

THE REGULATOR

2025 - Issue 2

Safety and Other Measures

What's changing?



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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NOPSEMA welcomes feedback from our stakeholders. Please direct all enquiries about this publication to feedback@nopsema.gov.au.

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Safety is at the heart of everything that we do at NOPSEMA. It is our job to ensure a protected offshore workforce and environment, and it is a job we take incredibly seriously.

We carry out this job in a number of different ways. In our previous edition of The Regulator, we announced our five National Priorities, key areas where sustained regulatory attention is needed to ensure improved industry performance and the most effective use of our resources.

In this issue, we drill down into some of those key areas, one of which is a focus on leadership and management.

How can good leadership at the executive level lead to improved safety and environmental outcomes offshore? Conversely, what are some examples of how inadequate leadership may lead to increased risk of incidents offshore?

We asked our inspectors to identify some recurring themes at the leadership and management level that have had an impact on offshore operations, either for good or bad – and what can be learned from those outcomes going forward.

We also take a closer look at our National Priority focus on psychosocial health – what it means, how industry can work to ensure both the mental and physical wellbeing of its workforce, and how psychosocial health risks can be better identified, addressed and reported.

An increased focus on psychosocial health is also a key element of the new work health and safety regulations that came into effect on 12 June, following a Commonwealth government review of the offshore safety regime.

As part of our commitment to industry education, we have hosted several online information sessions to answer frequently asked questions about the changes, which range from strengthening the role of Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) to the modernisation of diving regulations and new reporting requirements for incidents of sexual harassment, bullying and harassment at work.

NOPSEMA has developed a suite of new and updated guidance materials to reflect the changes.



Message from the **Chief Executive** Sue McCarrey

We will continue to engage with industry on these documents, which are available on our website, and we encourage you to contact us if you have any questions.

You can read more about the new regulations, which reflect changes to the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* (OPGGs Act), on pages 6-7.

In April, NOPSEMA held another successful Better Practice Forum, Environmental Submissions - Collaboration and Innovation, as part of our ongoing focus on industry education.

The event gave industry stakeholders an opportunity to gain valuable insights on best practice in the submission and assessment of Offshore Project Proposals and Environment Plans.

A mix of guest speakers and NOPSEMA specialists explored key topics including new data technologies, effective industry consultation, and how to assess acceptable levels of impact on the environment.

Our next Better Practice Forum, to be held later this year, will focus on our National Priority of leadership and management. In the meantime, you can read about our previous Better Practice Forum, and our presence at the recent Australian Energy Producers (AEP) Conference in Brisbane, in this edition.

While the AEP Conference is an industry-based event, it is important for NOPSEMA to have a presence there and engage with our industry stakeholders and the regulated community.

As you will see, a key thread throughout this issue of The Regulator is the importance of effective communication, whether it be between an executive leadership team and an offshore workforce or, indeed, between NOPSEMA and the industry we regulate.

Recently NOPSEMA established a new regulatory stakeholder engagement team which coordinates engagement with industry and relevant persons, including First Nations groups, in relation to regulatory activities and processes.

In the past six months NOPSEMA has undertaken several important engagement visits to Victoria, the Tiwi Islands and mid-west WA. You can read about these recent visits, and about the purpose of our stakeholder engagement activities, across pages 22-23.

I think you will agree that it's been a busy time for the offshore energy industry and our role as its regulator. With change comes complexity, but also a chance to renew our commitment to three key themes covered in this issue: proactive industry engagement, effective communication, and strong leadership.

Until next time, please take care and stay safe.

Sue McCarrey
Chief Executive Officer

Safety and Other Measures: What's changing?

New work health and safety regulations came into effect on 12 June 2025, following a Commonwealth government review of the offshore safety regime.

The 2021 offshore oil and gas safety review, led by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources, identified improvements that could help strengthen and enhance offshore worker safety outcomes.

The new regulations reflect changes to the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* (OPGGs Act), which was amended by Parliament in May 2024 and published in December 2024.

The changes will support industry and NOPSEMA to ensure the ongoing health and safety of workers and provide numerous benefits across the sector, from strengthening the role of Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) and simplifying reporting requirements to improving rules of diving operations and changing the definition of 'health' to include psychosocial health.

Prior to the amended regulations coming into effect on 12 June, NOPSEMA hosted a series of online industry information sessions on key aspects of the changes, answering industry's most pressing questions and providing clarity on the implications of specific regulation changes.

