



Moomba to Wilton Pipeline Modification 1

East Coast Grid Expansion Stages 1 and 2 – Compressor Stations
State Significant Infrastructure Modification Assessment (SSI 15548591 MOD 1)

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Cover image: *View of habitat at 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 was constructed in 1976 to supply natural gas from the Cooper Basin gas fields near Moomba in South Australia to customers in Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, Canberra and some NSW regional centres. The MSP currently operates at a forward haul capacity of 489 terajoules per day (TJ/day).

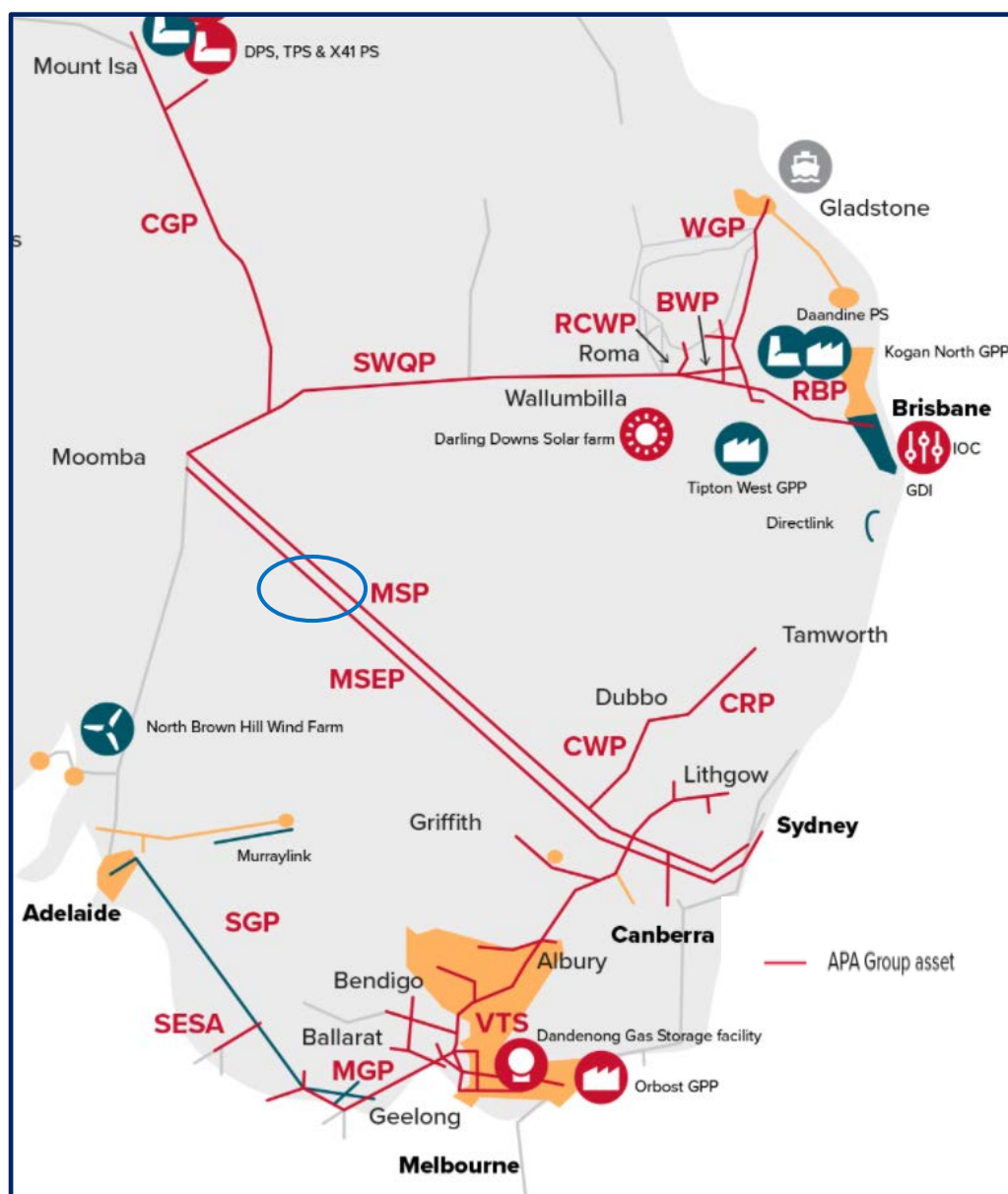


Figure 1 | APA East Coast Grid Network (Moomba to Sydney Pipeline circled in blue)

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. New South Wales imports the majority of its natural gas from other states.

