New Major Projects upgrade for state significant projects

The Major Projects portal has been upgraded to facilitate pre-lodgement engagements between proponents and public authorities for all state significant projects

What has changed?

From 21 July 2023, government agencies are required to provide pre-lodgement advice to proponents for state significant projects via the Major Projects portal. Agencies can use the portal to:

- receive, manage and track pre-lodgement engagement requests from proponents for state significant projects

- provide advice, request additional information and receive or send meeting requests on all pre-lodgement engagement requests initiated by proponents.

The upgrade will help government agencies digitally engage, in real time, with proponents at pre-lodgement engagement stage (during the prepare Environmental Impact Statement phase). The upgrade will also provide the department oversight of engagement to assist with the assessment of the proposal.

Note: this feature will only apply to projects for which a request for Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) is accepted on or after 21 July 2023. A project for which SEARs is issued prior to 21 July 2023 will still be required to engage the relevant government agencies directly for pre-lodgement engagement.

Why is this upgrade necessary?

Feedback from industry and public authorities advises the current offline pre-lodgement engagement process is difficult and manual. Proponents are expected to reach out directly to the relevant public authorities as required by their SEARs. Sometimes proponents do not know how to engage a particular public authority as the process is highly variable and unique for each authority.

Public authorities advised the department that proponents fail to meaningfully engage and address issues raised at a pre-lodgement engagement meeting. Since the department has no visibility over offline engagements, assessment officers are only across engagement details disclosed by a proponent and are not aware of any unresolved issues until the EIS is placed on exhibition and authorities raise the same concerns to the department. This can result in unnecessary delays to the assessment process as key issues are left to be resolved at the Response to Submissions stage.

Are government agencies required to provide pre-lodgement advice on state significant projects?

For all state significant projects, pre-lodgement engagements between a proponent and relevant government agencies are a SEARs requirement. A proponent should endeavour to contact and engage relevant government agencies before submitting their EIS.
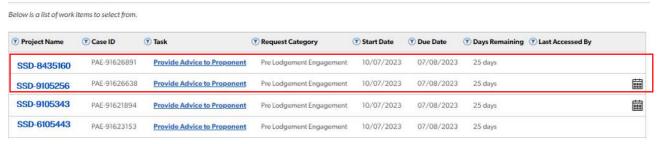
Early engagement for state significant projects is critical as issues can be identified sooner and appropriate mitigation measures discussed. Government agencies can also provide expert advice and views at a stage when the design of the project can be most easily influenced. The department encourages agencies and proponents to meaningful engage at the pre-lodgement stage and resolve key issues before submitting their EIS. The new pre-lodgement portal is designed to make pre-lodgement engagement more convenient for all parties and also improve transparency and accountability during the engagement.

How do I use the portal to provide advice on state significant projects?

1. **Pre-lodgement engagement cases will appear as tasks on your group dashboard**

Once the department has issued SEARs on a project, the proponent will be able to initiate engagement requests with government agencies. The engagement case will now appear as a task on your group dashboard.
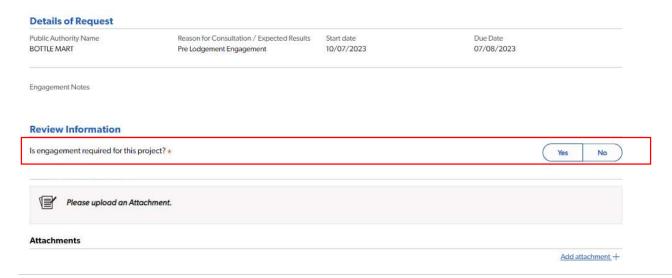
My Groups Work

Below is a list of work items to select from.

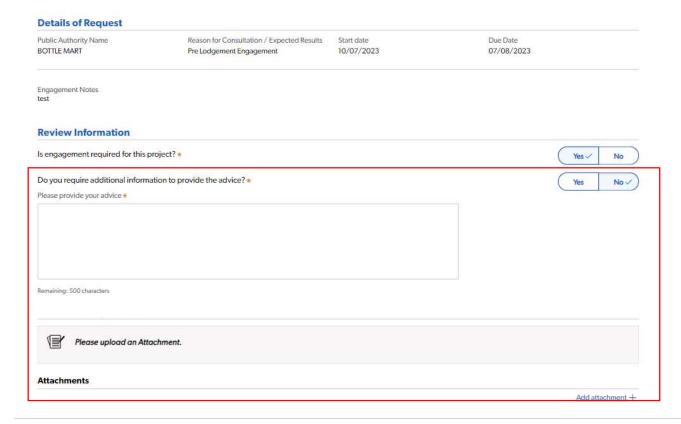| Project Name	Case ID	Task	Request Category	Start Date	Due Date	Days Remaining	Last Accessed By
SSD-8435160	PAE-91626891	Provide Advice to Proponent	Pre Lodgement Engagement	10/07/2023	07/08/2023	25 days	
SSD-9105256	PAE-91626638	Provide Advice to Proponent	Pre Lodgement Engagement	10/07/2023	07/08/2023	25 days	📅
SSD-9105343	PAE-91621894	Provide Advice to Proponent	Pre Lodgement Engagement	10/07/2023	07/08/2023	25 days	📅
SSD-6105443	PAE-91623153	Provide Advice to Proponent	Pre Lodgement Engagement	10/07/2023	07/08/2023	25 days	

2. View and respond to (accept or decline) an engagement request

Click on the task to view the engagement case and any attachments. You can either accept or decline an engagement request. You may decline an engagement request if you believe advice is not required for the project due to it being a simple and straightforward application or if you wish to not provide advice.

