

Snowy Hydro Community Insights Campaign Consultation Report

November 2024

snowyhydro

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Contents

Contents.....	1
1 Executive Summary.....	3
2 Community feedback	12
3 Consultation with First Nations People.....	50
4 Recommendations and next steps.....	59
Appendix A: Engagement approach and analysis	62
Appendix B: What we heard from interviews and focus groups.....	70
Appendix C: Focus Group Notes.....	116
Appendix D: Supplementary feedback provided by participants.....	165
Appendix E: Promotional and engagement collateral	170
Appendix F: Waligada program.....	172

Struber acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of the country on which we operate, and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

1

Executive Summary

1 Executive Summary

Introduction

Snowy Hydro's Community Insights Campaign was undertaken to understand:

- How people feel about Snowy Hydro in 2024
- How the Snowy 2.0 project is impacting communities in and around the Snowy Hydro operational footprint
- How Snowy Hydro can shape, build and enhance its role in the community now and into the future.

Struber partnered with Snowy Hydro to deliver the campaign which ran from March to July 2024. As part of the campaign, Struber also worked with Snowy Hydro to ensure First Nations community representatives were actively provided the opportunity to engage.

Project background

For 75 years, Snowy Hydro has played an important role in Australia's energy landscape, leading the way in the transition to a renewable energy future. Throughout its proud history, Snowy Hydro has remained committed to supporting the communities where the Snowy Scheme operates.

In preparing for its next 75 years, Snowy Hydro committed to undertaking a campaign to better understand the social impacts of the Snowy 2.0 project and to inform the organisation's social impact strategy. Struber was engaged by Snowy Hydro in February 2024 as an independent community and stakeholder engagement consultancy to deliver the Community Insights Campaign on behalf of Snowy Hydro. The aim of the campaign was to enhance Snowy Hydro's community support by better understanding how local community members view Snowy Hydro, the Snowy 2.0 project and its broader community work. The objectives of the Community Insights Campaign are summarised in Figure 1.

The campaign engaged over 200 people from across the Snowy Monaro, Snowy Valleys, Riverina South Coast and Canberra regions. A significant supplementary piece of work delivered as part of the campaign was engagement with First Nations representatives which was undertaken between May and July 2024.

This important research and social impact discovery initiative provides the opportunity to reframe Snowy Hydro's public narrative to focus on the future of Snowy Hydro and the next 75 years.

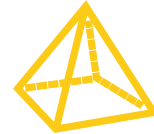
Community Insights Campaign objectives



Understand how the community feels about the Snowy 2.0 project in 2024



Gather insights on how Snowy Hydro can enhance its role within the community



Help shape the next 75 years of Snowy Hydro

Figure 1. Community Insights Campaign objectives

Where and how we engaged people

The Community Insights Campaign focused on engaging directly with the regions of Bega Valley, Snowy Monaro, Snowy Valleys and Wagga Wagga. People from outside these regions also provided feedback through the community survey, including people in Victoria, the ACT and other parts of regional NSW.

We collected feedback through a community survey (online and printed submissions), focus groups and interviews (face to face and over the telephone). We also encouraged email feedback however only one email was received. The Community Insights Campaign was promoted through various channels including email, pop-ups, radio, social media and Snowy Hydro ambassadors.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the engagement activities undertaken throughout the Community Insights Campaign in each of the regions visited.

More information on the engagement approach for the Community Insights Campaign is included at Appendix A.

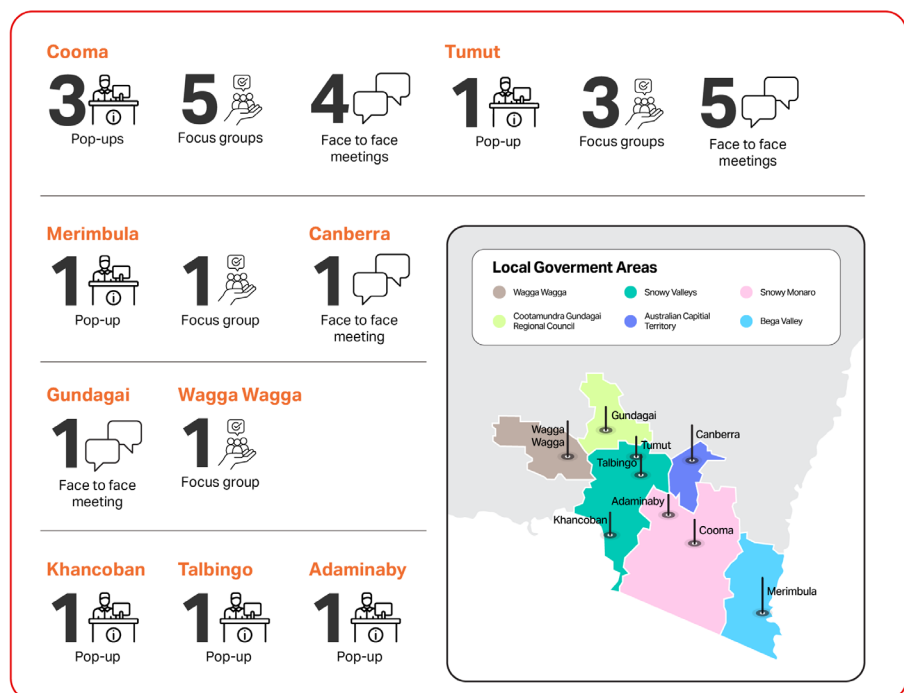


Figure 2. Overview of engagement activities and their locations

Participants

A total of 270 people formally provided feedback through the community survey, focus groups, interviews and as part of the First Nations engagement program. An estimated 800 people engaged directly with the campaign through visiting pop-ups, social media, opening (but not completing) the survey and interacting with Struber consultants over email and phone.

Survey respondents

There were 187 survey respondents with the majority (77) coming from the Snowy Valleys region. Bega Valley had 61 respondents with the next largest group (30) coming from outside those regions directly engaged. 18 respondents completed the survey from the Snowy Monaro region with reasons for the low take up unclear. Wagga Wagga had one survey respondent.

The majority of respondents were aged over 55 with slightly more females (89) than males (83). The majority of respondents did not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people (83 per cent).

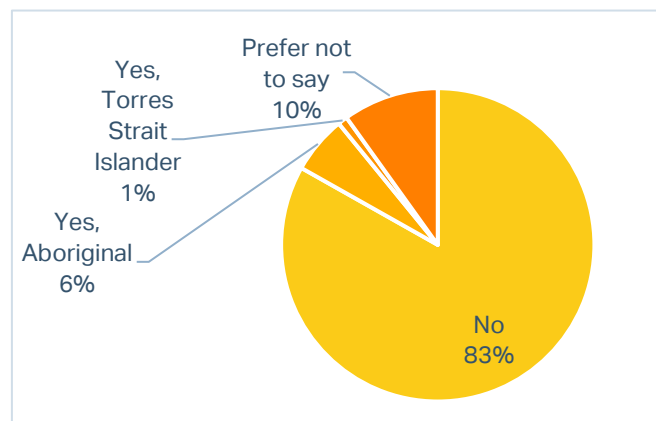


Figure 3. Survey respondents identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (n=187)

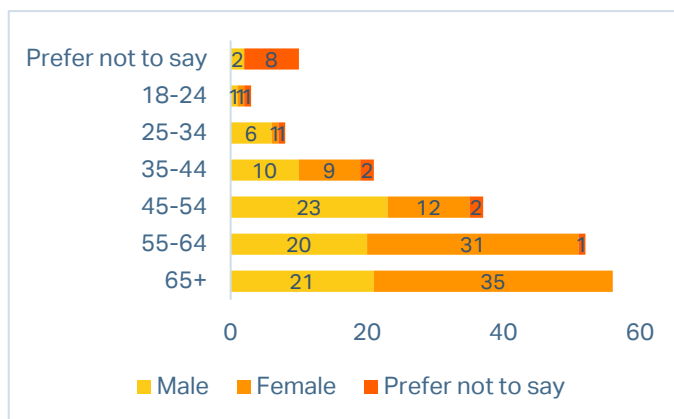


Figure 4. Age and gender of survey respondents (n=187)

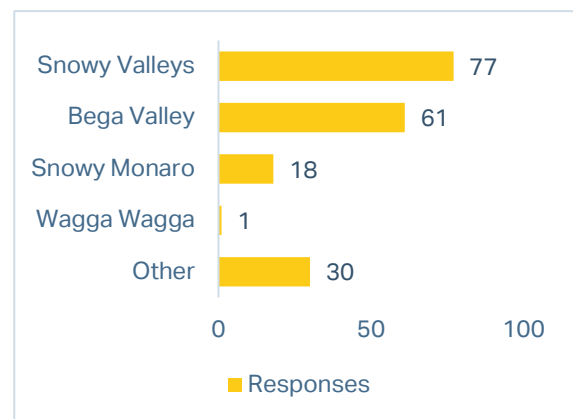


Figure 5. Locations of survey respondents (n=187)

Focus group and interview participants

Beyond the general community, the Community Insights Campaign sought feedback from various representative groups including:



Business leaders

Members of chambers of commerce, business owners etc.



Elected representatives

Federal Member for Eden Monaro, NSW
Member for Albury and Mayors of the Snowy Valleys, Snowy Monaro, Bega Valley and Wagga Wagga LGAs.



Local leaders

Representatives of community organisations such as social support services and not-for-profit organisations.



First Nations representatives

We spoke with eight First Nations representatives including Elders and a land council representative.

Feedback from representative groups was gathered via focus groups and interviews conducted either face-to-face or over the phone. In total there were 18 phone interviews, 55 focus groups and 10 face-to-face interviews.




Figure 6. Focus groups in Tumut

A snapshot of community sentiment

The below table provides an overview of the key feedback received on each of the three topics for discussion. A thorough analysis is contained in sections 2 and 3.

Table 1 Key feedback overview

Section	Feedback
<p>Feedback about Snowy 2.0 and its impacts</p> 	<p><u>Level of interest in and sentiment about the Snowy 2.0 project</u></p> <p>There is a high to very high level of interest in the Snowy 2.0 project. This level of interest has increased significantly since 2018. Half of all 2024 survey respondents felt positive about the Snowy 2.0 project. However more people have now developed much stronger opinions regarding the project, both positive and negative, since construction began.</p> <p><u>Perceptions on Snowy 2.0</u></p> <p>There is a high level of understanding of the Snowy 2.0 project. The level of understanding about the project has increased since research was undertaken in the 2018.</p> <p><u>Issues facing Australia and local communities</u></p> <p>In 2024, financial impacts are front and centre for many, with the top three issues showing people are extremely concerned about general living expenses, electricity costs and housing costs. These were the same concerns people held in 2018, however the level of concern is higher in 2024.</p> <p><u>Snowy 2.0 impacts on local communities</u></p> <p>In 2024, the majority of survey respondents saw Snowy 2.0 as having a negative impact on the community. Housing costs, quality of the roads and the natural environment are the most negatively impacted areas.</p> <p>Focus group and interview participants also cited housing and rental prices as a key Snowy 2.0 impact. This was forewarned in 2019, when 40% of respondents thought Snowy 2.0 would impact house prices.</p> <p><u>Snowy 2.0 impacts on housing</u></p> <p>In 2024, Snowy 2.0 is regarded as a major contributor to house and rent price increases. The Bega Valley region is feeling this impact the most. Focus group and interview participants consistently highlight severe housing availability and affordability issues</p>

as major consequences of the Snowy 2.0 project. There are temporary economic benefits from increased accommodation demand however the overall impact is characterised by an imbalance favouring landlords and negatively affecting lower socio-economic groups and essential workers. Demand on housing is not as intense since worker accommodation was established in some towns such as Adaminaby.

Snowy 2.0 impacts on community social support services

The majority of respondents indicated Snowy 2.0 placed low to moderate pressure on social services in their communities. However, many people felt social services in their communities were limited regardless of Snowy Hydro's presence. Some focus groups and interview participants identified services such as childcare, housing support and multicultural services to have been directly impacted by Snowy 2.0.

Snowy 2.0 impacts on accessibility and quality of public services

In 2024 most survey respondents did not view Snowy 2.0 as having an impact on public services and this was consistent with the 2019 Social Impact Assessment findings. However, there has been an increase in the level of negative perceptions and a decrease in positive perceptions since 2019 suggesting the community is noticing increased impacts since construction started. Focus group and interview participants were able to identify some key public services impacted by Snowy 2.0, notably council services impacted by skills shortages and population growth impacting healthcare and emergency services. Local non-government schools were reaching capacity as it is cheaper for international Snowy 2.0 workers to send their children there.

Long term benefits

The long-term benefits people were hoping to see come from Snowy 2.0 when surveyed in 2019 remain priorities in 2024, notably improved employment, economic benefits, cheaper electricity and better infrastructure.

Feedback on Snowy Hydro and the community



Past experiences with Snowy Hydro

In 2024, nearly half of survey respondents felt they were kept informed about the Snowy 2.0 project. However, there are opportunities for Snowy Hydro to improve the following:

- Engaging on relevant issues.
- Responding to enquiries and concerns.
- Understanding needs of the community and individuals.

Insights from the focus groups and interviews indicates there is an imbalance in the attention paid to the Snowy Monaro region compared to the Snowy Valleys region. There is also a need to delineate what Snowy Hydro is responsible for regarding overlapping issues with local councils and Future Generation.

Awareness of community programs

In 2024, the Snowy Hydro Community Grants Program is the most recognisable of Snowy Hydro's community investment initiatives amongst survey respondents. However less than half of respondents were aware of the next top four recognised community investment initiatives including Snowy STEM Academy, Tourism Snowy Mountains and Young Driver Training Program. Despite this, many cited positive experiences with the above-mentioned programs.

Focus group and interview participants were also well aware of the Community Grants Program with the exception of Bega Valley and Wagga Wagga focus group participants who were generally not well aware of the community investment initiatives. In all feedback collected, Snowy Hydro's involvement with the PCYC was the least well known of Snowy Hydro's investment initiatives.

Community investment examples

In 2024, survey respondents said they would like further investment in Snowy Hydro's existing Community Grants Program and other initiatives such as a new museum / Snowy Discovery Centre in the Snowy Valleys region or investment in community support services such as a community shed.

In the focus groups and interviews, the Clontarf program was highlighted for its positive impact on young First Nations men. Participants in the Snowy Valleys and Snowy Monaro regions praised the STEM Academy program and there was strong support for a Country University Centre in Tumut.

Other organisations noted for exemplary community investment included Brode Trust, Bendigo Bank, the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal, and Veolia.

Feedback about how Snowy Hydro engages with the community



Snowy Hydro community engagement performance and effectiveness

The majority of survey respondents felt Snowy Hydro's engagement was moderate to very low. Many focus group and interview participants regarded the deployment of Snowy Hydro ambassadors, the use of social media and engagement with the business community as positive attributes of Snowy Hydro's community engagement. Regular, on-ground and in-person presence is a preferred way to engage.

Communication, content and engagement preferences

In 2024 survey respondents wanted to see Snowy Hydro have a greater presence at community events including markets and fetes as well as hosting their own events, activities and in-person meetings. These results were echoed in the focus groups and interviews with a preference for informal, accessible formats fostering dialogue and relationship building. A number of focus group participants look favourably on Snowy Hydro ambassadors such as Dean Lynch.

The community wants to see less communication focusing only on positive news stories and more proactive communication about matters such as dam levels, construction impacts and traffic.

The challenges, priorities and opportunities that are unique to each of the regions



A key takeaway when all feedback is considered is noting the challenges, priorities and opportunities unique to each of the regions within and around the Snowy Hydro footprint. Whilst this report summarises notable findings across the consultation program, a closer look at the feedback from the focus groups and interviews (see Appendix B) demonstrates the need for taking a region-centric approach for community engagement and investment.

Consultation with First Nations community



Concern was raised about Snowy Hydro's consultation process more broadly, including engaging and consulting with the incorrect people. There are opportunities for Snowy Hydro to improve cultural awareness.

2

Community feedback

2 Community feedback

Overview

We asked participants to answer questions about the following three key discussion topics:

- Snowy Hydro and the community
- Snowy 2.0 and its impacts
- How Snowy Hydro engages with the community.

Whilst the First Nations engagement process was designed to ensure representatives could provide feedback on the same topics raised with the broader community, there was a strong emphasis on allowing participants to discuss the issues most pertinent to them. For this reason, this engagement has been separated out with its own analysis and findings in section 3.

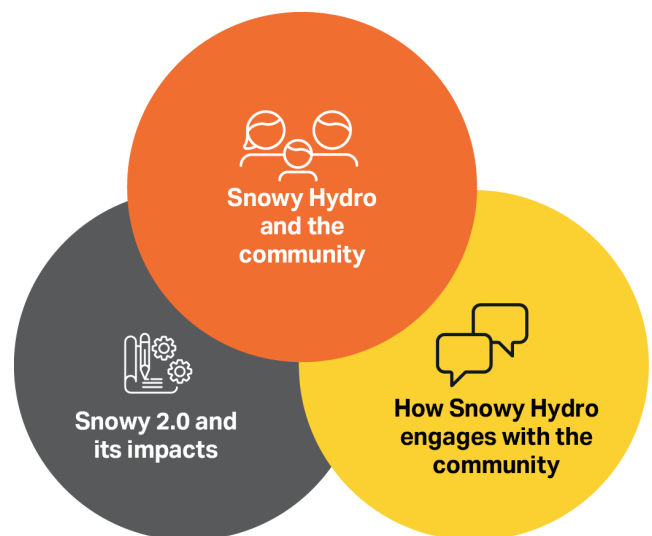


Figure 7. Discussion topics

How feedback is presented in this section

We have illustrated the feedback received on each of the three key discussion topics listed above in separate sub-sections below. In each, the survey data is first presented with key findings and takeaways before, where possible, we compare it to available data from previous research undertaken, including:

- 2017 Snowy Hydro Stakeholder Perceptions Final Research Report (2017 Research Report)
- 2018 Community Attitudes Towards Snowy 2.0 (2018 Community Attitudes)
- 2019 Social Impact Assessment Snowy 2.0 Main Works EIS Study (2019 Social Impact Assessment).

Where there exists no comparable data, mention of this comparison is omitted. Before concluding each topic, we consider the feedback received through the focus groups and the interviews.

Throughout this section is a high-level analysis and review of all the feedback received. A thorough analysis of the focus groups and interviews has been included in Appendix B. Notes from the focus groups have been included at Appendix C and supplementary feedback in Appendix D. As interviews were considered confidential, these notes have been omitted.

Snowy 2.0 and its impacts



Snowy 2.0 and its impacts – an overview

This section provides a comprehensive overview reflecting participants' feedback on the impact of Snowy 2.0 on their community. Opinions were canvassed on a range of topics, including the project's impact on housing, social services, and public amenities. We also explored perceptions of equity in the project's impact and hopes for long-term benefits for the community from the Snowy 2.0 project. Responses will help inform Snowy Hydro's social impact strategy and community engagement initiatives.

In this section, we explore the following discussion topics about Snowy 2.0:

Level of interest in the Snowy 2.0 project

Community sentiment about Snowy 2.0

Perceptions on Snowy 2.0

Issues facing Australia and local communities

Snowy 2.0 impacts on local communities

Snowy 2.0 impacts on housing

Snowy 2.0 impacts on community social support services

Snowy 2.0 impacts on accessibility and quality of public services

Long term benefits

Level of interest in the Snowy 2.0 project

Key findings and takeaways

Interest in the project has increased since 2018.

Homeowners have higher interest in the project than non-homeowners.

The number of people not interested in the project at all is largely unchanged from 2018.

Summary of survey findings

In the 2024, the vast majority of participants were either quite interested or very interested in the Snowy 2.0 project. This was consistent across the regions that fall within Snowy Hydro's footprint (Snowy Valleys, Snowy Monaro and Bega Valley).

Interest is higher among:

- Males (43 per cent vs 40 per cent females)
- Homeowners (33 per cent vs 19 per cent other)
- Participants with TAFE or higher qualifications (39 per cent vs 13 per cent other).

Comparison to earlier research

The 2024 survey indicates that overwhelmingly, participants have a high to very high level of interest in the Snowy 2.0 project. Quantitative data confirms very high interest in the project with those indicating they are very interested more than doubling since 2018.

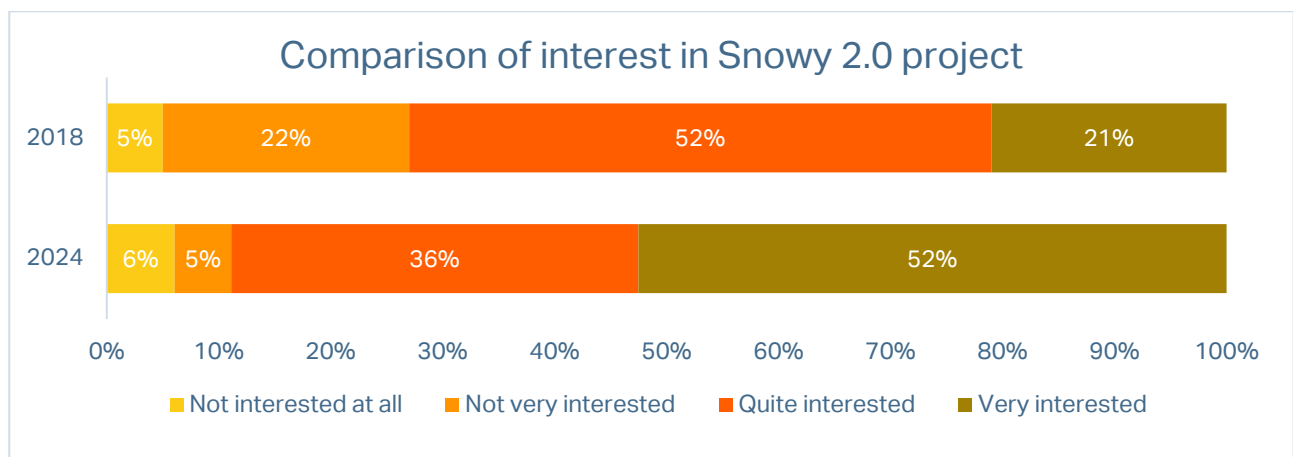


Figure 8. Interest in the Snowy 2.0 project 2018 vs 2024

Community sentiment about Snowy 2.0

Key findings and takeaways

Both positive and negative sentiment are expressed more strongly in 2024 compared to 2018.

There is a small increase in the number of survey participants who expressed a positive sentiment about Snowy 2.0.

Those who felt positive about the project were more likely to be over 55, have a TAFE or higher education qualification and be homeowners.

Summary of survey findings

When asked how they feel about the Snowy 2.0 project, sentiment in the 2024 survey was equally split across positive and negative sentiment in both Snowy Valleys and Snowy Monaro regions.

Most participants in the Bega Valley felt either neutral or positive about the project, and in the Cootamundra-Gundagai region, sentiment ranged from neutral to negative.

Positive perceptions were highest among:

- 55 – 64 (60 per cent) and 64+ (38 per cent) age groups
- Respondents with TAFE (21 per cent) or higher qualifications (6 per cent)
- Homeowners (32 per cent vs 18 per cent others).

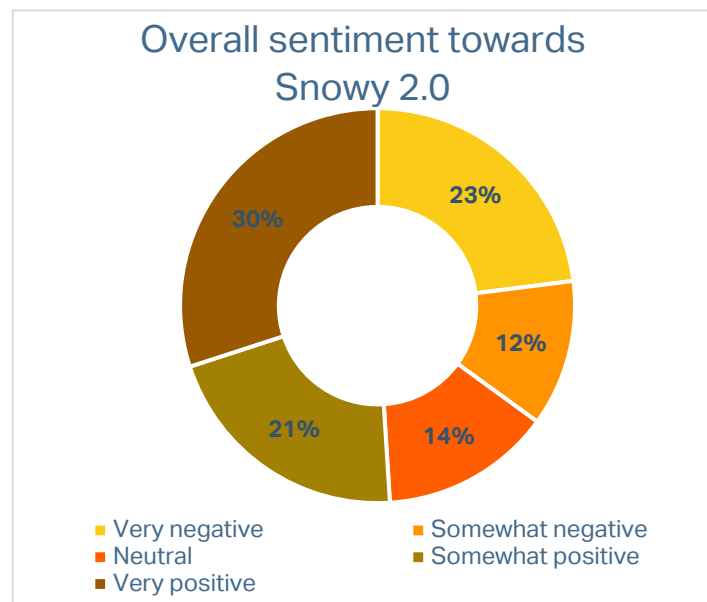


Figure 9. Measure of sentiment towards Snowy 2.0

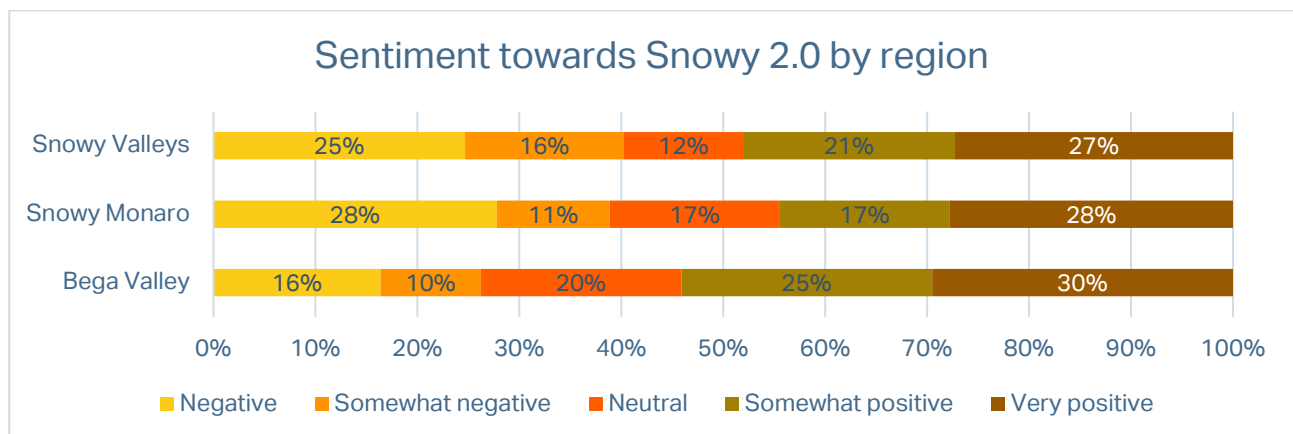


Figure 10. Measurement of sentiment towards Snowy 2.0 by region (2024) (n=157)

Comparison to earlier research

Over 50 per cent of respondents felt positive about Snowy 2.0 in 2024 compared with 46 per cent in 2018. The number of those who felt very positive increased significantly since 2018, as did the number who felt very negative about the project. The comparison of the two studies shows that people have developed a much stronger opinion of the project since construction has commenced.

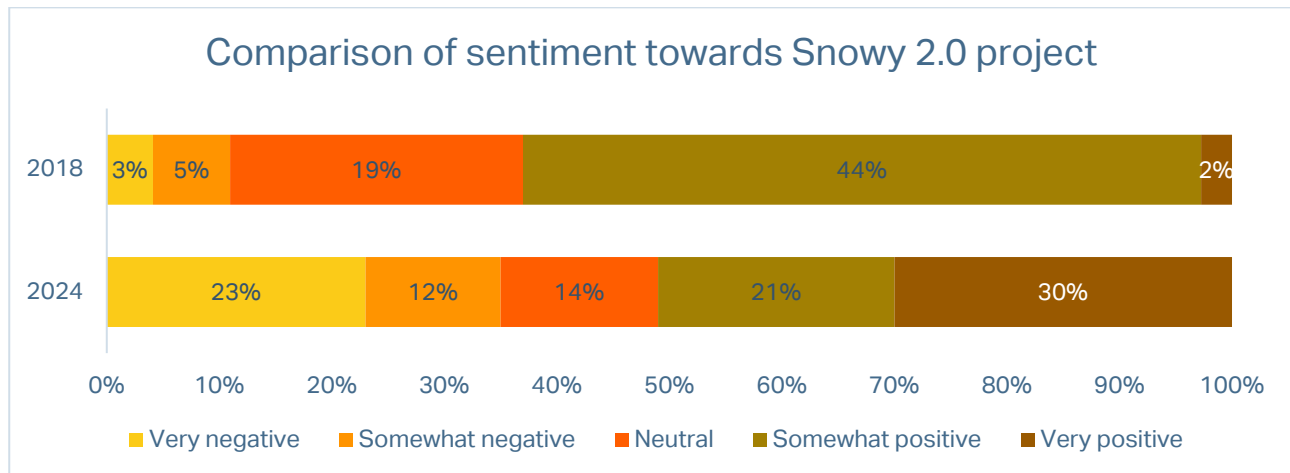


Figure 11. Sentiment about the Snowy 2.0 project 2018 vs 2024

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

A number of focus group and interview participants noted positive impacts for local businesses, homeowners and salaries for workers as well as broader positive social impact indicating positive sentiment for the project among many (but not all) cohorts at a local level.

Perceptions on Snowy 2.0

Findings and takeaways

The majority of survey participants recognise Snowy 2.0 as an expansion of the existing Snowy Mountains Scheme.

Participants strongly understand what the purpose of the Snowy 2.0 project is.

Fewer participants in 2024 said they did not understand the purpose of the project than the number of people in 2018 who said they knew nothing about the project.

Summary of survey findings

Survey data revealed a high level of understanding of the Snowy 2.0 project across the Snowy Valleys, Snowy Monaro, Bega Valley, Cootamundra-Gundagai and Wagga Wagga regions. Most respondents recognise the project as an expansion of the original Snowy Mountains Scheme and as Australia's largest committed renewable energy project under construction. There was also a broad understanding of the purpose of the project to support more intermittent renewable energy sources into the grid and to increase energy storage capabilities.

Responses to 'What is the Snowy 2.0 project?'

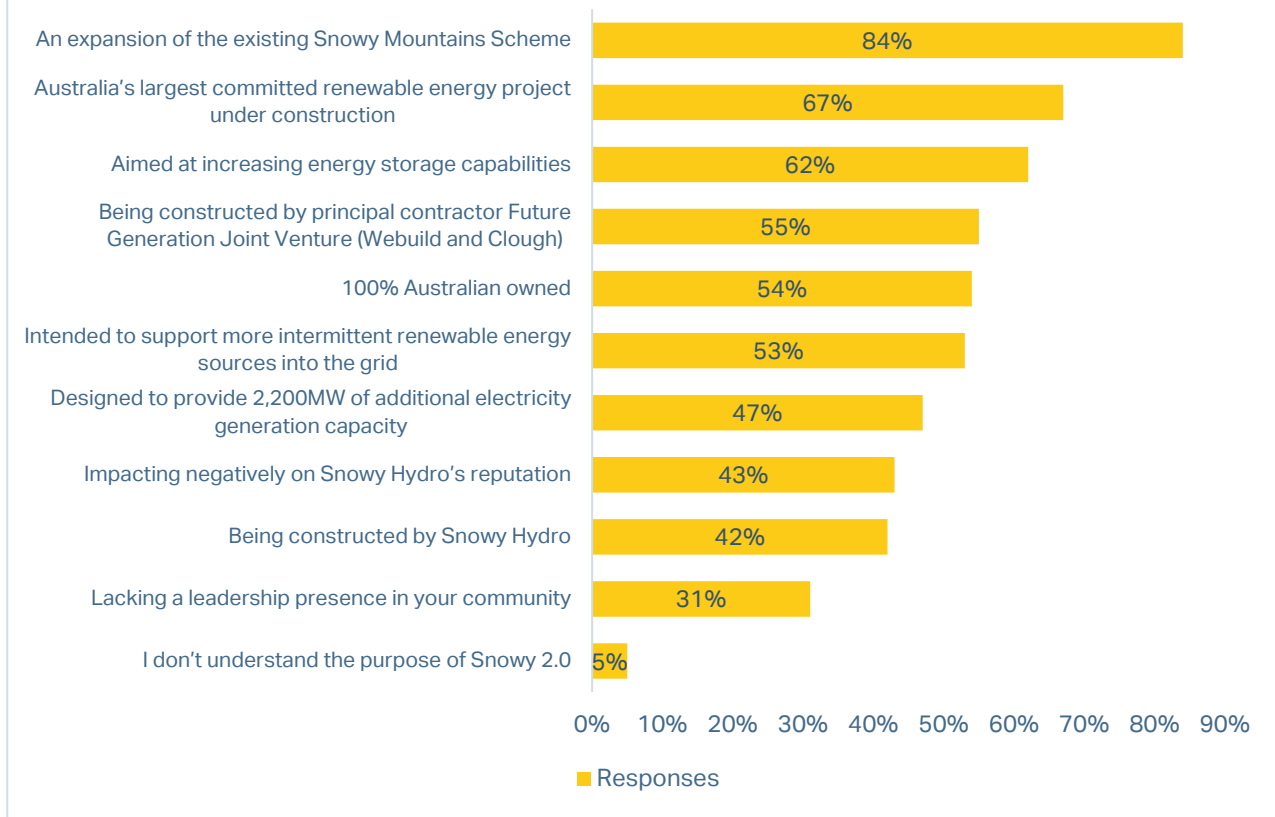


Figure 12. Responses to 'What is the Snowy 2.0 project?' (2024) (n=187)

Comparison to earlier research

There is some evidence that knowledge of the project has improved. In the 2018 Community Attitudes, 11 per cent said they knew nothing about the project in response to questions about prompted awareness and knowledge of Snowy 2.0. In comparison, when asked to select from a series of statements to summarise their perception of the project, five per cent selected 'I don't understand the purpose of Snowy 2.0 in 2024.*'

**It should be noted the number of participants and the questions posed to them varied significantly between these two studies.*

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

Perceptions about the purpose and scope of the Snowy 2.0 project were not directly assessed within focus groups and interviews. Broadly speaking, all who engaged with the project understood the purpose of the project.

Issues facing Australia and local communities

Key findings and takeaways

The cost of living in general is currently the most common concern for survey respondents in 2024.

Concerns about the reliability of the electricity network, housing affordability, cost of living and quality of health services and public education have increased significantly since 2018.

Concerns about crime and personal security, job opportunities, roads and traffic and quality of public transport have decreased since 2018.

Summary of survey findings

The 2024 Community Insights Campaign demonstrated financial impacts are front of mind for many survey respondents, with the top three areas of extreme concern the cost of electricity, the cost of living in general and housing affordability. There is no significant difference across regions, however there was slightly less concern about housing affordability in the Snowy Valleys.

