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MEDIA RELEASE

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STRICT REQUIREMENTS FOR PIPELINE PROPOSAL

Eastern Star Gas Pipeline has this week been issued with an extensive set of requirements which must be adequately addressed, before its plans for a proposed pipeline between Narrabri and Wellington can be publically exhibited.

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, said the company's response must include clear justification of the route alignment and detailed consultation with impacted landowners, local councils and relevant government agencies.

"The assessment of the pipeline proposal is still in its very early stages, but I can assure the community, people will have plenty of opportunity to have their say in what is a rigorous and transparent process," the Minister said.

The proposal, by Eastern Star Gas Pipeline Pty Ltd, is for the construction and operation of a buried 272-kilometre long high pressure gas transmission pipeline.

Mr Kelly said one of the important early steps under the Government's assessment system for major projects (Part 3A), is the issuing of what is known as Director-General's Requirements.

"This is a focussed and stringent set of requirements, issued by the Department of Planning, which must be adequately addressed by the proponent in its project documentation, before it is allowed to proceed to public exhibition," the Minister said.

The requirements, which are publicly available on the Department's website, include the need to:

- Justify the need, scale, scope and location of the project;
- Provide detailed information on all alternatives considered, both in terms of corridor selection and alignment within the identified corridor, and **clear reasons and justification for the selected corridor/alignment;**
- Outline the suitability or otherwise of using Travelling Stock Routes (TSRs), taking into account their ecological and cultural values and the potential for conflict with other users of the TSRs;
- Assess the potential for the project to have general land use conflicts, **with specific consideration given to impacts on agricultural users** and their existing or proposed operations;
- Consider the project's ecological impacts, including native vegetation, threatened species and their habitats, as well as details on proposed measures to avoid, mitigate or offset any impacts;
- Detail any indigenous and non-indigenous heritage impacts;
- Undertake an assessment of amenity impacts on nearby residents; and
- Address socio-economic implications, hazards and risks, surface and groundwater impacts, infrastructure impacts, traffic and transport impacts and other general environment risks.

Under the State's major projects assessment system, should the project proceed to public exhibition, all submissions received would be made publicly available on the Department of Planning's website and the proponent required to respond to the issues raised.