



Report highlights important lessons for the Australian offshore petroleum industry

The National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) today released its 2013 *Annual offshore performance report*; a yearly stocktake of risk management by the Australian offshore petroleum industry.

NOPSEMA is the Australian Government's independent regulator of offshore safety, well integrity and environmental management for petroleum activities in Commonwealth waters.

Ms Jane Cutler, NOPSEMA CEO, noted that the report "summarises the decisions, observations and recommendations made by the authority during assessments of proposed petroleum activities, inspections at offshore facilities and investigations of safety and environmental incidents."

Under NOPSEMA's regulation, the offshore petroleum industry has achieved significant progress in improving safety and environmental management outcomes. In 2013, the rate of accidents and injuries requiring three or more days off work reached the lowest level recorded since the authority commenced operations in 2005.

"Lower injury rates represent *actual harm avoided* and should be commended as it demonstrates continuing endeavours by organisations to prevent further fatalities and injuries" said Ms Cutler.

The average assessment timeframe for environment plans also decreased, reflecting increased efforts by industry to better demonstrate that their plans meet the requirements of the Regulations.

In acknowledging the achievements made by industry, Ms Cutler reinforced the need for constant vigilance and warned against industry complacency. "We must reflect on the lessons learnt, review how far offshore safety has progressed and reinforce our commitment to continuous improvement" she said.

Despite the decline in accidents and injuries, offshore workers are still being hurt. Insights from data show that mobile facilities continue to account for the highest number of injuries, reinforcing the need for industry to recognise and address the impact of different circumstances on health and safety.

"Closer attention needs to be given to the factors like the nature of the task, timing, facility design, and location, in determining which procedures and processes are best suited to protect the offshore workforce and control environmental impacts."

The report includes a 'spotlight' on hydrocarbon releases, which are a potential indicator for more severe events due their potential for ignition. In 2013, the number of hydrocarbon releases increased to 20 after reaching a seven year low of 17 in 2012. The top three root causes for OHS hydrocarbon releases are identified in the report as design, preventive maintenance and management systems and highlight where industry should be focusing their efforts.

"The onus is on industry to implement comprehensive and expert processes to identify and manage safety and environmental risks to levels that are as low as reasonably practical. In response, NOPSEMA will consistently challenge industry to secure compliance with the legislation and drive improved outcomes."

During 2013 NOPSEMA considered 537 submissions by operators, titleholders and dutyholders; undertook 128 inspections; issued 79 enforcement actions and considered eight complaints.

The *Annual offshore performance report* can be accessed at nopsema.gov.au

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