NOPSEMA also engaged with industry and sought public feedback during the preparation and updating of its suite of guidance materials and forms related to the changes.

NOPSEMA is committed to ongoing feedback and improvement, noting the wide range of changes that have come into effect. We will continue to amend the range of guidance materials as required to help provide clarity to industry on how we are implementing these changes.

We encourage industry to contact NOPSEMA with any questions related to meeting the new regulatory requirements.

Video recordings of NOPSEMA's monthly information sessions and a frequently asked questions fact sheet can be found in the Offshore Industry – Safety section of the NOPSEMA website (www.nopsema.gov.au/offshore-industry/safety), while general questions can be directed to communications@nopsema.gov.au

Leadership and management

Excellence in leadership is central to maintaining high standards of safety and environmental performance. Decisions at all levels of an organisation have a direct impact on operational outcomes.

NOPSEMA is looking at:

- working with duty holder leadership to emphasise the links between decision-making in an organisation and safety and environmental outcomes
- enhancing post-incident reviews to strengthen understanding of how leadership decisions influence risk management
- utilising available research to support evidence-based improvements in industry leadership practices.

This priority aims to ensure safety, integrity and environmental risk management remains at the forefront of executive decision-making.

"Industry engagement will be critical to the success of these priorities - we look forward to working closely with stakeholders to ensure that regulatory efforts remain effective, practical, and aligned with the realities of offshore operations," CEO Sue McCarrey said.

For more information visit nopsema.gov.au/nationalpriorities.

At a glance - What's changing?

Strengthening the role of HSRs

HSRs are required to complete up to five days of training initially and one day of refresher training per year and can choose their own NOPSEMA-accredited training provider.

Workforce health and wellbeing

Duty holders must consider a wider range of factors when managing worker fatigue, and workers are protected against discrimination for exercising their rights.

Sexual harassment and psychosocial health

The definition of 'health' has changed to include psychosocial health (i.e. mental as well as physical health) and there are new reporting requirements for incidents of sexual harassment, bullying and harassment.

Modernising diving regulations

NOPSEMA can withdraw acceptance of a Diving Safety Management System (DSMS) and can request further information on a DSMS during assessment; DSMS must be revised every five years.

NOPSEMA must be provided with copies of Diving Project Plans, and has the power to accept, refuse or request more information in a Diving Start-Up Notice.

Mandatory Design Notification Scheme

NOPSEMA can be consulted on the design of production and CCS facilities. NOPSEMA does not accept or reject the notifications but does provide advice.

Administration of safety cases

Operators must revise their safety case if there is a control measure change that is critical to safety and must submit a revised safety case every five years.

Operators and titleholders

The concept of a proposed operator has been introduced, as has a clarified process for a change of operator. New operator registration and deregistration criteria has also been introduced.

Compliance and enforcement

Notification and reporting requirements have been clarified. There are new requirements for reporting worker hours and personnel on board.

Vessel Activity Notifications Scheme

Operators must notify NOPSEMA when a vessel becomes or ceases to be a facility.

Contact information

Operators must notify NOPSEMA of key contact information as part of monthly reporting requirements.

Leadership and Management: A NOPSEMA National Priority

In our first edition of The Regulator for the year, we announced NOPSEMA's five National Priorities – key areas where sustained regulatory attention is needed to ensure improved industry performance and effective use of resources.

In coming editions, we will delve further into what each of these National Priorities mean for industry.

One of NOPSEMA's key National Priorities is a focus on ensuring excellence in leadership and management. Excellence in leadership has a crucial role to play in ensuring that the highest safety and environmental standards are maintained offshore, and NOPSEMA is committed to working with industry leaders to make clear the links between organisational decision-making and good outcomes in both areas.

An example of good safety leadership and executive accountability was seen recently at the Australian Energy Producers conference in Brisbane. Chief Executive Officers held a round table conversation where safety in the industry was openly and honestly discussed, including where improvements needed to be made.

At NOPSEMA, we asked some of our inspectors to pinpoint some of the issues they had seen that had resulted in poor safety outcomes; and, conversely, to also share examples of how good leadership had led to improved outcomes.

Poor communication flow

One of the issues that inspectors see is a failure of effective, open communication between onshore management and management personnel. This means that sometimes, not all the right people are receiving crucial information on a facility – a situation ripe for increased risk of safety or environmental incidents.

“Sometimes information is conveyed in the wrong format, or in a document not accessible offshore,” one inspector explained.

