

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

14 March 2000

Dr Ken Michael
Gas Access Regulator
Office of Gas Access Regulation
GPO Box 8469
PERTH BUSINESS CENTRE WA 6849

Dear Dr Michael,

**RELEASE OF SUBMISSION ON THE ACCESS ARRANGEMENT FOR THE DAMPIER
TO BUNBURY NATURAL GAS PIPELINE**

We refer to your notice of 23 February 2000, in which you state that the Office of Gas Access Regulation (OffGAR) has not released for public review three submissions it has received relating to the Access Arrangement for the Dampier to Bunbury Natural Gas Pipeline (DBNGP).

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of WA (CCI) is aware that one of these submissions is a paper prepared by Epic Energy that contains additional information relevant to their proposed Access Arrangement for the DBNGP.

CCI has been a very vocal proponent of open and transparent regulation of the gas industry. Consequently, it is disturbing to see that information pertinent to the Access Arrangement for the DBNGP, that if released would lead to more informed public comment, has been withheld. Industry's ability to respond with quality submissions on such an important process is hampered without access to this document.

CCI appreciates that OffGAR must consider the confidentiality implications of releasing this and the other submissions. However, we urge OffGAR in its determination of whether or not to release Epic's additional submission to assign sufficient weighting to the immediate benefits of making this information public, and the wider implications withholding this submission would have on the integrity of the regulatory process.

CCI notes that Section 7.12 of the National Third Party Access Code for Natural Gas Pipeline Systems permits OffGAR to release confidential information if it is deemed to be not harmful to the legitimate business interests of the service provider, user or prospective user.

If it is not possible to release the full submission, CCI requests that OffGAR remove those parts of the submission that are considered confidential and release the remainder. CCI understands that Eastern States regulatory authorities have taken this approach in the past. OffGAR will need to ensure that the paper as released assists industry reach informed conclusions on the Access Arrangement.

Ideally, OffGAR should defer the close off date for public submissions on the Access Arrangement for the DBNGP until some reasonable time after Epic's paper is released. The close off date should at least be deferred until after the non-confidential parts of the paper are released.

Yours sincerely

W S Sashegyi
Manager Industry and Resources