



Moomba to Wilton Pipeline Modification 3

Groundwater bore and site layout amendments

State Significant Infrastructure Modification Assessment
(SSI 15548591 MOD 3)



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Cover image: *View of compressor station MW433 - East Coast Grid Expansion -Stages 1 and 2 – Modification Report (pg 50)*

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

East Australian Pipeline, part of APA Group (APA), own and operate the Moomba to Wilton Pipeline (MWP), an approximately 1,299-kilometre (km) gas pipeline connecting Moomba in South Australia to Wilton in New South Wales. The MWP is the mainline part of the Moomba to Sydney Pipeline (MSP) (see **Figure 1**).

The MSP forms part of APA's interconnected East Coast Grid network which provides an important supply of gas between Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland.

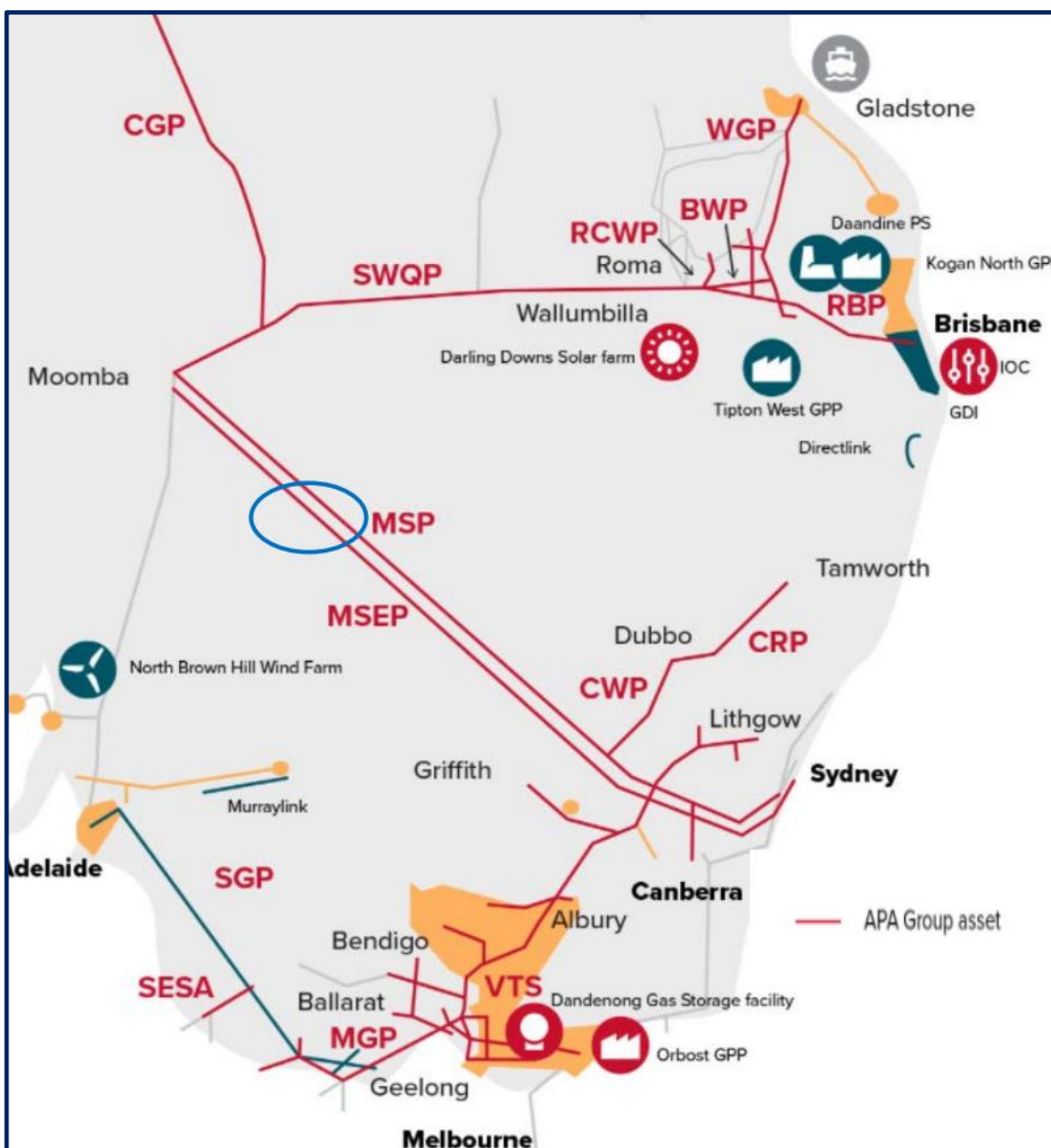


Figure 1 | APA East Coast Grid Network (Moomba to Sydney Pipeline circled in blue)

1.2 Approval history

Construction and operation of the MWP (the project) was authorised by a licence (Licence 16) issued under the *Pipelines Act 1967* (Pipelines Act) in 1997. Licence 16 was subsequently varied to allow for the construction and operation of lateral pipelines and compressor stations.

The project was granted planning approval under Part 3A of the EP&A Act in 2006 by the *Pipelines Amendment Act 2006* and was subsequently transitioned to State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) in December 2020.

In 2021, a modification to the project was approved under Section 5.25 of the EP&A Act (Modification 1), for the installation of two compressor stations (MW880 and MW433) to increase gas transportation capacity on the east coast gas network. The MW433 compressor station site is located approximately 100 km north of Wilcannia (see **Figure 2** below).

APA has also commenced scoping of other modifications to the project approval, including:

- Modification 2 – construction and operation of three additional compressor stations along the pipeline; and
- Modification 4 - construction and operation of temporary accommodation camps to facilitate the maintenance of the pipeline

