

For Public Notice via Internet**REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978*****Title of Proposal:** Melbourne Geelong Interconnection Project**Proponent:** Barwon Region Water Corporation (Barwon Water)**Description of Project:**

Barwon Water propose to develop the Melbourne Geelong Interconnection Project which is designed to deliver up to 16,000 million litres of water per year from Melbourne to supplement Geelong's water supply. The project will require the installation of an 800 millimetre pipe along a 56.4 kilometre route (described in the referral as a 'corridor') commencing north-west of Werribee, at the Cowies Hill Water Reserve and terminating north of Geelong at the Lovely Banks basin. The project also includes the installation of a pump station and surge tank. The pipeline route would be generally 30 metres wide, though this would be reduced in areas of environmental sensitivity.

Decision:

The Minister for Planning has decided that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is not required for the Melbourne Geelong Interconnection Project as generally described in the referral accepted on 18 March 2010, subject to following conditions:

1. Prior to the commencement of works the proponent is to prepare an Environmental Management Framework for the project, which is to incorporate the following:
 - (i) Document the likely effects of the project, both as referred under the Act and varied on the basis of a route that only utilises road reserves within the proposed grassland reserve. This assessment is to address effects on native vegetation, the habitat and local populations of fauna species listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act), as well as flora species and communities listed under the FFG Act, having regard to both the likely effectiveness of proposed avoidance, minimisation and offset measures and any likely cumulative effects with other activities in the area;
 - (ii) Document environmental commitments, particularly in relation to measures to avoid, minimise, manage and offset biodiversity effects;
 - (iii) Mapping that clarifies the locations of biodiversity effects and related environmental commitments;
 - (iv) A Fauna Management Plan for priority species such as the Plains Wanderer (*Pedionomus torquatus*), Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar*), Grassland Earless Dragon (*Tympanocryptis pinguicollis*), Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*) and Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*) that specifies measures to manage or offset effects these species;
 - (v) A Native Vegetation Offset Management Plan that complies with *Victoria's Native Vegetation Management: A Framework for Action* (2002);
 - (vi) An Environmental Management Plan that documents procedures to avoid, minimise and manage environmental effects during the construction and post-construction phases, including in relation to waterway crossings, dust, noise, pest and weed management; and

- (vii) Processes for monitoring, reporting and external auditing of the implementation of the Environmental Management Framework.

The Environmental Management Framework is to be prepared in consultation with the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Department of Planning and Community Development, and to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning.

2. Should the proponent need to make substantial changes to the pipeline route from that described in the referral under the Act, which could entail additional environmental effects of any type, a report documenting the modified proposal, its likely effects and their proposed management is to be submitted to the Minister for Planning for his endorsement. This report should incorporate any necessary amendments to the Environmental Management Framework that addresses additional biodiversity effects.

Reasons for Decision:

It is concluded that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is not required for the following reasons:

- The proposed pipeline route, as described within the referral, is unlikely to have significant effects on agricultural and residential activities, particularly due to the short duration of construction activities, the underground placement of the pipeline and the temporary nature of predicted effects.
- The potential effects of the proposal on waterway environments and heritage values will be largely localised and unlikely to involve a significant effect on the environment.
- The siting of the pipeline within the proposed route, in combination with implementation of the conditions specified in the Notice of Decision, the potential effects of the proposal on biodiversity values, will enable effects on listed flora and fauna species, communities and native vegetation to be effectively avoided, minimised or otherwise mitigated and as a result are unlikely to be significant.

Date of Decision:

11 MAY 2010