The recent Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) Gas Statement of Opportunities (GSOO March 2021) identifies that reduction in southern gas supply from Victoria will reduce gas system resilience with potential supply shortfalls by winter 2023, subject to the commissioning and operation of the proposed Port Kembla Gas Terminal.

To increase gas supply resilience on the east coast gas network, APA is proposing to undertake an East Coast Grid Expansion (the expansion) involving the construction of five additional compressor stations along the MSP to increase the capacity of gas transportation. The expansion is proposed to be undertaken in three stages, including Stages 1 and 2 (two additional compressor stations) and the scope of this modification. APA has advised that it will submit a second modification application for Stage 3 (the three remaining compressor stations) which will be subject to a separate assessment.

This modification is predicted to increase transportation capacity by 25% (approximately 120 TJ/day) which would provide additional capacity from northern sources during peak winter gas demand as southern gas field production reduces. The second modification would provide an additional 25% transportation capacity which would result in a total increase of 50% from the expansion.

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.

Under the then provisions of the Pipelines Act, Part 4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) did not apply to the project. However, those provisions were repealed in September 2006 by the *Pipelines Amendment Act 2006* which included transitional provisions for existing pipelines, under which Pipeline Licence 16 was deemed to be a planning approval granted under Part 3A of the EP&A Act.

Part 3A of the EP&A Act was also repealed in October 2011, and under the provisions of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment (Savings, Transitional and Other Provisions) Regulation 2017*, the project was transitioned to State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) in December 2020. The proposed modification is therefore the first modification to the project assessed under Section 5.25 of the EP&A Act.

2 Proposed modification

The proposed modification involves the construction of two additional compressor stations along the MWP (see **Figure 2**), including:

- MW433 – located approximately 100 km north of Wilcannia in the Central Darling Local Government Area (LGA); and
- MW880 - located approximately 35 km southwest of Condobolin in the Lachlan Shire LGA.



Figure 2 | Location of proposed compressor stations

Each station site would be approximately 16 hectares (ha), however, the disturbance footprint of the compressor stations would be approximately 3.5 ha during construction and 1.5 ha once operating.

Each station would consist of a permanent station compound including gas turbine compressor units, a control equipment building, gas skids, air compressors and receivers, a station vent, and associated piping, electrical equipment and controls. Temporary infrastructure would also be established during construction including accommodation buildings, a spray irrigation field and associated piping for effluent management. The indicative layout of each site is depicted in **Figures 3 and 4** below.

APA advise that construction would commence in Quarter 1 of 2022 at MW880 and Quarter 4 of 2022 at MW433. The construction timeframe for each site is expected to be approximately 12 months, including commissioning. Once operational, the compressor stations would be operated remotely for the design life of 25 years, with intermittent site personnel attending for maintenance and routine activities.

