



Adrian Williams

Graft, bribery, facilitation payments: call them what you will, corrupt practices in corporate circles are a hot topic at the moment, what with Rio executives imprisoned in China and another major company's activities in Cambodia rumoured to be under scrutiny. And with this issue of *PESA News* coinciding with the APPEA Conference, what better time to delve into the situation a little here with a couple of conference hypotheticals?

Clearly, if a contractor slips you, an oil company executive, a wad of 50s under the luncheon table in expectation of favoured treatment in the next tender—that's bribery! If he uses the same wad of notes to buy you a slap-up night on the town—same deal! But what if you are just one of a group of clients, some of whom

Bung Hu?

do not have any upcoming tenders? What if the group includes contractor competitors as well? He couldn't be bribing them, so surely he couldn't be seen as bribing anyone in the group, could he?

Or we could approach it from another direction: if a contractor hands out squidgy foam logos worth about two cents apiece to all comers, he's probably a bit of a tight-arse, but it's certainly no corporate backhand. But, what if the handouts are pens with corporate logos on them and worth about two bucks (or five bucks without the logo)? Still, no real problem. But, what if they slip in a few limited edition collector pens (no logo) worth a *couple of hundred dollars* apiece for 'special' clients?

And what about the issue of 'ethnic value' (for want of a better term)? A hundred dollars to an Aussie executive is loose change, whereas to someone from a small African country it might be a whole week's income. Does that mean we should run a quick financial audit on our colleagues before we buy them a drink? And the better dressed they are, the more we can spend on them (I guess that will favour lawyers over geologists straight off! But hang on, didn't they draft the legislation?).

Finally, if I buy you an expensive meal on the corporate account and you then return the favour, is that bribery? If so, who is bribing whom? What if I pay for the meal out of my

own pocket and 'forget' to claim it back on expenses?

As an Australian consultant working for a Norwegian service company, and with a minefield like that to negotiate, I am feeling a little better now about not being able to make it to the APPEA Conference this year. And, although I haven't read the Norwegian foreign corrupt practices legislation in the original, I am fairly confident that if I do slip up, at least their goals will be more comfortable than those in China!

Anyhow, enjoy the APPEA Conference and have a drink for me ... but make sure you buy it yourself. Cheers!

In this issue we preview the APPEA Conference: we've talked to 'The Rock Doctor', John Jackson; journalist and industry historian Rick Wilkinson has given an insight into his latest book, 'Knights, Knaves and Dragons: 50 years inside APPEA and Australia's oil and gas politics', to be released at this year's conference; plus, we have a rundown of all the keynote speakers and addresses. We also have our regular geothermal and CSG sections, we've talked with Perth-based Neon Energy about its Vietnamese and Californian interests, there's our annual South Australian review, we've taken a look at drilling technology, plus more.

Adrian Williams

Concerned about your image?

You'll love our **attitude**[®]

Step away from the borehole



For details please contact Lawrence Bourke
or Jeremy Prosser at **Task Geomodelling Limited**
Tel: +61 (0)8 9364 2051 Email: info@taskgeomodelling.com

www.taskgeomodelling.com

PERTH • ABERDEEN • HOUSTON