

Victorian Generator Project

Community Newsletter

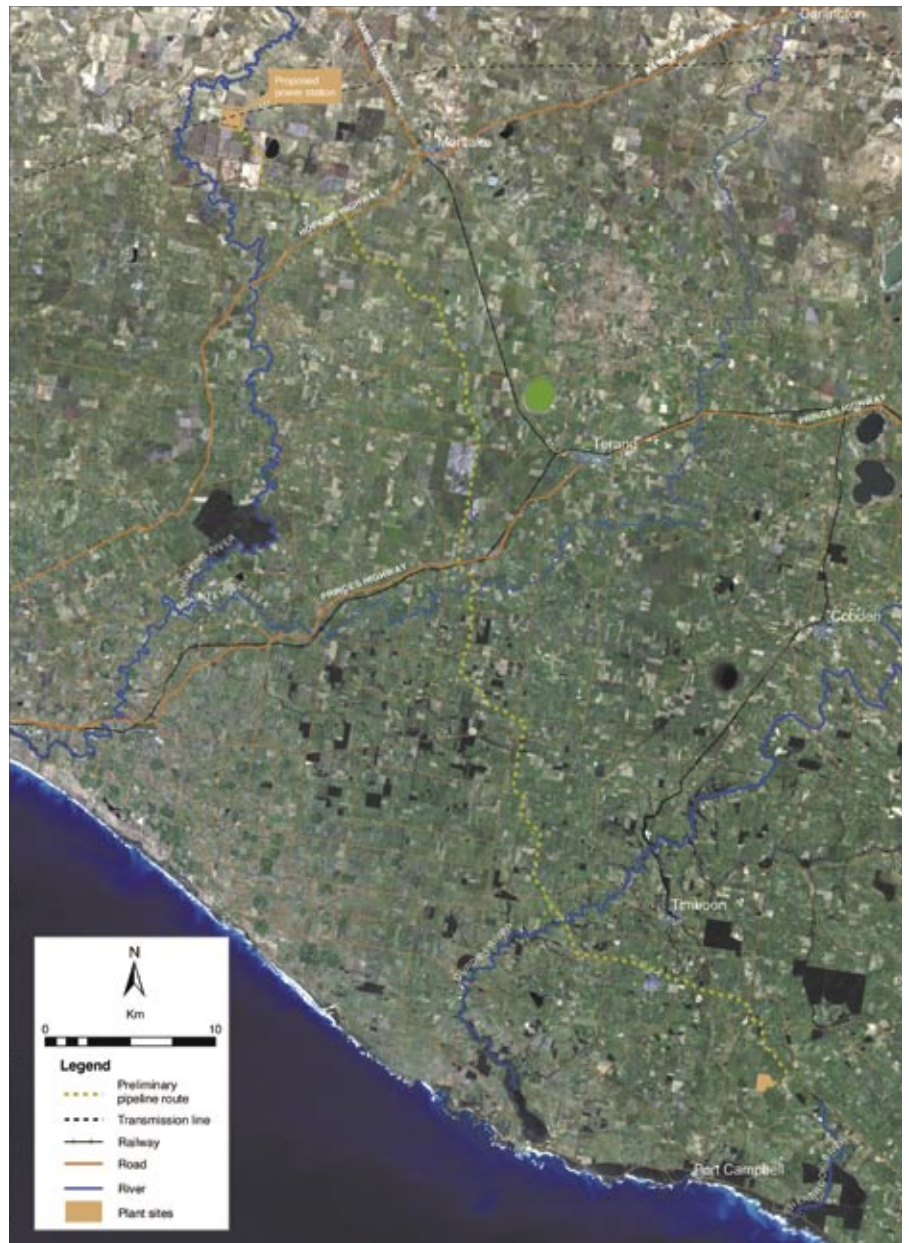
No 1 March 2005

This is the first in a series of newsletters to keep you informed of Origin Energy's progress in gaining approvals to construct a gas-fired power station with a capacity of up to 1000 MW 12 km west of the township of Mortlake and a 78-km gas pipeline from near Port Campbell to the proposed site.



Background

To meet the growing and future demand for electricity in Australia, Origin Energy started a process in October 2004 to seek planning and environmental approvals to build a natural gas-fired power station 12 km west of the township of Mortlake. The project includes the construction of a 78-km underground natural gas pipeline from the Otway Gas Plant near Port Campbell to supply the power station. Origin hopes to have the necessary approvals in place by mid 2006, at which time a decision will be made regarding the timing and scale of construction activities.





Information day - December 2004

The community getting involved

In mid-December 2004, Origin was grateful to the people of Mortlake, Garvoc and Timboon who took time out of their busy pre-Christmas schedules to attend advertised Information Sessions in those townships.

