• Municipal Council of Roxby Downs</li> <li>• Port Augusta City Council</li> <li>• Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group comprising of the councils of Whyalla, Port Pirie and Port Augusta (operating as Spencer Gulf Cities)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental management and impacts</li> <li>• Community sentiment and wellbeing</li> <li>• Workforce requirements</li> <li>• Local and regional economic development</li> <li>• Impacts to other industries – fishing, pastoral, agriculture, tourism</li> <li>• Social infrastructure</li> </ul> |

| Stakeholder group                                         | Key stakeholders                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Areas of interest                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local amenity and character</li> <li>Traffic and road infrastructure impacts</li> <li>Cultural Heritage</li> <li>Construction impacts</li> <li>Hazards and risks – bushfire, floods, site contamination</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| State Government Departments                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environment Protection Authority (EPA)</li> <li>Department for Environment and Water (DEW)</li> <li>Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA)</li> <li>Department of Housing and Urban Development (DHUD)</li> <li>Department for Energy and Mining (DEM)</li> <li>Defence SA</li> <li>Attorney-General's Department - Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (AAR)</li> <li>Crown Solicitors Office, Native Title Branch</li> <li>Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC)</li> <li>Country Fire Service (CFS)</li> <li>Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT)</li> <li>Department for Trade and Investment (DTI)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead Agency Development Assessment (DHUD)</li> <li>Development approvals (Referral Agency EIS)</li> <li>Environmental management and impacts – construction and ongoing (cumulative)</li> <li>Native vegetation offsets.</li> <li>Cultural heritage impacts</li> <li>ILUA and Native Title</li> <li>Construction impacts</li> <li>Hazards and risks – bushfire, floods, site contamination</li> <li>Impacts to other industries – fishing, pastoral, agriculture, tourism</li> <li>Industry growth – renewables, mining, aquaculture, tourism etc.</li> <li>Local and regional economic development</li> <li>Employment opportunities</li> <li>Land access</li> <li>Land use interface</li> <li>Marine exclusion zones</li> <li>Social infrastructure</li> <li>Local amenity and character</li> <li>Traffic and road infrastructure impacts</li> <li>Project outcomes and timeframe</li> </ul> |
| State Government Boards, committees, councils, institutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastoral Board of South Australia</li> <li>Landscape Boards: Eyre Peninsula and Arid Lands</li> <li>Native Vegetation Council</li> <li>Coastal Protection Board</li> <li>South Australian Research and Development Institute</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land access</li> <li>Water infrastructure</li> <li>Landcare and management</li> <li>Land use interface</li> <li>Project outcomes and timeframes</li> <li>Biodiversity</li> <li>Native vegetation impacts</li> <li>Partnerships with government</li> <li>Coastline protection</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

| Stakeholder group                                      | Key stakeholders                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Areas of interest                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marine protection and research</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Federal Government                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Department of Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry (DAFF)</li> <li>Regional Development Australia               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eyre Peninsula</li> <li>Far North</li> </ul> </li> <li>National Native Title Tribunal, Attorney-General's Department</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development approvals (Referral Agency EPBC Act)</li> <li>Net Zero emissions / Climate Change targets.</li> <li>Environmental management and impacts</li> <li>Matters of National Environment Significance</li> <li>Offset requirements</li> <li>Cultural heritage impacts</li> <li>ILUA and Native Title</li> <li>GAB/Mound Springs</li> </ul>   |
| Lease and landowners and holders                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastoralists along pipeline</li> <li>Freehold landholders, perpetual lease holders</li> <li>Government landholders</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land tenure</li> <li>Land access</li> <li>Impact to operations</li> <li>Water offtake</li> <li>Amenity</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Industry - Commercial Fishing                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marine Fishers Association of South Australia Inc (MFSA)</li> <li>Spencer Gulf and West Coast Prawn Fishermen's Association</li> <li>South Australian Blue Crab Pot Fishers</li> <li>Marine Scalefish Fishery (MSF)</li> <li>Local Commercial Fishers in Whyalla</li> </ul>                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marine environment impacts</li> <li>Construction impacts – noise, vibration</li> <li>Juvenile nurseries - seagrass, mangroves</li> <li>Entrainment</li> <li>Salinity</li> <li>Temperature rise – Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB)</li> <li>Exclusion areas</li> </ul>                                                                                    |
| Industry and Business – Recreational Fishing / Tourism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational SA Fishing Association</li> <li>Whyalla Business and Tourism</li> <li>Local marine tourism operators</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marine environment impacts</li> <li>Construction impacts – noise, vibration</li> <li>Juvenile nurseries - seagrass, mangroves</li> <li>Entrainment</li> <li>Salinity</li> <li>Temperature rise – algal bloom</li> </ul>                                                                                                                           |
| Industry peak bodies and representatives               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group</li> <li>South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy (SACOME)</li> <li>Regional Development Australia – Eyre Peninsula and Far North</li> <li>TACTIC</li> <li>Far North Aboriginal Economic Collective</li> </ul>                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impacts industry - aquaculture, fishing, agriculture and tourism</li> <li>Marine environment impact</li> <li>Cumulative environmental impact of projects on Eyre Peninsula and Upper Spencer Gulf</li> <li>Regional and local economic growth</li> <li>Industry participation</li> <li>Employment opportunities</li> <li>Job readiness</li> </ul> |

| Stakeholder group                                  | Key stakeholders                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Areas of interest                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Educational institutions                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TAFE SA (Whyalla) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whyalla TAFE Aboriginal Access Centre</li> </ul> </li> <li>Adelaide University Campus (Whyalla)</li> <li>Unihub Spencer Gulf</li> </ul>                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Job ready – courses reflect workforce requirements</li> <li>Project awareness – employment, EIS, timeframes</li> <li>Aboriginal employment opportunities</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Neighbouring residents<br>- Shack owners           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cowleds Landing shack owners</li> <li>Murninnie Beach shack owners</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marine environment impacts</li> <li>Impact to recreation and commercial fishing</li> <li>Amenity and environmental quality – noise, dust, vibration, visual impact</li> <li>Increase of large vehicles movements – traffic, safety</li> <li>Road infrastructure impacts – road quality</li> <li>Change in land use, attract more people to area</li> <li>Water access (off taker opportunity)</li> </ul>                                                             |
| Environmental Groups / organisations / individuals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biodiversity Council</li> <li>Conservation Council of SA</li> <li>OzFish Adelaide Chapter</li> <li>Australian Conservation Foundation</li> <li>Giant Australian Cuttlefish Working Group (DEW)</li> <li>Marine Life Society of SA</li> <li>Nature Conservation Council</li> <li>Nature Foundation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marine environmental impacts</li> <li>Australian Giant Cuttlefish</li> <li>Increased salinity</li> <li>Impacts to marine habitats and ecosystems</li> <li>Entrainment</li> <li>Water temperature</li> <li>Construction impacts to sand dunes</li> <li>Terrestrial environmental impacts</li> <li>Physical environment – coastal and marine, soils, landform and geology surface water and groundwater</li> <li>Water extraction from GAB and River Murray</li> </ul> |
| Transport Industry                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Airports / Carriers</li> <li>Freight Council</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction phase increasing demand for commercial flights to and from Whyalla</li> <li>Traffic, freight and road infrastructure impacts</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Third Party Interface                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ARTC</li> <li>Alligator Energy</li> <li>Tilt</li> <li>TotalEnergies/TEH2</li> <li>Quarry adjacent Mullaquana Station</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project timeframes</li> <li>Water access</li> <li>Land access</li> <li>Construction impacts</li> <li>Traffic</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

| Stakeholder group                                   | Key stakeholders                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Areas of interest                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competing demand for workforce and associated services</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Local and regional communities and community groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whyalla</li> <li>Port Augusta</li> <li>Pimba</li> <li>Woomera</li> <li>Roxby Downs region</li> </ul> </li> <li>Local and regional workers/business</li> <li>Broader community</li> <li>Regions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eyre Peninsula</li> <li>Upper Spencer Gulf</li> <li>Far North</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marine environment impacts</li> <li>Impact to industry - aquaculture, fishing, agriculture and tourism</li> <li>Regional and local economic growth</li> <li>Industry participation</li> <li>Employment opportunities</li> <li>Social impacts - workforce accommodation and infrastructure</li> <li>Traffic impacts</li> </ul> |
| Media                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local radio</li> <li>Local papers – Whyalla News</li> <li>The Advertiser</li> <li>InDaily</li> <li>Individual journalists with an interest</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental impacts</li> <li>Impacts to industry - fishing, agriculture and tourism</li> <li>Regional and local economic growth</li> <li>Employment opportunities</li> <li>GAB</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                   |

## Engagement approach

Northern Water recognises that meaningful engagement is essential to supporting informed participation during the EIS process and ensuring communities, stakeholders and Traditional Owners have access to clear, timely and accessible project information.

The engagement approach has been developed to support transparency throughout the EIS process and to provide opportunities for people to understand the Project, ask questions, share local knowledge and provide feedback.

Engagement activities undertaken during the EIS phase will focus on:

- increasing awareness and understanding of the Project and EIS process
- providing accessible information about technical investigations and environmental studies
- identifying community and stakeholder priorities, concerns and opportunities
- supporting informed participation during the EIS public exhibition period
- demonstrating how feedback is considered through project planning and assessment.

Northern Water acknowledges that stakeholders and communities may have different interests, concerns and information needs depending on their relationship with the Project. Engagement activities will therefore be tailored to different audiences and may vary in scale, format and level of detail.

The engagement approach has been informed by:

- engagement activities undertaken since 2022

- feedback received from stakeholders and communities
- the **Community Engagement Charter**
- **Better Together Principles of Engagement**
- Guidance relating to engagement with First Nations people and communities.

A range of engagement methods will be used throughout the EIS process to support participation and accessibility. These may include:

- community information sessions
- stakeholder meetings and briefings
- drop-in sessions and pop-ups
- online engagement opportunities
- surveys and feedback activities
- project newsletters and updates
- website information and FAQs
- participation during the formal EIS exhibition process.

## Phase 1 – EIS pre-lodgement engagement

Pre-lodgement engagement focuses on sharing information about the Project and technical investigations before the EIS is formally exhibited.

This phase of engagement is intended to:

- provide early information about the Project and EIS process
- support understanding of investigations and environmental studies
- identify key issues, questions and community priorities
- gather local knowledge and feedback to help inform project planning and assessment.

Engagement activities during this phase includes targeted stakeholder meetings, community information sessions, briefings, pop-ups, online engagement and ongoing project communications.

Topics expected to be discussed during pre-lodgement engagement include:

- marine and coastal environments
- terrestrial ecology and biodiversity
- cultural heritage
- traffic and transport
- construction impacts
- social and community impacts
- local industry and economic opportunities
- water resources and environmental management.

Northern Water will continue to provide updates regarding project investigations, engagement opportunities and key project milestones throughout this phase.

## Phase 2 – EIS public exhibition

Once completed, the EIS documentation will be placed on public exhibition through the SA Planning Portal (Plan SA) for a minimum 30 business days.

The exhibition period provides an opportunity for stakeholders, organisations and community members to:

- review the EIS documentation
- understand the findings of technical investigations and assessments
- ask questions about the Project and EIS process
- provide formal submissions.

Northern Water will continue to support access to information throughout the exhibition period through:

- community information sessions/ popups
- project information materials
- online information updates
- website resources and FAQs
- opportunities to contact the project team directly.

## Phase 3 – Post EIS submission

Following the exhibition period, submissions received during consultation will be reviewed and a Response Document will be prepared by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport and submitted to the Department for Housing and Urban Development (DHUD), addressing matters raised through the consultation process.

The Chief Executive, DHUD will then prepare an Assessment Report for consideration by the Minister for Planning.

DHUD will also undertake an evaluation survey for participants to determine the effectiveness of the engagement during the EIS period.

