



MEDIA RELEASE

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ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMS PRODUCE RESULTS

WHEN ALL EMPLOYEES ARE ENGAGED: CONTRACTOR

The spotting of a tiny, protected plant species by an excavation crew during a pipeline construction was cited as an example of a successful environment management plan at the Australian Pipeline Industry Association convention today.

Leighton Contractors Project Manager, Mr Konrad Litfin, told APIA delegates in Alice Springs that regular environment committee meetings and 'toolbox talks' had lifted employee awareness of environmental issues during construction of an 87 kilometre pipeline linking the Roma-Brisbane natural gas pipeline to the Braemar Power Station near Kogan in Queensland, completed earlier this year.

"A standout example of this improved awareness occurred a few months into the project when two employees stopped excavation works to investigate a one centimetre-tall plant that they recognized as a result of previous toolbox talks," Mr Litfin said.

"The employees went on to correctly identify the small plant shoot as a federally protected vulnerable flora species *Philotheca sporadica* and reported it to the site environmental representative," he said.

Mr Litfin told APIA delegates that environment and cultural heritage issues were "two of the most important and misunderstood areas within the pipeline construction industry".

"It is easy to commit too much or too little to the process and hence disappoint the key stakeholders or the bottom line," he said.

Mr Litfin said the Leighton Contractors project team had engaged early and extensively with elders of the two traditional owner groups along the pipeline route – the Western Wakka Wakka and Barunggam groups – to ensure they were part of the on-going management of site-based decisions such issues as the cultural heritage survey.

Ms Margaret McLeod, an elder of the Western Wakka Wakka people, told the convention via a pre-recorded interview that the relationship with Leighton Contractors had involved "mutual respect and an opportunity to connect with country".

She encouraged the pipeline industry and traditional owners to "take the time to explore common ground".

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