

THE 2025 - Issue 3 REGULATOR



NOPSEMA looks ahead to 2026

Protecting lives and
the environment



NOPSEMA
Australia's offshore energy regulator

About NOPSEMA

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

Under the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006*, offshore petroleum and greenhouse storage activities cannot begin before NOPSEMA has assessed and accepted the required permissioning documents demonstrating how the activity will be managed to ensure the associated risks to the health and safety of the workforce are as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP) and risks and impacts to the environment are ALARP and are acceptable.

The Offshore Infrastructure Regulator (OIR) was established under the *Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021* to regulate work health and safety, infrastructure integrity and environmental management for offshore infrastructure activities.

For more information, visit our website at nopsema.gov.au.

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Message from the
Chief Executive
Sue McCarrey

As a regulator, it is NOPSEMA's job to ensure a safe and environmentally responsible offshore workforce and industry. That responsibility evolves as industry activities change, new risks emerge, and community expectations grow.

In this edition of The Regulator, we highlight some of the ways we are working with industry and other stakeholders to strengthen safety and environmental outcomes.

One of the most significant recent developments is the introduction of the updated Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Safety) Regulations 2024.

These reforms, the most comprehensive in more than a decade, place renewed emphasis on the role of Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs). To support HSRs in exercising their powers with confidence, we have released an updated HSR Handbook, providing practical tools, templates and guidance. Strengthening the voice of the workforce is central to effective safety outcomes and HSRs play a vital role in that process.

We are also making strong progress on our digital transformation. Our flagship project, the Central Operations for Regulatory Excellence (CORE) platform, has entered an intensive engagement phase.

CORE will be a streamlined digital platform that makes regulatory interactions more efficient, transparent and consistent. Recently, more than 100 industry representatives joined workshops to provide feedback on system design and functionality.

Another key focus has been updating our diving guidelines. These revisions bring sharper accountability for diving supervisors and align requirements with the latest safety regulations. By focusing on the importance of planning, record-keeping and workforce engagement, we aim to ensure Australia's diving operations remain among the safest in the world.

We are also updating our oil spill modelling guidance to improve scientific rigour and ensure that modelling outputs are presented in ways that stakeholders can clearly understand. This is about building trust through transparency, consistency and robust science – while ensuring response plans are appropriate to the risks.

At the same time, we are tackling emerging challenges such as psychosocial hazards. Bullying, harassment and poor organisational culture are not peripheral issues: they are central to workplace safety. The new regulations now require duty holders to identify and manage psychosocial risks as part of their core safety systems. This shift recognises that safety is not only about equipment and processes, but also about people and leadership.

You'll also read reflections from our Deputy CEO of Regulatory Operations, Graham Blair, after two years with NOPSEMA. His emphasis on dialogue, humility and continuous learning reflects the regulator we aspire to be – firm but fair, informed and always open to engagement.

As Australia progresses towards a cleaner energy future, the work of the Offshore Infrastructure Regulator (OIR) and its international peers on offshore wind regulation is vital. By learning from international regulators and contributing to international forums, we ensure our frameworks are contemporary, adaptive and enabling.

Through all these initiatives, our focus remains clear: protecting workers, safeguarding the environment and regulating an industry that operates responsibly and sustainably. I thank everyone – industry, workforce representatives, community stakeholders and our own staff – for contributing to this important work.

Until next time, please take care, enjoy the holiday season and stay safe.

Sue McCarrey
Chief Executive Officer



NOPSEMA looks ahead to 2026

As Australia's offshore energy sector undergoes rapid transformation, NOPSEMA will enter 2026 with a clear and continued purpose: to keep workers safe and the environment protected through clear and considered regulation.

Next year NOPSEMA will sharpen its focus on risk-based oversight, continuous improvement and collaboration while delivering on its core regulatory functions – assessment, inspection, influence and, if needed, enforcement.

Central to this effort are our five National Priorities, which target the most pressing safety and environmental challenges. These priorities are not static; they evolve with industry trends and regulatory intelligence, ensuring resources are directed where they matter most. Alongside these, a new emphasis on emergency response readiness will strengthen the offshore sector's resilience to major incidents.

The regulator's work goes beyond compliance. It is about building confidence – within industry and across the community – that offshore operations are safe, sustainable and accountable.

This means refining inspection and environment plan assessment processes, embedding stakeholder feedback into regulatory improvements and advancing well integrity oversight. It also means investing in organisational capability, from digital transformation to workforce development, so the regulator itself remains fit for purpose.