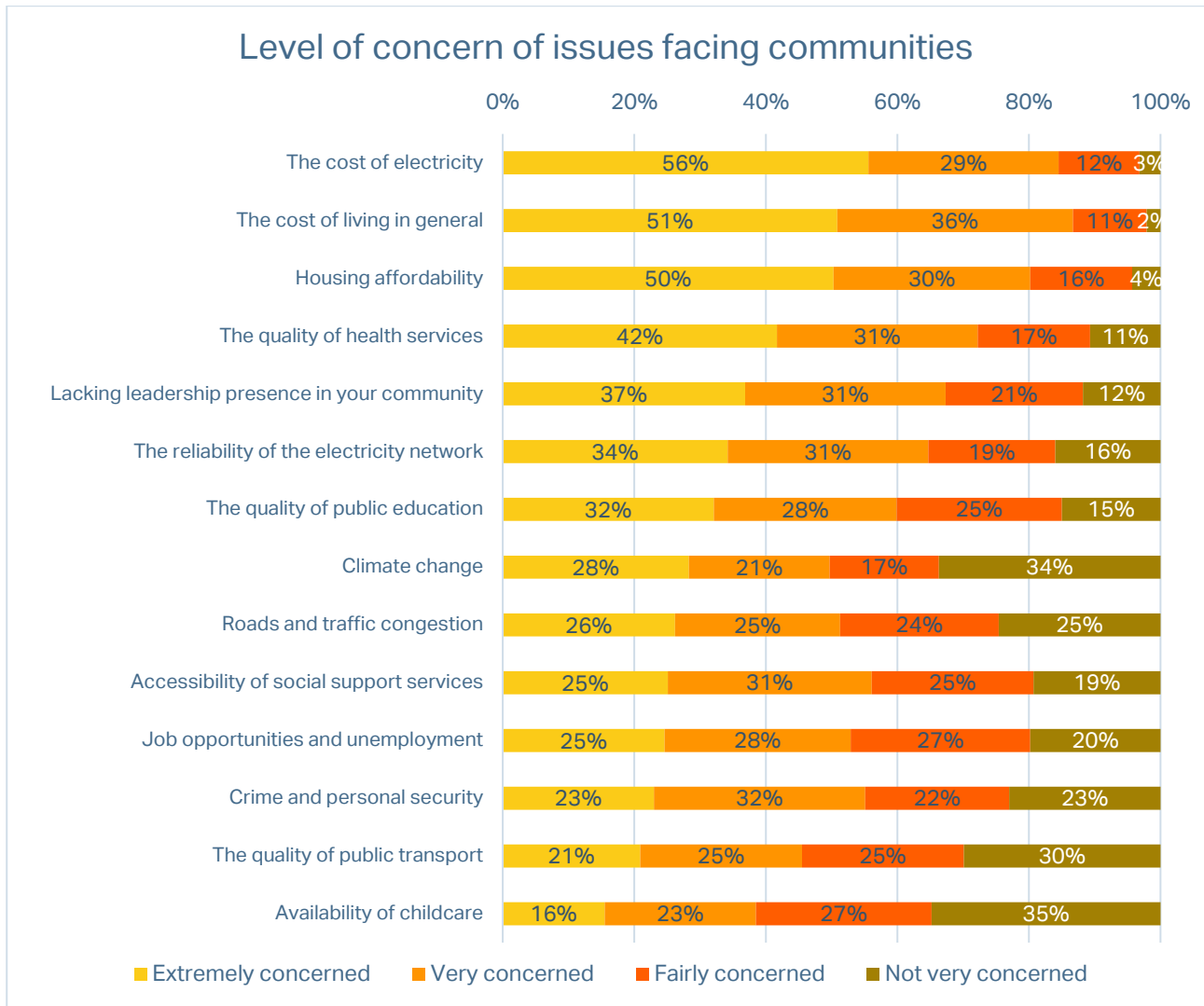


Figure 13. Level of concern facing local communities and Australia – Community Insights Campaign 2024 (n=187)

Comparison to earlier research

Figure 14 compares results of feedback provided in the 2018 Community Attitudes with survey results in the 2024 Community Insights Campaign. The cost of living in general has become the main concern, up from 71 per cent in 2018 to 87 per cent in 2024. Lacking leadership presence, availability of childcare and accessibility of social support services are new measures added in 2024 and do not have any historical benchmarks for comparison at this time.

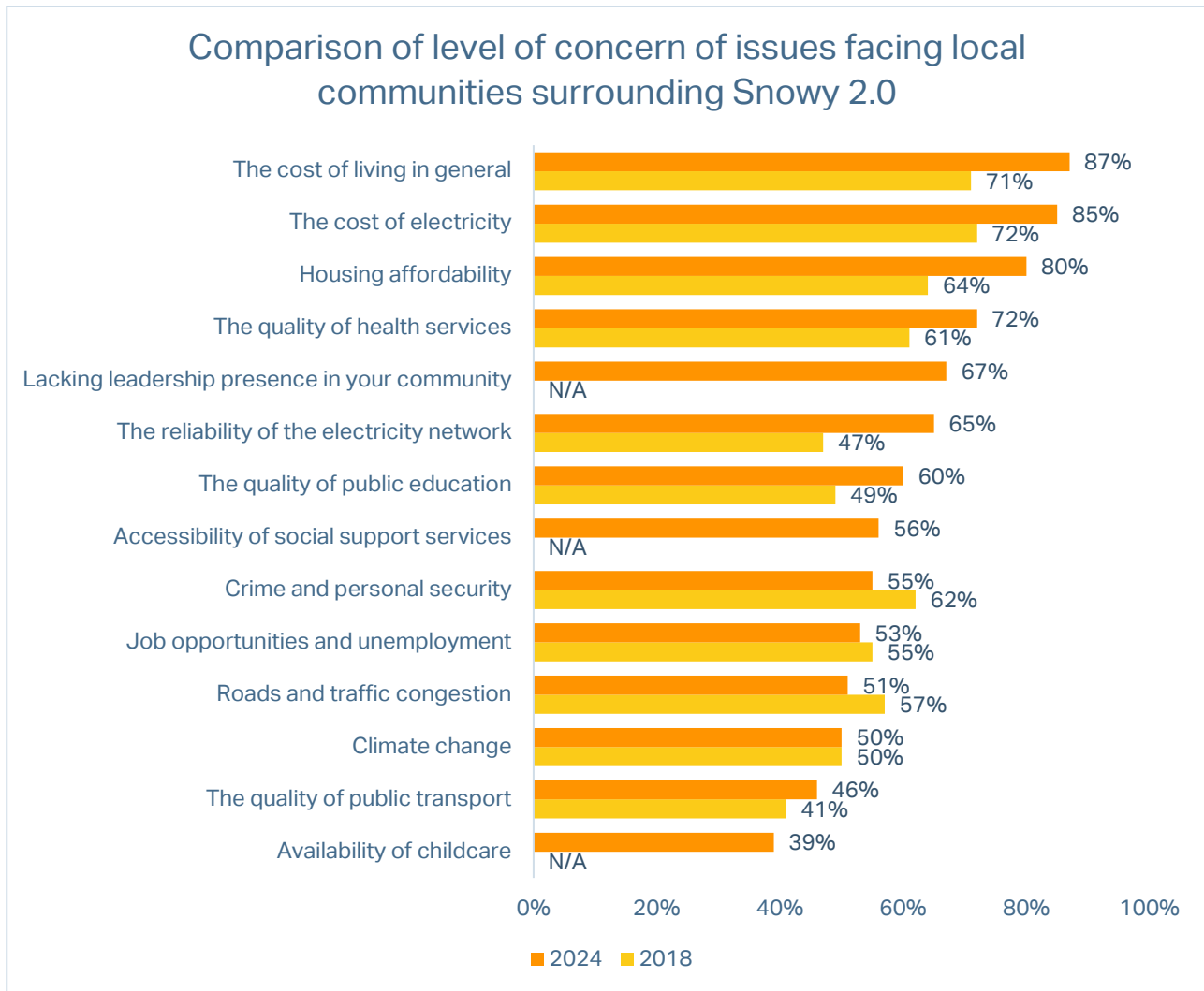


Figure 14. Comparison of level of concern about issues facing Australia and local communities 2018 vs 2024

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

Anecdotally, the views of interview and focus group participants are aligned to the survey results, with a number of participants identifying cost of living and housing costs as key community issues of concern further compounded by the presence of the Snowy 2.0 project.

Snowy 2.0 impacts on local communities

Key findings and takeaways from the survey

In 2024 half of the survey respondents feel there has been a negative impact to the local community from Snowy 2.0.

In 2024 housing (availability, affordability, rental costs) is seen as having been most impacted by Snowy 2.0.

Roads, traffic and housing were regarded as being significantly impacted in both 2018 and 2024.

Summary of survey findings

When asked about the perceived level of impact of Snowy 2.0 on the local community, 50% of respondents indicated negative or extremely negative, with 27% indicating positive or extremely positive (Figure 15). Highest impact is perceived to be on housing, quality of roads and the natural environment (Figure 16).

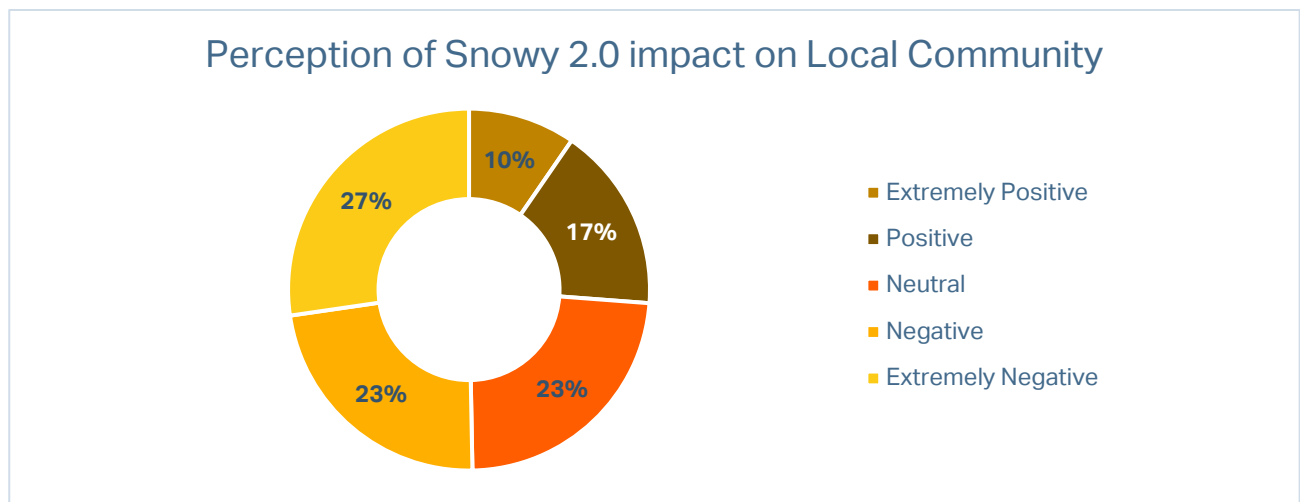
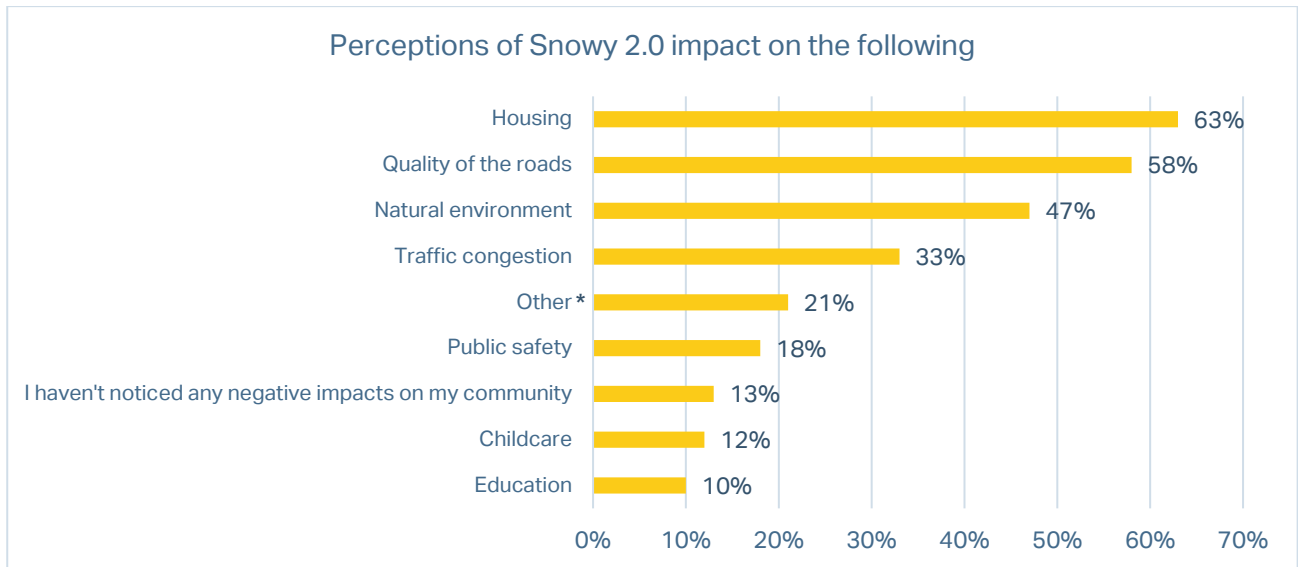


Figure 15. Perception of Snowy 2.0 impact on local community (2024) (n=187)



* Other includes impacts to tourism, trades and services, wages and the farming sector.

Figure 16. Perceptions of Snowy 2.0 impact on the following (2024) (n=187)

Comparison to earlier research

Analysis of the 2019 Social Impact Assessment found over 40 per cent of respondents indicated they thought the project would increase house prices. The 2024 research shows housing (including affordability and availability) is now the largest negative impact felt. Table 2 compares the key concerns in 2019 with those in 2024. It should be noted the process in which participants identified these key priority concerns varied between the two studies, however a review of where the priorities appear in both studies is worth reflection. Concerns about traffic impacts are now a higher priority, whilst concerns about safety (neighbourhood and public safety) are less of a priority in 2024.

Table 2. Comparisons of areas of impact by Snowy 2.0 - 2019 vs 2024

Concern rating	2019 concerns	2024 concerns	Change in priority
1	Access to recreation	Housing	▲
2	Traffic	Quality of roads	N/A
3	Community infrastructure	Natural environment	N/A
4	Neighbourhood safety	Traffic	▼
5	House prices	Other	N/A
6	Local jobs	Public safety	▼

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

Focus groups were consistent with the survey in noting housing and rental affordability and accessibility as a prominent area of concern being directly impacted by Snowy 2.0. Participants identified a significant increase in housing and rental prices across all regions, impacting both permanent residents and holiday accommodation. Participants attribute this to the influx of Snowy 2.0 workers, noting significantly higher salaries attracting workers from other industries and pricing out locals. With reference to the discussion about safety and recreation, one

group noted the lack of recreational opportunities available to Snowy 2.0 workers as a contributor to community safety concerns.

Snowy 2.0 impacts on housing

Key findings and takeaways

Snowy 2.0 is regarded as a major contributor to house and rental price increases.

In 2019 people were more neutral and generally less negative about how they felt house prices would be impacted. House price increases were seen as positive impacts.

Bega Valley region survey participants were most likely to attribute Snowy 2.0 as a major contributor to house and rental price increases.

Summary of survey findings

Survey respondents were asked to indicate how they felt housing was impacted by Snowy 2.0 (Figure 18). 60 per cent said Snowy 2.0 was a major contributor to house and rent prices. Of the respondents in the key local regions, the Bega Valley region was most likely to attribute Snowy 2.0 as a major contributor to house and rent price increases. It should be noted the Snowy Monaro region received far fewer survey responses and therefore the results for this region may not accurately reflect general sentiment.

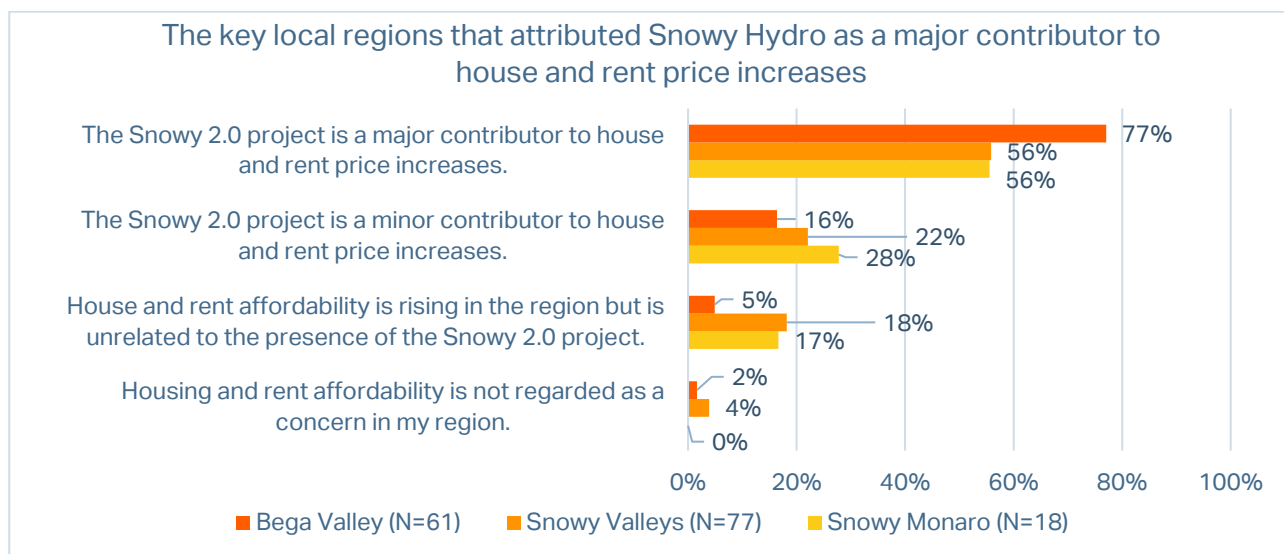


Figure 17. Key local regions that attributed Snowy Hydro as a major contributor to house and rent price increases (2024) (n=100)

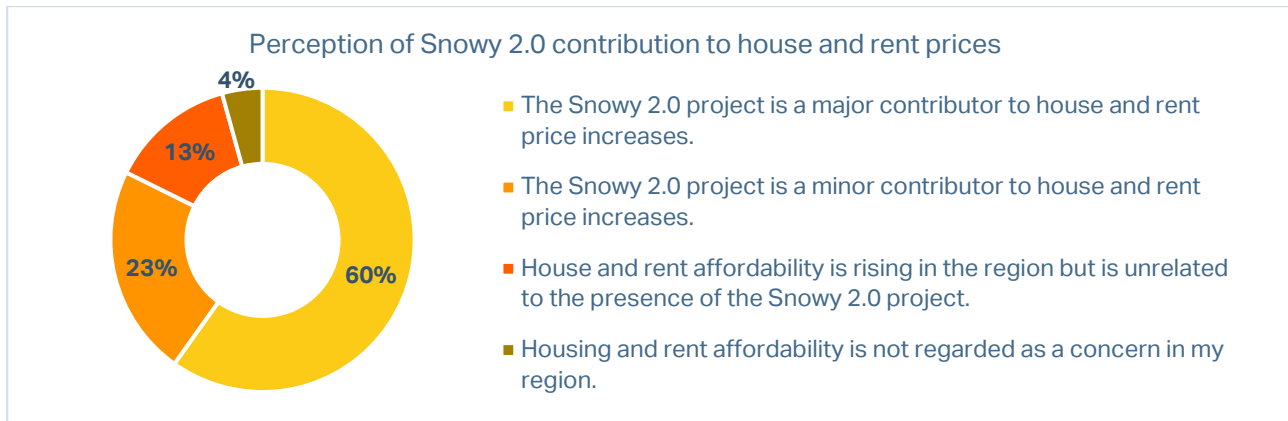


Figure 18. Perception of Snowy 2.0 contribution to house and rent prices (2024). (n=187)

Comparison to earlier research

The 2019 Social Impact Assessment suggested 43 per cent of online respondents and 28 per cent of phone respondents thought Snowy 2.0 would have a positive impact on house prices (see Figure 19). This compares to 60 per cent of 2024 respondents believing Snowy 2.0 is a major contributor to house and rent prices. It is important to note house price growth in 2019 was regarded as positive, however in 2024 housing prices are seen as a negative for many in the community.

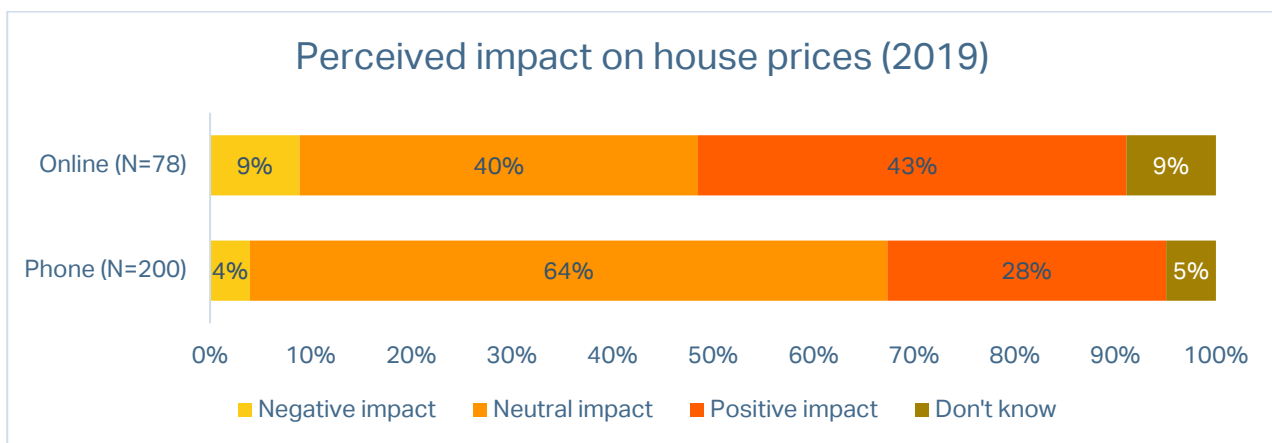


Figure 19. Perceived impact on house prices (2019) (n=187)

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

Focus group and interview participants also highlighted housing and rental availability and affordability as being impacted by the Snowy 2.0 project. Insights include:

- Participants across multiple locations report substantial rent increases and limited rental stock directly attributed to the project's impact. This was particularly notable before construction of on-site worker accommodation.
- Some Snowy Monaro participants feel housing scarcity has resulted in displacement of long-term residents, forced relocation and even homelessness.
- While some areas experienced temporary economic benefits from increased accommodation demand, the overall impact is characterised by an imbalance favouring landlords and negatively affecting lower socio-economic groups and essential workers who struggle to compete in the inflated market.

- Housing pressure is notable in popular holiday areas such as Jindabyne and Merimbula.
- Some participants noted that Snowy 2.0 workers were able to secure rentals because they were willing to pay more.

Perceived impact on housing differed in some areas:

- Respondents in Wagga Wagga expressed pressure on housing and rental affordability, but this was not attributed to Snowy 2.0.
- Some areas such as Adaminaby note a decrease in housing demand now that worker accommodation has been established.

Snowy 2.0 impacts on community social support services

Key findings and takeaways

The majority of respondents indicated Snowy 2.0 placed low to moderate pressure on social services in their communities. However, most people felt social services in their communities were limited.

Areas most in need of community investment were aged care support, housing support, healthcare and community building programs.

The Bega Valley and Snowy Monaro regions note childcare is a social service in need of support, with limited childcare options available. Multicultural services in Cooma are in high demand due to the multicultural Snowy 2.0 workforce.

Summary of survey findings

Participants describe widespread dissatisfaction with the availability of social support services in communities but do not overwhelmingly attribute this to Snowy 2.0. Figure 20 outlines how the 2024 survey respondents rated availability of social services and Figure 21 summarises how people perceive the level of pressure Snowy 2.0 places on these services. Figure 22 shows which social services are in most need of community investment based on survey feedback.



Figure 20. Perceived availability of social services (2024) (n=187)

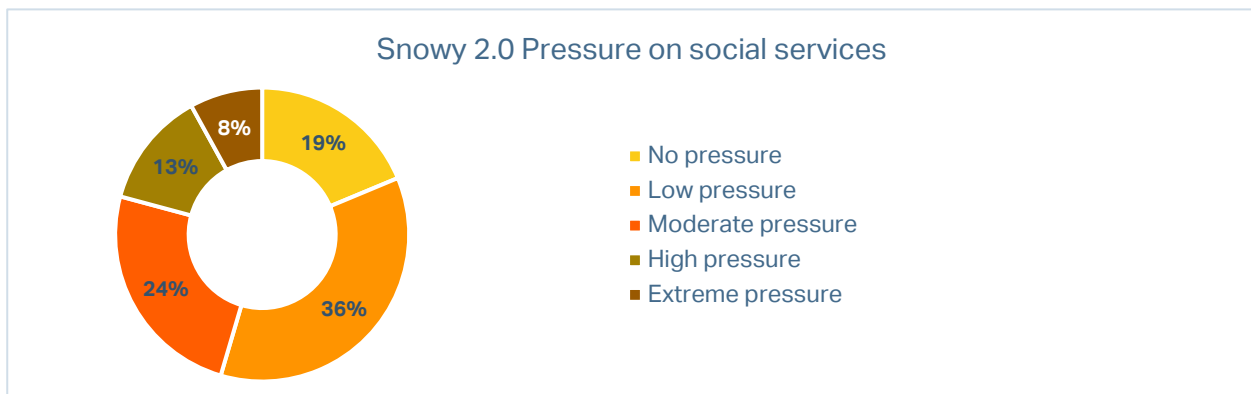


Figure 21. Perceived pressure on social support services (2024) (n=187)

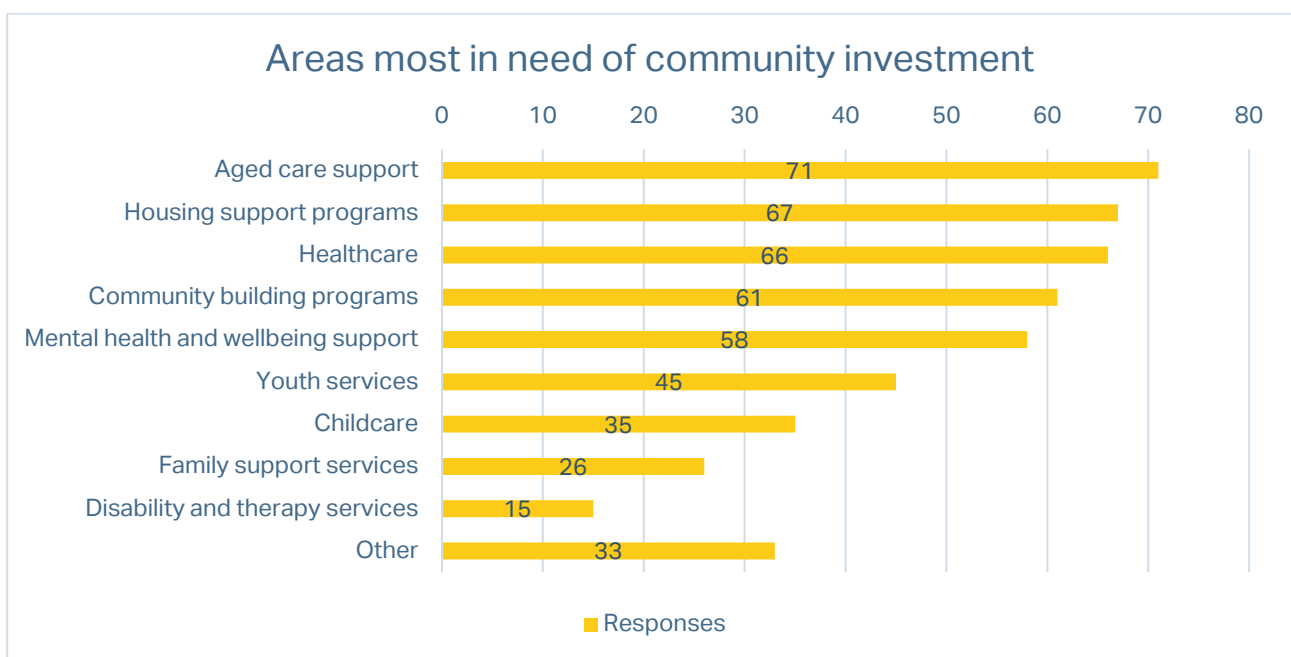


Figure 22. Perceived areas most in need of community investment (2024) (n=187)

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

Focus group and interview participants shared similar views to the survey results also noting that there were limited community social support services in their respective regions. The areas listed in need of investment in Figure 22 were also raised on several occasions in focus groups and interviews. However some focus groups and interview participants were able to identify services directly impacted by Snowy 2.0. Insights are described below:

- Significant lack of childcare options (most notably in the Bega Valley and Snowy Monaro regions) is forcing families onto years-long waitlists and hindering parents, particularly women, from re-entering the workforce.
- Participants also noted a shortage of affordable housing as a critical issue. This lack of accommodation also impacts the ability of social service organisations to attract and retain qualified staff, further compounding the strain on these services.

- Multicultural support services in Cooma are stretched due to the increase in overseas workers and families in the region.

Snowy 2.0 impacts on accessibility and quality of public services

Key findings and takeaways

In 2024 most survey respondents did not view Snowy 2.0 as having an impact on public services. This is consistent with how people felt about community infrastructure and services in 2019.

Focus group and interview participants were able to identify some public services that were impacted by Snowy 2.0, notably council services impacted by skills shortages and population growth impacting healthcare and emergency services.

Although the majority of respondents in the 2019 and 2024 studies were neutral, there was a marked increase in the number of people who felt negative about the issue in 2024.

Summary of survey findings

The 2024 Community Insights Campaign sought to understand how community and stakeholders felt about Snowy 2.0 impacts to public services such as education and health care (Figure 23). The majority of survey respondents did not believe there was a change to the impact on public services.

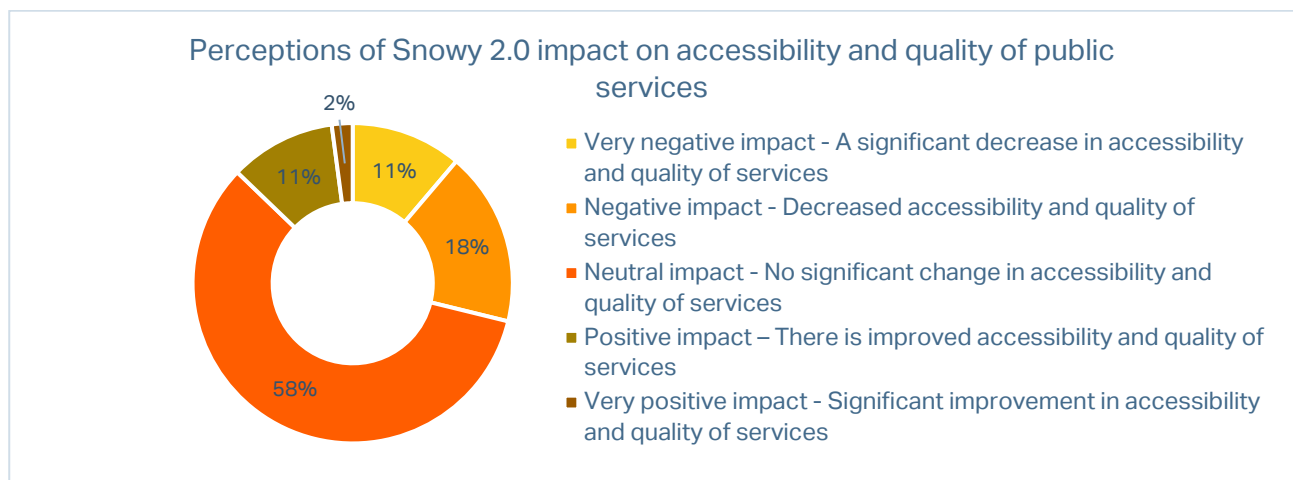


Figure 23. Perceptions of Snowy 2.0 impact on accessibility and quality of public services (n=187)

Comparison to earlier research

Data collected in the 2019 Social Impact Assessment regarding 'perceived impact on demand for community infrastructure and services' can be compared to 2024 responses about 'accessibility and quality of public services'. Both reports identify community infrastructure and services in a similar vein (citing education and public health services as examples).

The 2019 report found most respondents were neutral in their perception of the impact Snowy 2.0 would have on demand for community infrastructure and services. The 2024 findings suggest this feeling largely remains the same, with most respondents neutral. However, negative perceptions have increased and positive perceptions have decreased. Figures 24 and 25 illustrate this further.

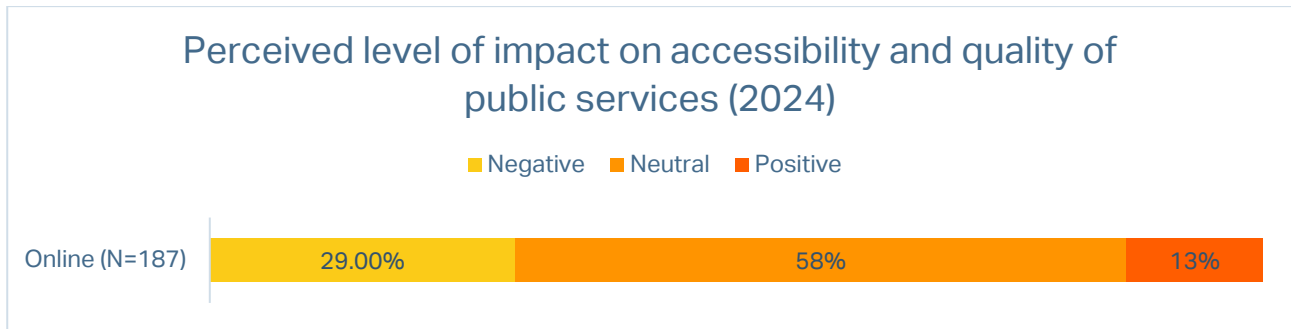


Figure 24. Perceived level of impact on accessibility and quality of public services (2024) (n=187)

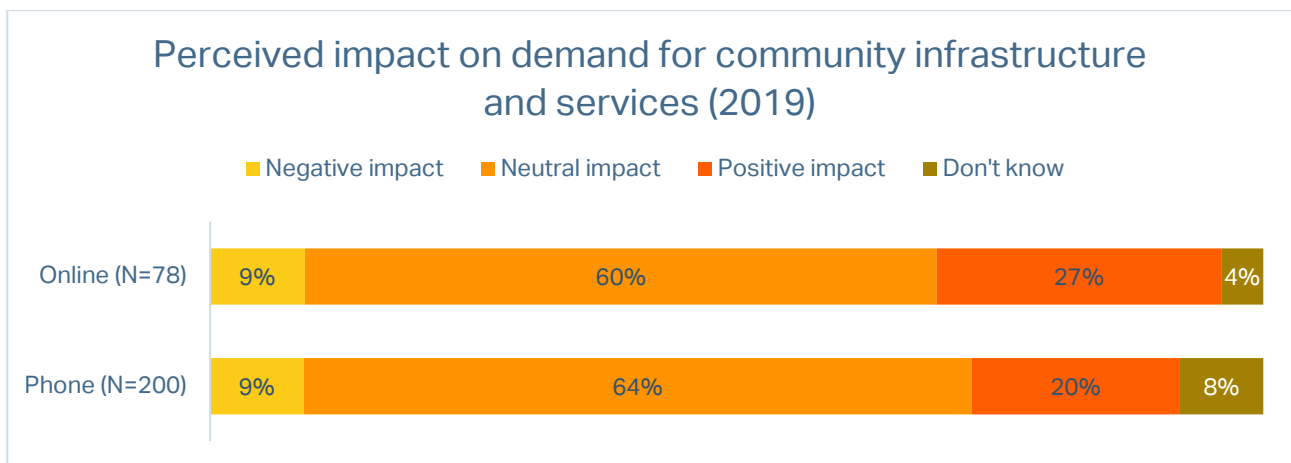


Figure 25. Perceived impact on demand for community infrastructure and services (2019) (n=278)

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

Whilst survey respondents were less inclined to believe Snowy 2.0 places pressure on public services, some interview and focus group participants identified specific examples where they believed Snowy 2.0 was impacting public services across various communities. This is described below:

- Council services were impacted by skills shortages and a general population increase.
- The influx of workers, and the associated population increase, has led to increased demand for healthcare.
- The healthcare system faces challenges attracting and retaining professionals due to the inflated housing market.
- Participants also expressed concern over the strain on emergency services, who often must respond to incidents further away from town centres, potentially delaying response times for the broader community.
- Local non-government schools were reaching capacity as it is cheaper for international Snowy 2.0 workers to send their children to private schools as opposed to sending their children to NSW public schools.

