

A photograph of a construction site on a grassy hill. A tall, grey lattice tower stands prominently, with a red and white crane attached to its top. The sky is clear and blue.

DPHI Updates for REAPs Webinar

Major Projects Advisory
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

26 June 2025



The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

Acknowledgement of Country

Agenda Overview



- Updates on Estimated Development Cost (EDC)
- Guidance on National Environmental Significance (MNES)
- Review of Critical State Significant Infrastructure Projects (CSSI)
- Implications of BC Act Concurrence
- Future Webinar Topics
- Question and Answers Session

Presenters

Tim Kirby, Director Major Projects Advisory,
DPHI

May Swan Chin, Team Leader & Principal
Advisor - CSSI & Use of Experts Reform,
Major Projects Advisory, DPHI

Panelists

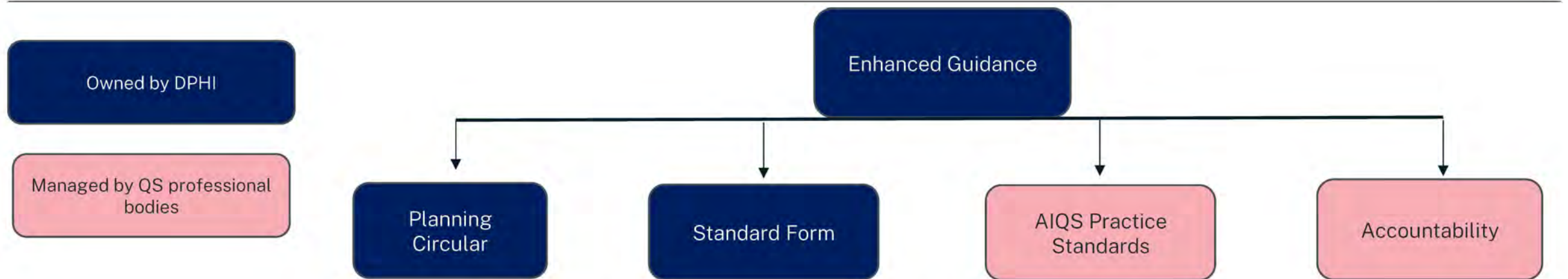
John Brockhoff, RPIA (Fellow), National Policy
Director PIA

Jamie McMahon, Senior CEnvP-IA and REAP
certified practitioner

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Estimated Development Cost (EDC)

What changed in 2023?



What guidance is available for Quantity Surveyors?

The quantity surveying profession has developed a practice standard for members to use when preparing EDC Reports.

All development costed above \$3 million must be prepared using the AIQS practice standard.

The AIQS practice standard for estimating development costs:

- clarifies the professional practice
- provides guidance to quantity surveyors on how to prepare an EDC report



What should REAPs check?

- REAPs should confirm that the EDC report follows the standard form
- The standard form allows the REAP to quickly confirm that the EDC Report is:
 - a) addressed to DPHI
 - b) signed by an AIQS Certified Quantity Surveyor or a RICS Chartered Quantity Surveyor
 - c) signed within 30 days of the application submitted on the Planning portal.
 - d) appropriately protected-with commercial-in-confidence limited to the detailed calculation schedule

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Standard Form of Estimated Development Cost Report (State significant projects) - March 2024

Structure of Report

1. An Estimated Development Cost Report shall be addressed to the consent authority, and include:
 - a. An executive summary.
 - b. A description of the basis of preparation.
 - c. A description of the scope of the estimated development cost (EDC).
 - d. A detailed calculation schedule that supports the EDC.

2025 Peer Review of EDC Reports



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- Transition to business-as-usual model means that DPHI will be selecting a sample of EDC Reports to be peer reviewed.

Key messages for REAPs from 2025 Peer Review

- Generally EDC Reports are conforming with the Practice Standard (so REAPs can be comfortable if they are checking the appropriate certification of the QS).
- REAPs are letting through EDC Reports that are:
 - not addressed to DPHI
 - not within the correct timing and
 - not appropriately structured to make it easy for DPHI to withhold publication of the detailed calculation schedule (this should be a separate document).
- We will be meeting directly with one QS who could do a better job.

