

Is resources recruitment running out of gas?



Sophie Macdonald, principal of Skye Recruitment oversees consultants specialising in recruitment for the oil and gas industry in Queensland.

She said the project is expected to generate up to 8,500 jobs during the construction of the plant and pipeline.

“Of these, thousands of professionals will be needed to manage the project at its peak,” she said.

The BG Group project is expected to raise \$200 million in royalties and will generate enough gas to supply China for the next 20 years.

The kinds of professionals required will include engineers, petroleum engineers, seismic exploration geologists, production engineers, piping engineers, and supervisors in all these categories, to name a few.

“Already we do not have enough of these professionals here now to work on current projects,” said Macdonald.

“Many current projects will be in trouble with human resources because the new projects headhunt with very attractive salary and packages”.

Already Macdonald’s company is recruiting from overseas to meet the skills shortage.

“Currently we are recruiting from countries like UK, South Africa, Canada and the Middle East.”

One such candidate who immigrated to Australia from Venezuela to work in the resources industry is Walter Rodriguez, now working for Lucas.

A senior drilling engineer, Rodriguez is working on the Surat Gas Project as well as Moranbah and Mackay but is based in Brisbane. Rodriguez achieved his Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering in Venezuela, and then his Masters in Petroleum Engineering in the United States of America.

“Australia will have to recruit from other countries like Venezuela to work in the energy industry,” he said.

“The projects seem to get bigger every day, and there are not enough qualified people here, especially in the new sources of energy such as geothermal.

“There is a lot of optimism in the Queensland gas sector, reflected in the new projects.”

Gas production has benefited greatly from the development of coal seam gas (aka coal bed methane) especially in Queensland. This has eliminated concerns about shortages in gas supplies in Australia.

Santos has expanded its profile in Queensland even though the Moomba Carbon Storage Project has been mothballed until prices improve.

According to Macdonald, financial remuneration is only one part of the equation of retaining staff.

“If staff feel valued by their employer, they are more likely to remain loyal to that company and work towards mutual business goals,” she said.

“If employees feel undervalued in their position, they may simply go somewhere else and companies may be faced with a greater expense in filling the vacancy.”

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