Long term benefits

Key findings and takeaways

Reliable and cheap electricity is a priority for many.

People would like ongoing employment growth and upgraded roads created as part of Snowy 2.0's legacy.

A number of anticipated long term benefits cited in 2019 remain in 2024, notably improved employment, economic benefits and better infrastructure.

Summary of survey findings

The survey participants identified the following long term benefits they would like to see materialise when the construction of Snowy 2.0 is completed. Figure 26 highlights the six most popular responses to this question.

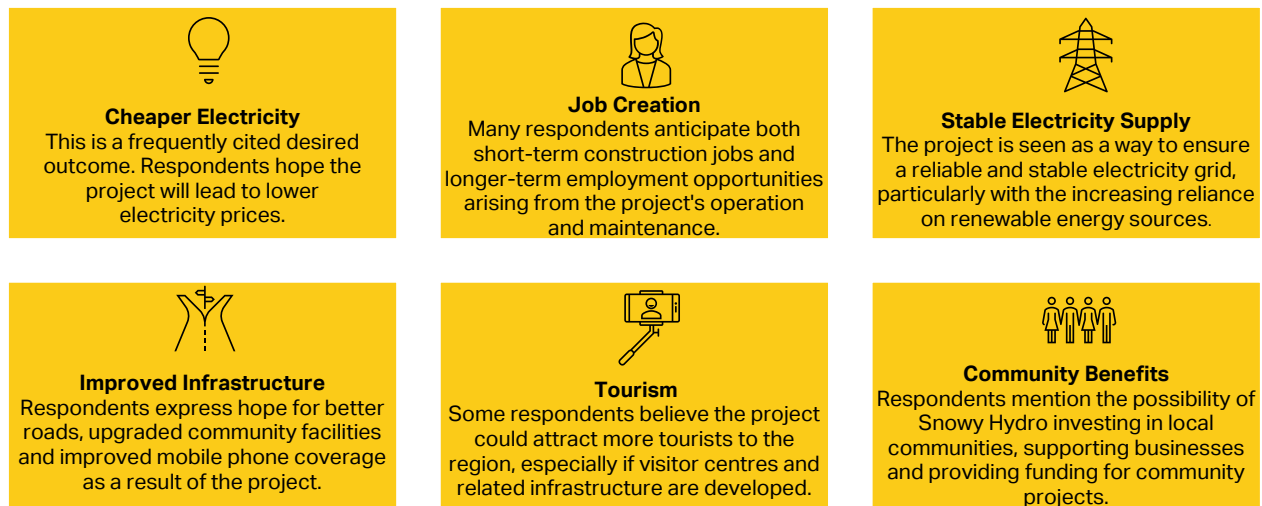


Figure 26. What survey respondents hope the long-term benefits of the project will bring

Comparison to earlier research

Data collected in the 2019 Social Impact Assessment regarding long-term social impacts can be compared to responses in the 2024 Community Insights Campaign about hopes for long-term benefits of the Snowy 2.0 project. The positive long-term social impacts respondents hoped to see in 2019 are listed below. Those highlighted also appear in 2024.

2019 positive long-term social impacts:

- General economic benefits
- More local employment
- Better infrastructure

- Integration of tourism and community
- **Reduced electricity costs/Lower power costs**
- More clean and renewable energy.

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

Focus group and interview participants echoed many of the above long-term benefits people hoped to see. There were a number of other notable suggestions:

- Participants (notably elected officials) expressed a strong desire for Snowy Hydro to invest in lasting benefits for the community such as infrastructure improvements, tourism opportunities, and support for local businesses. This was preferred rather than investing in 'sugar hit' investments that only deliver short duration benefits.
- Many feared a repeat of the 'boom and bust' cycle experienced after previous projects and emphasised the need for sustained employment opportunities.
- The rehabilitation of Kosciuszko National Park was also mentioned as a lasting legacy preference.

More broadly, however, many simply wanted to see Snowy Hydro's legacy extend beyond the project's completion, leaving a positive and enduring impact on the region.

Snowy Hydro and the community



Snowy Hydro and the community

Overview

This section of the report seeks to understand how Snowy Hydro's relationship with the community is viewed and how its efforts to support the communities where it operates are received.

A key focus of this section was to understand how community investment programs such as Snowy Hydro's major partnerships and the Community Grants Program are viewed along with their level of effectiveness and how they might be improved. This section also looks at peoples' past experiences in their interactions with Snowy Hydro.

Past experiences with Snowy Hydro

Awareness of community programs

Community investment examples

Past experiences with Snowy Hydro

Key findings and takeaways

Survey respondents in the Bega Valley were just as likely to feel they were kept up to date as those in the Snowy Valleys.

There are opportunities for improvement to: better understand the needs of the community and individuals; be more responsive to enquiries and concerns; and engage on relevant issues.

Focus group and interview participants in the Snowy Valleys believe the Snowy Monaro region receives greater levels of support and engagement from Snowy Hydro.

Summary of survey findings

Survey participants were asked to reflect on their past experiences interacting with and receiving information from Snowy Hydro, and to select one or more possible responses to illustrate their perception of Snowy Hydro. Across the survey, almost 50 per cent felt they were kept up to date about the Snowy 2.0 project. Respondents in the Bega Valley were just as likely to feel they were kept up to date as those in the Snowy Valleys. 36 per cent of respondents answered 'none of the above', and there are opportunities for Snowy Hydro to improve the following:

- Engaging on relevant issues.
- Responding to enquiries and concerns.
- Understanding needs of the community and individuals.

This finding is based on an assessment of respondents' selection of preferred pre-prepared survey answers.

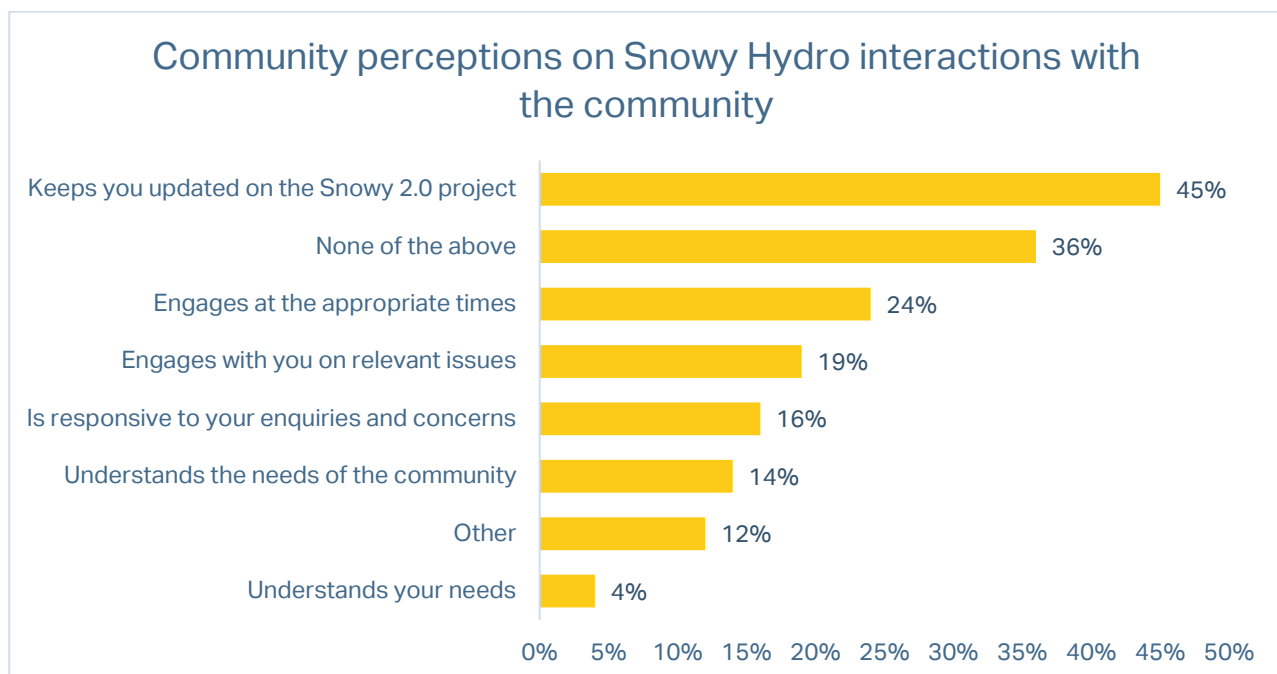


Figure 27. Reflections on interactions with the community (2024) (n=187)

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

Across various focus groups, participants expressed feeling ignored, having their concerns met with insufficient responses. For example, participants in the Cooma community leaders focus group described years of advocating for community consultation and feeling unheard despite "knocking on Snowy's door hundreds of times".

- The Snowy Valleys region participants felt their community was treated like the 'poor cousin' to the Snowy Monaro region with numerous examples provided where they felt there was more attention paid to the Snowy Monaro and that there was stronger investment in that region.
- There is a need to delineate what Snowy Hydro is responsible for. Two examples shed light on this:
 - There was a recurring theme among some participants of being directed back and forth between the Future Generation Joint Venture and Snowy Hydro on community issues about Snowy 2.0.
 - It was not clear to some people which organisation (the local council or Snowy Hydro) was responsible for management of recreational and outdoor spaces around the dam and reservoir foreshores.



Figure 28. Three focus groups and five face-to-face meetings were held in Tumut

Awareness of community programs

Key findings and takeaways

The majority of people engaged in the Community Insights Campaign were most familiar with Snowy Hydro's Community Grants Program.

After the Community Grants Program, the Snowy Valleys region was most familiar with the Snowy Valleys Sculpture Trail, Snowy Monaro and Bega Valley were most familiar with the Snowy STEM Academy.

About 50 per cent of survey respondents have seen Snowy Hydro's community investment initiatives in action with most citing examples of community funding.

Summary of survey findings

The Community Insights Campaign survey asked respondents to identify, from a set list, the Snowy Hydro community investment initiatives they were aware of. The Community Grants Program is the most recognised of Snowy Hydro's community investment initiatives, followed by local festivals and events, and the Snowy STEM Academy. Few people are aware of Snowy Hydro's partnership with the PCYC. For more see Figure 29.

The second part of this question asked respondents to identify if they had seen these programs in action. Of the 187 responses, 41 per cent have seen evidence of the community investment initiatives, with many noting they had seen Snowy Hydro fund community programs, support schools (i.e STEM or the Young Driver Training Program). 27 per cent of survey respondents have only seen community investment initiatives promoted or advertised.



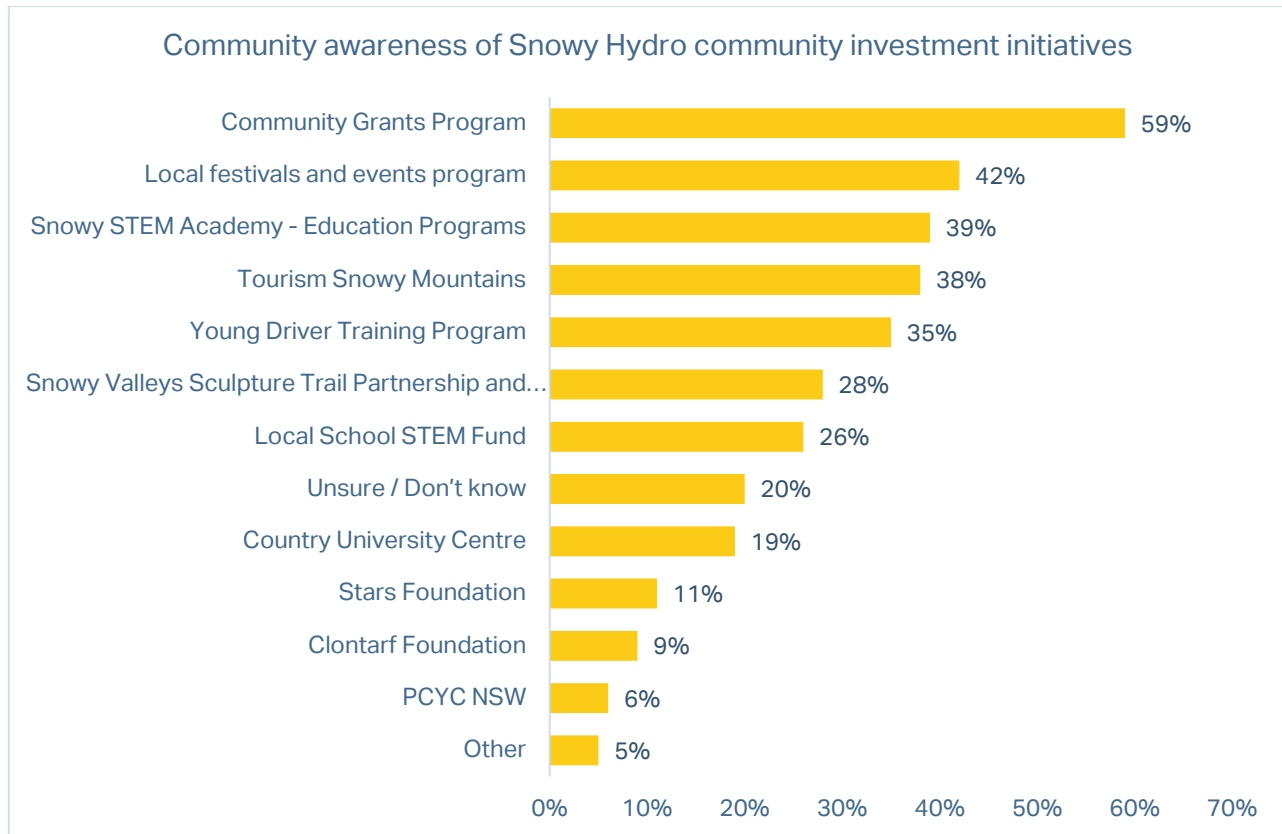


Figure 29. Snowy Hydro community investment initiatives people are aware of (2024) (n=187)

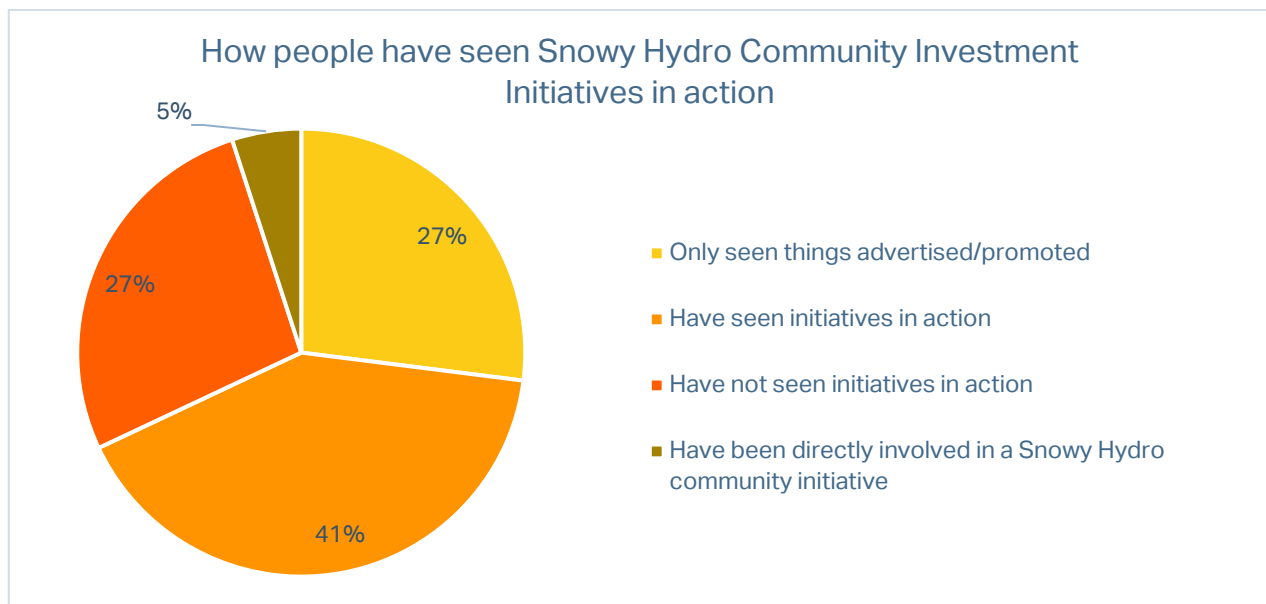


Figure 30. How people have seen Snowy Hydro Community Investment Initiatives in action (2024) (n=187)

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

For the most part, focus group and interview participants echoed much of the survey results for this subject:

- The Community Grants Program is the most well-known among the community investment initiatives.
- The Clontarf and Stars Foundation programs were repeatedly praised by Snowy Valleys participants for their positive impact on young people, with many leaders highlighting the importance of mentorship and work opportunities for the region's youth.
- Participants in the Bega Valley and Wagga Wagga focus groups were not well aware of the community investment initiatives.
- Some participants highlighted a disconnect between Snowy Hydro's efforts and community perception, emphasising the need for greater transparency and targeted communication to improve awareness and understanding of the community support initiatives.
- The Country University Centre (CUC) was not as well-known as some other programs supported by Snowy Hydro, however for those that were aware it is well regarded. Respondents requested a CUC be established in the Snowy Valleys region.
- Snowy Hydro's involvement with the PCYC was least well known of Snowy Hydro's investment initiatives.

Community investment examples

Key findings and takeaways

The Snowy Hydro Community Grants Program should go beyond funding or providing support for people to apply.

A facility similar to the Discovery Centre in Cooma should be established in the Snowy Valleys region. Consider further facilities to celebrate the Snowy legacy.

Bendigo Bank was cited on numerous occasions as a model organisation that supports local communities.

Summary of survey findings

Respondents were asked to suggest other examples of community initiatives Snowy Hydro could look to for inspiration. Broadly speaking, there was not a strong list of direct existing examples provided, but rather general suggestions as summarised below.

Participants believe the Snowy Hydro Community Grants Program could be extended further than the provision of funding. It was suggested it could be enhanced by providing support and advice when applying for grants, such as having access to a dedicated contact person or workshops to help with the application process.

- There were suggestions for a Snowy Discovery Centre in Talbingo, bringing back dioramas and displays. A similar centre, the Khancoban Snowy Hydro Visitors Centre, was highlighted as an excellent example of community investment.
- Discussions about community wellbeing saw participants highlight a need for investment in a combination community shed with tools and workshops accessible to all genders. Additionally, a fully funded companion animal and rehoming shelter with a cafe was suggested.

- Focus on training locals, such as a tunnelling/construction skills academy which could offer family-friendly rosters, potentially based out of Adaminaby, Talbingo, Cooma or Tumut. This initiative aims to address employment needs and provide sustainable job opportunities.
- Participants want to see Snowy Hydro invest in existing Snowy historic assets. Make assets like museums, the SMEC lab, and the Rock Bolt test site more accessible to Snowy workers and their families.
- The participants provided examples of successful community investment models from other organisations that could inspire Snowy Hydro. These include:
 - Border Trust: This organisation is recognised for its community-minded grants following bushfires, particularly its effective model of collaborating with local groups.
 - Bendigo Bank and IGA: Both organisations are acknowledged for their community funds and fundraising initiatives. Bendigo Bank is specifically praised for its substantial investment in local communities.

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

Reflecting the survey results, focus group and interview participants were not overly forthcoming with suggestions of other successful community investment initiatives from other organisations however the following insights were noted:

- The STEM program was praised in both the Snowy Valleys and Snowy Monaro focus groups for providing opportunities for young people and retaining students by showcasing local career paths.
- The Clontarf program was highlighted for its positive impact on young First Nations men, teaching discipline, ethics and self-esteem, and providing work and mentoring opportunities.
- There was a strong call for a Country University Centre in Tumut.
- In Merimbula, there was discussion about the lack of Snowy Hydro investment in the region, with participants citing examples such as the Bendigo Bank (which helps communities with grants and community focused appeals) and the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (which connects common purposes and funding from government, business and philanthropy with the local needs of rural people and places) as the biggest supporters of community projects.
- Focus group participants in the Snowy Valleys region suggested Snowy Hydro could learn from the legacy of investment left by Veolia in Goulburn, citing the refurbished showgrounds and new basketball court as examples.

How Snowy Hydro engages with the community



How Snowy Hydro engages with the community

This section delves into participants' perspectives on Snowy Hydro's current engagement with the local community. The discussion explored key aspects of Snowy Hydro's engagement strategy, including reach, inclusivity, effectiveness, and potential areas for enhancement. The discussion focused on how Snowy Hydro can become a more impactful and integrated member of the community.

By analysing these insights, we can identify opportunities to strengthen these ties and foster a more collaborative and transparent approach. This will ensure open communication and engagement with all community groups with all voices heard and considered in future endeavours.

In this section, the following discussion topics about Snowy 2.0 are explored:

Snowy Hydro community engagement performance

Snowy Hydro community engagement effectiveness

Communication preferences

Content preferences

Engagement preferences

Snowy Hydro community engagement performance

Key findings and takeaways

The majority of survey respondents felt Snowy Hydro's engagement was moderate to very low.

Many focus group and interview participants regarded the deployment of Snowy Hydro ambassadors, the use of social media and engagement with the business community as positive attributes of Snowy Hydro's community engagement.

Many focus group and interview participants favour on-ground presence as a way Snowy Hydro could improve community engagement.

Summary of survey findings

This section of the Community Insights Campaign asked respondents to evaluate the engagement performance of Snowy Hydro. The majority of respondents rate Snowy Hydro's community engagement performance as moderate to very low (Figure 31).

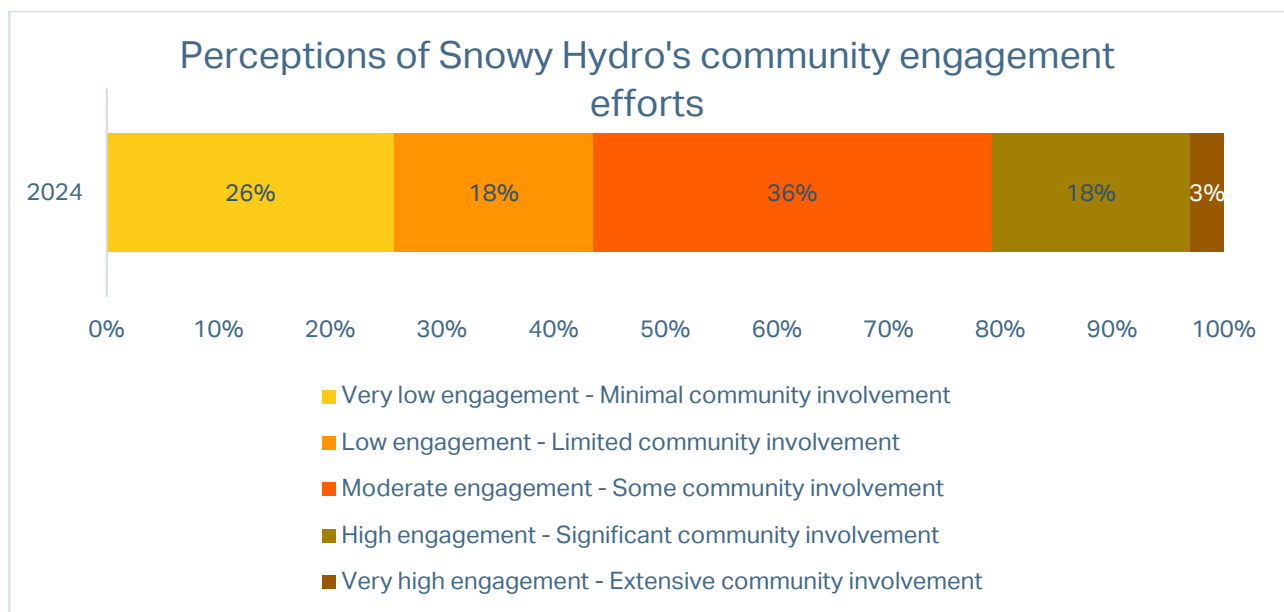


Figure 31. Perceptions of Snowy Hydro's community engagement efforts (2024) (n=187)

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

Focus group and interview participants were mostly consistent in their reflections that Snowy Hydro's community engagement efforts could be upgraded. There were, however, notable positive recognition for certain activities. Insights are described below:

- The broader communication mediums, notably the use of social media were well regarded.
- The deployment of Snowy Hydro ambassadors such as Dean Lynch was highly regarded.
- Engagement with local businesses and chambers of commerce was regarded as positive.

- Regular and in-person, on-ground presence was highly recommended, this could be in the form of an expanded community engagement team, deploying more ambassadors or hosting events such as open days and visits to Snowy Hydro infrastructure.
- Maintain transparent communications and improve communication of impacts of the Snowy 2.0 project.
- Communicate the impacts of the transmission line construction projects.
- The community meetings currently held are not seen as effective, noting poor attendance and feeling like box ticking exercises.
- Communication of dam levels are important for many in the Snowy Monaro region.

Snowy Hydro community engagement effectiveness

Key findings and takeaways

The majority of survey respondents regarded Snowy Hydro's community engagement effectiveness as either moderate, ineffective or very ineffective.

Focus group and interview participants identified areas in which Snowy Hydro could improve its community engagement effectiveness.

Perception of selective communication favouring positive news while neglecting to address negative aspects or potential disruptions.

Summary of survey findings

The survey asked respondents to evaluate the engagement effectiveness of Snowy Hydro. The majority of respondents (77 per cent) rated Snowy Hydro's community engagement effectiveness as either moderate, ineffective or very ineffective see (Figure 32).

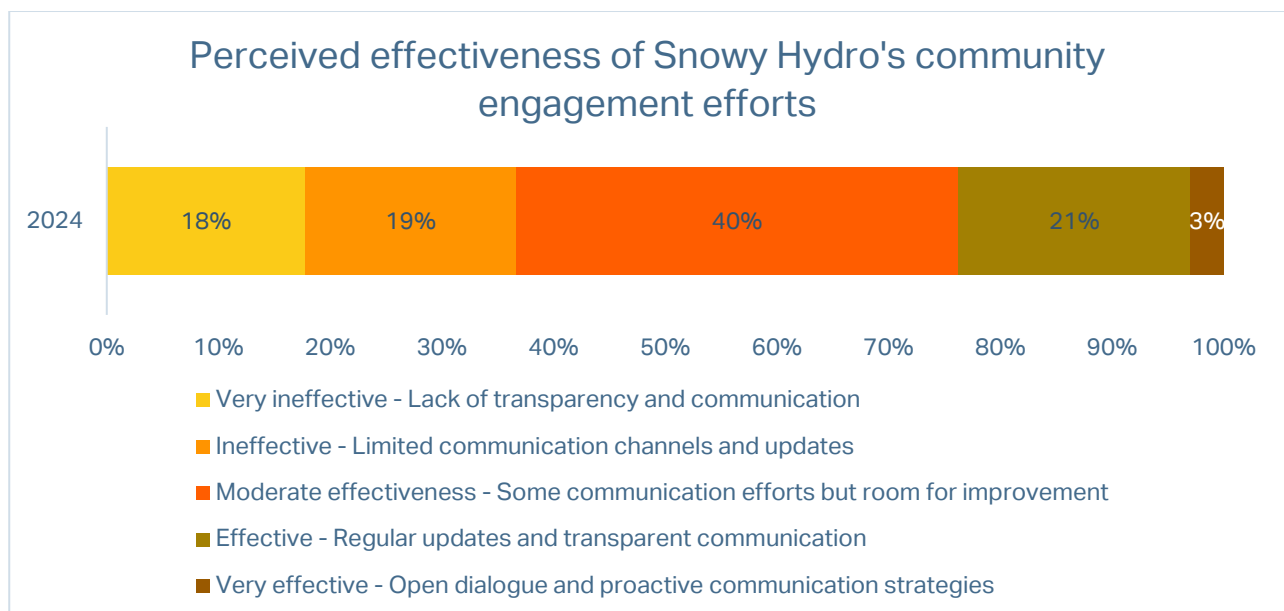


Figure 32. Perceived effectiveness of Snowy Hydro's engagement efforts (2024) (n=187)

Comparison to earlier research

In the 2017 Research Report it was noted “virtually all stakeholders praised the organisation [Snowy Hydro] for its significant contribution to the community, its broad consultation efforts and the strong relationships it has built with stakeholders”. Recommendations from the report were to maintain the highly effective approach to stakeholder engagement and leverage it in communications. The 2024 survey findings indicate this in an important area for improvement.

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

The majority of focus group and interview participants suggested ways to improve Snowy Hydro’s community engagement effectiveness.

Communication preferences

Key findings and takeaways

Social media, community meetings and newsletters were the three most preferred communication preferences across all regions.

There is a strong preference for clear, concise and community-focused communication, with an emphasis on face-to-face interactions.

The community currently rely on traditional media and word-of-mouth to receive news about Snowy Hydro. They regard this as inadequate with more direct methods of communication desired.

Summary of survey findings

Respondents were asked to indicate their preferred communication preferences for receiving Snowy Hydro information. The majority indicated social media, community meetings and newsletters (Figure 33).

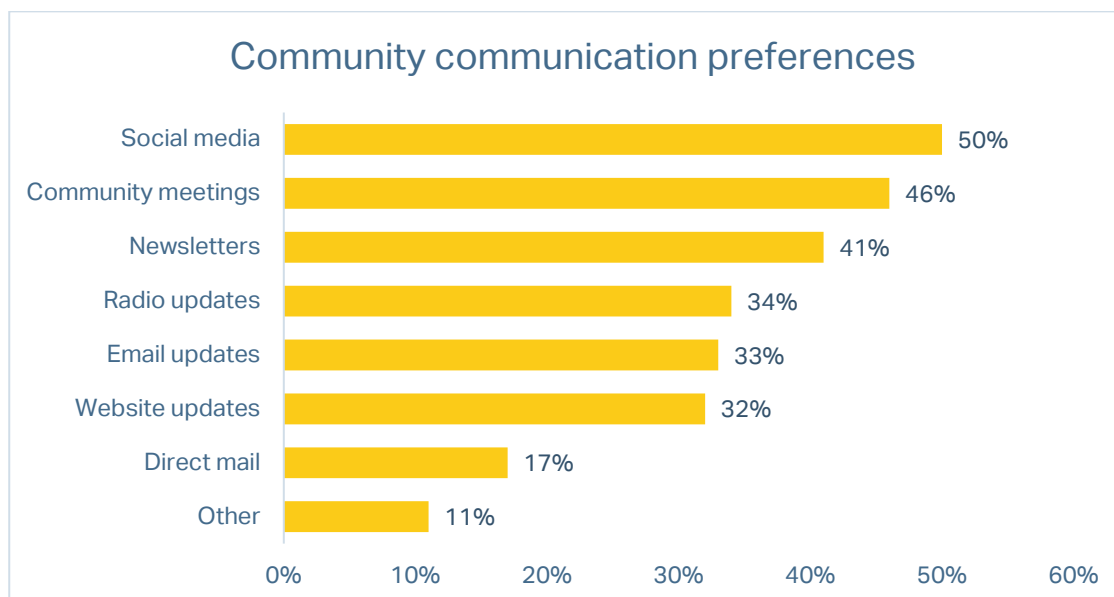


Figure 33. How community members would like to receive updates from Snowy Hydro (2024) (n=187)

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

Focus group and interview participants were not specifically asked what their communication preferences were, however, some insights were provided:

- Strong preference for clear, concise and community-focused communication, with an emphasis on face-to-face and regular on-ground engagement.
- The community currently relies on traditional media and word-of-mouth to receive news about Snowy Hydro and they regard this as inadequate with more direct methods of communication desired.

Content preferences

Key findings and takeaways

The majority of survey respondents were interested in Snowy 2.0 project updates, Snowy Scheme news and community updates.

18% of respondents did not know there was a newsletter.

The community want to see more proactive communication about matters such as dam levels, construction impacts and traffic.

Summary of survey findings

This section of the Community Insights Campaign asked respondents to indicate what content they wanted to hear more about in Snowy Hydro's quarterly community newsletter. There were clear top four preferences for Snowy 2.0 project updates, Snowy Scheme news, community updates and employment opportunities (Figure 34).

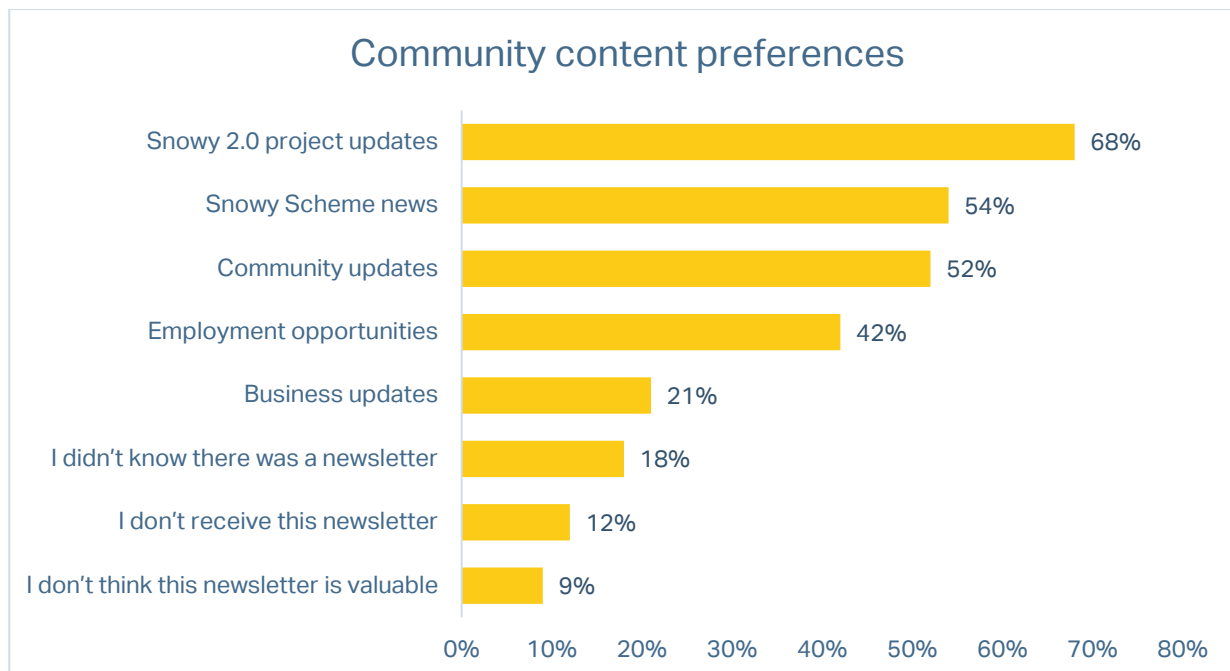


Figure 34. Content preferences for Snowy Hydro's quarterly community newsletter (2024) (n=187)

Comparison to earlier research

In the 2017 Research Report respondents were not asked about the newsletter or what content they'd like to receive from Snowy Hydro, however qualitative notes highlight people were interested in Snowy Hydro's success and innovations. This differs from feedback received in the 2024 focus groups and interviews which highlighted a desire for less positive or success driven updates and more on-the-ground/impact related information. Respondents in 2017 were, however asked specifically about communications around water management. This was identified as an area where improvements could be made, and we heard this again in 2024 with concern around timely information for the lowering of dam levels.