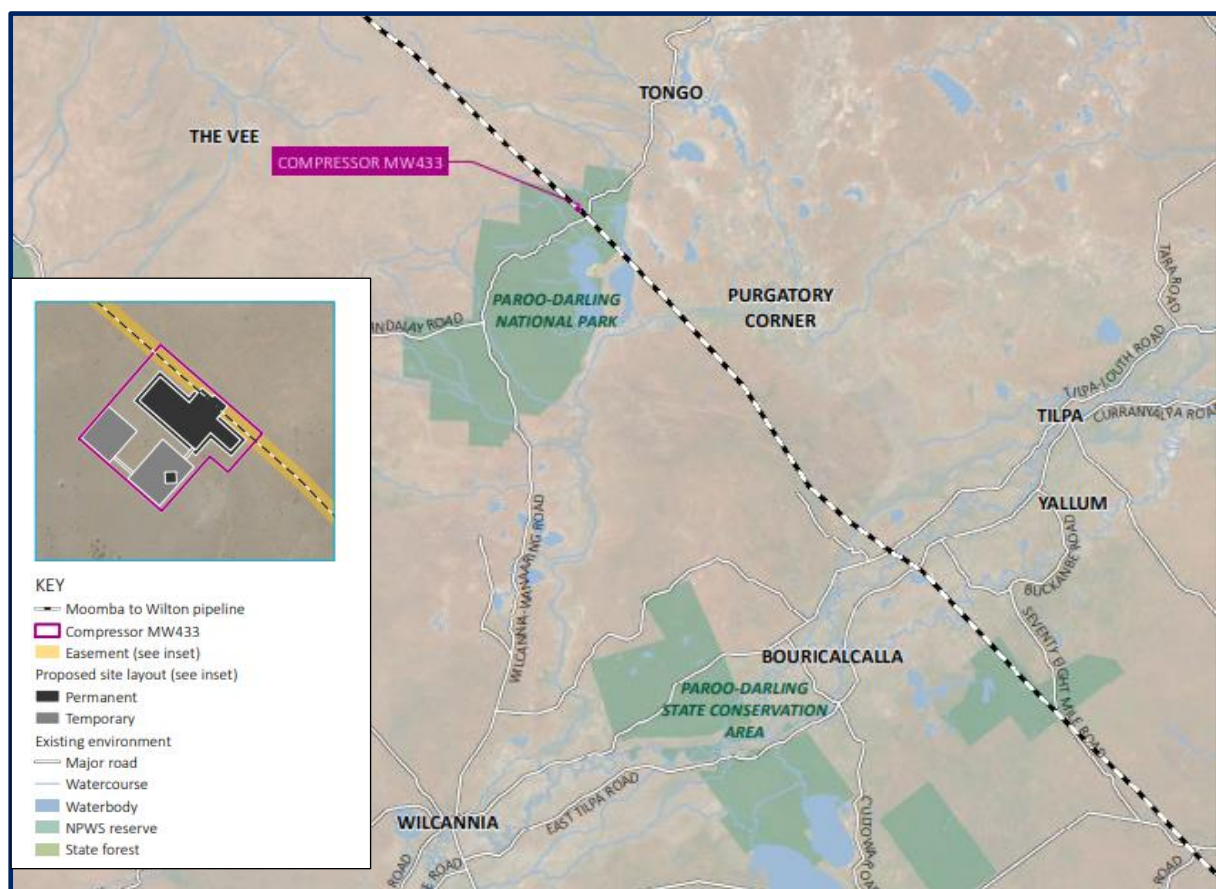


Figure 2 | Local Context Map – MW433

2 Proposed modification

APA has submitted a modification application to accommodate changes to the MW433 compressor station site, located in the Central Darling local government area (LGA).

The proposed modification seeks to construct a groundwater bore on the site to supply water for construction activities. The extraction of up to 40 ML over 12 months is proposed, with water mainly to be used during construction for dust suppression purposes.

The proposed modification also seeks to increase the disturbance footprint within MW433 by 5.1 ha (ie from 3.5 ha to 8.6 ha). This increase has been informed by the commencement of construction at the MW880 compressor station, in that the approved disturbance footprint was insufficient to accommodate all construction and operational works. APA advise that the additional disturbance areas are required to allow for additional stockpile areas, the propose bore infrastructure and minor site layout amendments that would increase buffer distances between construction works and the Paroo-Darling National Park.

No other changes are proposed to the project, with the arrangement of temporary and permanent structures generally remaining in the approved configuration. The layout of the proposed modification is depicted in **Figure 3**, and all proposed works are described in detail in the Modification Report (see **Appendix A1**)



Figure 3 | Proposed Site Layout at MW433

3 Statutory context

3.1 Scope of modifications

The proposed modification was lodged under section 5.25 of the EP&A Act, which provides for the modification of an SSI approval. The Department is satisfied that the modification is consistent with the approved MWP, with the modification proposing relatively minor changes within the MW433 compressor station sites.

3.2 Delegated authority

The Minister for Planning is the approval authority for the modification under Section 5.25 of the EP&A Act. However, under the Minister's delegation dated 9 March 2022, the Director, Resource Assessments may determine the modification application as APA did not make a political disclosure, Council did not object to the project, and there were no objections to the modification from the public.

4 Engagement

The Department publicly exhibited the modification report on its website from 18 October to 1 November 2022 and referred the modification request to relevant government agencies for comment. No submissions from members of the public were received. However, advice was received from five government agencies (see **Appendix A2**).

4.1 Key issues raised in agency advice

DPE Water advised that extraction from the proposed bore must not exceed 40ML over a single 12-month period, in order to protect a nationally significant groundwater dependent ecosystem located 8 km north of the site. DPE Water also recommended that the bore be constructed with a minimum 60m grout seal, is decommissioned on completion of project construction and that APA must ensure sufficient water is held in a Water Access Licence. APA acknowledged and agreed to these requests.

The Department has considered the water impacts of the proposed modification in **Section 5**.

