

Cheal's Teething Problems



Austral Pacific's Cheal A production well.

Austral Pacific announced that the Cheal-A3X production well located at the main Cheal A site has been temporarily shut-in due to mechanical problems, preliminary investigation work has indicated that pressure and fluid loss was caused by a leak in the production casing.

The company has immediately instigated a review of remedial options for the well, and at this stage it is planned that a temporary solution will be in place by the end of November, with the well brought back into production at a reduced flow rate at that time.

A plan for a permanent solution has been put in place and the company is moving to secure the appropriate workover rig and personnel

to implement this plan. It is expected to take approximately four weeks to assemble the equipment and complete the repair work. Austral Pacific expects to have final repairs completed and the well returned to full production by mid to late December.

Commenting on the shut-in, Thompson Jewell, President and CEO of Austral Pacific, said, "Everyone understands that mechanical problems of the sort we are experiencing are part of the business. However, I am very confident that our technical team will have the A3X well back in production with a minimum of downtime and lost production."

Austral Pacific also announced that the planned tie in of the B1, B2 and B3 wells into the Cheal Production Station is progressing according

to schedule. The wells, which are located at the satellite B site, were shut-in as part of the planned, phased installation of the permanent connections to the production facility. Despite extremely poor weather conditions, testing of critical equipment such as switchboards and control systems commenced ahead of plan and as a result the B wells are on schedule to be returned to full production via the production station by the beginning of January.

Jewell said, "I am very happy with the progress of the tie-ins at the B site. With these wells tied in we will be moving closer to getting the field up to our planned long-term production rates. The project is a relatively complex operation, and has drawn upon our team's skills in project planning, project management and project delivery, and I am pleased to say that we are on schedule." ■