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

Focus group participants desired more transparency and two-way communication from Snowy Hydro, particularly regarding Snowy 2.0 project updates and their potential impacts. Participants expressed a desire for clear communication about lake levels, which directly impact local businesses and tourism. For instance, two participants mention a lack of transparency regarding the lowering of lake levels, hindering the ability of businesses to prepare.

There is a strong call for Snowy Hydro to move beyond highlighting positive contributions and instead address community concerns, such as the environmental impact of transmission lines and the potential for increased traffic and strain on local infrastructure. Participants want to understand the rationale behind decisions and be informed about mitigation efforts in place, showing a preference for detailed and honest updates over purely positive narratives.

Engagement preferences

Key findings and takeaways

Survey respondents had a clear preference for face-to-face engagement with their top three preferences including events, activities and in-person meetings.

There is a strong desire for a more consistent presence from Snowy Hydro, particularly beyond Cooma. The community wants Snowy Hydro to be more accessible and present in the community.

Least preferred methods of engagement are online meetings, email and phone calls.

Summary of survey findings

This section of the Community Insights Campaign asked survey respondents what Snowy Hydro should do more of to achieve greater engagement with the community. The results indicate a clear preference for face-to-face engagement opportunities with online and direct methods such as emails and phone calls receiving significantly lower preferences (Figure 35).

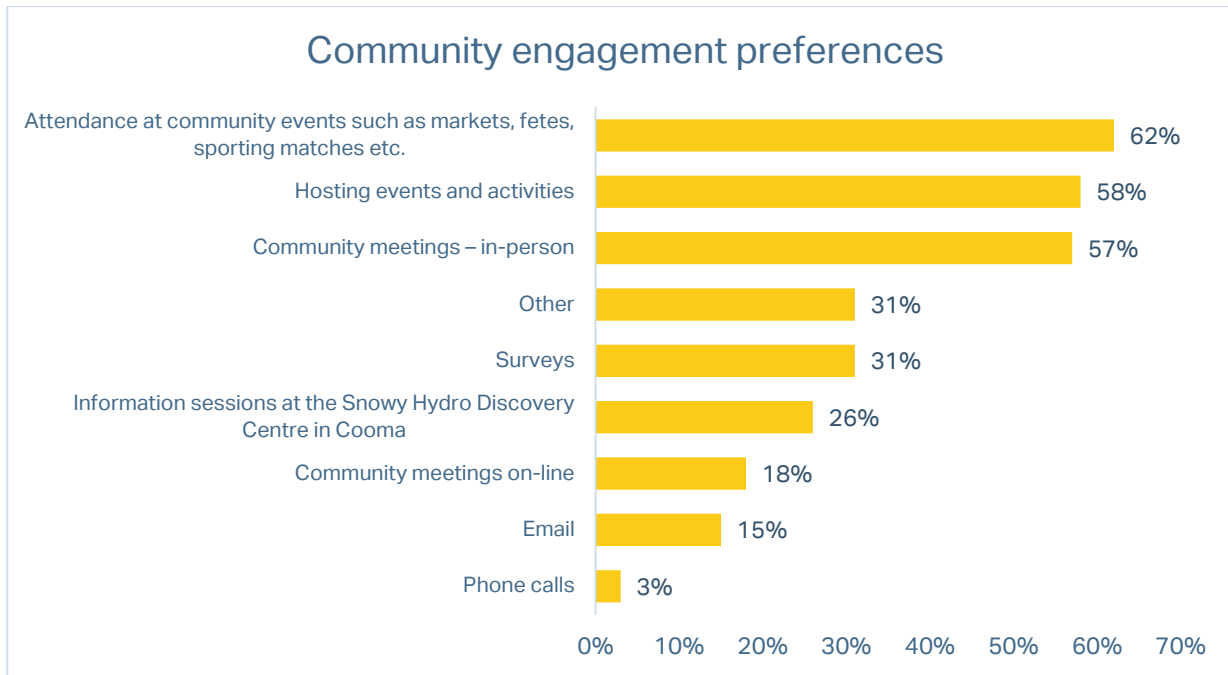


Figure 35. What should Snowy Hydro do more of to better engage with community

What we heard in focus groups and interviews

Feedback from focus group and interview participants aligned with the survey results in many ways. Insights are as follows:

- Participants indicated a strong desire for a more tangible and consistent presence from Snowy 2.0, especially in the Snowy Valleys region. Suggestions include establishing a physical community space, attending local events more frequently, collaborating with existing organisations, being more transparent and integrating the Snowy 2.0 workforce into the community.
- Successful programs like "Coffee with a Cop" were cited as examples of positive engagement strategies, indicating a preference for informal and accessible formats that foster dialogue and relationship-building. Overall, the feedback calls for a more embedded, consistent and accessible approach to community engagement from Snowy Hydro.



Figure 36. 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




3

Consultation with First Nations People

3 Consultation with First Nations People

As part of the Community Insights Campaign, Struber worked with Snowy Hydro to ensure First Nations community representatives were actively provided the opportunity to engage. Whilst the engagement process with First Nations people was designed to ensure feedback could be provided on the same topics raised with the broader community, there was a strong emphasis on allowing participants to discuss the issues most pertinent to them. As a result, most chose to discuss separate issues and opportunities they wanted to highlight with Snowy Hydro.

A snapshot of what we heard

 <p>Concern about Snowy Hydro's consultation process</p>	<p>Based on the interviews conducted, Snowy Hydro's engagement with the local First Nations communities, particularly those who participated, appears insufficient and faces several challenges, raising serious concerns about the broader consultation process. Several First Nations stakeholders, including those identifying as Ngarigo Elders, consistently describe Snowy Hydro's approach as disrespectful, lacking in transparency, and failing to involve the appropriate First Nations representatives.</p>
 <p>Consulting with the incorrect people</p>	<p>Concerns were raised regarding the cultural consultation process of Snowy Hydro, with some individuals expressing doubts about the authenticity of the engagement. They have indicated that Snowy Hydro may have consulted with individuals identifying as Ngarigo Elders who, in their view, may not have a genuine connection to the land or may have misrepresented their heritage. This has led to questions about the validity of cultural assessments and approvals obtained through these consultations. Some community members have voiced concerns, feeling that Snowy Hydro's process may have been compromised, particularly in cases where culturally significant sites were potentially mishandled or where funding was directed towards projects that Ngarigo Elders do not consider appropriate.</p>
 <p>Snowy Hydro has a lack of cultural awareness</p>	<p>The interviews reveal some areas of limited awareness and understanding of Ngarigo cultural protocols within Snowy Hydro. Individuals pointed out Snowy Hydro's initial lack of understanding regarding Aboriginal protocols, suggesting decisions have been made without proper consent from the Ngarigo people. They cited the example of Lobs Hole, where artefacts were removed without appropriate consultation. It is suggested this lack of cultural sensitivity has created some mistrust and resentment among some members of the Ngarigo community.</p>

The findings of these interviews indicate a need for Snowy Hydro to reassess its approach to First Nations consultation, ensuring engagement with verified representatives, incorporating cultural sensitivity and understanding, and prioritising transparency and accountability.

What we heard

Overview

Through in-person and phone interviews, First Nations stakeholders shared their perspectives on the Snowy 2.0 project and its impacts on the community, along with Snowy Hydro's engagement efforts, with particular reference to the impacts on First Nations people. These discussions highlighted a sense of disappointment and frustration stemming from a perceived lack of genuine engagement and transparency from Snowy Hydro.

Interviewees expressed a desire for more meaningful partnerships, equitable benefit-sharing, and a genuine commitment to collaboration and consultation. The feedback revealed a significant disconnect between Snowy Hydro's understanding of its community engagement and the lived experiences of the communities it impacts. The four most prominent themes are explored below.

Key Themes

Engagement with the First Nations community

Several individuals, including some who identify as Ngarigo Elders and other community members, expressed significant concerns about Snowy Hydro's engagement with the First Nations community. Many felt that Snowy Hydro has not engaged with the First Nations community in a respectful or meaningful way.

One individual stated that Snowy Hydro has not engaged with the First Nations community on an ongoing basis to determine what support is needed. Several others, who were among a group of seven self-proclaimed true Elders, expressed being very unhappy with Snowy Hydro's lack of engagement with "true Elders". They claim that Snowy Hydro is giving money to individuals posing as Elders, citing this as evidence that they were "out of touch". These participants spoke of the divisions within the Ngarigo community and recognised the difficulties Snowy Hydro would have had, saying there have been "a lot of issues" engaging with the First Nations community because individuals who were not Ngarigo were claiming to represent the Ngarigo people. Many conversations suggested that the Ngarigo people have felt ignored for a long time.

Two individuals claimed that there are only seven "true Elders" and provided their names as well as the names of individuals they allege are falsely claiming to be Elders. They stated that Snowy Hydro is being "made a mockery of" because they have not engaged in due diligence to verify the identity of the individuals they are engaging with.

One respondent was dissatisfied with Snowy Hydro's efforts to engage the local First Nations People at the beginning of the Snowy 2.0 project, saying they sought "outside help" for the process of walking over country rather than consulting with the Ngarigo people. This was reinforced in feedback collected from another individual who said there were several Ngarigo people ready and willing to perform cultural burning and other ceremonies, but they are never engaged by Snowy Hydro to take part.

One interviewee suggested Snowy Hydro have a Memorandum of Understand (MOU) with the land councils so they could meet regularly and discuss what support the community needed, saying it would help build a meaningful relationship.

One participant suggested Snowy Hydro's First Nations Engagement framework could use the [Dhawura Ngilan Business and Investor Initiative](#) as a blueprint.

Only one participant expressed satisfaction with Snowy Hydro's engagement with the First Nations community saying they are very approachable; their community had received a lot of support and they "have a direct line" to Snowy Hydro.

The impact of Snowy 2.0 on sacred sites and artifacts

Numerous interviewees express a sense of hurt and anger surrounding the handling of sacred artifacts during the construction of Snowy 2.0. Lobs Hole in particular was highlighted by many, where the removal of artefacts without consulting Ngarigo Elders has caused significant distress. One individual who identified as an Elder expressed discontent the removal of these artefacts from Lobs Hole without consultation deeply impacted them, stating artefacts "can only be removed by an Elder".

Another participant claimed Snowy Hydro gave artefacts and bones to a named individual who they believe is not Indigenous. They also expressed deep dissatisfaction no one had yet contacted them or other Elders about these artefacts. Additionally, concerns were raised about the restoration and preservation of sacred sites that have been impacted by the 2.0 project.

All interviewees shared the sentiment there is a strong desire within the First Nations community to work collaboratively with Snowy Hydro on restoring these sites. However, several participants point to the current lack of trust as inhibiting this collaboration. Interviewees emphasised the importance of Snowy Hydro reaching out and consulting with the community when they come across potential sacred sites, such as scar trees, rather than proceeding with potentially destructive actions like bulldozing. Several respondents also expressed a reluctance to disclose the locations of sacred sites is largely driven by a fear of mishandling and a lack of trust in Snowy Hydro.

However, all those interviewed believed by working together to find solutions, more respectful and effective plans that benefit both sides could be developed.

Supporting the First Nations community

There was an overwhelming sentiment of disappointment among most participants regarding Snowy Hydro's efforts to support the local First Nations People.

It was emphasised Snowy Hydro must acknowledge its responsibility in contributing to the 'Closing the Gap' targets, which aim to reduce disparities between First Nations People and non-First Nations People.

Participants expressed a desire for greater investment in enterprise development in the Ngarigo community to create sustainable employment opportunities, fostering a more self-sufficient community and reducing dependence on support services.

Several made suggestions of ways Snowy Hydro could have a meaningful impact on the Ngarigo community and take concrete steps that align with the community's needs and aspirations. These suggestions are listed below:

- Establishing an arts scholarship for Ngarigo artists to recognise and celebrate their unique cultural contributions.
- Introducing STEM scholarships in local high schools within the Local Aboriginal Land Councils' footprints to open educational pathways for First Nations youth that lead to sustainable employment.
- Funding youth-based programs focused on training and pathways to employment, like the "Koori Men on the Move" driver program, which is currently facing funding challenges.
- Providing secondments, allowing skilled employees to volunteer their time to build local capabilities and bridge the skills gap.

- Providing seed grants to First Nations businesses to help them get established.
- Supporting educational programs like the Waligada program (refer to Appendix F), which showcases Ngarigo culture and history through art and cultural education, to help preserve and promote traditional knowledge for future generations.
- Facilitating the gathering of Ngarigo people from across Australia on Country once a year to allow them to stay connected to their people and their land.

While some recognised Snowy Hydro has made some efforts to support First Nations groups, all participants felt there was a need for more targeted, respectful, and effective engagement with the Ngarigo community. By prioritising culturally significant projects, educational and youth initiatives, skills development programs, and enterprise development, all participants felt Snowy Hydro could play a pivotal role in enhancing the cultural, social, and economic well-being of First Nations People in the Snowy Mountains region.

Indigenous Engagement Advisor

The feedback highlighted a strong desire among Ngarigo community members for the appointment of an Indigenous Engagement Advisor at Snowy Hydro. However, there was considerable disagreement concerning the role's specifics, its aims, and who should fill it. Many felt Snowy Hydro's past engagement has been inadequate and disrespectful, failing to genuinely involve Ngarigo people in decisions about their Country. One source stated Snowy Hydro should have prioritised an "Indigenous liaison/cultural advocate" from the outset.

There was limited consensus on the Advisor's responsibilities, with suggestions including the following:

- Facilitating communication between Snowy Hydro and Elders
- Educating Snowy Hydro staff about First Nations culture
- Organising regular meetings between Elders and Snowy Hydro
- Facilitating business and investment opportunities for First Nations People.

Some believed the Advisor should advocate for the Ngarigo people and not simply act as a conduit for Snowy Hydro. Several sources identified specific individuals they believe would be suitable for the role, praising their understanding of Ngarigo culture, history, and their ability to engage with both the community and Snowy Hydro.

Overall, these interviews point to a deep distrust of Snowy Hydro within the Ngarigo community and a belief the organisation has consistently failed to understand and respect Ngarigo culture and protocols. While the proposed Indigenous Engagement Advisor role is seen as a positive step, many believe Snowy Hydro needs to undergo a significant shift in its approach to engaging with First Nations People. This includes moving away from superficial engagement and monetary offerings, instead focussing on genuine relationship-building based on respect, trust, and a willingness to listen to and learn from Ngarigo People.

Adding to the sense of frustration, several participants learned during the consultation period decisions had been made by Snowy Hydro regarding who would fill the role. This left them questioning why they were being consulted about the position when there appeared to be no intention by Snowy Hydro to listen to their feedback. This was seen as a sign of disrespect which several felt may destroy any hopes of Snowy Hydro having a working relationship with the Ngarigo Elders.

Community Commentary

Engagement with the First Nations community

"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 true Elders are not about money, we would just like the opportunity to work honestly with Snowy Hydro across all of Country. This giving of money must stop unless it's for a better cause requested by a true Elder."

"All we want is just some honest engagement. It's quite easy and lazy to just acknowledge the squeaky wheel who's making noise and not think about who the real stakeholders are."

"An MOU between Snowy Hydro and the land councils would be a great start. Even if we just tested the waters of what an MOU would look like and had some early conversations."

"I just get fed up with people being imposters and making decisions about our Country and our people when they are not true to our bloodlines. I'm fed up with Snowy letting these people make decisions about our Country and they're just being made a mockery of."

"There just needs to be better engagement with the Indigenous community on an ongoing basis to see what needs help."

"We want Snowy Hydro to only engage with the proper Ngarigo Elders. We want to work together as a team with Snowy Hydro to work together on a positive result for both sides."

"All these organisations always seem to just go to the land councils and the Ngarigo people have no land council, we're ruled by about half a dozen heartland camps, that's why there's so much strife."

"Land councils are the best place to start. They are government-endorsed bodies that have the rigours of having to prove your connection, we have legitimacy. Anyone can set up a corporation."

"Maybe the true elders could send Snowy Hydro a letter introducing themselves and who they are and where they are for consultation in the future, and that may help eliminate these fraudsters, people who are disrespecting our culture and our people and are in it just for the money. That way they can't come back to us and say they don't know."

"They have supported us a lot as an Indigenous group, we've had a direct line."

The impact of Snowy 2.0 on sacred sites and artifacts

"We have got nothing against Snowy 2.0. It was going to happen with or without our support. So, our attitude is we can't steer the ship if you're not at the front of the boat, so are happy to liaise and work with Snowy Hydro and they're happy to work with us."

"We want to work on restoring sacred sites. If they come across something that looks like a scar tree for example, reach out don't just bulldoze it. We can always work together to come up with a better plan."

"We're too scared to say where our sacred sites are at the moment because there's no trust."

"There was a women's birthing site, it's not just the birthing site, it's where the women go, and it's a sacred site. I think that's lost forever. It'd be like me going to your grandmother's grave, digging it up, and without your knowledge or your permission. So that's the impact it had."

"With sacred sites like this birthing site and others if the communication and transparency was there, and you contacted the right Elders, you would have found out not to go, or go around it, or do something else."

"A lot of decisions were made without consent from the Ngarigo people. Lobs Hole is one of them which is a very sore point. There were artefacts removed without consultation, they can only be removed by anyone but an Elder, so we were deeply upset about that."

Supporting the First Nations community

"I hope that Snowy Hydro recognises that they have a role in the Closing the Gap targets and that they show actions that reflect that going forward."

"We see grants come out from Snowy to people in Cooma but what they don't appreciate is that there are people who are Traditional Owners who can't afford to live there in Cooma. So, they are being overlooked."

"It really upsets me to know that we have a situation where a government funded entity is tinkering around the edges but not assisting in any way to close the gap. What are they doing to improve the cultural, social and economic well-being of Aboriginal people?"

"If people are in employment and flourishing then their dependence on these services is reduced."

"We get no engagement from Snowy to improve any cultural or economic outcomes."

"The Elders say they feel like the Snowy area is the playground of the privileged and Aboriginal people are excluded from that playground."

"It's not about filling our pockets it's about giving back to communities or to the Indigenous children who just don't have opportunities."

"Snowy Hydro should be funding cultural people and encouraging them to engage with the project through funding agreements. It is disrespectful to assume cultural people have the ability/access to get to meetings. Any other body expecting cultural people to engage with them would put the funds on the table to make it accessible."

"Snowy Hydro should develop a future plan for First Nations stakeholders ito consider shareholder options for them."

"The the business investment framework and principles (Dhawura Ngilan Business and Investor Initiative) should be incorporated into Snowy Hydro's vision."

Indigenous Engagement Advisor

"It would help if they were Ngarigo. But it would be important for them to get to know who the other mobs are and their Elders too."

"We just need that honesty. Someone to keep us up to date with the projects that are happening on Country and liaise with Snowy Hydro to help facilitate that consultation."

"There's a lot of hesitancy in Snowy Hydro surrounding Indigenous culture. So, I would love to see this person engage with staff and reassure around things like giving an Acknowledgment of Country to reassure them that things like this are not difficult."

"It should be a Ngarigo person and they've got to be able to liaise with the general public as well and be respectful to everybody and that's probably the biggest challenge."

"Someone to educate the staff on cultural aspects and to explain that the Elders are the ones that should be making the big decisions."

"What would work really well, is if this person could arrange a regular Elder's information day with Snowy. A chance for the Elders to come and have a yarn and have Snowy introduce themselves with to the Elders and have the opportunity express what their role is and to work with the Elders."

"They need to understand their culture really really well because if you understand your culture well you're able to pass that on to others."

"Instead of just wrecking something that might be a sacred site, they can consult with this advisor, and they can consult with us."

4

Recommendations and next steps

4 Recommendations and next steps

The Community Insights Campaign uncovered hundreds of viewpoints and opinions from across the diverse regional communities Snowy Hydro influences, including within First Nations communities.

A key takeaway from this discovery process noted the communities consulted had many differences and some shared commonalities for each of the three discussion topics.

The Snowy Hydro Communications and Engagement Strategy and the Community Commitment Pillars should be structured to address both the shared and unique challenges and opportunities of each region and community Snowy Hydro influences.

Recommendations

Region-centric approach

Broadly speaking the commonalities shared by all regions includes:

- Housing availability and affordability is a problem and is exacerbated by the Snowy 2.0 project.
- There are impacts to road conditions and road traffic which are influenced by Snowy Hydro.
- People want to see more Snowy Hydro representatives out in the community.
- There is great pride in the Snowy Scheme and its legacy.
- Desire for Snowy Hydro to leave a legacy of employment opportunities, a strong population and general growth in the regions after Snowy 2.0.
- General concern about environmental impacts related to the Snowy 2.0 project.

Despite, this, there are many key themes and takeaways where the regions differ greatly in their priorities, challenges and opportunities and these are more explicitly explored in the full analysis at Appendix B. This provides insightful nuances and unique perspectives among the focus groups and interviews.

This Community Insights Campaign has demonstrated these differences are deserving of a region-centric strategy for updating communication and engagement activities and community investment plans. This region-centric approach should be promoted widely to demonstrate Snowy Hydro's commitment to supporting the needs and priorities of different communities.

First Nations engagement framework

To establish meaningful and enduring partnerships with First Nations communities, Snowy Hydro should implement a comprehensive First Nations engagement framework that actively contributes to Closing the Gap and advancing the local First Nations community. This framework should have tangible and measurable outcomes,

driven by the needs of the First Nations community and be based on principles of respect, shared learning, and open dialogue, ensuring all interactions are effective, productive, and culturally safe.

Next steps

It has been a welcomed opportunity to engage with communities in and around the Snowy Hydro footprint. Ongoing conversations should continue in earnest as Snowy Hydro looks to shape its Social Impact and Advocacy Strategy and finalise its First Nations Engagement Framework.

The following close-out steps have taken place:

- This report has been published on the Snowy Hydro website and sent to all participants where an email had been provided.
- Snowy Hydro has thanked the community for their input and outlined how the feedback received is informing how Snowy Hydro will upgrade its approach to future communication, engagement and community investment.
- Feedback analysis will continue over the coming months.

5

Appendices

Appendix A: Engagement approach and analysis

Engagement approach

The engagement took a multi-pronged approach employing several engagement tactics to invite feedback from target stakeholder groups as well as the broader community (see figure A1). The consultation activities were supported by a comprehensive promotional campaign of the channels people could engage with the program (see Appendix F). Key to this approach was identifying a range of stakeholders that represented the various sectors of the community.








Figure A 1. The engagement approach

Consultation tools

The following range of consultation tools was used to ensure the local community knew about the campaign and had the opportunity to provide feedback about the Snowy 2.0 project and Snow Hydro as an organisation. A strategic and comprehensive engagement campaign across the Snowy Mountains region promoted the campaign. Struber also gathered feedback from First Nations People including several Elders and key stakeholders from the region.

Table A 1. Consultation tools




Tools	Description	Purpose
Focus Groups 	Structured discussions involving a small and diverse group of individuals. These sessions were moderated by a facilitator who guided the discussion to ensure all participants had an opportunity to contribute and the conversation remained focused on the predefined objectives.	Provided an opportunity for stakeholders to share their perspectives, experiences, and opinions of Snowy Hydro as an organisation and the Snowy 2.0 project.
One-on-one interviews 	In-depth one-hour interviews with key stakeholders selected by Snowy Hydro conducted in person. Interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams to accommodate schedules.	Identify critical local themes and issues raised by targeted stakeholders and use this information to inform future decisions.
Phone interviews 	Comprehensive 45-minute interviews with key stakeholders identified by Snowy Hydro.	Identify critical local themes and issues raised by targeted stakeholders and use this information to inform future decisions.
Pop-ups 	Informal four-hour kiosks set up in central locations with clear Snowy Hydro branding to engage with any interested stakeholders.	Provide clear, visible and accessible presence to promote the Community Insights Campaign and provide opportunities to access the survey.




Tools	Description	Purpose
Online survey 	Wide-ranging targeting both the local community and the broader public. Included a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions and benchmark questions to ascertain any shifts in sentiment since the last survey in 2018.	Provide an accessible, transparent platform for the local and broader community to share their opinions, concerns, and ideas about Snowy Hydro and the Snowy 2.0 project. Identify common themes and issues raised by participants and use this information to inform future decisions.

Engagement promotional tools and channels

To ensure the engagement was successful and to maximise the number of participants and target specific groups, Snowy Hydro undertook a rigorous promotional campaign in the lead up to and throughout the engagement period. Table A2 below outlines the tools and channels used. An example of the emails and website are shown in Appendix E.

Table A 2. Promotional tools and channels

Engagement activity	Purpose/How it was used									
<div>Emails</div> <div></div>	<p>Emails were the key form of communication used to directly contact and liaise with identified stakeholders.</p>									
<div>Radio</div> <div></div>	<p>Snowy Hydro advertised the Community Insights Campaign on local radio at various times throughout the program lifecycle.</p>									
<div>Pop-ups</div> <div></div>	<p>A total of eight pop-ups were hosted to promote participation in the Community Insights Campaign. These pop-ups are outlined in the following table.</p> <p>The pop-ups were predominantly designed to promote the survey, give people an opportunity to take a hard copy of the survey to complete at home or complete the survey on one of two tablets provided at each pop-up.</p> <table><tr><th>Location</th><th>Date</th><th>Visitors</th></tr><tr><td>Cooma</td><td>2/4/2024</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>Tumut</td><td>17/4/2024</td><td>5</td></tr></table>	Location	Date	Visitors	Cooma	2/4/2024	16	Tumut	17/4/2024	5
Location	Date	Visitors								
Cooma	2/4/2024	16								
Tumut	17/4/2024	5								

Engagement activity	Purpose/How it was used		
	Cooma	3/5/2024	20
	Khancoban	10/5/2024	35
	Talbingo	14/5/2024	7
	Merimbula	19/5/2024	30
	Cooma	19/5/2024	40
	Adaminaby	21/5/2024	9
Social media 	Snowy Hydro promoted the Community Insights Campaign via its Facebook social media channel.		
Snowy Hydro website 	A dedicated webpage was established on the Snowy Hydro website to provide background information and ways to engage with the Community Insights Campaign. The webpage also includes contact details for people wanting more information.		
Word of mouth/Snowy Ambassadors 	Snowy Hydro enlisted the support of key staff members and other Snowy Hydro representatives to promote the Community Insights Campaign to identified stakeholders. These representatives had long and deep connections with the community and were well regarded by many, as shown in the feedback received.		

How people participated

The chart below shows a breakdown of how the 270 participants contributed their feedback.

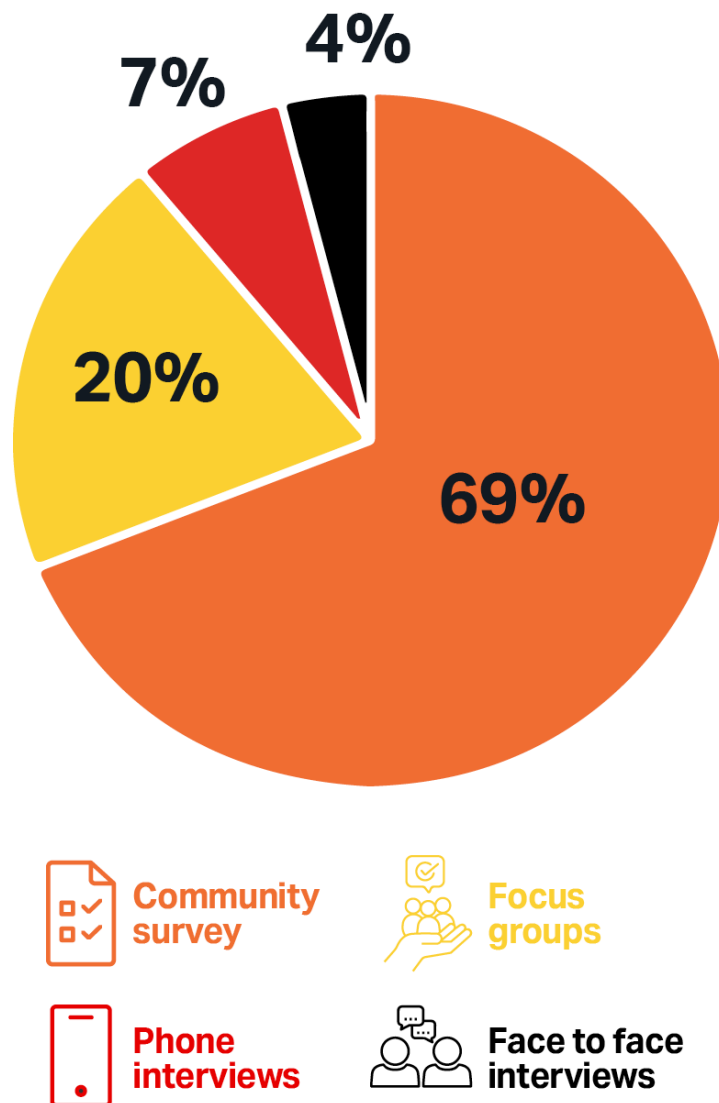


Figure A 2. How people provided feedback

Where people engaged with us and why these locations were chosen

A key strategy of the Community Insights Campaign was to ensure all efforts were made to connect with the regions Snowy Hydro and the Snowy 2.0 project influences. Below is a summary of the various regions visited and why they were selected.

Snowy Monaro region – Snowy Hydro has a strong influence in Cooma, with the Snowy Hydro office and the Discovery Centre located there along with key Snowy 2.0 sites including the Polo Flat segment factory.

Cootamundra -Gundagai region – Gundagai is a regional hub for nearby locations impacted by Snowy 2.0. The region's population contributes to the project workforce and the area is impacted by the transmission lines which will connect Snowy 2.0 to the electricity grid. Only one interview was recorded from the visit to this region, and will be considered within the feedback for the Snowy Valleys region.

Bega Valley region – A number of Snowy 2.0 project members have relocated to Merimbula in the Bega Valley region which has placed additional pressure on the availability of housing, childcare and schooling. The Bega Valley region had also anticipated greater economic involvement with Snowy 2.0 project, however this did not eventuate.

Snowy Valleys region – Located on the 'other side of the mountains', Tumut is intrinsically linked to the Snowy Hydro scheme and has a long history with it. Many local community work at or supply services to the Snowy Hydro project.

Wagga Wagga region – This large regional location will play an integral role in power transmission, with the power lines to support Snowy 2.0 intersecting at Wagga Wagga.



Figure A 3. Pop-up in Cooma

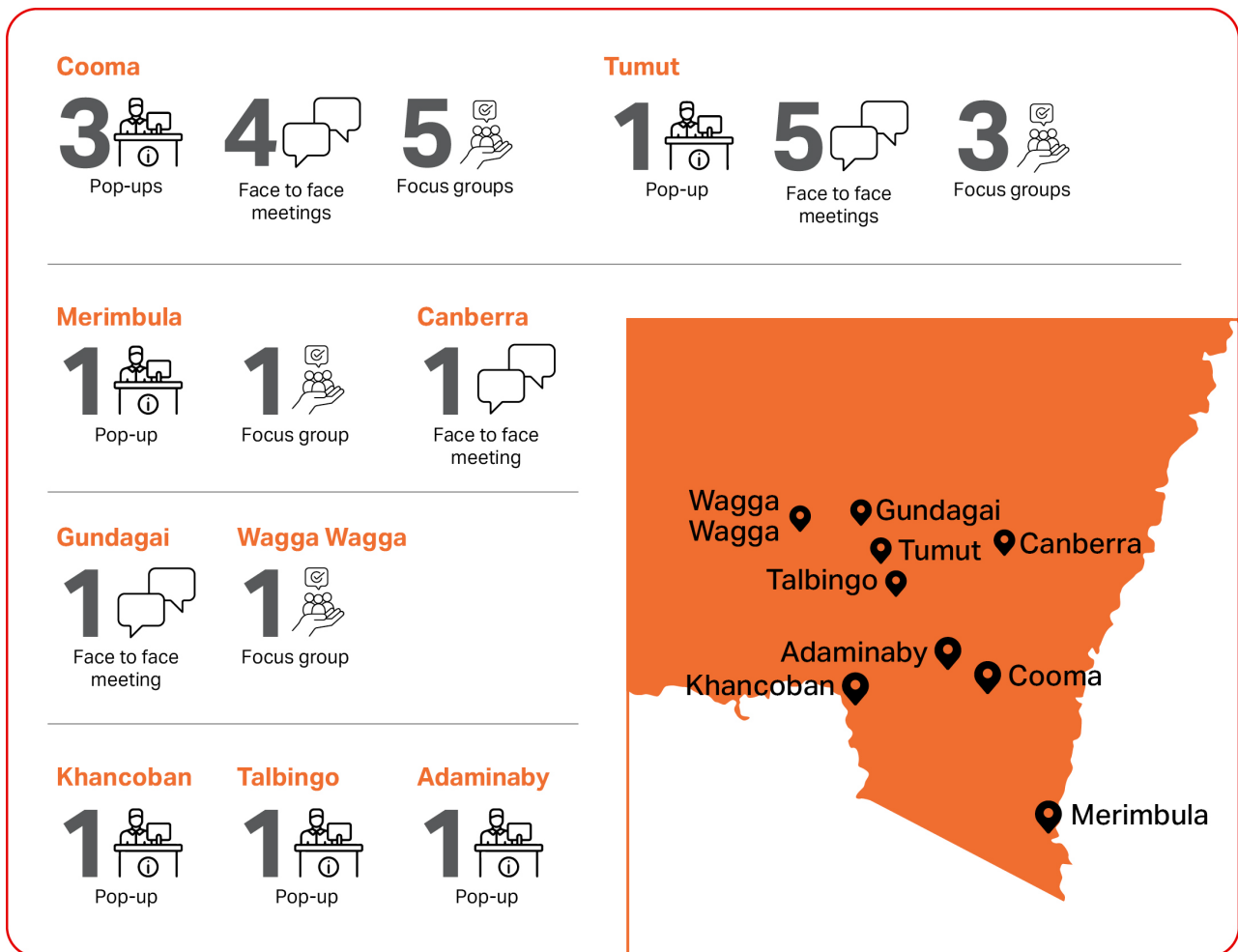


Figure A 4. Overview of consultation activities and their locations

Participants

Figure A5 illustrates the stakeholder groups targeted for engagement and how they engaged with the Community Insights Campaign.

