



Environmental assessment process

Fact sheet

Northern Water aims to provide a secure, climate resilient water source for industry located in South Australia's Upper Spencer Gulf and Far North. The Project is located on the traditional lands of the Barngarla and Kokatha Peoples.

Overview

The Northern Water Project must go through a detailed environmental and planning assessment before it can be approved.

This includes an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that meets both South Australian and Commonwealth Government requirements, with opportunities for public feedback.

State assessment

Planning Development and Infrastructure (PDI) Act 2016

The South Australian Minister for Planning has directed that an EIS be prepared for the Northern Water Project.

This is the highest level of development assessment in South Australia and is used for projects with significant economic, social and/or environment importance.

Commonwealth assessment

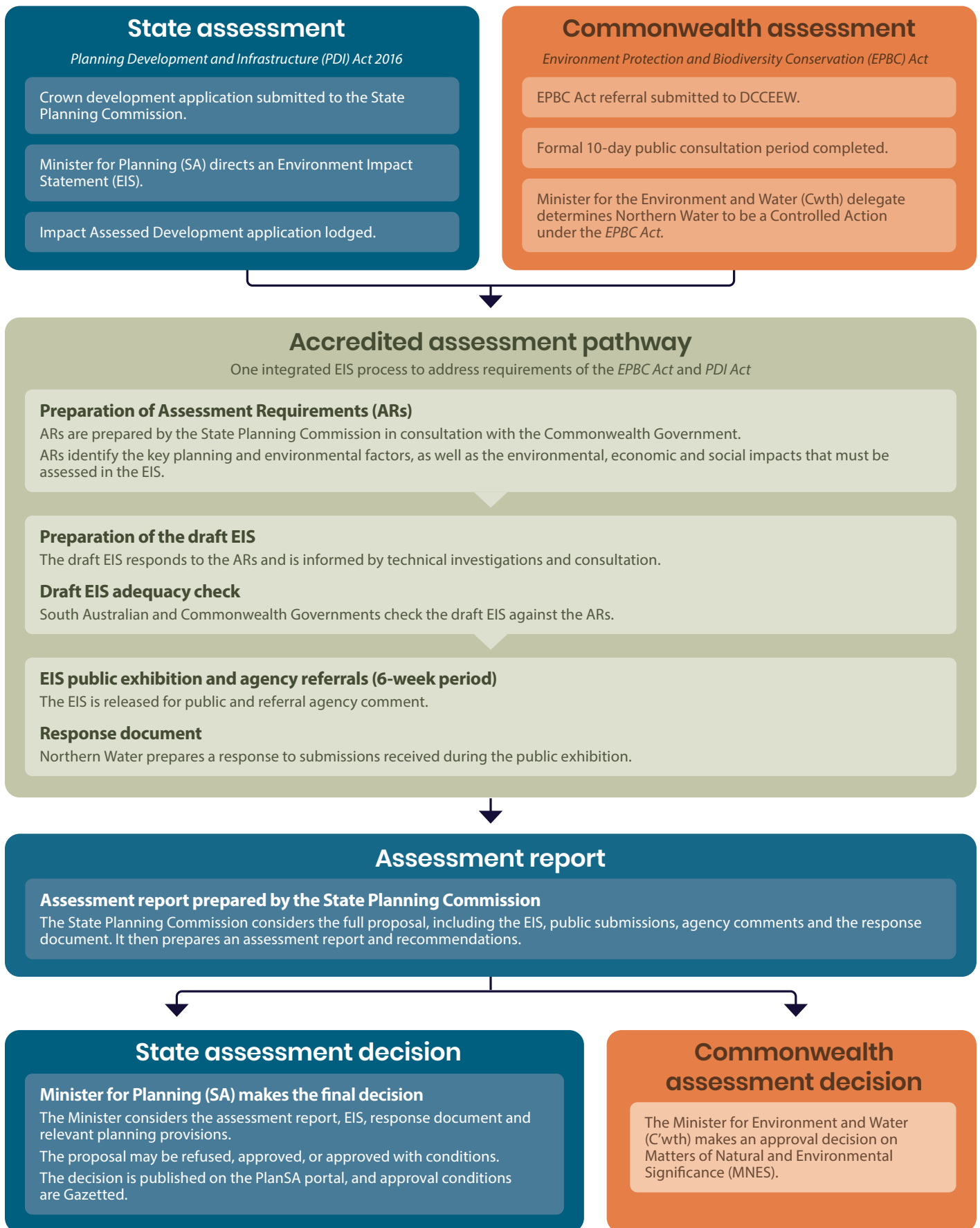
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999 referral