Where can you find out more?

- On the Department's website

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/policy-and-legislation/planning-reforms/estimated-development-cost>

- Ask questions

EDC.helpdesk@planning.nsw.gov.au

- Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyor practice standard-
*Construction Cost Assessments for NSW Estimated
Development Cost Reports*

<https://www.aiqs.com.au/technical-documents>

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Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) Guidance

Guidance Note for Accredited Assessors on the assessment of MNES

The new Guidance Note is:

- for use when preparing a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) where impacts on matters of national environmental significance (MNES).
- designed to help accredited assessors prepare an Appendix E that is suitable for major project assessment.

There are three parts to the guidance:

1. Direction to do appropriate referencing.
2. Accredited assessors are required to prepare a Summary Table (Attachment 1), that provides a summary of predicted impacts and offsets relating to MNES.
3. Accredited assessors are required to complete a Completion Checklist (Attachment 2) to assist accredited assessors to confirm that Appendix E to the BDAR is complete, for all relevant EPBC matters.

Insufficient information in BDARs does cause delays, and MNES information can cause delays with the Australian Government approval decision.

How REAPs could use the Guidance?

REAPs can help manage risk of delays for their clients, by doing three things:

- Making sure that the BDAR is prepared using the BDAR template.
- Making sure that the Appendix E includes a Summary Table consistent with Attachment 1 of the Guidance Note.
- Reviewing the accredited assessor's Completion Checklist (Attachment 2 of the Guidance Note).

The Completion Checklist

We do not know how many accredited assessors are using the Completion Checklist.

We do not know how much effort REAPs are putting in the check completeness of the BDAR.

We will be reviewing a sample of BDARs shortly to assess conformance.

Attachment 2: Completion Checklist for BDAR Appendix E, relating to assessment of predicted impacts on EPBC Act-listed Threatened Species and Communities

Initial when complete	Information required to be included in Appendix E	Comments
PART A		
Confirm that general information in Appendix E (MNES) of the BDAR is complete/sufficient		
	Appendix E clearly shows how operational and construction footprints , including clearing boundaries, structures to be built and elements of the action, are situated with regard to MNES (and/or references to where this detail is provided within the body of the BDAR).	
	Appendix E includes a map(s) of the subject land boundary showing the proposal/disturbance footprint with respect to location of MNES, including links to or directory locations of GIS shape files (and/or references to where this detail is provided within the body of the BDAR).	
	Appendix E identifies any other site constraints in selecting the location and design of the proposed development (such as bushfire protection requirements, flood planning levels, servicing constraints) (and/or references to where this detail is provided within the body of the EIS or BDAR).	
	Appendix E clearly depicts stages and timing of the action that may impact on MNES (and/or references to where this detail is provided within the body of the BDAR).	

Where can you find out more?

