

EES now on exhibition.

Western Outer Ring Main Pipeline Project

Public comment invited

APA VTS Australia (Operations) Pty Limited (ABN 65 083 009 278) (the proponent) has prepared an Environment Effects Statement (EES) for the Western Outer Ring Main Pipeline Project (the Project).

The EES, together with the pipeline licence application, are now available for public comment.

This notice is provided pursuant to the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Vic) (EE Act), the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) and the *Pipelines Act 2005* (Vic).

Written submissions can be made starting **Wednesday 7 July 2021** and closing **11:59pm on Tuesday 17 August 2021**.

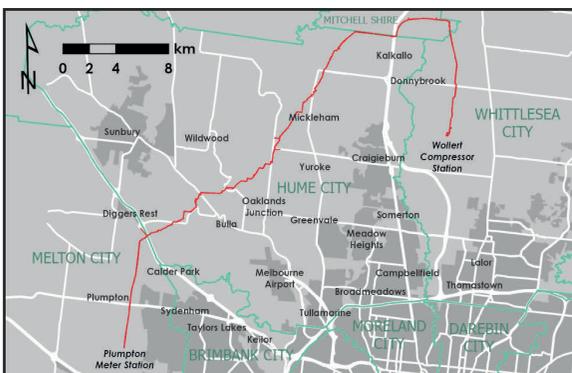
Project description

APA VTS Australia (Operations) Pty Limited (APA) is proposing to construct and operate a buried, 600 millimetre nominal diameter high pressure gas transmission pipeline (the pipeline) between APA's existing Plumpton Regulating Station (approx. 38 kilometres north west of Melbourne's CBD) and Wollert Compressor Station (approx. 26 kilometres north east of Melbourne's CBD).

The pipeline provides a high-pressure connection between the eastern and western pipeline networks of the Victorian Transmission System (VTS). The proposed pipeline will provide the 'missing link' in Victoria's high-pressure gas transmission network.

To ensure Victoria's gas transmission network can service current peak demand, the project proposes to connect the South West Pipeline (SWP) to the Victorian Northern Interconnect (VNI), allowing gas to be circulated across Victoria with greater efficiency by increasing transfer capacity from one side of the State to the other.

A map of the pipeline corridor appears below.



If the Project gains all required approvals, construction is anticipated to begin early 2022 and finish in mid to late 2022.

EES process

On 22 December 2019, the Victorian Minister for Planning determined that an EES is required for the Project under the *Environment Effects Act*. Procedures for the EES were published and are available at: www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0031/446980/EES-Procedures-and-Requirements.pdf

Read more about the EES process for the project at the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) website at www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/browse-projects/projects/western-outer-ring-main-gas-pipeline

EPBC Act process

On 21 February 2020, the federal Department for Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE) issued a decision that the project is a 'controlled action' under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and that the Project will be assessed under the bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and the State of Victoria.

The relevant provision for this controlled action is listed threatened species & communities listed under section 18 & section 18A.

Therefore, this EES has considered Matters of National Environmental Significance for making a determination under the *EPBC Act*. You can make a submission on the matters assessed for the purposes of the relevant provisions under the *EPBC Act*, by making a submission on the EES.

After considering the Victorian Minister for Planning's assessment under the *EE Act*, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment will make a determination whether to approve the controlled action under the *EPBC Act*.

Pipeline licence application

A pipeline licence is required under the *Pipelines Act 2005* (Vic) for the construction and operation of the pipeline.

An application was made to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change on 30 June 2021. The application is included in the exhibited documents at Attachment I to the EES.

Any person who may be affected by the grant of the pipeline licence may make a written submission to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change about the application for the licence by following the EES submission process. All such submissions will be treated as submissions on the EES.