The **Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Directorate** (BCS) advised that the Biodiversity Assessment Report (BDAR) had been prepared in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020, and the **National Parks & Wildlife Service** (NPWS) advised it was satisfied that the previously proposed wastewater management measures would sufficiently mitigate risk of impact on the Paroo-Daring National Park.

Heritage NSW noted the high significance of artefact scatter MW433-OS1 and advised that the avoidance and mitigation measures implemented in Modification 1 remain applicable to the project. Heritage NSW also recommended ongoing consultation with Registered Aboriginal Parties during construction.

The **Environmental Protection Authority** (EPA) advised that it had no comments on the proposal.

Central Darling Council did not comment on the proposal.

5 Assessment

In assessing the merits of the modification application, the Department has considered the:

- previous environmental assessments (EA) for the project;
- existing pipeline license conditions; and
- requirements of the EP&A Act.

The Department considers that the key potential impact of the proposed modification relates to water resources. Other potential impacts are considered to be minor and are discussed in **Table 1**.

5.1 Water Resources

Groundwater

The proposed modification has the potential to impact on groundwater resources as a result of extraction from the groundwater bore.

The compressor station site is located on the southern boundary of the Great Artesian Basin and groundwater resources are regulated under the *Water Sharing Plan for the Great Artesian Basin Groundwater Sources 2020*.

A high priority GDE is located approximately 8km south of the site, referred to as the Lake Peery Mound Springs complex. Additionally, there are 190 other GDEs surrounding the site, the closest of which is approximately 1.5 km from the site.

The groundwater assessment concludes that predicted drawdown at these receivers would be approximately 0.07 m and 0.01 m, respectively, which is well below the level 1 minimum impact criteria of the *NSW Aquifer Interference Policy (AIP)*.

There are 24 third-party bores within a 15 km radius of the site, the closest of which is located approximately 5.2km away from MW433. Similarly, the groundwater assessment concludes that the predicted drawdown at this receiver would be approximately 0.01 m and below level 1 minimal impact criteria of the AIP.

No changes to groundwater quality are predicted as a result of the proposed modification.

To identify and mitigate any adverse impacts on groundwater resources, APA propose to install a monitoring bore near the proposed production bore to verify drawdown predictions. APA also propose to construct the production bore in accordance with the '*Minimum Construction Guidelines for Water Bores in Australia*' (NUDLC 2020).

DPE Water advised that the bore must be constructed with a 60m grout seal to ensure that water is extracted from the targeted water source. Additionally, DPE Water advised that extraction from the bore must be limited to 40 ML over a single 12-month period to ensure potentially impacts on the Lake Peery Mound Springs complex are avoided. APA agreed to this request and committed to completing all Water Access Licence requirements prior to extraction.

Overall, the Department considers that potential impacts on groundwater are minimal subject to restriction on extraction from the bore. The Department has recommended condition to this effect.

Surface Water

Potential surface water impacts of the proposed modification relate to erosion and sediment control, flooding and unexpected downstream water quality impacts. A surface water assessment included in the Modification Report concluded that the proposed modification would pose no additional risks to offsite and downstream water features, subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures. These measures include the development of a Construction Environmental Management Plan and Soil and Water Management Plan.

The Department considers that these potential impacts can be managed under existing conditions of consent.

5.2 Other Issues

The Department's consideration of other issues is summarised in **Table 1**.

Table 3 | Assessment of Other Issues

Issue	Findings	Recommendations
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Under Modification 1, the compressor station site was approved to partially disturb a dispersed stone artefact scatter (MW433-OS1) of high scientific and cultural significance.• APA designed the location of temporary infrastructure to sit within the middle and south parts of the site, to reduce impacts on the northern crest landform containing a greater density and higher archaeological sensitivity of artefacts.• The proposed modification would increase the disturbance of the artefact scatter, with the proposed footprint including an additional 12,700 m² of sensitive archaeological area.• Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) advised that the crest landforms of the project area should remain undisturbed and that if works were to take place further downslope, salvage and recording of artefacts should take place.• APA confirmed that all no additional disturbance would occur north of the pipeline easement (ie upon the crest) and that the greatest extent of disturbance would be immediately south of the pipeline easement where infrastructure is unable to be relocated.• APA propose to mitigate impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage by incorporating new areas into its Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan	No additional conditions necessary.