As the energy transition accelerates, the Offshore Infrastructure Regulator (OIR) – administered by NOPSEMA – enters a pivotal phase. Having established the regulatory regime for offshore renewables and commenced feasibility inspections, OIR will now guide projects toward commercial scale. This involves supporting licence holders to embed safety by design, strengthening education and engagement and coordinating with government counterparts to ensure offshore renewables grow responsibly and sustainably. The goal is simple yet profound: apply the same rigorous standards that underpin oil and gas operations to the emerging renewables sector.

Behind the scenes, NOPSEMA is modernising its systems through the Digital Transformation Program, replacing legacy processes with scalable, cloud-based solutions that streamline permissioning and improve data sharing.

These upgrades will enhance transparency and efficiency for both the regulator and industry stakeholders. Coupled with NOPSEMA's new People Plan and Work Health and Safety Plan, these initiatives ensure NOPSEMA's workforce has the skills, tools and culture to deliver high-quality regulatory outcomes.

Ultimately, NOPSEMA's priorities for 2026 reflect a regulator that is responsive to change yet steadfast in its purpose. From managing ageing infrastructure and complex decommissioning programs to overseeing emerging offshore renewables, the agency's work is critical to safeguarding lives and the environment. As CEO Sue McCarrey notes in the Corporate Plan:

"Our approach will evolve to meet the demands of a rapidly changing offshore energy environment while staying focused on our purpose: protecting people and the environment through effective, independent regulation."

For industry, these priorities provide clarity and confidence. For the Australian community, they offer assurance that safety and environmental protection remain paramount in offshore energy regulation.

NOPSEMA's National Priorities

STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY

Ensuring offshore assets remain safe and well maintained.

REDUNDANT WELLS

Strengthening oversight to ensure wells are decommissioned responsibly.

PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH

Protecting worker mental health and wellbeing.

CONTROL OF WORK

Promoting effective systems to ensure work is carried out safely.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Highlighting how executive decisions impact safety and environmental outcomes.

New guidelines for offshore diving in Australia

NOPSEMA recently released updated Diving Guidelines to better align with recent amendments to the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Safety) Regulations 2024, which came into effect on 12 June 2025.

These updated guidelines bring a sharper lens to Diving Safety Management Systems (DSMS) and Dive Project Plans (DPPs), focusing on the level of detail and clarity required.

The Diving Guidelines now incorporate the requirements of the Offshore Electricity Infrastructure (OEI) Regulations 2022, providing a more streamlined approach to make it easier for licence holders, operators and contractors to understand exactly what's needed and why.

One of the standout changes is a stronger emphasis on workforce engagement. Divers must now be directly involved in planning and implementation, reflecting global best practice and the outcome of extensive consultation with industry stakeholders.

Another key shift is in the timing of diving start-up notices. Operators must now notify NOPSEMA 28 days before diving operations begin, double the previous 14-day window.

This change is more than administrative; it's about ensuring that regulatory assessment happens against a complete, validated plan, with fewer last-minute surprises.

Operators are also required to submit an approved DPP alongside their notification. While this may require some adjustment, it's a move that reinforces the importance of early, thorough planning.

In a departure from broader offshore norms – where accountability often rests with a 'responsible person' – the updated regulations place diving supervisors squarely in the spotlight.

Supervisors are now explicitly accountable for:

- ensuring all diving operations align with the accepted DSMS and DPP
- keeping accurate and up-to-date diving records
- implementing risk controls to reduce risks to divers to ALARP (as low as reasonably practicable)
- notifying NOPSEMA of diving incidents and dangerous occurrences.

And this isn't just box-ticking. Failure to meet these obligations can result in personal liability – a serious reminder of the critical role supervisors play in keeping divers safe.

NOPSEMA has observed several recurring issues in recent years, including poor record-keeping, misalignment with approved plans, and inconsistent application of risk controls.

These trends have prompted a renewed focus on supervisory accountability during inspections and compliance activities.

But the responsibility doesn't stop with supervisors. Operators and diving contractors must ensure supervisors are competent, well-trained and fully aware of their obligations. That means clear communication, robust systems and the right resources to support safe, compliant operations.

Australia's offshore diving safety record is strong, with no recent fatalities and very few serious incidents. But there's a growing concern about a generational gap in risk awareness.

