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Moranbah project springs back to life

The restart of work on the Moranbah ammonium nitrate project is bringing new business activity – and new faces – to the region.

"The project site is buzzing with activity again and we have started building homes in town for the permanent workforce," said Hugh Taylor, Moranbah Project Director for Incitec Pivot Limited (IPL).

Construction works have been ramping up since 28 July when IPL announced the go-ahead for the \$935 million plant after acquiring former project owner Dyno Nobel Limited on 2 June.

Site works are being undertaken for IPL by a contractors' alliance - United Group Resources, Bilfinger Berger Services and BGC Contracting.

The alliance currently has about 300 employees working on site. They work 10 days on, four off, and live in the site camp when they are on roster. IPL currently has about eight staff on site and a similar number in a process design team in Perth, WA.

Site work is currently focused on assembling the ammonia plant, bulk earthworks in preparation for laying the foundations for the nitric acid and ammonium nitrate plants, establishing all-weather roadways and re-establishing the site offices.

The site offices will be the nerve centre of the project, eventually housing about 150 alliance staff and up to 20 IPL people.

In Moranbah township, work has started on building 58 houses and 10 townhouses for the permanent employees who will operate the plant when it is in production. IPL already owns 10 houses in town.

Mr Taylor said IPL was finalising an arrangement which would see the company providing Isaac Regional Council with at least 50 megalitres of water a year for use by the township of Moranbah.

In addition, IPL was contributing to the upgrade of the intersection of Moranbah Access Road and Mills Avenue and at Peak Downs Highway.

The plant is scheduled for completion in 2010, with full-scale ammonium nitrate production expected to start in 2011. It will have an annual capacity of 330,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate, primarily used as an ingredient for explosives for the Queensland coal mining industry.

IPL is a gold sponsor of the 'Opera on Broadway', which will be presented at the Moranbah Community Centre on 3 October.

The performance will be staged by the Underground Opera Company, which presents a mixture of classical music and opera classics produced by Bruce Edwards, a former Moranbah resident.

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