



15 May 2009

Department of Environment and Resource Management
Queensland

Via email: VMEnquiries@derm.qld.gov.au

**MORATORIUM CONSULTATION ON NEW VEGETATION CLEARING LAWS
AND PROCESSES FOR QUEENSLAND**

The Australian Pipeline Industry Association (APIA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Department of Environment and Resource Management's (DERM) consultation on the *Vegetation Management (Regrowth Clearing Moratorium) Act 2009* and potential changes to vegetation management processes in Queensland.

APIA would like to be included in further consultation on the development of new vegetation clearing legislation, as APIA members are often involved in vegetation clearing, and the subsequent revegetation and restoration, of sensitive areas on pipeline infrastructure projects.

These infrastructure projects are typically related to either extractive industries or water supply, and often qualify as projects of significance. The existing approval processes in place to ensure these projects minimise environmental impacts are robust and have achieved positive results.

Any changes to vegetation clearing legislation seeking limitations on infrastructure projects must be considered very carefully.

We look forward to further consultations with DERM on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Cartwright
Chief Executive



Introduction

The Australian Pipeline Industry Association welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Department of Environment and Resource Management's (DERM) consultation on the *Vegetation Management (Regrowth Clearing Moratorium) Act 2009* and potential changes to vegetation management processes in Queensland.

APIA is the peak national body representing the interests of Australia's transmission pipeline sector. APIA's membership is predominantly involved in high-pressure gas transmission, but also constructs and operates water, oil, petroleum and slurry pipelines. APIA's members include contractors, owners, operators, advisers and engineering companies and suppliers of pipeline products and services.

APIA's members own, operate and service the gas transmission pipelines that supply today's gas market and are likely to be the key investors in new pipelines and capacity expansions of existing pipelines that will be needed in order to meet the growing needs of the energy market over the next 20 years and beyond. This investment in transmission pipeline infrastructure will be essential to Australia's economic growth and as part of Australia's strategy for reducing its greenhouse gas emissions. Also, significant new pipeline infrastructure will be required with the development of the extensive coal seam methane reserves in Queensland.

Pipeline Infrastructure

Pipeline infrastructure projects remain eligible to apply for clearing under the moratorium as they typically fall into one of the identified purposes for eligibility, identified in the Guide to making applications under the Moratorium on Clearing of Regrowth Vegetation published on the DERM website.

APIA considers it vital that any changes to vegetation management laws resulting from the current consultation continue to allow for pipeline and other infrastructure projects to be eligible to clear necessary vegetation.

Existing Approval Processes under the *Integrated Planning Act 1997*

APIA understands that there is no intention to change the current processes for approvals of infrastructure projects as outlined in the *Integrated Planning Act 1997*. APIA considers these processes to be sufficiently robust to ensure infrastructure projects do not unnecessarily impact on the environment and, where impact is necessary, that these impacts are minimised.

APIA's Code of Environmental Practice

APIA members adhere to APIA's *Code of Environmental Practice* (the Code). The Code is constantly reviewed and was updated in 2009. It contains extensive information regarding revegetation and rehabilitation processes to be undertaken to ensure minimal environmental impacts of pipeline projects.

APIA members are experienced in constructing pipeline infrastructure projects and are sensitive to the environmental needs of Australia's diverse landscape. Infrastructure projects in sensitive water catchment areas are typically subject to additional vegetation rehabilitation requirements and APIA is not aware of any projects failing to meet these requirements.

Recent examples of pipeline projects undertaken in water catchment areas in Queensland are the Southern Regional Water Pipeline Alliance for LinkWater Projects and the Western Pipeline Alliance (part of the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme) for the Coordinator General. Due to the sensitive nature of these regions, temporary erosion and sediment control measures were undertaken during construction and post construction, including site restoration and ongoing monitoring.

Continued Consultation

To date, APIA has not been involved in the consultation processes conducted by DERM on this issue. APIA seeks to participate in any further discussions.

In particular, APIA can assist DERM with any information or assessment of the possible effects that any proposed changes may have on pipeline and other infrastructure projects.