

Media Release

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Environmental assessment for Origin's Victorian Generator Project

The Victorian Acting Minister for Planning, John Pandazopoulos has determined that Origin Energy's proposed 1,000 MW gas fired Victorian Generator project will be assessed under the Environment Effects Act 1978.

The determination is a key milestone in the development approval process for Origin Energy's combined power station and pipeline project that is being considered near Mortlake in western Victoria.

Origin Energy's General Manager Public and Government Affairs Tony Wood said "Origin Energy welcomes the determination by the Minister as it now paves the way for a comprehensive environmental assessment of the project."

The Minister has also agreed with the Moyne Shire Council that, given the State significance of the project, it is appropriate that the Minister for Planning be the planning authority for the purposes of issuing a planning scheme amendment for the Power Station site.

Mr Wood said "The next steps in gaining the development approval for the project include the formation of a technical reference group by the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the preparation of 'assessment guidelines' for the project. These guidelines will be available for public review and comment in the next few months and will form the basis on which an Environment Effects Statement¹ will be prepared by Origin Energy in the second half of 2005."

In mid December 2004, Origin Energy undertook the first of a series of public information days at Mortlake, Garvoc and Timboon. Public information and community consultation activities will continue throughout the project development to ensure that the community is kept informed and updated on the project's progress and has the opportunity to participate in the project approval process.

Contact details:

Investors:

Angus Guthrie

Manager Investor Relations

Tele: 02 8345 5558

Mobile: 0417 864 255

About Origin Energy - With a history dating back 140 years, Origin Energy is a leading Australian energy provider and participant in most segments of the energy supply chain, including natural gas and oil exploration and production; power generation; energy retailing and trading; and asset management services. Origin Energy supplies energy to more than 2 million Australian homes and business and employs over 2,700 people.

¹ An Environment Effects Statement or EES describes the likely environmental effects of a proposed development and generally contains a description of the project, its alternatives, an outline of the various approvals that are required for the project to proceed, an outline of the public consultation undertaken and issues raised, description of the existing environment and predictions of the environmental impact of the project.