Northern Water will continue to provide project updates through:

- project newsletter
- website updates and resources
- stakeholder meetings and briefings

## Indicative timeframes

Indicative timeframes for engagement specific to the EIS:

| Phase of EIS Engagement                | Indicative Timeframe |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Phase 1 – EIS pre-lodgement engagement | Q1 to Q3 2026        |
| Phase 2 – EIS public exhibition        | Q4 2026              |
| Phase 3 – Post EIS Submission          | Q4 2026 to Q1 2027   |

# How we will engage

Engagement activities aim to provide stakeholders and communities with opportunities to access project information, ask questions, provide feedback, share local knowledge and perspectives, and participate in the EIS process.

Table 2 – Engagement activities with stakeholder groups

| Stakeholder group                                                                                        | Engagement purpose                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Engagement activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Registered Native Title Body Corporates (RNTBCs)                                                         | <p>ILUA Negotiations</p> <p>Provide regular updates and gather feedback on environmental, land access, economic benefits, construction and cultural heritage matters.</p>                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>negotiation meetings and workshops</li> <li>site visits</li> <li>cultural heritage and environmental discussions</li> <li>project briefings to the Board (as required)</li> <li>Common Law Holder meetings</li> <li>On Country meetings and presentations</li> <li>notifications and correspondence</li> <li>community events</li> </ul> |
| Surrounding First Nations groups and Aboriginal Corporations as well as key representative organisations | <p>Provide project information briefings and updates.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>project updates</li> <li>presentation to the Boards as required</li> <li>notification and correspondence</li> <li>community and industry events</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Local Government                                                                                         | <p>Provide updates and gather feedback on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental and planning assessment processes</li> <li>technical investigations and studies</li> <li>information sharing throughout the EIS process</li> <li>potential economic benefits and construction impacts.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regular standing meetings and workshops</li> <li>project briefings</li> <li>Elected Member briefings</li> <li>notifications and correspondence</li> <li>Stakeholder Reference Group membership</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                |
| State Government Departments                                                                             | <p>Provide updates and seek feedback on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental and planning assessment processes</li> <li>technical investigations and studies</li> <li>coordination with relevant regulatory agencies</li> </ul>                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one on one meetings depending on issue</li> <li>Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings</li> <li>general project updates and briefings</li> <li>site visits</li> <li>Stakeholder Reference Group membership</li> </ul>                                                                                                                    |

| Stakeholder group                                            | Engagement purpose                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Engagement activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>information sharing throughout the EIS process</li> <li>potential economic benefits and construction impacts.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| State Government Boards, committees, councils and Institutes | Provide updates and gather feedback on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental and planning assessment processes</li> <li>technical investigations and studies</li> <li>information sharing throughout the EIS process</li> <li>potential economic benefits and construction impacts.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations and briefings</li> <li>Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings</li> <li>general project updates and briefings</li> </ul>                                                                 |
| Federal Government                                           | Seek development approvals.<br>Provide updates on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental and planning assessment processes</li> <li>technical investigations and studies</li> <li>ILUA and Native Title.</li> </ul>                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regular meetings and workshops on approval and planning process</li> <li>project briefings and updates</li> <li>site visits</li> </ul>                                                                |
| Lease and landowners and holders                             | Provide updates and gather feedback on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental and planning assessment processes</li> <li>land access process</li> <li>construction and operational impacts.</li> </ul>                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one on one meetings/briefings</li> <li>letters and correspondence</li> <li>project updates</li> <li>pop ups, information sessions and community events</li> </ul>                                     |
| Industry – Commercial Fishing                                | Provide updates and gather feedback on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental and planning assessment processes</li> <li>marine technical studies, modelling outcomes and construction impacts.</li> </ul>                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one on one and group meetings/briefings (as required)</li> <li>Project updates</li> <li>pop ups, information sessions and community events</li> <li>Stakeholder Reference Group membership</li> </ul> |
| Industry – Recreational Fishing / Tourism                    | Provide updates and gather feedback on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental and planning assessment processes</li> <li>marine technical studies, modelling outcomes and construction impacts.</li> </ul>                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one on one and group meetings/briefings (as required)</li> <li>project updates</li> <li>Stakeholder Reference Group membership</li> </ul>                                                             |

| Stakeholder group                                   | Engagement purpose                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Engagement activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Industry peak bodies and Councils                   | Provide updates and gather feedback on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental and planning assessment processes</li> <li>workforce and construction impacts.</li> </ul>                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one on one and group meetings/briefings (as required)</li> <li>project newsletters and attendance at pop ups and community events</li> <li>Stakeholder Reference Group membership</li> <li>Industry events</li> </ul>                |
| Educational institutions                            | Project awareness on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental and planning assessment processes</li> <li>workforce requirements to assist in course preparation.</li> </ul>                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one on one and group meetings (as required)</li> <li>project newsletters and attendance at pop ups and community events.</li> <li>Industry events</li> </ul>                                                                         |
| Neighbouring residents - Shack owners               | Provide updates and gather feedback on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental and planning assessment processes</li> <li>land acquisition process and construction impacts.</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one on one and group meetings/briefings (as required)</li> <li>project updates and attendance at pop ups and community events</li> </ul>                                                                                             |
| Environmental Groups / organisations / individuals  | Provide updates and gather feedback on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental and planning assessment processes</li> <li>technical investigations and studies</li> <li>construction impacts and mitigation plans.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one on one and group meetings/briefings (as required)</li> <li>project newsletters and attendance at pop ups and community events</li> <li>Stakeholder Reference Group membership</li> </ul>                                         |
| Third Party Interface                               | Provide updates and gather feedback on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental and planning assessment processes</li> <li>construction timeframes, impacts and mitigation plans.</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one on one and group meetings/briefings (as required)</li> <li>project newsletters.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                       |
| Local and regional communities and community groups | Provide updates and gather feedback on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental and planning assessment processes</li> <li>construction impacts (increased demand for transport).</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one on one and group meetings/briefings (as required)</li> <li>project newsletters and attendance at pop ups and community events.</li> <li>Stakeholder Reference Group membership</li> <li>Community and industry events</li> </ul> |

| Stakeholder group                 | Engagement purpose                                                                                                                                                                                               | Engagement activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Transport Industry                | Provide updates and gather feedback on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>environmental and planning assessment processes</li> <li>construction impacts (increased demand for transport).</li> </ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one on one and group meetings/briefings (as required)</li> <li>project updates</li> <li>industry events</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) | Support information sharing and ongoing engagement throughout project planning and assessment with stakeholders and community representatives including industry, environmental and regional stakeholder groups. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>bi-monthly meetings</li> <li>briefings to member groups</li> <li>presentations on key topics.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Broader community                 | Provide updates and opportunities for feedback throughout the EIS process.                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>community information sessions</li> <li>drop-in sessions and pop-up events</li> <li>online information and engagement opportunities</li> <li>project newsletters and updates</li> <li>website information and FAQs</li> <li>opportunities to make submissions during the EIS exhibition period.</li> <li>media and social media updates.</li> </ul> |
| Media                             | Provide updates on key project milestones or enquiries.                                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>media releases, briefings and responses.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

## Engagement activity plan

Table 3 summarises the key EIS engagement and communication activities planned for pre-lodgement and during the public consultation period. The schedule has been informed by Northern Water and Statewide key dates and milestones.

Table 3: EIS engagement and communication activities

| Phase                                        | Date/<br>Estimated<br>Timing | Activity                                                                                                                      | Stakeholders                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Phase 1 – Pre-EIS<br>lodgement<br>engagement | Bi-monthly                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SRG Meetings</li> </ul>                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spencer Gulf &amp; West Coast Prawn Association Inc</li> <li>Recreational Fish SA</li> <li>Whyalla Dive</li> <li>Whyalla Business and Tourism</li> <li>Marine Scale Fish Assoc.</li> <li>SA Blue Crab Pot Fishers' Assoc.</li> <li>Charter Boat Association of SA</li> <li>Marine Scale Net Fishers Assoc.</li> <li>SA Professional Fishers Assoc"</li> <li>Port Augusta City Council</li> <li>Outback Communities Authority</li> <li>Municipal Council of Roxby Downs</li> <li>TACTIC</li> <li>Conservation Council SA</li> <li>Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association</li> <li>Primary Industries and Regions South Australia</li> <li>Landscape SA</li> <li>Regional Development Australia (Far North and Eyre Peninsula)</li> </ul> |
|                                              | April                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical Working Group (TWG) Meetings</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department for Infrastructure and Transport</li> <li>National Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Whyalla City Council</li> <li>Port Augusta City Council</li> <li>Outback Communities Authority</li> <li>Department for Environment and Water</li> <li>Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board</li> <li>SA Arid Lands Landscape Board</li> <li>Primary Industries and Regions South Australia / SARDI</li> <li>Department for Energy and Mining (Mining Assessments)</li> <li>Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Attorney General's Department</li> <li>Environment Protection Authority</li> <li>SafeWork SA</li> </ul>                                                                                                                       |
|                                              | March<br>April               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Government stakeholder meetings (including elected members briefings)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whyalla City Council</li> <li>Port Augusta City Council</li> <li>Outback Communities Authority</li> <li>Municipal Council of Roxby Downs</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

| Phase | Date/<br>Estimated<br>Timing                         | Activity                                                                                                                                | Stakeholders                                                                                                                            |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|       | Early April                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KAC/Proponent "On Country" visit</li> </ul>                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation</li> </ul>                                                        |
|       | Approx monthly                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder meetings – Traditional Owners</li> </ul>                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kokatha</li> <li>Barngarla</li> </ul>                                                            |
|       | February<br><br>July                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder meetings</li> </ul>                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broader Aboriginal Groups</li> </ul>                                                             |
|       | Early April                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spencer Gulf Cities Meeting</li> </ul>                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEOs and Mayors – Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Augusta Councils</li> </ul>                       |
|       | Ongoing                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial fishing associations meetings</li> </ul>                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prawn Assoc.</li> <li>MFASA</li> <li>Blue Crab Pot Fishers</li> </ul>                            |
|       | July                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local recreational fishers meetings</li> </ul>                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational SA Fishing Association</li> <li>Local marine tourism operators</li> </ul>           |
|       | June                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key Stakeholder meetings – education</li> </ul>                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whyalla TAFE Aboriginal Access Centre</li> <li>Adelaide University</li> <li>UniHub</li> </ul>    |
|       | July                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key Stakeholder meetings – local business</li> </ul>                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whyalla Business and Tourism</li> </ul>                                                          |
|       | July                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key Stakeholder meetings – local community / shack owners</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents (Cowleds/Murninnie)</li> <li>Landholder / Neighbours</li> <li>Local fishers</li> </ul> |
|       | May (Meet the buyer – Port Augusta)                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TACTIC and Office Industry Advocate – attendance at events</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry</li> </ul>                                                                              |
|       | February (Meet the buyer – Whyalla)                  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                         |
|       | Late July (Tactic Conference – Port Augusta)         |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                         |
|       | August (Meet the buyer – Adelaide)                   |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                         |
|       | Early June (Whyalla)<br><br>Late July (Port Augusta) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Information Sessions and pop ups</li> <li>Community pop-ups x 2</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broader community</li> </ul>                                                                     |
|       | June – August                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Water Project EIS Survey (Project sentiment)</li> <li>Market Research Survey</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broader community</li> </ul>                                                                     |

| Phase                                                                | Date/<br>Estimated<br>Timing                                         | Activity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Stakeholders                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                      | May<br>June<br>July                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EDM Update on EIS engagement activities</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interested stakeholders / Broader community</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Phase 2 - EIS Public Consultation (6 Weeks)</b><br><b>Q4 2026</b> | Week 1                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advertisement (The Advertiser and local newspapers)</li> <li>PlanSA and DHUD's YourSAy (including EIS survey)</li> <li>Northern Water website update</li> <li>EDM – Public exhibition announcement</li> <li>Media/Social media</li> <li>Static Displays- Whyalla, Port Augusta, Roxby Downs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All stakeholders and broader community</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                      | Week 2                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community information sessions and pop ups – Port Augusta and Whyalla</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All stakeholders and broader community</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                      | Week 3                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community information session and pop up – Roxby Downs</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All stakeholders and broader community</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                      | Throughout exhibition period (dependent on stakeholder availability) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Government stakeholder meetings (including elected members briefings)</li> <li>Stakeholder meetings – Whyalla, Port Augusta, Far North</li> <li>Traditional Owner Engagement</li> </ul>                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whyalla City Council</li> <li>Port Augusta City Council</li> <li>Outback Communities Authority</li> <li>Municipal Council of Roxby Downs</li> <li>Key Stakeholders e.g. community, business and tourism groups, fishers, landholders, neighbours, School –</li> <li>Kokatha and Barngarla</li> </ul>     |
| <b>Phase 3 – Post EIS exhibition</b><br><b>Q1 2027</b>               | early 2027                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Release of Response and What We Heard documents</li> <li>Undertake evaluation survey</li> <li>Provide project updates</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All stakeholders and broader community</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                      |                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SRG Meeting</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SRG</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                      |                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Government stakeholder meetings (including elected members briefings)</li> <li>Stakeholder meetings – Whyalla, Port Augusta, Far North</li> <li>Traditional Owner Engagement</li> </ul>                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whyalla City Council</li> <li>Port Augusta City Council</li> <li>Outback Communities Authority</li> <li>Municipal Council of Roxby Downs</li> <li>Key Stakeholders TBA e.g. community, business and tourism groups, fishers, landholders, neighbours, School –</li> <li>Kokatha and Barngarla</li> </ul> |

# Engagement to date

Northern Water is committed to early, genuine, inclusive and transparent communication and engagement with all stakeholders. Extensive communication and engagement commenced in 2022 to build project awareness and understanding, and to inform early planning and development of the Project with the objective to manage social risks and build social licence.

