GAS ENTERS BAYU-UNDAN PIPELINE

Gas has been introduced into the Bayu-Undan to Darwin pipeline for the first time Chief Minister, Clare Martin, said today.

The gas is entering the pipeline at a reduced operating pressure and will be ‘parked’ there ahead of when it is needed on a regular basis by the LNG gas plant at Wickham Point in the upcoming months.

Following high-pressure hydro-testing in May this year, ConocoPhillips has provided the Government with an independent certification of the integrity of the pipeline.

“This is a major milestone for one of the most expensive and biggest job creating projects in Territory history,” she said.

“The Darwin LNG plant is nearing completion in readiness to take this gas, liquefy it and export it overseas – gas coming on-shore is now very close to reality.”

Ms Martin said that two years into the project, construction at Wickham Point is approximately 83% complete. More than 2000 tradespeople are employed on site, of which more than 47% are Territorians.

She said ConocoPhillips’ certificate of fitness process has been completed and multiple internationally recognised independent certification bodies (Bureau Veritas, Det Norske Veritas and Lloyd’s Register) have certified the pipeline fit for the introduction of gas.

“Lloyd’s Register will witness the first entry of gas into the pipe line, and check that all approved procedures are followed, before issuing a final certificate for the pipeline,” she said.

“Earlier this month the Mines and Energy Minister, Kon Vatskalis, gave official consent to ConocoPhillips to commence pipeline operation.”

Ms Martin said it will take approximately a week to fill the 500 km pipeline.

“Plans are still on track to have the first LNG shipment leave Darwin for Japan in early 2006 and this latest step in getting gas onshore is very exciting,” she said.

“We can now all look forward to the start of the commissioning activities, working towards first LNG in early 2006.”

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