



Hon Tony Kelly MLC  
Minister for Planning  
Minister for Infrastructure  
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Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council  
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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **HUNTER GAS STORAGE FACILITY 'CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE'**

A \$300 million gas storage facility proposed in the Hunter has been declared 'critical infrastructure', to provide extra legal certainty to the assessment process.

NSW Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, said if approved, the proposed AGL Energy facility at Tomago would have the capacity to store around 30,000 tonnes of liquified natural gas.

"It would be the first gas storage facility of its kind in NSW and would be able to supply the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong markets with up to 120 terrajoules of energy a day upon demand," Mr Kelly said.

"The declaration of this project as critical infrastructure ensures, if approved, it is not held up in legal challenges, but rather can be constructed in time to meet this rapidly approaching deadline.

"This is particularly important in NSW as we are currently largely reliant on interstate gas supplies and therefore vulnerable to interruptions and supply risks out of our control.

"The Tomago project would offer ongoing environmental benefits by securing the improved availability of gas as an alternative to other fuels such as coal and diesel.

"With mid-winter peak gas demand predicted to exceed supply in around four years time, the proposal was set to play an important part in securing the State's energy future.

"The 2009 Gas Statement of Opportunities published by the Australian Energy Market Operator predicts the mid-winter peak gas demand in eastern and south eastern Australia is expected to exceed supply by 2014."

Minister for the Hunter, Jodi McKay, welcomed the announcement.

"This project would create up to 300 construction jobs and a further 15 once operational," Ms McKay said.

The project was declared a major project for assessment and determination by the NSW Government in August this year, as it is a proposal for a gas storage facility with a capital investment in excess of \$20 million.

The Department of Planning has subsequently issued AGL with its requirements for environmental assessment, which include the need to undertake a thorough analysis of potential hazards and risks associated with the project.

These requirements, along with AGL's preliminary plans, can be found on the department's website at [http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view\\_job&job\\_id=4187](http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=4187)

Mr Kelly said the proposal will now undergo a thorough merit assessment by the Department of Planning, including public exhibition, before a final decision is made.

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