
In launching the Forum Minister for Employment and Business Rob Knight stressed the need for a collaborative ‘Team NT’ approach to growing our local labour force and supporting local business.

“With potentially in excess of $240 billion of new gas projects being developed in Australia over the next 10 years, including the INPEX project in Darwin, the demand for labour will only grow.

“Developing the Territory’s labour force to meet the demands of a strong and growing economy is a key challenge for government, industry and unions alike.

“Major projects like INPEX will provide new challenges and opportunities on a scale not seen in the business landscape of the Territory before.

“At $23 billion the proposed INPEX project is the largest single private sector investment in the Northern Territory.

“I’m confident with hard work, together with support from the government, Territory business will take advantage of the massive economic boost around the corner.

“Developing our local workforce is a priority and we are committed to aligning our education and training initiatives, including our apprenticeship schemes, to help fill identified labour shortages.

“This means working in partnership with our education and training institutions to deliver the skills and trades needed by local business to win contracts associated with these major projects during their construction and operational phases.

“We need to ensure that Territorians and Territory businesses get a large portion of the potential benefits that a multi-billion development like this brings.

“However, some of our workforce will need to be sourced from interstate or overseas to fill gaps for local businesses including those created by existing staff moving onto join the major projects.

“Getting flexibility into the Federal migration system to better meet our local needs will also be on the Forum’s agenda,” Mr Knight said.

The Forum is co-chaired by the Chief Executive of the Department of Business and Employment Graham Symons and the Chief Executive of the NT Chamber of Commerce Chris Young and includes senior representatives from:

- INPEX
- ConocoPhillips
- Master Builders Association
- Civil Contractors Federation
- Road Transport Association
- Manufacturers Council
- Unions NT
- Charles Darwin University
- NT Industry Capability Network.

It also includes senior executives from the Department of Business and Employment and the Department of Education and Training.