“Sometimes the documentation being passed on is incorrect or outdated. Information might be handed over with few or no control checkpoints along the way.

“Good leadership will see onshore management taking the time to fully understand all the scopes and risks associated with an offshore project. The key is to have an effective flow of communication between executive leadership and facility operators.”

However, poor outcomes can lead to positive culture change. NOPSEMA has seen many examples of duty holders learning from poor outcomes and instigating changes that have helped minimise risks to work health and safety and the environment.

Risk migration

Another recurring issue is risk migration, in which regulatory responsibilities are shifted from the primary duty holder to the secondary operators contracted to do the work offshore.

This means contractors sometimes take on regulatory responsibilities which they have minimal or no understanding of, thus exposing the workforce to increased risk.

The primary duty holder is the entity that owns permissioning documents such as the Safety Case, Well Operations Management Plan (WOMP), or Environment Plan (EP) and which is regulated by NOPSEMA.

“The overall responsibility for compliance with the OPGGS Act and the commitments made in permissioning documents will always sit with the duty holder,” said Wouter Pattynama, Executive Director – Production.

“Contractors and sub-contractors are an inherent and essential part of the industry, but risk and responsibility can never be outsourced.



“The duty holder must, at all times, have oversight on the project and complete the necessary work to ensure that the safety management systems of the companies operating under their wing are at least as robust as their own.”

“If something goes wrong on a facility on your site, it's your responsibility and your risk as duty holder,” one NOPSEMA inspector said.

“It's important not to rely on a statement from someone else; have a process in place to clearly state why you think the analysis or the statement you are working with is good enough to rely on.

“Taking ownership of risk is an example of good decision-making, but sometimes it takes the intervention of the regulator for management to make changes. In an ideal world, these changes would be implemented before NOPSEMA has to come into the picture.”

Outsourced risk and technical analysis

One inspector cited an example of outsourced risk analysis leading to a mechanical incident on an offshore facility (in which, fortunately, no one was physically harmed).

The third-party analysis formed the basis of all the facility owner's future planning, but the technical analysis had not taken certain local factors into account.

“The analysis was outsourced because the technical capability was not available in-house,” the inspector explained.

“That isn't uncommon; in many cases it is more cost-effective to go to a contracting company for this type of work. However, there was no one internally performing a high-level review, confirming understandings or challenging assumptions in the analysis, which turned out to be flawed.”

Where any type of technical work is contracted out, the operator must have the internal competency and capacity to accept that work as suitable for the task or project to be undertaken. The operator continues to be accountable for the risk.

Lack of managerial oversight

Because there is often a high turnover of contractors on facilities, especially mobile units, it is essential for onshore management to have greater oversight of workforce competency on a vessel.

In some cases, cost-saving decisions are made which can limit crew competency or delay critical maintenance activities.

Although it is not in the remit of the regulator to comment on commercial aspects of a project, decisions which lead to the adoption of certain types of contracting models that provide less oversight can have severe safety consequences.

“Is senior management aware of issues being raised by Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs), for example?” asked one inspector.

“That is a key legislative requirement for us to look at as regulatory inspectors when we go offshore.

“When we are meeting with senior management and asking them what issues their HSRs are bringing up, they should be able to answer.”

Key elements of good leadership

On the flipside, NOPSEMA has also seen many examples of good leadership in which the satisfying of regulatory requirements is not merely a “box-ticking” exercise, but rather a genuine commitment to ensuring safety and environmental risks are reduced to ALARP.

“Some operators are willing to take suggestions on board or take on any feedback we give them, not just to get documents ticked off but to genuinely find improvement in the way they do things,” one inspector said.

“Good leadership is proactive, and sometimes it can be a matter of just changing up a few things to ensure good outcomes.”

Good operators don’t wait to be asked to “find one, fix many”. When one issue or problem is found, some duty holders immediately put a program in place to check if the same issues apply anywhere else on a facility or other facilities. This is a good example of safety and environmental leadership.

However, the onus isn’t just on executives at the top level to maintain exemplary leadership standards. Good leadership must be present at every level of an organisation.

Inspectors said there had been significant improvements over the past 18 months, with engagement activities between NOPSEMA and duty holder CEOs positively influencing safety awareness.

“There’s sometimes a view that if you’re not having incidents, then everything’s fine, but that’s not necessarily the case,” one inspector said.

“Spending time speaking with frontline workers is always valuable.

