



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Wednesday, 6 January 2016

### **Multi-million dollar natural gas network upgrade to provide significant economic boost for broader Mildura/Sunraysia region**

A \$14 million dollar upgrade to the natural gas pipeline that supplies Mildura has the potential to provide a major economic boost for the region.

The upgrade - completed by Australian Gas Networks Limited (AGN) with financial support of the Victorian Government – has increased the operating pressure of the pipeline by almost 40%, thereby significantly boosting the supply capacity to the Sunraysia region.

The increased capacity will allow AGN – Australia's leading natural gas distribution company - to connect more households and businesses to natural gas and deliver more natural gas to new and existing customers.

AGN today urged potential new customers to take advantage of a range of government and AGN rebates of up to \$1100 to replace their current electric hot water units to natural gas units.

"It's a well-known fact that natural gas is a clean, safe, instant and cost effective energy source so our ability to now be able to provide natural gas to more customers in the broader Mildura district will be a real economic growth opportunity for the region," Australian Gas Networks Chief Operating Officer, Mr Andrew Staniford, said today.

"Currently, about 7500 homes are connected to the Mildura natural gas network, however we know a further 4800 existing homes have natural gas available to them but are not yet connected," he said.

"Our upgraded natural gas network provides a wonderful opportunity to offer these home owners the opportunity to connect to the network, and enjoy the many advantages of natural gas being supplied to their homes, while taking advantage of the great rebates available to them.

"The Mildura natural gas pipeline upgrade has been three years in the making – from the time the Victorian Government and AGN first committed to the project – but the economic benefits to the local community will be around for many years to come.

"As more homeowners and business and property owners come on line, plumbers will need to be employed to connect their properties, and more equipment and appliances will be required, all of which contributes to the local economy."

The Mildura natural gas pipeline upgrade involved a wide variety of works conducted over several locations spanning two states – Victoria and South Australia.

The majority of the work occurred (and started) at Angaston, in South Australia's famed Barossa Valley, where a new 600kW compressor and associated equipment was installed.

Work was then undertaken at Berri, in SA's Riverland – a major pressure regulation and connecting station linking the Mildura pipeline to the main natural gas pipeline to the Riverland.

The Mildura gas pipeline was then upgraded to accommodate the increased gas pressure.

AGN held an information evening late last year where the local plumbing industry and allied services were invited to be updated on the project's completion, and the benefits to new and existing customers.

"Many people don't fully appreciate or understand the full benefits and uses of having natural gas connected to their homes or businesses," Mr Staniford said.

"Its use is wide and varied - from the obvious and most common uses like continual hot water, instant heat for cooking and central heating to powering gas-powered air-conditioners and firing the outdoor/alfresco barbeque," he said.

"Completion of the Mildura Natural Gas Pipeline Upgrade Project now means AGN is ideally placed to target network growth and facilitate connections for new and existing customers."

To celebrate the upgrade, AGN is running a promotion to help attract new customers.

For more information, visit (insert appropriate website address here)

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**About Australian Gas Networks**

Australian Gas Networks, with its head office in Adelaide, owns natural gas distribution networks in South Australia, Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory, which deliver this environment friendly fuel to almost 1.2 million Australian consumers.