Community

Members of the public

Engagement



Online survey



Pop-ups



Promotional collateral
(Radio, social media, EDMs)

Business leaders

Members of Chamber of Commerce

Hotels

Retail

Real estate

Hospitality

Engagement activities



Focus
Groups



Interviews

Local leaders

Educators

Representatives from local support services

Representatives from community organisations

Councillors

Healthcare representatives (doctors, pharmacists)

Engagement activities



Focus
Groups



Interviews

Elected representatives

Mayors

Members of Parliament

Engagement activities



Focus
Groups



Interviews

Recreational Users

Operational areas

Access Snowy Hydro's
operational areas for their
business or recreation uses.

Water-based users

Access Snowy Hydro's
operational areas for their
business or recreation uses.

Figure A 5. The groups that participated and how they engaged

Appendix B: What we heard from interviews and focus groups

Overview

We asked participants to answer questions about three key discussion topics:

- Snowy Hydro and the community
- Snowy 2.0 and its impacts
- How Snowy Hydro engages with the community.

The following sections outline the key themes and insights from responses provided against the three discussion topics. The feedback has been presented by each region visited, then by specific stakeholder group (business leaders, elected officials etc). The focus group notes are presented Appendix C and supplementary feedback presented in Appendix D. Interviews were considered confidential and these notes have been omitted.

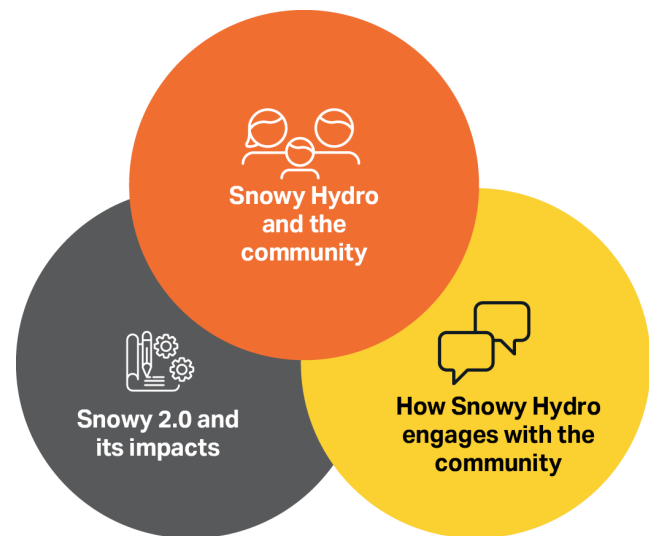


Figure B 1. Discussion topics

How feedback is presented in this section

Each discussion topic is structured as follows:

1. An overview of the findings for each topic.
2. The top three themes for each region with examples of supporting quotes.
3. Key insights identified for each stakeholder group (where applicable).
4. Top 20 themes listed (where applicable).
5. Key comments that help identify unique points of view, preferences, opportunities or concerns.

The above process is repeated for each region under each topic.



Secondly, we encouraged participants to share examples of successful community investment projects from other organisations or regions. By gathering insights into initiatives they admire, we aimed to glean valuable ideas to inform the development of future Snowy Hydro community programs. Analysing responses to both questions provided a comprehensive picture of community needs and expectations surrounding effective investment strategies.



Figure B 2. The words and phrases we heard


Snowy Valleys


Below are the top three themes across the Snowy Valleys region regarding Snowy Hydro community initiatives. Feedback is then presented by stakeholder groups.



Table B 1. Top 3 Themes – Overall Community

<p>Positive Impacts from Snowy Community Programs</p>  <p>43 Mentions</p>	<p>"Clontarf and Stars are great. Without Snowy neither would exist. Giving these kids work opportunities, doing training sessions. Providing mentoring without it being structured mentoring."</p>	<p>"Clontarf is excellent because it's taking young Aboriginal men and teaching them discipline and ethics and self-esteem."</p>
<p>Awareness of Community Grants</p>  <p>32 Mentions</p>	<p>"Snowy has been very supportive of me and my Big Brothers and Big Sisters program. I have been given a grant."</p>	<p>"The grants program has benefited loads of organisations. It's got such a wide scope. It's not exclusive."</p>
<p>Awareness of Snowy Valleys Sculpture Trail</p>  <p>15 Mentions</p>	<p>"I knew they were involved in the Sculpture Trail, we will see three sculptures being put in Tumut in the coming weeks. It's also supporting education by them getting some of the artists to do workshops at the schools."</p>	<p>"The Sculpture Trail is fantastic, it's a passion of mine. "</p>

Table B 2. Insights – Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder group	What did they say?
Business Leaders 	<p>In discussions with business leaders in Snowy Valleys, a clear appreciation emerged for Snowy 2.0's community engagement efforts. Many highlighted the positive impact of community grants, sponsorships for local events and festivals (like the rodeo, Blues festival and business awards), and initiatives like the Sculpture Trail, which is seen as a boost for tourism and education. The Clontarf Foundation and the Driver Training program were also recognised for their positive influence on the community's youth.</p> <p>However, concerns were raised regarding the distribution of benefits. Some leaders noted a lack of a Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) designation for the region, despite the area's significant contribution to renewable energy generation. This was seen as hindering potential investment and community development opportunities. Additionally, the impact of overhead powerlines on farmers, with calls for greater compensation for lost land use, was a recurring theme.</p> <p>Several business leaders saw potential for Snowy Hydro to leverage its technical expertise to further benefit the community. Suggestions included supporting local schools and TAFEs through apprenticeships and knowledge-sharing initiatives, and potentially contributing to the development of sporting facilities.</p>

Stakeholder group	What did they say?
<p>Community leaders</p> 	<p>Community leaders in Snowy Valleys expressed a range of views about Snowy Hydro and its community programs.</p> <p>Positive sentiment was frequently directed towards Snowy Hydro's investment in education and youth development programs. The Clontarf and Stars foundations were repeatedly praised for their positive impact on young people, with many leaders highlighting the importance of mentorship and work opportunities for the region's youth. The establishment of a Country Universities Centre (CUC) in Cooma was seen as a positive step towards educational advancement and local retention, and there was a strong desire for a similar centre in Tumut. The Snowy Hydro community grants program was also acknowledged for its role in supporting local businesses and initiatives.</p> <p>Opportunities for improvement were identified in several areas. Many leaders expressed a desire for more targeted and accessible community engagement, particularly around the Sculpture Trail and career opportunities with Snowy Hydro. There were calls for better communication and support during the grant application process, as well as more school expos showcasing potential career paths within the company. Concerns were also raised about the distribution of community investment, with some areas feeling overlooked or under-represented compared to others. For instance, Talbingo community members expressed a desire for more involvement in decision-making processes and events, such as the selection of sculptures and the development of local festivals.</p> <p>Additionally, there was a strong desire for more investment in tourism and infrastructure projects, such as the development of a rail trail connecting various towns and increased access to Snowy Hydro sites like Tumut 3 Power Station. The preservation of local heritage, such as the Talbingo shopping centre and the historical diorama, was also highlighted as an important area for future investment and collaboration.</p> <p>Participants cited other organisations' community investment initiatives such as Veolia's efforts in Goulburn, the Blakeney Millar Foundation, Visy Foundation and Hyne Community Trust as good examples to emulate.</p>

Stakeholder group	What did they say?
<p>Elected Representatives</p> 	<p>Elected Representatives in Snowy Valleys voiced strong appreciation for Snowy Hydro's community investment, highlighting the positive impacts of various programs and initiatives. Programs like the Driver Training program and the Sculpture Trail were identified as contributors in engaging youth and fostering skill development.</p> <p>The Representatives emphasised the importance of sustained, long-term support for youth engagement, wrap-around support, and overall community wellbeing, rather than short-term 'sugar hits'. They stressed the need for targeted investment in community growth and addressing essential needs, rather than solely focusing on expensive infrastructure. They also felt it was important to empower the community and focus on initiatives that foster a sense of ownership and long-term growth.</p> <p>Bendigo Bank Community Bank, the Blakeney Millar Foundation and Hyne Community Trust were named as good examples of supporters of other community investment initiatives.</p>
<p>Landowners</p> 	<p>The Snowy Hydro community programs generated a mix of positive and negative feedback amongst Snowy Valleys landowners. Many appreciate the community grants program, citing its wide scope and benefits to numerous organisations, especially those run by volunteers. But they also mentioned they would benefit from some assistance with grant applications. The Clontarf and Stars foundations, the Sculpture fTrail, and the County University Centre have been well-received additions to the community. However, some expressed concerns about the Sculpture Trail, suggesting it lacks local connection.</p> <p>Landowners have identified several areas for potential investment, such as TAFE engineering programs, the local tourist centre, and initiatives similar to the Snowy Hydro Discovery Centre.</p> <p>They consider investment models like the Country Education Foundation, Bendigo Bank Community Bank and the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) to be good examples.</p>

Community comments



"The sculpture trail is helping with tourism and showcasing local artists."



"They do a lot of sponsorships for festivals and events."



"Money needs to be targeted. It must provide opportunity for growth, not just new and expensive infrastructure that we have to upkeep and depreciates. Focus on needs not wants!"



"A Trust is better than a handout. Give people ownership. People are better when they have skin in the game."



"The REZ areas are set up so they pour money into the communities to offset the impact they have in the communities. Snowy Valleys will be one of the highest generators of renewable energy but we don't have a REZ designated for our region."



"Overhead powerlines are having a big impact on the farmers, they're getting no compensation. They should be paying them an annuity, an ongoing payment for hosting the powerlines."



"We want a Country Universities Centre in Tumut, we've been pushing for one. It is a standout for Cooma and I'm jealous we don't have one here."



"There's a real opportunity for Snowy to do something for local schools and TAFEs with the amount of technical knowledge and skills they have."

Snowy Monaro

Below are the top three themes across the Snowy Monaro region regarding Snowy Hydro and its community initiatives. Feedback is then presented by stakeholder groups including recreational users of Snowy Hydro's operational areas and lakes.

Table B 3. Top 3 Themes – Overall Community





<p>Positive Impacts from Snowy Community Programs</p>  <p>52 Mentions</p>	<p>The Country University Centre is game changing and life changing.</p>	<p>They're quite active on their careers promotion, as a result of that, quite a number of our former students have got traineeships there and they've finished engineering degrees while they work there. So that pathway from school to tertiary education to employment is very tangible.</p>
<p>Awareness of Local Festivals and Events Program</p>  <p>33 Mentions</p>	<p>Snowy has been very supportive of me and my Big Brothers and Big Sisters program. I have been given a grant.</p>	<p>Certainly their support of festivals in the region, they would not go ahead without Snowy support.</p>
<p>Awareness of Snowy STEM Academy</p>  <p>24 Mentions</p>	<p>The STEM stuff has shown kids that they can stay locally. It really helps retain students by showing them career paths.</p>	<p>The STEM grant is one of the easiest applications they have. We've gotten robotics into the school because of it.</p>

Table B 4. Insights – Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder group	What did they say?
Business Leaders 	<p>Business leaders in Snowy Monaro expressed a mix of appreciation and frustration with Snowy Hydro's community programs. While acknowledging Snowy Hydro's support for tourism, local events, and STEM programs, many felt uninformed about other initiatives and expressed disappointment over rejected grant applications.</p> <p>There was a strong desire for Snowy Hydro to address the impact of its operations on the community, particularly concerning housing and job opportunities. Some participants emphasised the need for more visible leadership and greater investment in local events and infrastructure projects, such as walking trails, bike paths, and festivals, to foster a stronger sense of connection and pride within the region.</p>
Community leaders 	<p>Community leaders in Snowy Monaro expressed a mix of appreciation and constructive criticism regarding Snowy Hydro's community programs. Many acknowledged the positive impact of STEM programs in schools, the Country University Centre providing local tertiary education opportunities, and Snowy's sponsorship of community events.</p> <p>However, concerns were raised about the distribution of grant funding, with some feeling that smaller communities like Adaminaby were being overlooked in favour of larger projects in Cooma. There were calls for a more strategic approach to investment, prioritising initiatives with the most significant community impact.</p> <p>There was a strong desire for increased investment in projects that would create long-term economic benefits for the region, such as tourism initiatives and infrastructure development like bike trails, rail trails or art trails.</p> <p>They mentioned the wind farm Boco Rock Community Enhancement Fund as a good community investment example.</p>
Elected Representatives 	<p>In discussions with elected representatives from Snowy Monaro, a clear appreciation for Snowy Hydro's community investment was evident. Representatives were largely aware of the various initiatives, with particular praise for the grants program, education initiatives, and the CUC. Specifically, the CUC was seen as a key driver in engaging and retaining young people within the region. There was a shared desire for more programs similar to the Tumba track project, tailored to the unique needs of other areas within Snowy Monaro.</p> <p>While some were surprised to learn of Snowy Hydro's involvement in programs like driver training, Clontarf, Stars, and PCYC, the positive impact of these initiatives</p>

Stakeholder group What did they say?

	<p>was acknowledged. The STEM programs and Sculpture Trail were also viewed favourably.</p> <p>Conversations highlighted a strong interest in fostering innovation within the region, with the Bega Cheese circularity centre cited as a good model to emulate. The Boco Rock Windfarm's bespoke community investment program was mentioned as an example of how initiatives can be tailored to a community's specific needs.</p>
Recreational Users: Operational Areas 	<p>Discussions with those who use Snowy Hydro's operational areas for their business or recreation revealed a mix of awareness and uncertainty about the organisation's community initiatives. There was recognition of visible projects like the Sculpture Trail and rodeo support, and a broader understanding that the company funds infrastructure improvements in national parks. Some participants highlighted the success of the STEM Academy program in encouraging young people to stay in the region by showcasing local career paths.</p> <p>However, it was also clear that many of Snowy Hydro's initiatives were unknown to the participants. When asked about good community initiatives they've seen, several people mentioned local tree-planting efforts and Boco Rock's generosity towards community groups, indicating an appreciation for environmental and social investment.</p>
Recreational Users: Water-based 	<p>Conversations with participants who use Snowy Hydro's existing lakes for their business or recreation uses revealed a strong appreciation for Snowy Hydro's community programs, particularly their sponsorship of local events like the Cooma Show and grant programs. These initiatives were seen as contributing positively to community life and fostering a sense of connection.</p> <p>Participants also expressed a desire for improved recreational access such as walking trails around the river between Dalgety to Jindabyne, similar to an initiative in New Zealand. When asked for examples of good community investments, participants gave the example of Bombala's successful community fundraising effort to save aged care services in the region.</p>

Community Comments



"They (Snowy Hydro) sponsor the Cooma Show and it wouldn't happen without them."



"It would be great to see a heritage museum in Jindabyne."



"We don't get any community-building projects. We don't get anything that brings business to town."



"They take a lot out of the community. We'd like Snowy to do something to address what they take out like jobs, accommodation. Even if it's leadership or mentorship, it doesn't have to be money but they can help us and show us how it's done to empower the community to do it themselves. The community grants aren't enough."



"They (Snowy Hydro) need to continue to support tourism in the snowy mountains – without support, we would not survive."



"I would love a pop-up café for these migrant women to work at – food brings people together. It would create an opportunity for these women to have some self-worth."



"I believe Snowy Hydro have a fantastic approach to supporting the community."



"There needs to be an investment priority strategy based on their impact on the community."

Bega Valley region (Merimbula)

Below are the top three themes that emerged in Bega Valley when it came to Snowy Hydro and their community initiatives. As there was only one focus group held here, the top three themes largely identify the main subjects that were addressed.

Table B 5. Top 3 Themes – Overall Community

<p>Community Investment Examples</p>  <p>52 Mentions</p>	<p>The basketball court in Merimbula was a million-dollar project, Bendigo Community Bank came and paid for lights to be installed. Has dramatically improved the functionality of the services. Has had an enduring impact on the region.</p>	<p>Bega Cheese sponsors a few programs and an annual golf day, but not enough. Roughly 100K a year to one charity. Their choice.</p>
<p>Need for Investment in Local Charities / Initiatives</p>  <p>33 Mentions</p>	<p>Good initiatives from volunteer organisations.</p>	<p>Community creative groups tried to help support medical centre, funded by Bendigo Bank, but fell apart because Doctor got offered much more to work at Wollongong.</p>
<p>Need for More Community Investment</p>  <p>24 Mentions</p>	<p>Community needs more funding, hard to get because you need to be a tax deductible org.</p>	<p>State and federal government only commit 50% of the money, the other 50% must be sourced privately. Bendigo Bank and FRRR are the biggest funders.</p>

Table B 6. Insights – Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder group	What did they say?
<p>Focus Group</p> 	<p>In focus group discussions, many participants acknowledged hearing about Snowy Hydro's initiatives through the media but felt a disconnect between those reports and their own experiences. A recurring theme was the lack of tangible benefits from Snowy Hydro programs reaching their region, despite observing successful projects in neighbouring areas.</p> <p>Participants identified the absence of adequate funding as a major obstacle to local initiatives, with limited support available through council grants and private sponsorships. They expressed a desire for increased investment in community projects, citing the positive impact of such initiatives on local facilities and services.</p>

When prompted for examples of successful community investment projects, participants mentioned local organisations like Bendigo Bank and FRRR in providing essential funding for community projects.


Wagga Wagga region

Below are the top three themes that emerged in Wagga Wagga when it came to Snowy Hydro and its community initiatives. As there was only one focus group held in this region, all key topics under this discussion topic are covered within the top three themes.

Table B 7. Top 3 Themes – Overall Community

<p>Community Investment Examples</p>  <p>9 Mentions</p>	<p>Wagga active travel grant is an exception – \$12m of grants for footpaths and bike paths etc. People are really loving it and getting active.</p>	<p>CareVan (makes meals for less fortunate) sponsorship from HumeBank sponsorships and donations. Well regarded.</p>
<p>Need for Investment in Local Facilities / Infrastructure</p>  <p>4 Mentions</p>	<p>Legacy items – community buildings etc. Don't do a cash splash, it needs to have longevity.</p>	<p>Park and playground redevelopments have been good. Rail trails also good.</p>
<p>Limited Snowy Support in Region</p>  <p>3 Mentions</p>	<p>SH2 support of these programs isn't focused in Wagga. It's benefited Griffith significantly for example, but no impact for Wagga. Didn't know SH2 put money into any ways to improve Wagga.</p>	<p>The incentives and programs are awesome, there should be one in Tumut. Griffith has grown out of their second building from community uptake.</p>

Table B 8. Insights – Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder group	What did they say?
<p>Focus Group</p> 	<p>In Wagga Wagga, focus group participants were largely aware of Snowy Hydro's community programs but feel the benefits haven't reached their town. They see positive impacts in other areas like Griffith and acknowledge the success of initiatives like the local festival and events program. However, they expressed a strong need for more localised investment, particularly in existing programs that address community needs. Participants highlighted Wagga's active travel grant as a well-received example of infrastructure investment. They also emphasised the importance of broad community consultation to ensure funding aligns with local priorities.</p>



Snowy 2.0 and its impacts

Overview

This section dives deep into participants' experiences with the Snowy 2.0 project across the Snowy Valleys and Snowy Monaro regions as well as the Bega Valley and Wagga Wagga. We aimed to capture a comprehensive picture of the project's impact on the local community, encompassing both positive and negative aspects. Participants were asked to weigh in on a range of topics, including the project's influence on housing, social services, and public amenities. Additionally, we explored perceptions of equity in the project's impact and hopes for long-term benefits for the community that the Snowy 2.0 project could bring. By analysing these responses, we can gain valuable insights to inform future decision-making and mitigate any negative consequences.



Figure B 3. The words and phrases we heard

Snowy Valleys region

Below are the top three themes across the Snowy Valleys region when it came to the Snowy 2.0 project and its impact on the community. Feedback is then split up by stakeholder groups including business leaders, community leaders, elected representatives and landowners.

Table B 9. Top 3 Themes – Overall Community






<p>Negative Impact of Perceived Bias towards the Snowy Monaro region</p>  <p>34 Mentions</p>	<p>Cooma is getting all the benefits and we're getting all the crappy infrastructure that no one wants.</p>	<p>Tumut has been left behind. Cooma was always going to be the main hub.</p>
<p>Negative Impact of Transmission Lines</p>  <p>29 Mentions</p>	<p>The transmission lines have affected Tumut more than anywhere else. With the cost blowout we'd love to see them put some of that money to putting it all underground. Powerlines are renowned for starting fires as they age, so there are bushfire dangers.</p>	<p>Transmission lines make it difficult to fight fires.</p>
<p>Negative Impact on Local Workforce</p>  <p>21 Mentions</p>	<p>Snowy have come up here and haven't thought about how they're going to get these workers they're just taking the locals.</p>	<p>We've lost professionals, like electricians, chefs, engineers etc. It's hard to make a living as that here, but you go to Snowy and make great money. So it's drained a lot of skills.</p>

Table B 10. Insights – Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder group	What did they say?
<p>Business Leaders</p> 	<p>Business leaders in Tumut identified several key concerns regarding the impact of Snowy 2.0. Labor shortages and rising wages topped the list, with Snowy 2.0 attracting skilled and unskilled labour away from local businesses and council. The increased demand for housing further strained the community, driving up prices and making rentals scarce. Infrastructure was also a major concern, with roads</p>

	<p>deteriorating under heavy vehicle traffic. While some businesses benefited from supplying Snowy 2.0, others felt excluded from opportunities. Overall sentiment was one of missed opportunity for the Tumut community, with the project failing to deliver significant economic or social benefits.</p>
<p>Community leaders</p> 	<p>Community leaders in the Snowy Valleys region expressed widespread dissatisfaction with the Snowy 2.0 project's impact on their town. Key concerns include: lack of economic benefits and unmet expectations of a "boom," significant strain on local infrastructure, particularly roads and emergency services, due to increased traffic and the project's remote location.</p> <p>There were mentions of housing affordability issues, with one participant noting that when the Snowy 2.0 project was announced, "there were seven houses for sale in Talbingo and six of them sold straight away."</p> <p>Whilst it was noted that Snowy 2.0 was the cause of a local skills and labour shortage it was conversely recognised that employment in the region was exceptional and that many lives and areas have been improved due to the strong employment.</p> <p>A strong theme identified included the perceived inequitable distribution of benefits directed to the Snowy Valleys region when compared to Cooma.</p> <p>The town of Talbingo was cited on a number of occasions for lacking services and investment.</p> <p>There were some notable concerns related to transmission lines with TransGrid mentioned in a negative light a number of times.</p>
<p>Elected Representatives</p> 	<p>Elected representatives in Snowy Valleys expressed mixed views on the impact of Snowy 2.0, acknowledging the project's importance for energy supply but also raising concerns about its execution and community engagement. They criticised the lack of planning, public education about the project and community engagement. Transmission lines and their environmental impact and impact to landholders were also noted.</p> <p>While recognising the economic benefits for some, particularly those employed by Snowy Hydro, the representatives highlighted that these benefits haven't been evenly distributed and have come at the cost of local amenities and community cohesion.</p> <p>The lack of affordable housing and childcare, as well as increased pressure on some essential services, have also raised concerns.</p>

	<p>Although, aged care and public health (excluding mental health) were noted for being acceptable within the local area. Despite the challenges, there is hope that Snowy Hydro can leverage its positive brand image to support community initiatives and growth, particularly in areas like education, mental health, and fire prevention. Representatives emphasised the need for greater transparency, partnership, and investment in the local community to ensure a positive legacy for Snowy 2.0.</p>
<p>Landowners</p> 	<p>The overwhelming impact cited by landowners was the associated transmission line network. Other impacts include environmental concerns, road deterioration, housing affordability challenges, and loss of skilled labour to higher-paying project jobs. Landowners suggested an imbalance in project benefits, with the Snowy Monaro region receiving more investment and attention. They identify concerns regarding lack of ambulances, lack of communication from Snowy Hydro, and inadequate recognition of the region's historical connection to the Snowy Scheme which they regard should be key to what legacy Snowy 2.0 should leave when the project concludes.</p>

Community comments



"The Big Brothers and Big Sisters is a great programme it is getting more popular."



"Cooma gets everything, we get crickets."



"Talbingo has a lot of aged people who rely on community transport, the one there is a lifeline for a community. It's all volunteers. People are volunteering to pick up scripts and shopping and things like that. It's not just Talbingo it's everywhere."



"They (Snowy Hydro) should have a financial obligation to support community but it should not be blood money."



"We have a new \$50m hospital and new ambulance station – we unashamedly leveraged Snowy 2.0 to get those."



"What we lack is the counselling and psychology. But Snowy is not affecting availability."



"We're the poor cousin (to the Snowy Monaro region)."



"Snowy 2.0 has lifted the wage rate locally to try to compete. It was the same when Visy came to town. It will be the same when TransGrid comes to town."

Table B 11. Top 20 themes

			
Negative impact of perceived bias	Negative impact of transmission lines	Negative impact on local workforce	Negative impact on economic growth
34 Mentions	29 Mentions	21 Mentions	18 Mentions
			
Negative impact on housing availability	Negative impact on emergency services	Positive impact on local business	Negative impact on quality of roads and traffic
18 Mentions	18 Mentions	16 Mentions	16 Mentions
			
Negative impact on local infrastructure	Need for investment in local facilities/infrastructure	Negative social impact on the community	Negative impact on housing affordability
16 Mentions	15 Mentions	15 Mentions	15 Mentions
			
Limited availability of all support services	Need for more community investment	Negative impact on public services	Investment in tourism
14 Mentions	13 Mentions	11 Mentions	Mentions
			
Other	Negative impacts on environment	Limited availability of mental health and wellbeing services	Need for investment in local initiatives/charities
9 Mentions	9 Mentions	9 Mentions	8 Mentions

Snowy Monaro

Below are the top three themes across the Snowy Monaro region when it came the Snowy 2.0 project and its impact on the community. Feedback is then split up by stakeholder groups including business leaders, community leaders, elected representatives and recreational users of Snowy Hydro's operational areas and lakes.

Table B 12. Top 3 Themes – Overall Community

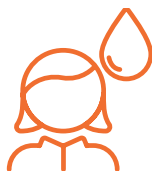
<p>Negative Impact on Housing Affordability</p>  <p>57 Mentions</p>	<p>Local people were pushed out of their houses when their lease came up because there was a perception that landlords could get more money from Snowy workers.</p>	<p>You used to be able to get rentals for close to nothing in this town. All the people at that lower socio-economic group could not get rentals. They've been priced out.</p>
<p>Negative Social Impact on the Community</p>  <p>49 Mentions</p>	<p>Adaminaby is a great example that went from one extreme to another, there was a time where you couldn't get a place in the town and now it's empty since they built their own accommodation.</p>	<p>It's a major project the onus is on them to address these social impacts of their project especially when they were told. It's a legal requirement for them to monitor their social impacts and address them.</p>
<p>Negative Impact on Housing Availability</p>  <p>44 Mentions</p>	<p>Rental prices have increased significantly and there's just nothing available.</p>	<p>I did hear of people who were basically homeless because they just couldn't find a place to rent. There just wasn't the stock available. I heard of a chef who had to live in his car.</p>

Table B 13. Insights – Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder group	What did they say?
Business Leaders 	<p>Business leaders in Snowy Monaro generally acknowledged the positive economic impacts of Snowy 2.0, citing increased business activity, job creation, and infrastructure development, particularly in Cooma. However, they also voiced concerns about the significant rise in housing costs, making it difficult for locals to afford rent or buy property. This housing issue has also put pressure on essential services like childcare, aged care, healthcare, and education, which are struggling to meet the increased demand. Additionally, businesses are facing challenges retaining staff due to competition from Snowy Hydro's higher wages.</p> <p>While some businesses and individuals have prospered, others, particularly those in lower socioeconomic brackets, are struggling with the rising cost of living and competition for resources. The unequal distribution of benefits has raised concerns about the long-term sustainability of the region. Business leaders stressed the need for strategies to attract new industries, develop tourism, and repurpose project infrastructure to ensure a prosperous future for the community beyond the completion of Snowy 2.0.</p>
Community leaders 	<p>In focus groups and interviews, Snowy Monaro community leaders discussed a mix of positive and negative impacts from Snowy 2.0. They emphasised the project's significant role in stimulating the local economy, noting increased business activity and real estate values. However, they also expressed concern about the resulting labour shortages, particularly in skilled trades, which have driven up wages and made it difficult for local businesses to compete. It was noted that businesses who did not engage with Snowy 2.0 were more likely to suffer from skills shortages.</p> <p>Housing affordability and availability emerged as a major concern, with many noting a sharp increase in rental prices and a lack of available properties. The influx of workers has also put a strain on essential services like childcare and healthcare. While acknowledging the economic benefits, some leaders expressed concern about the project's long-term sustainability and the potential for a "boom and bust" cycle once construction is complete.</p> <p>There was an acknowledgement that more needs to be done to support migrant workers and their families who feel isolated. Managing the behaviour of male workers both in the domestic setting and how they use their down time when not working was identified from a community safety perspective.</p> <p>Concerns for the Aaminaby township was raised on many occasions, noting lack of support services, housing and investment.</p> <p>Community leaders also discussed the need for careful planning and investment in infrastructure and services to address the negative impacts and ensure the region's ongoing prosperity. They emphasised the importance of supporting</p>

	essential services and creating a sustainable future for the Snowy Monaro region beyond the project's completion, such as improving access to the Kosciuszko National Park and maintaining the multicultural community presence.
Elected Representatives 	<p>Elected representatives in Snowy Monaro acknowledged the economic benefits of Snowy 2.0, particularly for businesses that secured contracts or experienced increased consumer spending. However, they also expressed significant concerns about the project's negative impacts on housing affordability and availability, essential services, and impacts to the environment. The influx of workers has driven up rental prices and created shortages, displacing some locals and making it difficult to attract and retain workers. Childcare and healthcare services are strained, and increased traffic has raised road safety concerns.</p> <p>While acknowledging the positive economic impact, representatives worry about long-term sustainability and the potential for a decline in economic activity when the project ends. They noted the need for investment in community infrastructure and services but caveated that with recognition that ongoing maintenance and upkeep of new infrastructure needs to be considered. There was also an acknowledgement for better support for families and multicultural communities. They also called for thoughtful planning and legacy projects to ensure the region's ongoing wellbeing and address the social and environmental impacts of the project.</p>
Recreational Users – Operational Areas 	<p>Recreational users in the Snowy Monaro region have experienced a mix of positive and negative impacts from Snowy 2.0. While Snowy Hydro's presence has led to increased economic activity, it has also put a strain on housing affordability and availability, with some residents being priced out of the market or even facing homelessness. This issue is exacerbated during peak tourist and ski seasons, when the demand for accommodation far exceeds the supply.</p> <p>The influx of workers has also put pressure on essential services, with limited aged care, childcare, and mental health support. Medical services are also stretched, with a shortage of doctors and the closure of a medical centre in Jindabyne. Additionally, there are concerns about the impact on community cohesion, with some perceiving a lack of social integration between workers and locals. However, Snowy Hydro's investment in infrastructure and emergency services is seen as a positive contribution. The project has also provided some economic benefits to local businesses, although there have been reports of delayed payments and financial difficulties for some suppliers.</p> <p>In terms of comments regarding Snowy Hydro's lasting legacy, provision of reliable power, reusing Snowy 2.0 accommodation for housing and site remediation were seen as priorities.</p>

Recreational Users – Water Based



Representatives from the water-based recreational sector in the Snowy Monaro region have experienced disruptions and concerns due to Snowy 2.0. Increased traffic, particularly from slow-moving trucks, has been a major issue, impacting travel times and road safety. The influx of workers has also exacerbated existing housing shortages, leading to higher rents and limited availability, especially in Jindabyne and Cooma.

Environmental concerns are prominent, with worries about the impact of construction on the landscape, potential water pollution, and the introduction of invasive species like Redfin. There are also concerns about the management of water levels in Tantangara Dam and the lack of transparency from Snowy Hydro regarding dam heights, noting a need for better education.

While some local businesses have benefited from increased patronage, others have suffered due to staff shortages and the loss of workers to Snowy Hydro. Pressure on essential services like aged care and transport has also increased, particularly in smaller towns like Bombala and Berridale. Additionally, there are concerns about unsocial behaviour and vandalism in recreational areas, which Snowy Hydro is urged to help address. Despite these challenges, this group recognised the long-term benefits of the project and hope to see improvements in infrastructure, environmental management, and community engagement.

Community comments



"Weeds are a huge problem on some Snowy Hydro lands, they need to clean up and manage their land."



"Early on Bukanderra and Adaminaby were doing very well because the accommodation was booked solid for months. But that was a short-term boost because Snowy built their own accommodation."



"Future Gen are very bad in paying their bills. For example there was a guy who supplied generators for hundreds of thousands of dollars and they haven't been paid."



"Youth support is not great."



"The neighbourhood centre in Jindabyne has shut down. Snowy used to support it but not any more."



"There is a culture of no bad news. Which means community is not listened to and lessons aren't learned."



"In schools, the classroom numbers have doubled."



"With more families in town I would say assistance with childcare would be worth investing in."

Table B 14. Top 20 themes

			
Negative impact on housing affordability	Negative social impact on the community	Negative impact on housing availability	Need for post project community support
57 Mentions	49 Mentions	44 Mentions	42 Mentions
			
Positive impact on local business	Negative impact on local workforce	Negative impacts on social support services	Limited availability of childcare services
33 Mentions	31 Mentions	30 Mentions	26 Mentions
			
Negative impact on public services	Need for investment in local facilities/infrastructure	Positive Social impact on the community	Negative impacts on environment
20 Mentions	18 Mentions	17 Mentions	16 Mentions
			
Limited availability of aged care services	Negative impact on emergency services	Negative impact on quality of roads and traffic	Need for more community investment
15 Mentions	14 Mentions	14 Mentions	14 Mentions
			
Limited availability of health services	Negative impact on schools	Positive impact on schools	Positive impacts for home owners
14 Mentions	14 Mentions	14 Mentions	13 Mentions

Bega Valley (Merimbula)

Below are the top three themes that emerged in Bega Valley when it came to the Snowy 2.0 project and its impact on the community followed by more detailed feedback from the community focus group held in the region.

