

October 2020

The new Social Impact Assessment Guideline 2020 for all State significant projects

A new Social Impact Assessment Guideline 2020 (the new Guideline) has been prepared for social impact assessment (SIA) to be applied to all State significant projects. This new Guideline replaces the existing *SIA guideline for State significant mining, petroleum production and extractive industry development*, released in 2017.

What are the transitional arrangements for the SIA Guideline 2020?

The SIA Guideline 2020 now applies to State Significant Development (SSD), including SSD sites, State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) and Critical State Significant Infrastructure (CSSI)¹. **Table 1** provides high-level transitional arrangements for each of the three phases of the EIA process.

Table 1: High-level transitional arrangements

| Phase | Proponent project stage | General transitional arrangement | EIA parallel process stage |
|-------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| 1 | A proponent is currently considering, or is preparing scoping documentation to seek the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for their proposed State significant project | The proponent should refer to the SIA Guideline 2020 to guide the preparation of scoping material and future environmental assessment material. The proponent can expect that the SEARs will likely refer to the SIA Guideline 2020. | 1a: Project Scoping |
| | | | 1b: Scoping Meeting |
| | | | 1c: Prepare Scoping Report |
| | | | 1d: Request for SEARs |
| 2 | A proponent is currently preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with DPIE formal advice (e.g. SEARs) and expects to submit a development application and EIS shortly for example within 6 months. | The proponent should continue with the preparation of the EIS in accordance with the DPIE's formal advice. The proponent can apply the SIA Guideline 2020 voluntarily. DPIE can reissue SEARs referring to the SIA Guideline 2020 and may do so if a long time has passed since the SEARs were issued. | 2a: SEARs issued * |
| | | | 2b: Prepare EIS |
| | | | 2c: Lodge EIS |
| 3 | A proponent has already submitted a development application and EIS. | DPIE may, if needed, require additional information on, or assessment of, specified social impacts identified in the submitted EIS, public exhibition submissions, or the Submissions Report, in accordance with the SIA Guideline 2020. | 3a: Assessment prior to exhibition |
| | | | 3b: Responding to Submissions |
| | | | 3c: Determination |
| | | | 3d: Post Approvals |

¹ The full list of State significant development types and identified sites can be viewed in the schedules of the *State and Regional Development SEPP*.

Frequently asked questions

Draft for Exhibition Purposes

* The Department has discretion to update SEARs as per *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000* Schedule 2 clause 3(7). Proponents can expect that the Department may reissue SEARs, updating a reference to the SIA Guideline 2020 if SEARs have been recently issued.

Where can further information be found?

The SIA Guideline 2020 and other supporting documents can be found at the following location: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/Social-Impact-Assessment>, along with the SIA Technical Supplement, which provides further technical guidance to practitioners.

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