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KUPE PIPELINE LAID

The Kupe Project has reached a key milestone, with the final stage of the main offshore gas pipeline laid by one of the world's most advanced pipelaying vessels, the Apache.

Kupe joint venture partners, including operator Origin Energy, New Zealand Oil & Gas Ltd, Genesis Energy, and Mitsui E & P Australia Pty Ltd, today announced completion of the final stages of the pipe laying, offshore from Hawera.

The Apache, operated by Technip, uses a reel-lay method for installing small and medium diameter pipelines. This allows a pipeline, which has already been welded together onshore, to be reeled off the back of the ship easily and quickly with much less risk of weather downtime.

The pipeline has a diameter of 12 inches and links the offshore wellhead platform to the onshore production station near Hawera through a tunnel drilled under the cliffs off the Taranaki coast.

The Apache is 122.9 metres long, 23.3 meters wide and sits at a depth of 8.7 metres. Powered by two 20 cylinder diesel engines, the Apache sleeps 95 people.

Kupe Gas Project Director Peter Ashford said this was the first time that a vessel like the Apache had been used in New Zealand to lay an offshore gas pipeline.

"The laying of the pipeline marks a major achievement for the Kupe Gas Project," Mr. Ashford said.

"The three 10 kilometre sections of pipeline have been laid quickly, without any serious delays. This is the result of meticulous planning and preparation by the whole Kupe Gas Project team."

After dropping off crew in Wellington the Apache is now heading to other projects in the North Sea.

ENDS

Participants in the Kupe Project are:

Origin Energy Limited (through its subsidiary Origin Energy Resources (Kupe) Limited)	50% (Operator)
Genesis Energy (through wholly owned subsidiaries)	31%
New Zealand Oil & Gas Limited (through wholly owned subsidiaries)	15%
Mitsui E&P Australia Pty Ltd	4%

Media release