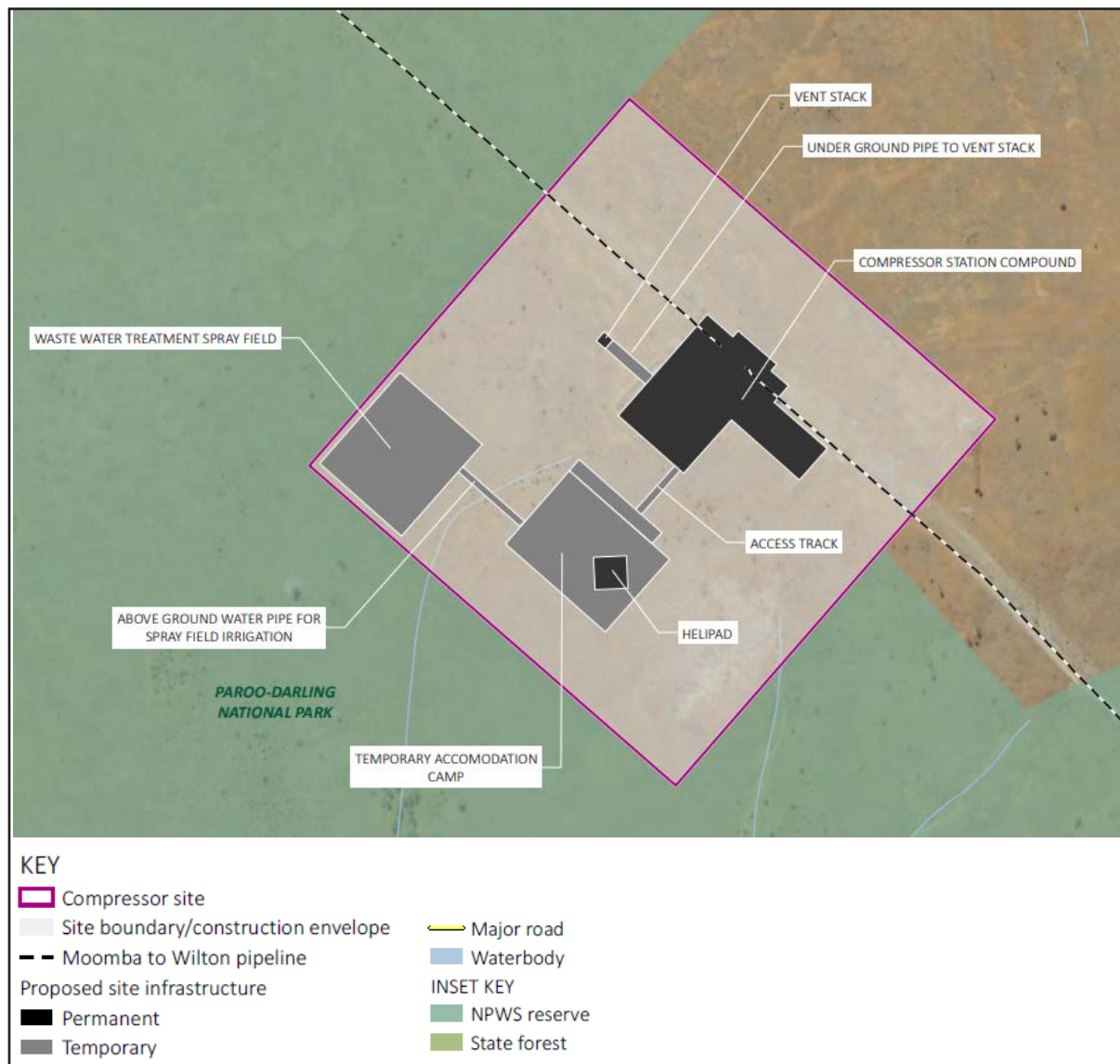


Figure 3 | Site layout and existing features at MW433



Figure 4 | Site layout and existing features at MW880

Both sites would require a temporary construction workforce including an average 40 and a peak of 80 employees over the 12-month period. These roles are expected to be drive-in-drive-out (DIDO) or fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) and APA propose to accommodate employees either in temporary camp facilities onsite or in short-term accommodation in Condobolin/West Wyalong (MW433 only).

A full description of the proposed modification can be found in APA's modification report (see **Appendix A1**).

3 Statutory context

3.1 Scope of modification

The project was transitioned to SSI by order, which took effect by publication in the NSW Government Gazette on 11 December 2020. The proposed modification was lodged under section 5.25 of the

EP&A Act which provide for the modification of an SSI approval. The Department is satisfied that the modification is consistent with the approved MWP, with the modification proposing to increase the capacity of the pipeline generally consistent with the existing capacity of the mainline MSP.

