



## Hells Gates Dam

### Questions and Answers

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## Where is Hells Gates?

For the Google Earth initiated – the coordinates for Hells Gates are -19.124511, 145.639765. It is approximately 120 kilometres north of Charters Towers and north-west of Townsville (almost on a straight line between Townsville and Greenvale) and approximately 50 kilometres west of Paluma.

The area of the dam is on private property and is not easily accessible by conventional vehicle.



### **How long will the Hells Gates Dam Feasibility Study take?**

The study will take around 12 months. It is due to be completed in April 2018.

### **Who is conducting the study?**

National engineering and development consultants, SMEC, is leading a consortium of Townsville businesses to undertake the detailed feasibility study for the proposed Hells Gates Dam. The consortium includes local engineering firm Premise, consulting firm Brazier Motti and economic consultants AEC. SMEC has had a long association with Townsville and the North Queensland region and a history that stretches back to the original Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme. Townsville Enterprise is the project manager for the study with finance from the Federal Government's National Water Infrastructure Development Fund.

### **Have the Hells Gates Dam Project Leadership Group (PLG) had interactions with the State and Federal Government?**

The PLG has had strong consultations with Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, Department of Energy and Water Supply and Department of State Development throughout the feasibility process.

### **Why another feasibility study?**

Hells Gates Dam is one of five infrastructure projects to be considered under the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility in the best interest of North Queensland. This feasibility study is addressing the potential to expand the Townsville region's agricultural capabilities, with potential to unlock significant arable land and offer the agricultural sector large growth opportunities, ultimately benefiting the output and GRP of the region.

### **Who will be consulted during the study and can I have my say?**

A range of groups, organisations, government agencies, farmers, graziers and land owners will be consulted during the 12-month study. It is important to gain a comprehensive understanding of not only the engineering challenges of building the proposed dam, but also how the water may be used and its value to end users, especially for agricultural production.

### **How much would the dam cost to build?**

Hells Gates Dam would be a significant infrastructure project. The feasibility study will provide a range of cost scenarios depending on the scale of the dam and additions such as hydro-electric generation and water distribution networks.

The early estimate on the cost of water and irrigation infrastructure is around \$1.3 billion. The estimate to fully fund a project that would produce up to 10 million tonnes of sugar cane per annum is around \$4.9 billion.

### **Is Big Rocks part of the study?**

Yes. The scope of the feasibility is relatively broad. It is investigating the water infrastructure necessary to support a large scale irrigated agricultural precinct.

Big Rocks is among the water supply options to be considered.

### **Will Hells Gates Dam provide urban water supply for the Townsville community?**

The purpose of the Hells Gate dam is the supply of water for large-scale agricultural development. The feasibility study will explore urban water supply options, though it is not its predominant purpose.

### **What is the involvement of Townsville Enterprise?**

Townsville Enterprise strongly advocated for the use of National Water Infrastructure

Development Fund (NWIDF) to fund the SMEC led feasibility study now being undertaken. Townsville Enterprise leads the management of the Hells Gates Dam Project Leadership Group which is fundamental in ensuring all community stakeholders are well engaged throughout the feasibility process.

**Is the Townsville Water Taskforce considering the outcome of the Hells Gates feasibility study?**

The Townsville Water Taskforce is awaiting the results of the feasibility study. The interim report from the Water Taskforce released at the end of June 2017 has expressed consideration of the Dam as a long-term water supply option, though they have highlighted it is more an opportunity to open up additional agricultural land.

**What are the next steps?**

The feasibility study is due for submission by SMEC in April/May 2018. If the project is considered feasible, appropriate funding and resource allocation will need to be secured.

**Where can I find more information?**

Visit the Townsville Enterprise Hells Gates Dam web page.

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