VOPAK PROGRESS AS TANK FARM SET TO DISAPPEAR

The relocation of Darwin’s fuel tank farms in Stuart Park is set to become a reality as the new bulk-fuel facilities at East Arm near completion, Chief Minister Clare Martin said today.

Inspecting the new $55 million Darwin Industry Fuel Terminal (DIFT) this morning, Chief Minister Clare Martin said the facility is on track to be commissioned in August.

“Bulk fuel deliveries will then be transferred to the East Arm Wharf, and the existing tank farms in Stuart Park decommissioned freeing up 25- hectares of prime inner city land and removing an eyesore,” she said.

“BP, Mobil, Shell and Caltex will move their operations from Stuart Park to the new terminal.

“Construction of the new facility has created jobs and work for local sub-contractors and will mark a major step forward in achieving the long-term development of the CBD.”

Ms Martin said the old tank farm surrounds will require rehabilitation but, from around mid 2007, valuable inner city real estate will become available for housing and commercial purposes.

“The Government’s strategic infrastructure spending of $18 million for a bulk liquids berth at East Arm Wharf and $10 million for the pipeline system between the wharf and the fuel terminal has clearly delivered major dividends for the Territory,” she said.

“The first fuel tanker is scheduled to discharge at East Arm Wharf on 19 August with the first road tanker loadings timed for 19 September. The final fuel tanker to discharge at Iron Ore Wharf for the fuel companies will be mid-August.”

Just over a year ago Ms Martin and then Vopak Asia President John Paul Broeders jointly turned the first sod for the DIFT project. Vopak, a leading international provider of independent fuel storage, will operate the facility, which will become a pivotal element of the East Arm transport and industrial development.

“The adjoining Darwin Business Park, the East Arm Wharf development and the rail freight facilities will be complemented by the new bulk fuel terminal,” Ms Martin said.

“Once complete, it will store 113 million litres of fuel in 11 major fuel tanks with facilities for road tanker delivery, drum filling operations and additive storage and injection - there is also scope for expansion.

“There are also flow-on effects as new industries are being attracted to East Arm, and the removal of the Stuart Park tank farms will enhance the environment of central Darwin.”

Additionally, Vopak intends to take up its option over an additional 4 hectares and sub lease part of that to Natural Fuels Ltd who want to build and operate a biodiesel manufacturing facility.
Vopak and Natural Fuels Ltd are close to completing negotiation of an agreement whereby Vopak will provide tank storage and a pipeline connection to the Bulk Liquids Berth.

Ms Martin said this project is an example of how top class infrastructure can attract significant investment into the Northern Territory.

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