

Publication: The Courier Mail
 Date: Thursday 25th March 2010
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More jobs in the pipeline

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QUEENSLAND'S trade workers will be beating a path to Gladstone with the prospect of up to 8500 jobs on offer in the construction of the \$10 billion liquefied natural gas project at Curtis Island.

The development will include a 450km pipeline from the Surat Basin to Gladstone and, according to Queensland Council of Unions secretary Ron Monaghan, "that will need a lot of boilermakers".

Industry experts claim the problem may not be getting workers but meeting their pay demands with expectations of up to \$150,000 a year on similar projects.

"That's not realistic but people are hearing those sorts of figures and that's what they're asking," said Brad Stein, an oil and gas employment expert at Crest Personnel.

But the project will also be competing for workers with the coalmining industry which is already heading back towards a boom and there was a prospect of a bidding war for highly qualified tradesmen and engineers.

Queensland Gas Company also expects it will have to import workers from overseas to meet demand but anticipates the bulk will come from Queensland and other states.

The company has listed the major occupations it will need as management and administration, engineers, civil trades, ironworkers, piping trades, mechanics, electricians, and instrumentation trades.

Subcontractors will also be needed in building and site preparation, painting, fireproofing, insulation and jetty construction at the site on Curtis Island, just offshore of Gladstone.

Gladstone Mayor George Creed said the city was on its way back to being a boom town

A rich future

What is coal seam gas?

High-purity methane gas trapped in fissures underground in coal areas. Once extracted it can be cleaned and compressed to make liquefied natural gas (LNG)

Where is it found in Queensland?

CSG is found in all the coal-producing areas. Initial interest is focused on the Bowen and Surat basins

How much have we got?

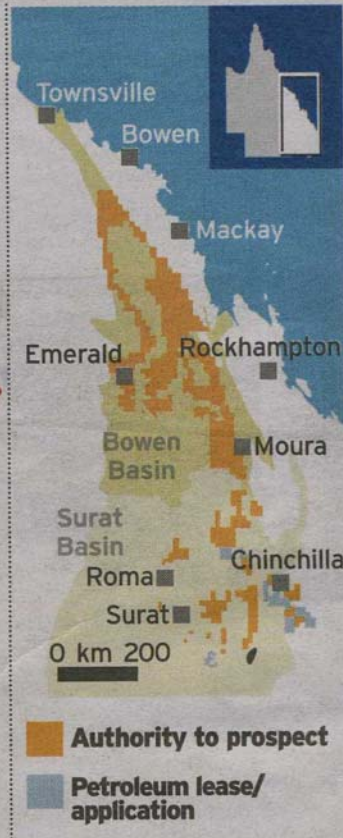
Estimates of 17,000 petajoules - enough to power the state for 40 years

What is it worth?

8500 jobs, royalties of \$800 million a year and another \$3 billion added to the value of Queensland's economy

The players

- BG Group
- Santos and Petronas
- Shell
- Origin Energy and ConocoPhillips



after hundreds of jobs were lost last year from local industries.

But he warned the city could not cope with the huge demands on basic infrastructure without state and federal help and feared there might be significant pressure on the city's ability to house the influx of workers.

Queensland Gas Company anticipates the project will need about 1000 workers when in operation, but during construction it will average about 5000 workers with a peak of 8500.

Premier Anna Bligh said the employment would add to her target of creating 100,000 jobs in this term of government.

Mr Monaghan said the announcement was a huge boost for Queensland's economy and a major boost to apprentices.

But he added that it raised even more concerns about privatisation because the project would feed at least \$200 million a year into the Government's coffers.