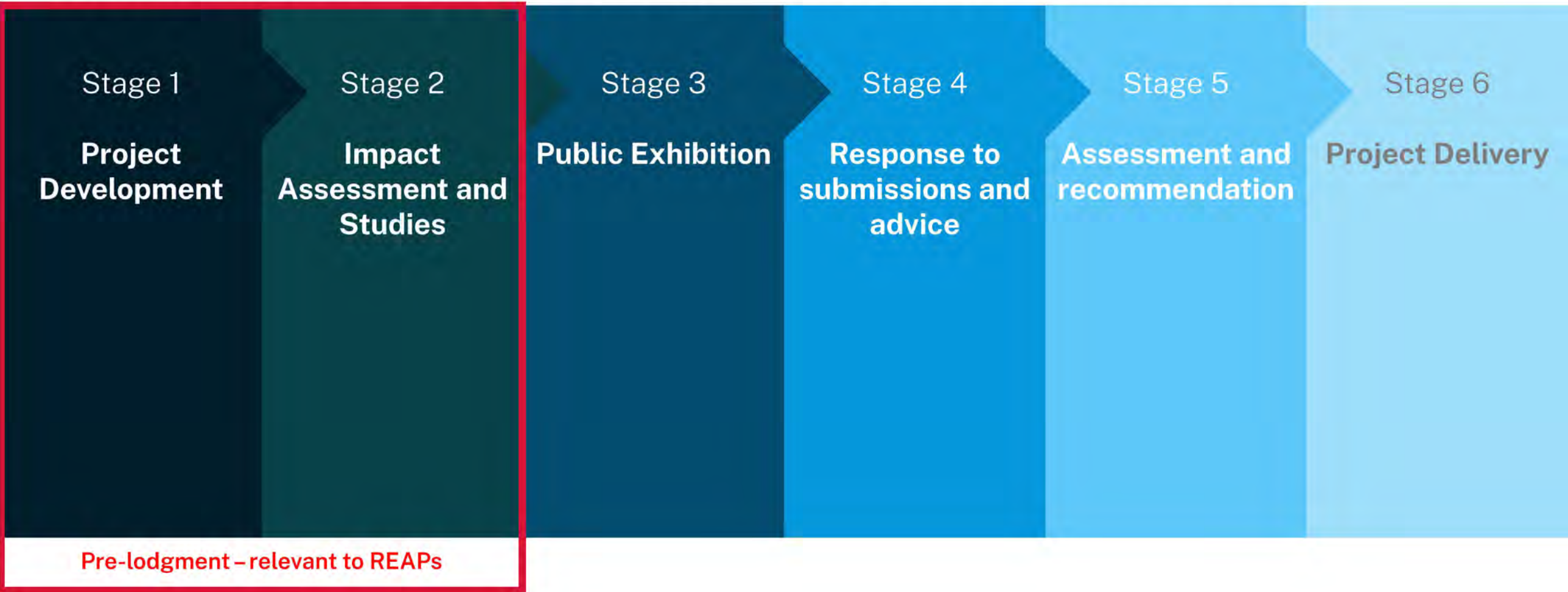
- On the Department's website

Guidance for Accredited Assessors - MNES May 2024.pdf

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Critical State Significant Infrastructure Projects (CSSI)

CSSI Protocol implementation across the stages of assessment – which stage is relevant to REAPs?



Pre-lodgement Checklist for Proponents:

Stage 1 – Project Development

- Make financial and timeline budget contingency to allow for additional studies
- Engage early with Advising Agencies and DPHI Planning
- Consult local community and council on early project design and impacts
- **Prepare detailed scoping report to request SEARs**
- Update SO committee on project progress

Pre-lodgement Checklist for Proponents: Stage 2 – Impact Assessment and Studies

- **Complete studies and design reviews to meet all SEARs**
- **Engage with community during EIS preparation**
- **Consult advising agencies to align EIS with requirements**
- **Arrange agency site visits if needed**
- **Engage suitably qualified expert/s to confirm EIS meets guidelines**
- **Submit draft EIS to DPHI Planning for feedback**
- **Notify relevant DPHI Senior Officer committee of expected EIS lodgement date**

