



BP drilling proposal to undergo further assessment

For immediate release

The National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA), has advised BP Developments Australia Pty Ltd (BP) that it will be taking additional time to reach an initial decision on a proposal to undertake exploration drilling in the Great Australian Bight.

On 1 October 2015, BP submitted an environment plan proposing exploration drilling in the Great Australian Bight to NOPSEMA for assessment.

The proposed drilling program has attracted significant community interest.

“The environmental assessment process requires BP to undertake a comprehensive risk assessment and clearly demonstrate to NOPSEMA how they will manage the environmental impacts and risks of their proposed activity in order for their environment plan to be accepted” said NOPSEMA Chief Executive Officer Stuart Smith.

“Ensuring that BP has considered and addressed stakeholder concerns is an important part of NOPSEMA’s environmental assessment process.”

“The environment plan must also include a comprehensive oil pollution emergency plan that outlines the detailed arrangements that will be in place to respond to and monitor any environmental impacts in the unlikely event of an oil spill.”

Mr Smith advised that “BP’s environment plan is currently being assessed by NOPSEMA’s dedicated environmental assessment team, which is staffed by highly qualified and experienced environmental and oil spill response experts.”

“The law requires NOPSEMA to notify the titleholder of its initial decision within 30 days of any environment plan submission.”

“That notification may involve NOPSEMA determining that additional time is required to consider the environment plan.”

“In this instance, BP has been informed that NOPSEMA will require additional time to assess the submission.”

“The law allows NOPSEMA to take as much time as required to ensure a professional, thorough and rigorous assessment” concluded Mr Smith.

For up-to-date details regarding the status of the assessment of BP’s environment plan for proposed drilling in the Great Australian Bight, subscribe to the [Great Australian Bight Exploration Drilling Program](#) submission page on NOPSEMA’s website at nopsema.gov.au.

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NOPSEMA is an independent Commonwealth Statutory Agency regulating the health and safety, well integrity and environmental management of offshore petroleum industry activities in Commonwealth waters, and in coastal waters where state and territory functions have been conferred.

By law, offshore petroleum activities cannot commence before NOPSEMA has assessed and accepted detailed risk management plans documenting and demonstrating how an organisation will manage the risks to health and safety to as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP) and the risk to the environment to ALARP and with acceptable environmental impacts.

NOPSEMA employs a robust environmental assessment process, as well as strict compliance monitoring and enforcement programs to ensure offshore oil and gas activities comply with Commonwealth environmental law.

For more information see nopsema.gov.au