Table B 15. Top 3 Themes

<p>Negative Impact on Housing Availability</p>  <p>8 Mentions</p>	<p>Average rental has gone from 540 to 720 in a matter of months because of 2.0. People who are currently paying under 500 are getting notice to pay more or get evicted and replaced with someone who will. Some homes are even being rented by 2.0 and are sitting vacant</p>	<p>Covid and bushfires have placed immense pressure on the town already. 460 houses burnt down in the fires and only 100 have been rebuilt.</p>
<p>Limited Availability of Childcare Services</p>  <p>5 Mentions</p>	<p>Childcare services, particularly early childcare. Can't get enough staff to meet demand. Currently, 48 placements and the need is 200+.</p>	<p>Have to join waitlists for over 2 years to get childcare services. 2.0 workers are also struggling with childcare.</p>
<p>Need for Investment in local facilities / infrastructure</p>  <p>4 Mentions</p>	<p>Build something that leaves an enduring legacy for the towns they rely on: i.e affordable housing/ other community infrastructure.</p>	<p>Would like to know where the community investment fund is already. The council has plans for fixing childcare, recreation facilities etc, but is short on the funds to finance.</p>

Table B 16. Insights – Focus Group














Stakeholder group	What did they say?
Focus Group 	<p>Focus group participants in Merimbula expressed a lack of awareness and understanding regarding Snowy 2.0's specifics, particularly its impact on the local community and the distribution of promised community funds. They highlighted the significant strain on housing and essential services due to the influx of workers, with rental prices skyrocketing and childcare waitlists exceeding two years. The lack of planning by Snowy Hydro for their workforce's impact on the community was a recurring concern, exacerbating existing pressures on infrastructure and resources already strained by recent bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>While some local businesses like hospitality and real estate have benefited from increased demand and higher wages, many locals feel disadvantaged by the rising cost of living and competition for resources. The focus group identified critical areas needing support, including childcare, housing, mental health services, schools, and community building programs. They also highlighted the need for Snowy Hydro to invest in the community, provide affordable housing and infrastructure, and offer more transparency and communication regarding the project's impact and legacy.</p>

Table B 17. Top 20 Themes



 <p>Negative impact on housing availability</p> <p>8 Mentions</p>	 <p>Limited availability of childcare services</p> <p>5 Mentions</p>	 <p>Need for investment in local facilities/ infrastructure</p> <p>4 Mentions</p>	 <p>Need for investment in local initiatives/charities</p> <p>4 Mentions</p>
 <p>Negative impact on housing affordability</p> <p>3 Mentions</p>	 <p>Negative impact on local workforce</p> <p>3 Mentions</p>	 <p>Negative impacts on social support services</p> <p>3 Mentions</p>	 <p>Limited availability of health services</p> <p>3 Mentions</p>
 <p>Negative impact of not consulting with the community</p>	 <p>Negative impacts of poor communication</p>	 <p>Positive impact on local business</p>	 <p>Negative impact on schools</p>



Wagga Wagga

Below are the top three themes that emerged in Wagga Wagga when it came to the Snowy 2.0 project and its impact on the community followed by more detailed feedback from the community focus group held in the region.

Table B 18. Insights – Overall Community

Limited Availability of Health Services  6 Mentions	I know that doctors go from Wagga to Tumut to man the hospital but not sure if SH2 contractors are the driving factor for this. Would be good to ask hospital.	GPs are hard to get into as well. Hard to access counsellors, psychiatrists and psychologists.
Positive Impact on Local Businesses  5 Mentions	SH2 will be good for economy, providing secure power with Wagga becoming the transmission hub for the country by 2028. Also gives us nexus with VIC and SA with EnergyConnect and VNI.	Could also bring further investment from business and industry for businesses who need reliable power.

Unaware of Snowy Impact on Region



4
Mentions

Unsure if the operation of SH2 will impact water irrigation, water availability and impacts on the surround area. Opens up quite a lot of operational flexibility, unclear if it will be good or not.

Not sure if there's FutureGen contracts in Wagga.

Table B 19. Insights – Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder group	What did they say?
Focus Group 	<p>Focus group participants in Wagga Wagga were generally unaware of the direct impacts of Snowy 2.0 on their community. While some recognised potential positive impacts on the local economy and renewable energy infrastructure, there was a lack of clarity and information about the project's specific effects on Wagga Wagga. Concerns were raised about the impact of transmission lines on farms and the limited access to certain national park areas.</p> <p>The focus group participants highlighted existing pressures on housing affordability and availability in the region, but it was unclear whether these issues were attributable to Snowy 2.0. There were also concerns about the strain on essential services, particularly healthcare, with long waiting times and limited access to mental health professionals. Despite these challenges, there was optimism about the potential for Snowy 2.0 to contribute to a greener environment, improve power reliability, and attract further investment in the region.</p> <p>Whilst there were concerns about the transmission line projects in the region, participants did not identify this as being an issue related to Snowy 2.0.</p>

Community comments



"Community said it would happen before Snowy 2.0 came in, then it happened and Snowy 2.0 didn't accept any responsibility for it."



"Rent and housing prices and availability are experiencing increasing pressures, but unclear if related to SH2."



"SH2 hasn't done anything in the Wagga community."



"Access to national parks and special places have been reduced."




"Positive: future support of local renewable energy developments.
Negative – transmission lines disrupting farms however area a necessary evil."



"Has had direct engagement on transmission lines, but that's Transgrid, not SH2.0. Council has expressed issue with transmission lines. Again not SH2.0 specifically."

Table B 20. Top 20 themes

 <p>Limited availability of health services</p> <p>6 Mentions</p>	 <p>Familiar with TransGrid</p> <p>5 Mentions</p>	 <p>Positive impact on local business</p> <p>4 Mentions</p>	 <p>Unaware of Snowy impact in region</p> <p>4 Mentions</p>
 <p>Negative impacts on access to National Parks</p> <p>3 Mentions</p>	 <p>Positive impact of renewables</p> <p>3 Mentions</p>	 <p>Negative impact of transmission lines</p> <p>3 Mentions</p>	 <p>Positive impacts of more reliable power</p> <p>3 Mentions</p>
 <p>Negative impact on housing availability</p> <p>2 Mentions</p>	 <p>Negative impact on housing affordability</p> <p>2 Mentions</p>	 <p>Limited availability of housing support programs</p> <p>2 Mentions</p>	 <p>Negative impacts on environment</p> <p>2 Mentions</p>
 <p>Limited availability of childcare services</p> <p>1 Mentions</p>	 <p>Need for investment in local facilities/ infrastructure</p> <p>1 Mentions</p>	 <p>Need for investment in local initiatives/charities</p> <p>1 Mentions</p>	 <p>Negative impact on local workforce</p> <p>1 Mentions</p>
 <p>Negative impact of not consulting with the community</p> <p>1 Mentions</p>	 <p>Negative impacts of poor communication</p> <p>1 Mentions</p>	 <p>Need for more community investment</p> <p>1 Mentions</p>	 <p>Other</p> <p>1 Mentions</p>



How Snowy Hydro engages with the community

Overview

This section delves into participants' perspectives on Snowy Hydro's current engagement with the local community. The discussion explored key aspects of Snowy Hydro's engagement strategy, including reach, inclusivity, effectiveness, and potential areas for enhancement. The discussion focused on how Snowy Hydro can become a more impactful and integrated member of the community. By analysing these insights, we can identify opportunities to strengthen these ties and foster a more collaborative and transparent approach, ensuring open communication and engagement with all community groups in which all voices are heard and considered in future endeavours.



Figure B 4. The words and phrases we heard


Snowy Valleys

Below are the top three themes across the Snowy Valleys region when it came to the how Snowy Hydro engages with community. Feedback is then split up by stakeholder groups including business leaders, community leaders, elected representatives and landowners.

Table B 21. Top 3 Themes – Overall Community

<p>Need for More Community Engagement</p>  <p>20 Mentions</p>	<p>"Just be accessible. They are reaching out to the right members of the community but they could be doing more. More of this community engagement you're doing now, more regular "</p>	<p>"Be equitable to both sides of the mountain. Cooma get all the benefits because head office is there."</p>
<p>Positive Impact of Good Community Engagement</p>  <p>16 Mentions</p>	<p>"Dean Lynch has just done a fabulous job in supporting all those backed up by Gabrielle Curtin – they are both so positive and really want to make the community better."</p>	<p>"The Discovery Centre in Cooma is great. People are also loving the mini-discovery centre in Khancoban. It would be great to have similar in Tumba and Tumut."</p>
<p>Negative Impact of Poor Communication</p>  <p>7 Mentions</p>	<p>It would be great if we get an update and information on the flow of workers and what to expect from one month to the next. There's been absolutely no sort of communication on that. So business owners have no idea, they might be cooking dinners for 10 workers this week or none the next week.</p>	<p>"We feel like Snowy hides from the issues of Hume Link."</p>

Table B 22. Insights – Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder group	What did they say?
<p>Business Leaders</p> 	<p>Business leaders in Snowy Valleys generally felt informed about the project, citing regular communication channels like newsletters, social media, and radio appearances. Some suggested that while initial engagement was strong, it could be reduced now that the project is underway. Others felt there was a lack of awareness as to the physical scale of the project which needed to be addressed. It was also suggested there should be a more structured and effective approach to bring together the various industries within one</p>

	<p>association, ensuring that they are all aligned and working towards common goals.</p> <p>However, there was a clear desire for more equitable distribution of benefits across the region. Leaders felt that Cooma received preferential treatment due to the location of the head office, while areas like Tumut were overlooked despite being featured in promotional materials.</p> <p>Additionally, business leaders expressed disappointment that the promised economic opportunities hadn't fully materialised. There was hope that the region could retain the influx of workers drawn by the project, but concerns remained about the long-term economic impact. There were also criticisms about the project's cost overruns and environmental impact, reflecting a broader scepticism about the project's overall management and justification.</p>
<p>Community leaders</p> 	<p>Community leaders in Snowy Valleys expressed a desire for a more consistent and localised presence from Snowy 2.0. They felt that while some outreach efforts were appreciated, there was a need for more regular and meaningful interactions. Some expressed the desire for more information about the flow of the transient workforce for the 2.0 project to enable the community and local businesses to better prepare. Leaders suggested having a Snowy-affiliated officer stationed in the community, or holding regular events to facilitate informal conversations and information sharing.</p> <p>They recognised the positive efforts of individuals like Dean Lynch and Gabrielle Curtin, but felt that Snowy 2.0 could do more to leverage its strong brand to foster collaboration and mutual benefit. Suggestions included creating community infrastructure, providing grant advice, and expanding educational initiatives like the successful Discovery Centre to other towns.</p> <p>Leaders also emphasised the importance of supporting local media and using existing community networks like the Chamber of Commerce to disseminate information and foster a sense of ownership. They highlighted the success of site visits and updates from Snowy 2.0 representatives but stressed the need for these interactions to be more frequent and accessible.</p>
<p>Elected Representatives</p> 	<p>Elected representatives in Snowy Valleys offered mixed feedback on Snowy Hydro's community engagement efforts. The presence of Snowy Hydro representatives on the ground such as Dean Lynch were valued for their positive impact on community relations however, concerns were raised about the broader approach.</p> <p>Representatives felt Snowy Hydro had distanced itself from the negative impacts of transmission lines, and desired greater responsibility and involvement in finding solutions. Concerns were also raised about TransGrid's perceived focus on their own agenda, highlighting a need for increased collaboration and consideration of community needs.</p>

Landowners



A significant concern among Snowy Valleys landowners was the perceived lack of transparency and communication regarding the HumeLink project. Landowners felt that Snowy 2.0 was avoiding addressing the potential impacts of HumeLink on their communities, particularly in relation to tourism and the environment.

They also expressed a shared sentiment of disconnect from Snowy 2.0, feeling a lack of tangible presence or acknowledgement of their community's historical and ongoing connection to the project. They noted the absence of Snowy 2.0 branding or informational resources in their towns and felt that opportunities to promote local attractions like Talbingo Dam were being missed. A desire for greater investment in the community, particularly in education and infrastructure, was also evident.

Despite these concerns, landowners acknowledged Snowy 2.0's online presence and advertising efforts were clearly visible but could be improved. They also highlighted the need for more targeted communication strategies that cater to the elderly population, who may not be as engaged with online platforms.

Community comments



"Be equitable to both sides of the mountain. Cooma get all the benefits because head office is there."



"We were promised a lot of opportunities, but they didn't materialise."



"We should be all be members of one association all on the same page. There should be a better way to bring all these industries together. The bigger organisations should coordinate support for the community."



"It would be great if we get information on the flow of workers and what to expect from one month to the next. Local businesses just need visibility of what's coming so they can prepare for that."



"I think It would be good for people to see the scale of the project."



"No one mentioned Humelink was going to rip through towns. They don't address the elephant in the room."






"Just be here. A presence in our town would be great."



"Snowy should do something like 'Coffee with a Cop' where they say come chat and get grant advice."

Table B 23. Top 20 Themes

			
Need for more community engagement	Positive impact of good community engagement	Negative impacts of poor communication	Negative impact of perceived bias
20 Mentions	16 Mentions	7 Mentions	7 Mentions
			
Need for more community investment	Negative impact from contractors	Positive impact of good communication	Negative impact of transmission lines
5 Mentions	5 Mentions	4 Mentions	3 Mentions
			
Need for investment in local facilities/ infrastructure	Positive impact on salaries	Need for further investment in promotion of Snowy Scheme history	Need for investment in local initiatives/charities
3 Mentions	3 Mentions	3 Mentions	2 Mentions
			
Investment in tourism	Investment in career development	Negative impacts on environment	Negative impact of not consulting with the community
2 Mentions	2 Mentions	1 Mentions	1 Mentions
			
Other	Need for post project community support	Negative social impact on the community	Positive impact from Snowy community programs
1 Mentions	1 Mentions	1 Mentions	1 Mentions

Snowy Monaro

Below are the top three themes across the Snowy Monaro region when it came to the how Snowy Hydro engages with community. Feedback is then split up by stakeholder groups including business leaders, community leaders, elected representatives and landowners.

Table B 24. Top 3 Themes – Overall Community




<p>Need for More Community Engagement</p>  <p>44 Mentions</p>	<p>"They take a lot out of the community. We'd like Snowy to do something to address what they take out like jobs, accommodation. Even if it's leadership or mentorship, it doesn't have to be money but they can help us and show us how it's done to empower the community to do it themselves. "The community grants aren't enough. We want a hand up not a hand out."</p>	<p>"2.0 has a medical team on site and Snowy Hydro has a medical team too. But the health system does support them, we get the overflow of their workers so they should engage better with health practitioners here."</p>
<p>Positive Impact of Good Community Engagement</p>  <p>24 Mentions</p>	<p>I think they have some active members of the community, usually most people know who to get in contact with at Snowy to get an answer on things. Shout out to Gabrielle Curtin and Dean Lynch who do most of that work.</p>	<p>"The Discovery Centre is fantastic. They run info sessions there with the big screen. They go to nth degree when it comes to catering."</p>
<p>Negative Impact of Poor Communication</p>  <p>18 Mentions</p>	<p>"They could do a bit better engagement and better engagement around the lake and the level of the lake around Jindabyne. They need better communication around the foreshore maintenance. People don't know that it's a working damn that the levels are controlled."</p>	<p>"It would be nice if some of the letters I wrote 3 -4 years ago were responded to. I wrote to say there would be an influx and a bigger need and I never heard back. I'm the cleaner, the manager, the driver, the everything. So we could use more investment at the multicultural centre."</p>

Table B 25. Insights – Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder group What did they say?

Business Leaders



In discussions with business leaders in Snowy Monaro, many acknowledged the company's efforts, particularly through the Chamber of Commerce, however, there was a clear desire for broader and more inclusive communication. While some participants felt well-informed through their involvement with the Chamber, others noted that information was not readily available for residents outside these networks, suggesting extending their efforts to organisations like the Country Women's Association and the Lions Club. Suggestions were made for more public forums, regular morning teas, or similar initiatives to foster communication with the broader community.

Participants expressed a need for greater transparency and long-term vision, not just engagement on immediate issues like lake levels. They emphasised the importance of community legacy and suggested initiatives like a Snowy Hydro retirement or leisure centre. Several people also highlighted a missed opportunity in not celebrating Snowy Hydro's 75th anniversary, citing a lack of connection with the company's rich history.

The development of the lake foreshore and addressing concerns about risk mitigation were also raised as areas where Snowy 2.0 could improve its engagement and collaboration with the community.

Community Leaders



Community leaders in Snowy Monaro expressed a range of views regarding Snowy Hydro's community engagement efforts. While some commended the company's consultation process, information sessions, and responsiveness, others voiced concerns about a perceived lack of genuine engagement, particularly with certain demographics including migrant families and regions such as Adaminaby.

Some leaders suggested a more proactive approach was needed, including establishing a physical presence in the community, such as a shopfront, and appointing independent community liaison officers. Several leaders stressed the need for dedicated resources and staff to effectively engage with the community and implement initiatives that benefit the region. There was a sense of urgency expressed by several leaders who called for immediate engagement and action with tangible outcomes rather than being delayed until the project's completion in 2028.

Certain sectors including emergency services and healthcare also called for more proactive engagement efforts to create efficiencies and built capability.

Additionally, concerns were raised regarding the distribution of funding from the sale of Snowy Hydro to the Federal Government, with some leaders advocating for a more equitable allocation of resources across the Snowy Mountains area. The lack of planned commemorations for the 75th anniversary of the Snowy Scheme was also a point of contention for some.

	Also of note were frustrations expressed regarding the lack of clear communication and responsibility between Snowy Hydro and Future Gen, causing confusion and inefficiency for those seeking assistance.
Elected Representatives 	<p>Elected Representatives in Snowy Monaro generally acknowledged Snowy Hydro's efforts in community engagement, highlighting their participation in local events, council interactions, and updates through the Discovery Centre. They also praised Snowy Hydro's responsive communication channels and effective social media presence.</p> <p>However, representatives also pointed out opportunities for improvement. Suggestions included enhancing engagement around Jindabyne Lake, particularly regarding water level management and foreshore maintenance. They also advocated for more proactive initiatives, such as open days at Snowy 2.0 offices, reactivating old power stations for educational purposes, and setting up community engagement events in public spaces.</p>
Recreational Users – Operational Areas 	<p>Conversations with recreational users from Snowy Monaro revealed a need for Snowy Hydro to re-engage with the local community and restore its reputation as a valued regional partner.</p> <p>Participants expressed disappointment over perceived disconnects, such as the prioritisation of commercial interests over the preservation of recreational areas, and a lack of meaningful engagement. Suggestions were made to enlist a community engagement officer who could help Snowy Hydro rebuild its relationship with the local community.</p> <p>There was a strong call for more community-oriented initiatives, particularly those focused on developing foreshore areas and providing opportunities for young people.</p>
Recreational Users – Water Based 	<p>The prevailing sentiment among recreational water users in Snowy Monaro is that Snowy Hydro's communication and engagement efforts fall short. Participants voiced concerns about the lack of awareness regarding the project's scope, with many feeling uninformed and in the dark about its potential impacts. There was a shared belief that Snowy Hydro needs to be more proactive in reaching out, rather than relying on individuals to seek them out.</p> <p>While some acknowledged that Snowy Hydro does respond to inquiries, there was a clear perception of selective communication, favouring positive news while neglecting to address negative aspects or potential disruptions. This perceived lack of transparency, particularly regarding water levels in popular recreational lakes like Lake Eucumbene and Lake Jindabyne, was a major source of frustration. Participants also expressed a desire for Snowy Hydro to play a more active role in supporting quality events that attract visitors to the region, suggesting a missed opportunity for collaboration and mutual benefit. Additionally, concerns were raised about the environmental impact of Snowy Hydro's operations and the need for better land management practices.</p>

Community comments



"We meet with them once a year to talk about the lake levels. In Jindabyne the lake levels are symbiotic with our mental health. When it's low, it's a dust bowl, when it's full it beautiful, when it's overfull it's a concern. The lake is a big part of who we are."



"I know this year is their 75th anniversary and I don't think much is planned because I don't think the new CEO is a big believer in the past and that's really sad. People like me would not be here if it weren't for the original Snowy. I would love them to celebrate this milestone."



"We just want more transparency. We want more than just a two or five-year view. We want more foresight for the future and forethought about legacy."



"It is critical that this engagement starts right away. There needs to be boots on the ground now and some projects that are happening. We can't wait till 2028, so that people have some confidence going into the future."



"I think there is a genuine desire to consult with the community and be positive presence."



"More work needs to be done in Adaminaby."



"It needs to be more than just a box-ticking exercise."



"It used to feel that Snowy was part of this region now it feels like they're out in Sydney and are just a corporate player."

Table B 26. Top 18 Themes

			
Need for more community engagement	Positive impact of good community engagement	Negative impacts of poor communication	Negative impacts on environment
51 Mentions	27 Mentions	18 Mentions	5 Mentions
			
Need for investment in local facilities/ infrastructure	Other	Negative impact of not consulting with the community	Need for post project community support
4 Mentions	4 Mentions	3 Mentions	3 Mentions
			
Need for more community investment	Need for further investment in promotion of Snowy Scheme history	Investment in tourism	Negative impact on local infrastructure
2 Mentions	2 Mentions	2 Mentions	2 Mentions
			
Negative impact from contractors	Need for investment in local initiatives/charities	Negative social impact on the community	Negative impacts on mental health
1 Mentions	1 Mentions	1 Mentions	1 Mentions
			
Negative impact of poor planning and preparation	Positive impact on emergency services		
1 Mention	1 Mention		


Bega Valley (Merimbula)

Below are the top three themes that emerged in Bega Valley when it came to how Snowy Hydro engages with the community followed by more detailed feedback from the community focus group held in the region.

Table B 27. Top 3 themes

<p>Need for More Community Engagement</p>  <p>8 Mentions</p>	<p>Snowy would benefit from additional engagement with the community. The daycare bus services almost create an us vs them mentality.</p>	<p>This focus group has been the first point of contact I've had on engagement.</p>
<p>Need for Investment in Local Initiatives / Charities</p>  <p>24 Mentions</p>	<p>Best way to reach the community are events and through media. Community is quite diverse, need to consider demographics and where to reach them.</p>	<p>Good avenues would be through the service clubs, Rotary etc. Using the markets etc. Only issue is to consider the demographic of service clubs.</p>
<p>Need for Further Investment in Arts / Events</p>  <p>18 Mentions</p>	<p>A win-win for their staff and the community would be a 'welcome to the community' event. Bit too late now, but that's an example of what needs to happen – low-hanging fruit.</p>	<p>If they choose to do more community events, they could improve their reputation and acceptance of families coming for 2.0.</p>

Table B 28. Insights –Focus Group

Stakeholder group	What did they say?
<p>Focus Group</p> 	<p>Focus group participants in Merimbula felt that Snowy Hydro's engagement with the local community has been lacking. Many felt uninformed about the project's impact, often only learning details through their own proactive efforts.</p> <p>For some, the focus group was a first point of contact for engagement. Participants suggested that Snowy Hydro could significantly enhance its relationship with the community by increasing communication and hosting events that cater to the diverse demographics of the area. Suggestions included leveraging local media, service clubs, and markets. There was a shared perception that these efforts could foster a sense of goodwill and understanding between the project and its neighbours.</p>

Wagga Wagga

Below are the top three themes that emerged in Wagga Wagga when it came to how Snowy Hydro engages with the community followed by more detailed feedback from the community focus group held in the region.

Table B 29. Top 3 themes




Negative Impacts of Poor Communication  8 Mentions	<p>To understand the JV, you'd need a family tree. People can't keep up with how complicated the structure is, who the funding bodies are, etc. Local community is confused about who's responsible for what.</p>	<p>Snowy 2.0 does not communicate well to local community, they don't understand where the project is up to. Community is probably not aware who's even working on what.</p>
Negative Impacts on the Environment  24 Mentions	<p>I hear stories that Snowy 2.0 is a lot less careful than Snowy Scheme. Great plumes of pollution on worksites. Wonder if corners are being cut to get back on schedule.</p>	<p>I read the EIS, and I have no idea if they did any of the care of historical artefacts that were identified, let alone plans to remediate the area after they're finished. Have no idea about that at all.</p>
Limited Snowy Hydro Support in Region  18 Mentions	<p>I don't feel like there has been much communication at all. What are the avenues for people to get involved? Those avenues have not been well communicated with Wagga. Surprised by the line of questions, since Snowy 2.0 hasn't done anything for Wagga.</p>	<p>Agreed that there has been limited consultation, and unsure why they're asking now.</p>

Table B 30. Insights – Focus Group

Stakeholder group	What did they say?
Focus Group	Focus group participants in Wagga Wagga expressed a strong sense of disconnect and lack of communication from Snowy Hydro. They felt uninformed about project progress, confused by the complex project structure and unsure about who is responsible for what.




Concerns were raised about the project's environmental impact and a lack of transparency around remediation efforts. There was also scepticism about Snowy Hydro's commitment to addressing community concerns, given a perceived lack of engagement and past experiences. Participants felt that communication avenues for community involvement had not been adequately communicated, leading to surprise and scepticism about the purpose of the focus group itself.

Appendix C: Focus Group Notes

Snowy Valleys

Table C 1. Snowy Hydro Focus Group 1: Tumut – Community Leaders (25/3/2024)

Question	Responses
Section 1  Snowy 2.0 and its impacts	
Question 1: <p>On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you believe the Snowy 2.0 project has positively impacted your local community.</p>	<p>Responses in Mentimeter</p>
Question 2: <p>We understand that the Snowy 2.0 project has affected the community in different ways. Please discuss areas you believe have been negatively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certainly housing, options of housing and the difficulty of getting developments through and the lag. • Housing, natural environment, and quality of the roads, extra traffic. • Roads is the biggest thing. There's been some hairy trips with potholes from the big trucks. This impacts public safety that comes with that and the congestion. • Quality of roads. The amount of traffic has increased. The natural environment too has been impacted. Housing has definitely been affected. As soon as Malcolm Turnbull announced the project the housing prices went up. • Tumut has been left behind. Cooma was always going to be the main hub.

impacted by the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Been no impact in terms of traffic for Tumba. We were hopeful there would be an increase of people. We were promised this boom. • Traffic congestion. Does a lot of travel and the roads are pretty s**t. But in terms of the economic benefit, we haven't seen anything in Tumut. In the early days there was a lot of talk of the boom it would bring. So, while there weren't really too many negatives, there weren't any positives either. • What value do we bring to this if everything is happening on the other side (Cooma). • We're the poor cousin. • With them all on-site, Mum and the kids aren't coming to Tumut.
Question 3: Do you believe Snowy 2.0 is a contributor to housing and rental prices in the region?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We don't have any 2.0 workers renting in Tumba. It's had no impact. • People were investing and gearing up for this influx, but it never came. • 2000 people are staying on site, they're not spreading out using existing housing stock. • FIFO does not help the community economically at all. They are on site. • Ask Cooma!
Question 4: Rate availability of social support services in your community? Is Snowy 2.0 placing pressure on availability of these?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared to major cities we do have less. Very early on we approached Snowy about services we can provide, and they said all their health services are on site. • Disability support is very well catered for. • Rural towns always have less. • Does Snowy have any support services on site? Have they got their own or are they just using and abusing the ones in our towns? • Are they asking if they're placing pressure on our support services, so that they can provide their own services if they are?
Question 5: What areas do you believe could benefit most from community investment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the above! They're all important. • Mental health care. • If Snowy's got extra money they want to burn we'll find places for them to use it.
Question 6: What level of impact has Snowy 2.0 had on the accessibility and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because of Snowy 2.0 there were extra police resources given, but they're all in Cooma despite the project being in our LGA. • If our emergency services are busy attending to Snowy emergencies there's less in Tumut. • There's a shortage of teachers, but that's everywhere.

quality of public services in the community? Which services are impacted and how?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because people are on site. Emergency services are stretched because of the distances they must travel. • If emergency services are attending to things over there there's less here. Quite often we must wait for ambulances to come from Gundagai or other places because ours are being used. • Snowy has helped improve the mobile service reception with the towers.
Question 7: Have some people in our community experienced greater negative impacts or greater positive impacts from the Snowy 2.0 project than others?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone who works there has had a positive impact. • Cooma people have had a positive impact. • We were all told to put all our tenders in. So many retailers and service providers all got pushed aside. There's a bit of smoke and mirrors. • We were encouraged to put ourselves forward but then nothing came of it. • We were encouraged to tender and take part, we made flyers and everything and they said, "don't worry, we don't need that anymore."
Question 8: With the commercial operation of Snowy 2.0 scheduled for 2028, what long-term benefits do you hope Snowy 2.0 will bring to your community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community investment. We don't want a lot we just want that. • It's about expectations. Don't come and say this is going to be the best thing that's going to happen. Come and consult with the community about what their priorities are. Don't come and tell us what they think we need. • Goulburn – Veolia left a massive legacy with great investment. • Long term negatives – the transmission lines, impact on land and housing prices. If we are wanting to push tourism this will impact that. • Cooma is getting all the benefits and we're getting all the crappy infrastructure that no one wants.

Section 2:



Snowy Hydro and the community

Question 9:
Snowy Hydro has a range of programs to support the community, before you were asked to take

[Responses in Mentimeter](#)

part in this focus group, what programs were you aware of?	
Question 10: Explain how you have seen this support in action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clontarf is excellent because it's taking young Aboriginal men and teaching them discipline and ethics and self-esteem. • They sponsored the Snowy Hydro Business Awards. It's always a great night of celebrating businesses. • Clontarf seems like a personal tailored approach. • I can always tell when I meet a Clontarf boy in my class. I met a boy who said the only reason he goes to school is because of Clontarf. • Snowy has been very supportive of me and my Big Brothers and Big Sisters program. I have been given a grant. • Their community grant program is great. • Clontarf and Stars are great. Without Snowy neither would exist. Giving these kids work opportunities, doing training sessions. Providing mentoring without it being structured mentoring. • We'd love a Country University Centre. • We've struggled to engage with the Sculpture program because they're running everything out of Cooma Discovery Centre so not accessible. • Sculpture has been fantastic for Tumba and the STEM Fund is great. We'd love more community investment beyond that. • We need a contact for advice and assistance with applications. Because you can put a lot of work into one and you never hear back. • We'd love more school expos about what options of careers there are with Snowy. Education around career opportunities.
Question 11: Share examples of successful community investment projects or initiatives from other organisations, or in other communities that you know of.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veolia – each year there was a significant amount of money put into community investment. Goulburn showground was completely refurbished, they built new basketball court. • I think the Visy Foundation is great. They give so much. • Hanley family trust. • Community foundation for the Tumut Region. • There are also a lot of local businesses who have supported me with just as much funding as Snowy does. Small local businesses, family-owned small businesses that support the not-for-profits like mine. • Blakeney Millar Foundation – Philanthropic group.

Section 3:



How Snowy Hydro engages with the community

Question 12:
How do you hear about Snowy Hydro and the Snowy 2.0 project in your community?

A) Is there value in Snowy Hydro engaging more frequently within your community?


B) How well is Snowy Hydro communicating and engaging with your local communities?

C) What can it do more of or be better at? Community involvement? More targeted updates?

- Just be here.
- Just be accessible. They are reaching out to the right members of the community but they could be doing more. More of this community engagement you're doing now, more regular.
- Just a presence in our town would be great. Or maybe having a Snowy-affiliated officer.
- If they had someone here in town engaging with us, they wouldn't need to be spending money in sending you here.
- They need to distinguish if it's Snowy 2.0 engaging or Snowy Hydro.
- Communication is really important but you need to get the lines set.
- Support local media.
- The Chamber of Commerce is the real contact for Snowy. Info has slowed coming through.
- Chamber is the most communal focal point that they can use.
- Have a Snowy member on the Chamber.
- Why are they re-engaging with Tumut? Is anything going to change.
- Snowy (Sarah and Dean) should do something like "Coffee with a Cop" where they say come chat and get grant advice.

END

Table C 2. Snowy Hydro Focus Group 2: Tumut – Business Leaders (26/3/2024)

Question	Responses
Section 1:  Snowy 2.0 and its impacts	
Question 1: On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you believe the Snowy 2.0 project has positively impacted your local community.	Responses in Mentimeter
Question 2: We understand that the Snowy 2.0 project has affected the community in different ways. Please discuss areas you believe have been negatively impacted by the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads definitely. The degradation of the roads with heavy vehicles. Talbingo is terrible. • Skilled trades, taking skills. I'm training up people and Snowy are taking them. If they decide to go that's fine, but when they're tapped on the shoulder that bothers me. • Unskilled labours. • Any labour has been sucked up by Snowy. • Council workers have been taken up there too. So council has been affected because anyone can drive a truck. • We can't compete with their pays. • Snowy have come up here and haven't thought about how they're going to get these workers they're just taking the locals. • I've heard that it has just decimated Cooma and the small business there too. • Has lifted the wage rate locally to try to compete. It was the same when Visy came to town it will be the same when Transgrid comes to town. • Housing and rental affordability. • Concern about the redfin going from Talbingo dam into Tantangara dam. They couldn't get any environmental group to sign off it to say it wouldn't happen.
Question 3:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Talbingo it pushed the prices up quite a bit, they have plateaued now.

<p>Do you believe Snowy 2.0 is a contributor to housing and rental prices in the region?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They went from \$180/200K and went up to \$400K. • There's a lot of supply in Tumut for sale at the moment. • Tumut had the 3rd highest per centage of migration to an LGA in NSW from Sydney. It was the first time in years that migration to regional NSW beat migration to QLD. • Rentals are still tight but that's just across the board, but Council not able to afford supporting infrastructure.
<p>Question 4: Rate availability of social support services in your community? Is Snowy 2.0 placing pressure on availability of these?</p>	<p>Quantitative Responses in Mentimeter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We don't have a doctor at our hospital. We have a multi-million dollar hospital but no doctor to put there. • Mental health we don't have any. • No counselling. • Valmar is a good asset for this town, it covers a very broad region. They've got about 600 employees they're one of the highest employers in town. • I don't think Snowy has put any pressure on our support services. • We don't really see any economic or social activity impact from Snowy. • Because all the workers are all on site, we don't really get any impact of these services.
<p>Question 5: What areas do you believe could benefit most from community investment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of them. • Some of them come back to council.
<p>Question 6: What level of impact has Snowy 2.0 had on the accessibility and quality of public services in the community? Which services are impacted and how?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW sold Snowy 2.0 to the federal government for \$4B and we didn't see any of it despite Snowy 2.0 being in our LGA. • It potentially has stretched our medical resources because of Snowy 2.0. If they're attending to something there and if we had a major incident somewhere here we're left short. • We don't have a 4WD ambulance. • If you ring an ambulance in Talbingo you're looking at a long wait. • Mobile phone service is terrible in Talbingo. There's no 4G and 5G and they're turning the 3G off in July. • We've been promised better mobile service, but nothing. • Every blackout our mobile phone service only lasts an hour. • Central Energy should be providing a generator. • Scheduled outages of power impact the caravan park. Caravan park relied on Starlink.

<p>Question 7: Have some people in our community experienced greater negative impacts or greater positive impacts from the Snowy 2.0 project than others?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the engineering shops in town and associated suppliers have done quite well out of Snowy. • Early on accommodation and hospitality would have had a bit of a boost. • There were a few businesses who didn't get a look in at all even though they tried to get work contacts up there. • There was a local indigenous group up there who did the assessment up there for artefacts, so they did pretty well out of it. • [NAME WITHHELD] does really well. • [NAME WITHHELD] never misses out. • Trucking companies from this side have been affected because they can't tender for jobs because the two bends. Truck only with no dog can access road.
<p>Question 8: With the commercial operation of Snowy 2.0 scheduled for 2028, what long-term benefits do you hope Snowy 2.0 will bring to your community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'd love to see them bring heaps of long-term benefits, but I know there won't be any. • Legacy accommodation at Lobs Hobs as a tourist offering. Leave some of the mining dongers up there and make them look nice as accommodation options. • Cheap electricity. • Some sort of long-term legacy funding for the community especially because we missed out when the business was sold. • When they finish are they going to return things to the way they were? Restoration. • I like to see them working with the community around fire prevention. • I'd love to see more Snowy 2.0 tours come back as a tourist attraction. • There was an unnamed tourist information centre about the history of Snowy scheme in Talbingo at the shopping centre, that's now been replaced by a info board on Snowy 2.0. I'd like to see that restored.


