CLAIMS

1. A pipe coupling for connecting together the ends of two pipes, the pipe coupling comprising:

a tubular casing for fitting around the pipes;

a tensioning system for tightening the casing around the outer surface of the pipes; and

a guide member, coupled to and extending away from a first axial end of the tubular casing, for radially aligning and guiding one of the pipes into the tubular casing, the guide member being frusto-conical, and the diameter of the free end of the guide member being greater than the diameter of the end coupled to the casing.

2. A pipe coupling according to Claim 1, wherein the diameter of the free end of the guide member is between about 1.5 times and about 3 times the diameter of the end coupled to the casing.

3. A pipe coupling according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the cone angle of the guide member is between about 30 degrees and about 90 degrees.

4. A pipe coupling according to Claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein the guide member is formed of an arcuate flat sheet having a hole on a first edge, configured to receive a foldable tab provided on a second opposing edge to retain the guide member in the frusto-conical shape.

5. A pipe coupling according to any of Claims 1 to 4, wherein the guide member comprises a plurality holes disposed around the circumference.

6. A pipe coupling according to Claim 5, wherein the holes are spaced apart substantially evenly around the circumference of the guide member.

7. A pipe coupling according to Claim 1, wherein the frusto-conical guide member comprises a plurality of elongate fingers, each finger extending radially and axially from the first axial end of the casing.

8. A pipe coupling according to Claim 7, wherein the guide member comprises at least three fingers.

9. A pipe coupling according to any of Claims 1 to 8, the casing being of generally U-shaped cross-section having a web portion with flanges projecting radially inwardly from the axial ends of the web portion to define an annular channel, and the guide member comprising a plurality of tabs, wherein the annular flange at the first axial end of the casing couples the guide member to the casing by retaining the plurality of tabs.

10. A pipe coupling according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the guide member is formed of steel.

11. A pipe coupling according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the tubular casing comprises a longitudinal gap between a first free end and a second free end, and a bridging plate extending across the gap.

12. A pipe coupling according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the tensioning system comprises at least one fastener for tightening the casing around the pipes.

13. A pipe coupling according to any of the preceding claims, further comprising a tubular sealing gasket disposed within the tubular casing.

14. A pipe coupling according to Claim 13, further comprising a pair of arcuate anchoring rings for gripping the pipes, the rings being disposed in slots in the sealing gasket adjacent the opposite axial ends.

15. A pipe coupling according to Claim 14, wherein each anchoring ring is frusto-conical, and the slot adjacent the guide member has an open side, such that the respective anchoring ring further aligns and guides the pipe.

16. A pipe coupling according to Claim 14 or 15, wherein each arcuate ring has inwardly projecting gripping teeth.

17. A pipe coupling according to Claim 14, 15 or 16, wherein each anchoring rings is formed from a plurality of arcuate segments which overlap to form a complete ring.

18. An assembly comprising a pipe coupling according to any of the preceding claims, and a first pipe, the pipe coupling being coupled to an end of the first pipe, and configured to receive a second pipe to be radially aligned and guided into the tubular casing by the guide member.

19. An assembly according to Claim 18, wherein the tensioning system is tightened around the outer surface of the first pipe.