3.2 Delegated authority

The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces (Minister) is the approval authority for the modification under Section 5.25 of the EP&A Act. However, under the Minister's delegation of 26 April 2021, the Director, Resource Assessments may determine the modification application as APA did not make a political disclose, Council did not object to the modification, and there were no objections to the modification from the public.

4 Engagement

The Department publicly exhibited the modification report on its website from 28 July to 10 August 2021 and referred the modification request to relevant government agencies for comment. The Department also notified adjoining landowners to the proposed compressor station sites.

No submissions from members of the public were received. However, advice was received from six government agencies (see **Appendix A2**). APA subsequently provided a Submissions Report to address the issues raised by agencies (see **Appendix A3**).

4.1 Key issues raised in agency advice

Lachlan Shire Council (LSC) identified that there is limited short term accommodation supply in Condobolin and surrounding areas, and that the proposed modification may impact accommodation availability particularly if undertaken at the same time as other projects in the LGA. APA noted Council's position and confirmed it would pursue temporary onsite accommodation at MW880, noting the likely need to minimise people movements in light of the current COVID-19 situation.

LSC also requested details of consultation with affected community members in relation to potential noise impacts and suggested that construction activities not be undertaken outside of daytime hours.

LSC raised concern with the proposed traffic increase during the construction period and considered that the additional traffic volumes would have a negative impact on the rural road network. LSC identified a number of sections of Crown Camp Road that would require ongoing maintenance, sealing and gravel re-sheeting. This road was also identified to be a school bus route and LSC requested road safety factors be considered during the construction phase.

APA subsequently met with Council to discuss these matters and it was agreed that suitable road maintenance and traffic management measures could be agreed between the two parties.

Heritage NSW (HNSW) advised that it was generally satisfied with the level of consultation undertaken and the assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage matters for the proposed modification. However, HNSW requested clarification of the response to a Registered Aboriginal Party's (RAPs) request to salvage a stone artefact scatter near MW433 for storage at Peery Lake nearby the Paroo Darling National Park.

In its Submissions Report, APA provided additional information regarding consultation records and its response to feedback from RAPs.

The Department's **Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Directorate** (BCS) requested that a like-for-like credit report be generated and appended to the application's Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR). BSC also requested that and that APA consult with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) regarding potential indirect impacts on Paroo National Park (MW433), particularly regarding wastewater discharge. In its Submissions Report, APA advised that consultation had been undertaken with NPWS before and after the receipt of this submission and that no concerns were raised as offsite impacts were likely to be low or negligible. The Department has considered the biodiversity impacts of the proposed modification in **Section 5**.

The Department's **Water Group** (DPIE Water) requested further information to confirm the availability of water supplies to meet the demands of the proposed modification and noted that an assessment of water supply works and groundwater impacts at MW433 had not been undertaken. Additionally, DPIE Water requested stormwater management and erosion and sediment control be managed under a Soil and Water Management Plan for each site.

In its Submissions Report, APA advised it would be submitting a separate modification application to construct a bore at MW433 and advised that construction works at MW433 would not commence until the appropriate water approvals were in place.

The **NSW Environment Protection Authority** (EPA) advised that the proposed modification's matters relating to the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* (POEO Act) are regulated by the respective Councils and as such, had no comments on the application.

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) noted that there are no state classified roads near either site that would be impacted by the proposed modification and advised that had no objections the application. However, TfNSW requested that the 'Summary of Commitments' detailed in the Modification Report's Traffic Impact Assessment be implemented during construction and operation of the compressor stations.

Central Darling Shire Council advised it had no comments on the proposed modification.

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.

