WATER PIPELINE ALMOST READY TO FLOW

The NSW Minister for Regional Water, The Hon Niall Blair MLC, visited Broken Hill this month to congratulate WaterNSW on the incredible milestone of laying 270km of pipe in less than 10 months.

“We chose WaterNSW to deliver this critical piece of infrastructure to provide water security for the Broken Hill community because we had confidence in their capability to deliver it. Today, that confidence we had in them has been repaid in spades”.

The laying of the last steel pipe in Broken Hill brings the project a step closer to completion and water delivery by April 2019.

The project has also delivered a major boom to the communities of Broken Hill and Wentworth along the journey, injecting over $35 million to date into the economies and employing 150 locals.

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THE NEXT STEPS

Soon after the last pipe was put in place, final hydrotecting of the new pipeline was able to be carried out, which involved water being pumped through the pipeline at 1.5 times the operating pressure to ensure there were no leaks.

Meanwhile, work on the four large-scale pump stations is continuing and well on track to transport up to 37.4 megalitres per day to the Mica Street Water Treatment Plant, where construction of a new balance tank and associated infrastructure is also progressing.

The other piece of the puzzle, construction of a massive 720 megalitre bulk water storage facility, 25 km south of Broken Hill off the Silver City Highway, is also nearing completion.

Once operational, the two-cell reservoir, which will hold the equivalent of 288 Olympic-size swimming pools, will ensure reliability of supply to Broken Hill during shutdowns, maintenance and poor water quality events.

ROAD REINSTATEMENT

As we have installed pipe, we have made temporary repairs to local roads to minimise disruption. All sections of road where pipe has been laid in Broken Hill will be fully reinstated to the condition they were in prior to pipeline construction, at the expense of the project.

Final road reinstatement is expected to get underway in November and will take a few weeks to complete. Keep your eye out for local road closures and diversions to ensure the safety of motorists, residents and work crews during this process.

TREE REPLANTING MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR BROKEN HILL

After construction, plant rehabilitation works will take place across the project area. Where trees have been removed to facilitate excavation and pipeline installation in Broken Hill, two trees of the same or similar species will be planted in its place. Trees with a fully developed root system and in a healthy robust condition will be sourced. Shrubs and groundcovers will also be replanted.

To ensure the success of new plantings, replanting will take place seasonally to avoid the heat of summer. A tree replanting management plan is being finalised to inform ongoing maintenance activities such as watering and fertilising, and the trees will be monitored over time to ensure their survival.

Local species will be replanted, such as River Red Gum, Black Box and shrubs representative of Saltbush Shrubland.
WATER PROJECT ALSO DELIVERS FOR TRAINEES

A long-term water supply won’t be the only legacy left behind when work is completed on the W2BH Project.

The water pipeline project has also provided young local people with upgraded on-the-job skills, which some have already used as a stepping stone into other employment opportunities in the region.

Eighteen young trainees, mainly Aboriginal youth from Broken Hill, Wentworth and Mildura, were taken onto the project earlier this year, as part of a local jobs and training commitment made by WaterNSW and Joint Venture contractors John Holland and MPC Group.

Each one now has a nationally-recognised qualification under their belt - a Certificate II Civil Construction - as well as hands-on experience on a major infrastructure project.

Broken Hill locals Blade Martyn and Verina Crawford, said their experience working on the project was life changing and had prepared them well for their long-term work plans after the project finished.

“It was a very intense training course, with lots of theory, but it also included a lot of hands-on practical work alongside experienced pipeliners, so I’ve come away with new skills, but also field experience that has built my confidence to make a career in the construction industry,” Blade said.

Verina Crawford, one of the four young female trainees taken on to the project, agreed the real-life work experience working along the pipeline route was beneficial on a number of fronts.

“All of the trainees received real-life work experiences, whether it was working in a trench laying pipe, helping to build the pump stations that will bring the water to Broken Hill or, eating and living in worker camps – it was hands-on, very real, but a great experience,” Verina said.

It has already proven to be a stepping stone for Verina and several of the other trainees, who, since finishing on the project, have managed to secure employment elsewhere in Broken Hill or the region.

More than 150 local people have been employed across the project’s scope since it began back in January and of those, 90 have undertaken skills upgrades while working on the pipeline.

W2BH trainee Lakisha Sloane puts the finishing touches to a new exhibit at the Sulphide Street Railway and Historical Museum. Lakisha was one of a number of trainees who, as part of their training, were involved with community projects in Broken Hill.

TRAINEE PROGRAM FACTS

- W2BH employed 18 trainees in early May to participate in Certificate II Civil Construction.
- Due to the short nature of the project’s construction schedule, W2BH engaged group training organisation to fast-track theoretical components.
- A cohort of trainees travelled to Sydney to undertake block TAFE training to compete 50% of their theory units in two weeks.
- All 18 trainees successfully completed their Certificate II in Civil Construction.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT JOBS AND TRAINING TARGETS</th>
<th>ACTUAL</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Number of local jobs. Target of 150</td>
<td>151</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indigenous employees. Target of 20</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young Indigenous employees. Target of 14</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>People under 25. Target of 35</td>
<td>35</td>
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ROTARY MEMBERS TAKE A PEEK AT PIPE PROJECT

The W2BH Pipeline has generated plenty of interest since it started, but very few locals have had the opportunity to get a close-up look at the various aspects that make up the project.

A group of Broken Hill Rotarians did just that recently, when they were taken on a guided tour of the street works, bulk water storage facility and one of two W2BH construction camps located between Broken Hill and Wentworth.

The 22 Broken Hill South Rotary Club members first visited one of the construction work sites, where they observed trenching, before piling back into two chartered 4WD buses and heading to the bulk water storage facility 25 km south of Broken Hill.

After spending some time touring and hearing about what goes into making a 720 megalitres reservoir and pumping station, the Rotarians travelled a little further south to the second of two construction camps established for the project.

A tour of the fully self-sufficient camp, which can cater to over 220 personnel, gave the wide-eyed visitors a taste of what camp life is like before they enjoyed a full buffet breakfast served in the dining room.

It capped off a memorable day for the Broken Hill locals, who now have a better understanding of what’s involved in the construction of the pipeline that will soon be bringing water to their own town.

WATER PRICING UPDATE

The NSW Government this month announced that Essential Water customers in Broken Hill won’t pay extra in their bills for the cost of the pipeline, should the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) determine that the cost be passed on. Any determination from IPART to pass on extra costs will be absorbed by the Government for the first four years.

IPART have commenced public consultation around water pricing for Essential Water and W2BH pipeline offtake customers.

IPART are seeking stakeholder feedback and a public hearing will be held in Broken Hill on 20 November 2018. The details are available on the IPART website www.ipart.nsw.gov.au.

For questions relating to water pricing and the consultation, you can contact IPART via their website.

IPART will release the final water pricing structure in 2019.