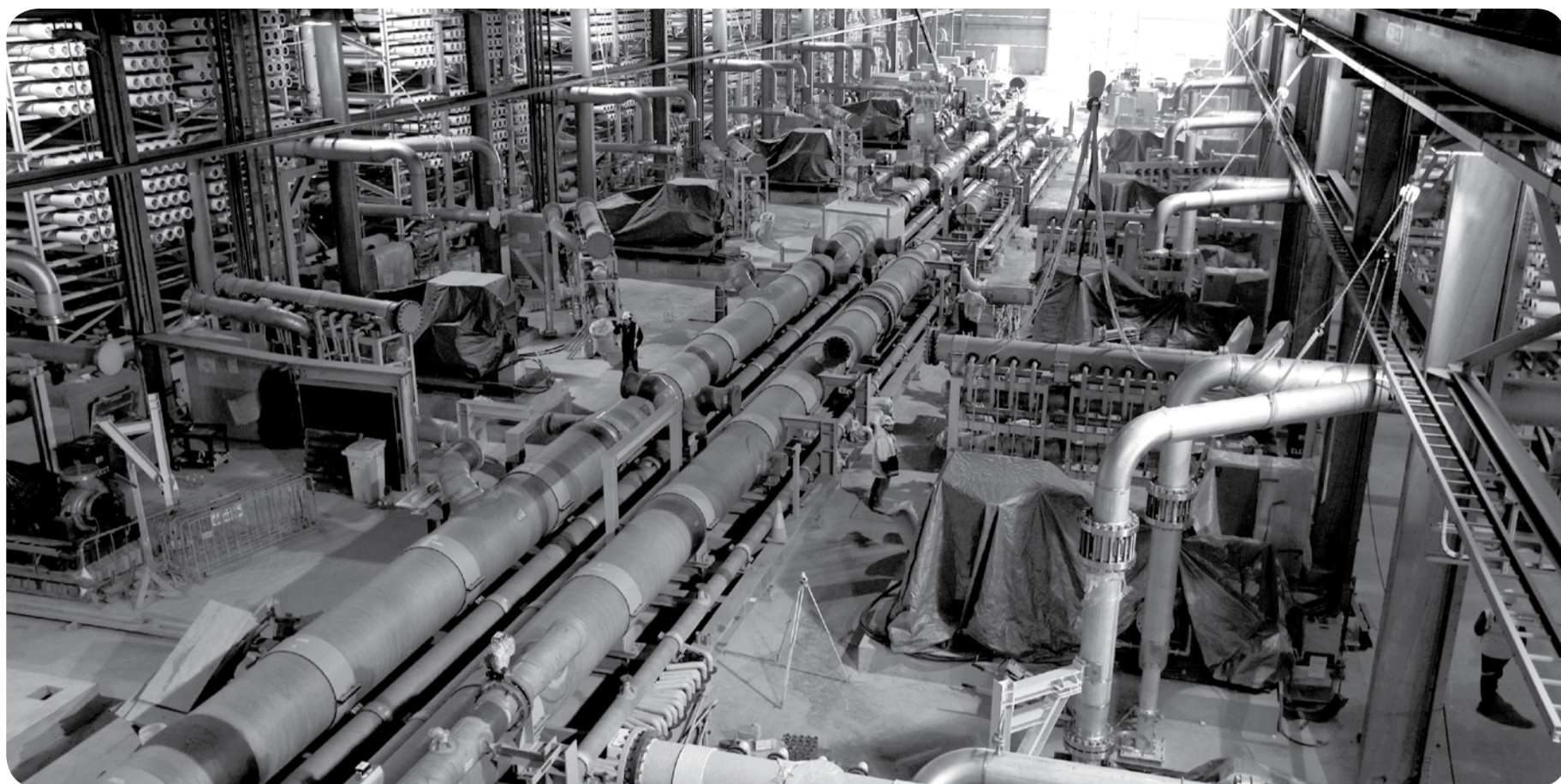


AN UPDATE FROM AQUASURE



June was a big month on the Victorian Desalination Project.

The erection of the reverse osmosis building's 3600-tonne structural steel frame is now complete, all 448 roof panels are in place and 51 reverse osmosis racks installed.

As I mentioned in last month's column, as construction draws to a close, we are starting to carry out some of the pre-commissioning tests and checks that are required before the different components of the desalination plant can come together as one.

Another test that will soon be commencing in the coming weeks is hydrotesting of the 84 km pipeline that will connect the desalination plant to Melbourne and regional communities.

Laying of the pipeline is 95% complete but before it can begin operating, the pipeline must pass a standard quality test carried out on gas and water pipelines all over the world.

Hydrotesting ensures pipelines are fit for operation, providing final verification that the pipeline has been well constructed and that no defects exist within the pipes or ancillary structures before they begin operating.

To fill the pipe, a small work site will be established near Talinga Court in Berwick and will operate 24 hours a day for about two months.

The water will be safely disinfected with chlorine from these facilities. Some minor construction noise and lighting during night activities may be expected.

The process involves filling the pipeline with water, pressurising it, and then performing inspections and quality tests to establish whether the pipeline and its supporting structures, like air valves, are operating properly.

Because this will be the first time that the pipeline will be filled with water, air valves located along the pipeline will emit a hissing sound – a normal and temporary function as air is pushed out of the pipeline.

Noise will stop once the pipeline is full of water and the air valves will then only operate periodically.

Another important activity that has started on the pipeline is planning for the permanent reinstatement of local roads. As sections of the pipeline are completed and local roads are no longer required by the project, they will be progressively reinstated to their pre-existing condition and responsibility for their maintenance handed back to the relevant local council.

A process for road reinstatement has been established and is being managed through the respective Councils, VicRoads and the project's Traffic Management Liaison Group.

The process involves a joint inspection between Thiess Degrémont Nacap and the relevant road management authority to agree the scope of repair work required. The work is then carried out, inspected again, and any additional repairs undertaken if necessary before being signed off.

This more extensive repair work will start in July and take place progressively on a road-by-road basis. Final reinstatement of the roads, and their

return to the authority, is heavily dependent on weather so will commence after the winter and spring rains and is expected to commence in October.

In the meantime, pipeline road maintenance crews will continue to work to repair roads as required.

In closing, I wanted to touch on the recent strike action by the CFMEU over the redundancy process for the project, which has been covered extensively in the media.

It's a great success story that so many people have been able to access jobs and experience on this project, but also a reality of construction that those jobs will come to an end when work is finished.

The priority of everyone involved in this project is to see it delivered safely and successfully and the right to retain appropriately skilled workers as long as possible is key of achieving this.

It was very disappointing indeed that comments in a recent press report on this matter totally misrepresented the safety standards on site.

In fact, the safety record at the Victorian Desalination Project is far better than any other comparable project I am aware of, with no serious injuries recorded in 9.5 million man-hours worked to date.

Safety is the highest priority on site!

Chris Herbert CEO, AquaSure

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