



NEWS RELEASE
The Hon. Kristina Keneally MP
Member for Heffron
Minister for Planning
Minister for Redfern Waterloo

Tuesday 11 August, 2009

LEAFS GULLY POWER STATION APPROVED FOLLOWING RIGOROUS EXAMINATION

The NSW Government has approved a \$200 million gas-fired peaking power station at Leafs Gully in south-west Sydney. The project will create up to 145 operational and construction jobs.

Strict conditions have been placed on the approval with regard to air quality, noise and visual impacts, wastewater management and revegetation, as well as any future application to expand the plant.

Construction will take about 2 years and include two gas turbines and ancillary facilities such as a switchyard, transmission lines, domestic wastewater treatment systems and access roads.

“There is a real and necessary requirement for additional electricity generating capacity to secure energy supply for NSW into the future,” said Minister for Energy, Ian Macdonald.

“The gas-fired power station will contribute considerably to the State’s energy supply, delivering energy infrastructure and supporting the transition to a lower carbon economy.”

Planning Minister, Kristina Keneally said her decision followed an extensive technical merit assessment by the Department of Planning.

“Leafs Gully, a declared critical infrastructure project, will have a maximum generation capacity of 360 megawatts and operate no more than 15 per cent of the year,” Ms Keneally said.

“One of the significant issues raised by the community during the extended, 60 day public exhibition period, was that the power station’s capacity might increase after initial approval of 360 megawatts.

“I’ve told AGL they must demonstrate acceptable environmental performance for at least 12 months following construction before any application to expand the plant will be considered.

“Given that construction will take about 2 years, what this means is there will be no consideration of any application to expand the plant until at least 2012.

“Other issues raised during community consultation included potential impacts on air quality, visual amenity, noise and local ecology. These have been scrutinised by the Department of Planning.”

Ms Keneally said air dispersion modelling found the power station would meet established local **air quality** criteria under both normal operating conditions as well as during start-up of the project. To ensure air quality outcomes were maintained, she has required:

- Air quality discharge limits that are more stringent than the requirements under State law;
- A comprehensive air quality performance verification study within 90 days of operations starting;
- An average emissions benchmark for nitrogen oxides, a key contributor to photochemical smog, to be set within 12 months of commencing operations;
- Continuous and periodic monitoring of air pollutants, and a full air quality management plan.



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“Along with continuous air quality monitoring, I have imposed a discharge limit for nitrogen oxides of nearly 30 per cent under the limit set by the relevant State regulation,” Ms Keneally said.

“This is designed to ensure the project does not increase the number of days where the national ozone standard is exceeded in Sydney.

“Of 28 nearby **view locations**, 12 will be subject to a low impact on visual amenity, and only one would experience a medium impact. The project will not be visible from the remaining 15 locations.

“The proponent has committed to **revegetation** to improve wildlife corridors on site, including Koala feed trees. They will also install native trees on the northern perimeter to screen affected properties.

“And about 170 hectares of vegetation around the power station will be conserved to protect large tracts of endangered ecological communities and the habitat of the endangered Matted Bush-pea.

“A **wastewater management system** will ensure the project is ‘zero discharge’. No water will be discharged into the local surface water or groundwater system, protecting local water quality.

“A number of other conditions were imposed on the proposal with regard to **local road improvements, water cycle management measures, hours of operation** and **hazard management**.”

Ms Keneally said a Community Participation Program will allow the community to liaise directly with the proponent through an independently-chaired Community Reference Panel.

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IMPORTANT STATEMENT ABOUT POLITICAL DONATIONS

New donation disclosure laws which came into effect in 2008 impose obligations on applicants who make a relevant planning application to the Minister or the Department of Planning to disclose all reportable political donations (if any) made within the period commencing two years before the application is made and ending when the application is determined. More information at:

<http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/DevelopmentAssessments/Donationandgiftdisclosure/tabid/209/Default.aspx>

With regard to this announcement, records on the Electoral Funding Authority website show that AGL has previously made political donations, including to the Labor and Liberal Parties. This occurred prior to the introduction of the new donation disclosure laws.