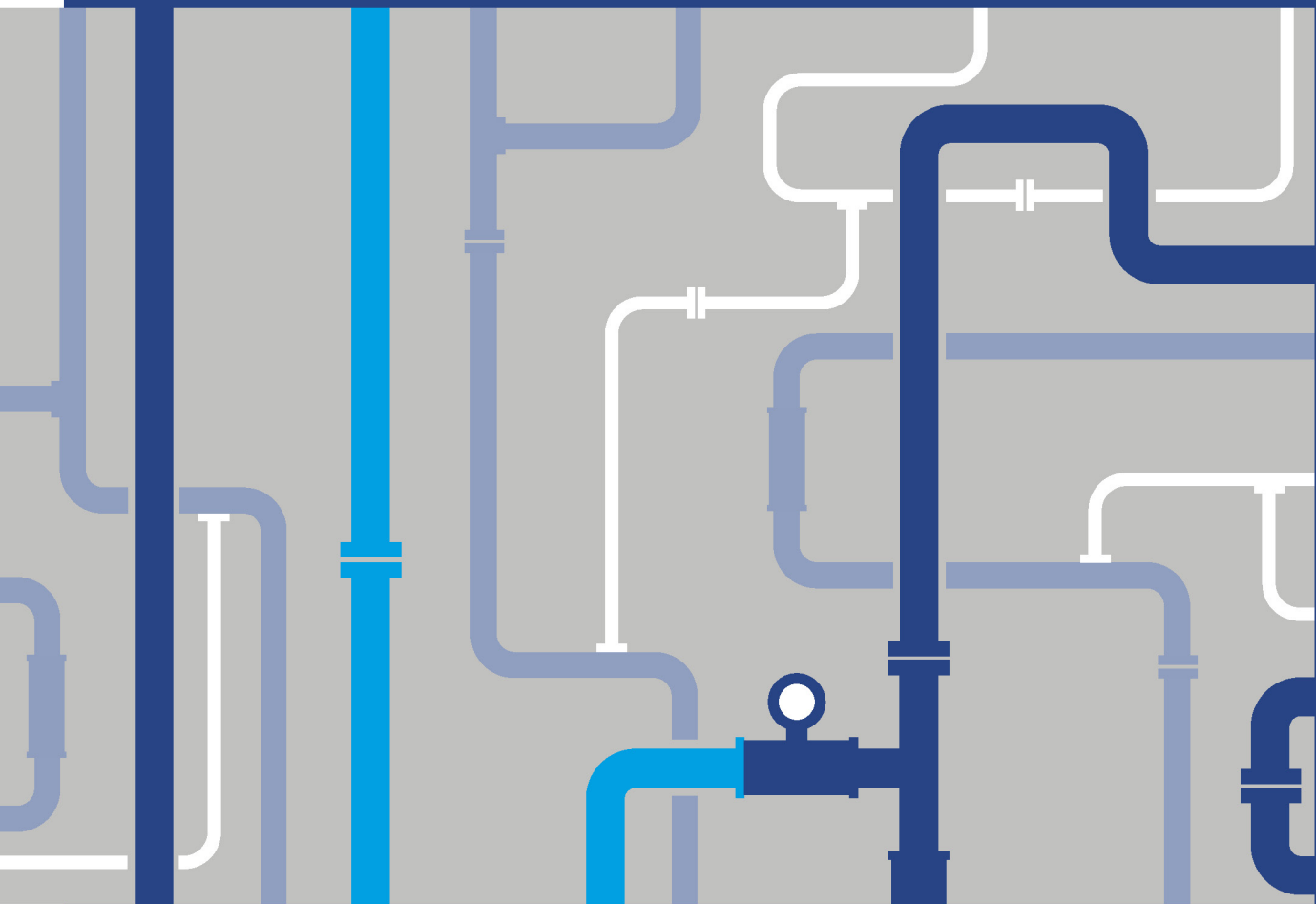




chapter 6

# community and stakeholder engagement.



Environment Effects Statement | May 2021

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## 6.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the consultation approach and engagement activities that have informed communities and stakeholders, and enabled them to influence the planning and design of the Western Outer Ring Main (WORM) gas pipeline project (the Project). This chapter is based on the information presented in *EES Attachment III Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report*.

Public participation is integral to development of the Project. Community and stakeholder engagement has provided awareness and understanding of the Project. Input from those interested in and impacted by the proposed pipeline feeds back into Project planning and development, ultimately assisting to inform the Project alignment, EES process and Project decision-making.

## 6.2 EES scoping requirements

The Ministerial guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Ministerial Guidelines) state that a specific objective of the EES assessment process is “to provide public access to information about potential environmental effects as well as fair opportunities for participation in assessment processes by stakeholders and the public”. The Minister for Planning’s decision to require an EES for the Project included a requirement that an EES consultation plan be prepared for engaging with the public and stakeholders during the preparation of the EES.

The scoping requirements also require a consultation plan to be prepared to:

- Identify stakeholders
- Characterise public and stakeholders’ interests, concerns and consultation needs, local knowledge and inputs
- Describe consultation methods and schedule
- Outline how public and stakeholder inputs will be recorded, considered and/or addressed in the preparation of the EES.

An EES Consultation Plan was prepared in accordance with the final scoping requirements for the Project, reviewed by Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and the Technical Reference Group (TRG), and published on the DELWP website in September 2020. It is available at: <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/browse-projects/projects/western-outer-ring-main-gas-pipeline>.

In accordance with the scoping requirements, the EES documents the process and results of the consultation undertaken by the proponent during the preparation of the EES. This includes the issues raised by stakeholders or the public and the proponent’s responses to these issues, in the context of the EES studies and the associated consideration of mitigation measures. This is documented in *Attachment III Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report* and summarised in this chapter.

The scoping requirements also require the EES to include an outline of a program for community consultation, stakeholder engagement and communications proposed for implementation during the construction and operation of the Project, including opportunities for local stakeholders to engage with the proponent to seek responses to issues that might arise during Project implementation. Section 6.7.3 describes the construction and operation phase engagement.

### 6.3 Pipelines Act 2005

Consultation underpins the Victorian *Pipelines Act 2005*. A separate Consultation Plan was prepared in accordance with Part 4, Division 1 of the Pipelines Act and requirements of the Pipelines Regulations 2017 (Pipelines Regulations). Section 17 of the Pipelines Act outlines the requirements for a consultation plan to be provided to owners and occupiers of land that outlines information about the Project, how potential impacts are to be managed and legislative approvals required to facilitate construction and operation of the Project.

The Pipelines Act Consultation Plan was approved by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change in accordance with the Pipelines Act in January 2019 and made available on the APA Project website.

In addition to complying with the Pipelines Act, the Pipelines Act Consultation Plan was developed in accordance with APA's Community Consultation Policy and Community Consultation Planning Guide. The Pipelines Act Consultation Plan sets out the process for consultation with landholders and stakeholders affected by the proposed pipeline.

While the EES Consultation Plan is limited to addressing the EES phase of the Project, the Pipelines Act Consultation Plan approved under the Pipelines Act addresses all phases of the Project.

### 6.4 Approach

#### 6.4.1 Overview

The purpose of the EES Consultation Plan is to:

- Inform stakeholders and community members of the assessment and approval processes and timeline
- Share completed technical studies with stakeholders and community
- Provide stakeholders and community members with sufficient opportunities to provide input into the EES process
- Obtain stakeholder input on Project issues, impacts and alignments
- Outline current and future opportunities for community involvement with the Project.

The plan was designed to integrate with the EES program of technical studies and was prepared specifically for the Project in accordance with the procedures and requirements of the EES scoping requirements, the Minister for Planning's decision under section 8B(3)(a) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978* and the Ministerial Guidelines.

Engagement and consultation during the EES preparation has ranged from informing stakeholders about the Project to involving them in decisions about the Project design and management of potential impacts. The engagement approach and methodology is guided by principles based on the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) and the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) guidelines, along with APA's own policy for community engagement.

A wide range of channels supported the consultation process, including emails, phone enquiries, meetings and virtual information sessions. The majority of Project consultation was undertaken while Victoria’s coronavirus (COVID-19) physical distancing restrictions were in place. In keeping with State of Emergency requirements, consultation during 2020 was conducted almost exclusively online, with some opportunities for traditional channels such as mail outs and a Project hotline.

The launch of an engagement hub supported outward communications, along with the collation of feedback through the interactive map and a community survey. Engagement was expanded in 2021 to create more face-to-face opportunities in line with eased restrictions.

A broad range of stakeholder groups have been consulted throughout the engagement process, including extensive engagement with landholders. An overview of these stakeholders consulted is outlined in Section 6.5 of this chapter. The issues, concerns and opportunities they raised are summarised in Section 6.7.5, along with the project response. Further detail on Project communications and engagement are included in EES *Attachment III Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report*.

## 6.4.2 Principles

The engagement principles listed in Figure 6-1 are sourced from the *Public Participation in Government Decision-making – Better Practice Guide* (Victorian Auditor-General’s Office, 2015). APA is committed to implementing a high standard of consultation and engagement principles in its approach towards communications and engagement for the Project.