Earlier generations of divers worked through an era of higher incident rates – when decompression sickness, paralysis and even fatalities were grim realities. Today's supervisors may not have the same lived experience of those risks, making leadership, competence and accountability more important than ever.

Ben Barnes, a former commercial diver and now-retired NOPSEMA inspector, has seen the shift firsthand.

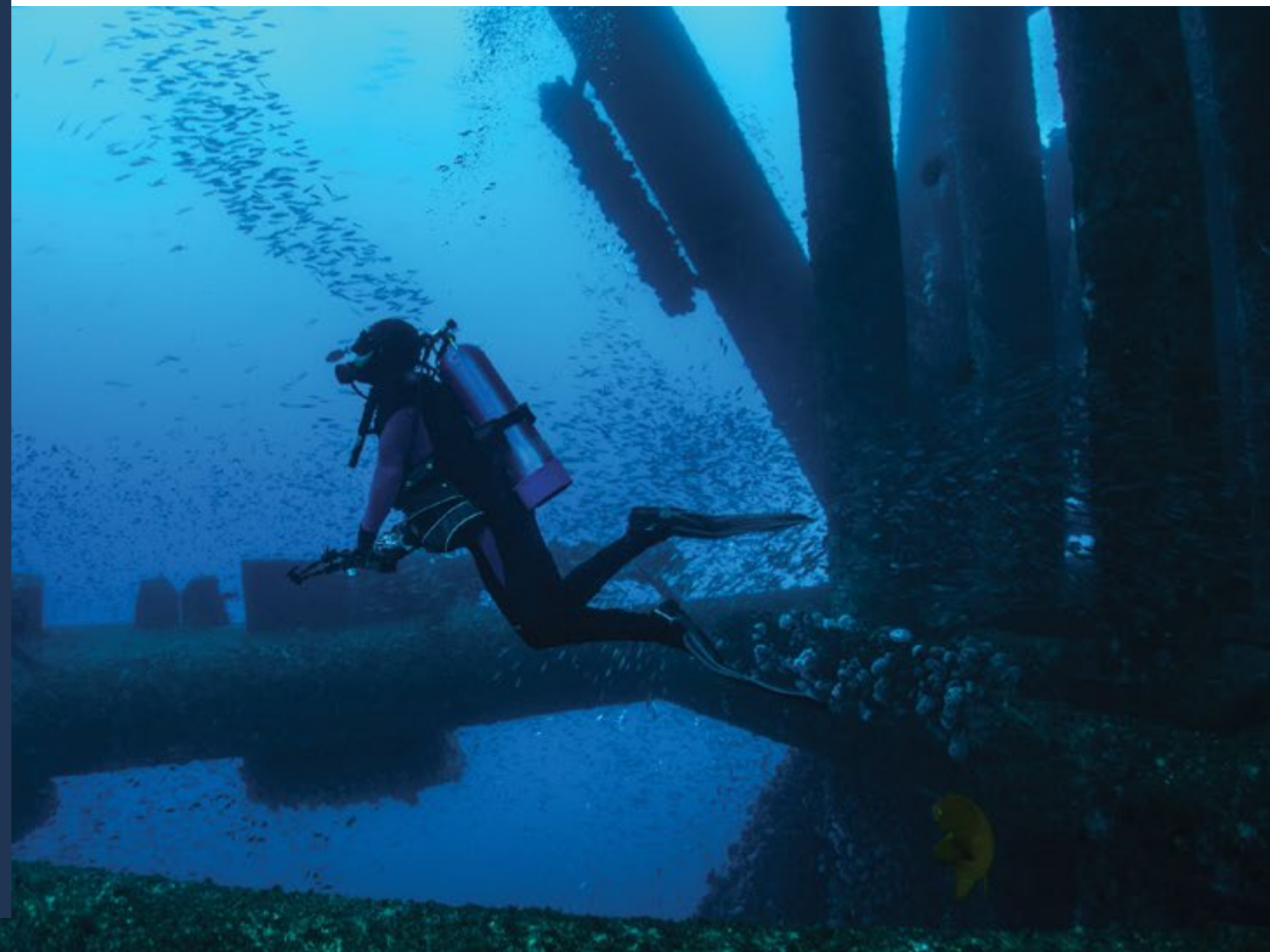
"When I started, decompression sickness, paralysis and even fatalities were much more common," Mr Barnes said.

"Over the years, we introduced systems, controls and equipment that brought diving safety up to a world-leading standard.

"Our generation really cleaned up the OHS risks, so future changes will be more about education, culture and accountability."

