

## Media query

Ref: A856114

<b>Date</b>	25/01/2023
<b>Topic</b>	Santos General Direction
<b>Journalist</b>	██████████
<b>Media outlet</b>	████
<b>Deadline</b>	

**The following is provided as a non-attributable, background note:**

On 13 January NOPSEMA issued a General Direction to Santos NA Barossa Pty Ltd, SK E&S Australia Pty Ltd, and Santos Offshore Pty Ltd as the registered holders of Pipeline Licence NT/PL5 (the Barossa pipeline license) to address issues identified during a NOPSEMA inspection carried out in December 2022.

The Direction requires the registered holders to carry out an assessment to identify any underwater cultural heritage places along the Barossa pipeline route to which people, in accordance with Indigenous tradition, may have spiritual and cultural connections that may be affected by the future activities covered by the Barossa Pipeline Installation Environment Plan accepted by NOPSEMA on 9 March 2020 that are not already identified in the environment plan.

The Direction also requires Santos to notify NOPSEMA of any future activities covered by the Barossa Gas Export Pipeline Installation Environment Plan (EP) that are to commence at least 10 days before the activity commences.

**Comments to be attributed to a NOPSEMA spokesperson:**

“While the environment plan remains in force and the General Direction doesn’t prohibit the start of work on the pipeline installation, it’s our expectation that Santos won’t undertake any work that may result in impacts and risks that haven’t been adequately identified, evaluated and managed, in accordance with the regulations.

“On completion of the assessment, Santos must update the environment plan to reflect any impacts or risks to cultural heritage places which have been identified, including a description of control measures to reduce those environmental impacts and risks to as low as reasonably practicable and acceptable levels.

“We’re also asking Santos to provide a weekly report to NOPSEMA detailing their progress toward satisfying the General Direction.”

“An Environment Plan can be updated through an titleholder’s management of change (MOC) process without further assessment by NOPSEMA, however if a significant new impact or risks, or a significant change in impacts and risks, is identified through an MOC a revision is required to be submitted that would then be assessed in accordance with NOPSEMA’s assessment guidelines.”

**Ends**

### Background notes

- The Barossa Gas Export Pipeline Environment Plan (the in-force environment plan) was accepted by NOPSEMA on 9 March 2020.
- The in-force environment plan was prepared by ConocoPhillips prior to the title for the pipeline license being transferred to Santos in May 2021.
- Santos updated the in-force EP through an internal management of change (MOC) process in September 2021.
- Santos wrote to NOPSEMA on 22 December 2022, confirming they would undertake an internal MOC process in relation to the potential for newly identifiable cultural heritage places.
- NOPSEMA inspectors were not assured, based on the inspection, that Santos's MOC process would adequately address the potential gaps.
- Issuance of a General Direction ensures any actions required to be undertaken by the registered holders are enforceable.
- The full General Direction can be seen on NOPSEMA's website [link].
- The Environment Regulations include offences provisions that prevent a titleholder from continuing a petroleum activity where there is a significant new or significant increase in environmental impact or risk unless there has been a proposed revision of the environment plan submitted.

### For media enquiries contact:

[Redacted]

T: [Redacted] | e: [communications@nopsema.gov.au](mailto:communications@nopsema.gov.au)

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#### About NOPSEMA

NOPSEMA (the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority) is Australia's independent, expert regulator for the offshore energy industry. NOPSEMA oversees health and safety, environmental management and structural and well integrity for all offshore energy operations and greenhouse gas storage activities in Commonwealth waters (and in coastal waters where regulatory powers and functions have been conferred).

By law, offshore petroleum and greenhouse storage 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.

In November 2021, NOPSEMA was given the role and functions of the Offshore Infrastructure Regulator following the passing of the Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021 in federal parliament.

For more information, visit our website at [nopsema.gov.au](http://nopsema.gov.au)