

Meeting Date: Monday 8 December 2025

Meeting objectives:

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

Meeting details:

The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams at 10:00am AWST on Monday 8 December 2025. Attendees included representatives of NOPSEMA and members of the Community and Environment Reference Group (CERG), as listed in Attachment 1.

Meeting record:

Agenda Item 1 – Introduction and welcome

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. The agenda and objectives for the meeting were confirmed. The record of the meeting of 2 April 2025 was accepted. The action items were reviewed and updated as appropriate. Members were asked by the Chair to provide any relevant Conflict of Interest declarations. A number of CERG Members provided Conflict of Interest declarations which the CEO accepted and noted that the members participation would be able to continue as per the Terms of Reference.

ACTION: NOPSEMA Secretariat to update Register of Interests and Conflicts to reflect these disclosures.

Agenda Item 2 – CERG Terms of Reference and Membership

The updated Terms of Reference were discussed and accepted CERG Members. The Chair confirmed that all members will continue into early 2026, inclusive of Meeting 16 (April 2026) unless any members wish to resign after Meeting 15. The Chair communicated that an Expression of Interest (EOI) process for CERG Membership will occur in Q2 2026 and that members who had completed a 2-year term would be welcome to re-apply and be considered along with new applicants.

ACTION: Written correspondence will be sent to all current CERG members thanking them for their two-year tenure on the CERG, and Members would be welcome to re-apply.

Agenda Item 3 – CERG Members update

CERG Members shared updates of offshore energy industry engagements undertaken since last meeting in April 2025.

Common themes from CERG perspectives shared included:

- **Regulatory uncertainty and inconsistencies**
 - o Community concerns that there are inconsistencies in regulatory decision-making – can make consultation difficult and can leave stakeholders disengaged.
 - o Desire for plain-language guidance and clarity on consultation requirements.
- **Community concerns around offshore activities**
 - o Seismic surveys causing anxiety in some coastal communities such as around Dongara region
 - o Growing interest and concern about cumulative impacts (noise, exclusion zones) on marine environments and fisheries.
 - o Artificial reef projects and decommissioning activities generating mixed reactions in community.
- **Climate change and marine heatwave impacts**
 - o Significant coral bleaching and seagrass loss in Pilbara and Kimberley regions continue to cause concern in the region.
 - o Heightened public and community focus on marine environment health, including Members raising concerns around flow-on effects for fisheries, food sources, and cultural practices.
- **Fishing access and industry changes**

- WA State Government's statewide demersal reform package was unexpected and could result in some additional / renewed interest and concern in the community around proposed offshore wind projects and its impact on access for fishers.

- **Cultural Engagement and ceremony commitments**
 - Traditional ceremonies currently underway across large regions, limiting Elders' availability for participating in consultation activities.
 - Companies vary in respect for cultural obligations; reliance on consultants can pose risks.
 - Broader lack of awareness among impacted communities about regulatory changes.

- **Resource constraints and consultation workload issues**
 - Limited capacity and resources within Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs) and communities continues to be an issue on the ground
 - Social challenges (e.g., housing without air conditioning during heatwaves and other expectation/obligations on community) further strain limited resources and capacity to take up engagement.

- **Treaty and engagement frameworks**
 - Victorian treaty developments consuming attention; optimism about alignment with engagement standards.
 - Interest in EPBC reform First Nations engagement standards noted.

Agenda Item 4 – Meeting Discussion Topics

Agenda Item 4.1 – CEO Update: Year in Review

NOPSEMA CEO provided an update including key themes that emerged from the recent NOPSEMA Stakeholder Survey and the work that NOPSEMA continues to do with relevant policy agencies around regulatory reform.

ACTION: NOPSEMA to communicate directly with CERG members when the environment consultation reform draft(s) are publicly available and schedule possible CERG meeting out of session if required.

ACTION: NOPSEMA to share results from NOPSEMA Stakeholder Survey with CERG for their noting
ACTION: NOPSEMA Secretariat to share CEO Update with CERG for their noting.

Agenda Item 4.2 – Offshore Infrastructure Regulator (OIR) update

Owen Wilson, Executive Director – Offshore Renewable Regulation attended the meeting and CERG members noted the discussion paper presented.

Agenda Item 4.3 – Project CORE – digital transformation and community information interface

CERG members noted the discussion paper presented.

ACTION: NOPSEMA Secretariat to seek CERG Member interest in contributing to Project CORE engagement process – via email

Agenda Item 4.4 – Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act reforms

CERG members noted the discussion paper presented.

Common themes from CERG perspectives included:

- **Regulatory Standards and Clarity**
 - Need for clear understanding of standards established by proposed regulations.
 - EPBC Act proposed changes introduce Ministerial declaration powers with strict conditions.
 - National environmental standards will require integration into regulations to ensure decision-making consistency.
 - Desire for plain-English explanations of how the new NOPSMEA arrangements would work once details are confirmed.
 - Discussion on EPA's role in administration under new frameworks.
- **First Nations Engagement and Awareness**
 - Significant lack of engagement by government with Traditional Owners and PBCs regarding proposed EPBC Act changes and therefore little or no awareness which is concerning given role TOs play in major WA project approvals.
 - Most affected groups have not been briefed or involved; no sessions explaining practical implications.
 - Reference to Samuel Review noting previous engagement efforts with First Nations groups.

ACTION: NOPSEMA to schedule an *EPBC Act* Reforms update at the next CERG meeting.

ACTION: Commitment from NOPSEMA representatives to provide feedback to other government counterparts that there is lack of engagement and awareness about proposed EPBC Act reforms

Agenda Item 5 – Review and close out

Agenda Item 5.1 – Recap actions and other business

The Chair sought general feedback and questions from CERG members.

ACTION: NOPSEMA will consider a meeting agenda item (including a discussion paper) on how offshore assessments should consider future climate conditions (rather than historical baselines), focusing on habitat resilience and how contaminants behave under changing conditions.

Agenda Item 5.2 – Date of next meeting

Next meeting will be scheduled for April 2026.

The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and closed the meeting at 11.55am.

Attachment 1

Attendees list

NOPSEMA representatives
Sue McCarrey, Chief Executive Officer (Chair)
Cameron Grebe, Deputy CEO – Strategic Regulation and Improvement Division
John McGuire, Director Regulatory Stakeholder Engagement
Susan Weary, Stakeholder Engagement Specialist – Regulatory Engagement
Community representatives
Sander Scheffers
Luke Skinner
Terry Atkinson
Danielle Hartshorn
Sean-Paul Stephens
Piers Verstegen
Apologies
Stuart Field
Jason Froud
Jacqueline Hine