Figure 6-1 Engagement principles

- 

**Open communication**  
Achieved when open and meaningful dialogue is carried out and processes established to allow this to occur
- 

**Transparency and integrity**  
When community concerns are responded to in a timely, open and effective manner; and engagement is conducted in a manner that fosters mutual respect and trust
- 

**Collaboration**  
Working to seek mutually beneficial outcomes where feasible
- 

**Inclusion**  
Created when the rights, cultural beliefs, values and interests of the community within or surrounding the Project area are recognised
- 

**Responsiveness**  
Acknowledging all feedback and by establishing processes to record and disseminate information on how community feedback contributed to decision making
- 

**Accountability**  
Actively seeking diverse opinions and perspectives to broaden understanding of views and assist decisions
- 

**Awareness**  
Demonstrated when the need to understand, engage and identify the community is undertaken early in the process

### 6.4.3 Engagement program

Consultation has been planned around seven stages of the Project's development and includes significant activities prior to the EES. These stages form logical phases of consultation, with different information and engagement required with relevant landholders and other stakeholders for each stage. The relevant stages, along with a description of the consultation requirements for each stage, are illustrated in Figure 6-2. Consultation for the EES is taking place during Stage 5.

#### Stages 1 to 4: Prior to EES (November 2018 to December 2019)

APA aimed to generate awareness and to engage with communities and stakeholders since the Project's inception by informing, listening and acknowledging concerns. From November 2018 to December 2019, consultation was an essential part of the Project planning process comprising the following four key stages:

- Stage 1: Route selection
- Stage 2: Initial stakeholder engagement
- Stage 3: Obtaining land access for surveys
- Stage 4: Agreement on pipeline corridor.

#### Stage 5: EES preparation (January 2020 to March 2021)

From January 2020 to March 2021, investigations and technical studies were undertaken for the EES during the Completion of Regulatory Approvals (Stage 5). Engagement activities during this period centred on sharing the outcomes of the investigations and technical studies and providing opportunity to comment on the results of the studies to inform their ongoing development. A Technical Reference Group (TRG) was established in May 2020 to review the EES and draft impact assessment reports.

#### Stage 5: Public exhibition and public hearing (May to July 2021)

Stage 5 also includes the public consultation process to support the EES process, including public exhibition of the EES and Pipeline Licence Application and a public inquiry to review the EES documents and public submissions. Following a public hearing the inquiry provides a report to the Minister for Planning to inform the Minister's assessment of the EES which in turn informs approval authority's assessment of applications. From April 2021 to the third quarter of 2021, further communications and engagement are planned to ensure continued awareness and involvement in the EES process, to encourage submissions and landholder and stakeholder engagement as required.

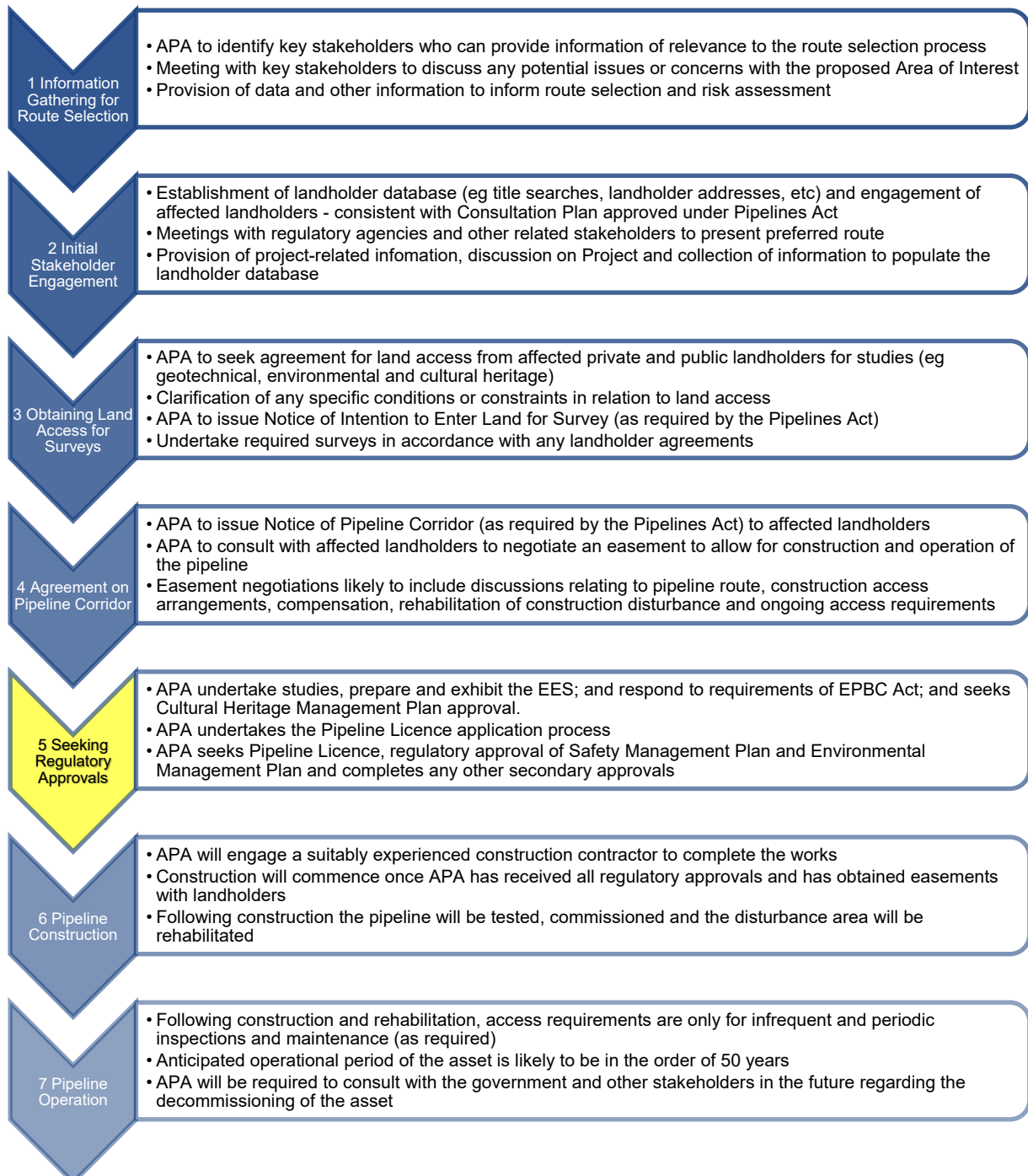
#### Stages 6 and 7: Construction and operation (late 2021 onwards)

Subject to approval, the Project would commence construction from late 2021. Stakeholder engagement would be reviewed to consider how to continue to effectively engage with the community during construction. Engagement during construction would keep landholders and stakeholders informed and would include consultation with potentially affected community members where required about specific activities and mitigation measures. The Pipelines Act Consultation Plan specifies APA's commitments for consultation during construction and would be reviewed and updated as relevant following the regulatory approvals stage. The responsibilities of the construction contractor would also be developed and recorded.



APA would continue to consult with landholders and stakeholders during the operational life of the pipeline.

**Figure 6-2** Summary of Project phases and consultation



## 6.5 Stakeholders

Identifying stakeholders is critical to ensuring individuals and groups who may be impacted or who are interested in the Project have opportunity to be involved in consultation. APA has developed and maintained a list of project stakeholders since 2018. A list was included in the EES Consultation Plan. During preparation of the EES, the stakeholder list was continually reviewed and updated so engagement activities were effective and appropriate. Figure 6-3 shows an overview of stakeholders.

Figure 6-3 Overview of stakeholders



## 6.5.1 Landholders

Landholders have been identified as the owners or occupiers of land that would be directly affected by the proposed Project.

Landholders within the construction corridor include:

- Owners and occupiers impacted by the pipeline construction/operation
- Government agencies/committees of management for Crown land reserves.

In addition to the EES Consultation Plan, a Pipelines Act Consultation Plan was developed in 2019 as part of the regulatory requirements for a Pipeline Licence. Through these plans, APA has committed to proactive engagement with landholders impacted by the pipeline construction and operation, as well as the communities surrounding the pipeline corridor.

Engagement has provided affected landholders with background and reasoning for the pipeline, consultation on the pipeline alignment, and proposals to minimise impacts on properties during the Project's construction.