Valuable feedback has been received at these information sessions on issues such as road reserves, traffic management during and after construction, power station lighting and flora and fauna, which will enable Origin to address these issues in the EES.

Further Information Days and newsletters are being planned for mid-2005 to keep people informed of project developments, and again in the fourth quarter of 2005 when the EES and associated approvals documents will be exhibited for public comment.

How you can get involved

In March/April 2005, the Victorian Government — through the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) — will prepare Draft EES Assessment Guidelines. These Guidelines are intended to outline the matters to be addressed in the environment effects statement (EES) for the Victorian Generator Project. Advertisements will be placed in local and metropolitan newspapers notifying the community that the Draft EES Assessment Guidelines are on exhibition and available for public comment. The Draft EES Assessment Guidelines will also be available through the DSE's website www.dse.vic.gov.au/planning/ees After consideration of all relevant feedback, the EES Assessment Guidelines will be finalised by DSE.

How to make a submission

You will have four weeks from the time the Draft Assessment Guidelines are published to make a submission. All submissions must be made in writing and posted or emailed to:

Mr Ashley Stephens
Department of Sustainability and Environment
PO Box 5000
EAST MELBOURNE 3002
Phone: 03 9655 6923
Facsimile: 03 9655 6919
Email: ashley.stephens@dse.vic.gov.au

Activity to Date

Since the announcement of the proposed power station and pipeline:

- Origin has commenced consultation with the local community including landholders, Local Shire Councils, Government agencies and Ministers, environmental groups and media
- Easement option agreements are being delivered and considered by landowners
- The first options for the pipeline easement have been signed
- Environmental, engineering and social studies are in progress
- Commonwealth Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) referral has been made and response received
- A Technical Reference Group (TRG) has been formed under the lead of the Department of Sustainability and Environment, to oversee the EES process
- The first meeting of the TRG was held in Mortlake on 8 March 2005
- Project web-site has been updated www.originenergy.com.au/vicgenproject

Pipeline easement process

Recently Origin's representatives have been visiting landholders along the proposed route of the natural gas pipeline to negotiate an option for the pipeline easement.

Landowners are currently considering the terms of these options and associated compensation payments.

The easement process is being conducted in line with the Australian Pipeline Industry Association/Victorian Farmers Federation easement guidelines.

Timeline

Q4 2004

Request Minister for Planning's determination
Commence Consultation

Q1 2005

EES process determined
EPBC decision
First TRG Meeting
Guidelines drafted
Newsletter 1