3. Request additional information

If you require additional information to provide advice, you may simply request additional information as shown below.
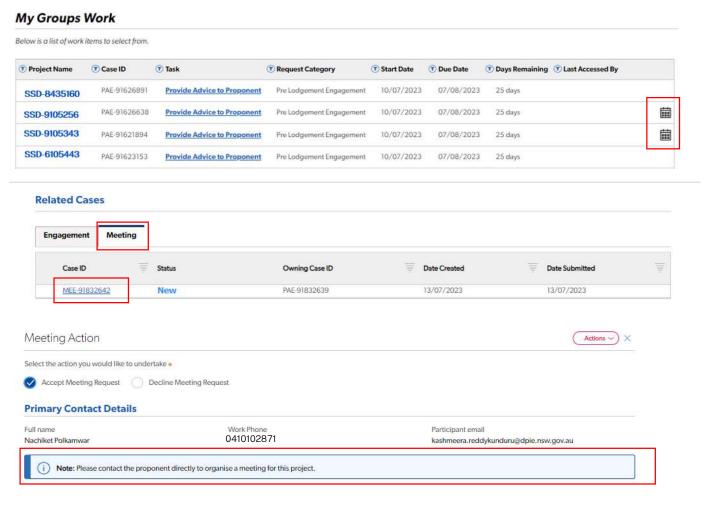
4. Respond to (accept or decline) a meeting request

You may receive a meeting request for an engagement case. New meeting requests will appear on your group dashboard as an icon (📅) next to the engagement request. Click on the 'Task' and view the meeting by selecting the meeting tab at the bottom of the page.

Note1: Meetings will need to occur outside of Major Projects. If your agency accepts a meeting request, you will need to get in touch with the proponent directly to organise the meeting time and date outside of the portal.
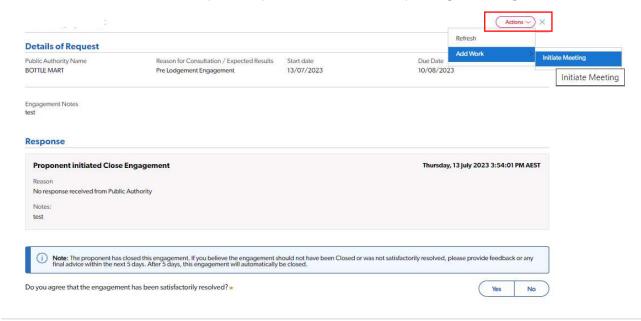
Note 2: Proponents are able to request a meeting when creating an engagement case or later, once an engagement is underway. Only one open meeting case is possible at any given point of time.

My Groups Work

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Project Name	Case ID	Task	Request Category	Start Date	Due Date	Days Remaining	Last Accessed By	
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Related Cases

| Engagement | **Meeting** |

Case ID	Status	Owning Case ID	Date Created	Date Submitted
MEE-91832642	New	PAE-91832639	13/07/2023	13/07/2023

Meeting Action   (Actions ⌄) ✕

Select the action you would like to undertake *

☑ Accept Meeting Request   ○ Decline Meeting Request

Primary Contact Details

Full name	Work Phone	Participant email
Nachiket Polkamwar	0410102871	kashmeera.reddykunduru@dpie.nsw.gov.au

ⓘ **Note:** Please contact the proponent directly to organise a meeting for this project.

5. Request a meeting for an engagement case

If you wish to hold a meeting with the proponent to discuss an engagement case, and the proponent has not elected for a meeting, you can create a meeting request by selecting the option to 'Create a Meeting' under the Actions menu. You will be required to provide a reason for requesting a meeting.
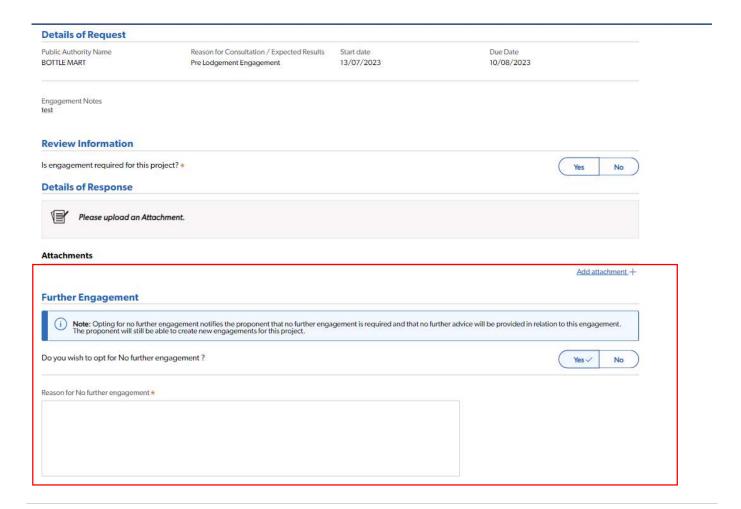

6. View meeting minutes

A copy of the meeting minutes will be shared with you when a proponent uploads the minutes.

Note 1: Proponents are required to upload meeting minutes for each meeting.

7. Opting for no further engagement

You can also opt out of further engagements in an engagement case if you believe that sufficient advice has been provided on the project. You can do so by selecting the option 'Yes' to the question shown below. You will be required to provide a reason for opting out of the engagement case.

8. View all records of engagement

You can view records of an engagement even after the engagement is complete by searching for the case ID, using the filter, under 'My Team Actioned Engagements' table.

9. Provide feedback on engagement closed by proponents

Proponents may close an open engagement, if no advice is provided within 28 days of receiving the engagement request or for other reasons specific to a particular engagement. In this scenario, you are still able to provide feedback on the project or engagement for another 5 days from the proponent closing out an engagement case.