The NSW Government has given approval for its portion of a $96 million water supply pipeline which will play an important part in securing drinking water for Queanbeyan and other NSW towns near the ACT.

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, said the Murrumbidgee to Googong water transfer pipeline was approved following an assessment under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

“The Part 3A assessment system has allowed the NSW Government to assess this complex, cross-border project quickly, reducing potential delays in its delivery,” the Minister said.

The ACT and Commonwealth Governments are considering their portion of the project.

The 12 kilometre pipeline, proposed by the ACT’s water authority the ACTEW Corporation, will transfer water from the Murrumbidgee River in the ACT to Burra Creek in NSW.

The water would then flow into the Googong Reservoir in order to supplement its existing water levels during times of reduced supply.

Ten kilometres of the pipeline will be located in NSW with the remaining portion in the ACT on Commonwealth land.

Mr Kelly said depending on demand and surrounding environmental conditions, up to 100 megalitres of water could be transferred from the Murrumbidgee River into the reservoir per day.

“The volume of water to be transferred would be accommodated within and would not exceed the established Murray Darling Basin Inter-governmental Agreement caps for water off-take out of the Murrumbidgee River,” the Minister said.

“The pipeline would play an important role securing the current and future water needs of the ACT and the surrounding NSW region, particularly Queanbeyan and potentially also Yass and Goulburn.”

Member for Monaro, Steve Whan, said the Sydney-Canberra Corridor Regional Strategy predicts an additional 16,100 people will be living in the Queanbeyan local government area by 2031.

“Recent severe drought restrictions, future climatic predictions and expected population growth in the region mean there is a significant risk of a water undersupply in the region,” Mr Whan said.

Even if there was no further population growth, drier climatic conditions alone are expected to force the need for an additional water supply.”
The NSW Department of Planning has agreed with ACTEW Corporation’s plan to secure in perpetuity a 58-hectare area of endangered native vegetation in the ACT, in order to offset the unavoidable loss of a 17-hectare portion of endangered native vegetation during the pipeline construction.

Due to the pipeline’s location and potential for impacts on land within NSW, the ACT and the Commonwealth, the project requires assessment and approval from all three authorities prior to the commencement of any work.