With the new guidelines now in force, NOPSEMA remains focused on maintaining Australia's world-class safety standards while strengthening leadership and accountability across the board.

Further information about NOPSEMA's regulatory diving processes and links to the updated Diving Guidelines can be found at nopsema.gov.au



Regulating psychosocial hazards: a new era in workplace safety

Ensuring offshore workers feel safe, supported and free from bullying and harassment is a vital part of workplace safety.

Psychosocial health – once considered peripheral to traditional safety practices – is now central to regulatory frameworks across Australia.

With new legislation under the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act (OPGGGS Act)* coming into effect in June 2025, the offshore energy industry is being called to rethink how it identifies, assesses and controls risks that stem not from machinery or materials, but from culture, leadership and human interaction.

Psychosocial health is one of NOPSEMA's five National Priorities – key areas requiring a more targeted regulatory approach to ensure continued improvement in industry performance.

As a regulator, NOPSEMA is proactively addressing psychosocial hazards through:

- strengthening oversight and engagement to support compliance with new regulations
- encouraging improved industry reporting to better understand and address psychosocial risks
- enhancing collaboration for a coordinated regulatory approach to workplace mental health
- analysing benchmarking inspection campaigns to build understanding of psychosocial risk and management in offshore environments.

Psychosocial hazards include a wide range of workplace factors that can lead to harm, including bullying and sexual harassment. These behaviours are rarely isolated; they often reflect deeper systemic issues.

“Bullying doesn’t occur in isolation – it is context-driven and can only be understood by looking at the social environment and systems in the workplace,” NOPSEMA’s Regulatory Specialist in Psychosocial Health and Safety, Kath Jones, said.

“That is why sacking someone doesn’t always fix bullying. You have to look at the organisational factors that allow it to happen.”

Poor leadership, ineffective performance management and unclear policies are just some of the contributing factors. The key shift in thinking is recognising that the hazard is not the individual, but the organisational context that permits harmful behaviour.

Ms Jones noted that bullying is just one of many psychosocial hazards. Violence, aggression, sexual harassment, high job demands, poor change management and other hazards arising from the design and management of work each have distinct risk profiles.

The regulatory approach now emphasises risk management over reactive enforcement. Psychosocial hazards must be managed to “as low as reasonably practicable” (ALARP), requiring a structured process of hazard identification, risk assessment and hazard control.

Unlike physical hazards, psychosocial risks cannot be measured with instruments. Instead, they must be uncovered through consultation. This includes surveys, focus groups, interviews and other mechanisms that allow workers to share their experiences.

This consultation process, and the analysing of other workplace data (such as turnover, sick leave and injury data), helps organisations understand the psychosocial factors behind incidents and develop targeted interventions.



“You can’t measure psychosocial hazards in the same way you measure noise or gas levels,” Ms Jones said. “You have to talk to people. That is how you uncover the underlying factors.”

In offshore environments, psychosocial risks are amplified by isolation, lack of autonomy, hazardous conditions and hierarchical structures. Workers often have limited control over their schedules and surroundings, which can lead to stress, role conflict and interpersonal tensions. In confined environments, even minor interpersonal conflicts can escalate due to the absence of work-life balance and personal space.

Regulators are increasingly focused on proactive engagement in order to address psychosocial hazards before they escalate to grievances or harmful incidents. Safety cases must now include strategies for managing psychosocial hazards, prompting operators to integrate these risks into their broader safety systems. This shift moves psychosocial safety out of the “health and wellbeing” silo and into core operational planning.

However, challenges remain. While large organisations are beginning to employ psychosocial specialists, smaller operators may lack internal expertise. Building industry capability is essential – not just to meet compliance requirements, but to foster mentally healthy workplaces that retain talent and reduce turnover.

Ms Jones emphasised that psychosocial safety is closely tied to leadership and management – another NOPSEMA National Priority.

“If people fear reporting, bullying is more likely to occur,” she explained.

“It isn’t about finding a ‘bad apple’, it is about understanding and addressing the systems that allow inappropriate behaviour to flourish.”

Consultation isn’t just a way to identify hazards; it’s also a method for evaluating the effectiveness of controls. Organisations must continuously engage with staff to determine whether interventions are working and adjust strategies accordingly.

This iterative approach ensures that psychosocial risk management is dynamic and responsive. It also reinforces the idea that psychosocial safety is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Different industries, and even different roles within the same industry, have unique risk profiles that require tailored controls.