5.1 Issues

The Department considers the potential impacts associated with the proposed modification primarily relate to construction and are considered to be minor. The Department's consideration of these impacts is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1 | Assessment of Issues

| Issue | Findings | Recommendation |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Cultural Heritage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Modification Report included an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) prepared in consultation with 12 Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs). The ACHA identified that the proposed modification would partially disturb a dispersed stone artefact scatter at MW433 (MW433-OS1) considered to be of high scientific and cultural significance. No cultural materials were identified during investigations at MW880. Discussion with RAPs suggested that MW433-OS1 was linked to another larger artefact site at Round Hill (AHIMS #15-6-0047) approximately 1.2 km west of the project area. This site was identified as culturally significant for its use a tool manufacturing site and workshop. MW433-OS1 consists of <100 stone artefacts with the highest density located on the northern crest of the proposed compressor station site. Discussion with RAPs identified that this area of the site should remain undisturbed. On this basis, APA re-designed the location of temporary infrastructure to the south of the site. Despite a significant reduction in potential impact from the redesign (approximately 1.9 ha), the compressor station site would still disturb a portion of the artefact scatter. There is limited opportunity to relocate permanent infrastructure due to the location of existing gas pipeline infrastructure below ground. APA has proposed to further mitigate impacts by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> facilitating the inspection, recovery, relocation and/or salvage of Aboriginal objects by Aboriginal stakeholders and heritage professionals; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department has recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a condition for APA to implement an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan, to be prepared in consultation with RAPs and Heritage NSW; and conditions relating to unexpected finds. |

| Issue | Findings | Recommendation |
|---------------------|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o implementing an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan, including details of measures to investigate, mitigate and monitor impacts. • The Department considers that the proposed compressor station site has been designed to avoid cultural heritage impacts as much as possible, and that residual impacts could be appropriately managed under conditions of consent and in consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders. | |
| Biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7.5 ha of native vegetation would be impacted by the proposed compressor stations, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 1.23 ha of Plant Community Type (PCT) 72 White Cypress Pine – Poplar Box woodland at MW880, in primarily derived native grassland condition; and o 6.27 ha of PCT 153 Black Bluebush low open shrubland at MW433, in disturbed condition. • Targeted surveys identified two threatened fauna species (Grey-crowned Babbler and Superb Parrot) at MW880. Eight other threatened flora and fauna were assumed present at the sites (four species at each site); • APA advise that disturbance areas were designed to avoid impacts as far as practicable by locating temporary infrastructure in areas of lower biodiversity value; • There is limited opportunity to relocate permanent infrastructure due to the location of existing gas pipeline infrastructure below ground; • APA propose to implement a range of mitigation measures to further minimise biodiversity impacts, including undertaking pre-clearance surveys, limiting vehicle speed limits to prevent fauna strike incidents and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department has recommended conditions requiring the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o preparation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) including detail of mitigation measures; and o retirement of identified species credits prior to disturbance. |

| Issue | Findings | Recommendation |
|--------------|---|---|
| | <p>implementing weed and pest management control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APA advised that it consulted with NPWS regarding indirect and offsite impacts on the Paroo National Park (MW433) and have committed to manage wastewater irrigation consummate with evaporation rates, seek relevant approval from Council for wastewater management and implement a Soil and Water Management Plan. Details of all proposed mitigation measures are provided in APA's BDAR. • The BDAR identified that no ecosystem credits would be required to offset the proposed modification due to the poor condition of vegetation to be disturbed. • 71 species credits would be required to be retired to offset the residual impacts of the modification in accordance with the NSW Government's Biodiversity Offset Scheme. • BCD raised no concern with the findings of the BDAR. • The Department considers the biodiversity impacts of the proposed modification are acceptable, subject to the recommended conditions. | |
| Noise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise impacts from the proposed modification would be primarily associated with construction activities as well as rare gas expulsion events (referred to as blow downs). • Both sites are located in sparsely populated areas with no receivers located within 10 km of MW433 and seven receivers within 5 km of MW880. • APA propose to undertake construction activities from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, seven days a week. These hours extend beyond the standard construction hours recommended in the <i>Interim Construction Noise Guideline</i> (DEC, 2009) (ICNG) which are 7:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 1:00 pm on Saturday and no works on Sunday or public holidays. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department has recommended conditions requiring APA to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ minimise noise impacts from construction and operation of the sites; ○ prepare a CEMP that details the site-specific noise mitigation measures; ○ adhere to specific construction hours, including the development of an out-of-hours works protocol; ○ schedule blow down events to occur in |