“It’s also important for duty holders to have matured and tested management systems in place to ensure that the necessary information reaches the appropriate levels within their organisations at the right time.”



Tools for good leadership

- Listening to those undertaking frontline or high-risk tasks
- Leading by example in what you do every day, not just what you say – particularly when under pressure
- Engaged oversight of hazard management and risk identification
- Checking for effective flow of communication and information
- Willingness to take recommendations on board and implement change
- Organisational maturity
- Understanding fully the implications of capital efficiency goals
- Learning from and reflecting on previous incidents

Examples of poor leadership

- Reluctance to implement cultural/mindset change that would lead to better environmental or safety outcomes
- Lack of risk and hazard identification and management
- Seeing the regulator as a barrier or obstacle rather than an entity trying to help improve outcomes
- Box-ticking approach



Psychosocial health: A NOPSEMA National Priority

Ensuring offshore workers feel safe, supported and free from bullying and harassment is an integral part of workplace health and safety.

On 12 June 2025, new legislative changes came into effect (see pages 6-7) requiring duty holders to explicitly consider psychosocial hazards in the workplace as part of their safety cases.

The definition of health has changed to include psychological health (i.e. mental as well as physical health), and new reporting requirements for incidents of sexual harassment, bullying and harassment are in place.

These amended safety regulations now require any incident of sexual harassment, bullying or harassment at a facility to be reported by operators to NOPSEMA through a dedicated channel (psychosocial@nopsema.gov.au) in a de-identified form.

Further to this, the requirements of the Monthly Activity Report, submitted by each facility on the 15th of every month, now includes psychological health incident categories that must be reported to NOPSEMA.

These changes will ensure that titleholders and operators focus appropriate attention on psychological health and safety when complying with their obligations to Australian OHS laws and worker health and safety.

Within the past five years, NOPSEMA has received 19 notifiable occurrences, 24 complaints, and issued one enforcement related to psychosocial hazards/harm. Although these numbers may appear low, they do not mean that there were no incidences of psychosocial hazards/harm going unreported.

More work is needed to better understand this issue in the offshore environment; to that effect, NOPSEMA recently announced a focus on psychosocial health as one of the five National Priorities guiding its strategic focus throughout 2025-26.

This includes a commitment to strengthening oversight and engagement to support compliance with the new safety regulations; encouraging improved industry reporting to better understand and address psychosocial risks; enhancing collaboration to ensure a coordinated regulatory approach to workplace mental health; and analysing benchmarking inspection campaigns to build our understanding of psychosocial risk and management in the offshore workplace.

The regulation of psychosocial health in the workplace will receive greater emphasis, with NOPSEMA maintaining a focus on ensuring the workplaces it regulates have adequate management systems in place to prevent and deal with incidents of harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment.

“The choice of psychosocial health as a National Priority is in response to a range of factors, including ministerial expectations, cultural change and societal expectations, and an internal recognition that NOPSEMA needed to build capacity and capability in the area,” said Chris Bourne, Director, Exploration and Development – Safety.

“Some of the tasks associated with this included aggregated and de-identified benchmarking of industry to get an understanding of the prevalence of bullying and harassment in the offshore sector – a task which has been completed.”

Some of the cultural and social drivers leading to an increased focus on psychosocial health offshore include the WA Parliamentary Inquiry into FIFO mining workplace culture (“Enough is Enough”) and the Australian Human Rights Commission’s “Respect@Work” report.

In 2025, NOPSEMA welcomed a Psychosocial Specialist as the agency’s psychological health and safety subject matter expert.

The specialist will work across the agency, advising on the implementation of the new regulations, supporting investigations, inspections and safety case assessments, and leading programs to build NOPSEMA’s ability to regulate psychological health and safety.

By proactively addressing psychosocial hazards, both NOPSEMA and the offshore industry can foster a stronger, safer and more resilient workforce.

“The feedback we have been receiving from industry, independent organisations and individuals leading up to the recent legislative changes has been overwhelmingly positive”, said Wouter Pattynama, NOPSEMA’s Executive Director, Regulatory Operations – Production.

“We have always recognised the immense importance of psychosocial health and mental wellbeing, but the amended safety regulations and NOPSEMA’s organisational changes now provide the offshore workforce with an additional layer of protection, dedicated to ensuring a safe and protected workplace for everyone.”



New restrictions for PFAS-based firefighting foams

In 2024, NOPSEMA conducted a survey of industry on the use and management of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in offshore activities.

