

# Victorian Generator Project

## Community Newsletter

No 2 July 2005

With the initial environmental and social studies for the Victorian Generator Project nearing completion, this newsletter brings you the preliminary results of flora and fauna, cultural heritage and noise impact studies.

### Background

This is the second 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.

### Progress on approvals

March to June 2005 has been a busy time for the project with the following activities undertaken:

- Environmental and social studies
- Consultation continuing with the local community
- The Draft Assessment Guidelines for the Environmental Effects Statement (EES) advertised for public comment and finalised, taking into account submissions received
- The second meeting of the Technical Reference Group (TRG), formed under the lead of the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) to oversee the EES process, held in Mortlake on 16 June 2005.



Curdies River crossing. Origin will drill horizontally under the crossing to avoid and minimise impacts on the conservation values of the area.

## Studies nearing completion

During the past three months, specialist consultants have been evaluating the effects of the Victorian Generator Project on the local community and environment.

### Study 1: Noise

The noise study was undertaken by Chris Turnbull of Sonus Pty Ltd. The study involved:

- Characterising the existing noise conditions in the vicinity of the power station site
- Identifying permissible noise conditions for the operation of the proposed plant under appropriate EPA noise guidelines
- Identifying the requirement for mitigation measures for the power station.

The report considers noise levels from the proposed plant at residences close to the power station site.

### Key findings

In late April, background noise assessments were taken at four residences near the power station site. In addition, spot noise measurements were taken at various locations. Sonus Pty Ltd found that EPA noise guidelines would classify the present background noise levels as 'very low'.

Noise modelling of alternative power station configurations has been based on stringent conditions and the recorded background noise levels. Sonus Pty Ltd found that all Origin Energy's proposed power station configurations are capable of meeting the EPA guidelines through proven acoustic treatment practices.

### Study 2: Cultural heritage

Heritage specialists Andrew Long & Associates and Framlingham Aboriginal Trust conducted the cultural heritage study. The field and desktop study involved:

- determining the presence of any Aboriginal and historical cultural heritage values that may be affected by the project
- recommending management options to mitigate or minimize any identified adverse effects.

### Historical heritage

The study identified numerous historical places throughout the wider region, however found that these will not be affected by the project. No previously registered historical archaeological sites occur within 2 km of the power station site or pipeline route.

The field survey did not identify any new historical archaeological sites. Three potentially historical features; the Reichmans Lane Dam, Chamallak Road Bridge and Tapps Lane Shed were noted close to the pipeline route. The study recommends Origin Energy avoids these features.



Tapps Lane Shed



### Aboriginal cultural heritage

The study found that no previously registered Aboriginal sites occur within 50m of the pipeline route or power station site. One previously unrecorded stone artefact site was identified within 50m of the pipeline route during the field survey, which was conducted on foot. Appropriate avoidance measures will be implemented during construction to ensure this site is not affected by the project.

For the most part, the pipeline route is regarded as having low to moderate sensitivity for site types including scarred trees, stone artefact scatters and isolated artefacts. The valleys and slopes of the Curdies River and Mt Emu Creek were considered to have high to moderate sensitivity for site types including scarred trees, stone artefact scatters and isolated artefacts. Origin Energy will horizontally drill under these areas. Further field investigations will also be undertaken based on the horizontal drilling pad locations. Any additional requirements identified will be implemented prior to construction.

It was noted that pasture growth along the pipeline route hampered visibility for the identification of shallow surface and sub-surface Aboriginal and historic archaeological deposits. Origin Energy will ensure strict compliance with monitoring requirements and procedures for discovery of unrecorded cultural heritage during construction, as recommended by Framlingham Aboriginal Trust and Andrew Long & Associates.



Log rolling was undertaken to locate reptiles and frogs.



Curdies River Valley looking south.



Aquatic vegetation at Mt Emu creek.