| Issue | Findings | Recommendation |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At MW433, no receivers are predicted to experience exceedances of the ICNG's noise management levels for both 'standard' and 'outside standard' construction hours (ie 45 dB and 40 dB, respectively). At MW880, a 2 dB exceedance of the 'outside standard hours' NML (ie 40dB) would be experienced at one receiver during impact piling activities. As such, APA has committed to avoiding this activity outside of the ICNG's standard construction hours. The Department considers that construction activities occurring out of standard construction hours should be subject to an out-of-hours works protocol, to be finalised and approved under the CEMP. During operations, noise levels are predicted to remain well below Project Trigger Noise Levels (PNTLs) prescribed in the <i>Noise Policy for Industry 2017</i>, except during blow down events. APA's Noise Impact Assessment predicts noise levels of up to 70 dB (A) and 45 dB (A) $L_{Aeq\ 15\ mins}$ at receiver locations closest to MW880 and MW433, respectively. These events would occur rarely (ie once per year for up to fifteen minutes) and APA have committed to notifying residents in advance and scheduling the activity to occur during the day period. The Department considers this approach to be reasonable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the day period; and notify affected receivers in advance of blow down events. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dust emissions would primarily be generated by earth movement activities, wind erosion and diesel emissions from equipment. Due to the remote location of the sites, no exceedances of air quality impact assessment criteria are predicted to occur in accordance with <i>Approved Methods for the Modelling and Assessment of Air Pollutants in NSW</i>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department has recommended conditions requiring APA to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to minimise dust and greenhouse gas emissions from the construction and operation of the sites; and prepare a CEMP that details the site- |

| Issue | Findings | Recommendation |
|---------------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed modification would generate additional Scope 1 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plant and equipment fuel combustion during construction (2,250 t CO₂-e per year); gas combustion in compressor stations during operations (95,674 t CO₂-e per year); and gas from venting during maintenance and 'blow down' events (42 t CO₂-e per year). These emissions are estimated to reflect minor proportions of the total NSW and Australian GHG emissions. APA has committed to minimise greenhouse gas emissions by undertaking efficient materials handling and sourcing local and low carbon materials, where possible. Additionally, the company operates a working group to continually review broader emissions reduction opportunities for its infrastructure. | <p>specific air quality and greenhouse gas mitigation measures.</p> |
| Visual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the remote location of both sites, the proposed modification would have moderate to low visual impacts on surrounding receivers and public spaces. Some elements of MW880 would be moderately visible at five landholdings surrounding the site, however, due to the distance between the site and these receivers (ie between 2.5 km and 5 km) and the presence of vegetation, the visual obtrusiveness of the sites would be minimal. APA has committed to consult directly with the most affect landholder (R1) in relation to potential vegetation screening options, and to consult with the broader community ongoing through its stakeholder engagement plan. The Department considers the visual impacts of the proposal are | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department has recommended conditions requiring APA to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> minimise the visual and off-site lighting impacts of the sites; and consult with affected landowners after construction regarding potential vegetation screening options. |

| Issue | Findings | Recommendation |
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| | acceptable, subject to the recommended conditions. | |
| Soil and Water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Modification Report included a Surface Water Assessment (SWA) and Soil and Erosion Hazard Assessment to assess potential impacts on water quality and supply, flooding and watercourses. • APA has proposed a number of design and management measures to avoid adverse water-related impacts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a drainage design that is appropriate for dispersive and non-cohesive soils; ○ maintaining and/or re-establishing soil surface cover; ○ onsite spray irrigation of treated effluent at rates suitable for evaporation; and ○ preparation of a soil and water management plan, detailing specific design and mitigation measures for each site. • Areas of onsite irrigation have been proposed and evaluated, and APA have advised that offsite impacts can be avoided by managing spray irrigation rates to not exceed evaporation rates. The Department notes that this activity would require separate approval by Council. • During construction, each site would require approximately 20 ML of water, primarily for dust suppression purposes. Water demands for ongoing operations is expected to be minimal. • APA propose to purchase and truck water to MW880. However, this method is not preferred for MW433 due to its remote location. • APA therefore propose to seek approval to construct a bore at MW433. As discussed in Section 4, as assessment of water supply infrastructure and groundwater abstraction was not including in the Modification Report, and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department has recommended conditions requiring APA to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ prepare and implement a Soil and Water Management Plan in consultation with DPIE Water, prior to construction; ○ not commence construction at MW433 until the appropriate water supply approvals and licences are in place, or the Department has been notified that water will be trucked into the site; and ○ onsite wastewater is installed and managed to the satisfaction of Council. |