The regulatory landscape is evolving, and psychosocial hazards are no longer optional considerations. They are central to workplace safety and managing them effectively requires a cultural shift as much as a procedural one.

As industry adapts, the focus must remain on prevention, consultation and continuous improvement. Psychosocial safety is not just about avoiding harm – it’s about creating environments where people feel valued, supported and empowered to thrive.

“No company wants to hurt an individual,” Ms Jones said.

“And no worker goes to work to hurt someone else. If we focus on the context, the systems, we can prevent harm before it happens.”

NOPSEMA’s psychosocial risk management guideline can be found at [nopsema.gov.au](https://www.nopsema.gov.au)

A regulator in dialogue: Graham Blair reflects on two years at NOPSEMA

When Graham Blair stepped into the role of Deputy CEO of Regulatory Operations at NOPSEMA nearly two years ago, he brought with him more than two decades of experience from the other side of the table – as a duty holder. That perspective, he said, had shaped how he led the group of regulatory staff under his stewardship.

“I spent almost 25 years working in operator environments, including a lot of new ventures work globally,” he said.

“That gave me a real flavour for how regulators operate – their purpose, the huge diversity of regulatory models, and the differing postures across jurisdictions. I always believed that regulators and duty holders were sitting at the same table, with largely aligned interests – safe operations and environmental protection.”

Mr Blair describes his role simply as “leading the community of experts that are tasked with being the regulator,” and while he doesn’t claim to be an expert assessor or inspector, he sees his position as a vital conduit – a channel for communication, escalation and clarity between NOPSEMA and the industry.

Asked how the offshore regulatory environment had changed during his tenure, he was quick to point out that while the core focus on safety and environmental protection remains unchanged, the context in which that work took place is evolving.

“Industry activities, stakeholder expectations and societal pressures are constantly developing,” he said. “One of the biggest changes I saw is the growing importance of First Nations engagement – not just from duty holders, but from us as a regulator. That is humbling and enlightening.”

He also noted the ongoing challenge of decommissioning. Despite progress in this area, decommissioning remains a persistent and complex issue, especially when it comes to planning for the end stage of a project’s life cycle. “Some duty holders have done great work, but across the portfolio, the question of ‘when?’ (to start thinking about decommissioning) still looms large,” he said. (The answer? From the very beginning.)

Mr Blair added that one of his proudest achievements in his two years at NOPSEMA was helping to make the regulator more open and accessible to a wide variety of stakeholders.

“I think we have delivered more satisfaction to a greater number of stakeholders by being available, by demonstrating that we are open to challenge and by showing that we are willing to listen,” he said. “That includes duty holders, unions and individuals in the workforce.”

He also highlighted the successful implementation of the safety and environment lifecycle model at NOPSEMA – a framework that was still in its infancy when he joined. “There were concerns it wouldn’t bring much change, but it’s up and running now,” he said.

“We had minor issues to manage along that journey, sure, but we adapted and improved as we went.”

Mr Blair was candid about the challenges ahead – not just for NOPSEMA, but for the industry as a whole.

“One of the biggest challenges is public expectation,” he said. “People want assurance that safety and environmental protection are being upheld – not just during operations, but long after, through decommissioning.”



They want to know that duty holders are being rightly held to account.”

He believes most operators understood and valued the role of an independent regulator.

“They may have frustrations, but they prefer clear regulations and expectations over ambiguity,” he said. “And I think they appreciate that we could be a sparring partner, a body that could challenge them constructively as they explored acceptability and what’s ‘reasonable’.”

Mr Blair’s vision for regulatory operations is grounded in relevance, humility and continuous learning.

“Unlike industry, which often moves from project to project, the regulator’s role is continuous,” he said.

“My vision is that we remain relevant, valued by the community and industry, informed and always in dialogue. We need to be the right regulator doing the right things – and recognised as a valuable contributor to our shared goals.”

He is also clear-eyed about the energy transition. “Whether it is oil and gas or renewables, our job is the same: to ensure safety and protect the environment. The nature of the activity may change, but our purpose doesn’t.”

On a personal level, Mr Blair said the past two years had been a “voyage of discovery.”

“I have learned what it means to be a modern, flexible, and responsive regulator – not a prescriptive, checklist-based one. That learning came from my colleagues across the whole organisation and I am genuinely grateful for it.”