### Study 3: Flora and fauna

To minimise impact on significant flora and fauna species that may be present, extensive desktop and reconnaissance work was undertaken by Origin Energy when initially selecting the pipeline route.

Brett Lane & Associates Pty Ltd conducted the flora and fauna study. The field and desktop study involved:

- assessing the potential impacts of the development and operation of the project on significant flora and fauna species
- assessing the project's potential impact on wetlands, habitat areas and wildlife corridors, including the risk of weed spread
- specifying management options to mitigate or minimize disturbance to habitats and species.



### Key findings

The power station site was considered to be of minimal conservation significance, as the site is regularly cultivated and provides limited habitat for indigenous flora and fauna species. Brett Lane & Associates Pty Ltd evaluated each property along the pipeline route for its conservation significance. It was determined that the landscape is highly modified as a result of European settlement. The majority of the pipeline route is dominated by introduced vegetation, such as pasture and planted vegetation that has minimal conservation significance.

Scattered remnant vegetation is present in some places along or adjacent to the pipeline route. Further investigation work is currently being undertaken to determine specific mitigation strategies for each area where this occurs. Origin Energy's preference will be to make slight modifications to the pipeline route to avoid these features.

The Curdies River crossing and its immediate environs were considered to be the most significant area of remnant vegetation. Origin Energy will horizontally drill under this area. Of interest, outside the project area, two populations of threatened plant species were noted. These were the Lime Fern and the Swamp Greenwood.

The study found that while a number of nationally significant fauna species have the potential to occur in the area, no species were confirmed to be present.


One species of state significance was sighted along the pipeline route or in the general area; this was the Grey Goshawk. The Powerful Owl was also considered likely to occur at several locations along the pipeline route. The study considered that these species may use areas along the pipeline route for foraging; however it is unlikely that these are used regularly and the impact of construction will be negligible.

Overall, the study found that large mobile fauna species are unlikely to be impacted. Small fauna species (e.g. frogs and lizards) may be temporarily displaced in some locations while pipeline construction is undertaken. Rehabilitation of the alignment will ensure any impacts to these species are temporary.

### Further investigations

As it is not always possible to confirm the presence of some flora and fauna species due to seasonal or behavioral limitations, a supplementary spring/early summer survey will be conducted.

## Timeline



<b>Q4 2004</b> Request Minister for Planning's determination Commence Consultation	<b>Q1 2005</b> EES process determined EPBC decision First TRG Meeting Guidelines drafted Newsletter 1	<b>Q2 2005</b> Guidelines finalised Environment studies underway TRG meetings Newsletter 2	<b>Q3 2005</b> Studies completed Draft EES prepared EES reviewed by TRG Newsletter 3	<b>Q4 2005</b> EES exhibited Public comment period Information sessions held	<b>Q1 2006</b> Public submissions reviewed Newsletter 4	<b>Q2 2006</b> Independent panel enquiry Assessment report Newsletter 5
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### What other studies are being undertaken?

Other studies include:

- visual amenity
- air quality
- greenhouse gas emissions
- socio-economic
- water and effluent
- roads and traffic.

Community Newsletter No.3, scheduled for release in August 2005, will focus on these areas.

### Where can you find the full details of the studies?

The results of these studies will be consolidated in the EES. Full copies of the specialist consultant's reports will be available as technical appendices to the EES.

### How you can get involved?

#### Community Information Day

Come and see us at the Community Information Day, to be held in August. Dates and times will be advertised.

#### EES Exhibition

The EES will be available in Q4, 2005. The DSE will place advertisements in local and metropolitan newspapers notifying the community that the EES on the project may be obtained from Origin's website, the DSE website at [www.dse.vic.gov.au/planning/ees](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/planning/ees)

or viewed at a range of locations convenient to the local community. You are invited to comment on the Power Station project. The Department of Sustainability and Environment will take into account all public submissions prior to making a recommendation for development approval to the relevant Minister.



*delivering the goods*

#### Contact details

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

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