

Minister for Ports commissions new firefighting system at Bulk Liquids Berth

THE Minister for Public Works and Ports, Mr Laurie Brereton, commissioned a recently installed \$4.3 million fire fighting system at the Bulk Liquids Berth, Port Botany, on Monday 18 June last.

The Berth is used for the import and export of a wide variety of liquefied products, ranging from non-hazardous vegetable oils and tallow to highly volatile products such as ethylene.

The first shipments of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) are soon to be imported through the Berth by Boral Gas Ltd and ICI Operations Pty Ltd. It will become the major product handled at the Berth, the Minister said.

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Mr Brereton operates the control console which activates the fire fighting system at the Bulk Liquids Berth at Port Botany during its commissioning on 18 June last. The former president of the MSB, Mr John Wallace, is pictured in the foreground. On Mr Brereton's left, partially obscured, is Mr Rick Foster, engineering manager (NSW) for Wormald's Fire Systems, designers and installers of the fire control apparatus. On Mr Foster's immediate left is Mr Eric Silva, Port Manager, Sydney Ports.

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"Current throughput of all products, excluding LPG, is approximately 180,000 kilolitres," Mr Brereton said.

"By the end of 1985 that total is expected to reach one million kilolitres, of which 680,000 kilolitres will be liquefied petroleum gas.

"It is essential to safeguard the lives of crew members and other personnel working on or near the Berth and to ensure maximum levels of safety for the Port Botany community and environs.

"The Maritime Services Board of New South Wales has recently concluded intensive studies into the safety of bulk liquids berths Australia-wide," he continued.

"The contract for the fire fighting equipment was awarded to Wormald International Ltd., who are recognised as world experts in this field," the minister said.

He explained that the work consisted of two tower-mounted spray nozzles positioned some 27 metres above low water level. They can rotate through 360 degrees and can eject nearly 1.5 million litres of water and/or foam over any vessel at the Berth.

The foam is a special biodegradable type which is suitable for extinguishing fires fuelled by any of the flammable products likely to be handled at the Berth, Mr Brereton said.

A deluge protection system sprays water and foam over loading arms and pipes at the wharf, while sophisticated personnel protection systems on the wharf access, the working platform of the wharf, and the access walkways of the wharf, will provide a vast curtain of water above these areas to ensure the safe exit of personnel in any emergency.

Looking down on the Bulk Liquids Berth with the two tower-mounted spray nozzles and the lower level personnel protection spray systems in full operation. The tower-mounted nozzles can deliver 1.5 million litres of water and foam, over any vessel berthed at the BLB, in each 30 minute period.



Mr Brereton, left, and Mr Wallace pictured standing on the bow of the MSB pilot vessel Governor Hunter during an inspection of the systems from the water. A massive curtain of mist and spray blankets the berth and approaches when all nozzles are operational. The \$4.3 million fire control apparatus is the first of its kind installed in New South Wales.

A direct link to the Fire Brigade can be activated in a variety of emergency situations.

In the event of an alarm being triggered, all fire fighting equipment will automatically come into play and an automatic dialler will alert the Board's Port Operations and Control Tower in Darling Harbour, Sydney.

The Minister said that an extensive training system had been initiated within the MSB to ensure that trained personnel will be available at all times during the discharge or receipt of hazardous cargoes at the Berth.

"In addition, operators from the terminal companies such as Boral, ICI, P.D.O.C.S., and others are undergoing specialist training, as are a number of officers from the Board of Fire Commissioners," Mr Brereton said. ■

