



## Report flags safety lessons for offshore petroleum industry

### National offshore petroleum regulator demands continuing vigilance to protect workers and the environment

**NOPSEMA, Australia's national independent regulator for offshore petroleum health and safety, well integrity and environmental management, today released the latest health and safety performance report for Australia's offshore petroleum industry.**

The report contains data of inspections, investigations and information collected from 35 operators and 209 facilities operating in Commonwealth waters (and relevant coastal waters) to December 2011. Health and safety categories covered in the report include injuries, complaints, investigations and enforcements.

The authoritative report identifies signs of progress in industry safety performance. For example:

- no fatalities were recorded during the reporting period (July 2010-December 2011)
- the rate of major injuries has been decreasing since 2008

Recalling the lives lost in the BP Macondo blowout in the Gulf of Mexico in April 2010 and the impact of the PTT EP Montara blowout in the Timor Sea in 2009, NOPSEMA CEO Jane Cutler warned that industry could not afford to be complacent at any stage of offshore petroleum exploration and production.

“Strong safety performance is fundamental to restoring confidence in an industry that has seen the tragic consequences of inadequate risk prevention.”

The Offshore Health and Safety Performance Report identifies design, procedures and preventive maintenance as the top three root causes of accidents and dangerous occurrences.

Ms Cutler acknowledged the role of the regulator in driving continuous improvement in minimising risks to workers, noting an increase in inspections and enforcement actions in 2011.

“From the early design stages of a facility to the end of its lifecycle, it is up to operators and industry regulators alike to be vigilant in their commitment to the safety of people working offshore.”

In the interests of sharing safety lessons for industry, the report documents 57 incidents investigated in the 18 months to 31 December 2011, including accidents involving injuries to workers and dangerous occurrences that could have caused death or serious injury.

The report reveals there were three major hydrocarbon gas releases reported in 2011.

“Uncontrolled hydrocarbon releases are of particular concern due to their potential to cause ignition. Preventing releases of this nature should continue to be a top priority for operators”, Ms Cutler said.

NOPSEMA was established in January 2012 following the *Final Government Response to the Report of the Montara Commission of Inquiry* (2011) and a decision to extend the health and safety remit of the National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority (NOPSA) to include well integrity and environmental management. NOPSEMA superseded NOPSA as the single national regulator for offshore facilities and activities in Commonwealth waters, as well as designated coastal waters where powers have been conferred.

The Offshore Health and Safety Performance Report can be accessed at [www.nopsema.gov.au](http://www.nopsema.gov.au)

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