### Landholder engagement objectives

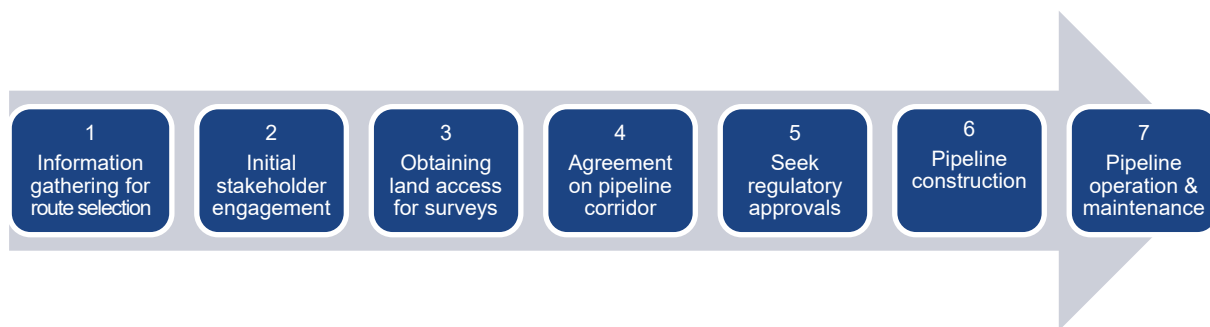
The primary objectives of APA consultation activities with landholders as initially developed through the Pipelines Act Consultation Plan are to:

- Ensure that landholders are sufficiently informed about the pipeline works, the aspects they can influence and their statutory rights
- Allow landholders to have input into aspects of the pipeline works that could affect them
- Enable APA to understand the views of landholders
- Ensure that consultation activities enable landholders to better understand the pipeline works through the timely distribution of Project information in an understandable format
- Ensure a consistent consultation approach is adopted during the pipeline works
- Outline the process of consultation with landholders and the complaints process to ensure consistency with regulatory requirements
- Outline the EES process and consultation opportunities for landholders
- Meet the statutory requirements and expectations of regulatory agencies.

### Stages of landholder engagement

APA's consultation methods have been developed in line with stages of Project planning and delivery. The EES is part of the Project planning phase and the EES consultation process during that phase aligns with the requirements of the Pipelines Act. These stages form logical consultation stages, with distinct elements within each phase relating to information provision, consultation methods and the level of engagement required with landholders. The stages are shown in Figure 6-4 and align with the Project phases in Section 6.4.3.

Figure 6-4 Stages of consultation



## Engagement overview

APA has had 4,126 interactions with the owners of 127 privately owned parcels during development of the Project. A snapshot of key interactions with landholders is provided in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1 Snapshot of landholder engagement

Engagement activity	Statistics/results As of 03/12/2020	Purpose/description
Visit property	124	A visit is when a Land Access Officer attends a landholder’s property without a scheduled meeting to discuss land negotiations.
Phone conversations	877	A phone conversation, incoming or outgoing, with a landholder about potential land impact queries or negotiations.
Emails	2407	An email correspondence with landholders relating to potential land impact queries or negotiations.
Meetings	299	A meeting scheduled with the landholder, sometimes with other stakeholders such as lawyers or valuers, to discuss impacts on land or land negotiations.
Letters	419	Letters sent to properties to reach landholders, including regulatory purposes, with Project notifications or information.

### 6.5.2 Asset and infrastructure owners

Utility services and industry groups relevant to the Project Area or impacted by the pipeline route include:

- Melbourne Water
- VicTrack
- Utility asset owners/authorities including Telstra, AusNet Gas Services, and water service providers (City West Water, Western Water, Yarra Valley Water)
- Road management authorities (councils and Department of Transport (DoT)).

## Engagement overview

APA engaged with asset and infrastructure owners about the Project to seek their input throughout the planning phase. Councils, DoT, VicTrack and Melbourne Water are also represented on the Project's TRG (refer Section 6.5.3). Updates on the proposed pipeline construction dates have been provided, as requested by City West Water.

### 6.5.3 Technical Reference Group (TRG)

A TRG for the Project was established and chaired by DELWP, on behalf of the Minister for Planning.

TRG members include regulatory authorities, local councils and the Registered Aboriginal Party within the area of the Project. A full list of members is as follows:

- DELWP Impact Assessment Unit
- DELWP Energy
- DELWP Pipelines Regulation
- DELWP Planning
- DELWP Port Philip Region
- Hume City Council
- Melton City Council
- Mitchell Shire Council
- City of Whittlesea
- Aboriginal Victoria
- Department of Transport (previously VicRoads)
- Energy Safe Victoria
- Environment Protection Authority
- Heritage Victoria
- Melbourne Water
- VicTrack
- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

The TRG has provided advice to APA throughout the EES process, particularly on the scope and preparation of the technical studies and documentation for the EES.

## Engagement overview

A number of TRG members have discussed and reviewed alternatives for the alignment of the pipeline and construction technique during the EES process to ensure community and environmental concerns are addressed, as well accommodate wider infrastructure in the project area.

### 6.5.4 Registered Aboriginal Parties and Traditional Owner Groups

Traditional Owner groups located on or near the Project Area include:

- Boon Wurrung Foundation
- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC).

WWCHAC is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the part of the construction corridor between KP 8.3 to KP 51.0.

#### Engagement overview

WWCHAC is represented on the Project TRG and has had the opportunity to review draft EES documentation.

A number of stakeholder meetings were held at the WWCHAC offices to discuss the proposed works, assessment methodologies and fieldwork results. The WWCHAC will continue to be consulted as the relevant Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) is developed for the land on which they are the RAP.

Consultation has also taken place to inform the Cultural Heritage assessment and an additional CHMP in relation to land where there is no allocated RAP, with Aboriginal Victoria, WWCHAC, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Boon Wurrung Foundation. All Traditional Owner Groups have participated in Project fieldwork as relevant.

### 6.5.5 Elected representatives

Relevant local, state and Federal members of Parliament include:

- Kororoit: The Hon. Marlene Kairouz MP
- Sunbury: Mr Josh Bull MP
- Sydenham: Hon. Natalie Hutchins MP
- Yan Yean: Ms Danielle Green MP
- Yuroke: Ms Ros Spence MP
- Gorton (Federal): Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP
- McEwan (Federal): Mr Rob Mitchell MP.

#### Engagement overview

Elected representatives are included in Project communication distribution lists and have been kept informed of the Project through regular communications.

## 6.5.6 Local councils

Local councils within the construction corridor are:

- Melton City Council
- Hume City Council
- Mitchell Shire Council
- Whittlesea City Council.

### Engagement overview

These local councils are all represented on the Project TRG. Through the TRG, APA has updated Melton, Hume, Mitchell Shire and Whittlesea City Councils on the engagement approach.

Melton, Hume and Whittlesea City Councils shared information about the Project, its engagement hub, information sessions and survey via their social media platforms and website.

Meetings occurred with councils where items discussed included key characteristics of the nearby communities, sense of place and significance, use of open spaces and recreational areas, use of watercourses, community concerns and likely impacts on the community.

## 6.5.7 Community, environment and action groups

There are a variety of clubs, land care groups, resident groups and friends of parks groups in the area including:

- Bulla Hill Railway
- Diggers Rest Residents Association
- Environment Victoria
- Environmental Justice Australia
- Friends of Edgars Creek
- Friends of Malcolm Creek & Grasslands
- Friends of Merri Creek
- Hume Climate Action Now
- Jacksons Creek EcoNetwork
- Melton Environment Group
- Merri Creek Management Committee
- Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action
- Sunbury Residents Action Group
- Western Alliance for Greenhouse Action.

### Engagement overview

Throughout the preparation of the EES, APA made reasonable attempts to contact local community groups at Project milestone stages including through workshops, letters, phone calls and emails. APA representatives also met with and provided briefings to the Jacksons Creek EcoNetwork and Merri Creek Management Committee. The intention was to keep key groups updated, directly or indirectly, so their members were familiar with the Project and had the opportunity to ask questions and seek further information. Feedback collected has informed Project design and planning.

Environmental groups have concerns regarding construction in areas that require removal of a large number of trees, as well as biodiversity hotspots that are home to threatened species, especially in conservation regions and sensitive habitats such as natural waterways.

The potential for greenhouse gas emissions and remediation of the land is important, as is the opportunity for funding of conversation projects.

### 6.5.8 Media

This category includes news organisations that publish in print, on television and online, including:

- Hume Leader
- Northern Leader
- Sunbury Leader
- Melton And Moorabool Star Weekly
- Preston Press
- The North Central Review
- Melton Leader
- Sunbury & Macedon Rangers Star Weekly
- Whittlesea Leader
- Mirage News
- Whittlesea Review.

### Engagement overview

Interaction with media groups consisted of letters, emails and phone calls and was undertaken as part of specific direct requests to APA. One publication sought further information about the environmental impacts of constructing a pipeline over natural areas, such as creek beds, and whether investment in natural gas aligns with the State Government's renewable energy commitments.

### 6.5.9 Local residents

Local residents include neighbouring owners and occupiers of land not directly impacted. Residents of suburbs and locations close to the Project include:

- Bulla
- Donnybrook
- Plumpton
- Craigieburn
- Kalkallo Mickleham
- Wildwood
- Diggers Rest
- Oaklands Junction
- Wollert.

### Engagement overview

The Project team have kept residents informed throughout the EES process, providing regular project updates and opportunities to ask questions through a range of channels, including email, phone, letterbox drops and information sessions (both online and in-person). Local councils have also been supportive in ensuring local awareness of the Project through their own channels, which has been especially important during the pandemic when face-to-face contact has not been allowed.

