A proposed 45-kilometre water pipeline that promises to ensure the ongoing security of Orange’s water supply will be assessed by the NSW Government as a major project due to its significance to both the Central West region and the State as a whole.

The project, being proposed by Orange City Council, would if approved deliver water from the Macquarie River to the Orange water supply network.

In accepting the project for assessment, Planning Minister Tony Kelly said Orange’s status as an important and growing regional centre meant that securing the city’s long term water supply was a crucial issue for the State’s future development.

The pipeline would also traverse two and possibly three different local council areas – including Orange and Cabonne – meaning the State Government is best placed to consider the proposal.

“Orange is planned to grow as a major regional employment centre in line with various State and Federal initiatives,” Mr Kelly said.

“This includes its identification as one of the State’s seven leading regional cities under the EVOcities program.

“The city’s current water supply capacity, including a recently commissioned stormwater harvesting scheme, can only satisfy demand if permanent water restrictions are imposed.

“This is not a satisfactory long term position and leaves no capacity for regional growth.

“The State’s major projects assessment system will ensure the project undergoes a rigorous environmental assessment by the Department of Planning before any decision is made on whether it should progress.

“This will include careful consideration of potential pipeline routes and possible impacts on landowners and other nearby land uses.

“And of course, the assessment process will include extensive public consultation.”

The project’s acceptance as a major project is the first step in the overall assessment process under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, which includes consultation with local councils and other Government agencies as well as public exhibition.

Information and relevant documentation on the project will also be available on the Department of Planning website throughout the assessment process, or alternatively information on the proposal itself can be sought from Orange City Council.