



ACTEW working with ActewAGL

ACT/NSW planning approvals update

Community Update - 13 January 2010

ACTEW lodged the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with the NSW Department of Planning and the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) on 21 December 2009. The EIS incorporates a preferred project description and submissions report to meet the requirements of both NSW and ACT.

Visit www.actew.com.au to view the EIS or contact the water security information line on (02) 6248 3563 to request a CD copy.

Over 80 submissions were received in response to the draft EIS/Environmental Assessment (EA) from government agencies, community groups and individuals. The final EIS incorporates responses to all issues raised in these submissions.

Ongoing consultation

While the EIS has been finalised, ACTEW remains committed to ongoing consultation regarding the Murrumbidgee to Googong Water Transfer. Continued input from all stakeholders is essential to ensure the project successfully meets its social and environmental objectives.

In light of community concern regarding air and scour valves along the pipeline, ACTEW will hold an open meeting with interested landowners and community members in mid February regarding these issues. All community members on our database will be invited to attend with final meeting details to be sent out soon.

If you have not been receiving our emailed or posted community updates, please call the water security information line and register your details so you can be kept up to date.

ACTEW is also working closely with Palerang Council with regard to upgrading and sealing a section of Williamsdale Road at Gibraltar Hill. Survey and design work has been completed, and road widening land acquisition negotiations are underway. The land proposed to be acquired will be sufficient to include a bridle path or "greenway" along this section of road. This work will significantly improve road safety at this location.

Extension of ACTEW's current funding commitments to cover the road construction will be conditional on planning agency approval of the Murrumbidgee to Googong Water Transfer.

Commonwealth planning approval

The Commonwealth Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts advised ACTEW in 2009 that the Murrumbidgee to Googong Water Transfer has been deemed a controlled action under the Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. This means that ACTEW will prepare a Public Environment Report (PER) for assessment under the Act. ACTEW is currently preparing the Draft PER based on guidelines received from the Commonwealth in December 2009.

Land easement negotiations

ACTEW remains committed to achieving voluntary land acquisition whenever possible, whereby a compensation package for the pipeline easement is negotiated and agreed by both ACTEW and the landowner. These negotiations have been underway since mid 2008 and several landowners have already agreed to ACTEW's offer of compensation. Other landowners have taken up ACTEW's offer to pay for a second independent valuation of the proposed easement.

In a number of cases, where agreement has not been reached, ACTEW has requested the NSW Office of Water to commence action to purchase easements on behalf of ACTEW. Any compulsory acquisitions will require the approval of the Minister for Water and landholders have an opportunity to make submissions. The initiation of this process is to ensure that the project is not delayed, stays within budget and can be completed as soon as possible to meet the critical need for water in Canberra, Queanbeyan and the surrounding region.

However, ACTEW believes that voluntary agreements will achieve better outcomes for both landowners and ACTEW and remain open to progressing voluntary acquisition with all affected landholders.

Want to know more?

As always, ACTEW welcomes your feedback, queries and views on the Murrumbidgee to Googong Water Transfer as well as our other water security projects and is available for presentations and briefings to local community groups.

Delivered by the Bulk Water Alliance