Engagement to date has focused on feedback to help identify a location for the proposed desalination plant and alignment of the transfer system pipeline and associated infrastructure while also informing early planning and development, managing social risks and building social licence.

Engagement and communication activities are ongoing, an overview of the engagement activities undertaken to date is outlined below.

Table 4 Engagement and Communications Activities

| Key engagement activities                                             | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cultural Heritage and Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs)          | <p>Northern Water continues to engage with Traditional Owners, the Barngarla and Kokatha peoples as part of the negotiations towards the development of the ILUAs and to progress detailed Aboriginal Cultural Heritage surveys.</p> <p>The outcomes of this engagement and the associated heritage surveys include the identification of cultural heritage constraints and management measures which have informed design development, and other matters of interest such as employment, training and business opportunities, environmental impacts and protection requirements, and cultural expression opportunities. Ongoing engagement is informing the development of Cultural Heritage Management Plans, approaches for embedding employment, training and workforce outcomes and environmental assessment and mitigation measures.</p> <p>This engagement has identified the importance of the Plains Mouse habitat and weed management as well as the protection of the marine environment.</p> |
| Land and lease holder engagement - transfer system pipeline alignment | <p>Determining the transfer system pipeline alignment required engagement and negotiation with anyone directly impacted during both construction and operation. This included pastoral land and lease holders, government land holders, and the traditional owners the Kokatha and Barngarla Peoples. The Northern Water team met with each land or leaseholder individually to determine an alignment with the least impact to their property as possible.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Land and lease holder engagement - access agreements                  | <p>Ongoing land and leaseholder engagement to secure land access agreements for the construction and operation of the desalination plant, transfer pipeline and associated infrastructure. In addition, Northern Water are undertaking regular meetings with landholders to provide project updates, discussions on potential impacts, negotiating access to minimise impact and disturbance.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

| Key engagement activities                                                    | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                              | There are various tenures and rights to the land within the Project footprint with approximately 23 private land and leaseholders, third parties, State Government agencies who manage Crown and pastoral land and the two Aboriginal Native Title Holders. The majority of the Project footprint is Crown land.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Broader engagement with other Aboriginal community groups and organisations. | Broader engagement has commenced with Aboriginal groups and representatives surrounding the physical project footprint that have been identified to have an interest in the Project in addition to the ongoing engagement with Traditional Owners, this included presenting to the Arabana Aboriginal Corporation.                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Stakeholder Reference Group Meetings                                         | <p>Bi-monthly SRG meetings have been occurring since 2022 and comprise of representatives from various industry (fishing, workforce, tourism), conservation and community groups, and regional representatives from State and local government.</p> <p>The objective of these meetings is to provide an open and transparent forum to provide project information and capture local knowledge and priorities from a broad range of regional government and non-government organisations, interest groups and peak bodies.</p> |
| Mullaquana Station SRG Sub-Group meetings                                    | <p>The Mullaquana Station SRG sub-group was established in early 2025 in response to renewed investigations of this location as an option for the desalination plant.</p> <p>The subgroup comprises a smaller membership of the SRG with a specific interest in Mullaquana Station. Northern Water has met with this group several times to capture local insights and inform site assessments.</p>                                                                                                                           |
| Key stakeholder meetings and briefings                                       | <p>Targeted stakeholder meetings are being conducted to respond to key areas of interest and issues raised by the SRG and sub-group, particularly relating to interaction with the marine environment.</p> <p>Meetings are ongoing with all relevant commercial and recreation fishing industry representatives and associations, local commercial and recreational fishers within the Whyalla region, tourism operators, environmental interest groups and conservationists.</p>                                             |
| Resident meetings                                                            | Meetings have been held with the nearest residential shack communities to Mullaquana Station including Murninnie Beach, located approximately 9km south and Cowleds Landing located approximately 5km north of Mullaquana Station.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Cross Government Agency Briefings                                            | Regular Cross Government Agency briefings are held at an executive level, with a focus on information sharing, and risk identification with regards to assessment pathways and criteria, basis of reference design and estimates.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Government agencies and stakeholders                                         | Ongoing individual meetings with Commonwealth, State and local government referral agencies at an operational level, including various branches within the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), EPA,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

| Key engagement activities                 | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                           | Whyalla City Council and both the SA Arid Lands and Eyre Peninsula Landscape Boards.<br><br>These meetings are intended to facilitate discussions around assessment requirements and seek feedback and insights on the methodologies and preliminary findings of our environmental investigations. |
| Industry and business                     | Ongoing engagement is conducted with local businesses and organisations within the region including Aboriginal business stakeholders through targeted meetings with industry representatives and attendance at industry participation events to provide project awareness.                         |
| Events and community information sessions | Northern Water hosts educational events aimed at youth, listening posts, pop-ups at community events and community information sessions with the broader community.                                                                                                                                |

## Project communications

Communication activities have been supported through regular dissemination of information, including electronic Direct Mail (eDM) project updates distributed to approximately 1,120 registered email addresses, as well as updates through social and traditional media channels.

A dedicated project website has served as a centralised source of project information. It provides detailed information that addresses key stakeholder issues and interests through the provision of factsheets, videos, animations, environmental reports and FAQs.

## Key engagement findings

There is a general level of support for the Northern Water Project and its broader strategic objectives. Stakeholders can appreciate the need for the Project and the associated social and economic benefits for the region.

Maintaining project trust and support will require ongoing and regular engagement and demonstration of how any impacts will be managed. Proactive engagement and regular information sharing is of particular importance to existing industry including commercial fishing, aquaculture, tourism and farming, to demonstrate how the Project will not cause adverse impacts to industry, nor any associated economic activity.

Early engagement has provided a detailed understanding of the key concerns, risks and opportunities that need to be addressed through project planning and development. EIS engagement will act as an important mechanism to gather further input to inform project planning, impacts minimisation and enhance benefacts

Key stakeholder feedback has centred on the following key themes:

- **Marine and coastal environment protection**, including potential impacts associated with intake and discharge 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.

Stakeholders consistently highlighted the need for robust assessments, evidence-based decision-making, transparent communication and effective impact management.

Recent sentiment surveys conducted between June-August 2026 indicate a generally positive view of the Project, provided environmental values are protected. Ongoing transparent engagement will remain critical to maintaining stakeholder confidence and informed participation as the Project progresses.

More information on what the Project has heard during engagement, and how it is responding, can be found in the ***Northern Water Engagement Report, September 2026***.

# Engagement evaluation

Engagement is evaluated against how it performs against the Community Engagement Charter Principles. The approach focusses on measuring and benchmarking the engagement against changes in sentiment, and the quantity and content of inquiries, interactions, survey responses, and formal submissions.

Table 5 – Engagement evaluation approach

| Objective<br><i>What are we trying to achieve?</i>                                    | Approach<br><i>What is the approach to achieve it?</i>                                                                     | Measurement<br><i>How are we measuring it?</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Benchmark<br><i>What are we measuring against?</i>                                                                                              | Target<br><i>What does success look like?</i>                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Engagement is genuine</b><br><br>People have confidence in the engagement process. | Stakeholder sentiment surveys undertaken to identify people's confidence in the Project prior to and after EIS exhibition. | Through stakeholder sentiment in the NW project.<br><br>Stakeholder sentiment will be gauged by the engagement interactions and survey responses in Phase 1 – Pre-lodgement and the submissions and engagement interactions in Phase 2 – Public Consultation.<br><br>The sentiment will be analysed in the Engagement Outcome Report. | Stakeholder sentiment for the Northern Water Project in the Public Consultation phase against stakeholder sentiment in the Pre-lodgement phase. | Sentiment for the Northern Water Project remains the same or improves in the second phase. |
| <b>Engagement is inclusive and respectful</b>                                         | Stakeholder analysis was undertaken to identify affected and interested people. The engagement plan and                    | There are zero or minimal survey responses, inquiries or submissions from certain demographics of the                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Responses and sentiment align with what is expected                                                                                             | Questions, concerns and submissions reduce over the engagement phases.                     |

| Objective                                                                        | Approach                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Measurement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Benchmark                                                                     | Target                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>What are we trying to achieve?</i>                                            | <i>What is the approach to achieve it?</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <i>How are we measuring it?</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <i>What are we measuring against?</i>                                         | <i>What does success look like?</i>                                |
| Affected and interested people have the opportunity to participate and be heard. | <p>activities appropriately, proportionately and reasonably considered the engagement and communications needs of all impacted people in the community including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Nations people</li> <li>• Young and elderly people</li> <li>• People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds</li> <li>• People with a disability and/or neurodivergence</li> <li>• People living in remote or isolated areas.</li> </ul> | <p>community, despite the stakeholder analysis identifying them as being highly interested or impacted. (Indicating unsuccessful approach).</p> <p>There are many survey responses, enquiries and submissions from certain demographics within the community. (Indicating unsuccessful approach).</p> <p>If sentiment for the Northern Water Project is lower amongst these demographics than others. (Indicating unsuccessful approach).</p> <p>Measured through the content and quantity of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event attendance</li> <li>• Enquiries</li> <li>• Questions and concerns raised during 1:1 interactions</li> <li>• Survey responses</li> <li>• Formal submissions.</li> </ul> | through the stakeholder analysis.                                             | Sentiment remains the same or improves over the engagement phases. |
| <b>Engagement is fit for purpose</b>                                             | The engagement approach matches the significance of the risk and impacts. The                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Measured through the content and quantity of:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Attendance at engagement events are reflective of expected levels of interest | Zero or minimal submissions received during the public             |

| Objective                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Approach                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Measurement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Benchmark                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Target                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>What are we trying to achieve?</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <i>What is the approach to achieve it?</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>How are we measuring it?</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>What are we measuring against?</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <i>What does success look like?</i>                                                                                                                                                                                |
| The engagement and communication needs of stakeholder and the community will be reasonably considered, and people are effectively engaged and satisfied with the process. People are clear about what is being proposed and how it could affect them.                                                                                                                 | <p>engagement approach is flexible, targeted, scalable and timely.</p> <p>The engagement approach was based on a risk identification and stakeholder analysis methodology. Enabling stakeholders to be categorised into tiers to inform how and when they would be engaged.</p>                                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event attendance</li> <li>• Enquiries</li> <li>• Questions and concerns raised during 1:1 interactions</li> <li>• Survey responses</li> <li>• Formal submissions.</li> </ul>                          | <p>and perceived impact as identified in the stakeholder analysis.</p> <p>The quantity and content of survey responses and enquiries aligns with the risk identification and stakeholder analysis.</p>                                 | <p>consultation on the development assessment.</p> <p>Submissions are informed and justified.</p> <p>Zero ministerial in relation to engagement approach. or the provision of accurate and timely information.</p> |
| <p><b>Engagement is informed and transparent</b></p> <p>People have access to all relevant information at the time it is needed so that they can participate fully. They understand what is happening, why it is happening, what the consequences are and what they can and cannot influence. When decisions are made, the reasons behind them will be explained.</p> | <p>Easy to understand, yet detailed information about Northern Water, relating to the development and environment assessment, will be developed and provided in Phase 1 and continuously updated. This information will be provided on the website and at each engagement event. Information on how to access this information will be provided through direct communication channels, emails, letters, social media posts and eDMs.</p> | <p>Measured through the content and quantity of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enquiries</li> <li>• Questions and concerns raised during 1:1 interactions</li> <li>• Survey responses</li> <li>• Formal submissions.</li> </ul> | <p>The quantity and content of survey responses, enquiries and submissions will indicate whether stakeholders and the community were provided with relevant and timely information and are able to participate in an informed way.</p> | <p>Responses, submissions and inquiries are informed and justified.</p>                                                                                                                                            |