Q2 2005

Guidelines finalised
Environment studies underway
TRG meetings
Newsletter 2

Q3 2005

Studies completed
Draft EES prepared
EES reviewed by TRG
Newsletter 3

Q4 2005

EES exhibited
Public comment period
Information sessions held

Q1 2006

Public submissions reviewed
Newsletter 4

Q2 2006

Independent panel enquiry
Assessment report
Newsletter 5

Project Approval - Assessment Process

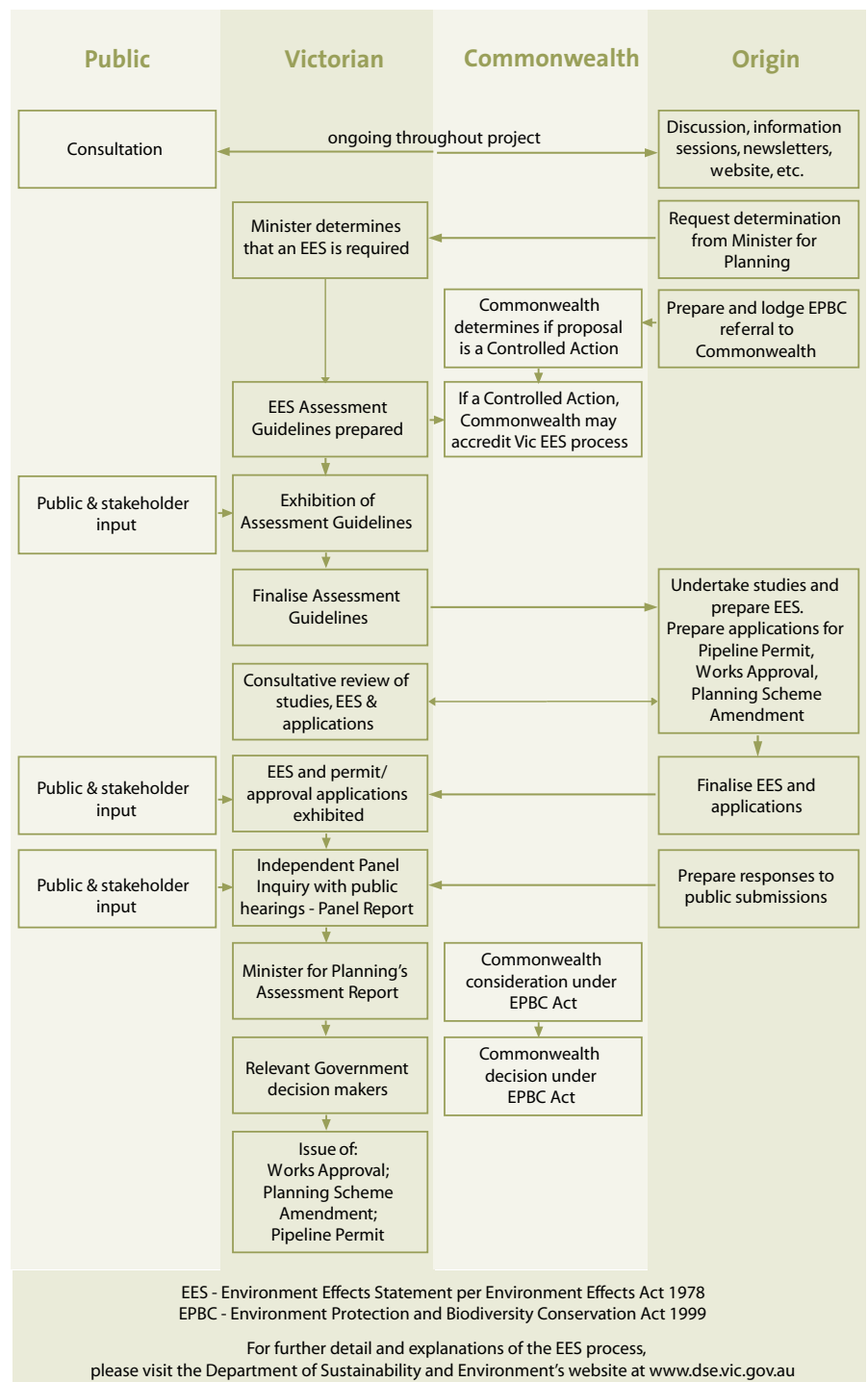
On 10 January 2005, the (acting) Minister for Planning determined that the project requires an Environment Effects Statement (EES) under the Environment Effects Act 1978. An EES provides a detailed description of the proposal, its potential impacts on the environment and its associated economic and social implications.

The key steps in the EES process are:

- The Minister for Planning decides an EES is required
- Draft EES Assessment Guidelines are prepared and advertised by the DSE for public comment
- The Guidelines are finalised incorporating relevant public comments
- Environmental studies are undertaken and a draft EES prepared by Origin and reviewed by the DSE/TRG
- The EES is finalised and exhibited for public comment
- An Independent Panel is appointed to review submissions, hold public hearings and provide a report to the Minister for Planning
- The Minister for Planning prepares and forwards an assessment report to the relevant government decision-makers

The DSE has established a Technical Reference Group (TRG) made up of representatives of statutory authorities and agencies to advise DSE on the environmental studies and the EES. The TRG met for the first time in Mortlake on the 8 March 2005. The project has also been referred to the Commonwealth under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and it was determined that the project will not be a "controlled action" under that legislation.

Indicative Environment Assessment and Approval Process



Frequently Asked Questions

What are the environmental effects?

A comprehensive study of the environmental and social effects of the proposed project will be conducted as part of the environmental approval process. Impacts will be rigorously assessed by Government regulators and be subject to public scrutiny. The site has been selected to minimise any local impacts, the fuel will be clean natural gas and the use of air-cooled technology will minimise water use.

How big will it be?

The power station will sit on approximately 20 hectares of land. The tallest part will be the exhaust stacks, which may possibly stand up to 45 metres high (equivalent to between one-half to two-thirds of the height of the existing electricity transmission towers).

When will it be built?

The approval process, which is now underway, is expected to be completed by mid 2006. If approved, and Origin decides to proceed immediately, the earliest construction would commence in summer 2006/07 with the power station entering service approximately two years later.



Scenes along the proposed pipeline route



Studies planned

The types of studies that Origin would expect to have to complete for the EES include:

- Flora and fauna
- Air quality
- Noise
- Visual amenity
- Indigenous and non-indigenous cultural heritage
- Roads and traffic impact
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Social and economic impacts
- Water and effluent

It is anticipated that the majority of the investigations will be completed by July 2005.



delivering the goods

Contact details

If you have any questions regarding the information presented please contact:

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