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MEDIA RELEASE

New \$8 million natural gas pipeline a boon to more than 1300 properties in regional Victoria

More than 1300 homes and businesses in a thriving area of regional Victoria are now able to benefit from the many advantages of using natural gas following the construction of a new \$8 million, 14 kilometre natural gas pipeline.

The country's leading gas distribution company, Australian Gas Networks, has built the gas pipeline from Pakenham South to Koo Wee Rup, a region located about 65km south east of Melbourne.

The project involved a 14 kilometre gas supply pipeline and 10 kilometres of street reticulation, and was made possible by a \$5.3 million funding commitment from the Victorian Government.

The street reticulation was commissioned during March - only a few days after the final piece of the supply pipeline was successfully installed under the Bunyip River to the north of the town.

The project - one of seven towns being newly connected to Victoria's existing natural gas network - is a significant boon to the district.

Over the next 20 years, more than 1300 local homeowners and businesses are expected to benefit from the many advantages of having natural gas connected directly to their properties.

In a significant milestone, the first natural gas connection - to a new home in Diamond Drive in Tesoro Estate - recently occurred.

Owned by Kayla and Nick Wylie, the official hand-over of their new home closely coincided with AGN's scheduled commissioning of its new pipeline.

Mrs Wylie said: "Once we heard that Koo Wee Rup was going to get natural gas I contacted AGN to monitor the timing. It was important to Nick and me to select natural gas appliances. As a result, we now enjoy controllable cooking, an endless supply of hot water and all-of-home heating in our new home."

AGN Chief Operating Officer, Mr Andrew Staniford, said: "The Wylie's connection represents a significant milestone for Koo Wee Rup as it indicates natural gas is now available in the area - most timely given winter is looming large.

"Australian Gas Networks is delighted to be delivering such a key energy source to the region as residents and business owners at Koo Wee Rup now have access to what many people living in capital cities take for granted - clean, green, cost-effective natural gas," he said.

"For the first time, Koo Wee Rup homeowners and business owners can connect to natural gas running straight past their properties.

"This not only allows them to take immediate advantage of the significant cost savings associated with using natural gas instead of electricity for their home appliances, but it will also save them the cumbersome task of having to use bottled LPG.

"Generally households choosing to connect to gas will not have to pay any up-front charges to AGN. We will provide - and fund the cost of - a service pipe and the meter in the customer's property.

"The response we have received from property owners - keen to hook up to natural gas as soon as they can - has been very positive.

"Importantly, the new infrastructure will provide a major economic boost for the area as more and more businesses and homeowners access the many benefits of natural gas for the first time."

Mr Staniford said AGN's first connected business customer from the project will be the Koo Wee Rup Secondary College - which is switching across from LPG to natural gas to provide instant, reliable and cost effective heating for the students.

AGN has constructed a gas service to supply the College and also have prepared a meter assembly ready for installation after gas appliance and fitting line site works have been completed.

AGN forecasts more than 1300 homes and 13 businesses in the area will connect to natural gas over the next two decades.

The Koo Wee Rup project - which is being undertaken with financial support of the Victorian Government - is one of several major infrastructure projects in which AGN has been recently involved in Victoria.

AGN has also recently constructed a \$6 million pipeline to supply natural gas to Wandong-Heathcote Junction- a flourishing region about 60km north of Melbourne - that is expected to see over 650 homes and 20 businesses in the area connect to natural gas over the next 20 years.

Mr Staniford said a major marketing campaign was underway in Koo Wee Rup to advise potential new customers of the new natural gas network.

He urged new customers to take advantage of a range of AGN rebates of up to \$1500 to install natural gas appliances.

From 1 January this year, a range of new rebates are now available to support existing home customers' connection costs.

They include a \$500 "new connection" rebate, a \$500 rebate for a natural gas central heater, space heater and/or dedicated natural gas hot water system, and a \$100 rebate for any other natural gas appliance.

Mr Staniford said: "The Koo Wee Rup pipeline is part of the continual improvement program we roll out across all the jurisdictions in which we operate.

"It's a well-known fact that natural gas is a clean, safe, instant and cost effective energy source. We believe the availability of natural gas to property owners in the area will be a real economic growth opportunity for the region," he said.

"Our new pipeline to Koo Wee Rup provides a wonderful opportunity to offer these business and home owners the ability to connect to the network, and enjoy the many advantages of natural gas being supplied to their properties, while taking advantage of the great rebates available to them.

"Expanding our network into Koo Wee Rup means AGN is now ideally placed to target network growth and facilitate connections for new and existing customers."

For more information, visit www.australiangasnetworks.com.au



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