| Issue | Findings | Recommendation |
|---------------------|--|---|
| | <p>APA intend to lodge a separate modification and water licence application to facilitate this water access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department considers that APA must not commence construction at MW433 until the appropriate water supply approvals are in place, unless the company decides to truck in the required water. Overall, the Department considers the water impacts of the proposed modification to be acceptable, subject to the recommended conditions. | |
| Road traffic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed modification would generate additional traffic on surrounding roads during the construction period. Sites are accessed via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barrier Highway and Wilcannia-Wanaaring Road, via Wilcannia – MW433; and Lachlan Valley Way, The Gipps Way and Crown Camp Road, from Condobolin – MW880; Road traffic would be a mix of heavy and light vehicles and APA have estimated a peak of 22 trips (44 movements) and an average of 10 trips (20 movements) for both sites. Estimated truck movements include potential movements associated with water transport to both sites. Due to the low level of existing traffic on these roads and the temporary nature of the works, potential traffic impacts are expected to be minimal. The proposed transport routes for both sites involve travelling through a regional town, including Wilcannia for MW433 and Condobolin for MW880. APA has advised the peak hourly vehicle trips for each site would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 light vehicle trips (6 movements) and two heavy vehicle trips (four | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department has recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> APA prepare a CEMP which details the specific traffic management measures for the construction period, including measures to minimise amenity impacts on the towns of Condobolin and Wilcannia; and APA undertake road maintenance and grading works on Crown Camp Road to the satisfaction of LSC. |

| Issue | Findings | Recommendation |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| | <p>movements) through Wilcannia; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 11 light vehicle (22 movements) and 7 heavy vehicles (14 movements) from Condobolin. • The Department notes that the intensity of hourly movements would be variable and that peak movements would occur for approximately one week during site establishment. As such, the Department considers amenity impacts associated with construction traffic would be minor and temporary. • APA has committed to preparing a Traffic Management Plan, scheduling major deliveries outside school hours and ensuring all weight restrictions are adhered to. The Department has recommended conditions to this effect, including detail of measures to minimise traffic amenity impacts on regional towns. • In response to issues raised by LSC regarding the condition and maintenance of the transport route to MW880, APA has proposed to undertake various re-sealing, grading and maintenance works along Crown Camp Road. • The Department considers these matters can be agreed to and formalised directly with LSC and has recommended a condition to this effect. | |
| Social and economic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed modification would have minimal social impacts, due to the remote location of both sites. • The majority of the construction workforce would be FIFO or DIDO and therefore, is less likely to generate direct employment from the local region. • Following LSC's concerns regarding a shortage of accommodation availability in the local region, APA agreed to the temporary accommodation camp option for construction workers at MW880, instead of short-term accommodation in Condobolin and West Wyalong. The impacts of this | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No conditions necessary. |