PFAS are synthetic chemicals that have been used in firefighting foams, in Australia and internationally, due to their effectiveness in suppressing flammable liquid fires.

However, these chemicals can pose human health risks through occupational exposure and are known to be highly persistent in the environment. If released into the marine environment, these substances can bioaccumulate in marine organisms, and accumulate in marine sediments, leading to long-term contamination.

Responses to NOPSEMA's survey indicate that PFAS-based firefighting foams remain in widespread use on offshore oil and gas facilities in Australia. A small number of duty holders have commenced transition to fluorine-free alternatives. No duty holders reported undertaking environmental monitoring that included PFAS.

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) recently listed PFOS (perfluorooctanesulfonic acid), PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid), PFHxS (perfluorohexanesulfonic acid) and related substances on the Industrial Chemicals Environmental Management Standard (IChEMS) Register. From 1 July 2025, these substances are subject to national standards in relation to their import, export, manufacture, use and disposal.

Additionally, an International Maritime Organization prohibition on the use or storage of firefighting foams containing PFAS will take effect for new vessels on 1 January 2026, and for existing vessels no later than the date of the first survey on or after 1 January 2026. This prohibition also applies to offshore drill rigs.

"With new restrictions coming into effect, NOPSEMA is strengthening its regulatory focus on the use, impacts and risks, and management of these substances in offshore activities," said Jared Davidson, Acting Director, Exploration and Development – Environment at NOPSEMA.

When assessing Environment Plans (EPs), NOPSEMA considers whether the EP includes sufficient information on the legislative requirements that are relevant to the activity and demonstrates how they will be met throughout the life of the activity. Further, the EP must demonstrate that impacts and risks of the activity will be reduced to as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP) and an acceptable level.

The facility Safety Case must include a detailed description of the safety management system which provides for the continual and systematic identification of hazards and assessment of risk to health and safety of persons at or near the facility.

This should enable the facility operator to demonstrate that potential hazards associated with all firefighting foams, whether fluorine-based or fluorine-free, have effective technical control measures to reduce the risk to ALARP. It is important to note that no firefighting foam is entirely without risk.

NOPSEMA encourages duty holders to actively explore and transition to alternative firefighting foams that reduce risks to the workforce and environment, while complying with these new restrictions.

NOPSEMA will continue to monitor titleholder performance in reducing impacts and risks of their activities to a level that is ALARP and acceptable.

Better Practice Forum: Environmental submissions - Collaboration and innovation

NOPSEMA's first Better Practice Forum for the year, Environmental submissions – Collaboration and innovation, brought more than 90 guests and speakers to the Parmelia Hilton in Perth on 10 April 2025.

The forum focused on the development and implementation of Offshore Project Proposals (OPPs) and Environmental Plans (EPs) for offshore petroleum activities.

For industry stakeholders it was an opportunity to gain valuable insights and engage in discussions on improving environmental management through effective, high-quality submissions.

The day's program saw NOPSEMA experts and guest industry speakers explore a range of topics connected to the submission of OPPs and EPs.

In the morning session, NOPSEMA's Deputy CEO of Regulatory Operations Graham Blair, pictured right, gave the audience some key insights into what makes for a successful OPP and EP. Edith Cowan University Professor Angus Morrison-Saunders reflected on NOPSEMA's assessment processes in relation to international best practice, while Chris Gentle from the Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute (WABSI) explored how data analytics can translate scientific knowledge into streamlined decision-making processes.

The afternoon session began with an exploration of how several industry titleholders came together collaboratively to form the Otway Operators Working Group and concluded with an engaging panel discussion on the enablers, barriers and opportunities for improving the quality of environmental submissions.

NOPSEMA CEO Sue McCarrey said the event gave titleholders a chance to discuss what was working well – and what could be improved – when it came to the submission and acceptance of OPPs and EPs, and what could be done to reduce timeframes of approvals while ensuring robust environmental management of activities.

Ms McCarrey said three key themes were explored on the day – acceptable levels of environmental impact, navigating uncertainty and the need to make clear links between an OPP and EP.

"Firstly, what are acceptable levels of impact on the environment, and how do you assess those?" Ms McCarrey said.

"A really strong submission clearly defines what is acceptable, draws on evidence, credible sources of research or modelling, and then links that research or modelling to the actual project or activity that you are planning to undertake.

