

Media Release



SMEC Secures Hells Gate Feasibility Study

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SMEC has been engaged by Townsville Enterprise Limited (TEL) to lead the Hells Gate Dam and Irrigation Scheme Feasibility Study in the Upper Burdekin catchment of Northern Queensland. The 12-month study will determine the dam's engineering, environmental and economic feasibility.

The Hells Gate Dam project has been in discussion since 1938 and has been the subject of a number of investigations in the 1970's through to 2014. This project will produce the first fully investigated feasibility into the dam and irrigation scheme, and is a precursor to attracting investment for the construction of a multi-billion dollar project over the coming 10 years. The project has nation building significance in that it will double the irrigated agriculture capacity of Northern Australia, and has attracted funding from the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund.

SMEC will lead a team of local businesses to complete the feasibility study into the one million mega litre dam and 100,000 hectare irrigation scheme.

TEL CEO Patricia O'Callaghan said "It is very important to be able to engage local content, that was a key part of the criteria." "The company (SMEC) will use local expertise wherever possible."

SMEC Regional Manager Graeme Pollock said the Company was proud to be leading a consortium of local businesses. "We have specifically partnered with leading local businesses to not only achieve the project objectives but provide high level expertise in areas such as cropping analysis, water resource modelling, environmental assessments and economic analysis which will be key to achieving the project," he said.

Project scope of work includes: water resource and cropping assessments; agronomy and field studies on soil conditions; concept engineering of Hells Gate Dam, Big Rocks Weir, irrigation infrastructure, power supply, road and associated infrastructure and water delivery to the City of Townsville; ecology and environmental assessment; stakeholder relations; and economic assessments.

Ms O'Callaghan said TEL was pleased that SMEC was leading the study. "They are a global leader in assessing large-scale infrastructure developments and have a track record stretching all the way back to the original Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme," she said. "The company has had a long association with Townsville and the North Queensland region and did some of the original preliminary studies into Hell's Gate.

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For more information please contact:

Angus Macpherson, Director of Operations

E: angus.macpherson@smec.com T: +61 2 9925 5552 M: +61 421 619 244 www.smec.com