

GLADSTONE HARBOUR DREDGING IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE



The Client



The Project

Exploration drilling for gas in central and western Queensland became hugely attractive at the turn of the 21st century as the world began to impose financial penalties on power generated by carbon, particularly by coal.

- Ultimately, four major consortia of LNG suppliers were formed, with gas being piped to LNG processing plants and ship loading facilities at the Port of Gladstone (on Curtis Island).
- In order to service these new berths, the main shipping channel through the length of the harbour needed to be considerably lengthened, and shipping access provided to the four new berth locations, plus a new ship turning basin developed

The Challenge

- 100 million cubic metres to be dredged from the harbour floor and disposed
- Transport of dredged material by barge or dredge to existing approved offshore disposal zones was going to be both expensive and slow, due to distances and harbour movement regulations
- Pumping dredged material via pipelines to settling basin onshore disposal was environmentally very constrained, however expansion of the existing harbour-shallows reclaimed landfill zones was available
- The disposal reclamation zone required a long bund wall be constructed in the harbour shallows, to enclose sufficient area to contain the necessary dredged material and suitable to allow the creation of suitable settling ponds such that the overflow water met stringent environmental standards before being returned to the harbour.

- The bund wall construction, dredging and three process plants were to be concurrently constructed
- Critical key-date connections between dredging and each consortium's plant construction varied with their and the dredger's ongoing circumstances
- Reprogramming required much give-and-take, causing some intermediate dates to be delayed and additional costs incurred by all parties, some innovative alternatives to be implemented; and some additional costs and savings to be accepted
- The environmental issues of damage to marine and flora life, to social recreational rights, to commercial industry rights, and to the barrier reef came to have a very significant impact on the program and costs, all on top of meeting the requirements of the environmental licences and approvals held

The Outcome

- To oversee the management of GPC as project manager for this work, and to manage the funding thereof including the authority to approve budget changes and all any construction contractual matters outside those normally held by a 'Superintendent', the parties agreed under the Funding Agreement between them, to establish a decision-making body, the Implementation Committee (IC), to take that role and make those decisions
- That Agreement nominated a mutually agreed 'Independent Chairman', a Flagstaff Partner, to manage the business of the IC.
- The dredging for the three consortia, which progressed to process plant construction stage, was managed to satisfy the access and completion dates actually needed by each LNG consortium, and the overall construction cost was completed well within budget.

'experience makes a difference'