Chief Minister, Clare Martin, today officially inspected the Bechtel construction village for ConocoPhillips' $1.6 billion Wickham Point LNG Plant.

Ms Martin said that the village highlighted some of the benefits the project was bringing to the Territory - benefits that have already seen over $230 million worth of contracts and spending awarded to Territory based companies.

“The village, which currently houses 104 workers, can accommodate 800 people and is serviced by 20 people (12 catering/cleaning staff and 8 bus drivers),” she said.

“Sixteen of the village staff are Territorians and this number will increase as more workers arrive at the village with one staff member employed to accommodate every 10 workers.

“This means new business opportunities such as the village catering contract which was awarded to ESS-NAAD, a subsidiary of the international Compass Group, as part of a 50/50 partnership with the North Australian Aboriginal Development Corporation.”

Ms Martin said that construction of the gas plant - and the resulting construction village - was the culmination of hard work by government, business and Territorians and marks an important turning point in our economic history.

“Total employment on the project to date, including non-manual and tradespeople, is 545 people making it a very significant business and employment project for the Territory,” she said.

“Currently, the number of tradespeople employed is 386 of which 261 (68 %) are Territorian – these job and business opportunities will increase during the dry season with over 1000 high pay, high skill jobs created during construction.”

Ms Martin said that just nine months after Bechtel, the project builders, were given access to the site, over $230 million worth of business has gone to Territory based companies.

“And the economic benefits do not stop there as spill-over benefits occur with project personnel renting housing, shopping, dining and enjoying other attractions in the Territory,” she said.

Ms Martin said that there is a 3-year construction phase for the ConocoPhillips LNG Plant as part of their overall $6 billion Bayu-Undan development.

One of the big winners to date is Thiess Ptd Ltd, with 40 years civil works experience in the NT, securing contracts worth over $150 million. The company - which is committed to jobs for Territorians - will provide site clearance, tank infrastructure, a wharf and require 200 staff.