

Media Release

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BassGas Community Consultation Begins

Specialist consultants will begin work this week on an extensive environmental study and community consultation to ensure the route for the proposed BassGas pipeline project has minimal environmental and social impacts.

A preferred corridor for investigation has been identified for the location of a new gas pipeline and processing plant in the Kilcunda to Koo-Wee-Rup of south-east Victoria by the BassGas Joint Venture.

The BassGas Project - which involves the development of the Yolla gas field located approximately 150 kilometres south of the Victorian coast in the Bass Strait - is expected to provide up to 10% of Victoria's current natural gas demand for 15 years when it is constructed.

BassGas General Manager, Mr Geoff Wearne, said "Over the past few months, the Joint Venture has undertaken an options analysis of potential sites for both the shore crossing point for the pipeline as well as the location of the gas processing plant. This preliminary assessment considered environmental, land use, social, economic and technical issues.

"The precise pipeline alignment and location of the gas plant site have yet to be determined and will be subject to appropriate environmental and planning approvals, in consultation with the local community.

An environmental impact assessment (EIA) will be undertaken as required by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments.

Environmental and regulatory approvals for the project need to be in place by mid-2002 so that construction can begin and enable first gas production to be provided to consumers by winter 2004.

“We are committed to a partnership approach with the community and government agency stakeholders to ensure the project’s environmental assessment is rigorous and transparent, and that the local community has the opportunity to participate in the process,” Mr Wearne said.

Under the current proposal, the BassGas Project would extract gas, LPG and condensate (light oil) from the field and transfer it by sub-sea and underground pipeline to an onshore gas processing plant in the south-eastern Victoria.

The gas would then be transported from the plant by underground pipeline to join the existing gas transmission system at Dandenong. This would provide a new independent gas supply into the Victorian markets through Origin Energy Retail in Victoria.

Origin Energy Resources Ltd is the operator of the project on behalf of the BassGas Project Joint Venture, which comprises Origin Energy Resources Ltd, CalEnergy Gas (UK) Ltd, Origin Energy Northwest Ltd, Galveston Mining Corporation Pty Ltd, AWE Petroleum Pty Ltd and Santos Ltd.

“Locally, the project will generate up to 40 long-term jobs and up to 1,000 construction-based jobs. The project will also result in Multiplier effects from investment, which will generate employment for two or three times the number of direct long-term employees,” Mr Wearne said.

Project expenditure is estimated at \$400 million and forms part of a chain of new Victorian offshore resource and onshore infrastructure developments with a total value in excess of \$1 billion that will be undertaken by Origin Energy.

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