

Consultation Report Summary

November 2024



Background

For 75 years, Snowy Hydro has played a critical role in Australia's energy sector and is now leading the nation's transition to a renewable energy future. Throughout its history, Snowy Hydro has been a proud and active contributor to the local communities across the Snowy Mountains. Snowy Hydro remains committed to supporting the region in and around the Snowy Scheme operational footprint.

Purpose

The Community Insights Campaign was undertaken to better understand the social impacts of Snowy Hydro's operations and the Snowy 2.0 project. Snowy Hydro sought honest and constructive feedback on the company's existing projects and programs, along with ideas and suggestions from the community that will help refine our approach to community engagement and social impact. Snowy Hydro engaged independent consultancy Struber to lead the campaign.

The campaign had three primary objectives:

- 1 Understand how the community feels about the Snowy 2.0 project
- 2 Gather insights on how Snowy Hydro can enhance its role within the community
- 3 Help shape the next 75 years of Snowy Hydro

How we engaged

A total of 270 people formally provided feedback:

- 187 through the survey.
- 83 people participated in either a focus group or interviews (phone and face-to-face).
- Feedback was received from business leaders, elected representatives, community leaders, First Nations representatives and the broader community.

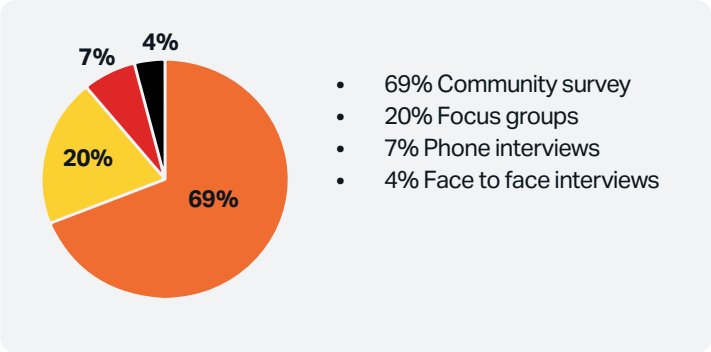


Figure 1 How people participated

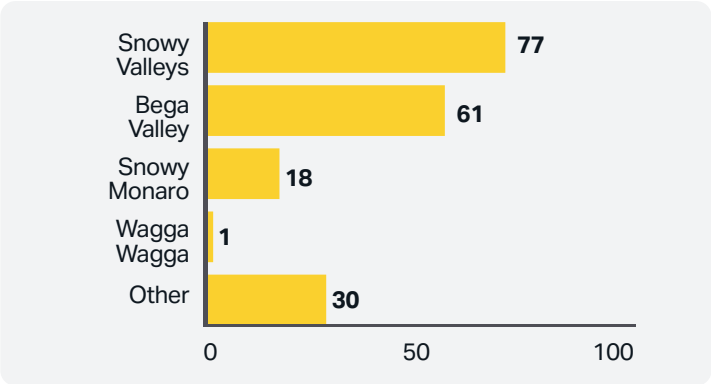


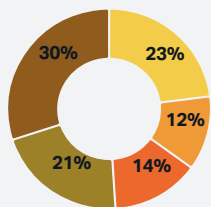
Figure 2 Location of survey respondents



Key Findings

Snowy 2.0 impacts

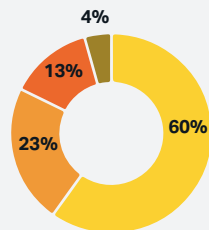
- Interest in the Snowy 2.0 project is high to very high and has increased significantly since 2018.
- Half of all 2024 survey respondents feel positive about the project.
- Opinions have become stronger, both positive and negative since construction began.



- 30% Very positive
- 23% Very negative
- 21% Somewhat positive
- 14% Neutral
- 12% Somewhat negative

Figure 3 Measurement of sentiment towards Snowy 2.0

- There is a high level of understanding of the Snowy 2.0 project. This has increased since 2018.
- In 2024, most respondents viewed Snowy 2.0 as having a negative impact on the community. Key areas of concern include housing costs, road quality, and the natural environment.
- Housing availability and affordability is regarded as a major consequence of the Snowy 2.0 project.



- 60% Major contributor
- 23% Minor contributor
- 13% Not related to Snowy 2.0
- 4% Not a concern in my region

Figure 4 Perception of Snowy 2.0 contribution to house and rent prices

- Temporary economic benefits include increased accommodation demand (an imbalance favouring landlords) with lower socioeconomic groups and essential workers negatively affected.
- The establishment of worker accommodation has eased the demand on housing pressure in some towns, such as Adaminaby.
- Sentiment that local social services are limited regardless of Snowy Hydro's presence, but participants believe Snowy 2.0 places low to moderate pressure on childcare, housing support and multicultural services.
- Limited impact of Snowy 2.0 on public services with skills shortages and population growth impacting healthcare and emergency services.
- Local non-government schools are reaching capacity as it is cheaper for international Snowy 2.0 workers to send their children there.
- The long-term benefits people hope to see from the Snowy 2.0 project include:
 - improved employment
 - economic benefits
 - cheaper electricity
 - better infrastructure.