Section 2:



Snowy Hydro and the community

Question 9: Snowy Hydro has a range of programs to support the community, before you were asked to take part in this

[Responses in Mentimeter](#)

focus group, what programs were you aware of?	
Question 10: Explain how you have seen this support in action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of small organisations have gotten community grants program. • I've seen some of the Clontarf kids come to the caravan park. They have to meet certain behavioural standards before they can go on the camping trip. • They do a lot of sponsorships for festival and events. • They sponsor the business awards. • I've seen things on social media about the STEM Academy. • I knew they were involved in the Sculpture Trail, we will see three sculptures being put in Tumut in the coming weeks. It's also supporting education by them getting some of the artists to do workshops at the schools. • It's also helping with tourism to showcase local artists.
Question 11: Share examples of successful community investment projects or initiatives from other organisations, or in other communities that you know of.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The REZ the social licence. The REZ areas are set up so they pour money into the communities to offset the impact they have in the communities. • Snowy Valleys will be one of the highest generators of renewable energy, but we don't have a REZ designated for our region. • Overhead powerlines are having a big impact on the farmers, they're getting no compensation. It should be paying them an annuity. They need to get a ongoing payment for hosting the powerlines. They lose cropping areas and grazing areas for their cattle. • There's a real opportunity for them to do something for local schools and TAFEs with the amount of technical knowledge and skills they have. • There needs to be a bigger focus on local apprenticeships where they don't have travel. It could even support getting TAFE teachers here. • There's a big opportunity for a company like Snowy to contribute to sporting facilities like a heated pool, netball courts.
Section 3:  How Snowy Hydro engages with the community	
Question 12: How do you hear about Snowy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should all be members of one association and all on the same page. There should be a better way to bring all these industries together. The bigger organisations should coordinate support for the community.

Hydro and the Snowy 2.0 project in your community?

A) Is there value in Snowy Hydro engaging more frequently within your community?


B) How well is Snowy Hydro communicating and engaging with your local communities?

C) What can it do more of or be better at? Community involvement? More targeted updates?

- Be equitable to both sides of the mountain. Cooma gets all the benefits because head office is there.
- They always show Tumut 3 power centre on all their ads but they don't have an info centre or tours there.
- Their comms are pretty good with the newsletter and social media.
- There's a good relationship between Snowy and the business community.
- We were promised a lot of opportunities, but they didn't materialise.
- We're hoping to retain a lot of people who have come for the project and want to stay because they love it here.

END

Table C 3. Snowy Hydro Focus Group 3: Tumut – Landowners (26/3/2024)

Question	Responses
Section 1:  Snowy 2.0 and its impacts	
Question 1: On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you believe the Snowy 2.0 project has positively impacted your local community.	<u>Responses in Mentimeter</u> Extremely negative purely based on the impact of TransGrid.
Question 2: We understand that the Snowy 2.0 project has affected the community in different ways. Please discuss areas you believe have been negatively impacted by the project.	<p>HumeLink and Transgrid have had a major negative impact. Our communities deserve better compensation. You wouldn't have HumeLink and Transgrid without Snowy. Cooma doesn't have any of this. They get all the benefit and we get the s**t.</p> <p>There are farmers who can't sell their farms because people think it will devalue their properties.</p> <p>Environmental concerns – damage to the national park.</p> <p>Roads are terrible from all the trucks.</p> <p>There is a fondness for the Snowy Hydro history - they love the legacy and the cultural benefits the initial project brought.</p> <p>They should be promoting what it's going to look like in the future.</p> <p>Snowy Hydro is having major impact on the mental health of our communities. They talk a lot about creating the renewable energy but not the cost on the community of transporting that energy to Sydney. The wires caused fires.</p> <p>There was an after thought</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They should be promoting what it's going to look like in the future. • Snowy Hydro is having major impact on the mental health of our communities. They talk a lot about creating the renewable energy but

	<p>not the cost on the community of transporting that energy to Sydney. The wires cause fires.</p>
<p>Question 3: Do you believe Snowy 2.0 is a contributor to housing and rental prices in the region?</p>	<p>Yes it definitely has. There's a perception of easy rental for investment properties. This is happening in Tumut, Talbingo and Cooma maybe not so much in Adelong.</p> <p>It's a double-edged sword.</p> <p>Adelong hasn't had new housing development for a long time. Young families are attracted to Adelong but they can't find rentals so they end up in Tumut. So we lose the kids that would have gone to school in Adelong etc.</p> <p>We have a property in Talbingo, the amount of money people were charging for rentals was incredible.</p> <p>It falsely inflates the prices until Snowy built onsite accommodation.</p> <p>It affected school enrolments etc. School enrolments are so low at the moment.</p> <p>The people who were staying in rentals who were with the 2.0 project were young blokes, not young families.</p>
<p>Question 4: Rate availability of social support services in your community? Is Snowy 2.0 placing pressure on availability of these?</p>	<p>Quantitative Responses in Mentimeter.</p> <p>Tumut didn't get any fire funding.</p> <p>No Snowy is not placing pressure on support services.</p> <p>Everything went to the other side of the mountains.</p> <p>The most iconic vision on Snowy is T3 and we get bugger all.</p> <p>The only presence of Snowy here is T3 and the workers there. We don't have Snowy 2.0 presence here at all.</p> <p>There used to be a diorama and now there's nothing. They do nothing to promote the history. There's nothing that identifies the history and the heritage of what was here before they flooded it.</p> <p>We get people parking here, the just see us a place for secure parking.</p>
<p>Question 5: What areas do you believe could benefit most from community investment?</p>	<p>Youth services.</p> <p>Talbingo has a lot of aged people who rely on community transport, the one there is a lifeline for a community. It's all volunteers. People are volunteering to pick up scripts and shopping and things like that.</p> <p>It's not just Talbingo it's everywhere.</p> <p>Community building programs - We would love to see Snowy Hydro link our communities in some way, because they're all silos.</p>

<p>Question 6: What level of impact has Snowy 2.0 had on the accessibility and quality of public services in the community? Which services are impacted and how?</p>	<p>They impact on our local roads and we don't get anything for it. Snowy doesn't pay council rates, but they pay national parks.</p> <p>The ambulance service is. If one gets called out from here for an incident, we only have one so we're left short and have to rely on ones that are much further.</p> <p>We don't have any 4WD ambulance that can deal with snow and there's a significant community out there now. There was an incident where a lady died in Jindabyne because the ambulance slid off the icy road.</p> <p>They are generous in Talbingo they pay their way, they're good tenants, they'll pay council to mow the lawn on their properties. But nothing here.</p>
<p>Question 7: Have some people in our community experienced greater negative impacts or greater positive impacts from the Snowy 2.0 project than others?</p>	<p>Some younger people have loved the money they can earn as FIFO workers.</p> <p>We've lost professionals, like electricians, chefs, engineers etc. It's hard to make a living as that here, but you go to Snowy and make great money. So it's drained a lot of skills.</p> <p>The elderly have been negatively affected.</p> <p>Families trying to rent.</p> <p>People affected by HumeLink.</p> <p>People don't feel safe on the roads, they're worried by the trucks.</p> <p>Part of the DIDO culture has an impact on families. They're leaving their families to go and do eight day stretches and leave their wives kids alone. They struggle to reconnect.</p>
<p>Question 8: With the commercial operation of Snowy 2.0 scheduled for 2028, what long-term benefits do you hope Snowy 2.0 will bring to your community?</p>	<p>They need to show the Snowy story's rich history. The migrants bringing their amazing culture.</p> <p>There's no continuation of the story, that link has been broken. We should be able to link from the very beginning. We need to embrace the entirety.</p> <p>If Snowy would come out and push for the underground cabling to prove they want to have the least impact, that would be great.</p> <p>There's nothing commemorating anything in Talbingo. We've got so much along the Tumut river and no one would know.</p> <p>Cooma gets everything, we get crickets.</p>

Section 2:



Snowy Hydro and the community

Question 9:

Snowy Hydro has a range of programs to support the community, before you were asked to take part in this focus group, what programs were you aware of?

Responses in Mentimeter
No-one knows PCYC

Question 10:

Explain how you have seen this support in action:

I've seen the community grant ads in the paper.

The grants have benefited loads of organisations. It's got such a wide scope. It's not exclusive.

Our kids did the driving program.

So much of the community is run by volunteers, so they're helping people with all these grants. It would be great if we have a facilitator to come and help people.

Clontarf is "next level". This is one thing we got that Cooma hasn't got.

Stars is great.

Sculpture trail is great.

STEM is a "load of rubbish" it should be STEAM to include arts, so you get the creative thinkers who solve problems with the right side of their brain, they're strategic which actually matters. Art does involve an element of engineering and design etc.

County University Centre is great.

Question 11:

Share examples of successful community investment projects or

FRRR – it's a regional grants program.

Local community Bendigo Bank are very supportive – they like to give people a **hand up not a hand out**.

We'd love to see the something like the Discovery Centre here.

initiatives from other organisations, or in other communities that you know of.

Do something with TAFEs teach engineering.

Support the tourist centre. If we partnered with Snowy Hydro to support the Tourist centres.

Country Education Foundation model is a good model to look at.

There's a big opportunity for a company like Snowy to contribute to sporting facilities like a heated pool, netball courts, FRRR – it's a regional grants program.

Section 3:



How Snowy Hydro engages with the community

Question 12:
How do you hear about Snowy Hydro and the Snowy 2.0 project in your community?

A) Is there value in Snowy Hydro engaging more frequently within your community?

B) How well is Snowy Hydro communicating and engaging with your local communities?

*C) What can it do more of or be better at?
Community involvement?
More targeted updates?*

Snowy has no presence in our community. If you walk down the main street in Tumut you see nothing that shows we have anything to do with Snowy.

They could have a communication hub that people could use.

Talbingo as it now only exists as it is because of the Snowy Scheme, yet there's nothing that says we are really proud this is a Snowy community.

There's nothing advertising Talbingo Dam or the lookout that overlooks the big cuttings of the dam.


If Snowy developed a bursary or something at our local schools that encourages them to look at the careers in STEM.

No one mentioned the HumeLink that going to rip through towns. They don't address the elephant in the room.

END

Snowy Monaro

Table C 4. Snowy Hydro Focus Group 4: Cooma – Community Leaders (03/4/2024)

Section 1:  Snowy 2.0 and its impacts	
Question 1: On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you believe the Snowy 2.0 project has positively impacted your local community.	<p><u>Responses in Mentimeter</u></p>
Question 2: We understand that the Snowy 2.0 project has affected the community in different ways. Please discuss areas you believe have been negatively impacted by the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing. • Rapid population growth. • Lack of childcare and housing. • Social cohesion – the division that has been created in the existing community due to those who have benefitted from the project and those who haven't. • Increased traffic. • Existing workforce impacts – many people have lost staff to Snowy because they change more. • Community service organisations have seen an increase in people needing their services but get no increase in funding. • Displacement of people from their homes in the community. • Adaminaby – victims or relocation in the first project and are being retraumatised due to 2.0 people have been displaced from their homes in Adaminaby. They're being relocated out to Merimbula. • Adaminaby has now been left with business. They've had a huge influx then they built their own housing and they all left. - "they walked in smashed the town and walked out". • People had to relocate out of Cooma because of housing.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers have had to leave because they can't afford the rent. You can't attract workers from out of the area because there isn't any housing and the rents have gone up. Trying to attract skills into the region is very hard. The highest risk people in this situation are the most vulnerable and they are being forced out of the region, they're being squeezed out. They have low incomes and can't afford the rents. From a landlord's perspective it was not a bad deal when their place is only being used for 50 per cent of the time that's pretty good. Community safety – unsafe environments created by an influx of workers who have limited recreational opportunities so they drink and create an unsafe environment. Lack of access to the certain areas of the national park. What are you going to do to open it when the work is finished? Traffic and damage to the roads. We've been impacted in our childcare – we have lost workers. Many of the impacted individuals and families have gone.
<p>Question 3:</p> <p>Do you believe Snowy 2.0 is a contributor to housing and rental prices in the region?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability and affordability have been affected. How do we facilitate and enable the correct utilisation of stock? We have an aging population so here's three-bedroom houses with one person in them. We probably have seen an upgrade of stock overall because of Snowy. But with that came the rent rises. So we used to put homeless people in the cheap one-bed places now their rents are way too high. We need more stock for the vulnerable and those who have accessibility issues. Snowy hasn't intentionally done this, they were under political pressure to get the project going. A widening of housing stress beyond just the vulnerable – we've seen a ripple out to families yes there is cost the cost of living crisis but they have contributed.
<p>Question 4:</p> <p>Rate availability of social support services in your community?</p> <p>Is Snowy 2.0 placing pressure</p>	<p>Quantitative Responses in Mentimetre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, there is pressure on all these services. We advocate for our community and our clients and the amount of time it takes to meet with Snowy and trying to get them to listen has had an impact. It has taken years of work to get any community consultation happening like what we're doing now. We knock on Snowy's door hundreds of times.

<p>on availability of these?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not the service providers' job to hold up a mirror to the project but it is the project's job to come to the community and ask how are we affecting your community. • It now Snowy's job to address social impacts and they're not doing that. • It's nice that you're here. • The workforce being isolated from their families and they're not getting the adequate support. The needs from the multicultural spouses is not being addressed. • Cooma Multicultural centre our workload has increased 300%. • This is history repeating. In the Snowy Scheme with all the multicultural workers that came then, it was all brought up back then and they didn't address it and it's all happening again. • The men who come by themselves are so isolated and sometimes don't establish connections in the camps. • There is an increase in reporting of domestic violence, but there hasn't been an increase in funding. • "There is a culture of no bad news." Which means community is not listened to lessons aren't learned. • There are people will tell you that Snowy Hydro is a cult. • "There was never enough in the first place now adding the population and not increasing anything has just been catastrophic."
<p>Question 5: What areas do you believe could benefit most from community investment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every area needs support because there are more people. • People say build a childcare centre - but where do we get the workers, where do we get the training. We get a lot of abuse to say we need more childcare and what are you going to do about it. We have people crying to us because they can't work because there's no childcare. Or men are forced to leave their families in other cities and come alone. • Very now have very high turnover, either because the pressure is too much or they're pushed out of the rental market. • Language is a problem. For example, in aged care we want to employ migrant workers but the language is a problem. Older people or people with neurological issues find it hard to understand them. • Without a visa they can't access TAFE to learn English, we can only supply certain amount of free English places. • The level of impact was predicted. They knew it was going to occur but they was pushed through. Was it political pressure?
<p>Question 6: What level of impact has Snowy 2.0 had</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public safety has definitely been affected. Snowy will say is hasn't because the crime rates haven't increased. But there have been qualitative shifts. When kids can't go have pub dinner with their family because the pubs full of the workers drinking or when 40 men go down

on the accessibility and quality of public services in the community? Which services are impacted and how?	<p>to the local pool at the end of the shifts and you don't want your teenage daughter to go down there – there's been a shift.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a gap here. • It's a major project the onus is on them to address these social impacts of their project especially when they were told. It's a legal requirement for them to monitor their special impacts and address them. • There's been no governance structure around Snowy Hydro around their accountability in addressing their social impact. • Snowy have done the wrong thing but I think the federal government hasn't stepped up to the mark.
Question 7: Have some people in our community experienced greater negative impacts or greater positive impacts from the Snowy 2.0 project than others?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social services providers are suffering. • The people who've gotten work with Snowy and earned good money. • Landlords have benefitted. • It has increased the gaps between the haves and the have-nots. • Commuters on the roads have been impacted because of the increased traffic and degradation of the roads. • A lot of local business and suppliers have benefitted. • Children are the most negatively impacted. They can't get access to childcare so they're missing out on that early education before school. • In schools the classroom numbers have doubled. A lot of the children don't have English as a first language and there just isn't the support for that. • Migrant families, who aren't citizens are sending their kids to the private schools because they are cheaper than the public schools.
Question 8: With the commercial operation of Snowy 2.0 scheduled for 2028, what long-term benefits do you hope Snowy 2.0 will bring to your community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better renewable energy. • Invest in tourism. • Reuse side assets like Lobs Hole. • To reengage the park. • Planning for alternative employment opportunities with the community so that people will want to stay here after the project. • Ways to attract more people. • How can they support the infrastructure of social detriments. • Make sure that all this information goes into resolving this lack of planning and foresight. • It shouldn't wait till 2028 it needs to start now. • Skills and opportunities for young people. • Support start-ups.

- There is an opportunity to have an adequate community development and engagement strategy that sets out investment in community development needs. We've been saying this for years.

Section 2:



Snowy Hydro and the community

Question 9:

Snowy Hydro has a range of programs to support the community, before you were asked to take part in this focus group, what programs were you aware of?

Responses in Mentimeter

Question 10:

Explain how you have seen this support in action:

- STEM program has been great.
- They're good at glossies and pushing out the material of all the good things they're doing.
- My kids have been through the driver programs.
- Some of the bigger grant money like Clontarf and Stars isn't going to Snowy Monaro.
- They have sponsored a driving program for refugee and migrant women which was very successful. Now 35 women have gotten their licences. This was only half-funded by Snowy.

Question 11:

Share examples of successful community investment projects or initiatives from other organisations, or in other

- They will come back to us on this.

communities
that you know of.

Section 3:



How Snowy Hydro engages with the community

Question 12:
How do you hear
about Snowy
Hydro and the
Snowy 2.0
project in your
community?

*A) Is there value
in Snowy Hydro
engaging more
frequently within
your
community?*


*B) How well is
Snowy Hydro
communicating
and engaging
with your local
communities?*

*C) What can it do
more of or be
better at?
Community
involvement?
More targeted
updates?*

- I don't think they are reaching out to the right people or engaging well.
- It's not hard to find who the appropriate groups would be.
- More work needs to be done in Adaminaby.
- Disadvantaged or disenfranchised people won't engage.
- They need to listen better and make sure it's not just the loud voices being heard.
- It needs to be more than just a box-ticking exercise.
- When you have a concern, Snowy Hydro tells me to go to Future Gen and Future Gen say go to Snowy Hydro. We get bounced between them.
- There's never been a community team, they don't have the resources to engage with the community.
- What they do is determined by their needs not the needs of the community.
- They need a presence in the community, like a shop front of somewhere there are many empty shops, where people can come in and have an accessible conversation.
- They need to have external community officers that are independent of Snowy.
- The lack of a community reference group has been a big issue from the start.

END

**Table C 5. Snowy Hydro Focus Group 5: Cooma – Recreational Users: Operational areas
(03/4/2024)**

Question	Responses
Section 1:  Snowy 2.0 and its impacts	
Question 1: On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you believe the Snowy 2.0 project has positively impacted your local community.	Responses in Mentimeter
Question 2: We understand that the Snowy 2.0 project has affected the community in different ways. Please discuss areas you believe have been negatively impacted by the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental properties are scarce. • House prices have gone up and people can't afford it. • The workers just don't seem to mesh in with the community. No social integration. Maybe that's more the FIFO workers. • Traffic. You can sometimes be stuck behind a segment truck doing 5km/h up a hill. They are always very courteous, and they do use the slip lanes all the time, but there just aren't many of them. They need to purchase better trucks. • The execs live in Jindabyne. • I know they've provided some accommodation there so workers can go recreate. • There are flats and executive townhouses and they're almost always vacant. • Adaminaby hasn't had any economic boost from the workers spending in town. The pub used to do well, but not anymore. • Supermarket's shelves left bare by Snowy workers.
Question 3: Do you believe Snowy 2.0 is a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It did create a lot of pressure in the earlier days. • I did hear of people who were basically homeless because they just couldn't find a place to rent. There just wasn't the stock available. I heard of a chef who had to live in his car.

<p>contributor to housing and rental prices in the region?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's been an ongoing escalation in housing prices. • The tourist and ski seasons really add to that pressure. Businesses need staff in the area to cope with the influx but they can't get any. • Business pleading during ski season about the lack of accommodation. • Businesses like the pub have to house staff. • We hear of rents like \$1500 a week in a town like Adaminaby.
<p>Question 4: Rate availability of social support services in your community? Is Snowy 2.0 placing pressure on availability of these?</p>	<p><u>Quantitative Responses in Mentimeter</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged care is very limited. It's diminishing here in Cooma. • It's bummer all in Jindabyne. • The privately run medical centre in Jindabyne can't attract doctors because there's no accommodation. He's saying he'll have to close it down which would leave only one in town. • The neighbourhood centre in Jindabyne has shut down. Snowy used to support it but not any more. • There's limited childcare. • There's no community mental health support. There's a couple of private psychologists in town that do pretty well. • Disability support is on the up and aged care is diminishing. • Youth support is not great. • Virtually no health support. • The Cooma Multicultural Centre is a really important facility for women in this area. That has been a huge benefit to our area and the families of Snowy migrant workers. "It's probably one of the best community services here and it's run on the smell of an oily rag."
<p>Question 5: What areas do you believe could benefit most from community investment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Services. • Aged care support – transport services. • Community building programs are important because of rural living and people can be isolated and cut off from services and facilities. You need to rely on neighbours. There are limited transport services. • No-one knows their neighbours most people are blow-ins. There are no families. • You get a lot of cultural diversity in the tree change phenomenon and they probably don't have the engagement skills of those from the rural backgrounds.
<p>Question 6: What level of impact has Snowy 2.0 had on the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowy did engage two police vehicles and 4WD patrol cars. So they've contributed to highway patrol safety. • They have really good medical services on their work sites. • Snowy's own first responders respond to public incidents. And because of their proximity they get there before the ambulance and police etc.

accessibility and quality of public services in the community? Which services are impacted and how?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambulance is dismal here. • They've drawn a lot of staff out of council, so they've affected council resources. • Adaminaby lost their police officer to go to Snowy. He resigned from the police force to go there maybe as security.
Question 7: Have some people in our community experienced greater negative impacts or greater positive impacts from the Snowy 2.0 project than others?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people who wanted to cash in their properties did very well. • 2000 kids go to two schools in Jindabyne. • I think the more disadvantaged people have been negatively impacted. Lower socio-economic groups have had the most negative impact. They can't afford to rent so may have to go into share housing for example. The higher socio-economic groups have had a good impact. • Future Generation are very bad in reaction to paying their bills. For example, there was a guy who supplied generators for hundreds of thousands of dollars and they haven't been paid. • Cleaners are having trouble getting paid. This has ripple effects, for example a guys couldn't buy a house because he had to use his deposit to pay bills because he wasn't paid by Future Generation.
Question 8: With the commercial operation of Snowy 2.0 scheduled for 2028, what long-term benefits do you hope Snowy 2.0 will bring to your community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uninterrupted power would be a great start. • Better transport facilities for the community. Make a legacy fund that would maybe support a bus. • What's going to happen to the all the accommodation. Could the dongas be converted to community housing. It should be made available to people who have lost their homes in fires for example. • Site remediation. Will the roads in the unsealed roads in the national park continue to be maintained by Snowy. Make Pocket Saddle Road accessible. That would be a benefit not only to the local community but to the community at large.

Section 2:



Snowy Hydro and the community

Question 9:
Snowy Hydro has a range of programs to support the community,

[Responses in Mentimeter](#)

Noone knows Clontarf, Stars or PCYC

before you were asked to take part in this focus group, what programs were you aware of?	
Question 10: Explain how you have seen this support in action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know the community grants gave money to the Adaminaby Museum and the Lake light sculpture. • They support the rodeo in Jindabyne. • They give money to the national parks to improve infrastructure. • Used to teach their trainees at TAFE. • The STEM stuff has shown kids that they can stay locally. It really helps retain students by showing them career paths. • I would say that their initiatives are a bit like an iceberg. You see the tip of it but I'm sure there is a lot more we don't see.
Question 11: Share examples of successful community investment projects or initiatives from other organisations, or in other communities that you know of.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resorts are doing a lot of things to do with tree planting. • Boco Rock have a lot of programs and are very generous to community groups.

Section 3:




How Snowy Hydro engages with the community

Question 12: How do you hear about Snowy Hydro and the Snowy 2.0 project in your community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the biggest disappointments was when they keep the water really high and damaged a lot of the infrastructure. I know it's commercially challenging for them and it's very complicated. But they need to regulate the Snowy Rivers better. • Need more development around foreshores. • I know a lot of kids in the area feel very disenfranchised. We need to engage them.
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<p><i>A) Is there value in Snowy Hydro engaging more frequently within your community?</i></p> <p><i>B) How well is Snowy Hydro communicating and engaging with your local communities?</i></p> <p><i>C) What can it do more of or be better at? Community involvement? More targeted updates?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowy Hydro are a corporate entity they don't have that warm community-oriented feel. They need a community engagement officer. A woman in that role would be able to really connect with community. • We need more people like Dean Lynch and Charlie. • It used to feel that Snowy was part of this region now it feels like they're out in Sydney and are just a corporate player. • The bad press of Snowy 2.0 has diminished the good reputation of the original Snowy.
END	

Table C 6. Snowy Hydro Focus Group 6: Cooma – Business Leaders (04/4/2024)

Question	Responses
Section 1:  Snowy 2.0 and its impacts	
Question 1: On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you believe the	Responses in Mentimeter

Snowy 2.0 project has positively impacted your local community.	
Question 2: We understand that the Snowy 2.0 project has affected the community in different ways. Please discuss areas you believe have been negatively impacted by the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowy 2.0 affects the nation whereas Snowy Hydro affects the local community. • We don't see the trucks 2.0 doesn't affect us. • Snowy Hydro floods the lake. • A lot of businesses have lost good employees to Snowy 2.0. • We've got a building surge in Jindabyne but we're losing tradies. • Our mechanic who has been here for decades, is selling up to go drive a bus for Snowy because he's getting paid so much more. • Cleaners, mechanics, tradies, electricians have all been drawn over to Snowy. • A lot of execs are buying up property. • We've now got better cheeses in Woolies. Woolies are now stocking better quality products and a better range because the demand is there.
Question 3: Do you believe Snowy 2.0 is a contributor to housing and rental prices in the region?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huge yes. • 2.0 would be the main contributor to the housing and rental prices. • Adaminaby became a "one-company" town. Then they were forced out. • In Jindabyne they were definitely the main contributor. Then the department of education came and put a school here. • Teachers, police ambulance workers used to all be housed, now they're not. • Rental prices have increased significantly and there's just nothing available.
Question 4: Rate availability of social support services in your community? Is Snowy 2.0 placing pressure on availability of these?	<u>Quantitative Responses in Mentimeter</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Jindabyne we can't get doctors for our medical centres, we've only got two. There's only one part-time dentist, no optometrist. • There's not aged care services in Jindabyne and they're very concerned about the health services.
Question 5: What areas do you believe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They've all got a need for more investment.

could benefit most from community investment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth services. There is a problem with youth outside of ski season. Teens being destructive for no reason, they're bored in the off season and have nothing to do. There's a drug problem with youth in Jindabyne. We're absolutely hopeless when it comes to disability support. Accessibility is a real issue in Jindabyne. There are no footpaths. The council has a budget of \$60K for footpaths for an LGA of 20K people. I think healthcare would benefit the most.
Question 6: What level of impact has Snowy 2.0 had on the accessibility and quality of public services in the community? Which services are impacted and how?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's difficult to qualify. But I would think that because there are more people then they might have an impact.
Question 7: Have some people in our community experienced greater negative impacts or greater positive impacts from the Snowy 2.0 project than others?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people have done really well out of it. If you're driving a bus for \$180K. There's a drain for any of the services you rely on like electricians, mechanics then that really impacts the people in the community who have to wait weeks to get their car fixed or an electrician. Snowy has too much of a competitive advantage, you just can't compete. Landlords are doing very well and are very happy. But renters are not.
Question 8: With the commercial operation of Snowy 2.0 scheduled for 2028, what long-term benefits do you hope Snowy 2.0 will bring to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discount on our electricity bills because we helped build the nation's infrastructure. I know Snowy Hydro want to ensure they have a better legacy after 2.0. I'm hoping they leave more infrastructure behind and that they leave the land in a better way than how they found it. Not just the sites but the townships, leaving them with better roads, better housing. We want them to manage the exit to ensure sustained employment. Things like the cement factory, can that be repurposed?

your
community?

- As it's a federal business can they bring other federal projects down here to keep the area hoping.

Section 2:



Snowy Hydro and the community

Question 9:

Snowy Hydro has a range of programs to support the community, before you were asked to take part in this focus group, what programs were you aware of?

Responses in Mentimeter

Question 10:

Explain how you have seen this support in action:

- We have applied for some grants in the Chamber but we have been knocked back every time.
- Because I have school-aged kids I know of the STEM programs.
- I'm aware of the sculpture trail because our lake flooded so we couldn't have our sculpture.
- I haven't really seen any of them advertised. I'd only heard of the grants program.

Question 11:

Share examples of successful community investment projects or initiatives from other organisations, or in other communities that you know of.

- Eastern distributor in Sydney. They put that massive green space above it which was great for the community.
- It would be great to see a heritage museum in Jindabyne.
- We don't get any community-building projects. We don't get anything that brings business to town.
- They take a lot out of the community. We'd like Snowy to do something to address what they take out like jobs, accommodation. Even if it's leadership or mentorship, it doesn't have to be money but they can help us and show us how it's done to empower the community to do it themselves. The community grants aren't enough. We want a hand up not a hand out.
- They provide expert support to tourism in the Snowy Mountains. They need to continue to support tourism in the Snowy Mountains – without support, we would not survive.

Section 3:



How Snowy Hydro engages with the community

Question 12:
How do you hear about Snowy Hydro and the Snowy 2.0 project in your community?

A) Is there value in Snowy Hydro engaging more frequently within your community?

B) How well is Snowy Hydro communicating and engaging with your local communities?

*C) What can it do more of or be better at?
Community involvement?
More targeted updates?*


- There's three main community organisations the Lions Club, the Chamber and the CWA.
- They engage with the Chamber but not the Lions Club or the CWA.
- They need to fix Claypits park.
- There's always great ambiguity about who's responsible to maintain the areas around lake on the foreshore.
- Don't hide behind regulation and legislation – look for solutions.
- We meet with them once a year to talk about the lake levels. In Jindabyne the lake levels are symbiotic with our mental health. When it's low, it's a dust bowl, when it's full it beautiful, when it's overfull it's a concern. The lake is a big part of who we are.
- We've had discussion with Snowy about changing the name to Lake Jindabyne.
- Help us build things. Help us bring stuff to community like a Snowy Hydro retirement centre, a Snowy Hydro leisure centre.
- We just want more transparency. We want more than just a two-or-five-year view. We want more foresight for the future and forethought about legacy.
- Legacy is huge.
- There are not many businesses around the lake. Why hasn't the foreshore been developed more. Why aren't there more events help on the lake in summer, like ski boat races, dragon boat races. To do that we need more infrastructure around the lake to develop it as a commercial area with a marina.
- Risk mitigation is having an impact on the development of the area. They don't want to see new homes being built and then flooded for example. This is an ongoing problem.

Additional Notes

- We are very lucky to have Snowy Hydro in our area. But there is a tipping point, and I don't think they're doing enough to address it.
- We've lost skilled labour to unskilled labour. We had a meeting at the beginning to discuss this and we knew there would be a brain drain, we've lost more than what we anticipated, and nothing has been done to address it.
- We want Snowy to be visible in helping find solutions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visas are a big problem; we've suggested an Alpine Visa (instead of the farming visas) that would help us here. We know Snowy can't fix this problem, but as a federal body, that could help us navigate that.
END	

Table C 7. Snowy Hydro Focus Group 7: Cooma – Recreational Users: Water-based users (04/4/2024)

Question	Responses
Section 1:  Snowy 2.0 and its impacts	
Question 1: On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate the extent to which you believe the Snowy 2.0 project has positively impacted your local community.	Responses in Mentimeter
Question 2: We understand that the Snowy 2.0 project has affected the community in different ways. Please discuss areas you believe have been negatively impacted by the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic on the roads and the slow trucks. Accommodation has been a big issue. We couldn't get our road upgraded because the workers have all gone to work for Snowy Hydro. Threat of fish in Tantangara from redfin and water movement. Concerns about Tantangara dam heights. So much uncertainty and uncertainty breeds negativity. Reduction of housing in tourist areas, especially for staff. Snowy needs to be a bit more transparent about the level of the lakes. They say it's commercial in confidence. They need to keep people informed about the levels of the dam so people who are running their business around the lake can prepare for it and manage around it, but they don't let anyone know. The land degradation has been a disaster, especially at Lobs Hole.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's a hell of a lot of scars on the land now. • There's a real concern about the toxic fill leaching into the lake. • People are worried what the western shore will look like at Tantangara after it's finished.
Question 3: Do you believe Snowy 2.0 is a contributor to housing and rental prices in the region?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The execs are taking long-term rentals in Jindabyne. • Adaminaby is a great example that went from one extreme to another, there was a time where you couldn't get a place in the town and now it's empty since they built their own accommodation. • Rentals in Cooma have gone sky high.
Question 4: Rate availability of social support services in your community? Is Snowy 2.0 placing pressure on availability of these?	<u>Quantitative Responses in Mentimeter</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SAP process affects the national park and Jindabyne, people believe that pretty ordinary services exist. • Aged care is a real problem. Living on a resort area like Thredbo, we've got it pretty good. But if you're in Bombala is a real problem. • In Berridale we're losing our aged care facility. • Aged care is a big problem. • In Berridale we're noticing a lot of people who grew up here and left are coming back with their young families. • Transport services for the elderly are pretty bad. • Having more people would probably add more pressure.
Question 5: What areas do you believe could benefit most from community investment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone on that list needs help. • Aged care is a real problem. • Housing support.
Question 6: What level of impact has Snowy 2.0 had on the accessibility and quality of public services in the community? Which services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The police are concentrating a lot on the Snowy Mountains highway. • The Rural fire service in Adaminaby are getting a lot of callouts for accidents on the Snowy Mountains Highway. • This would be the same for the ambulance and everyone else because they need to attend to these accidents too. • There is a skills and labour shortage.

are impacted and how?	
<p>Question 7: Have some people in our community experienced greater negative impacts or greater positive impacts from the Snowy 2.0 project than others?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early on Buckenderra and Adaminaby were doing very well because the accommodation was booked solid for months. But that was a short-term boost once they built their own accommodation. • Local Cooma businesses who provide services to Snowy have benefitted. • Commuters and drivers have been negatively impacted because of all the big trucks, being stuck behind them.
<p>Question 8: With the commercial operation of Snowy 2.0 scheduled for 2028, what long-term benefits do you hope Snowy 2.0 will bring to your community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It had better work. • That they put the landscape back to how it was. • It's designed to last 125 years, demand for electricity will only increase. So I think there'll be a massive windfall for Snowy. The community has gone through a lot of angst and worry, it would be great to see them have a long-term fund for the community and give a per centage of whatever they earn every year back to the community, on top of what they do. • Upgrade the access roads for anglers. • Our visitor economy is built on the water. As the tide goes out more and more broken glass becomes evident. There's always been unsociable behaviour and vandalism. So there needs to be more education by Snowy on how to behave on their land. • Snowy Hydro are key in supporting community efforts to improve unsocial behaviour. • Seven Gates is a huge problem. We've suggested they have a caretaker. • Weeds are a huge problem on some Snowy Hydro lands, they need to clean up and manage their land. • Public toilets are not getting cleaned. • They need to help us manage the badly behaved tourists on Snowy owned land.

