

City LNG office opened

But spectre of federal resources tax overshadows Premier's day



KIERAN MORAN

kieran.moran@gladstoneobserver.com.au

PREMIER Anna Bligh officially opened the new Australian Pacific LNG (APLNG) office in Gladstone yesterday.

APLNG is one of four liquefied natural gas (LNG) companies proposing a LNG refinery on Curtis Island.

The APLNG project is in partnership with Origin Energy and ConocoPhillips. Estimates of job creation are for up to 5000 direct jobs during the peak construction phase and 1000 during the operational stage of the project.

The Premier was all smiles and handshakes yesterday. However, she was less forthcoming about the Federal Government's pro-

posed resources tax, which is making the LNG industry nervous.

Ms Bligh said the mining tax was a matter upon which the companies would be working with the Federal Government.

"I understand the companies want certainty from the Federal Government as soon as possible because they will be reaching their own international decisions

on investment here," she said.

"The sooner we see an outcome the better it will be for LNG because they are paused on the verge of making big investment decisions.

"I have urged the Federal Government to work with LNG companies to resolve this as quickly as possible because these companies need certainty and we want these

companies to be based here."

Origin announced last week its joint Gladstone LNG project with ConocoPhillips might be delayed or suffer significant cost increases because of the Rudd Government's proposed resource tax.

Origin chief Grant King said the government's proposed resources super-profits tax was really a tax on profits.

Expansion due to lure industries

GLADSTONE is on track to attract more national and international industries following environmental approval for the proposed \$82.5 million port expansion at Fisherman's Landing, Premier Anna Bligh said yesterday.

Ms Bligh said the project would include the protection of 750ha of coastal land and a \$750,000 contribution from the Gladstone Ports Corporation to support Fisheries Queensland initiatives.

"Expanding Fisherman's Landing by 170ha will provide additional land for the construction of six wharves and allow for the development of transport, storage, loading and unloading facilities," Ms Bligh said.

"The five existing wharves are either in use or committed to proposed industries within the Gladstone State Development Area (GSDA) and there are few, if any, remaining areas of land immediately adjacent to the port that are suitable for providing storage facilities for the import and export of bulk materials.

The project had been designed to better serve the import export-orientated industries located within the Gladstone State Development Area.

The new port facilities might further be used by one or more of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects that had already been proposed for the region, the Premier said.



Bligh hails LNG milestone

NOW OPEN: Premier Anna Bligh, who opened the new Australian Pacific LNG office in Gladstone yesterday, termed the event an important milestone. "It is another great step in a journey to create a whole new export industry of liquid natural gas that means jobs and prosperity," Ms Bligh said.

Picture: MURRAY WARE

Regional cabinet set to boil

THE community cabinet meeting held in Rockhampton today will be a rowdy one with Queensland Rail workers planning to protest the sale of Queensland assets and the sale of the rail network.

The Queensland Coal Industry Rail Group's (QCIRG) made a \$4.85 billion bid for the State's central coal track network yesterday and Premier Anna Bligh said the State Government would consider the offer.

"I have told the companies if they make an offer we will take it seriously and we will look at it, but this is a complex issue and we won't be making any judgement on the first day," Ms Bligh said.

"We will be looking at what is best for Queensland Rail and what is best for workers and their families and ultimately what is best for the Queensland taxpayer."

The Premier said the offer from the coal companies would split Queensland Rail in two.

"It is a big decision and the government is not going to rush through it," she said.

"We will take advice, but it's important to get it right for the long term future of the coal industry, but it's also important for the long-term future of the workers in the industry and for Queensland Rail.

"My job is to see what is in the best interests of Queenslanders and to do what is right for Queensland Rail," Ms Bligh said.