How to access the EES and Exhibited Documents

The EES and the pipeline licence application are now available to read and download at www.apa.com.au/worm/ees

Should COVID-19 restrictions allow, hard copies of the EES and the pipeline licence application will be made available at the following locations during the exhibition period:

Caroline Springs Library & Learning Hub	193-201 Caroline Springs Blvd, Caroline Springs VIC 3023
Craigieburn Library	75-95 Central Park Ave, Craigieburn VIC 3064
Greater Beveridge Community Centre	Cnr Lithgow St / Mandalay Cct, Beveridge VIC 3753
City of Whittlesea Civic Centre Office	25 Ferres Blvd, South Morang VIC 3752
State Library Victoria	328 Swanston Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Subject to COVID-19 restrictions on Community Facilities. Please check the COVIDSafe Settings for metropolitan Melbourne for updates. www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covidsafe-settings

You can request an EES information pack. The pack contains:

- USB loaded with the complete EES and pipeline licence application.
- Printed Summary Brochure.
- Printed guide on How to Navigate the EES.
- Printed Project Overview Map.

For those who cannot access either the physical or electronic sites to view the EES, hard copies may be requested from the Project team free of charge.

To request an EES information pack, or hard copy documents please contact APA VTS Australia (Operations) by phoning **1800 951 444** or emailing worm@apa.com.au

Please note the EES is a long document and we encourage the use of electronic versions.

How to make a submission

Submissions on the EES and the pipeline licence application must be made in writing and be received by **11:59pm on Tuesday 17 August 2021**.

Each submission is a public document and will be treated as a submission on the EES and the pipeline licence application.

Online submissions are preferred and can be lodged via the Victorian Government's engagement website: www.engage.vic.gov.au/worm-inquiry

Where a submitter is unable to lodge a submission online, they must contact Planning Panels Victoria (PPV) through the DELWP Customer Call Centre on **136 186 (select option 6)** and request a hardcopy submission coversheet. Each hardcopy submission must be accompanied by a coversheet issued by PPV.

All submissions must state the name and address of the person making the submission. Petition responses will be treated as a single submission and only the first names from a petition submission will be registered and contacted.

Submissions will be treated as public documents and will be published on the Victorian Government's engagement website. Do not include personal information in the body of your submission (such as your email address or phone number). Your submission and your name will be made public.

The submission process is independently managed by PPV and any enquiries regarding the management of submissions and the Inquiry process should be directed to them.

Inquiry Process

The Minister for Planning will appoint an inquiry under the *Environment Effects Act* to review public submissions, the EES and consider the environmental effects of the project in accordance with terms of reference issued by the Minister for Planning. The Inquiry may also be appointed by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change as a panel under the *Pipelines Act* to consider the pipeline licence application. If appointed as a panel, it must act in accordance with the requirements of the *Pipelines Act* and any specifications in its instrument of appointment.

After the exhibition period, the Inquiry will hold a Directions Hearing on **Monday 6 September 2021**, where the necessary arrangements and timetable for the public hearing will be established.

Further information about the Directions Hearing arrangements (including whether it will be held in person or conducted online by video conference) will be published on www.engage.vic.gov.au/worm-inquiry when determined. The Inquiry will follow the health advice from the Victoria Government and the Chief Health Officer in making this decision.

The public hearing process will commence on **Monday 4 October 2021** and will run for 2 – 3 weeks (as required).

Members of the public and any other parties seeking to be heard at the public hearing are required to submit a written submission and indicate on the submission form that they would like to be heard at the hearing.

Information on the hearing process and timetable will be published as it becomes available at: www.engage.vic.gov.au/worm-inquiry

Questions

In relation to the Project or EES Documentation

APA VTS Australia (Operations), Licencing and Approvals Lead

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PO Box 423 Flinders Lane, Vic 8009

Phone: **1800 951 444**

Fax: **+61 3 8626 8454**

Email: worm@apa.com.au

In relation to making a submission or the Inquiry

Planning Panels Victoria

Phone: **136 186 (select option 6)**

Email: planning.panels@delwp.vic.gov.au

In relation to the EES Process

Impact Assessment Unit, DELWP

Email: environment.assessment@delwp.vic.gov.au

In relation to Pipeline Licence Application

Pipelines Regulation, DELWP

Phone: **136 186**

Email: pipeline.regulation@delwp.vic.gov.au