



# **Guide to the Western Outer Ring Main Gas Pipeline Inquiry**

**Presenting to the Inquiry**  
Information for submitters

**Planning  
Panels  
Victoria**

**Version 1 – dated 19 August 2021**

OFFICIAL

# Public Hearing process

## Public Hearing

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to provide submitters the opportunity to talk about their submission and highlight or expand on any key points for the Western Outer Ring Main Gas Pipeline Inquiry (the Inquiry). The Hearing is open to the public and anyone can observe the proceedings.

## How will COVID-19 impact the conduct of the hearing?

The Inquiry will follow the health advice of the Victorian Government and the Chief Health Officer.

Due to the current coronavirus pandemic, the Public Hearing will be conducted remotely through video conference.

## Directions Hearing

The Inquiry will hold a Directions Hearing on Monday 6 September 2021.

At the Directions Hearing, the Inquiry will:

- discuss its role
- discuss a draft timetable and the format of the Hearing
- discuss site inspections
- provide its directions about exchanging information, including evidence, and
- answer questions submitters have about the Inquiry process including the Hearing.

After the Directions Hearing, the Inquiry will publish Directions and a version 1 Hearing Timetable on its [Engage Victoria website](#).

## Expert Witness Evidence Statements and Meetings

The Inquiry is an expert body. The Inquiry will make recommendations and provide advice to the Minister for Planning based on the submissions received and evidence presented and tested throughout the hearing process.

An expert witness has specialised knowledge from training, study or experience and gives evidence in a field of expertise. Evidence usually includes facts relating to the Project and may include the opinions of a person based on their expertise. This can include data modelling, photographs, and other visual presentations.

Any party or submitter may call expert evidence to support its case, but there is no requirement to do so.

**Tip: If you decide to use an expert witness, remember that expert witnesses are not 'hired guns.' They must be able to present evidence that fairly reflects their professional opinion. Their duty is to the Inquiry, not their client.**

If called, an expert witness must prepare a report consistent with the Planning Panels Victoria Guide to Expert Evidence

(<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/panels-and-committees/planning-panel-guides>).

The Inquiry will provide an opportunity to parties to ask questions of witnesses at the Hearing, a process called cross-examination. 'Expert Witness' must be made available for cross-examination at the Public Hearing.

The Inquiry may limit the form of questions and the time requested by all parties through cross-examination. Priority will be given in cross examination to those parties calling 'like' evidence.

When engaging in cross examination and asking questions please note:

- A party wishing to cross-examine must be present for the entirety of the evidence in chief of the particular witness.
- Cross-examination will only be permitted of expert witnesses and must be directed towards established matters of fact or professional opinion.
- Questions must relate to the evidence and expertise of the witness and must be about the matters that are before the Inquiry.
- Questions are just that and are not statements or personal opinions, noting that opportunity comes at the allocated submission time.
- Questioning a witness is not an opportunity to argue with the witness.
- Cross examination must be respectful, and productive.
- Witnesses must not be badgered, nor can questions previously asked by someone else be repeated.

- Only one representative of an organisation or group may cross examine or ask questions of any one witness. Tag teaming cross examination, that is, two different advocates from or representing the one organisation or group is not permitted.

Unrepresented submitters seeking to ask questions of witnesses may wish to group together with other submitters and have one person ask the questions on behalf of the group of submitters, if time permits

## Speaking at the Hearing gives you the chance to speak in support of your written submission to the Inquiry

### Main Hearing

The Public Hearing will commence on Monday 4 October 2021 at 10.00am and will run for two to three weeks, generally sitting four days per week from Monday to Thursday.

The Hearing is open to the public, and anyone can view the proceedings.

The Hearing allows for:

- The Proponent to set out its case in full and provide evidence in support of the Project.
- Municipal Councils, government departments and agencies, community groups and submitters to speak to their submissions and call evidence if required.

All submitters who have requested to be heard will be allocated a dedicated time in the Hearing Timetable. The Inquiry will consider all written submissions when preparing its report, including those from submitters who do not wish to speak to their submission at the Hearing.

### What does presenting at the Hearing involve?

The Inquiry will have already read your written submission lodged through the exhibition period of July 2021 to August 2021 prior to the Public Hearing.

Your presentation or oral submission to the Inquiry will expand on the points you have made in your original written submission or place emphasis on particular points of importance.

You may highlight particular concerns you have or elements of the proposal you would like to see altered. You may also provide comment about the

expert witness reports or the submissions that will be filed by the Proponent or the submission of the municipal councils and statutory authorities.