He is also proud of NOPSEMA’s growing focus on emerging issues like psychosocial risk and First Nations heritage. “These were barely even on the radar 25 years ago, but they’re now important in how we think about risk and responsibility,” he said.

Mr Blair’s reflections are grounded in a deep sense of purpose. “We’ve got an industry that’s overwhelmingly committed to safety and environmental protection. That makes our job easier – but it doesn’t make it unnecessary,” he said.

“We are still seeing harm, still seeing environmental impacts. So, our role remains vital.”

As the offshore industry continues to evolve, Mr Blair’s steady, thoughtful leadership – and his commitment to dialogue – will undoubtedly help shape NOPSEMA’s path forward.



NOPSEMA's new information paper on oil spill modelling

NOPSEMA has released a new information paper on the application of oil spill modelling in Environment Plans (EPs) and Oil Pollution Emergency Plans (OPEPs).

This paper replaces NOPSEMA's previous environment bulletin on oil spill modelling, which has now been formally withdrawn.

The new publication reflects regulatory expectations, contemporary information, scientific understanding and good practice principles in oil spill risk evaluation and response planning.

Oil spill modelling is a critical tool for identifying the environment that may be affected by oil, evaluating the potential environmental consequences of oil and informing oil spill preparedness and response arrangements.

However, modelling is technically complex and can be misinterpreted without appropriate context.

This paper provides advice on the application, interpretation and presentation of modelling results in EPs and OPEPs, to support titleholders in meeting the regulatory requirements.

"While the information paper is not mandatory, NOPSEMA encourages titleholders to apply the advice in this paper when preparing EPs, as it provides a foundation for titleholders to identify, evaluate and manage oil pollution risks from their activities," NOPSEMA's Acting Director – Exploration and Development (Environment) Jared Davidson said.

"Importantly, the advice promotes consistency across industry, reducing the variability in how oil spill modelling is applied, interpreted and communicated.

"It aims to improve the quality of EPs, resulting in improved assessment outcomes."

The paper emphasises the importance of using oil spill exposure values to analyse modelling results and selecting the appropriate exposure value for its intended purpose.

It recommends a range of exposure values for floating, shoreline, dissolved and entrained oil, based on peer-reviewed literature, relevant policy and management context. It also provides relevant guidance on the known limitations of spill response techniques and environmental impacts.

To support clear presentation of oil spill modelling outputs in EPs and OPEPs, the paper provides advice on the use of a mix of geographic representations and tabular formats. These outputs should be appropriately scaled and use consistent terminology and symbology.

The paper highlights the need to communicate oil spill modelling results effectively with stakeholders. It offers guidance on using plain language, visual

aids and scenario-based narratives to support engagements.

The use of animation or time-lapse visualisations can help stakeholders understand how a spill might evolve over time.

"Simplifying technically complex information and data while maintaining accuracy and transparency is key to enabling stakeholders to meaningfully engage with the results and better understand the risk and inform environmental management," Mr Davidson said.

The release of this paper is part of NOPSEMA's broader effort to support continuous improvement in offshore environmental management. It complements existing published guidance on NOPSEMA's website.

To access the new information paper and related guidance, please visit nopsema.gov.au

CORE engagement success: industry feedback driving digital transformation

NOPSEMA's flagship digital transformation project – the Central Operations for Regulatory Excellence (CORE) platform – has completed its first round of industry engagement, holding in-person workshops with more than 100 representatives from 15 industry operators across Australia.

The CORE platform will replace a patchwork of existing processes with a single digital entry point for regulatory interactions. This will improve access to data and historical records, strengthen compliance reporting and enable more efficient informed decision-making.

Recent workshops were positively received, with participants contributing valuable ideas and expressing appreciation for NOPSEMA's commitment to "walking the talk" when it comes to meaningful industry engagement.

The focus on gathering insights and input will ensure CORE is designed with the needs of industry at the centre. Feedback gathered through this engagement directly informs CORE's solution requirements, functional design and future implementation.

Simon Korzec, Program Director for Digital Transformation, said industry participation was crucial.

"CORE is being built to streamline how companies interact with NOPSEMA and the Offshore Infrastructure Regulator. To achieve that, we need to hear from the people who use our systems every day," Mr Korzec said.

"This engagement is not a box-ticking exercise – it's about listening to industry so we can design a platform that reduces complexity and makes regulation more consistent, transparent and efficient. That means less time spent on administration and more time focused on what really matters: keeping safety and environmental management front and centre."