CSSI Protocol Background & Project Types

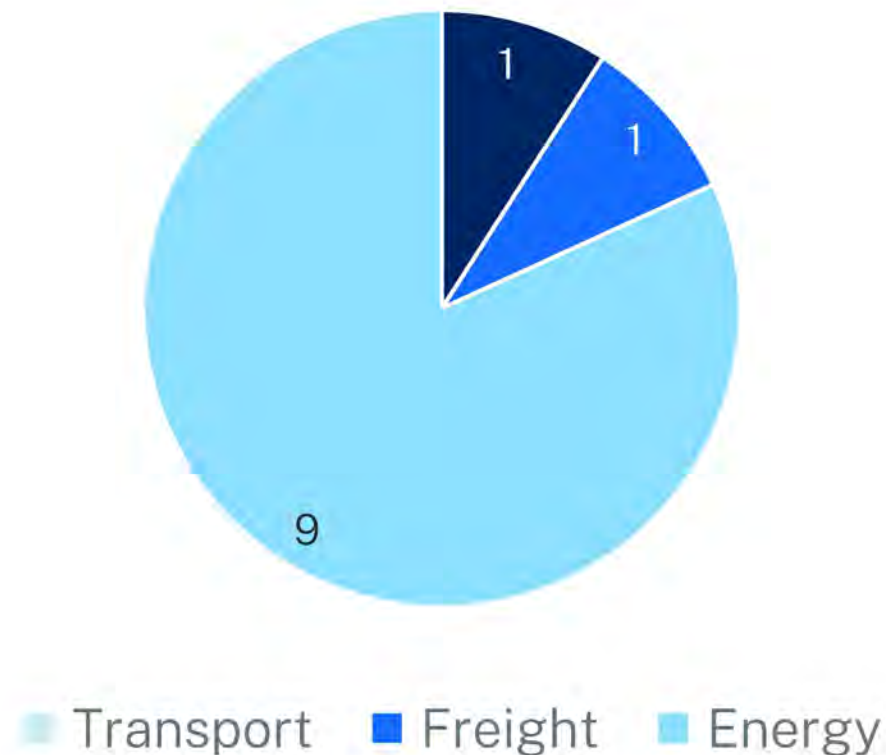
History

- Established in 2015
- Protocol is reviewed periodically
- 42 CSSI declarations in Planning Systems SEPP

Current Snapshot

- 11 active projects - collectively worth ~\$18bn, 7k jobs
- Project types include energy, transport and freight

Active CSSI Project Type



What should REAPs do?

REAPs can help manage risk of delays for their clients by fulfilling key responsibilities outlined in the REAP Guidelines:

- **Prepare detailed scoping report to request SEARs**
- **Complete studies and design reviews to meet all SEARs**
- **Engage with community during EIS preparation**
- **Consult advising agencies to align EIS with requirements**
- **Arrange agency site visits if needed**
- **Engage suitably qualified expert/s to confirm EIS meets guidelines**
- **Submit draft EIS to DPHI Planning for feedback**

Where can you find out more?

- On the Department's website

*CSSI Protocol Webpage - Arrangements with proponents /
Planning Portal - Department of Planning and Environment*

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BC Act Concurrence

There is a new major projects role for the Minister for the Environment

BC Act Reforms were passed in November 2024 - came into effect in March 2025

- BC Act Reforms added a new step for major project assessments.
- DPHI will need to seek the concurrence of the Minister for the Environment if proposed conditions do not require retirement of the number and class of biodiversity credits in the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR).

Concurrence is only needed for:

- Biodiversity offsetting conditions
- SSD and SSI (including CSSI)

The process is simple

- DPHI will seek concurrence when finalising an assessment that is heading toward approval.
- If the major project is being determined by the IPC, then concurrence is sought by DPHI at the end of that process if required.
- Concurrence takes 14 days.
- The Minister for the Environment is briefed by the Regional CPHR team that has provided advice to DPHI through the assessment process.
- To avoid delays further down the track - proponents should notify the Minister for the Environment (and DCCEEW CPHR) that they are lodging a project proposal that seeks to rely on tools/strategies that will mean DPHI has to seek concurrence.

What should REAPs do?

REAPs can help manage risk of delays for their clients, by doing three things:

- Making sure offset strategies outlined in the EIS avoid using tools/strategies such as deferred offsets, post-approval re-surveying or offset recalculations.
- Making sure that any proposed use of such tools/ strategies is very explicit in the EIS Executive Summary.
- Assisting the proponent to notify the Minister for the Environment -if they are lodging an EIS that includes tools/strategies that would require DPHI to seek concurrence if they determine the project can be approved subject to conditions allowing for the tools/ strategies.

Topics that could be covered in the future

Next Webinar



- Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) Heritage
- Bushfire Assessment
- Housing Projects

Question and Answers

Thank you