## Appendix D-2:

### Engagement Outcomes Report

# Engagement Outcomes Report

## Northern Water Project

September 2026



**Government of South Australia**  
Department for Infrastructure  
and Transport

**Build.  
Move.  
Connect.**

## Disclaimer

While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that this document is correct at the time of publication, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, its agencies, instrumentalities, employees and contractors disclaim any and all liability to any person in respect to anything or the consequence of anything done or omitted to be done in reliance upon the whole or any part of this document.

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Country throughout South Australia 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.

**Build. Move. Connect.**

by Jaylene Ware

Wirangu, Kokatha and Antakirinja  
Matu-Yankunytjatjara Artist



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# Acknowledgement

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We acknowledge that the Northern Water Project is being developed on the traditional lands of the Barngarla and Kokatha peoples, and we recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects Elders past and present and extend that respect to emerging Elders. We acknowledge the significant contributions, knowledge and stewardship by Traditional Owners, which have helped inform the development of the Project.

We thank all community members, stakeholders and organisations who have contributed feedback. We appreciate the time and input of the Northern Water Stakeholder Reference Group and other key stakeholders for their ongoing and constructive involvement. Their feedback and local knowledge have been invaluable and will continue to inform future phases of the Project.

# Executive Summary

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Northern Water is committed to early, transparent and accountable engagement with stakeholders and the community. Since 2022, engagement and communication activities have supported key project milestones including site identification, investigations, reference design development and environmental assessment. Feedback has directly influenced the Project by identifying environmental, social, cultural heritage and economic considerations.

While stakeholders generally support the importance of providing a climate-independent water supply for the Upper Spencer Gulf and Far North, support remains contingent on demonstrating that environmental, cultural heritage, community and industry impacts can be effectively avoided, minimised or managed.

This report summarises engagement undertaken between November 2024 and August 2026 to inform the Project's reference design, technical investigations and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

During this period, Northern Water delivered a comprehensive stakeholder engagement program both in scale and geographic reach, undertaking approximately 381 engagement activities across the project area. This included engagement with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal stakeholders, all levels of government, communities, landholders, residents, industry groups, environmental organisations and other key stakeholders. Public communications were distributed to approximately 1,120 registered stakeholders.

Stakeholder feedback centred on the following key themes:

- **Marine and coastal environment protection**, including potential impacts associated with intake and discharge 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.

Stakeholders consistently highlighted the need for robust assessments, evidence-based decision-making, transparent communication and effective impact management.

Recent sentiment surveys conducted between June-August 2026 indicate a generally positive view of the Project, provided environmental values are protected. Ongoing transparent engagement will remain critical to maintaining stakeholder confidence and informed participation as the Project progresses.

# Introduction

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## Purpose of this report

This Engagement Outcomes Report summarises engagement undertaken between November 2024 and August 2026 to inform technical investigations and preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and planning for the EIS exhibition period.

It has been prepared to support the Northern Water Impact Assessed Development Application and EIS by documenting the engagement activities and stakeholder and community perspectives on social, environmental and economic impacts and opportunities associated with the Project.

## Project Overview

### Need for the Project

Northern Water aims to provide a secure, climate-resilient water source for industry located in South Australia's Upper Spencer Gulf and Far North. This will enable the growth of industries and key mining resources crucial for contributing to decarbonisation initiatives, sustainability and unlocking long term economic prosperity for South Australia.

### Project description

The Project proposes the construction and operation of a 51 GL/year (or approximately 140 ML/Day) seawater reverse osmosis desalination plant located at Mullaquana Station on the Upper Spencer Gulf.

Key components include an intake pump station, and intake and outfall tunnels extending beneath the seabed into the Spencer Gulf and diffuser structures for discharge of return water into the Spencer Gulf.

Water will be transported via a transfer system comprising approximately 360 km of main transfer pipeline, an approximate 46 km lateral branch to the Carrapateena mine site, and a series of associated transfer pump stations and storage tanks to transfer desalinated water to the delivery point at the Olympic Dam copper-gold mine. Supporting electricity infrastructure includes high-voltage powerlines and both network and facility substations, to service the desalination plant and associated transfer pump stations.

Figure 1 Project location



# Engagement overview

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## Engagement objectives

The key objectives of the engagement included:

- communicate clearly to build understanding of the Project, the EIS process and the associated benefits
- provide engagement opportunities for the Traditional Owners, stakeholders, community and the public before and during public release of the EIS
- identify and address issues early through targeted engagement with stakeholders
- clearly explaining technical investigations, assessment outcomes and how impacts will be avoided where possible, mitigated and managed
- build understanding of the Project's environmental commitments by addressing key concerns such as how desalination works and how the marine environment will be protected
- foster trusted relationships with Traditional Owners, communities, stakeholders and government agencies through ongoing and regular engagement
- demonstrate how feedback has influenced decisions to close the engagement loop.

Engagement has informed the refinement of environmental investigations, project planning, mitigation measures and stakeholder communication materials throughout the Project's development.

As the Project progresses through the EIS and development assessment process, ongoing engagement will continue to focus on providing accessible, evidence-based information, supporting stakeholder participation, and maintaining transparent communication regarding environmental investigations, assessment outcomes, mitigation measures and future project activities.

## Engagement approach

The key engagement approach for the project is to build project awareness and understanding, informing project planning and development and to supporting social licence through early, genuine and transparent consultation.

The Project adopted a multi-channel and iterative approach combining structured forums, targeted stakeholder meetings, direct community engagement and ongoing project communications. This ensured information was shared and feedback was gathered in ways that were appropriate to different audiences and stages of project development.

## Engagement activities

Engagement was extensive in both scale and geographic reach, delivered across the Project Area throughout the Upper Spencer Gulf and Far North ensuring opportunities for participation by communities and stakeholders with an interest in, or a connection to the Project.

Between November 2024 and August 2026, Northern Water recorded approximately 381 engagement activities were undertaken with stakeholders and the broader community in relation to:

- Desalination plant site options and preferred site investigations
- Announcement of the preferred desalination plant site
- Aboriginal Cultural heritage matters, Native Title and Indigenous Land Use Agreement processes with Traditional Owners
- Local and Aboriginal employment, business, procurement and industry participation opportunities
- State and Commonwealth environmental assessment processes
- Land access and property matters
- Environmental investigations and technical studies including focus on marine and terrestrial values
- General project enquiries and project updates.

Figure 2 Summary of engagement and communication activities



Table 1 Summary of engagement and communication activities

| Key engagement activities                                                   | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cultural heritage and Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs)                | <p>Northern Water continues to engage with the Traditional Owners, the Barngarla and Kokatha peoples, as part of negotiations toward the development of the Indigenous Land Use Agreements LUAs and to work collaboratively to undertake detailed Aboriginal Cultural Heritage surveys.</p> <p>The outcomes of this engagement and associated heritage surveys included identification of cultural heritage constraints and management measures that informed design development. The engagement also identified matters of interest such as employment, training and business opportunities; environmental impacts and protection requirements; and opportunities for cultural expression.</p> <p>Ongoing engagement informed the development of Cultural Heritage Management Plans, approaches to embedding employment, training and workforce outcomes, and environmental assessment and mitigation measures.</p> |
| Land and leaseholder engagement                                             | <p>The Project footprint includes multiple tenure types and rights, involving approximately 23 private land and leaseholders, third parties, State Government agencies managing Crown and Pastoral land, and two Aboriginal Native Title Holders. The majority of the Project footprint is located on Crown Land.</p> <p>Land and leaseholder commenced early and is in ongoing. Key areas of interest included land access agreements for investigations and survey work for the desalination plant, transfer pipeline and associated infrastructure. Regular communication is undertaken with land and lease holders to provide project updates, discuss potential impacts and negotiate access arrangements to minimise disturbance.</p>                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Broader engagement with other Aboriginal community groups and organisations | <p>It is recognised that the Project may be of interest to Aboriginal people and communities beyond the two recognised Native Title holders, Barngala and Kokatha. Aboriginal groups with traditional lands surrounding the physical project footprint include the Adnyamathanha, Arabana, Dieri, Gawler Ranges, Kuyani, Narungga, Nauo, and Nukunu peoples.</p> <p>Broader engagement with Aboriginal groups and representatives surrounding the Project footprint has commenced and is ongoing as the project progresses.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) Meetings                                  | <p>Bimonthly SRG meetings commenced from 2022 and are ongoing and comprise of representatives from industry (including fishing, workforce and tourism), conservation and community groups, and regional representatives from State and local government.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

| Key engagement activities                                  | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                            | The meetings provide an open and transparent forum to share project information and capture local knowledge, priorities and concerns from a broad range of government and non- government organisations, interest groups and peak bodies.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Mullaquana Station SRG Sub-Group meetings                  | <p>A Mullaquana Station SRG sub-group was established in early 2025 in response to renewed investigations of this location as an option for the desalination plant.</p> <p>The sub-group comprised a smaller membership of the SRG with a specific interest in Mullaquana Station. Northern Water met with this group on multiple occasions to capture local insights and inform site assessments.</p>                                                                                                                                                  |
| Key stakeholder meetings and briefings                     | Stakeholder meetings were held with commercial and recreational fishing representatives and associations, local fishers within the Whyalla region, tourism operators, environmental interest groups, business and tourism groups, industry groups, educational groups and conservation organisations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Resident meetings                                          | Meetings were held with the residential shack communities closest to Mullaquana Station, including Murninnie Beach (approximately 9 km south) and Cowleds Landing (approximately 5 km north), to discuss potential impacts and provide project information.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Cross-government agency briefings                          | Regular cross-government agency briefings were held at an executive level, with a focus on information sharing and identification of risks related to assessment pathways, assessment criteria and reference design assumptions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Government stakeholder meetings                            | Individual meetings were held with Commonwealth, State and local government referral agencies at an operational level, including branches of the Department for Environment and Water, the EPA, Whyalla City Council, Port Augusta City Council, Roxby Council, Outback Communities Authority, Spencer Gulf Cities and the SA Arid Lands and Eyre Peninsula Landscape Boards. These meetings supported discussion of assessment requirements and enabled feedback on proposed methodologies and preliminary findings from environmental investigations. |
| Industry and business events and briefings                 | Engagement was undertaken with local businesses and regional organisations, including Aboriginal businesses, through targeted meetings with industry representatives and attendance at industry and business participation events. The aim of this engagement was to build project awareness and discuss potential opportunities with industry.                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Broader community information sessions, pop-ups and events | Community engagement events were held at targeted locations with high community foot traffic at key project milestones. These included pop-up information sessions and drop-ins at community events, shopping centres and other public spaces, as well as education-focused activities and listening posts designed to maximise accessibility and informal participation                                                                                                                                                                                |