Section 2:



Snowy Hydro and the community

Question 9:
Snowy Hydro

Responses in Mentimeter

has a range of programs to support the community, before you were asked to take part in this focus group, what programs were you aware of?	
Question 10: Explain how you have seen this support in action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My daughter did the driver training. • Community grants programs are published. • We got the grant a few times for the Cooma show. • Snowy Hydro is one of our biggest sponsors for the Cooma show.
Question 11: Share examples of successful community investment projects or initiatives from other organisations, or in other communities that you know of.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In NZ there's a great initiative to get access trails to allow walkers/ hikers to access these areas around the river. It would be great to do that from Dalgety to Jindabyne. • How Bombala rallied together to stop aged care going again, they got a very generous donation and the whole town rallied to raise funds.

Section 3:



How Snowy Hydro engages with the community

Question 12: How do you hear about Snowy Hydro and the Snowy 2.0 project in your community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are not aware of the scope of the project at all. They're not doing a good job of informing people. • All everyone knows is that Florence was stuck. • From the tourism perspective Snowy Hydro – hydroelectricity is great and clean but jeez they leave a big mark on the planet. • They need to manage their land better. Leasing landowners need support to manage the land.
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<p><i>A) Is there value in Snowy Hydro engaging more frequently within your community?</i></p> <p><i>B) How well is Snowy Hydro communicating and engaging with your local communities?</i></p> <p><i>C) What can it do more of or be better at? Community involvement? More targeted updates?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I don't think they support quality events that drive visitation to the region instead of just sprinkling funding around for meaningless things. The people of Cooma believe that tourism is a disease that everyone has but them. They're not reaching out to the right people. When the project first started I was the one who went in search of how to reach out to them. They're not very proactive about reaching out to groups. They do listen when you speak to them but we had to go chasing and knocking on doors. If it's good news they are very good at communicating about it but not if it's bad news. They always update the app when the water is rising but not when it's going down. They can tell when there'll be more trucks but they can't tell me when the water is going down. I don't understand why they're so secretive. We just want to know about Lake Eucumbene and Lake Jindabyne where we get lots of visitors.
Additional Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In NSW Lake Eucumbene and Lake Jindabyne are the stronghold for trout fishing in the whole state. People travel vast distances to come to the area and go trout fishing. If it goes it will be such a big loss.
END	

Table C 8. Snowy Hydro Focus Group 8: Cooma – Supplementary Community Leaders discussion with Monaro Family Support Services (04/4/2024)

Voices not being heard

- So many have left because of Snowy, they've been pushed out.
- The most vulnerable people in our community who have really been affected don't take part in these discussions.
- They don't understand vulnerability, it's invisible to them.
- They only really engage with people who are the beneficiaries.
- There were a few town meetings, and I was at all of them every time I felt there was a strategy to shut down anything negative. This is a very hard conversation to have, and they don't want to have it.
- I was at a meeting at Adaminaby where a very vulnerable person was proactively shut down.

- Right at the beginning we spoke about all of this, and it was all blocked. They didn't do things correctly from the beginning.
- Essential service workers.
- There's no empathy or understanding and walking in people's shoes.
- They never took ownership of their responsibility to the community.
- They haven't had the right people with the right skills to do this work.
- They've spent million on dollars on consultants to address the redfin perch, and that's about fish, where's the money on the people?
- If there's no way for them to find the people they need to, we need resources and time to help do that. Maybe it's about forming a meaningful partnership.
- We're doing everything we can do advocate for the needs of the community. We've had meetings and phone calls, and no one is listening to our proposals, solutions.
- This isn't new we are at exhaustion point.

Snowy and trust

- There's been a very big transition from when it was a Hydroelectric Authority, fast forward to now.
- Being tossed around between Future Gen to Snowy is really eroding that trust. They're not taking ownership of the problem.
- We are told what we should believe about this project and this company and that we are all in this together. But trust is about building relationships not about being told. They keep trying to rely on that legacy and the fondness around the history. But they have no more social capital. Legacy is past its used by date.
- This consultation now is too short. You can't do real community consultation in two days. So we call for community consultation and we get two days and with no notice.
- They can't keep relying on the fondness for the history original Snowy Scheme bringing the cultural diversity and these sacred cricket matches and bringing espresso to the region. But that's not what this project has brought.
- Trust is about bringing the community on the journey of development with you. It's not about doing to, it's about doing with. There's no social conscience.
- We want a community liaison officer in Aaminaby and Cooma. Have a presence in the community where people feel comfortable sharing feedback.
- You must go to where the vulnerable people are not wait for them to come to you.
- Presence, visibly and relationships build trust. That ongoing engagement.
- You need to not pretend that everything is rosy and happy and be prepared to talk about the hard stuff. And you need to have the skills to be able to really listen to people who can't always articulate what they feel very well.

Fragmentation

- There is real fragmentation that has occurred because of the project. It's not just the haves and the have nots.
- There's a lot of discussion about social cohesion. The communities that do better and cope better with challenges are the ones that have social cohesion.
- What we've seen is the disintegration of social ties, social division, conflict, resentment, isolation.
- There's the division between the beneficiaries and the others in the community. There's a lot of talk that without us you'd have nothing. So that builds resentment.
- There were disagreements between JV partners and the workers really started resenting Snowy.
- The average person in the community felt resentful because we were being told a lie about how good the project is going all the time, but that was just a lie.
- The glossies were saying one thing, and we'd talk to the workers who tell us a different story.
- There's a lack of integration of the workers in the community. Snowy put a lot of money into their internal events and, but they do nothing to really facilitate that workforce into the community to really build that social cohesion.
- They don't need to be confined to the camps, they should integrate them into the community.
- People leaving and not able to afford to live in town adds to the fragmentation.
- School enrolment dropping in Adaminaby for example adds to the social fragmentation because families leave.
- There are limited opportunities to hold community events because venues are often booked out for years, so they can't hold the gatherings, meetings, courses etc. So that adds to the lack of cohesion.
- The composition of the community totally changing there's a perception of the town being taken over by a sea of hi vis. Things could be done to really help integrate them but that hasn't happened.
- The moving and shifting of workers and their families doesn't give anyone the chance to build community and cohesion.
- We've tried so many avenues. We've gone to elected members, we've considered going to the media but we want to build a collaborative partnership.
- There needs to be access, have an open-door policy.
- There's so many opportunities to make this work. It's not completely broken, it can be fixed.

Proposed solutions

- We have been calling for a basic strategy for years.
- The first is just open and transparent communication, not just holding reactive meetings or meetings to tell us what's happening, but to really listen.
- There needs to be a consultative rep from the start, a Community Reference Group.
- A proper community team with adequately skilled, qualified and empathetic people who can implement a community strategy so that the impact can be monitored and mitigated and communicated in an ongoing way.

- Once you have that you can determine what a community investment charter and strategy should be.
- Community liaison officers.
- The social impact assessment report that was done in 2019 needs to be properly updated and should include KPIs and metrics.
- Once this is in place the right conversations will start to occur and full collaborative work can begin that can determine the solutions to all the impacts.


Additional notes:

- Real collaboration needs to occur.
- We've always been challenged to provide evidence and justify community issues – where's your evidence, where's your data. So, unless we're able to substantiate an increase in DV or something else, we get sent away.
- Sometimes the data doesn't tell the story when it comes to social issues. If people leave town because of DV and a wealthy engineer moves in, the data will look good.
- It's about looking for local strengths and asset-based community development. Map and use your local assets.

END

Wagga Wagga

Table C 9. Snowy Hydro Focus Group 1: Wagga Wagga (13/5/2024)

Question	Responses
Section 1:  Snowy 2.0 and its impacts	
Question 1: On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent do you believe the Snowy 2.0 project has positively impacted your community - either directly or indirectly	Responses in Mentimeter
Question 2: As the closest regional centre, what areas do you believe have been positively or negatively impacted by the Snowy 2.0 project?	<p>I am not aware of any impact.</p> <p>National park access – jobs?</p> <p>Business community positively impacted.</p> <p>Positive: future support of local renewable energy developments. Negative – transmission lines disrupting farms however area a necessary evil.</p> <p>Infrastructure required in future at this point as an LGA and part of region. Community links to East of Wagga (Tarcutta) lines into Wagga substation via 3rd party... Unaware at this point. Overall positive impact. Aware work needs to happen, hoping for further discussion and mitigation / compensation where possible.</p> <p>Has had direct engagement on transmission lines, but that's Transgrid, not Snowy 2.0. Council has expressed issue with transmission lines. Again, not Snowy 2.0 specifically.</p> <p>Very different response between Wagga and the region, both now and for the future. Some people annoyed they can't access certain parts of the</p>

	<p>national park. Hard to determine if Snowy 2.0 is impacting jobs, information not available. Has definitely impacted housing and workforce in Tumut and Gundagai, maybe Wagga, but not as much. It's not clear. Information about new water flows and impacts such as erosion have not been had. Would have liked more engagement and information about the impacts.</p> <p>Unsure if the operation of Snowy 2.0 will impact water irrigation, water availability and impacts on the surround area. Opens up quite a lot of operational flexibility, unclear if it will be good or not.</p> <p>In a tour of Tumut 3 Power Station, if it was run 100% it runs out of water in three days. Thought that was surprising.</p>
<p>Question 3:</p> <p>How familiar are you with; Lumea, Transgrid, Future Generation Joint Venture which is building Snowy 2.0?</p>	<p>Transgrid very familiar (x5).</p> <p>Lumea sounds familiar, can't recall who they are. (x1).</p> <p>FutureGen familiar (x1).</p>
<p>Question 4:</p> <p>Do you believe Snowy 2.0 is a contributor to housing and rental prices in the region?</p>	<p>Absolutely is a contributor to Tumut, Gundagai, Adelong, most likely Wagga. Hard to prove, however.</p> <p>Rent and housing prices and availability are experiencing increasing pressures, but unclear if related to Snowy 2.0.</p> <p>Community said it would happen before Snowy 2.0 came in, then it happened and Snowy 2.0 didn't accept any responsibility for it.</p>
<p>Question 5:</p> <p>Rate availability of social support services in your community? Is Snowy 2.0 placing pressure on availability of these?</p>	<p>AVERAGE SCORE = 2.8</p> <p>I know that doctors go from Wagga to Tumut to man the hospital but not sure if Snowy 2.0 contractors are the driving factor for this. Would be good to ask hospital.</p> <p>Don't think Snowy 2.0 is placing any additional pressure than any other service in the area. Have not heard anyone mention in.</p> <p>Reasons it's not 5/5</p> <p>Wait months for appointment.</p> <p>Only 1 part time psychiatrist in Wagga.</p>

	GPs are hard to get into as well. Hard to access counsellors, psychiatrists and psychologists.
Question 6: What areas do you believe could benefit most from community investment?	<p>Childcare, Healthcare, Housing support programs, probably all of them. Childcare specifically, families can't go back to work but cannot get care. Long waiting lists.</p> <p>Housing support programs. Homelessness is an issue.</p>
Question 7: Have some people in our community experienced greater negative impacts or greater positive impacts from the Snowy 2.0 project than others	<p>Not sure if there are FutureGen contracts in Wagga.</p> <p>Negative - access to national parks and special places have been reduced.</p> <p>I know someone who's next to the Gregadoo substation who's going to have multiple 60m towers set up next to his property and another person who worked trying to set up these towers who quit due to the unpleasant nature of the job.</p>
Question 8: With the commercial operation of Snowy 2.0 scheduled for 2028, what long-term benefits do you hope Snowy 2.0 will bring to your community?	<p>Economic benefits (x2) – With more money coming in, more investment in local infrastructure. Even just better maintenance of the existing infrastructure.</p> <p>Cheaper power.</p> <p>Renewable energy, that's the whole purpose. To bring us a greener environment in an effort to address climate change.</p> <p>More reliable power, less blackouts.</p> <p>Legacy items from JV partners – community buildings, grant funding, discovery hub, etc. Unclear what SH JV.</p> <p>Snowy 2.0 hasn't done anything in the Wagga community.</p> <p>Snowy 2.0 will be good for economy, providing secure power with Wagga becoming the transmission hub for the country by 2028. Also gives us nexus with VIC and SA with EnergyConnect and VNI.</p> <p>Could also bring further investment from business and industry for businesses who need reliable power.</p>

Section 2:



Snowy Hydro and the community

Question 9:

Snowy Hydro has a range of programs to support the community, before you were asked to take part in this focus group, what programs were you aware of?

Responses in Mentimeter

Question 10:

Explain how you have seen this support in action:

Aware of many of the programs, not aware Snowy 2.0 supported them.

No benefit in Wagga.

Some meetings here, Clontarf has a banner. Sculpture gets good media.

Snowy 2.0 support of these programs isn't focused in Wagga. It's benefited Griffith significantly for example, but no impact for Wagga. Didn't know Snowy 2.0 put money into any ways to improve Wagga.

The incentives and programs are awesome, there should be one in Tumut. Griffith has grown out of their second building from community uptake.

Local festival and events program was well received in the community, especially after the fires.

Question 11:

Share examples of successful community investment projects or initiatives from other organisations, or in other communities that you know of.

Wagga Council runs annual grant program (\$210K/Year) – ten categories.

Riverina Water Annual grants program.

Club grants.

Wagga City council annual grants is over subscribed. Never enough money.

CareVan (makes meals for less fortunate) sponsorship from HumeBank sponsorships and donations. Well regarded.

Legacy items – community buildings etc. Don't do a cash splash, it needs to have longevity.

Wagga active travel grant is an exception – \$12m of grants for footpaths and bike paths etc. People are really loving it and getting active.

Need to consult the community broadly. What's out there now that's working that needs support? Programs or infrastructure. Couple of years ago there was a program that connected young people into opportunities who lost their funding and ceased operating. Big loss to the community. Need to look after existing programs where we can, rather than set up new programs for the sake of it. Nobody likes being told what will be funded, when they should be consulted.

Park and playground redevelopments have been good. Rail trails also good.

Section 3:



How Snowy Hydro engages with the community

Question 12:
How do you hear about Snowy Hydro and the Snowy 2.0 project in your community?

A) Is there value in Snowy Hydro engaging more frequently within your community?

B) How well is Snowy Hydro communicating and engaging with your local communities?

*C) What can it do more of or be better at?
Community involvement?
More targeted*

When major news occurs, such as a company goes broke or tunnel borer gets stuck.

Council gets briefings from Canberra Region Joint Organisation (10 councils).

So before it started NSW Gov did a lot of consultation in community about future impact, once it started, there hasn't been much consultation at all. Dean Lynch was around a lot at the time, not so much anymore.

To understand the JV, you'd need a family tree. People can't keep up with how complicated the structure is, who the funding bodies are, etc. Local community gets confused, can't understand who's responsible for what.

Can certainly better explain what Snowy 2.0 does.

Snowy 2.0 does not communicate well to local community, they don't understand where the project is up to. Community is probably not aware who's even working on what.

I read the EIS, and I have no idea if they did any of the care of historical artefacts that were identified, let alone plans to remediate the area after they're finished. Have no idea about that at all.


I hear stories that Snowy 2.0 is a lot less careful than SH1. Great huge plumes of pollution on worksites. Wonder if corners are being cut to get back on schedule.

I don't feel like there has been much communication at all. What are the avenues for people to get involved? Those avenues have not been well communicated with Wagga. Surprised by the line of questions, since Snowy 2.0 hasn't done anything for Wagga.

<i>updates?</i>	<p>Agreed that there has been limited consultation, and unsure why they're asking now.</p> <p>Skeptical of Snowy 2.0 commitment to address issues, since historically they've no addressed these before.</p>
Extra Notes from group:	How many megawatts of a solar farm will Snowy 2.0 enable in the region, and where do you put them?
END	

Bega Valley

Table C 10. Snowy Hydro Focus Group 1: Merimbula (20/5/2024)

Question	Responses
Section 1:  Snowy 2.0 and its impacts	
Question 1: On a scale of 1 to 5, how familiar are you with the Snowy 2.0 project?	<u>(3.3) Responses in Mentimeter</u> Not into the detail of the construction element and likely completion date. Familiar with the tendering from the beginning, the only part don't know about was how the community funds were distributed. We were promised money but Bega Valley hasn't seen a dollar. The community don't know how much power 2.0 will generate and if 3.0 will go ahead. What's expected of the community to support 2.0, how are the FIFO workers and their extended families are impacting the community and the flow on effects of their presence?
Question 2: What areas in your region have been either positively or negatively impacted by the project?	Snowy salaries capture all specialised skills and public and private businesses can't compete with 2.0 salaries. Many local jobs like transport and freight can't retain workers and compete with salaries. Safety issues - Brown Mountain Road is council responsibility yet gets damaged by 2.0 – can't afford to maintain. Medical and Support services can't keep up with increased demand. Suggestion: 2.0 build something that leaves an enduring legacy for the towns they rely on: i.e affordable housing/ other community infrastructure.
Question 3: What level of impact has Snowy 2.0 had on the accessibility of housing both	Housing and schools come to mind first. Average rental has gone from \$540 to \$720 in a matter of months because of 2.0. People who are currently paying under \$500 are getting notice to pay more or get evicted and replaced with someone who will. Some homes are even being rented by 2.0 and are sitting vacant. Homeowners are putting their rental properties on the market with tenants already as a selling point to capitalise on the demand.

permanent and holiday?	<p>Our housing used to be 25-35% vacant as a holiday destination, now it's much lower. More people mean more demand for services and needs. It's good for cafes and bars but there's got to be a cliff soon.</p> <p>Flow on effects to homeless and disadvantaged who can't get cheap rentals or access to affordable services.</p>
Question 4: Rate availability of social support services in your community?	<p>Quantitative Responses in Mentimeter.</p> <p>Childcare services, particularly early childcare. Can't get enough staff to meet demand. Currently, 48 placements and the need is 200+.</p> <p>Have to join waitlists for over 2 years to get childcare services. 2.0 workers are also struggling with childcare.</p> <p>2.0 hasn't planned for their presence and their impact on communities. They should have known better given their size and requirements.</p> <p>It's natural that 2.0 would place additional pressure because the systems were already stretched.</p> <p>Covid and bushfires have placed immense pressure on the town already. 460 houses burnt down in the fires and only 100 have been rebuilt.</p>
Question 5: What areas do you believe could benefit most from community investment?	<p>Childcare (x3) – see above notes.</p> <p>Housing support – people don't have secure homes, which affects mental health and quality of life.</p> <p>Mental health support – there's some good volunteer groups that do a great job, but early intervention resources for children are limited. Youth mental health is also lacking. Only 1 service provider that offers these services in Merimbula.</p> <p>Schools – schools can't keep up with demand, so many kids requires more infrastructure and teachers that then limit funding for other immediate support.</p> <p>Community building programs – Always a good investment. There's no community youth centre. Always a struggle for PCYC to find space to gather for events.</p> <p>GPs – limited GPs because all doctors want to specialise. Health students don't want to be GPs. Have to pay exorbitant fees to import doctors when the hospital is understaffed.</p>
Question 6: Have some people in your community experienced	<p>Quantitative Responses in Mentimeter</p> <p>If you own multiple properties, you'd be doing quite well. Big benefits for Real Estate.</p>


<p>greater negative impacts or greater positive impacts from the Snowy 2.0 project than others?</p>	<p>People are getting paid a whole lot more than they used to with 2.0 salaries.</p> <p>Hospitality and retail standing to benefit from increased disposable income from workers.</p> <p>Increased population means more foot traffic in the town.</p> <p>Majority of locals are still disadvantaged due to rental prices, QOL, etc.</p> <p>6 months ago, 2.0 asked for 100 properties on top of all they already occupied.</p> <p>Benefits to the families of 2.0, Snowy paid for bus trips to take kids to Bega for daycare etc.</p> <p>Not enough workers for local businesses, struggling to get applicants. Snowy family partners are well educated and want to participate but can't due to the need to look after their families.</p> <p>FutureGen wasted the time and resources of locals and the council through a 2+ year tendering process that 2.0 abandoned. This has occurred repeatedly.</p>
<p>Question 7: With the commercial operation of Snowy 2.0 scheduled for 2028, what long-term benefits do you hope Snowy 2.0 will bring to your community?</p>	<p>Community investment for legacy.</p> <p>Reduced/free electricity prices.</p> <p>Would be nice if the workers stayed and integrated into the community after the project was done.</p> <p>Wouldn't mind some EV charging stations.</p> <p>Would like to know where the community investment fund is already. The council has plans for fixing childcare, recreation facilities etc, but is short on the funds to finance.</p>

Section 2:



Snowy Hydro and the community

<p>Question 8: Snowy Hydro has a range of programs to support the community,</p>	<p>Responses in Mentimeter.</p>
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before you were asked to take part in this focus group, what programs were you aware of?	
Question 10: Explain how you have seen this support in action:	<p>Only seen the impacts in the media, not first-hand. (PCYC young driver training program).</p> <p>Many grant programs from Snowy 2.0 do not apply to Merimbula.</p> <p>Have seen most like CUC, PCYC and Falling Leaf Festival in other regions, but nothing spent in Bega Valley. Bendigo Bank, FRRR is the biggest sponsor here.</p>
Question 11: Share examples of successful community investment projects or initiatives from other organisations, or in other communities that you know of.	<p>Good initiatives from volunteer organisations.</p> <p>Council has a community grants program too, too little to do big stuff.</p> <p>Communities creatives group tried to help support medical centre, funded by Bendigo Bank, but fell apart because Doctor got offered much more to work at Wollongong.</p> <p>Community needs more funding, hard to get because you need to be a tax deductible org.</p> <p>State and fed gov only commit 50% of the money, the other 50% must be sourced privately. Bendigo Bank and FRRR are the biggest funders.</p> <p>Bega Cheese sponsors a few programs and an annual golf day, but not enough. Roughly 100K a year to one charity. Their choice.</p> <p>The basketball court in Merimbula was a million-dollar project, Bendigo Community Bank came and paid for lights to be installed. Has dramatically improved the functionality of the services. Has had an enduring impact on the region.</p>
Section 3:  How Snowy Hydro engages with the community	
Question 12: How do you hear about Snowy Hydro and the	<p>Don't think they're really doing very well in engaging with local community.</p> <p>This focus group has been the first POC they've had on engagement.</p>

<p>Snowy 2.0 project in your community?</p> <p><i>A) Is there value in Snowy Hydro engaging more frequently within your community?</i></p> <p><i>B) How well is Snowy Hydro communicating and engaging with your local communities?</i></p> <p><i>C) What can it do more of or be better at? Community involvement? More targeted updates?</i></p>	<p>Very limited comms from 2.0. We only hear about it because we're really engaged, read the paper a lot and want to find info.</p> <p>Average local probably doesn't realise Snowy has an impact, or just assume it's nation-wide issues.</p> <p>Snowy would benefit from additional engagement with the community. The daycare bus services almost create an us vs them mentality.</p> <p>Bit of a catch 22, if they don't want to invest in the community, they shouldn't communicate.</p> <p>If they choose to do more community events, they could improve their reputation and acceptance of families coming for 2.0.</p> <p>A win-win for their staff and the community would be a 'welcome to the community' event. Bit too late now, but that's an example of what needs to happen – low-hanging fruit.</p> <p>Best way to reach the community are events and through media.</p> <p>Community is quite diverse, need to consider demographics and where to reach them.</p> <p>Sure 2.0 has big bucks for marketing and comms.</p> <p>Good avenues would be through the service clubs, Rotary etc. Using the markets etc. Only issue is to consider the demographic of service clubs.</p> <p>Bring in the 2.0 helicopter for free rides.</p>
<p>Extra Notes from group:</p>	<p>Will the outcomes of this research be shared? How will the public see the benefits of all the time and effort they've committed?</p>
<p>END</p>	

Appendix D: Supplementary feedback provided by participants

SNOWY HYDRO COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP

WEDNESDAY 3RD APRIL 2024 12.00 – 13.30 COOMA

- Snowy Hydro has come from a great historical foundation, this should be acknowledged more, with 75/50 years of operation and contributing to the building and development of the Nation – both for water and energy. Be proud of the past and those who made it happen, and today's team for continuing to maintain and operate the Scheme. This is not very obvious, - proud of past achievements, (role in Nation building) and should be promoted more, in media /web page, and in print. (link to its history – SMA /SMHEA branding).
- Identity ? What is Snowy Hydro Today ? What is its symbol? Find it difficult to identify what Snowy presently is –consortium of lots of small companies ? When you think of Holden/Ford/Land Rover there's an image of the original to the latest model, I find this with Snowy up to around 2000's then the story is then fragmented. Finish the jig saw for the last 20 years, glue it back together because it's not too late to tell the story - 1949 to 2024 75years of a great Australian history to promote. Produce a hard copy Book and film. (link with below) Would be happy to contribute to developing this outcome.
- In conjunction with ABC/SBS/ ?, produce the first 75 years of the Snowy Scheme (summary time line factual sequence 1949 - 2024), commemorative film to show what the scheme has given the Nation – tie together for wider community, praising great achievements and contributions. The end could also provide a concept of where SH future vision may go (Snowy 3.0?). Benefits to local and wider national communities. Screen around Oct/Nov 24.
- Would like to see, Snowy Hydro and the Snowy Scheme Museum foster a more cooperative relationship, this is especially important now, with the construction of Snowy 2.0. (Museum to plan and tell the story of 2.0) Past relationships have been on-off and at arm's length at times. The Snowy Scheme Museum would like to work closer with Snowy Hydro across all levels, and feel part of the Snowy Hydro's on-going story and journey. Could Snowy Hydro consider nominating a Museum contact officer, possibly through the Discovery Centre? (Community contact officer?). Be seen as an extension of the Snowy for both parties.

1

- New Snowy employees (incl trainees, apprentices) to visit the Snowy Scheme Museum (in groups), to connect with the building of the Scheme. The Museum would be interested in exploring these visits.
- Snowy Hydro to identify it's self-more on the ground in Snowy Regional towns, especially those that were part of the construction of the Scheme. This could be initially by providing towns with a 75/50 years commemorative feature or hardware ie (Snowy Hydro labelling visible)
 - Park benches/tables/street seats
 - Public BBQ in Parks
 - Plant an avenue of Trees
 - Snowy scene Mural on building
 - Sculpture or light feature depicting Snowy

When Snowy handed over towns to local Councils it broke most ties with these towns, this also distanced itself with local communities, it might be an opportune time to re-connect itself with these local communities.

- Hold a gathering for the remaining surviving Snowy Scheme workers and Snowy Kids (Grounds of the Head Office in Cooma?) There are not many original workers (pre 1974) left now. Provide a visit to Snowy 2.0 work site for these workers. Hold a community event recognising remaining workers sponsored by SHL, but not all about SHL!
- More transparency for the Snowy 2.0 project, controlled visits to some of the work sites, this was done for the original scheme construction. Public relations worked on "seeing is believing" Sell the value of Snowy 2.0 to the nation. Produce a balance of digital and printed media (older generations not all on digital platforms and miss out on information – can create a negative vibe).
- There's a need for more cooperative public display, between Snowy Hydro and the Kosciuszko National Park from both parties. There's a sense of friction between both parties and KNP wielding the big stick, over a non-compliant SHL. There's very little recognition by KNP of the construction of most of the original access roads within the park and SMA pioneering contribution toward preserving the high country environment (removing grazing) and soil conservation. (It appears that Parks view SHL as a cash cow and intruder

2

within the park not a partner). Both share some common values and the environment and these need better promotion by both. Joint partnership image working together. SHL could be proactive in improving this image, without having to hand over lots of money.

- There are billboards promoting Red Energy, could these show a bigger presence of Snowy Hydro on the billboards – features of the Scheme
- State Blue Plaques, Snowy Hydro could promote more Blue Plaque recipients recognizing prominent early Scheme workers, it would be good to see a plaque for Major Clews and his team – early Scheme surveyors.
(Existing - Tom Leach SMA – SMEC Plaque at old Hydraulics Laboratory).
- Local school programs usually have a strong emphasis on Engineering, these could be broadened/balanced to include hydrology, telemetry communications, IT and trade careers, that also make up SHL. Display and promote an interest in providing employment for local school leavers. (Expand apprenticeship programs and offer full time employment at the end of the apprenticeships) A Great community sell. Expand collaboration with TAFE in trades. (What is the current process?).
- During the initial launch of Snowy 2.0, (community forums/meetings) the topic of Snowy 2.0 community legacies was discussed, very little has been heard since. There were some concerns of what happens to local small towns when Snowy 2.0 is complete, and pulls out. Where is Snowy Hydro with this now.....?
- Snowy Hydro should promote the function of the Discovery Centre, on free to air TV, (already on local radio), promoting the service it offers to school groups, bus tours – and local public (provides the best coffee in Cooma) – feel it's a bit undersold in its value to the community. Existing structure - easy to further improve standing in the community.

Do all local/regional schools regularly visit the discovery Centre??

- Impacts of Snowy 2.0 on community
 - Future plans for The Segment Factory? Continue with concrete form fabrication? Good long term business for Cooma.
 - Accommodation assets, completion of Project
 - Future access to Lobs Hole – plans

- Snowy Hydro could produce these plaques to place on the major buildings identifying years they were build and are National treasurers



Badge on Land Rover that worked on the Scheme

"This Land Rover helped build the greatest engineering project in the world 1949-1974."

From: Rebecca Tobin <rebecca.ann.smith1982@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, April 1, 2024 11:26 PM

To: Angela Habashy <angela.habashy@struber.com.au>

Cc: Harley McNamara <harley.mcnamara@struber.com.au>

Subject: Re: Invitation to participate in Snowy Hydro community focus group

Hey Harley and Angela,

I just wanted to put some things more succinctly.

I hope the below helps.

We as a community need Snowy Hydro to invest in and throw support around undergrounding HumeLink. For the benefit of people, community, environment and our beautiful rural landscape, and their protection in fire.

Snowy is responsible for Snowy 2.0, HumeLink is only needed to connect it, both projects should be and are defined by the community as joint, Snowy Hydro will continue to generate bad publicity and bad perceptions in the community unless Snowy support undergrounding as the way forward, without it the angst around Snowy Hydro, Snowy 2.0 and HumeLink will increase when building overhead seals our fates for the next 80 years.

When a company does wrong by the community it operates in, it is a legacy of burden that no amount of community grants can make up for, Snowy Hydro needs to make their legacy advocating for Undergrounding HumeLink.

Thanks

Rebecca Tobin

Appendix E: Promotional and engagement collateral

Website



Help shape the future of your community!

For 75 years, Snowy Hydro has played an important role in Australia's energy landscape, leading the way in the transition to a renewable energy future. Throughout its proud history, Snowy Hydro has remained committed to supporting the communities where the Snowy Scheme operates.

We are hosting a community insights campaign to better understand the impacts of the Snowy 2.0 project on our local communities.

Snowy Hydro wants our community, customers, and key stakeholders to help shape our current and future initiatives.

TAKE THE SURVEY



Emails

Invitation to participate in Snowy Hydro community focus group



Angela Habashy

To: info@cochranshorsetreks.com.au

You forwarded this message on 14/03/2024 10:35 AM.

Reply Reply All Forward

Fri 8/03/2024 5:07 PM

Dear Peter,

Thanks so much for that chat just now. As mentioned, my name is Angela and I am reaching out to you on behalf of the Snowy Hydro team to invite you to participate in a focus group we are hosting on **Wednesday, April 3 in Cooma**.

Snowy Hydro has played an important role in Australia's energy landscape for 75 years and more recently has been at the forefront of the renewable energy transition. As we prepare for our next 75 years, we are undertaking a campaign to connect with the community so we can understand how people feel about Snowy Hydro in 2024. We also want to know from people how we can shape, build and enhance our role in the community now and into the future.

Throughout March and early April, we'll be talking to individuals and groups from the Snowy Mountains region. We are also hosting an online survey through March and April. Our on-the-ground conversations will be taking place through dedicated focus groups in Cooma and Tumut. These focus groups will allow us to gain a deeper understanding of how people feel about us, and our role in the community and provide the opportunity to deepen and foster local relationships.

Here are the key details about your focus group:

- **Date:** Wednesday, April 3
- **Time:** 6pm – 7:30pm
- **Duration:** Approximately 1.5 hours
- **Location:** Country Universities Centre, Meeting Room, 38 Bombala Street, Cooma

Snowy Hydro wants our community, customers and key stakeholders to help shape our current and future initiatives. We understand your time is precious; however, your input is critical to helping us understand the needs of our communities.

If you are available and interested in participating, please confirm your availability by replying to this email or contacting me directly at **0424 747 049**. Additionally, if you have any questions or require further information about the focus group, please don't hesitate to call or email us.

Thank you for considering our invitation. We genuinely hope that you can join us and contribute your valuable perspective to our discussion.

Warm regards,
Angela



Angela Habashy (She/Her) | Senior Consultant

STRUBER /// Bright Impact.

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W: www.struber.com.au



Appendix F: Waligada program



The Waligada Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, provides children with the opportunity to engage and participate in a Cultural Educational experiences..

The program will be running over a couple of months with the aim to educate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students about their People, Country and Culture, including aspects of Aboriginal Lore.

The learning program will be conducted on the first Thursday of the month by Ngarigo Elder (EE) and Aboriginal Community Leader Uncle Michael-A Kyron Wilesmith (Uncle Mike) and Ngarigo Community Leader: Miss Racheal Hopkins. Both being trained and qualified in educational professions, they are dedicated to education and enriching the lives of children and youth.

During this Program, the Students will have the opportunity to learn about:

- Didgeridoos – and decorating
- Clap Sticks and Coolamons – and decorating
- Art Experiences – Traditional, Modern and Contemporary Art and its forms.
 - Mental Health – Woman's Business and Men's Business
 - Traditional Food (Emu, Kangaroo, Crocodile and others).
- Learning and Understanding Aboriginal Hieroglyphics and their Meaning.
 - the Traditional art of making Coolamons on Country
 - Ocre – Face Painting and Ceremonial Uses

At the end of the year, a Special Award Ceremony will be held and open to family members to attend where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will receive an official Certificate of Completion.

This program is the first of its kind here on Ngarigo Country.

Elders and Community Leaders attempt to educate and maintain the survival of Ngarigo Culture and Aboriginal Culture as a whole. This Program is not compulsory and is optional for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, this program will commence with a smoking ceremony and an official Welcome to Country by Uncle Mike on the first day. For those students who wish to participate in the program please return the permission slips for attendance and media release.

Yarra,

Uncle Michael-A Kyron Wilesmith
"Uncle Mike"
Aboriginal Emerging Elder
Ngarigo Community Leader
Aboriginal Community Leader
Ngarigo, Ngadjuri and Wiradjuri
Artist
Ngarigo, Ngadjuri, Wiradjuri and
Biripi



Racheal Hopkins
Ngarigo Community Leader
Wiradjuri