Snowy Hydro and the community

- Nearly half of the survey respondents felt they were kept informed about the Snowy 2.0 project, with room for improvement in responding to enquiries and concerns and understanding the needs of the community.
- Participants perceive an imbalance in the attention paid to the Snowy Monaro region compared to the Snowy Valleys region.
- The Snowy Hydro Community Grants Program is the most recognisable of Snowy Hydro's community investment initiatives.
- Those who are aware of the community investment programs report positive experiences.
- Only 5% had been directly involved in a Snowy Hydro community investment initiative.
- Survey respondents would like further investment in:
 - Snowy Hydro's existing Community Grants Program
 - other assets, such as a new museum
 - a Snowy Discovery Centre in the Snowy Valleys region
 - investment in community support services such as a community shed.
- The Clontarf program was highlighted for its positive impact on young First Nations men in Tumut.
- The Snowy Valleys and Snowy Monaro participants praised the Snowy STEM Academy programs. There was strong support for a Country University Centre in Tumut.



52
Mentions

Positive Impacts from
Snowy Community
Programs



33
Mentions

Awareness of Local
Festivals and Events
Program



24
Mentions

Awareness of Snowy
STEM Academy



Focus groups in Tumut

How Snowy Hydro engages with the community

- The majority of survey respondents felt Snowy Hydro's engagement was moderate to very low. Regular, on-ground and in-person presence is a preferred way to engage.
- Many focus groups and interview participants regarded Snowy Hydro ambassadors, social media activities and engagement with the business community are considered as positive attributes of Snowy Hydro's community engagement.
- Desire to see Snowy Hydro have a greater presence at community events with a preference for informal, accessible formats fostering dialogue and relationship-building.
- More proactive communication about matters such as dam levels, construction impacts and traffic, and less communication favouring only positive news stories.



20
Mentions

Need for More
Community Engagement



16
Mentions

Positive Impact of Good
Community Engagement



7
Mentions

Negative Impact of
Poor Communication

Consultation with First Nations community

- In-person and phone interviews allowed First Nations stakeholders to share their perspectives on the Snowy 2.0 project and its community impacts.
- Feedback from First Nations representatives raised concerns about Snowy Hydro's consultation process and the representatives being consulted.
- Opportunities were identified to improve Snowy Hydro's cultural awareness.
- Discussions highlighted disappointment and frustration due to a perceived lack of genuine engagement and transparency.
- Interviewees expressed a desire for:
 - More meaningful partnerships.
 - Equitable benefit-sharing.
 - A genuine commitment to collaboration and consultation.
- Feedback revealed a significant disconnect between Snowy Hydro's understanding of its community engagement efforts and the lived experiences of impacted communities.

"I think Snowy have a greater understanding of what the policy and procedures are when you're dealing with Country. A lot of things that happened we can't change, but I'd like to see them not happen again."



The community want Snowy Hydro to be more accessible and present in the community with more face-to-face engagement such as pop-ups, undertaken throughout the Community Insights Campaign.

Key recommendations

Region-centric approach

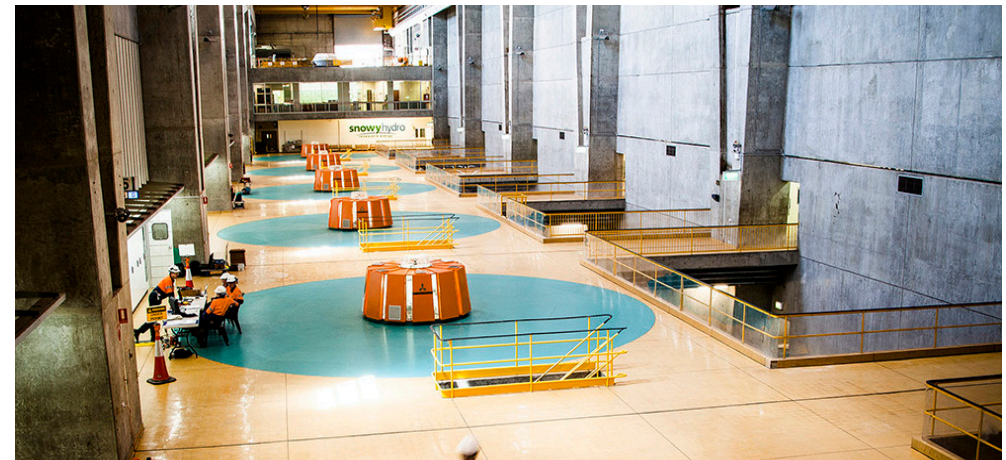
- Challenges, priorities and opportunities are unique to each region within and around the Snowy Hydro footprint. A region-centric approach for community engagement and investment is highly valued.
- Participants across all regions share great pride in the Snowy Scheme and its legacy.
- Following the construction of Snowy 2.0, participants want to see a legacy of employment opportunities, strong population and general growth in all regions.
- All regions express general concern about environmental impacts related to Snowy 2.0, housing availability and affordability problems exacerbated by Snowy 2.0 and impacts on road conditions and traffic, which Snowy Hydro influences.

First Nations engagement framework

- Create a comprehensive engagement framework to establish meaningful and enduring partnerships with First Nations People.
- Framework principles of respect, shared learning and open dialogue, with tangible and measurable outcomes driven by the needs of the First Nations community.

Next steps and future focus

- Snowy Hydro recognises ongoing conversations with local communities are vital.
- From November 2024, the Snowy Hydro Community Engagement team will discuss the findings with the community in regions.
- Snowy Hydro will work with the community throughout 2025 to co-design a Social Impact Strategy.



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