| Key engagement activities                           | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pre-EIS lodgement online survey and interactive map | <p>An online survey and interactive map gathered feedback on key aspects of the project to support the EIS planning between 2 June to 9 August 2026.</p> <p>A pre-EIS lodgement survey and map were available online via the Department of Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) Social Point platform between 2 June to 9 August 2026. It was promoted, the Project website, social media channels, direct email distribution to registered stakeholders, project updates and community engagement activities.</p> <p>The survey and interactive map were designed to gain insights on community values, concerns and priorities in relations to the project. A total of 120 people responded to the survey with 10 people leaving a comment on the interactive map.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Market research sentiment survey                    | <p>An independent social and market research company was engaged to conduct a market research sentiment survey to measure awareness, understanding and perceptions of the Northern Water Project. The sentiment survey targeted a collection sample of 345 people across Whyalla, the broader project area (including Port Augusta and Roxby Downs), and Adelaide Metro. The collection timeframe was between 3 July to 10 August 2026. The primary method was an online geo-targeted survey which was supplemented by telephone interviews in Whyalla to strengthen representation of older and less digitally connected residents.</p> <p>The Project online survey, map and sentiment survey findings provided additional insights along with the broader qualitative engagement outcomes, including meetings, submissions, correspondence and targeted stakeholder discussions, to support a balanced understanding of stakeholder perspectives.</p>                                                                                    |
| Project communications                              | <p>Engagement activities are supported through regular dissemination of project information across multiple channels, including electronic Direct Mail (eDM) via 1120 registered stakeholders, direct stakeholder correspondence, the project website, social media channels, community events and enquiry management processes.</p> <p>Key stakeholders were also provided with project updates through targeted correspondence, including direct emails, meetings, phone calls and letter mail outs. Communication activities included approximately 122 meetings, 54 phone calls and 24 events and community engagement activities over the reporting period.</p> <p>A project website served as a centralised source of project information and provides stakeholders with access to project updates, fact sheets, videos, animations, environmental reports and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Website content was regularly updated to reflect project milestones, investigation outcomes and emerging stakeholder interests.</p> |

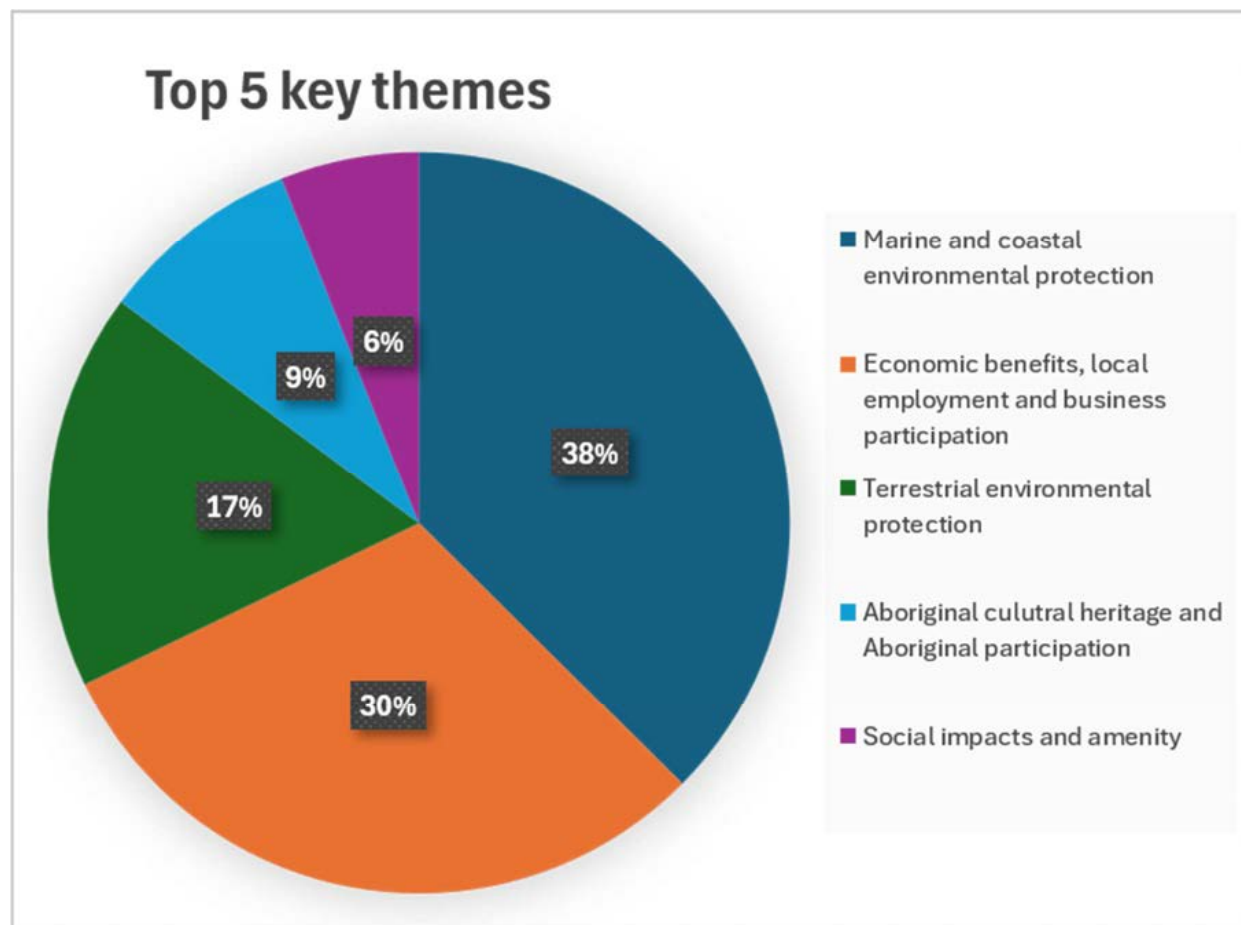
| Key engagement activities | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Project enquiries         | Project enquiries from the broader community and key stakeholders were facilitated through the Northern Water Project email address, northernwater@sa.gov.au and a dedicated phone number, 1300 893 196. Records demonstrate that enquiry management formed an ongoing component of engagement activities, with both inbound and outbound communications undertaken to respond to stakeholder issues. |

# What we heard

## Key themes

Analysis of stakeholder feedback identified the top 5 key themes raised throughout the engagement period.

Figure 3 Top 5 key themes



The following themes were most raised:

- **Marine and coastal environment protection**, including potential impacts associated with intake and discharge 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.

Stakeholders also frequently raised questions regarding the technical investigations, including scientific studies, modelling methodologies, environmental monitoring, impact assessment criteria and mitigation measures, as well as project timing, environmental assessment processes, staging and estimated construction timeframes.

The information shared through engagement informed ongoing project planning and design development, environmental investigations, mitigation planning, assessment methodologies and the focus of technical studies supporting the EIS. Engagement findings also informed the development of communication materials and the refinement of stakeholder engagement approaches throughout the project lifecycle.

## Marine and coastal environment protection

### What we heard

Protection of the Upper Spencer Gulf marine and coastal environment was the primary issue raised throughout engagement and was consistently identified as the highest priority and key community value.

Stakeholders identified the marine environment not only as an ecological asset, but as the foundation for regional livelihoods including fisheries, tourism and local identity. While many stakeholders supported the strategic need for the Project, they consistently identified potential marine impacts, particularly during operations, as the key factor in determining the proposal's acceptability.

Concerns were more strongly focused on operational impacts than construction-related concerns, reflecting their long-term nature and perceived direct relationship to ongoing marine ecosystem health.

Key concerns included:

- potential impacts on marine nurseries and habitats, including intertidal flats, mangroves and seagrass meadows
- perceived impacts of concentrated seawater discharge and associated salinity changes in the Spencer Gulf
- potential entrainment of eggs, larvae and juvenile species into the intake and the impact that this may have on fishing and aquaculture industries
- concerns around potential temperature changes and broader ecological effects on marine habitats
- perceptions of the cumulative impacts, particularly in relation to Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) events and existing ecosystem pressures in the Upper Spencer Gulf.

Stakeholders highlighted the need for the Project to appropriately consider local tidal conditions and potential impacts on Giant Australian Cuttlefish migration and breeding areas including noise and vibration impacts.

Commercial fishing representatives emphasised:

- the sensitivity of prawn stocks and nurseries and habitats
- the importance of robust baseline data
- exclusion zones and the interactions with key seasonal fishing times (November to June)
- the need for ongoing monitoring and adaptive management of operations.

Recreational fishing stakeholders similarly highlighted the broader ecological vulnerability of the Upper Spencer Gulf as a significant breeding and nursery environment.

Stakeholders also sought clarification on how the preferred site decision should be understood, given earlier perceptions that alternative locations, such as Cape Hardy, may have posed lower marine impact risks.

Across stakeholder groups, there was a strong expectation that:

- environmental performance would be transparently monitored
- data would be shared in a timely manner
- adaptive management measures would be implemented if unanticipated impacts arise or monitoring results fall outside predicted ranges.

## How we responded

Northern Water responded to these concerns through targeted and ongoing engagement on marine issues, supported by a comprehensive program of marine investigations informed by stakeholder feedback.

Northern Water met regularly with the SRG, Traditional Owners, Aboriginal groups, commercial and recreational fishing representatives, local fishers, nearby residents, tourism representatives, cuttlefish experts and relevant government agencies to discuss marine risks and mitigation strategies.

Preliminary findings from marine and environmental investigations were shared with stakeholders, including fishing, aquaculture and tourism representatives, to support transparent discussions regarding coexistence, cumulative impacts, and how potential risks could be avoided, minimised or managed. This approach recognised that protecting existing industries and environmental values was integral to maintaining stakeholder confidence and supporting credible local economic participation outcomes.

The marine studies described in the draft EIS were comprehensive and included:

- marine and intertidal surveys
- larval surveys
- mangrove condition surveys
- benthic and seagrass health surveys
- prawn recruitment surveys
- epibenthic and infauna surveys
- site-specific water quality testing
- vertical water profiling
- ecotoxicity review

- Giant Australian Cuttlefish risk assessment.

The work was also independently peer reviewed by experts from the University of Adelaide, CSIRO and UNSW to ensure a robust level of assessment.

The Project has also been carefully designed with the objective of avoiding, minimising and managing impacts in accordance with regulatory and legislative environmental requirements. Protecting the marine and coastal values has shaped the Projects design. This included:

- positioning the seawater desalination plant inland and using underground tunnel boring to protect sand dunes and the unique coastal environment
- locating the seawater intake in sufficiently deep water to allow safe vessel passage and avoid mangroves, reducing impacts on valuable habitats
- designing the seawater intake to allow marine life to swim in, out and around the structure
- undertaking marine hydrodynamic modelling to understand the diffuser's performance and inform its design. Modelling predicts the return water will disperse a few hundred metres from the diffuser and well before it reaches the Giant Australian Cuttlefish breeding area (35km north of Mullaquana Station).

## Economic benefits, local employment and business participation

### What we heard

Stakeholders generally support the Project due to its potential to drive significant regional economic growth, future industrial development, employment and improved water security in the Upper Spencer Gulf and Far North. However, support was contingent on delivering tangible local employment and business participation outcomes, while also protecting industries such as commercial fishing, aquaculture, tourism, agriculture and associated local supply chains, which are viewed as integral to regional economy and identity.

Employment, procurement and business participation were the most prominent themes in the feedback received. Stakeholders placed strong emphasis on maximising local workforce participation and ensuring meaningful access for local and regional businesses throughout procurement and delivery. This included expectations around early visibility of procurement opportunities, reasonable contract packaging to enable local businesses to compete, and clear requirements for contractors to prioritise local suppliers and workers wherever practicable.