"Secondly, if we can't eliminate the factor of uncertainty, how can it be addressed? We don't always have the answers on day one, but a really good submission will outline where that uncertainty is, how it will be addressed and monitored as the activity goes on, and how you are going to react to that uncertainty.

"And thirdly, it's important to think of the EP as a continuation of the OPP. Sometimes the OPP is done so far in advance that by the time you get around to that first EP, you've almost forgotten to go back to the OPP and show those linkages between the two.

"The OPP starts to outline your performance outcomes and how you are going to measure those; so how does the EP link back to those outcomes and show that you are now implementing the things you said you were going to do to achieve those outcomes?"

Feedback from the Better Practice Forum was uniformly positive, with attendees praising the diversity of speakers and perspectives on the day.

For Graham Blair, the strong attendance numbers demonstrated industry's clear commitment to improvement.



"(Today) I've seen great examples of collaboration, excellence in practice, the embracing and recognition of change, and the amount of effort that is being put into thinking about making things better and working through challenges," he said.

"Where I am energised is in seeing the resilience, creativity and determination that is driving us all to achieve a shared goal, and that's the protection of our environment.

"Let's take pride in the work we are doing, because there's not just a value to that work; there is a nobility to that work. I can see that progress is being made, and that better outcomes for the environment are being achieved.

"That makes me hugely proud to be part of this community of people who are fighting the good fight."



Special thanks to our presenters and panelists on the day.

Welcome to Country

Barry Winmar

Edith Cowan University

Angus Morrison-Saunders: Professor, Environmental Management

NOPSEMA

Graham Blair: Deputy CEO, Regulatory Operations

David Christensen: Executive Director Exploration, Development and Decommissioning

Cam Sim: Chief Environmental Scientist

Alice Turnbull: Director, Exploration and Development - Environment

Shell Australia

Cara Price: Environment Manager West

Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute (WABSI)

Chris Gentle: Director, Information Management

Woodside

Heather McDonald: Senior Environment Adviser

Xodus Group

Naomi Kerp: APAC Environment and Approvals Lead

Our digital transformation project

NOPSEMA's Digital Transformation Program is underway.

In March this year, CEO Sue McCarrey executed the contract with Insight Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd to deliver the new CORE (Central Operations for Regulatory Excellence) portal.

External industry engagement and feedback will be sought for CORE's solution requirements and functional design to ensure its regulatory functions and processes flow seamlessly with industry requirements.

Soon, interested industry stakeholders will be invited to join a presentation outlining the project's purpose and benefits and outlining how industry will be engaged during this time.

CORE: Shaping the Future of Offshore Regulation

As part of its digital transformation program, NOPSEMA is delivering the Central Operations for Regulatory Excellence (CORE) platform—a flagship initiative under the Commonwealth Government's Regulatory Reform agenda.

CORE is designed to modernise how industry interacts with NOPSEMA and OIR by streamlining regulatory processes and reducing administrative complexity.

Through a single, centralised digital platform, CORE will improve consistency, transparency, and efficiency across all regulatory activities—from approvals and compliance to reporting.

It will also enhance access to data, historic records, and regulatory information, supporting more connected and informed decision-making.

Industry collaboration is central to CORE's development. NOPSEMA will be engaging with stakeholders through briefings and workshops to ensure the platform is intuitive, practical, and aligned with industry needs.

Feedback gathered throughout 2025–26 will directly shape CORE's design, functionality, and implementation.

By working with industry and other key stakeholders, we are building a platform that supports effective, risk-based regulation by reducing administrative burden and improving the way industry interacts with the regulator.





Making connections at the Australian Energy Producers Conference

The 2025 Australian Energy Producers (AEP) Conference in Brisbane provided NOPSEMA with an invaluable opportunity to have a presence at the nation's biggest conference gathering of onshore and offshore energy producers.

Over three days in May, NOPSEMA delegates attended conference sessions exploring the future of the Australian oil and gas industry and met with key stakeholders to share information about the regulator's remit and purpose.

NOPSEMA CEO Sue McCarrey discussed the role of the offshore regulator at the plenary session Seismic Shifts: Gas, exploration and the economy, where she was joined in conversation by the Hon. Lia Finocchiaro, Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, and industry panellists from 3D Energi, Senex and The Energy Users Association of Australia.

"The AEP Conference was an important opportunity to engage in some very robust discussion about the energy landscape in Australia, and the role of NOPSEMA in ensuring work health and safety and environmental protection remained front of mind," CEO Sue McCarrey said.

