Indigenous trainees to help build Darwin into gas capital of northern Australia

Indigenous trainees will play a key part in building Darwin into the gas capital of northern Australia under a new industry training program.

Chief Minister Paul Henderson joined Macmahon Contractors’ Robert Wilson at the new Marine Supply Base to meet Indigenous trainees employed under a new program to train workers to build the Ichthys gas plant and the Marine Supply Base.

“The Territory has a very bright future as we move into becoming the gas capital of Northern Australia and I want to work with industry to ensure our Indigenous Territorians have access to high-wage high-skill jobs this economic growth will bring,” Henderson said.

“Local company Macmahon Contractors and Joint Venture partner John Holland, have benefited from our Local Participation Plan with INPEX and won a $340 million contract under the Ichthys Project – the contract is biggest in the Territory’s history and will generate 375 jobs.

“Already 53 Indigenous people are gaining skills working on the Ichthys Project and Marine Supply Base, and are the new faces of the benefits the $34 billion project is bringing to the Territory.

“The Territory Government has stepped up to the plate and made a commitment to train 10,000 apprentices over four years and the Macmahon ROCKSTAR program is a perfect example of industry doing their bit to train the workforce of tomorrow.

“It is also a direct demonstration of the results of the $4.5 million Larrakia Trade Training Centre and the opportunity it brings for Indigenous people to benefit from the training and work now available in the Territory.”

Robert Wilson from Macmahon Contractors said the ROCKSTAR program, which stands for Real Opportunities and Careers Kick Starting Today’s Aboriginal Role-models, will see 300 Indigenous people start their career in the mining and construction sectors across Australia by 2013.

“Both Miguel and Daniel were unemployed before joining the program and now they have already completed a six weeks pre-employment course on the ground at shoal bay and at the Larrakia Trade Training Centre, and are currently working towards a Certificate III in Civil Construction,” Mr Wilson said.

“They are part of a 25 strong group of ROCKSTARs to undertake the training and are all now working on major projects in the Territory including the Marine Supply Base and the Ichthys project.
“The 25 trainees come from across the Territory including from Belyuen, Borroloola, and Crocker Island.”

Chief Minister Henderson said the Marine Supply Base is a key part of the Territory 2030 target of establishing Darwin as a key centre for oil and gas operations.

“The oil and gas service and supply industry already contributes approximately $150 million annually to the local economy - under our plan this is expected to increase significantly to $450 million within the next five years,” Henderson said.

“We are committed to harnessing this growth to make sure this multi-million dollar industry creates more and better job opportunities for Territory students.

“Already major players have come on board to take advantage of our world class Marine Supply Base including ConocoPhillips and Shell.”

Work on the base started in April 2012 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2013.

Media Contact: Claire March 0403 937 849