NOPSEMA is committed to exploring ideas raised in workshops, such as improving the accessibility of information and activities (both current and historical), reducing emails through automating notifications and reminders, and re-using previously submitted data to reduce duplication of effort.

Engagement will continue throughout 2025 and into 2026 as Project CORE progresses.

"By working together, we can deliver a platform that reduces administrative burden while improving regulatory outcomes," Mr Korzec said.



Preparing for change: NOPSEMA plans for remade RMA Regulations

NOPSEMA has commenced preparations for the implementation of the Resource Management and Administration (RMA) Regulations, which are being remade.

These changes aim to modernise the regulatory framework, streamline reporting and data management and provide greater clarity for titleholders operating in Australia's offshore oil and gas sector.

In the lead-up to the transition, NOPSEMA will engage closely with industry to support understanding and readiness.

Guidance materials, FAQs and webinars will be rolled out progressively, with opportunities for feedback and collaboration.

A dedicated page on the NOPSEMA website will host all relevant resources and further updates will be shared in the months ahead.

New HSR handbook to support offshore safety leadership

NOPSEMA has published an updated Health and Safety Representative (HSR) Handbook, offering offshore HSRs a practical and accessible guide to their powers, responsibilities and rights under the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006*.

This new publication coincides with the introduction of the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Safety) Regulations 2024, the most significant update to Australia's offshore safety framework in more than a decade.

In her foreword, NOPSEMA CEO Sue McCarrey emphasised the importance of the HSR role.

"Your role in this process is not symbolic," she said. "It is embedded in the regulation and essential to effective safety outcomes."

The handbook is designed to support both newly elected and experienced HSRs in confidently exercising their powers. It includes practical tools, regulatory guidance and templates, including the Provisional OHS Improvement Notice and the HSR Request for Review of Safety Management-Related Documents.

The new regulations place greater emphasis on workforce involvement, clearer operator responsibilities, stronger safety case requirements and a recognition of the formal role of HSRs.

Key changes for HSRs include:

- HSRs can request that the operator review safety management-related documents
- HSRs must attend initial training and refresher training each year, with costs covered by their employer
- HSRs may choose their own training provider, if the provider is accredited by NOPSEMA
- HSRs can be members of the Health and Safety Committee



- HSRs election procedures have been harmonised with the WHS Act
- NOPSEMA is to be provided with (and will keep) a list of elected HSRs.

"The Offshore Oil and Gas Safety Review found that although Australia's offshore OHS regime remains a leading practice regulatory framework, there is always room for improvement," Rod Gunn, NOPSEMA's Director – Regulatory Operations, Production East explained.

"The safety reforms recognised that a top priority was strengthening the role of HSRs. The new handbook supports and guides HSRs with ensuring that they're supported with regulatory guidance and practical tools to support their role."

The handbook is available in both print and digital formats and can be accessed at nopsema.gov.au or by contacting communications@nopsema.gov.au



Enforceable undertakings: a collaborative compliance tool

Enforceable undertakings are a compliance enforcement tool that are increasingly being used across regulatory frameworks.

Under the OPGGS framework, they offer an alternative to prosecution in certain circumstances and are often initiated by the duty holder themselves.

Legally binding, an enforceable undertaking may arise from a compliance activity, investigation, or as an alternative to criminal or civil penalty proceedings.

However, the legislation makes clear that NOPSEMA's CEO cannot generally accept an undertaking where a contravention has led to a fatality or involves deliberate misconduct or reckless behaviour.

If accepted, the undertaking carries serious weight — failure to meet its terms can result in court-enforceable penalties.

To assist stakeholders in understanding how these provisions would be administered by NOPSEMA, a new guideline has been developed and minor changes to the NOPSEMA Enforcement Policy have been made to reflect the role these play in NOPSEMA's strategies to monitor and enforce compliance.

The new guideline can be found at nopsema.gov.au

Ongoing stakeholder consultation: a regulatory requirement and good practice

Consultation is not a one-off requirement limited to the preparation of Environment Plans (EPs). Ongoing consultation between titleholders and stakeholders – including relevant authorities of the Commonwealth, a State or a Territory and other relevant interested persons or organisations – is both a regulatory requirement and a good practice throughout the life of an offshore activity, including in the event of an environmental incident.

NOPSEMA has received feedback from stakeholders, including First Nations groups, expressing dissatisfaction and concern about not being informed of environmental incidents in a timely or appropriate manner.