Some of NOPSEMA's most experienced environmental and regulatory specialists were on hand throughout the conference to answer questions and meet with industry representatives between panel sessions in the Exhibition Hall, where NOPSEMA shared a booth with NOPTA and Geoscience Australia.

The booth was visited during the week by the Minister for Resources, the Hon. Madeleine King, whose opening plenary speech was considered a highlight of the event for many NOPSEMA delegates.

"Minister King's keynote speech was most insightful," observed David Christensen, NOPSEMA's Executive Director – Exploration, Development and Decommissioning.

"(Minister King) clearly conveyed the need for industry to provide an affordable and reliable supply of energy to Australian users, noting the importance of gas in the energy transition, the need for changes to environmental regulations, and a commitment to pursue reforms."

Deputy CEO of Regulatory Operations Graham Blair added that there was a sense of optimism about the continuing centrality of gas in the Australian energy matrix, but concerns were also expressed about regulatory complexity.

"Frustration with the regulatory environment has little to do with the need for a regulator itself, but rather the requirements and lack of certainty that the regulations bring," Mr Blair said.

"It was conveyed that industry recognises the role and the value which the regulator brings. Industry clearly foresees a long future for itself in Australia, meaning that the role of NOPSEMA will be required for many decades to come."

For Cameron Grebe, Deputy CEO of Strategic Regulation and Improvement, another insight from the conference was industry appreciation for NOPSEMA's external stakeholder engagement efforts.

"One of the key messages from this year's AEP Conference was the respect and recognition of our external regulatory stakeholder engagement program, and the flow-on benefits for titleholders arising from better informed First Nations representative bodies," Mr Grebe said.

For Mr Blair, the event represented an important opportunity to hear a variety of opinions from global and national leaders in the energy production space.

"The conference sessions flagged key issues facing industry and had well-informed participants who shared balanced and diverse views," he said.

In 2026, the Australian Energy Producers Conference moves to Adelaide, South Australia.



The importance of stakeholder engagement

Collaboration and engagement are central to NOPSEMA as an Australian government regulator, and proactive external engagement is a key component of our strategic and corporate plan.

To that end, NOPSEMA has established a new regulatory stakeholder engagement team which coordinates external engagement with industry and relevant persons and provides specialist advice on assessing consultation in environment plans.

Engagements over the past six months have included a diverse range of stakeholders.

NOPSEMA has met with First Nations groups across Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory; our Community and Environment Reference Group (CERG); fisheries organisations; and various government agencies.

As an offshore energy regulator, NOPSEMA is committed to ongoing engagement with the oil and gas industry to explain the agency's role and to improve safety and environmental outcomes.

NOPSEMA is also committed to engaging with First Nations groups, with a number of clear objectives: to explain the oil and gas lifecycle in relation to Sea Country; how NOPSEMA regulates offshore oil and gas projects; the purpose of consultation; and how First Nations groups can provide effective input during consultation with industry.

"The purpose of many of our stakeholder engagement activities is to explain what the regulatory environment is and what NOPSEMA's role is within that," CEO Sue McCarrey said.

"A lot of stakeholders deal directly with a duty holder - they hear about NOPSEMA, but they don't always understand what we do.

"We explain what the regulations require of the duty holder, what our role is, the fact that we assess environment plans and safety cases.

"But we also explain that there are a number of different environment plans needed for different activities, and that we perform ongoing inspections and compliance monitoring to ensure that companies are doing the right thing."

In recent years, NOPSEMA has proactively reached out to many First Nations groups who may have been unaware of the regulator's role.

"Our engagement with First Nations groups has been hugely beneficial," Ms McCarrey said.

"I'm a strong believer in developing good working relationships with a whole range of different people and proactively explaining what we do, rather than waiting until there's a problem."

Earlier this year, a NOPSEMA delegation travelled to Darwin to meet with the Northern Territory Government and to Pirlangimpi in the Tiwi Islands for on-country engagement with the Tiwi Land Council.

The purpose of this visit was to establish a relationship with the council as the representative body of all Tiwi people in the protection of land, sea and environment.

During the visit, NOPSEMA held an educational session with full council to explain its regulatory regime, including a question-and-answer session addressing consultation requirements and the environment plan approval process.

Across the board, there is continued demand for direct engagement between NOPSEMA and external stakeholders, especially in relation to how relevant persons can participate effectively in consultation on environment plans.

