

Hot topic - Offshore projects and related activities

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KEY MESSAGES

- Approval of an Offshore Project Proposal provides a project-level approval for new development activities, this excludes marine seismic surveys and exploration drilling.
- Individual activities to be carried out as part of an offshore project require additional approvals including environment plans (EP), safety cases, and well operations management plans (WOMPs).

TALKING POINTS

If asked about Woodside's Scarborough Gas Project

- The OPP for the Scarborough Development was approved by NOPSEMA on 30 March 2020.
- An EP for drilling and completions, seabed intervention and trunkline installation, subsea infrastructure installation and a 4D marine seismic survey are currently under assessment.
 - There are several environmental sensitivities that may be affected and significant stakeholder interest in these EPs which has resulted in an extended consultation and assessment timeframes.
 - The drilling and completions EP is being assessed by NOPSEMA. The EPs for drilling and completions, subsea infrastructure installation and the 4D marine seismic survey are being modified by Woodside with resubmissions expected before the end of the year.
- The WOMP for the Scarborough Phase-1 well construction was accepted on 12 October 2023.
- Further required approvals include EPs for each activity, including the installation of the FPU and commissioning and operations, these EPs are expected in 2024. In addition, WOMPs for all wells and safety cases for all facilities and pipelines that form part of Scarborough Development.

If asked about the legal case brought against the Woodside's Scarborough Gas Project

- NOPSEMA is aware of the litigation proceedings the Australian Conservation Foundation has brought against Woodside in relation to the Scarborough Gas Project.
- NOPSEMA will apply any decision of the court that may be applicable to NOPSEMA decision making. I am unable to comment any further on this case as the matter is before the court.

If asked about Woodside's Browse Project

- The Browse Project is being assessed by DCCEEW under the EPBC Act as the project was determined to be a controlled action on 22 February 2019. NOPSEMA is providing regulatory advice under contract to DCCEEW for the assessment.

- A key issue challenging the project includes its potential for impacts on blue whales and a genetically isolated stock of green turtles (both listed threatened species with recovery plans in place). Further information on this assessment process should be sought directly from DCCEEW.
- If the Browse Project is approved under the EPBC Act, an OPP approved by NOPSEMA is not required. Once the project is approved under the EPBC Act, further required approvals include EPs for each activity, WOMPs for all wells, and safety cases for all facilities and pipelines that form part of the Browse Project.

If asked about Santos' Barossa Area Development

- The OPP for the Barossa Area Development was accepted by NOPSEMA on 13 March 2018.
- The first EP, for the installation of the gas export pipeline, was accepted by NOPSEMA on 9 March 2020. This EP remains in-force and activities may commence between in Q4 2023.
- NOPSEMA issued a General Direction to Santos for the installation of the gas export pipeline on 13 January 2023 requiring it to identify any underwater Indigenous cultural heritage places along the proposed pipeline route, revise the EP if needed, and provide NOPSEMA with weekly progress reports.
- Santos submitted a proposal to DCCEEW to duplicate the gas export pipeline in Commonwealth and Northern Territory waters for assessment under the EPBC Act. Further information on this assessment process should be sought directly from DCCEEW.
- The drilling and completions EP was approved on 14 March 2022, but the decision to approve the EP was set aside by the Federal Court in September 2022 and upheld on appeal in December 2022. The EP was resubmitted to NOPSEMA on 18 July 2023 and is currently under assessment.
- The WOMP for managing the construction of six (6) development wells was accepted on 16 May 2022. The first well drilled under the approved WOMP was drilled between July and September 2022.
- Further EP approvals are required including plans for the extension of the gas export pipeline, moorings installation, SURF (subsea, umbilicals, risers and flowlines) installation, FPSO Hook-up and commissioning (including start-up and operations) and Pipeline Start-up and Operations.
- Other required approvals include WOMPs for all wells and safety cases for all facilities and pipelines that form part of the project.

If asked about Santos' Dorado Development

- The OPP for the Dorado Development was approved by NOPSEMA on 10 February 2023.
- To date, there has been no EPs, WOMPs or safety cases for the Dorado Development submitted to NOPSEMA for assessment.
- Required approvals include an EP for each activity, WOMPs for all wells, and safety cases for all facilities and pipelines that form part of the Dorado Development.

If asked about Shell's Crux Offshore Project

- The OPP for the Crux Offshore Project was approved by NOPSEMA on 18 April 2019.

- EPs for a seabed survey, drilling and installation activities were submitted for assessment and are currently with Shell to be modified. The EPs are expected to be resubmitted by the end of the year.
- Further required approvals include EPs for each activity, including platform installation and commissioning and operations, WOMPs for all wells, and safety cases for all facilities and pipelines that form part of the Crux Offshore Project.
- NOPSEMA issued a General Direction to Santos for the installation of the gas export pipeline on 13 January 2023 requiring it to identify any underwater Indigenous cultural heritage places along the proposed pipeline route, update the EP if needed, and provide NOPSEMA with weekly progress reports.