

Approvals process – State and Federal

EES Decision

At the end of last year the Minister for Planning determined under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) was not required for the Sugarloaf Pipeline Project, subject to conditions.

These conditions included the preparation of a Project Impact Assessment (PIA) Report, a period of public comment, and consideration of the PIA and any public submissions received during the public comment period by an Advisory Committee.

PIA

The Minister determined that the PIA would provide a suitable body of technical evidence to inform the decision making process and help in setting a final pipeline alignment. This decision is consistent with those made for other Victorian pipeline projects, including the Goldfields Superpipe and Wimmera Mallee Pipeline.

The project team submitted the PIA in January 2008, including assessments of the many environmental studies undertaken for the project, such as flora and fauna, cultural heritage and social issues.

In addition to environmental and social effects, the report specifically addresses the down stream environmental effects of transferring water from the Goulburn River via the pipeline.

The Minister for Planning has appointed an Advisory Committee to review the PIA Report, any public submissions received in relation to it and any other relevant information. Details on membership of the Advisory Committee are available on the internet. Information about any hearings the Committee may conduct will be published at www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning/ees as they become available.

The Advisory Committee will accept written public submissions on the PIA until 5pm on 18 March 2008. Submissions must be made within the Terms of Reference issued by the Minister; any issues outside these terms cannot be considered. The full Terms of Reference can be downloaded at the above internet address.

After the Advisory Committee makes its report to the Minister for Planning, the Minister will make a decision on the final pipeline alignment and the appropriate mechanisms to facilitate this under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

EPBC

In addition to this process, the Commonwealth Government is required to approve the project under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC)*, which protects matters of national environmental significance.

The Sugarloaf Pipeline Project was referred to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts in January 2008.

The Minister's delegate determined that the project was a 'controlled action' and accredited the Victorian Government's assessment process. This means that the Advisory Committee will also make its report to the Federal Minister for his consideration under the EPBC Act.

The State and Federal Ministers will make their decisions about how the project proceeds, based on the Advisory Committee's report.



Sugarloaf Pipeline Project

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