Stakeholders also raised concerns about the distribution of economic benefits and the potential impacts of a construction workforce influx on receiving communities. These concerns included pressure on housing and accommodation availability, local services, infrastructure capacity and community amenity. There was a strong expectation that the Project would contribute to long-term regional resilience and economic capacity beyond the construction phase, rather than delivering only short-term benefits that diminish once major works are complete.

## How we responded

Northern Water responded through targeted engagement with business, workforce and industry stakeholders to better understand regional capacity, supply chain readiness and opportunities to maximise local employment, procurement and business participation.

Engagement activities included:

- industry associations and representative bodies meetings and presentations
- local businesses and tourism groups meetings and presentations
- workforce development bodies and training organisations meetings and presentations
- organisations specialising in Aboriginal employment and procurement meetings and presentations
- multiple 'Meet the Buyer' events and conference booths facilitated through TACTIC, the ICN and the Office for the Industry Advocate in multiple locations including Whyalla, Port Augusta, Port Pirie and Roxby Downs, Adelaide
- local and regional supplier tours

Businesses were also encouraged to register with ICN to support visibility of local capability and future involvement in project delivery.

This work was intended to inform decisions regarding procurement design, timing and contract packaging, as well as expectations placed on delivery partners relating to local workforce utilisation, training outcomes and reporting on local participation performance.

Engagement also supported a clearer understanding of regional constraints, including labour availability, accommodation capacity and service pressures, so that potential impacts could be anticipated and managed.

Future engagement in this area will continue to clearly distinguish between potential economic opportunities and confirmed commitments, while progressively demonstrating how local employment, procurement and business participation objectives will be translated into measurable outcomes. Ongoing engagement will also be important to show that the Project's socio-economic assessment considers both benefits and risks, including impacts on existing industries, services, housing availability and overall regional liveability.

During construction and operation of the Project, a Local Industry Engagement Plan will be prepared detailing the approach to address targets for local and regional industry participation.

## Terrestrial environmental protection

### What we heard

Stakeholders raised strong concerns about terrestrial environmental impacts, particularly in relation to native vegetation, flora and fauna, habitat connectivity and hydrological systems. While terrestrial issues have not received the same level of public attention as marine impacts, they remain important to regulators, conservation stakeholders, local communities and those concerned about cumulative environmental pressure across the region.

Stakeholder discussion focused heavily on construction-related impacts, reflecting the extent to which terrestrial disturbance would be concentrated during site preparation and installation works.

Key terrestrial issues included:

- the need to minimise native vegetation clearance and habitat fragmentation
- protect threatened species and Threatened Ecological Communities
- maintain ecological connectivity and biodiversity corridors
- avoid impacts to surface water flows, drainage lines and groundwater systems
- manage acid sulphate soils where present
- protect wetlands and migratory bird habitats
- ensure effective erosion and sediment control during construction.

Regulators and agencies particularly emphasised the importance of managing native vegetation clearance, preventing impacts to watercourses, controlling sediment and runoff, and avoiding the spread of invasive species, including Buffel grass and other declared weeds.

Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of using existing disturbed corridors where practicable, reducing the footprint of construction activities, and ensuring that rehabilitation and revegetation are undertaken to an appropriate standard following construction.

Environmental agencies highlighted offset requirements, EPBC listed species and communities, water-affecting activities, wastewater and stormwater management, weed and pest management and the need to assess cumulative terrestrial impacts in combination with other regional developments.

## How we responded

Northern Water undertook extensive seasonal terrestrial ecological investigations, including vegetation and habitat mapping, threatened species surveys and hydrological assessments, as part of environmental investigations and design development.

Engagement with stakeholders informed investigation priorities, methodologies and areas of interest. Preliminary findings were shared with stakeholders including DEW branches, the Native Vegetation Branch, the EPA, Councils and Local Landscape Boards, to review methodologies, clarify approval pathways and identify any additional investigation, mitigation or management measures required.

Environmental findings were also shared with the Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) and Traditional Owners to ensure local knowledge and values informed planning and design decisions.

The Project has adopted an avoidance and mitigation hierarchy in route selection and design, refined construction methodologies to reduce environmental impacts where feasible, and developed measures addressing flora, fauna, threatened species, weed hygiene, biosecurity, erosion and sediment control, and rehabilitation of disturbed areas following pipeline installation.

Stakeholders expect construction impacts to be anticipated, minimised and managed appropriately, with clear and transparent communication provided before works commence.

# Aboriginal cultural heritage protection and Aboriginal participation

## What we heard

Aboriginal cultural heritage protection as well Aboriginal participation were important issues raised by for Traditional Owner groups, including the Barngarla and Kokatha peoples, as well as surrounding Aboriginal groups, conservation groups, key stakeholders and representative organisations.

The protection of cultural heritage and culturally and environmentally sensitive water sources, particularly the Great Artesian Basin (GAB) and associated culturally significant springs, was a key priority raised by several stakeholders, including Aboriginal groups and conservation organisations.

Aboriginal groups who are connected to the cultural springs, expressed strong interest in the extent to which the Project could reduce long-term reliance on GAB groundwater. These groups along with conservation groups highlighted a desire for a transition away from GAB water extraction, citing the importance of protecting culturally significant springs and supporting long-term water sustainability outcomes.

Feedback consistently emphasised that the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage must be embedded in project planning, design, construction and operation.

Key issues raised included:

- avoidance of impacts to culturally significant places
- landscapes and waterways
- early involvement in cultural heritage assessments
- incorporation of Aboriginal knowledge of Country
- culturally appropriate protocols during field investigations and construction activities
- long-term protection and management of cultural values.

There was also strong interest in ensuring Aboriginal engagement included broader Aboriginal groups, organisations and businesses with cultural, environmental and regional interests in the Project.

Stakeholders additionally expressed interest in Aboriginal employment including expectations that Aboriginal participation and procurement pathways should prioritise local South Australian Aboriginal businesses and communities wherever practicable.

## How we responded

In addition to the formal Native Title and ILUA negotiations with the Barngarla and Kokatha peoples, including cultural heritage surveys and broader Traditional Owner engagement processes, Northern Water also engaged with surrounding Aboriginal groups.

The project team has established formal and ongoing relationships with the Barngarla and Kokatha Traditional Owner groups through agreements, cultural heritage survey collaboration and structured negotiation processes. Formal agreements were established to guide engagement and ILUA

negotiations, including decision-making processes, funding and administration arrangements, project-specific negotiation pathways, and cultural heritage survey and monitoring protocols.

Engagement is ongoing with Aboriginal groups beyond the formal Traditional Owner groups associated with the Project footprint, including organisations representing the Adnyamathanha, Arabana, Dieri, Gawler Ranges, Kuyani, Narungga, Nauo and Nukunu peoples.

Northern Water continues to communicate the Project's role in providing an alternative, climate-independent water source, while noting any future reduction in groundwater abstraction from the GAB would be determined through decisions made by individual water users and the operation of separate water allocation, licensing and regulatory frameworks. The Northern Water Project does not itself alter groundwater extraction entitlements, groundwater allocation limits or groundwater management arrangements.

To maximise economic opportunities during construction and operation, many targeted industry engagement activities were undertaken prior and during the procurement with the two shortlisted consortiums including:

- establishment of the Industry Capability Network register for the Project, with specific recognition of Aboriginal businesses in the region
- engagement with Aboriginal employment organisations and training providers
- attendance at multiple industry 'Meet the Buyer' events where Aboriginal business participated
- delivering a Tactical Advantage Program in partnership with TACTIC to support local suppliers to increase capability for participation in major projects
- delivering a cultural competency program in partnership with Regional Development Australia Eyre Peninsula held in Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Lincoln.

Engagement activities provided valuable insights into the opportunities and barriers affecting Aboriginal business and workforce participation in major projects which has guided approaches to Aboriginal participation targets for the project.

An Aboriginal Employment Strategy will be prepared outlining how the Project will achieve opportunities for businesses, training, employment and retention of Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people during construction and operation of the Project. Specific performance targets are set as part of the Tailored Industry Participation Plan (TIPP) and to ensure participation obligations will be met as part of the ILUAs with the Barngala and Kokatha Traditional Owners.

## Social and amenity impacts

### What we heard

Social and amenity impacts as well as tangible community benefits were primarily raised by nearby residents, shack owners and the local Councils within the Upper Spencer Gulf, particularly during construction phase of the project.

While these impacts were generally understood to be temporary in nature, stakeholders emphasised that poorly managed construction impacts could affect quality of life, community wellbeing and perceptions of the Project.

Key issues related to:

- potential impact of increased construction traffic and heavy vehicle movements on local and regional roads, including road safety, access and congestion. Concerns were raised regarding interactions with agricultural traffic, tourist movements and daily commuting routes, especially near townships and key access corridors.
- potential noise, dust and vibration associated with earthworks, tunnelling activities, vehicle movements and construction plant were also identified as concerns, particularly for nearby residents, shack owners and other sensitive land uses
- potential landscape and visual amenity concerns regarding temporary construction lighting, visual impacts associated with construction infrastructure and night works, and the potential disruption of local landscape character and coastal amenity
- workforce accommodation pressures and broader community impacts associated with construction activity including flow-on effects for housing availability, short-term accommodation, local services, infrastructure and community facilities during peak construction periods.
- community benefits for the communities impacted by construction activities.

Some stakeholders noted that cumulative amenity impacts could become more pronounced when considered alongside other regional projects and seasonal population increases, particularly if activities were not appropriately coordinated and communicated.

Local councils and other regional stakeholders also identified potential workforce accommodation pressures and associated flow-on effects for housing availability, short-term accommodation, local services, infrastructure and community facilities during peak construction periods. Some stakeholders noted that cumulative amenity impacts could become more pronounced when considered alongside other regional projects and seasonal population increases, particularly if activities were not appropriately coordinated and communicated.

Overall, stakeholders indicated that amenity impacts were likely to be manageable, provided they were identified early, mitigated appropriately and supported by clear, timely and transparent communication regarding the nature, duration and timing of construction activities.

## How we responded

Northern Water responded by continuing to refine construction methodologies through environmental investigation, technical studies and design development, and by assessing traffic, environmental, social, visual and amenity impacts through the EIS process. Consideration was given to issues raised by nearby residents, shack owners and the Whyalla City Council regarding the management of temporary construction impacts and potential cumulative pressures on local infrastructure and services.

This included a detailed assessment of:

- Construction traffic routes, timing and volumes
- Traffic interactions with local, agricultural and tourist movements
- Noise, dust and vibration impacts
- Visual and lighting effects
- Potential pressures on housing, accommodation and local services

- Cumulative impacts associated with concurrent regional projects and seasonal activity.

The Project indicated that construction planning would incorporate measures to avoid or minimise amenity impacts where practicable, supported by targeted management plans. These included traffic and transport management measures to maintain safety and access, noise and dust controls, limitations on working hours where appropriate, lighting design to minimise unnecessary spill and glare, and workforce accommodation strategies intended to reduce pressure on local housing, accommodation and community services. Consideration was also given to maintaining local access, minimising disruption to nearby residents and sensitive receivers, and protecting local landscape and coastal amenity values where practicable.

A key engagement outcome was that amenity impacts were generally viewed as manageable, provided they are identified early, appropriately mitigated and communicated transparently before construction begins. Ongoing engagement will remain important to maintain community confidence as construction planning and delivery are refined. The Project will also deliver in consultation with key stakeholders and the community meaningful and tangible community benefits, particularly during the project's construction phase.

## Traditional Owner engagement

Engagement activities with both Traditional Owner groups, Barngarla and Kokatha have been ongoing since 2022. Approximately 275km of the transfer pipeline system and associated infrastructure is proposed to be located within the boundaries of the Kokatha Determination Area. The desalination plant and remaining pipeline and associated infrastructure would be located within the boundaries of the Barngarla Determination Area. The project footprint contains areas of cultural significance to both Traditional Owner groups.

