

# western outer ring main **project.**



Improving Victoria's energy security.



## What is the Western Outer Ring Main Project?

Natural gas is an essential source of energy for Victoria with approximately two million customers using gas every day for domestic applications including cooking, heating and hot water. Natural gas is also a critical fuel for approximately 60,000 industrial and commercial users throughout Victoria including manufacturers, and gas fired power generation plays a key role in ensuring a reliable electricity network. In Victoria, the Victorian Transmission System (VTS) is owned and maintained by APA and consists of some 2,267km of gas pipelines.

The Western Outer Ring Main project is a proposed high pressure, buried, gas transmission pipeline approximately 51km in length. It will address a key capacity constraint in the VTS by providing a new high pressure connection between existing sources of natural gas supply in the north and east with those in the west of the State.

Addressing this missing link will deliver improved network reliability by increasing the amount of natural gas that can be stored for times of peak demand and ensuring sufficient volumes of natural gas can be moved where it is needed most. Importantly, without the project being delivered, the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) has forecast that Victoria may face natural gas shortages by mid 2022.

The Western Outer Ring Main will help to deliver sufficient natural gas to Victorian homes for heating and cooking on very cold days, as well as supplying natural gas for power generation during times of peak electricity demand. The project also provides the opportunity for new growth suburbs on Melbourne's urban fringe to be supplied with natural gas as those areas are developed.

The Western Outer Ring Main project will ensure that all Victorians can continue to benefit from a reliable natural gas transmission system that meets the needs of the community both now and into the future.

## Further information:

 **project hotline:** 1800 951 444

 [WORM@apa.com.au](mailto:WORM@apa.com.au)

 [apa.com.au](http://apa.com.au)

## Pipeline stats

length	Approximately 51 kilometres
material	Epoxy coated high strength steel line pipe
diameter	500 millimetres
minimum cover	750 millimetres
design principles	Strictly in accordance with the latest version of Australian Standard (AS) AS2885 Pipelines Gas and Liquid Petroleum.
temporary construction corridor	Generally 30 metres, plus ancillary areas to facilitate safe construction
easement width	15 metres

## Project benefits:

- Addressing forecast gas shortages
- Improved network performance and resilience
- Increased gas supply capacity for power generation
- Improved supply options for urban growth areas

APA is a leading Australian energy infrastructure business. We've been connecting Australian energy since 2000. From small beginnings we've become a top 50 ASX-listed company, employing 1,800 people, and owning and operating the largest interconnected gas transmission network across Australia. We deliver smart, reliable and safe solutions through our deep industry knowledge and interconnected infrastructure. Visit [www.apa.com.au](http://www.apa.com.au) to learn more about how we are connecting Australia to its energy future.

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# Proposed project timeline

**Note:** timeline provided is indicative only and will be subject to further discussions and agreement with state and federal governments.

## Community and stakeholder engagement

2020 – 2022

- Consultation with government agencies, local councils and other stakeholders.
- Ongoing consultation with landowners where the pipeline is located on their property.
- Consultation with the wider community.

## Field surveys

2020 – early 2021

Undertake any additional investigations of the preferred pipeline route, such as ecology, cultural heritage, feature surveys, and hydrology.

## EES Process and Regulatory approvals

2020 – 2021

Undertake:

- EES Scoping Requirements.
- EES Consultation.
- EES Investigations.
- EES Process.
- Obtain all other relevant federal and state government approvals.

## Project construction

late-2021 – mid-2022

Construction of the pipeline and compressor station at Wollert.

## Alignment selection

In late 2018 and early 2019, APA undertook initial consultation to determine the key constraints to consider for a pipeline route between Plumpton and Wollert. The initial consultation included relevant local governments in order to ensure that community issues were understood and taken into account. In March 2019, APA identified a preferred pipeline route for the Project, based on an assessment of such key constraints including environmental values, cultural heritage, terrain, existing and proposed infrastructure corridors, watercourses, and land use.

The preferred pipeline route has sought to minimise impacts on individual properties by following existing pipeline easements as well as the proposed Outer Metropolitan Ring transportation corridor that has previously been identified for reservation by the Department of Transport.

APA's pipeline route selection report is available to download from the Western Outer Ring Main project website.

Since March 2019, APA has been liaising with landholders to seek their feedback regarding the preferred pipeline route and the likely impacts on their property. This feedback has been used to refine the pipeline alignment and agree on other design and construction commitments to minimise the impact on individual properties wherever possible.

## Approvals process

APA will need to obtain a Pipeline Licence under the *Pipelines Act 2005 (Vic)* to allow for the construction and operation of the Project. Prior to submitting the Pipeline Licence application, APA is required to give each landowner on the proposed pipeline corridor a Notice of Pipeline Corridor. The Pipelines Act also includes a requirement to prepare an Environmental Management Plan demonstrating how the impacts of the project will be managed.

In Victoria, environmental assessment of the potential environmental impacts or effects of a proposed development may also be required under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*. APA has referred the Western Outer Ring Main project to the Minister for Planning. In December 2019, the Minister for Planning determined that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is required for the Western Outer Ring Main project.

A referral for the Project was also submitted to the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE) under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*. In February 2020, DAWE determined that the Project is a 'controlled action', to be assessed under a bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and Victorian governments.

## Land Access and Compensation

Since March 2019, APA has been obtaining landholder agreement to access land along the preferred pipeline route so that detailed investigations regarding the route could be undertaken. These investigations have been necessary to confirm the preferred alignment and inform the detailed environmental assessment.

APA has now commenced negotiations with landholders to obtain an easement to contain the pipeline. An easement is an agreement registered on the title of the land that sets out the rights of a pipeline owner to install and maintain the pipeline and also defines the restrictions on the landowner in the area of the easement. Compensation for the easement is payable to the landowner and APA will also pay landowner legal and valuation costs reasonably incurred in negotiating an easement agreement.



Example of a pipeline under construction, prior to being lowered into the ground.



The same pipeline easement, after reinstatement.