| Issue | Findings | Recommendation |
|------------------------|---|---|
| | <p>option is incorporated into the environmental impact assessment – noting the accommodation camp footprint and spray irrigation areas in Figure 4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APA has advised that approximately \$1.5M of capital expenditure for each site would be spent in the local region, including on goods and services for the construction camps, fuel, equipment servicing and local contractors. • However, the key economic benefit of the proposed modification is to provide increased capacity and resilience for the delivery of natural gas supplies into the east coast gas network from Queensland to NSW and Victoria during peak demand periods. | |
| Hazard and Risk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Modification Report included a Preliminary Hazard Assessment (PHA) to assess the hazards and risks of the proposed modification to surrounding land use. The Department's Hazard Unit reviewed the PHA and were satisfied that it | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department has recommended a condition requiring the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ preparation of a Hazard and Operability Study and Final Hazard Analysis, prior to the commencement of construction; and ○ preparation of an Emergency Plan and Pipeline Management Plan to the satisfaction of the Secretary authorising the Pipelines Act. |

| Issue | Findings | Recommendation |
|-------|---|----------------|
| | <p>was undertaken in accordance with the Department's Hazardous Industry Planning Advisory Paper (HIPAP) No. 6 – Guidelines for Hazard Analysis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PHA considers the risk associated with natural gas which can form a flammable mixture on release. Key hazards therefore relate to jet or flash fires. • The PHA evaluated the individual risks in relation to fatality, injury and property damage and concluded that both compressor stations comply with the risk criteria for industrial uses under HIPAP No. 6. • The PHA made a number of recommendations to reduce hazard risk, including tailoring design elements of the compressor stations. • A societal risk assessment was not undertaken due to the very limited population surrounding both sites. • The Department notes that a fatality risk level for residential and sensitive land uses extends beyond the boundaries of both sites. As such, any future development in proximity to the sites should be monitored by the Applicant. • The Department also notes that final, design, construction, operation and decommissioning of the compressor station must be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Pipelines Act. These aspects are separately regulated under a variation to the pipeline licence. The Department consulted with the DPIE Energy team on appropriate conditions for emergency and pipeline management. • Overall, the Department considers the recommendations made in the PRA are appropriate to address risks associated with the proposed modification. | |

6 Evaluation

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

The proposed modification would facilitate an increase in the gas transportation capacity of the MWP by up to 25 percent which would increase east coast gas system resilience as supply from Victoria reduces over the next decade. A second modification for the expansion (Stage 3) could provide an additional 25% transportation capacity, however this is subject to a separate assessment. The Department considers that this benefit could be achieved with minimal incremental environmental impacts, particularly as:

- the proposed modification would enhance the capacity of existing gas pipeline infrastructure with minimal additional disturbance footprint;
- potential impacts of the proposed modification primarily relate to construction, which would be temporary and managed through a CEMP;
- impacts on Aboriginal objects have been avoided where possible, with mitigation proposed through salvage and relocation of artefacts at one artefact scatter site in consultation with Registered Aboriginal Parties;
- impacts on biodiversity values have been avoided where possible with residual biodiversity impacts to be offset in accordance with the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*;
- potential surface water impacts, including erosion, sediment control and wastewater treatment could be appropriately managed through conditions of consent; and
- the additional gas infrastructure meets the Department's hazard risk criteria, given the location of the compressor stations are remote from residential and other sensitive receivers.

The Department is satisfied that the issues raised by the public authorities have been appropriately considered and responded to by APA and any residual issues can be appropriately mitigated or managed through the Department's recommended conditions. The Department also notes that following public exhibition and notification there were no public submissions on the modification application.

The Department considers the modification to be in the public interest and that the benefits of the proposed installation and operation of the additional compressor stations outweigh the impacts, and the modification should be approved, subject to the recommended conditions.

7 Determination

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

- **considers** the findings and recommendations of this report;
- **determines** that the application SSI-15548591 Modification 1 falls within the scope of section 5.25 of the EP&A Act;
- **accepts and adopts** all of 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 B**).

Recommended by:



1/10/21

Gen Lucas
Team Leader
Resource Assessments

8 Determination

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



5/10/2021

Stephen O'Donoghue
Director Resource Assessments

as delegate of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

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/project/41546>

A2 - Submissions: Refer to folder “Submissions” on the Department’s website at <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/41546>

A3 - Submissions Report: Refer to folder “Response to Submissions” on the Department’s website at <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/41546>

Appendix B – Notice of Modification

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/41546>