Issue	Findings	Recommendations
	<p>(ACHMP) and continuing to consult with the RAPs during salvage and recording procedures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage NSW noted that the proposed modification had been designed to avoid Aboriginal objects where possible and advised of its support for the proposed mitigation measures. Overall, the Department considers that the Aboriginal cultural heritage impacts of the proposed modification can be managed under existing conditions of consent, including through procedures within the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan. 	
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed modification would disturb an additional 4.1 ha of Plant Community Type (PCT) 153 Black Bluebush low open shrubland. A Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) prepared for the proposal assumed presence of four threatened species identified in the assessment undertaken for Modification 1, including the Stimson's Python, Australian Bustard, saltbush and Crowned Gecko. The BDAR identified that a total of 104 species credits would be required to be retired to offset residual impacts on species credit species and that no ecosystem credits would be required due to the poor condition of vegetation to be disturbed. No additional impacts are predicted for the Paroo River Wetlands and NPWS advised it was satisfied with the previously proposed wastewater management measures. BCD advised that the BDAR had been prepared in accordance with the relevant requirements of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i>. The Department considers that the biodiversity impacts of the proposed modification are acceptable subject to the recommended conditions, including the retirement of additional species credits prior to disturbance. 	<p>The Department has recommended additional species credits to be retired prior to disturbance.</p>
Amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to offsite air quality, noise and visual impacts are predicted. 	<p>No changes necessary.</p>

6 Evaluation

The Department has assessed the modification application and supporting information in accordance with the relevant requirements of the EP&A Act, including the objects of the of the EP&A Act, and advice from government agencies.

The modification would facilitate sufficient area and water supply for the construction and operation of compressor station MW433, which is essential to increasing gas transportation capacity on the East Coast Grid network.

The proposed modification would result in some additional impacts on water resources, Aboriginal cultural heritage and biodiversity, however, these impacts are relatively minor in relation to the approved compressor station site.

The Department considers that the issues raised by government agencies and RAPs have been considered and responded to by APA and that any residual issues can be appropriately mitigated or managed through the existing and recommended conditions.

The Department considers the modification to be in the public interest, and should be approved, subject to the recommended conditions.

7 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Director, Resource Assessments, as delegate of the Minister for Planning:

- **considers** the findings and recommendations of this report
- **determines** that the application SSI-15548591 Modification 3 falls within the scope of section 5.25 of the EP&A Act
- **accepts and adopts** all the findings and recommendations in this report as the reasons for making the decision to approve the modification
- **modify** the approval SSI-15548591 and
- **signs** the attached Notice of Modification (see **Appendix C**)

Recommended by:



28.11.22

Rachelle Abou Saleh
Environmental Assessment Officer
Resource Assessments

Recommended by:



1.12.22

Gen Lucas
Team Leader
Resource Assessments

8 Determination

The recommendation is **Adopted** / ~~Not adopted~~ by:



2 December 2022

Stephen O'Donoghue

Director

Resource Assessments

as delegate of the Minister for Planning

Appendices

Appendix A – List of Documents

A1 – Modification Report: Refer to folder 'Modification Application' on the Department's website at <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/moomba-wilton-pipeline-mod-3>

A2 - Agency advice: Refer to folder 'Agency Advice' on the Department's website at <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/moomba-wilton-pipeline-mod-3>

Appendix B – Consolidated Approval

Available at: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/moomba-wilton-pipeline-mod-3>

Appendix C– Notice of Modification

Available at: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/moomba-wilton-pipeline-mod-3>