

SE Lifestyle
HD **Abbot Point: From the first ship to an export award**

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From the Past Construction phase

The Port of Bowen was closed to cargo ships in 1982 after the departure of MV Oregon Rainbow with the port about to embark on an exciting future — to be Australia's northern most deepwater **coal** export port.

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The master of MV Oregon Rainbow was Captain Mihimi and the Bowen harbour master captain Steve Roscoe piloted the last vessel out of the harbour. Northern Shipping and Stevedoring manager Pat Flynn closed the books and the Bowen Waterside Workers were retired or transferred to Mackay or Townsville. By this time work had already begun on the port of Abbot Point.

On February, Sunday 26 1984 the K-Line bulk carrier, Fukukawa Maru, berthed at Abbot Point under the command of Captain S Kamimura. The Abbot Point harbour master, Captain John Zealley, performed the pilotage, assisted by the tug boats Denison and Gloucester, and the lines boat, Curlewis and Upstart.

C. Itoh & Co (now Itochu Corporation) arranged this commissioning shipment with MIM Holdings Ltd on behalf of Collinsville **Coal Company** and Nippon Steel Corporation of Japan.

The next day, with the vessel loading, albeit slowly, Captain Kamimura hosted a Sukiyaki lunch on board for port officials. Abbot Point staff, Dave Kellie, Brian Byrne, and Ron Steen joined the ship's master and officers and other guests.

These guests included Captain Ono from K. Line, Alan Hope (MIM Shipping and Transport), Graham Barr (Customs), Lex Flemming (Bowen Towage) and Doug Lukin (Ship chandler) for the luncheon.

After five days of loading **coal** and commissioning the terminal loading equipment, MV Fukukawa Maru sailed from the port with 34,280 tonnes of Collinsville coking **coal**, at 8.30am on March, 2 1984. This was the first shipment of a **million** tonnes per annum contract, to supply Collinsville coking **coal** to Japanese steel mills.

This loading also marked the culmination of seven years of planning and construction. MIM Holdings and the Harbours Corporation of Queensland began the project in 1976 and earthworks started in 1981. MIMETS Development Pty Ltd (General manager Merv Norman, father of golfer Greg Norman) was project manager, GHD was responsible for onshore planning and Macdonald Wagner Priddle Pty Ltd for offshore planning.

Construction supervision was handled by Fluor Australia Pty Ltd (managed by Peter Wyche who later became Bowen Shire President). John Holland Constructions made the news when they transported, by barge, the 60M 120 tonne boom for the new shiploader 400 kilometres from Northern Queensland Engineers in Cairns to the new port of Abbot Point in 1983.

The construction cost of Australia's northernmost deepwater **coal** port was \$160 **million** making up the total of \$800 **million** for the entire NCA Project (Newlands/Collinsville/Abbot Point Project). The

maximum shiploading rate was 4,600 tonnes per hour, the live stockpile capacity was 500,000 tonnes with a dead stockpile area of 750,000 tonnes outside the reach of the stacker/reclaimers.

The design annual capacity was 6.5 million tonnes, but by 1987 efficiencies were introduced to claim a capacity of 12 million tonnes without major capital expenditure.

After the Fukukawa Maru sailed, railings from Collinsville and Newlands slowly built up and the ships were now loading and sailing within 24 to 30 hours. Operations manager Dave Kellie finalised his plans for the official party to celebrate the opening of the port, on March 30, 1984.

Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen officially opened the Abbot Point Bulk Coal Loading Terminal, accompanied by government ministers and various public servants.

MIM chairman John Middlin was accompanied by directors Colin Kaiser, Jim Catterall, Roger Marshall and chief executive officer Alan Hope and secretary of the board K Wooderson.

Abbot Point employees in March 1984 Operations manager: Dave Kellie.

Secretary: Mignon Bulloch.

Maintenance superintendent: Reg Perry.

Electrical engineer: John Chiro.

Shipping and transport officer: Brian Byrne.

Accountant: Ron Steen.

Personnel officer: Alex Pavusa.

Administration: Karen Read and Sue Mawhirt Storeman: Laurie Caldwell Maintenance foremen: Morgan Wakely and Lawry Draper.

Production foremen: Col Smith and Bill Myers.

Fire and security officer: Ken Jenkins.

Security/First Aid officers: John Fraser, Grattan Leatherbarrow, Neil Cooksley and Dave Dermody.

Operators: Trevor Aitken, Allan Sowden, Dave Cranston, Col Edgerton, Neil Thoroughgood, John Edwards, Charles Greenhalgh, Don Jewell, Eric Keech, Don Delacey, Wally Savage, Fred Savage, Doug Sharp, Eddie Wales and Errol Youse, Maintenance: Brian Fisher, Greg Davey, Graham McLaren, Steve Mitchell, Mike Newman, Robert Doherty, Michael Porter and Jerome Wong.

Bunkering with Newlands steaming coal In 1985 there was a slowdown in the world alumina trade and MIM Shipping and Transport Department in Brisbane chartered the alumina carrier "TNT Carpentaria" for CIF sales to Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Alcoa used the "TNT Carpentaria" and "TNT Capricornia" for regular alumina shipments from Weipa to Gladstone, where they would bunker with Callide coal. These ships could burn either marine fuel oil or coal, so MIM Holdings could arrange a favourable charter party rate based on bunkering with Newlands steaming coal at the load port.

Before the first bunkering operation in May 1985, the ships General Arrangement plans were studied to ensure the Abbot Point shiploader could access the narrow opening on the bunker hatch, which was behind number nine hold, below the bridge.

The bunker hold was loaded first, the amount recorded and then the remaining Newlands Coal was loaded into the cargo holds. This venture was so successful that the shipping company agreed to purchase additional bunker coal when the vessel returned in September.

This time the bunker hold was loaded first again and then ten thousand tonnes of additional bunkers were loaded into number nine hold. The chief mate arranged for crew to spray a line with red paint to mark the height of the ten thousand tonnes before the official cargo was loaded.

We were later told that when the cargo was unloaded at the discharge port a watchman instructed the grab operator to discharge down to the red line inside the hold. Later the bunker coal in hold number nine was transferred to the bunker hold.

The shipowners were very pleased with Newlands Coal as a bunker fuel.

Export award In 1998 Abbot Point Bulkcoal Pty Ltd was an active member of the **Coal** Export Terminal Operators Association (CETOA).

There were regular meetings and constant comparisons made with other ports in regard to ship loading performance indices, safety records and unit costs. **Operations** manager Steve Allard, gathered the relevant data and presented an application to the Premier of Queensland's Awards for Export Achievement. On October 22, 1998 management and senior staff donned their dinner suits and attended the function at the Plaza Ballroom, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. Abbot Point Bulkcoal Pty Ltd received the award for "Excellence in Export Support" from Premier Peter Beattie. The NCA general manager Mike Ryan, Port **Operations** manager Steve Allard, and Abbot Point staff: Col Edgerton, Brian Byrne, Bill Myers, and Lawry Draper posed for the historic photo with the premier. The award is exhibited in the foyer at the administration office at Abbot Point.

CO itohc : Itochu Corporation | march : Glencore PLC

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