The approach to this engagement has been grounded in the principle of Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC). Early engagement included briefings with both groups and their legal representatives and focused on build an understanding of the project context, opportunities, areas of interest and agreeing approaches for ongoing engagement and collaboration including to develop Native Title consent pathways, through the negotiation of Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs).

To guide these negotiations formal agreements have been established with both Traditional Owner groups. These agreements set out project engagement and the ILUA negotiation processes, including processes for:

- Working collaboratively, including setting administrative arrangements, resourcing and funding
- Negotiating project specific Indigenous Land Use Agreements; and
- Preliminary cultural heritage management protocols to progress cultural heritage surveys and monitoring of preliminary activities.

Site surveys have been undertaken in partnership with Traditional Owners to identify, preserve and protect areas of cultural significance. Survey findings are used to inform project planning and mitigate risks related to cultural heritage.

Other key priority areas for ongoing negotiation and engagement include social and economic benefits.

## Kokatha Traditional Owners

In March 2026, the Kokatha negotiation committee held an on-country meeting to the present to the Northern Water project team and the two consortiums.

A comprehensive presentation was given with the purpose to increase understanding of Kokatha culture, heritage, governance and aspirations, recognising their role as Traditional Owners and discussing opportunities for collaboration, cultural heritage management and participation in the Project.

Kokatha has also provided names to recognise custodianship of the land and to help keep their language alive. The names for some of the above ground infrastructure includes:

- **Kalaya** meaning emu for the Kootaberra pump station;
- **Mangata** meaning wild peach or quandong for Oakden Hills;
- **Bimba** which is the original name for the area and for the pine for the Pimba storage tanks.

## Barngarla Traditional Owners

Barngala has ongoing Native Title and Cultural Heritage interests, addressed through the ILUA process, which sets out commitments and processes around heritage surveys and monitoring and aligned activities.

Engagement with the Barngarla Traditional Owners is ongoing and to date they have expressed specific interest in the EIS assessments and studies. Of particular importance is the protection of the marine environment including the Giant Cuttlefish and ensuring that the operational aspects of the plant to not have any adverse impacts to the Upper Spencer Gulf.

Barngala's heritage team has worked closely with the Northern Water heritage team to conduct heritage surveys that have influenced the location of the desalination plant and sections of the pipeline in their Native Title Determination areas.

Opportunities for cultural recognition on above ground infrastructure will be explored as engagement progresses.

## Key stakeholder group themes

Engagement activities undertaken have provided stakeholders with opportunities to share feedback through meetings, workshops, briefings, correspondence, surveys and written submissions. Feedback has been received from a broad range of stakeholder groups, including landholders, industry representatives, Traditional Owners and Aboriginal organisations, commercial and recreational fishing interests, tourism operators, conservation organisations and the broader community.

The key themes raised through engagement activities are summarised in the table below. The themes identified reflect matters of stakeholder interest, concern and opportunity relating to the Project and have informed ongoing investigations, engagement activities, project planning and environmental assessment processes.

Table 2 Key themes by stakeholder group

| Stakeholder Group              | Key themes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Land holders and lease holders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of local amenity, landscape character and the relatively undeveloped nature of coastal areas</li> <li>• Potential impacts to marine environments, fisheries and local recreational and commercial fishing activities</li> <li>• Importance of transparent communication regarding environmental investigations, marine modelling and mitigation measures</li> <li>• Interest in understanding potential impacts to marine species and habitats, including cuttlefish and key fish species</li> <li>• Expectations regarding timely, accessible and locally appropriate communication and engagement activities</li> <li>• Preference for face-to-face engagement and direct communication with local residents and shack owner communities</li> <li>• Concerns regarding field investigation activities, including access management, behaviour of contractors and minimising disturbance to local areas</li> <li>• Interest in understanding potential future opportunities associated with water supply and regional water security</li> <li>• Recognition of the importance of maintaining ongoing engagement with local landholders, leaseholders and coastal communities throughout the assessment process.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Industry – commercial Fishing  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of survey and commercial fishing licence areas, aquaculture operations and access to key fishing grounds within the Upper Spencer Gulf including potential exclusion zones of the marine infrastructure and associated impacts.</li> <li>• Potential impacts to marine ecosystems, fisheries productivity, nursery habitats and ecologically important areas, including mangroves, seagrass beds and intertidal environments</li> <li>• Concerns regarding potential impacts to key commercial species and recruitment processes, including prawns, snapper, whiting, calamari, blue swimmer crab and cuttlefish</li> <li>• Recognition of the existing pressures on the marine environment and fishing industry associated with algal bloom events and broader environmental change</li> <li>• Importance of robust baseline marine investigations, seasonal surveys and transparent sharing of technical information and monitoring data</li> <li>• Confidence in hydrodynamic modelling, salinity dispersion modelling, entrainment assessments and diffuser design to demonstrate impacts can be effectively managed</li> <li>• Interest in understanding the scale, location and operational implications of marine infrastructure exclusion zones</li> <li>• Importance of minimising impacts through ongoing design refinement, construction planning and adaptive environmental management. This includes co-ordination with the seasonality of commercial fishing operations during construction and marine investigations. For example, the prawn fishing period is typically from November to June in the Upper Spencer Gulf.</li> <li>• Interest in independent peer review of marine investigations and ongoing operational monitoring to support confidence in assessment outcomes</li> </ul> |

| Stakeholder Group               | Key themes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest in opportunities to participate in habitat restoration, marine enhancement and nature positive initiatives associated with the Project</li> <li>• Desire for continued consultation throughout the EIS and assessment process, including opportunities to review and discuss technical findings and marine investigation outcomes.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Industry – Recreational Fishing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of the Upper Spencer Gulf marine ecosystem and key recreational fishing areas</li> <li>• Potential impacts to ecologically and recreationally important species, including King George whiting, squid, blue swimmer crab and cuttlefish</li> <li>• Protection of Giant Australian Cuttlefish migration past the desalination plant</li> <li>• Confidence in hydrodynamic and salinity modelling, including consideration of cumulative and long-term environmental change within the Gulf</li> <li>• Transparency, accessibility and timely sharing of environmental monitoring data and investigation results</li> <li>• Consideration of lessons learned from existing desalination infrastructure and monitoring programs within South Australia</li> <li>• Potential impacts of discharge plumes on marine habitats, breeding grounds and fish behaviour</li> <li>• Importance of ongoing marine ecology investigations, monitoring and adaptive management</li> <li>• Interest in opportunities for reef rehabilitation, habitat restoration and broader marine enhancement initiatives associated with the Project</li> <li>• Desire for continued engagement throughout the EIS and assessment process.</li> </ul> |
| Tourism operators               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of the Upper Spencer Gulf marine environment and tourism values, particularly with regards to the Great Australian Cuttlefish.</li> <li>• Potential cumulative impacts of industrial development and climate change on marine ecosystems</li> <li>• Importance of transparency regarding environmental investigations, survey data and monitoring outcomes</li> <li>• Interest in habitat restoration, reef rehabilitation and nature positive initiatives associated with the Project</li> <li>• Opportunities for collaboration with local environmental, tourism and community organisations</li> <li>• Supporting community understanding and education regarding marine environmental management and Project impacts.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Conservation Groups             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of the Great Artesian Basin and concerns regarding long-term groundwater sustainability</li> <li>• Marine impacts, including impacts to Giant Australian Cuttlefish breeding grounds and migration pathways, sensitive or threatened ecological communities, and the cumulative impacts associated with HAB events</li> <li>• Terrestrial impacts, including native vegetation removal and impacts to terrestrial ecological communities and habitat values</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

| Stakeholder Group                                         | Key themes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Local and regional business, and business industry groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest in opportunities to participate in the construction phase of the Project through the provision of goods, services and workforce support</li> <li>• Workforce readiness, local labour availability and the capability of local businesses to tender for project opportunities</li> <li>• Concerns based on previous experiences where Tier 1 contractors engaged interstate suppliers and contractors rather than local businesses</li> <li>• Interest in Aboriginal business procurement opportunities and pathways for local Aboriginal business participation</li> <li>• Confusion regarding procurement processes, tendering pathways and requirements for registering with the ICN</li> <li>• Interest in project delivery timeframes and the timing of procurement opportunities</li> <li>• Requests for clearer information regarding workforce requirements, including workforce numbers, staging, timing and skills demand across different phases of the Project</li> <li>• Concerns regarding workforce accommodation and associated impacts on housing availability, local services and broader community amenity, particularly from a local government perspective</li> </ul> |
| Educational institutions                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest in understanding what jobs will be available during construction and operation to plan for courses to reflect workforce requirements including local and Aboriginal participation targets.</li> <li>• Interest in the EIS, technical studies and general project updates.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Neighbouring residents - Shack owners                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns around impacts to the marine environment including recreation fishing</li> <li>• Interest in understanding more about construction and operational impacts such as traffic, noise, dust, vibration, visual impacts</li> <li>• Interest in upgrades to access roads and concern around an increase in people to the area</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Third Party Interface                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest in project timeframes, land access, upgrades to infrastructure (e.g. road), construction and operational impacts.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Broader Aboriginal stakeholder groups                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong interest in reducing long-term reliance on the Great Artesian Basin water due to concerns regarding impacts on culturally significant springs and Cultural Story Lines</li> <li>• Support for the Project as an alternative water source, subject to appropriate environmental management and ongoing Aboriginal engagement</li> <li>• Importance of meaningful and inclusive engagement with a broad range of Aboriginal groups and organisations, beyond Traditional Owner representative bodies alone</li> <li>• Interest in ongoing participation in project planning, engagement and decision-making processes</li> <li>• Expectations regarding Aboriginal employment, procurement and business participation opportunities, including a preference for local South Australian Aboriginal participation</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

| Stakeholder Group                                                                                                                                                                           | Key themes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest in transparency regarding Aboriginal procurement targets, implementation approaches and reporting mechanisms</li> <li>• Desire for regular project updates and ongoing relationship-based engagement throughout the assessment and delivery process</li> <li>• Interest in opportunities for collaboration relating to water sustainability, cultural values and research associated with the Great Artesian Basin and culturally significant springs.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Local Government:<br>City of Whyalla<br>City of Port Augusta<br>Outback Communities Authority<br>Roxby Council<br>Spencer Gulf Cities                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socio-economic impacts and community benefits realisation of the Project including local employment and business outcomes</li> <li>• Future water offtakers</li> <li>• Legacy opportunities</li> <li>• Construction workforce accommodation strategies</li> <li>• Construction impacts and amenity impacts</li> <li>• Construction water</li> <li>• Traffic and transport such as main haulage routes</li> <li>• Impacts and management of impacts to local and social infrastructure such as health, transport, roads, land management, waste management</li> <li>• Cumulative impacts to the Whyalla and regional cities from other developments on communities and local infrastructure</li> <li>• Local amenity and character</li> <li>• Community engagement, health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Environmental impacts</li> <li>• Protection of the Upper Spencer Gulf and tourism</li> </ul> |
| South Australian EPA                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Management Plans, License Application</li> <li>• Environmental impacts.</li> <li>• License requirements.</li> <li>• Spoil management.</li> <li>• Ongoing hydrodynamic monitoring.</li> <li>• Climate Change – stormwater, flood protection, marine discharge.</li> <li>• Compliance with Environment Protection Policies.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Department for Environment and Water (DEW) – Native Vegetation Branch, Heritage Branch, National Parks and Wildlife Services, Coastal Board Protection, Crown Lands and Pastoral Lands Unit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental impacts</li> <li>• Cultural heritage.</li> <li>• Net Zero emissions / Climate Change targets.</li> <li>• Coastal impacts – construction.</li> <li>• Design – flood mitigation.</li> <li>• Pastoral land impacts.</li> <li>• Impacts to threatened species and communities, migratory species.</li> <li>• Construction disturbance corridor.</li> <li>• Native Vegetation offsets and strategies</li> <li>• Development adhering to Coast Protection Board policy document re sea level rise.</li> <li>• Coastal process modelling – desktop.</li> <li>• Climate Change</li> <li>• Crown Lands Management Act 2009 Notification.</li> <li>• Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989 Notification.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                            |

| Stakeholder Group                                                                                                                           | Key themes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Native Vegetation Council                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referral Agency (depending on pathway) - Native Vegetation Clearance</li> <li>Approval under the Native Vegetation Act 1991</li> <li>Significant Environmental Benefit (SEB) Offset</li> </ul>                                                                                                            |
| Department of Primary Industries and Regions, SA                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permit Application to disturb bed of any waters or interfere with aquatic or seabed flora under Aquaculture and Fisheries Acts.</li> <li>Marine Environment Impacts</li> <li>Impacts to Aquaculture and Recreation Fishing - compensation</li> <li>Exclusion zones</li> <li>Ongoing monitoring</li> </ul> |
| National Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE)<br>Federal Minister for Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental impact</li> <li>Offset requirements</li> <li>Threatened species</li> <li>Traditional Owners</li> <li>Matters of National Environment Significance</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                |
| Attorney-General's Department -Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (AAR)<br>National Native Title Tribunal                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Native Title Agreement Barngarla and Kokatha Peoples</li> <li>Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA)</li> <li>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                      |
| Country Fire Service                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bushfire and risk management</li> <li>Hazardous material and storage</li> <li>Provision and access to water</li> <li>Asset Protection Zone requirements</li> <li>Access</li> </ul>                                                                                                                        |

## Online survey, interactive map responses and sentiment survey

The online Project survey and interactive map were designed to better understand stakeholder priorities to be considered as part of the EIS. The survey and map were open to responses between 2 June to 9 August 2026 on DIT Social Point platform.

