



# Blacktip creates a milestone

**Adam Orlando**

THE completion of the 2,800-tonne multi-million dollar Blacktip well-head platform has marked another milestone at the Australian Marine Complex in Henderson, which is expected to experience continued strong demand for its facilities.

The Blacktip platform will this week be loaded out from the AMC's Common User Facility, a large assembly hall that was completed five years ago.

Built by Perth-based Ausclad Group of Companies, the Blacktip platform took 15 months to build including the substructure, grillage, topsides, piles and sea fastenings.

To relocate the massive structure, Ausclad is using specialised self-propelled modular transporters (SPMT) operated via remote control.

"This has required a patient, safety-first approach taking many weeks of preparation to make sure everything is in place," AGC project manager Carlo Silvera said.

"Moving something of this scale will naturally take time – transporting just the jacket structure less than a kilometre from the CUF's main fabrication hall to the eastern wharf took about five hours."

Owned and operated by Italian-owned oil and gas company ENI Australia, the Blacktip platform will be stationed at an offshore gas field in the Bonaparte Basin off Australia's north coast.

The platform will extract gas which will be transported by pipeline to an onshore processing plant currently under construction near Wadeye in

the Northern Territory.

The Blacktip project has been one of the most significant structures to be built at the AMC facility, which can accommodate up to 1,000 workers on the 400,000-square-metre site at any one time.

Developed by LandCorp and the Department of Industry and Resources, the AMC's CUF enabled Ausclad to build the Blacktip platform at one site.

Ausclad chief executive John Sheridan said using the one facility for various stages of the project provided massive cost and production advantages to the company.

LandCorp chief executive Ross Holt said the facility's uniqueness would ensure its order book stayed full for some time.

"There is not another site like this anywhere in the world and with significant upgrades on the way, the facility will continue to provide significant benefits to the state's economy," he said.

AMC business development manager Jonathon Smith said the facility enhanced the ability of local industry to compete for work in the oil and gas, resources, marine and defence industries.

"The facility has been set up so that you can't preclude the competition," he said.

"The risks are low because to use the Common User Facility, you need to have a specific project booked in, so it's a known environment we're working in."

The marine and defence industries account for 50 per cent of work at

AMC-CUF, with the resources sector accounting for 26 per cent and the oil and gas sector 23 per cent.

The site is divided into four precincts; shipbuilding, support, technology and fabrication.

Steel fabrication and construction business Pacific Industrial Company, based in Naval Base, built the massive mobile assembly hall and 200-tonne crane at AMC.

PIC business development manager George Petley said the AMC-CUF was an engineering masterpiece.

"There are not many big sheds like that in the world that are mobile so it's very unique in that sense," he said.

Mr Petley said the company expected to remain busy assembling ship loaders for export to the North West over the next nine months.

In 2009, the AMC will take delivery of a 99-metre long by 53-metre wide floating dock worth \$60 million. The dock will be capable of providing the land transfer of docked vessels up to 3,500 tonnes and will be able to lift 12,000-tonne vessels out of the water for service and maintenance work.

Also to come online next year is a \$17 million SPMT system comprising 512 wheels in 129 axle lines to carry weights up to 3,500 tonnes allowing for the on-land transfer of heavy modules and marine vessels.

The floating dock and SPMT are funded by LandCorp as part of a \$174 million infrastructure upgrade program and will allow the AMC to deliver projects estimated to be worth \$2 billion to the WA economy over the next 25 years.



**SIGNIFICANT STRUCTURE:** The multi-million dollar Blacktip wellhead platform at the Australian Marine Complex in Henderson.