



**NOPSEMA**

Australia's offshore  
energy regulator

# HAVE YOUR SAY on environmental aspects of offshore energy activities



The National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) is Australia's independent expert regulator for health and safety, environmental management and well integrity for offshore petroleum facilities and greenhouse gas storage activities in Commonwealth waters.

By law, the public must have the opportunity to comment on documents associated with proposed offshore energy projects or exploration activities, such as seismic surveys and exploratory drilling, as part of the assessment process for environmental approval. A public comment period of at least four weeks is intended to allow the community to have its say on the potential environmental impacts of projects and activities and proposed management practices.

## Public comment on areas released for offshore oil and gas exploration

Each year the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources manages a public comment process for areas proposed to be released for offshore oil and gas exploration. As the independent regulator, NOPSEMA has no role in this process. For more information about the process visit [industry.gov.au](http://industry.gov.au).

## How to have your say on environmental approvals

When a public comment period is underway, environmental approval documents are published in full on NOPSEMA's website, along with a summary of key information, maps of the proposal and contact details for the proponent. The quickest, recommended way to submit a comment is through NOPSEMA's online Consultation hub, which is accessible via the homepage of NOPSEMA's website [nopsema.gov.au](http://nopsema.gov.au).

Alternatively to having your say via the website, you can send a submission through:

- Email: [environment@nopsema.gov.au](mailto:environment@nopsema.gov.au)
- Post: NOPSEMA – Public comment submissions, GPO Box 2568, PERTH WA 6001
- Delivery: NOPSEMA – Public comment submissions, Level 8 Alluvion, 58 Mounts Bay Rd, PERTH WA 6000

## Where can I find information about public comment processes underway?

Public comment periods are publicised on NOPSEMA's online Consultation hub. This web page shows all the environmental approvals documents currently open for public comment, along with closing dates for comment.

Email-based subscription services are also available from the NOPSEMA website, which send a notification when the public comment period opens on a new environmental approvals document.

Subscriptions can be customised to a particular region or type of activity:

- Subscribe to Environmental management news at [nopsema.gov.au/subscribe](http://nopsema.gov.au/subscribe) to be notified when offshore project proposals are published for comment
- Subscribe at [info.nopsema.gov.au](http://info.nopsema.gov.au) to be notified when environment plans for exploration activities are published for comment.

In addition, proponents publish a notice inviting comment on environmental approvals documents on their own websites and in national, state and regional newspapers.

## How to make an effective comment

The public comment process provides an opportunity for community members to raise suggestions or concerns about the environmental management of a proposed project or activity. It is useful to frame your comments as objections or claims. To be considered a relevant issue or key matter, a comment must relate to the information contained in the environmental approvals document. For example, comments could relate to:

- the way the existing environment in the area of the proposed project or activity is described in the document
- the environmental impacts and risks of the proposed project or activity
- the proposed measures for managing the environmental impacts and risks
- the proposed methods for monitoring the environmental performance of the project or activity.

Information that is irrelevant to NOPSEMA's decision making criteria will not be considered, such as:

- statements of fundamental objection to oil and gas activity or industry
- comments that contain personal threats or profanities
- SPAM mail
- petitions
- comments that pose questions to NOPSEMA and or/the titleholder.

If there is new information that NOPSEMA and/or the proponent should consider, commenters are encouraged to provide supporting documents, such as data or scientific reports or clearly labelled photographs or maps. These can be uploaded via the online platform.

It is also important for commenters to double check their comments prior to submission. Comments submitted accidentally for a different activity will not be considered, nor can they be redirected to the correct activity or proponent. Edits cannot be made to comments once submitted.

Submissions must be made prior to the closing date of the public comment period. If comments are received after this time, NOPSEMA will not forward these comments to the proponent, but will encourage the submitter to contact the proponent directly to convey their comments. Comments sent by post must be date stamped prior to the end of the public comment period.

## What happens to my comment once it's submitted?

Once the public comment period has closed, all comments are provided to the proponent. If relevant issues are raised through public comment, proponents must take these issues into account and address them in their environmental approvals documents. After considering information received from the public, the proponent may change the environmental approvals document before submitting it to NOPSEMA. The proponent is not required to respond to each comment individually.

In addition to the response by the proponent, NOPSEMA also reviews the information received during public comment and determines whether it has been

addressed in the revised environmental approvals documents. If NOPSEMA finds that a proponent has not considered a relevant issue raised during the public comment process, it will ask the proponent to address the matter during the assessment process.

For exploration environment plans, NOPSEMA publishes a key matters report after the final assessment decision is made. This report describes how the regulator took into account the information received during public comment when making the decision. This report is published on the NOPSEMA website.

## Privacy notice and sensitive information

When submitting a comment, NOPSEMA requests that your name and contact details are provided. This allows NOPSEMA and/or the proponent to get in touch if new issues are raised and increases the transparency and accountability of the comment process. Names and contact details of commenters will not be published in any assessment documents by NOPSEMA or the proponent.

While it is preferred that you provide your name and contact details, if you wish to remain anonymous to the proponent, you may email NOPSEMA directly at [environment@nopsema.gov.au](mailto:environment@nopsema.gov.au).

NOPSEMA's handling of personal information is described in NOPSEMA's privacy policy at [nopsema.gov.au/privacy](http://nopsema.gov.au/privacy). If you have an enquiry about privacy, please contact NOPSEMA's Privacy contact officer on 08 6188 8700 or by email at [privacy@nopsema.gov.au](mailto:privacy@nopsema.gov.au).

## If you are a 'relevant person' for an exploration activity

For the purposes of environment plans for offshore activities, the Environment Regulations define relevant persons as:

- particular government departments or agencies with responsibilities that are relevant to the petroleum activity
- a person or organisation whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by the activities to be carried out under the environment plan, for example, other marine users in the vicinity of the activity and its immediate footprint
- any other person or organisation that the titleholder considers relevant. This may vary between activity and titleholder, and NOPSEMA

recommends that titleholders apply this category broadly when considering who to consult with.

If you are a relevant person, the best mechanism for raising issues or concerns with the proponent is through the relevant person's consultation process, prior to the public comment process. A titleholder is required by the regulations to carry out consultation with relevant persons during preparation of an environment plan. This is intended to promote consideration of key stakeholder matters earlier in titleholder planning and develop mutually beneficial approaches to environmental management.



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### Further information

Regulatory alerts and bulletins, a quarterly magazine, brochures and factsheets, and regulatory guidance including the Environment plan decision-making guideline are published at [nopsema.gov.au](http://nopsema.gov.au)

### Key legislation

Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006  
Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2009  
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

### Contact details

p: +61 (08) 6188 8700  
e: [communications@nopsema.gov.au](mailto:communications@nopsema.gov.au)

Head office: Level 8, Alluvion Building  
58 Mounts Bay Road, Perth WA 6000

Postal: GPO Box 2568 - Level 8, 58 Mounts Bay Road, Perth WA 6000

### About NOPSEMA

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

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[nopsema.gov.au](http://nopsema.gov.au)

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