

Community & Environment Reference Group – Meeting 10

Meeting Date: Friday 6 May 2022

Meeting objectives:

To seek the group's feedback and provide a variety of community perspectives on specific matters of interest to NOPSEMA or members of the reference group, relevant to offshore petroleum environmental management, to help guide NOPSEMA's approach to regulation of environmental management.

Meeting details:

The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams and in person at 9:30am – 12:00pm AWST on Friday 6 May 2022.

Attendees included representatives of NOPSEMA and members of the Community and Environmental Reference Group (CERG), as listed in Attachment 1.

Meeting record:

Agenda Item 1 – Safety and introduction

The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed all participants and provided a safety overview for the participants in the meeting room.

The agenda and objectives for the meeting were confirmed, it was noted that Kirsten Rough is currently offshore and may not be able to attend the meeting, but she has provided points to Cameron via email for discussion points.

Marie Illman will be attending the meeting for Agenda Item 5.1 as per suggestion from CERG and will be able to have a discussion but given the federal election it will be limited to what Marie is able to say on policy related issues but its still a good opportunity to explore how CERG may be able to interact with DISER and NOPSEMA.

Agenda Item 2 – Register of interests

The Chair noted that Ruby Hamilton has declared her interest working for Environmental Defenders Office.

Agenda Item 3 – Confirmation of record of Meeting 9 and review of actions

The record of the meeting of 12 November 2021 was accepted without change.

Agenda Item 4 – Recent community interactions

Agenda Item 4.1 – Update from CERG members

CERG members provided an update to the reference group with their most recent community interactions, topics covered by Robyn Glindermann had been regarding the Native titles and the newly released Policy statement on Climate Change.

Andrew Levings informed the group he is currently a member of the scientific advisory for Gippsland, FRDC and CGG are funding a study on effects from seismic testing on octopuses, incidents of Blue Whales throughout the Otway area and the development of wind farms is great interest to fisherman in the Portland area. Jacqueline Hine noted that BHP decommissioning in the Exmouth area, Ruby Hamilton spoke of the Sharma appeal and that a decision has now been brought down and the scope has been clarified and Kirsten Rough advised the two remaining permits for the Great Australia Bight is of concern in the community.

Agenda Item 4.2 – Update from NOPSEMA

NOPSEMA provided an overview of recent activities and advised;

- Barossa drilling EP was a question during the recent estimates, NOPSEMA is taking steps towards engaging further with the Tiwi Island Land Council and ensure they understand the assessment process and provide support to the Tiwi people.
- Participating in Blue Economy CRC including research advisory panel, project support for marine spatial planning research project and CRC participant workshop presenter Dr Christine Lamont.
- Offshore renewables is to commence on 2nd June for the new framework including NOPSEMA's role as Offshore Infrastructure Regulator.
- NOPSEMA is making progress in improving industry recognition of planning towards end state of full removal unless approved otherwise.
- Stuart Smith is finishing up as CEO when his contract expires in September 2022.

Agenda Item 5 – Topics for discussion/information

Agenda Item 5.1 – Policy context for the OPGGS regime

Marie Illman joined the meeting to speak with the CERG members. The Chair informed CERG members that as the government is currently in Caretaker mode coming up to the election Marie will not be able to cover any government policy related matters.

Marie noted that with the upcoming election DISER may change as it often has done in the past and is responsible for amending the Act and policies in the offshore scope. Marie noted DISER is responsible for selecting areas that are released for acreage and exploration. DISER is involved with a steady stream of public consultation and CERG would appreciate visibility on the activities.

CERG Members and Marie had discussions around offshore renewables and the installation of the wind farms and potential issues to the environment.

It was noted that CERG appreciated Marie joining the meeting and occasional participation by DISER would be beneficial to allow the policy agency to hear directly from community stakeholders on the impact of policy implementation, provide CERG members with an understanding of how the policy agency and regulator interact, as well as understanding the Department's policy priorities, particularly in light of increasing developments in the offshore energy area.

The Chair thanked Marie Illman for dialling into the meeting and giving the CERG an opportunity to engage with the Department and from the discussion there is scope to have DISER join future meetings.

Marie Illman left the meeting.

Agenda Item 5.2 – NOPSEMA Research Strategy and influencing research

Dr Christine Lamont joined the meeting to speak with the CERG members about NOPSEMA's Research Strategy. Christine noted that NOPSEMA relies on quality research outputs to inform regulatory decision making but is often not consulted when the research is being proposed, resulting in poorly targeted or poorly utilised research outputs and precautionary decision making.

The next version of the strategy will contain a list of priorities that NOPSEMA sees as top-priority issues, and although the list has been narrowed down NOPSEMA understands that they aren't the only issues they will need to look at in the future.

Discussion was made around how NOPSEMA will determine how reliable the research is and it was suggested that a scale or an independent peer review is done on the research findings or built in to the process to ensure the quality of work. NOPSEMA would not publish any findings if the science was doubted, but with that said there is a spectrum of quality that is seen and it will be monitored and through this process allow the public accepting the decisions made as its supported by research.

The Chair thank Dr Christine Lamont for joining the meeting and enabling this discussion.

Dr Christine Lamont left the meeting.

Agenda Item 5.3 – Decommissioning – Australian Government's roadmap

David Christensen joined the meeting to discuss with members the challenges and initiatives underway to ensure the decommissioning of offshore petroleum wells and structures is completed in a timely, safe and environmentally responsible manner.

Following the collapse of the NOGA group of companies, the Australian government announced [enhancements to Australia's framework for decommissioning](#) offshore oil and gas infrastructure. NOPSEMA is also giving heightened focus to titleholder's compliance with their decommissioning obligations and as a result has issued 7 General Directions to titleholders requiring the decommissioning of petroleum projects.

NOPSEMA is working with the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER) on enhancements to Australia's Decommissioning Framework to ensure any policy change can be effectively and efficiently implemented.

Discussion was around the maintenance of the facilities, financial assurance from the organisations to ensure they can decommission their facilities and marine life currently foraging around these platforms, as structures do increase density of species.

The Chair thanked David Christensen for joining the meeting and discussion with CERG and made note that this is not a process to be rushed and planning needs to start earlier and NOPSEMA is focusing efforts on those areas and working along with DISER and industry further changes will be made to the framework.

David Christensen left the meeting.

Agenda Item 6 – Review and close out

Agenda Item 6.1 – Date of next meeting and meeting topics

The proposed date for the next meeting is to be held in October or November, a date to be finalised in the next couple of months. An agenda will be confirmed closer to the time.

The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and closed the meeting at 11:58am.

Attachment 1

Attendees list

NOPSEMA representatives	
Stuart Smith, Chief Executive Officer (Chair)	In person
Cameron Grebe, Head of Environment, Renewables and Decommissioning Division	In person
Dr Christine Lamont, Chief Environment Scientist, Renewables and Decommissioning Division (Agenda Item 5.2)	Teleconference
David Christensen, Manager – Decommissioning (Agenda Item 5.3)	Teleconference
Community representatives	
Ms Jacqueline Hine	Teleconference
Ms Ruby Hamilton	Teleconference
Ms Robyn Glindemann	In Person
Dr Andrew Levings	Teleconference
DISER representatives	
Marie Illman, General Manager, Offshore Resources Branch	Teleconference
Apologies	
Mr Stuart Field	
Mr Liam O'Connor	
Ms Jess Lerch	
Ms Kirsten Rough	