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Attention: Energy writers

A.C.C.C. RECEIVES PROPOSED ACCESS ARRANGEMENT FOR ROMA TO BRISBANE PIPELINE

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has received a revised access arrangement for the Roma to Brisbane pipeline from APT Petroleum Pipelines Ltd (APTPPL) for approval under the *National Third Party Access Code for Natural Gas Pipeline Systems*. The Australian Energy Regulator is assisting the ACCC in this assessment.

The access arrangement describes the terms and conditions under which APTPPL proposes to offer third party access to the Roma to Brisbane Pipeline.

APTPPL lodged its proposed access arrangement and access arrangement information on 31 January 2006, and has since been providing further supporting information. In addition, APTPPL requested confidentiality over certain information provided. The ACCC considered that this information would be useful to all interested parties and has sought APTPPL's agreement to making the information public.

The call for submissions from interested parties was delayed until APTPPL provided sufficient information to enable a considered assessment of its application. While APTPPL is still considering a request to make available certain information provided on a confidential basis, the ACCC considers that enough information has been provided to call for submissions on the access arrangement and to commence its assessment.

ACCC Commissioner (and AER Board member), Mr Ed Willett said the ACCC has released the issues paper to assist parties to prepare submissions on any issues relevant to the proposed access arrangement.

"The ACCC's *Access arrangement process guideline*, which was issued on 9 December 2005, also provides information that may assist submitters".

Submissions should be received by the ACCC by Thursday 18 May 2006.

The proposed revised access arrangement application and associated documents, including the public issues paper, are available from the AER's website www.aer.gov.au, under 'Regulation/Gas Transmission Pipelines'.

Media inquiries

Mr Ed Willett, ACCC Commissioner, (02) 9230 9106 or 0414 559 999

Mr Brent Rebecca, Media Unit, (02) 6243 1317

General inquiries

Infocentre: 1300 302 502

MR 86/06

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BACKGROUND

The Roma to Brisbane Pipeline was commissioned in 1969 and is considered to be Australia's oldest natural gas transmission pipeline. To cater for increased demand, compressors have since been added and almost all of the pipeline duplicated.

The pipeline is located in South East Queensland and originally supplied gas from the Surat Basin fields, which are close to Roma, near Brisbane. The discovery of subsequent fields now sees Wallumbilla, near Roma, act as a hub. The pipeline now also has links with the South West Queensland and Queensland Gas Pipeline.

The Roma to Brisbane Pipeline is around 440km long and terminates at Gibson Island. The access arrangement also includes the 128 km Peat Lateral, which connects the coal seam methane fields near Scotia and Peat to the Roma to Brisbane Pipeline near Condamine.

The pipeline delivered 48 Petajoules of gas in 2004-05. The gas is used in three main sectors – for generating electricity, by major industrial customers and by retail customers.

The pipeline is owned and operated by APT Petroleum Pipelines Ltd, a subsidiary of Australian Pipeline Trust.

This current assessment is the first full assessment by the ACCC of the access arrangement for the Roma to Brisbane Pipeline under the *National Third Party Access Code for Natural Gas Pipeline Systems* (the Code). Under transitional arrangements for the *Natural Gas Pipelines Access Agreement* the tariff arrangements to 28 July 2006 have been covered by the Access Principles approved by the then Queensland Minister for Mines and Energy in accordance with amendments to the *Petroleum Act 1923* (Qld) which came into effect on 1 July 1995. Accordingly, the previous ACCC assessment, covering the period 2002 to 28 July 2006, included only non-tariff elements.

The ACCC is being advised by the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) in this assessment. The AER is scheduled to assume responsibility for gas transmission regulation on 1 January 2007.