

Media Release

The Hon Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Planning
Minister for Housing
Acting Minister for Water



Tuesday, 30 March, 2021

GAS PROPOSAL RULED OUT DUE TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The Andrews Labor Government today ruled out a proposal to establish a gas import terminal at Crib Point in Western Port and construct a pipeline from the terminal to Pakenham.

Minister for Planning Richard Wynne concluded marine discharges from the proposed AGL and APA project would have unacceptable effects on the environment in Western Port, which is listed as a Ramsar wetland of international significance.

The decision is based on an Environment Effects Statement (EES) produced by AGL and APA Group, around 6,000 public submissions and a report into the findings of the statement by an independent Inquiry and Advisory Committee (IAC).

In October 2018 the Minister decided an EES was required for the proposal due to its potential for significant environmental effects, particularly on biodiversity – as well as social, amenity, heritage and other values.

The Minister also appointed the IAC to review the EES and consider submissions. A public hearing on the proposal was held by the IAC over ten weeks from October to December 2020.

The IAC submitted its report to the Minister in late February 2021, in accordance with its terms of reference.

The Minister has provided copies of his assessment to Victorian decision-makers, including the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, EPA and Aboriginal Victoria. Under the Environment Effects Act, those decision-makers must consider the Minister's assessment before making decisions about the approvals in their jurisdictions.

The Minister also provided his assessment to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, in accordance with an agreement between the Australian and Victorian Governments under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

A report of the EES assessment is available from planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment

Quotes attributable to Minister for Planning Richard Wynne

"This has been an exhaustive, open and transparent process and this is the right outcome for the local community, the environment and Victoria as a whole."

"It's very clear to me that this project would cause unacceptable impacts on the Western Port environment and the Ramsar wetlands – it's important that these areas are protected."