

DRILLING RIG LAUNCHED IN DARWIN HARBOUR



MEO Australia's West Atlas drilling rig is launched from the heavy transport vessel, Blue Marlin.

MEO AUSTRALIA delivered the Seadrill Drilling Management-owned West Atlas jack-up rig to Darwin aboard the *Blue Marlin*, the world's largest heavy transport vessel.

The rig will commence its drilling campaign in the Timor Sea as part of a \$100 million drilling program set to last until Christmas.

Following drilling for MEO Australia, the rig has been contracted for 12 months work at Coogee Resource's Montara oil project west of Darwin.

The *Blue Marlin* partially submerged itself in Darwin Harbour, enabling the *West Atlas* rig to float free before the rig was towed to the drilling location.

Figures show economic growth

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU of Statistics figures showed Territory employment growing by 7% in September.

The figures released show there are now almost 109 000 people in the Territory's workforce.

The Territory recorded an excellent participation rate for September at 73.5% - the highest of all jurisdictions and well above the national average of 65%.

ANZ figures also released this week show Territory job advertisements increased by 8.2% in the year to September, with National figures showing a decline of 0.5% in advertisements.

As of August this year there were 107,817 people employed in the Territory – a rise of 963 since August 2006.

In another economic indicator, ABS figures showed that more Territorians are currently building homes than this time last year.

In the year to August 2007, the value of residential Building Approvals increased by 37.6% to \$477 million.

The total number of Territory residential building approvals for this period increased by 7.0% to 1420.

Berrimah land release for new housing

CHIEF MINISTER Clare Martin announced the release of land in Berrimah which will result in hundreds of new dwellings on the 220 hectare site.

Ms Martin said initial estimates indicated the release of Berrimah Farm land, currently owned by the NT Government, would allow about 700 residential dwellings to be built.

This complements the Government's release of land at Bellamack for 700 more dwellings.

Primary Industry Minister Chris Natt said the whole of Berrimah Farm was no longer needed for agricultural research on the same scale, although his Department would maintain its headquarters there.

Perkins Shipping wins Exporter of the Year Award

DARWIN-BASED Perkins Shipping has won the Exporter of the Year Award and Services Award in the Chief Minister's 2007 Northern Territory Export and Industry Awards.

Perkins has doubled its capacity on the trade route to Singapore, provided regular services to East Timor despite the unrest in that country, and won a tender to operate the main container and general cargo terminal at the Port of Townsville.

"Perkins Shipping has positioned itself in a niche market by offering flexible, quality and regular fast shipping services on multi-purpose vessels," said Executive Director, Peter Hopton.

"We are going through a period of rapid growth, based on diversification and strategic partnerships."

Perkins Shipping Group is Australia's largest privately owned shipping company, operating both liner and charter shipping services across Northern Australia and South-East Asia,

The company also won the Commonwealth Bank Services Award and the Southern Cross Television Exporter of the Year Award.