### 6.5.10 Local businesses

Local businesses identified which are adjacent to the Project area:

- Hi-Quality Quarry Products Pty Ltd
- Marnong Estate Winery and Homestead
- Mickleham Musallah Muslims Sunni Mosque.



## Engagement overview

Businesses neighbouring the alignment have been notified about the Project through regular updates via email and letterbox drops. Engagement with businesses will be ongoing, including a wider business engagement event planned to take place in mid-2021 to discuss local investment and involvement opportunities.

### 6.5.11 Emergency services

Emergency services operating in the Project area include:

- Ambulance Victoria
- Country Fire Authority/Metropolitan Fire Board (CFA/MFB)
- Victoria Police
- State Emergency Services (SES).

## Engagement overview

A meeting with Victoria Police was carried out as part of the Social Impact Assessment (refer to Section 5.8 of *Technical report L Social*). They requested to be consulted with regard to construction timelines and changes in road conditions to be undertaken during the Project's construction phase. Ambulance Victoria and CFA have also been approached about the Project.

### 6.5.12 Property developers

A number of significant developers and developments have been identified in the Project Area including:

- Dahua Group
- Dennis Family Corporation
- MAB
- Merristock
- Olivine Estate, Donnybrook (planned development by Mirvac)
- Peppercorn Hill, Donnybrook (planned development)
- Potter George
- Santieri Developments
- Satterley
- Stockland
- Wolfdene.

## Engagement overview

Developers have been receiving regular e-communications from the Project.

## 6.6 Engagement channels

A broad range of engagement tools and techniques have been employed to provide as many opportunities as possible for stakeholders to be involved in engagement and consultation. The engagement channels are summarised in Table 6-2. Further details of the reach of the channels and engagement results are provided in EES *Attachment III Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report*.

Table 6-2 Engagement channels

Channel	Purpose
<b>Print communications</b>	
Letter distribution	Letters sent to local residents, impacted householders, landholders and businesses to inform them of Project information.
Newsletters, fact sheets and brochures	A suite of collateral with content including a Project overview, field surveys, land use, design and EES process. These have been made available online and in hard copy for face-to-face events and distribution to community outlets (subject to restrictions easing in Q1 2021).
Posters and signage	Posters and signage to increase awareness of the Project have been displayed at public events and can be provided to local councils, MPs offices, libraries and community notice boards.
Media	Local media through newspapers and government media networks have informed people about the Project and feedback opportunities.
Maps and other visual aids	Clear maps (including interactive versions) displaying Project options and other aspects have been made available online and during information sessions.
<b>Digital communications</b>	
Website	APA WORM website pages have been updated promptly as new information becomes available. Content has been prepared in line with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
Email updates	Sent at regular intervals (milestone triggers eg prior to information sessions or exhibition) to keep people informed and highlight opportunities for involvement.
Promotion through partners' online presence	Project updates and discussion have been promoted through local council and community pages and social media.
Videos	Videos of information sessions and key aspects of the Project such as construction techniques have been uploaded to the Project website to provide updates.
<b>Engagement</b>	
Virtual information sessions	Project and topic-focused presentation and Q&A hosted as an MS Teams Live Event to engage the community and stakeholders in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions.
Online engagement hub (Social Pinpoint)	This hub, linked from the APA website, provides Project information, interactive map, and collates public comments and survey responses.
Stakeholder meetings	APA has connected with key stakeholders through meetings and briefings, both targeted and on request. The TRG has met eight times and provided feedback on EES documentation and process. Meetings have also taken place with landholders.
Face-to-face information sessions and displays	Held at key milestones in 2021, prior to and during the exhibition of the EES and Pipeline Licence Application, in accessible venues, allowing a wide cross-section of the community to attend (subject to circumstances relating to COVID).
Community presentations	APA has offered to present to groups potentially interested in the Project such as Rotary and RSL clubs, highly interested stakeholders, culturally and linguistically diverse groups (with the support of cultural leaders), youth and industry groups.

Channel	Purpose
Email and telephone	Enquiries from the community have been received and responded to via the 1800 phone number and Project email address, which were included on all public collateral. All calls, responses and actions required are recorded in an accredited stakeholder database.
Research and/or surveys	The Project has carried out targeted community research activities such as surveys to support technical studies such as social impact assessment.
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities  Vulnerable and hard to reach communities	<p>The Project team has worked with local government, community group leaders and other relevant agencies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify vulnerable and hard to reach communities and to provide culturally sensitive ways to approach and involve different communities</li> <li>• Identify relevant individuals, groups and those who support them</li> <li>• Determine engagement approaches on a case by case basis</li> <li>• Collaborate with local government to use known contacts</li> <li>• Ensure information is made available in formats and at times to suit different communities.</li> </ul> <p>During the exhibition of the EES CALD communications will be used where appropriate including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translations of printed materials</li> <li>• Advertising in specific language publications.</li> </ul>

## 6.7 Overview of engagement activity

### 6.7.1 Prior to EES (November 2018 to December 2019)

Engagement during Stages 1 to 4 (prior to the EES) focused on informing key stakeholders about the Project and obtaining feedback to inform route selection. Communication and engagement activities consisted of meetings, mail outs, newsletters, email distribution and the launch of a Project website with a map of the Project alignment. The Pipelines Act Consultation Plan was also published on the APA website during this time, which provides guidance for landholder engagement and the standards of engagement planned from Project planning through to delivery.

Following initial stakeholder consultation, engagement with landholders, and a comprehensive route selection process, a Route Options Report was published in March 2019. The preferred pipeline alignment resulting from the route selection process was then refined and taken into the EES process.

Engagement undertaken prior to the EES focused on route selection, raising Project awareness, and seeking inputs from communities, stakeholders and landholders to:

- Provide information of relevance to the proposed pipeline route
- Identify any potential issues or concerns with the proposed area of interest
- Source local information about conditions in the Project area
- Provide data and other information to inform route selection.

Engagement during Stages 1 to 4 including as part of the Pipelines Act Consultation Plan was undertaken prior to the decision of the Minister for Planning that an EES would be required for the Project.

The feedback helped to select a pipeline route and inform regulatory agencies and other related stakeholders of the preferred route. It also allowed identification of landholders and the local community impacted by the pipeline route, and how communities would like to be engaged. Over this period, key issues and concerns that would need to be considered in the EES were identified.

### 6.7.2 EES Preparation (January 2020 to March 2021)

As preparation of the EES progressed from January 2020 into early 2021, information was made available about Project alignment, construction methods, EES process and draft assessment findings.

Community and stakeholders were provided with an outline of the EES, planning process and the opportunity to provide feedback on the Project alignment and design. This period also provided the opportunity for feedback on issues or concerns previously raised in more detail to be considered by specialists for the development of EES.

The feedback helped to understand key impacts and areas of concern or interest related to the Project and inform refinements to the alignment and design for public exhibition.

Preparation of the EES involved a variety of communication and engagement activities described in Table 6-3. Objectives of the activities were to:

- Inform stakeholders and community members of the EES process and timeline
- Share technical study findings with stakeholders and community
- Provide stakeholders and community members with sufficient opportunities to provide input into the EES process
- Obtain stakeholder input on Project issues, impacts and alignments
- Outline current and future opportunities for community involvement with the Project.

The Technical Reference Group (TRG) was convened as part of this phase to review the EES draft documentation and specialist technical studies.

Virtual community information sessions were held during late 2020, with face to face information sessions in relevant municipalities in early 2021. Digital public engagement platforms were also launched during this time and will remain active until construction is complete.

Table 6-3 Engagement activities undertaken during preparation of the EES

Activity	Date	Purpose	Results
Meetings	November 2018 to February 2021	Meetings enable the proponent to provide tailored information to a stakeholder, and to receive focused feedback.	61 meetings have been held by the Project team with all stakeholders since consultation began in November 2018 through till the end of February 2021. In addition, 11 meetings have been held with stakeholders as part of the social impact assessment. Further meetings have also taken place with landholders (see Table 6-1).
Dedicated 1800 number and email address	November 2018 to February 2021	Enquiries from the community are received and responded to via the 1800 phone number and Project email address, which are included on all public collateral. All calls, responses and actions required are recorded in an accredited stakeholder database.	Since consultation began in late 2018, there have been 14 calls to the 1800 number and one email to the Project email address.
APA website	Launched March 2019	The online presence of the Project was undertaken to align with publication of the approved Pipelines Act Consultation Plan, and the Route Options Report. The website includes an overview of the Project, information for landholders, environmental assessment and approvals information, Project engagement and communications information and an interactive community engagement hub.	Traffic to the website has been consistent, with an average of 323 page views per month up to 28 February 2021, totalling 7,757 page views. A spike in interest can be identified with the launch of draft scoping requirements on 14 July 2020 (956 views during that month).
Western Outer Ring Main Engagement Hub	Launched August 2020	The Hub was set up using the Social Pinpoint platform to share the latest information about the Project and enable stakeholder and community feedback. It includes an interactive map, a community survey, links to subscriber updates, discussion forum, links to the EES Consultation Plan and APA contact details.	Traffic to the hub has been strong with a total of 3,817 visits up to 28 February 2021, averaging 545 visits per month. Spikes in interest can be identified connected with the mail outs and publicity connected with information sessions. The project survey has received six responses as of 28 February 2021 via the engagement hub, with an additional four responses from mail-in submissions and one from community sessions.
Emailed communications	April 2020 to February 2021	Using Campaign Monitor, an online e-notification platform, to provide regular community updates and news to subscribers. Communications included notification of scoping requirements on exhibition, upcoming community information sessions, and updates.	Traction has been strong, with click rates of between 10% and 52% for all communications since exhibition of draft scoping requirements in July 2020.

Activity	Date	Purpose	Results
Physical mail outs	April 2020 to February 2021	The Project has used a mailing services provider to ensure local distribution of collateral. Mail outs included notification of scoping requirements on exhibition and of upcoming community information sessions, updates and a community survey.	Each delivery was made to approximately ~2500 local residences, businesses, schools, local councils and other authorities.
Information sessions	October 2020 to February 2021	<p>The Project has hosted online and face to face information sessions for the community and key stakeholders.</p> <p>Online sessions were held via MSTeams, and face to face sessions were held in the municipalities of Melton, Mitchell, Whittlesea and Hume.</p> <p>The first session introduced the Project, raised awareness for future topic-focused sessions and collected initial feedback.</p> <p>Subsequent sessions were centred on the EES and public submission process or themed to key topics based on feedback from the initial information session and the online community survey.</p>	<p>The Project hosted three online community sessions during 2020. A community information session held online during October 2020 attracted 40 live attendees and 19 views of the recorded session.</p> <p>Two information sessions held in December 2020 attracted a combined total of 41 live attendees and 25 views of the recorded sessions. Themes for these sessions were Ecology and Cultural Heritage, and Community (impacts and opportunities).</p> <p>Four face to face community information sessions with a combined total of nine attendees were hosted in key municipalities to provide general information on the Project, the EES process including public submissions and gather community feedback.</p> <p>Communications through a variety of channels promoted awareness of the sessions, in particular through electronic communications to subscribers and key stakeholder groups, direct mail outs to local residents and updates provided on the engagement hub. There was additional support from local councils to ensure visibility in communities.</p>
Collateral publications	2019 to February 2021	Project collateral was developed for communicating with communities and stakeholders during the EES process.	Project collateral included three factsheets, two newsletters, a flyer advertising community sessions, overview map and a community resource guide. All collateral has been uploaded to the APA website.

### 6.7.3 Public exhibition and hearing (May to July 2021)

Following preparation of the EES, engagement will continue through the public exhibition and inquiry process. The aim of this public exhibition and public inquiry process is to give the community and stakeholders the opportunity to make written and oral submissions about the Project and the EES and Pipeline Licence Application documents. All submissions made will be considered by the independent inquiry appointed to review the EES. Following the public hearing the inquiry will provide the Planning Minister with a report recording considerations and recommendations.

The objectives of this engagement period are to:

- Provide an opportunity for stakeholders to review technical reports and understand the impact of the Project, and how APA proposes to mitigate and manage the impacts
- Promote the formal opportunity for public submissions and involvement in the inquiry process
- Support the Minister for Planning appointed independent inquiry process.

The Public Exhibition period is the opportunity for the community to read all exhibited documents, understand how feedback has shaped the Project and provide input through a formal process.

### 6.7.4 Construction (late 2021 to late 2022)

If the Project receives statutory approvals following the EES process, the Project's construction would present different considerations for engagement. Stakeholder engagement would be reviewed to consider how to continue to effectively engage with the community during construction, including construction-related activities and mitigation measures relevant for landholders and nearby neighbours. With Project evolution leading up to the point of construction, engagement would also be reviewed to consider any changes in engagement to reflect changes in the Project.

The Pipelines Act Consultation Plan would be reviewed against the approved Project requirements and would specify APA's commitments for consultation during construction, and the responsibilities of APA and the construction contractor. An updated version of the Pipelines Act Consultation Plan would be part of the assessment of the Pipeline Licence application.

The consultation associated with this phase would be focused on ensuring landholders and nearby residents were fully aware of the likely activities prior to the commencement of construction. During construction it is important that landholders and residents are aware of communication paths to notify and communicate with construction personnel.

This phase of consultation will commence prior to construction and continue through to completion of rehabilitation activities. There may be some overlap with the operation phase.

The objectives of this engagement period are to:

- Advise landholders and nearby residents of the construction commencement and details of the proposed construction program
- Introduce the construction contractor's representative
- Advise of the appropriate communication protocols with both APA and the construction contractor during the construction period
- Confirm with the landholder and the construction contractor property-specific requirements that are to be followed with respect to individual landholder requirements

- Provide additional details on specific construction activities (where required)
- Address enquiries, issues and complaints that may arise during the construction program
- Work with landholders on reinstatement and rehabilitation completion, including preparation of Property Management Plans with each landholder to accurately document existing conditions and monitoring of agreed rehabilitation measures.

APA would continue to maintain the 1800 number and dedicated email address, ensuring access to a complaints procedure, and making dedicated personnel available to communicate with impacted landholders.

Face to face consultation would be the primary form of communication with directly impacted landholders, subject to circumstances relating to COVID, along with the provision of additional information resources (for example, handouts and brochures) undertaken as necessary. APA would send all landholders a letter confirming that the Project is planned to proceed and the likely dates for Project construction. This notice would also include reference to the engaged construction contractor.

APA would introduce the landholder to the construction contractor's representative for the works. In addition, the construction contractor would complete a property inspection report that details the contact information for the landholder, any above or below ground assets potentially impacted, and any operational requirements that need to be addressed by the construction contractor.

APA and the construction contractor would also formalise and document the appropriate communication paths for landholders to follow during construction. The construction contractor is likely to be responsible for general communication or enquiries with landholders regarding scheduling of activities and other day to day issues, though APA representatives will also be involved where necessary.

Complaints would be investigated and responded to by APA, in accordance with the APA complaints procedure. All enquiries, feedback, complaints and incidents would be recorded and addressed. APA would have overall responsibility of the complaints procedure, which would incorporate the responsibilities and actions of the contractor. APA and the construction contractor would also liaise with landholders to ensure they are satisfied with the reinstatement of any disturbed areas. This process may also involve formal correspondence.

APA would maintain the Project website during the construction phase with Project updates.

### 6.7.5 Operation (expected 2023 onwards)

Given that a pipeline is a long-term infrastructure investment, it would be APA's objective to develop a sound relationship with all landholders. The operation and maintenance of the pipeline would be undertaken in accordance with APA's Landholder Engagement Procedure and Authorised Third Party Works Management Procedure. The Landholder Engagement Procedure identifies awareness objectives that are to be met and provides confidence that key messages are being communicated to external stakeholders, including landholders.

The objectives of this engagement period are to:

- Raise awareness of how APA operates its gas pipelines and associated infrastructure and the process for undertaking work in the pipeline easement
- Provide information of pipeline infrastructure
- Provide information and support to mitigate land-use changes impacting the pipeline classifications



- Ensure third parties are informed of APA's planned activities with regards to their interests
- Provide knowledge to identify an emergency situation and what to do in such an event.

Landholders would be mailed an information pack on an annual basis. All landholders will have a face to face visit, at a minimum of every three years, by an APA representative. Landholders would also be notified regarding non-routine maintenance activities (for example, chemical vegetation and weed control, and excavations). Where landholders are undertaking higher risk activities, the frequency of communications would be increased.

The information booklet mailed annually as part of the information pack will contain details such as when to contact APA, APA contact details, emergency contact details, explanation of pipeline markers, guidelines for appropriate activities near pipelines, activities that may result in damage to the pipelines and methods of recognising threats to the pipeline and what to do in an emergency.

APA's operational stakeholder management system includes a database record all landholder visits.

APA would also facilitate regular meetings with regulatory authorities with jurisdiction and with local councils in the Project area.

## 6.8 Feedback summary and response

### 6.8.1 Collection of feedback

Early and broad engagement since 2018 helped APA identify key areas of community interest. During preparation of the EES, feedback was sourced from the engagement channels outlined in Section 6.5.

Engagement information collected during the EES preparation was also provided to technical specialists for their consideration in their technical studies. The technical specialists contributed to the creation of thematic definitions for the issues analysis.

### 6.8.2 Themes from community and stakeholder consultation

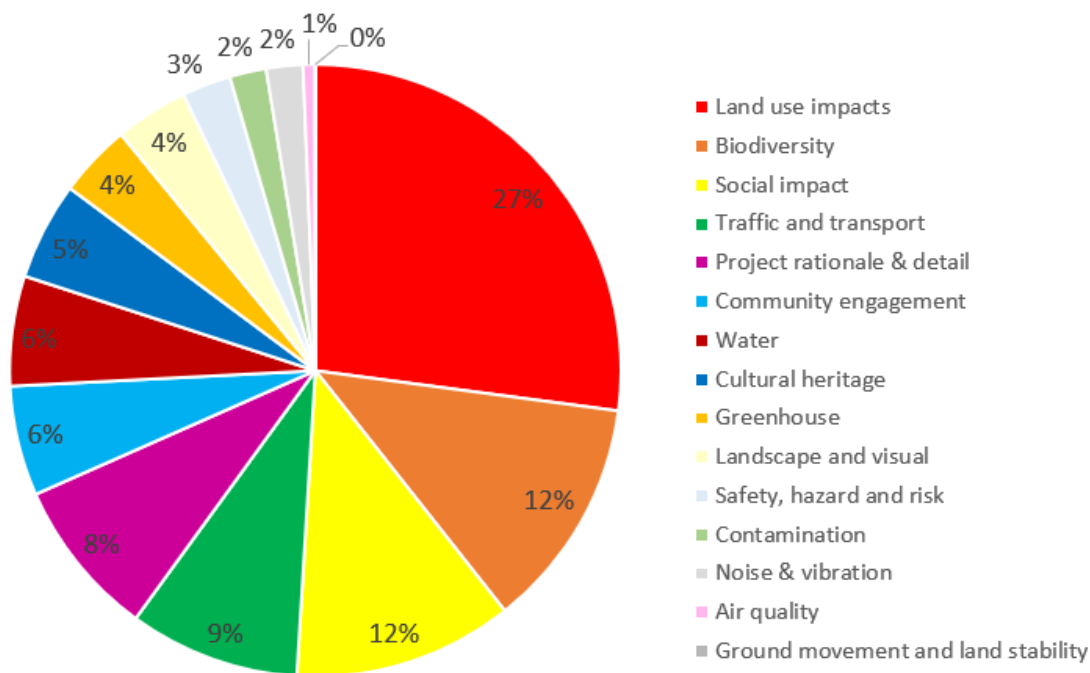
A total of 89 items of feedback were collected between 6 December 2018 and 28 February 2021. The feedback, including queries from community and comments from stakeholders, was categorised into 15 themes for consistent analysis. Where feedback contained multiple themes, each theme was counted.

Figure 6-5 illustrates the proportion of mentions for each theme. The 15 themes are ordered below according to the frequency of mentions during the engagement.

- 1 Land use impacts (27 per cent)
- 2 Biodiversity (12 per cent)
- 3 Social impact (12 per cent)
- 4 Traffic and transport (9 per cent)
- 5 Project rationale and detail (8 per cent)

- 6 Community engagement (6 per cent)
- 7 Water (6 per cent)
- 8 Cultural heritage (5 per cent)
- 9 Greenhouse (4 per cent)
- 10 Landscape and visual (4 per cent)
- 11 Safety, hazard and risk (3 per cent)
- 12 Contamination (2 per cent)
- 13 Noise and vibration (2 per cent)
- 14 Air quality (1 per cent)
- 15 Ground movement and land stability (no mentions).

Figure 6-5 Key themes raised in community consultation



## Land use impacts

Land use impacts was the most common item raised among community and stakeholders, with 42 queries related to this topic. Many of the questions were in relation to the pipeline alignment and impacts on existing and future land use on and around the proposed pipeline.

These queries came from various stakeholders including asset owners, local councils, property owners and concerned residents. For example, property owners inquired about whether agricultural activities, such as cropping, could continue over the pipe easement once construction had finished. Asset owners queried whether the pipeline would impact existing infrastructure, such as roads and other pipelines, and a few local councils raised queries about the impact of pipeline construction on sites marked for future development.

## Biodiversity

Following land use planning, biodiversity was the next most popular topic raised by local councils, asset owners, regulatory authorities, community action groups and residents. Primary concerns were in relation to pipeline construction impacts on waterways and habitat disruptions in biodiversity hotspots and conservation areas. More specifically, stakeholders and the community were concerned with protecting the habitats of native species, such as the Growling Grass Frog and wombats, avoiding the spread of weeds, minimising the removal of trees and adjusting pipeline alignment where possible to minimise impact on sensitive areas.

## Social impact

Responses were in relation to the effect of the pipeline construction on local amenity, such as roads and parklands, potential disruption to farm activities and resulting economic impacts to local farming communities. A few community members expressed concern about the choice of using natural gas, which is a highly potent greenhouse gas, and the implications this may have for future generations. One member expressed support and hoped for a gas service sooner as a result. Participants also expressed interest in opportunities for community investment as a result of the Project.

## Traffic and transport

Community members and asset owners raised issues about disruptions and hazards to traffic during the pipeline construction. Some stakeholders queried whether the easement would allow for foot and bike paths to encourage future active transport access. Some respondents requested to see traffic management plans for local roads where the pipeline alignment crosses.

## Community engagement

Local councils, asset owners and community information session attendees raised questions about the consultation process and consideration of community concerns. Safety during construction and notifications of work were raised as key considerations for the Project.

## Cultural heritage

Feedback was primarily focused on measures to mitigate or avoid impacts on areas and landforms of cultural significance, as well as sensitive ecological regions such as creek beds. Key considerations included avoiding disruption in areas where evidence of scar trees, Aboriginal stone artefacts and rocky knoll shrub land has been found.

Queries were raised during the community information sessions about items found in field work. Identifying cultural heritage potential and mitigation are the key matters in consultation with Registered Aboriginal Parties and Traditional Owner Groups. The WWCHAC will continue to be consulted for the land on which they are the RAP as the relevant CHMP is developed. Continuing consultation will also take place for an additional CHMP in relation to land where there is no allocated RAP, involving Aboriginal Victoria, WWCHAC, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Boon Wurrung Foundation.

### Water

Most items raised about water were centred around impacts on water infrastructure and natural waterways during construction, in particular Jacksons Creek, Merri Creek and Deep Creek. Landholders and prospective landholders were also interested in the impact on groundwater. Asset owners, including Melbourne Water, highlighted the importance of aligning construction schedules to avoid overlapping works. Participants from the community information sessions and Traditional Owner Groups raised concerns about minimising construction impacts on natural waterways and associated native flora and fauna.

### Greenhouse gas emissions

Many community groups, residents and landholders expressed concern about the investment in natural gas, rather than renewable energy, due to the environmental impact of burning fossil fuels. Managing potential leakage during extraction was mentioned as a key concern, as natural gas is recognised as a potent greenhouse gas – however this Project does not involve extraction.

### Project rationale and detail

Residents and participants at the community information session sought more information about details of the Project, such as construction schedules, easement and pipeline dimensions, and pipeline alignment.

### Landscape and visual

Queries about post-construction landscape remediation and rehabilitation were raised at the community information sessions by participants who wanted to understand what the easement would look like and how it would be maintained. Councils expressed similar concerns about the post-construction visual amenity, while local residents expressed concerns about rehabilitation of land based on previous experience of pipeline construction and the potential for discarded rubbish.

### Contamination

Community and stakeholders at the community information sessions asked questions about how the Project would manage topsoil contamination and weeds spreading during construction.

### Safety, hazard and risk

Councils and community members had queries about the safety measures in place to protect communities during pipeline construction and operation of the high-pressure gas main.

## Noise and vibration

Many noise and vibration matters raised were made in relation to impacts on farming activities and livestock. Community members were concerned as cattle and horses are sensitive to noise and would need to be moved during construction.

## Air quality

Some councils put forward a request to mitigate risk for dust control, as some community members suffer from asthma and respiratory problems.

## Ground movement and land stability

Land stability and ground movement has not been mentioned by the community in engagement forums so far.

### 6.8.3 Project response to community and stakeholder feedback

Since Project conception, APA has incorporated feedback from stakeholders and the community into the pipeline alignment and the design of the high-pressure gas main, the Wollert Compressor Station upgrade and the operation aspects of these components.

The consideration of community and stakeholder interests have informed the route selection and refinements to the pipeline alignment since selection of the preferred route. Input has also informed the construction corridor area and construction methodology at some locations. Many of these revisions are directly in response to consultation and negotiation with landholders and other stakeholders. The project development including the route selection and refinements to design and construction are described in Chapter 3 *Project development*.

Further to alignment refinement, feedback from stakeholders and the community has contributed to refining measures to avoid and minimise impacts during construction and operation.

Responding to issues raised has contributed to the focus of EES assessment, recommendations in technical reports and commitments to mitigate impacts incorporated into the EES. Feedback from landholders, the wider community and stakeholders, along with the corresponding Project response and the location of further detail in the EES, is summarised in Table 6-4.

Table 6-4 Project response to issues and concerns

Issue/concern	APA response and mitigation measures	Location in EES
<p>Land use impacts: Potential impacts on current or planned land use and character of those land uses including residential, rural, commercial, industrial and recreational values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions have been raised about ongoing use of land. APA nationally has 15,000 km of pipeline over all kinds of land use. APA encourage rehabilitation of the land and using it for farming purposes is one way to support this. Land within the construction corridor currently used for cropping would be able to continue following rehabilitation of the land.</li> <li>• During information sessions and other interactions, local residents have asked about the process for land use agreement. APA seeks to obtain a 15 m easement over the pipeline where the pipeline is constructed on private land. APA is committed to reaching an agreement with landholders within commercial terms wherever possible. The easement would solely be for the purpose of this pipeline (and associated facilities) and would be owned and operated by APA, to protect and maintain the pipeline. Under the Pipelines Act, APA is required to provide various levels of protection — including, for example, warning signs above ground. Easement is a form of protection to maintain land use and protect the asset.</li> <li>• APA has responded to location specific feedback from landholders and asset owners by making alignment revisions and refinement throughout the proposed pipeline. An example of this is the alignment option of the Gunns Gully Road Extension being avoided due to sensitive land uses (including several schools, a civic centre and an aged care facility, etc) proposed on or in proximity to the extension.</li> <li>• APA would seek to minimise land use impacts from pipeline reinstatement as far as practicable by:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Co-locating the alignment with other utility and transport infrastructure projects to avoid impacts on net developable land where practicable</li> <li>– Locating the pipeline at a distance from residential land uses that generally replicates the standards prescribed in Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) where the alignment is accommodated</li> <li>– Facilitating for future uses along the pipeline (eg shared use paths) in accordance with the APA Site Planning and Landscape National Guidelines (APA 2020)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 15  <i>Land use</i>                      Technical report                      K Land use</p>

Issue/concern	APA response and mitigation measures	Location in EES
<p>Biodiversity: Concern over removal of vegetation, potential impacts on flora and fauna</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of biodiversity has been frequently mentioned as a concern by communities and stakeholders. The pipeline alignment has been chosen to avoid where possible conservation areas, such as Mount Ridley Nature Conservation Reserve.</li> <li>• The construction corridor has been reduced in some relevant locations to avoid vegetation and threatened communities</li> <li>• APA will work with landholders to retain trees where practicable and to replace trees where this is appropriate.</li> <li>• APA will have an environmental management plan in place during construction to manage construction impacts. For example, if there are weeds on a particular property, protocols would be in place for checking that machinery is clean before entry and exit from site to prevent the spread of weeds.</li> <li>• Offsets will be sought where native vegetation removal and/or impacts to EPBC Act listed species or habitat, is unavoidable.</li> <li>• Aligning with feedback received from the community about environmental values, measures would be undertaken to avoid construction in areas of habitat for the Growling Grass Frog and the Striped Legless Lizard. Construction would be undertaken outside peak breeding season of the Growling Grass Frog to minimise impacts.</li> <li>• Golden Sun Moth and Striped Legless Lizard habitat would be reinstated as far as practicable including topsoil management and revegetated with appropriate native grasses that provide habitat and food sources for the Golden Sun Moth.</li> <li>• Underboring in some relevant locations will avoid important vegetation. As an example, the one identified Matted Flax Lily plant will be protected by avoiding surface level disturbance in that location.</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 7 <i>Biodiversity</i> Technical report A Biodiversity and habitats</p>
<p>Social impact: Potential impacts to access, amenity and/or community infrastructure/ services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns have been expressed by the community about the short to medium term impact on local amenities and services. Through consultation with local communities and stakeholders, APA has taken care to minimise social impact through changes to the pipeline alignment, and by putting detailed plans and mitigation measures in place.</li> <li>• APA plan to work with local communities to improve open spaces and facilities where the opportunities arise.</li> <li>• APA will provide reasonable opportunity for subcontractors and labour from regions local to the site to be engaged on the construction works.</li> <li>• APA will seek opportunities for community support beyond pipeline construction in the Project area.</li> <li>• Opportunities will be explored and further developed as the Project progresses. The team is currently taking proposals from the community.</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 16 <i>Social</i> Technical report L Social</p>

Issue/concern	APA response and mitigation measures	Location in EES
<p>Traffic and transport: Impacts on existing and planned transport infrastructure and traffic impacts during construction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities mentioned traffic impacts during construction of the proposed pipeline as a concern. While there are a large number of road crossings that will cross the pipeline, many of these roads will be unaffected. APA will develop a traffic management plan and the local community will be advised of any temporary disruptions associated with the construction works where there is a need to redirect traffic for limited periods</li> <li>• APA are working closely with organisations leading other projects within or close to the Project area, to avoid or minimise impact on their works. This will include, for example, the planned Outer Metropolitan Ring Transport Corridor,</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 15 <i>Land use</i> Technical report K Land use Chapter 16 <i>Social</i> Technical report L Social</p>
<p>Project rationale: Concerns over investment in fossil fuels as a source of energy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APA has received and acknowledged concerns about the rationale for the Project in the context of the broader picture for energy supply in Victoria.</li> <li>• APA consider climate change a critical issue facing the global community. APA is committed to helping shape a sustainable energy future for Australia.</li> <li>• APA understand concerns around continued use of fossil fuels. As the energy sector progressively transitions from thermal power (including from coal-fired plants) to more renewable energy (including wind and solar) – gas, which generally has lower emissions than coal, will play a role in enabling firming capacity to complement renewables at peak times or when renewables are not available.</li> <li>• Locally, the Project presents a number of benefits, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increasing the amount of natural gas that can be stored for times of peak demand</li> <li>– Improved network performance and reliability</li> <li>– Improved compression facilities with reduced emissions</li> <li>– Gas supply is evened out with more efficient gas flow into gas storage basins addressing potential gas shortages as forecast by the Australian Energy Market Operator.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 2 <i>Project rationale</i></p>
<p>Community engagement: Ensuring sufficient consultation with impacted stakeholders and communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APA has been engaging with potentially impacted landholders, communities and stakeholders since 2018. Consultation has been carefully planned, in line with a Pipelines Act Consultation Plan (published in March 2019), and an approved EES Consultation Plan (published in October 2020). Feedback from these stakeholders has helped to inform the project design, construction methodologies proposed and an engagement approach.</li> <li>• Consultation has been offered through a range of channels including face-to-face meetings, online meetings, virtual information sessions, an online engagement hub, a community survey and a Project hotline.</li> <li>• APA have created a range of collateral which aims to provide clear, regularly updated information about the Project, its progress through approvals, and opportunities to provide feedback.</li> <li>• APA has not been able to engage face to face throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead during this time APA were able to increase online communications and retain traditional channels which are safe to use, such as the hotline.</li> <li>• In 2021, APA plan to offer more opportunities for local communities and stakeholders to engage face-to-face with the Project team, with government restrictions permitting</li> </ul>	<p>EES Consultation Plan Attachment III EES Stakeholder Consultation Report</p>



Issue/concern	APA response and mitigation measures	Location in EES
<p>Water: Potential impacts to waterways (Jacksons Creek, Merri Creek and Deep Creek) and groundwater (water quality and water movement)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical Report C, Groundwater assessed impacts on groundwater levels, flow paths and quality during construction and operation of the Project. Six areas were identified where the pipeline may interact directly with the water table aquifer (approximately five percent of the alignment) which can impact water quality and availability. Management measures including pipeline design requirements to prevent preferential flow paths, and construction management requirements to minimise potential impacts to groundwater quality would be implemented to minimise impacts associated with Project construction and operation.</li> <li>• In alignment with the feedback received from communities and stakeholders, potential impacts on the three main waterways intersected by the Project would be minimised where possible, including minimising impact on riparian vegetation through pipeline alignment selection.</li> <li>• Jacksons Creek: The proposed pipeline crossing at this creek is to be constructed using open cut trenching methods. The construction method proposed considered a number of factors including existing ground conditions, constructability constraints and environmental aspects in this area. Fish surveys have taken place, but these didn't identify any of the threatened species expected to be in the area. While the presence of Growling Grass Frogs has been established at that creek, the proposed pipeline crossing falls in the most degraded part of the creek, where frogs are least likely to occur. Additional management measures proposed to mitigate potential impacts to the creek during construction and operation include site-specific design and construction specifications, site rehabilitation measures including restoration of waterway bed and banks in accordance with stringent requirements, and surface water and biological monitoring. Remedial action would be carried out if monitoring and inspection results indicate a potential impact from the works to the environment.</li> <li>• Merri Creek: The proposed pipeline crossing at this creek is to be constructed using open cut trenching methods. It will be located within an existing APA easement, which has an existing gas pipeline that was constructed via an open cut methodology in 2014. The proposed pipeline will be co-located with the existing gas pipeline infrastructure to minimise environmental disturbance in this area. Surface water and biological monitoring would be undertaken during construction to manage potential impacts to the creek, such as erosion, and periodic visual monitoring would be undertaken to monitor the waterway after rehabilitation.</li> <li>• Deep Creek: The proposed pipeline crossing at this creek is to be constructed using Horizontal Direct Drilling (HDD) methodology. There will be no above ground disturbance within the creek corridor at this location. Specific HDD mitigation measures would be applied as standard controls to minimise potential residual impacts associated with erosion.</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 8 <i>Water</i> Technical report B Surface water Technical report C Groundwater</p>

Issue/concern	APA response and mitigation measures	Location in EES
<p>Cultural heritage: Potential impacts to registered Aboriginal Heritage sites or identified European heritage values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APA are engaging closely with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Aboriginal Victoria and other relevant Traditional Owner groups in the development of two Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMP) connected to the Project.</li> <li>• A CHMP is a written report prepared by a Heritage Advisor. It includes results of an assessment of the potential impact of a proposed activity on Aboriginal cultural heritage. It outlines measures to be taken before, during and after an activity in order to manage and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage in the activity area. APA's Heritage Advisors have been guided by Traditional Owners in identifying and testing key sites, and in developing an understanding of the associated cultural values.</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 13 <i>Cultural heritage</i> Technical report I Cultural heritage</p>
<p>Greenhouse gas: Identify potential impacts from greenhouse gas emissions from the Project during construction and operation activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities expressed some concern about the nature of the project and impacts of greenhouse gases in operation.</li> <li>• Technical Report H, Greenhouse Gas, identified the estimated construction and operation emissions of the Project, which are largely attributed to the removal of vegetation and fuel use emissions during construction, and fuel use at the Wollert Compressor Station during operation. In relation to these concerns, the new equipment to be installed at the Wollert Compressor Station would represent the latest technology.</li> <li>• Application of management measures including consideration of low embodied energy materials fuel efficient plant and equipment and locally sourced materials, would further reduce potential emissions.</li> <li>• The Project is predicted by AEMO to lead to efficiency gains in the overall Victorian gas supply network by improving efficiency of the existing gas network and improving the compression facilities. This will lead to a net reduction in total greenhouse gas emissions across the VTS.</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 10 <i>Waste</i> Technical report H Greenhouse gas</p>
<p>Landscape and visual impact: Potential landscape character and visual impacts from removal of vegetation and construction activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholders, particularly landholders, provided feedback about retaining landscape and visual values on their properties or surrounding properties impacted by the pipeline alignment. In response to feedback with the affected landholders, APA will be required to reinstate the construction corridor to enable it to be used as per the previous use as far as practicable, in consultation with the landholder.</li> <li>• APA would avoid tree removal during construction where possible and machinery, materials and temporary infrastructure would be removed as soon as it is no longer required. Construction laydown areas would also be kept tidy and dust kept to a minimum.</li> <li>• For loss of trees and shrubs within the approved construction area affecting public places or existing screening of private residences from road reserves, screening measures will be implemented (outside the easement) where reasonably requested and where practicable, in consultation with the affected landholder and/or responsible authority. With the landholder's agreement, APA will also screen above-ground facilities.</li> <li>• A planting and remediation plan would be developed where planting of trees and shrubs is proposed (in consultation with any affected landholders and consistent with APA guidelines on restricted uses within an easement and other necessary approvals granted).</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 14 <i>Landscape and visual</i> Technical report J Landscape and visual</p>

Issue/concern	APA response and mitigation measures	Location in EES
<p>Safety, hazard and risk: Identify potential safety hazards and associated risks with the Project on people and environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safety is common community concern for pipeline projects. APA have performed a threat analysis according to Australian standards. This is a bottom-up look at threats to the pipeline such as seismic events, and other natural phenomena, as well as events such as corrosion. APA then look at how these risks can be mitigated, using safety measures, categorised into physical measures (eg depth of pipe, width of steel), as well as other patrol measures (eg signage, visual guidance and periodic patrols of the pipeline).</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 17 <i>Safety</i> Technical report M Safety</p>
<p>Contamination: Disturbance of potentially contaminated soil in construction</p>	<p>Technical Report E, Contamination, assessed potential impacts on human health and the environment as a result of disturbance and management of contaminated soils and groundwater, acid sulfate soils and other wastes; and identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No contamination was identified at the locations sampled, indicating shallow soils are likely suitable for reuse at the site of origin in areas not identified as potential sources of contamination</li> <li>There is potential for regional groundwater contamination impacts from landfills but due to Project design and construction methodology, the Project is unlikely to interact with groundwater in these areas. Analysis of groundwater to date at locations sampled has also not identified contamination.</li> <li>Spoil management measures will be developed in consultation with EPA Victoria and include processes for classifying and managing all types of excavated material in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements. It is expected that the main spoil types would include mostly uncontaminated soils and potentially small volumes of prescribed industrial waste in the vicinity of known potential contamination sources. A process will also be implemented for identifying, containing and managing unexpected contamination.</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 10 <i>Waste</i> Technical report E Contamination</p>

Issue/concern	APA response and mitigation measures	Location in EES
<p>Noise and vibration: Potential impacts on sensitive receptors from construction noise and vibration of the Project and operation of the Wollert Compressor Station</p>	<p>Amenity impacts during construction are frequently mentioned as a concern by impacted stakeholders. Technical Report F Noise and Vibration, has assessed the noise and vibration impacts of the Project during construction and operation of the Wollert Compressor Station. The assessment found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where works would occur in proximity to sensitive receptors, construction activities may result in short-term noise and vibration impacts</li> <li>• Noise from the operation of the expanded Wollert Compressor Station is predicted to comply with the applicable noise limits (State Environment Protection Policy – Control of Noise from Commerce, Industry and Trade No. N-1 (SEPP N-1) at all of the sensitive receptors during the day, evening and night-time.</li> <li>• To avoid and minimise noise and vibration impacts during construction APA will implement a range of measures including preparation and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) detailing measures to avoid and minimise construction and vibration, and condition/dilapidation surveys where required (EMM NV1).</li> <li>• Following the implementation of the CEMP and where noise is still predicted to exceed the adopted criteria, information on the impact will be discussed with affected residents and depending on the circumstances, further measures to minimise noise impact will be considered including alternative temporary accommodation or other respite options (EMM NV7).</li> <li>• Prior to any blasting, a detailed blast study and impact management plan would be developed to confirm potential blasting impacts and identify any further management measures required (EMM NV3).</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 12 <i>Noise and vibration</i> Technical report F Noise and vibration</p>
<p>Air quality: Potential impacts on sensitive receptors from construction dust or operation of the Wollert Compressor Station</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amenity impacts during construction have been mentioned as a concern by impacted stakeholders. In response, APA will put measures in place to control dust during the construction phase.</li> <li>• APA have established separation distances to meet dust standards and will implement mitigation measures where residences are within these distances. Measures will be adapted to suit the location, activities and conditions and could include watering, placing crushed rock on access tracks, restricting vehicle speeds, compaction of stockpiles. Additional measures such as wind barriers may be used in particular circumstances.</li> <li>• Realtime dust monitoring would be employed in locations where residences are within impact zones.</li> <li>• The compressor station design adopts the latest technology. Modelling has shown that State Environmental Planning Policy emission requirements would be achieved, and no further mitigation of emissions is required. This has been assessed by EPA Victoria, with impacts deemed low enough that a Works Approval and operational licence are not required.</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 11 <i>Air quality</i> Technical report G Air quality</p>

Issue/concern	APA response and mitigation measures	Location in EES
<p>Ground movement and land stability: Potential ground instability or movement from trenching and boring</p>	<p>Technical Report D Land stability and ground movement, assessed potential impacts relating to trenchless crossing ground movement, slope stability and trench stability. The report identified that encountering cohesionless granular material in trench construction could result in trench wall collapse and result in localised impact on nearby land. There is potential for impact on slope stability in the valley north of the Jacksons Creek crossing.</p> <p>To manage potential impacts associated with land stability and ground movement, the following key measures would be applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirements for fluid application for bore support during trenchless crossings</li> <li>• Adherence to third party asset clearances</li> <li>• Prior to construction, an investigation to confirm locations of sodic soils along the alignment. Sodic soil management measures will be developed in response to this investigation and implemented during construction</li> <li>• Provision of trench support or battering to reduce the potential for slope or trench wall failure and associated impacts.</li> <li>• Rehabilitation of the land in the case of soil disturbance and if there are issues with soil sinkage, bring in more soil to manage that. Routine inspections and maintenance will be ongoing during operation of the pipeline to manage any issues such as those associated with dispersive soils.</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 9 <i>Land stability and ground movement</i></p> <p>Technical report D Land stability and ground movement</p>

## 6.9 Monitoring and evaluation

Consultation is continuing to consider community and stakeholder needs and to provide opportunities to contribute feedback to inform the Project. APA is actively seeking feedback from participants at engagement events and via online platforms to continue to improve their processes.

Participation levels and feedback received on the engagement process are being recorded, collected and considered as part of ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement of the engagement program and to inform the future engagement program for the construction phase.

The Pipelines Act Consultation Plan and implementation program are reviewed and modified in response to feedback and Project evolution to improve the engagement approach and efficiency.

Pending the granting of statutory approvals, APA is committed to ongoing engagement with the local community and stakeholders during construction and operation of the Project. The proposed engagement approach and activities for these phases are outlined in Sections 6.7.3 and 6.7.5.

The outcomes of the EES process, relevant conditions of approvals and approved documents such as the Environment Management Plan would inform and contribute to the engagement approach. The ongoing engagement strategy would reflect relevant construction and operation issues and interests for landholders and the community.