The sentiment survey, delivered by an independent market research company, ran between 3 July and 10 August. It was designed to measure awareness, understanding and perceptions of the Northern Water Project including information needs and preferred communication channels among residents, workers and businesses connected to Whyalla, the broader project area, and Adelaide Metro.

## Online survey and interactive map results

A total of 120 people responded to the online survey and interactive map. Of these, most respondents:

- identified themselves as living (46%), working (16%) or using the area for recreation (18%)

- rated themselves as being very familiar (42%) or somewhat familiar (35.5%) with the Project
- strongly support (37%) or somewhat support (15.5%) the Project
- based their feedback on professional or industry knowledge (45.5%) or general awareness (39%).

Majority of respondents were from the Whyalla area (28%) and Adelaide (25%) with some respondents from Port Augusta (5%) and Roxby Downs (6%).

Of these:

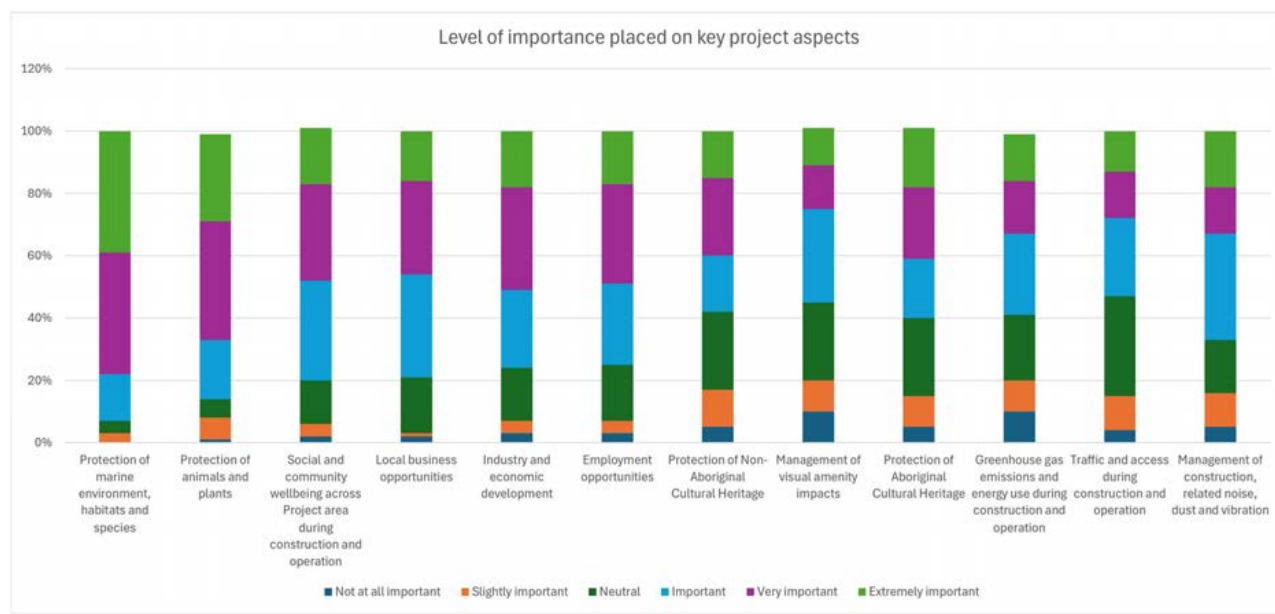
- Whyalla respondents were generally supportive of the Northern Water Project, with almost two-thirds expressing support generally due to jobs, economic development and water security.
- Adelaide respondents were also generally supportive, with support linked to water security, economic development and project benefits.
- Port Augusta, Roxby Downs and Pimba was more mixed, with a high proportion of neutral responses.

Survey respondents were asked to rate the level of importance that they placed on key aspects of the project during construction and operation. The top three issues rated as extremely important or very important were:

- protection of marine environment (habitats and species) – extremely important (39%) and very important (39%)
- protection of the terrestrial environment (plants and animals) – extremely important (28%) and very important (38%)
- social and community wellbeing across the Project area during construction and operation – extremely important (18%) and very important (31%).

Results from this question support what the Project team have heard through the engagement activities and how we have been responding to development of the design and the EIS. All results are shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Overview of level of importance placed on key aspects of the Project



Approximately 60% of respondents provided specific feedback on key aspects of the operation and construction of the Northern Water Project.

The majority of the open-ended feedback focused on concerns about the marine environmental impacts, particularly the potential effects of return water into the Spencer Gulf. Selected verbatim comments associated the marine environment include:

*"The upper Spencer gulf waters, the ongoing wellbeing of the mangrove habitats and the delicate balance of nutrients in this narrow gulf are absolutely essential for this gulf to remain healthy."*

*"Concerned about the environmental impact due to the highly saline water being dispersed into the low level and slow to replenish gulf waters. Inevitable impact on marine life (fish, plants, mangroves etc) is a major concern."*

*"I am VERY concerned about the impact of a Desal plant at the top of a gulf eco system. This is a fish breeding ground and making it more saline could have disastrous results."*

Positive feedback focused on the employment, economic development and regional growth opportunities expected to arise from the Project. Respondents noted that the Project was 'positive for Whyalla', 'Whyalla needs this!' and 'We need jobs'.

Respondents also highlighted the importance of long-term water security, renewable energy use and transparency regarding environmental management, monitoring and project commitments. Select verbatim comments included:

*"The project will have impact during construction however the outcome will bring an overall environmental benefit to water supply in the north and take pressure off groundwater."*

*"Must maximise reduction of reliance on draw down of underground water... Must ensure those resources maintain sufficient economical reserves for long term alternate developments."*

*"Desalination is energy-intensive... I'd encourage the project to design the plant so it can run a 'boost mode' during the daily solar-surplus window."*

Supporting the survey responses, a total of 10 respondents used the interactive map to provide comments including alternative locations for the desalination plant, highlighting areas of ecological importance and commercial fishery activities as well as raising concerns about limited water circulation in the Upper Spencer Gulf and dodge tides that may prevent adequate dispersal of return water.

## Market Research sentiment survey key findings

### Level of project awareness

A sentiment survey of 345 respondents from Whyalla, the broader project area and metropolitan Adelaide found strong awareness of the Northern Water Project, particularly in Whyalla (69%), followed by the broader project area (56%) and metropolitan Adelaide (52%). Respondents generally associated the Project with construction opportunities (76%), a reliable and climate-resilient water supply for industry (75%), and long-term employment and regional growth (70%). Selected verbatim comments included:

*"Supplying water to industry/mining and end users such as BHP, to enable new mines, industries, and expansion projects to become more feasible and less reliant on the Artesian Basin."*

*“Government-funded Desal plant to supply BHP mostly and a few other smaller stakeholders with water that does not come from the severely depleted Great Artesian Basin.”*

*“Creating a large desalination plant and building a pipeline into Northern South Australia with the intention of the water being used in the mining industry, particularly copper.”*

## Level of support

Support for the Project outweighed opposition in every location. Support was strongest in the Broader Project Area (56%), followed by Adelaide Metro (49%) and Whyalla (44%) representing an average of 50% of respondents. A large proportion remained neutral (30%) indicating that this group has yet to form a strong view and that sentiment may become more defined as understanding of the Project develops. Opposition levels overall were lowest (20%) which appears to be concentrated on environmental concerns, particularly potential impacts on the marine environment and the Spencer Gulf, rather than opposition to the Project's overall objectives.

Mullaquana Station as the proposed location for the desalination site were more positive than negative across all regions, including 47% positive sentiment in both Whyalla and the Broader Project Area. There was also reasonable recognition of the logic behind the location, with 56% agreeing it made sense given its proximity to existing and future industry.

## Key issues

The importance of the environment was consistent throughout the research, with environmental impacts and safeguards for the marine environment being the leading future information priority (60%), followed by impacts on existing water sources such as the Great Artesian Basin and River Murray (49%).

Environmental concern was also not confined to those opposed to Northern Water, with 21% of supporters also raising environmental impact concerns when explaining their level of support. It also might indicate why there was strong support, but lower positive and mixed sentiment (how people feel) in the Whyalla area demonstrating that people understood the benefits but were concerned by the environmental impacts. These concerns are shown in the verbatim comments below:

*“It would provide a large number of local jobs, but there could be significant environmental issues.”*

*“Positive impacts for jobs and reduction in water use from the Great Artesian Basin, but potential for negative environmental impacts with brine discharge into the gulf.”*

*Locally, for Whyalla, I think the impact will be detrimental to the marine life, for example the cuttlefish, it'll affect tourism; however, it will bring jobs in other areas.*

These findings reinforce what we've been hearing through our engagement activities and the importance of continuing to provide clear, transparent information on the environmental impacts, safeguards and protections for the Project.

# Ongoing engagement priorities

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Engagement undertaken throughout the development of EIS demonstrated that community and stakeholder interest became increasingly focused not on whether the Project should proceed, but on how risks were being assessed and managed, how technical evidence was being interpreted, and how stakeholders could remain actively involved as investigations and design development progressed.

The nature of stakeholder feedback indicated a strong preference for:

- Evidence-based communication
- Transparent discussion of technical investigations and environmental modelling
- Ongoing access to project information and technical specialists
- Clear explanation of how stakeholder feedback informed project decisions
- Continued opportunities for direct engagement and dialogue.

Stakeholder feedback also demonstrated that future engagement should prioritise issue-specific communication and transparent reporting over high-level project promotion.

Key engagement priorities moving forward include:

- Clear, plain-language explanation of the preferred site decision, including the criteria used to compare site options and how trade-offs were assessed
- Accessible summaries of environmental modelling, particularly marine dispersion, salinity behaviour and cumulative impact considerations
- Regular updates on the progress, findings and implications of environmental and technical investigations
- Clear explanation of how stakeholder feedback has informed investigations, design development and mitigation measures
- Ongoing opportunities for direct discussion with the project team and, where appropriate, regulators and technical specialists
- Clear information about likely construction timing, future engagement opportunities and anticipated community interfaces
- Transparent communication regarding monitoring frameworks, adaptive management arrangements and how potential impacts would be identified and addressed if they occur.

Records also indicate that stakeholder support remained predominantly neutral to positive throughout the engagement period, with many stakeholders continuing to engage constructively while seeking greater technical detail, transparency and ongoing involvement in project development.

These priorities should guide the engagement approach into subsequent phases of project development, supporting informed participation, building stakeholder confidence and maintaining transparency as the Project progresses.