NOPSEMA has committed to sharing feedback with industry to continue to improve consultation and environmental management outcomes and will continue an active program of external engagement.

"It is the duty holder's responsibility to do the consultation around their projects and activities, and NOPSEMA always makes that clear," Ms McCarrey said.

"But it is our job to explain who we are, what we do and what the regulations require.

"I think stakeholders gaining that knowledge of our purpose is of real benefit.

"Explaining how highly regulated the offshore energy industry is gives people a lot more comfort that the environment is being looked after to the best that it possibly can be.

"That alone makes our engagement activities worthwhile.

"Beyond the need for a regulator, there is often relief amongst those who may not have known that NOPSEMA is an organisation that is there making sure everyone is doing the right thing."

Offshore renewables: Communication as a cornerstone of safety

The next few years are set to be an exciting time for the offshore renewables industry, setting the tone for the successful delivery of a safe, responsible and sustainable new energy sector in Australia.

The Offshore Infrastructure Regulator (OIR) is responsible for the operational oversight of this sector, a remit that includes working with all relevant stakeholders to deliver strong outcomes.

The OIR's focus is on transparency, accountability, and ensuring the offshore renewables industry grows safely, with public confidence and long-term integrity.

Open, respectful and effective communication will be key elements underpinning the sector and ensuring the industry is designed, developed and delivered in a way that is not only technically sound, but socially responsible and safe.

Building an offshore wind industry is not just a matter of building turbines and transmission lines. It is also about building trust, a common understanding, and a positive safety culture.

Safety offshore depends on the ability to relay information accurately, quickly, and in a way that is easily understood by all parties involved. It takes many different moving parts to deliver projects of the scale and complexity of an offshore wind farm.

One of the most critical elements in ensuring safe outcomes for the offshore wind industry is the development of robust management systems that ensure effective communication across all levels of an organisation or project.

Developing a management system as part of a management plan submission to the OIR is the first chance to test the protocols and systems proposed to manage operations and to effectively respond to emergencies and unplanned events.

This early phase is an opportunity to identify, assess and manage hazards, impacts and risks before they arise or lead to an incident.

It gives industry the chance to identify any barriers or challenges to the delivery of safe outcomes and make sure that frontline voices are being heard and integrated into the thinking and development that goes into establishing the sector.

The management system is the key mechanism ensuring that licence holders establish and maintain appropriate oversight and control of operations. It should ensure that all stakeholders – from contractors to project engineers to frontline workers – are aligned on roles and responsibilities, safety standards and regulatory requirements.

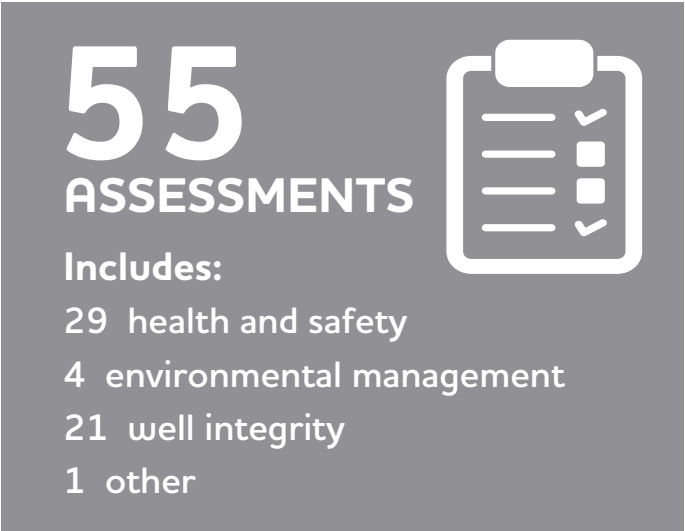
The systems that are put in place for communication and information flow are critical to obtaining that alignment, helping to prevent costly and potentially dangerous mistakes.

The offshore renewables sector is still in its infancy in Australia, but it is clear that lessons learned from one project can be incredibly valuable for other projects. A culture of shared learnings and transparency can help industry adapt more quickly to emerging risks and to put in place measures to manage these.

Ultimately, safety is not just about protocols and checks. It is also about creating a culture of open communication, where everyone involved understands their roles and responsibilities, and where any potential risks are flagged early and addressed collaboratively.

When the systems for communication are strong, risks are identified earlier, responses are coordinated, and outcomes are safer.

Offshore activity Q1 2025





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

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