You may wish to have someone else present on your behalf such as a family member, friend, neighbour, or professional representative.

## How to prepare for the Hearing

### Consider writing down what you want to say.

- It is a good idea to prepare written speaking notes to read out at the Hearing. Your presentation or oral submission should identify what is of particular concern to you about the proposal, the specific reasons why, and what, if anything you would like to see changed with the proposal. You may include examples that illustrate your key points using photographs or plans.
- Writing down what you want to say will help you convey your key messages in a logical order. You can read from all, or part of your documents at the Hearing. This will ensure that you address all the points you wish without repetition.

## You must be cognisant of the time and speak within the time allocated to you. There will be another presenter following you and the Hearing must run to schedule

## Presenting on your allocated day

You should give the Inquiry a presentation that is clear and focused. The best way to do this is to keep your presentation simple, speak clearly and be yourself.

You can expect the Inquiry to treat you with respect and to put you at ease. You should treat them with respect also.

On the day you are scheduled to present, ensure you log in with plenty of time. If you are not planning on attending the full hearing day, you will need to log into the Zoom video conference platform at least 20 minutes before your allocated presentation time.

When it is your turn to present, you will be invited to unmute your microphone and turn your camera on.

The Inquiry Chair will introduce himself and the other members present (noting that not all members will necessarily be present every hearing day). When making your submission or raising other matters you should refer to the Chair as "Chairman" or Mr Kirsch. Other members should be referred to as Ms Bell or Ms Brizga. Their names will be visible on their respective video tiles to help you know who each of the members are.

You must finish your whole presentation during the time allocated to you. If you run out of time, any written material you have prepared but not presented in your allocated time will be considered by the Inquiry.

**Tip:** If you are delayed for any reason it is important that you contact Planning Panels Victoria as early as possible, so we can inform the Inquiry Chair and ensure any delays to the Hearing are minimised.

### **What happens if in my submission I said I did not want to be heard but I have changed my mind and now want to be heard?**

If you have changed your mind and decide you now want to be heard to speak to your submission, you will need to make a written request to the Inquiry. The Inquiry can decide whether or not to hear a person. If the person has made a written submission, the Inquiry will need to consider its Hearing timetable, the length of time involved, the number of people that have requested to be heard, the reasons for changing your mind and whether it is fair to the other parties involved. Requests should be sent to [Planning.Panels@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:Planning.Panels@delwp.vic.gov.au)

### **Documents**

The Inquiry has a copy of your original submission, so you do not need to resubmit it to the Inquiry.

If you have other documents to present to the Inquiry (additional written document or PowerPoint presentation) you will need to provide an electronic copy to Planning Panels Victoria at [planning.panels@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:planning.panels@delwp.vic.gov.au) by 12.00pm the business day prior to your allocated presentation time. During your presentation, you will be able to share your screen to display documentation.

All information received by the Inquiry during the Hearing is treated as a public document and will be published on the Inquiry's Engage Victoria website.

### **Keeping you updated**

All updates about the Hearing process will be provided on the Engage Victoria project site at <https://engage.vic.gov.au/worm-inquiry>. This will include:

- the final Directions of the Inquiry and any updated or new directions
- the final timetable from the Directions Hearing and updates to it as the Hearing progresses
- numbered and updated or new documents tabled on the previous day.

### **Checklist for presenting at the hearing**

**The hearing provides submitters with a chance to have a say and participate in the planning decision-making process. Keep the following points in mind when making your presentation at the hearing:**

- Begin your preparation early and think about the key messages you want to make.
- Practice reading your presentation or speaking notes before the hearing. There will be time limits, make sure you present within them.
- Log in to the hearing in plenty of time.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Introduce yourself and/or your organisation. If you are representing an organisation, state what your role is in the organisation, the organisation's objectives, activities, and the membership base.
- Keep to the point. Clearly state your concerns and provide information to support your point of view.
- Speaking to two or three key points can be better than trying to rush through many issues.
- Avoid repeating what others have said but acknowledge where you agree with it.

### **Using Zoom video conference technology**

A guide for using the Zoom video conferencing platform for the Hearing has been published on the Engage Victoria website along with the Zoom video conference link to join the hearing.

### **Questions or further information**

For further information, please contact:

Ms Andrea Harwood, Senior Project Manager or Ms Georgia Thomas, Project Officer and of Planning Panels Victoria at:  
[Planning.Panels@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:Planning.Panels@delwp.vic.gov.au)

