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NOTICE

EXTENSION OF TIME FOR PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS TUBRIDGI PIPELINE SYSTEM – RING FENCING ARRANGEMENTS

On the 31 March 2000, Origin Energy Resources Ltd (Origin Energy) made application for a waiver of certain ring fencing obligations under section 4.16 of the *National Gas Pipelines Access Code for Natural Gas Pipeline Systems* (the Code). The application was lodged in respect of the Tubridgi Pipeline System (Licence Numbers WA: PL 16 and WA: PL 19).

On 22 May 2000, a Draft Decision was issued indicating that I did not intend issuing a notice under section 4.15 of the Code granting a waiver of the pertinent ring fencing obligations. The Draft Decision and a notice calling for public submissions were placed on the Office of Gas Access Regulation web site (www.offgar.wa.gov.au) on that date.

The notice calling for public submissions provided for an extended public submission period to 31 August 2000 to allow additional information to be obtained prior to issuing the Final Decision. This additional information was made public by my notice issued on the 18 August 2000.

The extended public submission period was also made necessary because the Code does not make provision for extensions of time to issue a Final Decision. In fact, the Code provides only three weeks between the close of submissions and the issue of a Final Decision.

On 31 August 2000, Origin Energy made an application for an extension of time of the public submission period for it to pursue options for separating the Tubridgi gas transmission business from the Tubridgi gas production/gas trading business to enable the Tubridgi Parties to comply with the provisions of section 4.15(a)(ii) of the Code. A copy of the application from Origin Energy seeking the extension of time until 31 October 2000 is available from the OffGAR web site.

In response to the application for an extension of time by Origin Energy, I granted an interim two-week extension to further discuss the proposals with the company. As a result of these discussions, I have granted an extension of time to 31 October 2000 for the Tubridgi Parties to further develop the options for separating the business units as proposed and to make additional submissions for the possible waiver of ring fencing obligations.



The decision to extend the public submission period was also taken in view of the inadequate period allowed in the Code between the close of submissions and the Final Decision and the inability to grant an extension of time during this phase.

The extension of time to the 31 October 2000 has been granted in accordance with section 7.19 of the Code.

KEN MICHAEL
GAS ACCESS REGULATOR

14 September 2000