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Bechtel in Darwin for LNG plant job talks

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The world’s largest engineering/construction company, Bechtel, has begun its Darwin preparations for a Wickham Point LNG plant, with the Project Director in town to discuss contracts with local companies.

Chief Minister Clare Martin met with Bechtel’s Ned Baudat today to discuss final preparation work before full-scale construction can begin.

"Bechtel is now well advanced in its plans to construct the $1.6 billion dollar plant and has spent the past two days meeting with local companies," she said.

"The company has already signed Territory businesses up to major multi-million dollar construction contracts - which will mean high pay, high skills jobs for locals.

"These contracts will become official once the project’s joint ventures make their final investment decision early next month.

"We have been informed that construction - in addition to this Government’s $20 million worth of preparation work already underway - would then begin almost immediately."

Ms Martin said 1300 jobs would be created over the life of the construction phase with Bechtel planning to employ ‘as many locals as possible’.

"The Territory Government has remained in close contact with Bechtel throughout the Timor Sea treaty negotiations, including visiting the company’s Houston headquarters in December, working with them to prepare for this great project," she said.

"Importantly, Bechtel has also committed to setting up an office in Palmerston in coming weeks and will begin training local people – including indigenous Territorians – in the near future."

Ms Martin said that onshore gas, from Bayu-Undan to the Wickham Point Plant, would be the first gas to the Territory and would fuel major economic development and job creation.

"The Wickham Point LNG Plant will take approximately 32 months to build, providing Territory companies and workers with good new jobs and business opportunities," she said.

"The benefits of onshore gas are already starting to flow through and Territorians are the winners."