Under the offshore regulatory framework, titleholders are responsible for both incident response and ongoing consultation. The feedback from stakeholders highlights the need for proactive, transparent and respectful notification, and appropriate ongoing engagement with those affected by or interested in the environmental impacts and risks of their offshore activities in the event of an incident.

Consultation during EP development presents an opportunity for titleholders to establish clear expectations with stakeholders about how communication will be maintained over the life of an activity.

This includes outlining how and when stakeholders will be contacted if an environmental incident occurs, the type of information that will be provided and the purpose of the engagement.

NOPSEMA plays a key role in cooperating directly with government response agencies and other regulatory authorities during environmental incidents.

While NOPSEMA is not responsible for directly notifying communities of such events, we are strengthening efforts to enhance stakeholder understanding of the offshore regulatory regime.



This includes clarifying NOPSEMA's role, emphasising the importance of titleholder consultation during EP preparation and activity implementation, promoting effective ways for stakeholders to raise concerns, provide feedback, and communicate expectations directly with titleholders.

Effective, two-way consultation helps build trust, may improve environmental management of offshore activities, and can support titleholders' response efforts during environmental incidents.

Viewing consultation as a continuing conversation, rather than a one-off requirement in the preparation of EPs, helps ensure offshore activities remain responsive to changes in the environment and community expectations.

NOPSEMA's role to maintain compliance oversight in the event of an environmental incident continues. Where necessary and appropriate, NOPSEMA may undertake compliance inspections and investigations. In more serious cases of non-compliance, it may also take enforcement action.

This may occur when titleholders fail to appropriately notify or carry out ongoing consultation arrangements, as specified within the accepted EP.



International collaboration enhancing offshore wind regulation

At the recent Asia Pacific (APAC) Wind Energy Summit, Offshore Infrastructure Regulator (OIR) CEO Sue McCarrey shared a compelling vision for how regulation can support the safe and sustainable growth of offshore wind across Australia and the broader Asia Pacific region.

Her message was clear: regulation must evolve. It can no longer be about just enforcing the rules – it must be contemporary, adaptive and enabling. The goal is to protect people and the environment while giving industry the confidence to innovate and deliver projects responsibly.

Ms McCarrey highlighted how the OIR is shaping its regulatory approach by learning from global experience and applying this to the Australian context.

Offshore wind may be emerging in Australia, but in other regions it is well established. By engaging with international peers through forums like the International Regulators Forum and the Global Offshore Wind Regulators Forum, the OIR is gaining insights into what works, what doesn't and how early engagement between regulators and industry can reduce risk and improve outcomes.

This kind of cross-border collaboration is especially vital in the Asia Pacific, where offshore renewables deployment is expected to surge in the coming years as energy markets diversify and transition to net zero.

With tight timelines, evolving workforces and maturing regulatory systems, the challenges are real – but so are the opportunities.

That's why the OIR is focused on clear guidance, practical education and transparent decision-making.

The aim is to ensure expectations are accessible, understood and achievable, and that regulation is not a barrier, but rather a catalyst for innovation in an evolving energy landscape.

At the heart of this approach is trust – trust in the regulatory framework, in the technology and in the relationships between regulators, governments, industry and communities.

Trust is built through genuine engagement and collaboration, including the willingness to share lessons learned, even when things don't go to plan.

The OIR is committed to this collaborative mindset. By working closely with international counterparts, domestic agencies and stakeholders, it is ensuring that regulation is fit for purpose and ready to support the region's offshore renewables ambitions.

"By maintaining transparent decision-making, rigorous standards and a collaborative mindset, we're working to make sure that opportunity is realised," Ms McCarrey said.

Offshore activity Q2 2025

4.0M

TOTAL HOURS WORKED
OFFSHORE



WELL
INTEGRITY
INCIDENTS

14

49

ASSESSMENTS

Includes:

- 24 health and safety
- 8 environmental management
- 11 well integrity
- 3 other



46
INSPECTIONS



11
ENFORCEMENT
ACTIONS

& non-statutory compliance actions



0 INVESTIGATIONS



5

ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT
INCIDENTS

6

INCIDENTS



137

DANGEROUS
OCCURRENCES



0

COMPLAINTS
regarding duty
holder performance



0

FATALITIES



2 SERIOUS
INJURIES

11
INJURIES

Includes:

- 2 lost time \geq 3 days, alternative duties and medical treatment injuries





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**National Offshore Petroleum Safety and
Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA)**

ABN 22 385 178 289