The *EPBC Act* is Australia's main environmental law. It provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally important plants, animals, habitats and places. These are called 'protected matters' and include, but are not limited to:

- world heritage areas
- national heritage places
- Commonwealth marine areas
- wetlands of international importance
- listed threatened and migratory species and ecological communities.

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) is responsible for administering the *EPBC Act*.

Northern Water assessment process



Approval Conditions

The approval of the EIS will include a range of requirements that must be met before the Project can proceed.

Some details, such as design, layout and access, must be finalised and assessed before development is authorised and construction can begin (Reserved Matters).

Building plans must also meet safety and construction standards before buildings can be occupied (Building Rules Consent).

Conditions set under State and Commonwealth legislation often include preparing management plans that outline how construction will be carried out.

Specific activities, such as vegetation clearance or construction of individual project elements, cannot begin until the relevant conditions have been met and any required plans or further approvals are in place.

Impact assessment and technical investigations

As part of the EIS, Northern Water will undertake a detailed impact assessment regarding the construction and operational aspects of the Project.

The impact assessment will:

- assess the positive and negative environmental, social and economic impacts
- determine the environmental outcomes the Project should seek to achieve to be acceptable to regulators, the community and other stakeholders
- develop measures to avoid, minimise, mitigate or offset potential impacts
- engage with the community and stakeholders so they can provide informed feedback on the Project
- enable regulators to make an informed response to the EIS, including any conditions that should be applied to ensure its impacts are acceptable.

The impact assessment considers the following environmental attributes, consistent with project-specific EIS assessment requirements issued by the State Planning Commission.



Amenity and environmental quality

- Air quality
- Noise and vibration
- Transport and traffic
- Landscape and visual amenity



Hazards and risks

- Bushfire
- Floods
- Contamination



Biological environment

- Biosecurity
- Matters of *National Environmental Significance*
- Marine flora and fauna
- Terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna



Land use and site considerations

- Land tenure
- Protected areas
- Use of land and marine waters



Climate change and resource use

- Climate change adaptation
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Sustainable use of resources
- Waste management



Physical environment

- Coastal land systems and marine water quality
- Soils, landform and geology
- Groundwater
- Surface water



Design

- Design quality



Social and community

- Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Non-Aboriginal heritage places and areas
- Community wellbeing
- Social impact assessment



Economic environment

- Local, regional and state economies

Northern Water has undertaken extensive technical investigations, research and data collection of the marine and terrestrial environment to inform the impact assessment.

We are working with technical experts to ensure best practice terrestrial and marine science research, modelling and data collection informs our design. Experts from the Adelaide University, University of New South Wales and the CSIRO are peer-reviewing our marine modelling, design and assessments.



Northern Water acknowledges and respects the First Peoples of this land and their deep ongoing spiritual and cultural connection to Country. We will work together with First Nations peoples to share our collective knowledge and recognise the enduring impact of infrastructure on Country.

We acknowledge the Project is on the traditional lands of the Barnjarla and Kokatha peoples and recognise their continuing connection to land and waters. We pay our respects to the diversity of cultures, significance of contributions and to Elders past, present and emerging.

© Government of South Australia 2026

With the exception of the piping shrike emblem and where otherwise noted, this product is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence.