

# foreword.

Natural gas is an essential source of energy for Victorians, with approximately two million customers using gas every day for domestic applications including cooking, heating and hot water.

However, the existing high-pressure gas network serving Victoria, known as the Victorian Transmission system or VTS, is currently constrained in its ability to efficiently transport gas from Melbourne's east to the west. This is caused by the absence of an efficient link around greater Melbourne.

Constraints in the VTS will be a key contributor to forecast gas supply shortages in the coming years.

The Western Outer Ring Main (WORM) is designed to close this missing link, by helping ensure sufficient natural gas can be transported across Victoria for homes and industry, and supporting power generation during times of peak electricity demand.

The WORM will ensure that all Victorians can continue to benefit from a reliable natural gas transmission system that meets the needs of the community both now and into the future.

This is consistent with APA's purpose to strengthen communities through responsible energy.

As always, in developing the WORM, we will seek to ensure impacts to the environment are avoided or minimised.

The alignment and construction methodology for the WORM have been developed following extensive investigations into the existing terrain, ecology and geology of the area, to ensure potential impacts to the environment and surrounding community are avoided or minimised.

Similarly, we have been careful to avoid significant impacts on communities and landholders.

Extensive consultation with landholders, stakeholders and the community to gather local knowledge about the environment has already been conducted and this feedback has been used to improve our design, and proposed construction and operation of the Project.

Consistent with our commitment to build honest and enduring relationships with all our stakeholders, we will continue to work at a local, state and national level to ensure stakeholders knowledge is shared, voices are heard, and differing views are considered.

It is my pleasure to share the extensive suite of assessments prepared for the Environment Effects Statement.



**Kevin Lester**

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