

Kupe pipeline laying completed by specialist vessel Apache

15 February 2008 - The 30 km pipeline that will carry Kupe gas and condensate from the offshore field has been laid by the pipelaying vessel Apache, project operator Origin Energy says.

The reel barge earlier laid the umbilical control lines from the offshore platform into the south Taranaki coast near Hawera where the Kupe onshore production station is being constructed.

The Apache arrived in Wellington in early January from Aberdeen, after picking up the umbilical cable in Texas en route. The ship, operated by Technip, is said to be one of the most advanced pipelaying vessels operating in the offshore oil and gas industry. The Apache has now headed back to the North Sea.

Origin said the Apache picked up its first section of pipe from the Picton spool base in the Marlborough Sounds where 10 m sections of steel pipe imported from Italy had been welded into 400 m lengths.

These longer pipelines were wound onto the giant spool wheel on the Apache, each 400 m length being welded to the next until an 8 km length of the 12 inch pipeline was on board for the first pipelaying section.

When the Apache reached the south Taranaki coast, this pipeline was welded to a 2 km section of pipe fed through the previously drilled horizontal tunnel under the cliffs and beach from the production station.

The pipeline was then reeled off the back of the ship onto the seabed southward towards the platform. Two further 10 km lengths were later added. The Apache was capable of laying pipe at up to one kilometre per hour.

Origin said the ship completed laying the umbilical line before work laying the pipeline.