



A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Our Vision

Health and safety risks in the Australian offshore petroleum industry are properly controlled.

This series of messages is aimed at keeping you informed of the operations of NOPSA. Please let us know if you would like to be added to the [distribution list](#)

PERSONNEL:

Leonie Brewer has been seconded from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing to temporarily fill the role of Finance Officer, following the resignation of Lindy Munnings.

INDUSTRY MATTERS:

Part 4 of the WA Petroleum Legislation Amendment and Repeal Act 2005 and the set of four occupational health and safety related regulations to the WA Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1982 (WA PSLA 82) were published in the Tuesday 27 March 2007 edition of the WA Government Gazette. NOPSA's responsibility for regulating offshore petroleum health and safety in the WA designated coastal waters (WA PSLA 82 waters) commenced on 27 March 2007. This legislation can be obtained at the [State Law Publisher's](#)¹ website.

Cyclone response and medical evacuation plans have both been matters of interest in the last month. One facility was unable to complete down-manning prior to Cyclone George. NOPSA has issued an improvement notice to the operator of the facility; however a number of coordination issues which are beyond NOPSA's remit are also thought to have played a part. NOPSA is working with APPEA, various Operators, contractors and other government departments to improve the ability to down-man effectively.

NOPSA appreciates the effort made by operators of facilities in reporting their response to approaching cyclones. The relevant forms for reporting are located on the NOPSA website at the end of the ['for operators'](#) page, entitled "[NOPSA Information for Operators](#)²". This reporting uses two forms that are linked to the above page. Completion of Form 1 – 'Action in response to threat' is generally good. Completion of Form 2 – 'Return to normal operation' is improving. However, timely submission of status would be appreciated.

Woodside made a very interesting and thought provoking presentation at DrillSafe (link not available at time of publication) which highlighted some of the difficulties in providing medical treatment and/or evacuation flights in remote towns. NOPSA would encourage the industry to look at common approaches to dealing with medical and evacuation plans, and NOPSA would be willing to participate, if requested, in any approach to State Government agencies on this topic.

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STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS:

Two full day Safety Case Workshops were held in Melbourne (27 February) and Perth (2nd March), which included both NOPSA and industry presenters. There were 35 attendees in Melbourne and 113 in Perth, and the feedback received was overwhelmingly positive. Comments confirmed that gaining industry perspectives was of significant benefit, and suggestions for future workshops included more case studies, sharing best practice and breaking down the elements of the Safety Case. All [presentations](#)³, together with [Questions and Answers](#) from the sessions, are on the NOPSA website.

Following the safety case workshops in Melbourne and Perth, NOPSA has now issued [PL255 - Safety Case Assessment Process – Requests for Further Information](#) and Re-submission following Rejection as policy. This policy forms part of NOPSA's safety case assessment core process. This policy is available on the [NOPSA website](#).

The CEO met with the Chairman of the Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC), Mr Bill Scales, to discuss areas of mutual interest including the application of the NOSHC National OHS Strategy 2002-2012 to offshore petroleum operations. He also met with the Hon Peter Batchelor, new Victorian Minister for Energy & Resources and Mr Richard Aldous, Executive Director Mineral and Petroleum DPI.

NOPSA met with senior AMSA Corporate staff, to discuss areas of mutual interest, including pre and post manning models on disconnectable FPSOs, lifeboat issues, and jurisdictional matters. Both parties agreed that where possible, joint inspections of (P(SL)A 'facilities' / Nav Act 'vessels', (eg MODUs, disconnectable FPSOs), were to be encouraged, (one such inspection on an FPSO has already occurred). [Marine Order 60](#)⁴ (FPSO / Marine) issues were also discussed.

NOPSA met with Australian Workers' Union (AWU) representatives in Melbourne to discuss the issue of offshore helicopter safety that had been raised by the AWU. NOPSA highlighted the recently commissioned Hart Aviation Study into this area. NOPSA is working with CASA, APPEA and other stakeholders to address offshore helicopter issues. Ongoing dialogue will continue with AWU and other interested parties.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES:

NOPSA is currently developing a Handbook for offshore petroleum HSRs. This will supplement the information for HSRs that is already on the NOPSA web, and will address a key action arising from the 2006 HSR Forum. A draft of the Handbook has been written, and NOPSA now seeks comments on the draft from relevant stakeholders, including in particular from HSRs themselves and from accredited HSR training course providers. Any HSRs wishing to take part in this review should contact Ray Wells (ray.wells@nopsa.gov.au) for a copy of the draft. If groups of associated HSRs are able to provide collective comments, that would be preferred.

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CONFERENCES:

Congratulations to Adrian Hill, Seascope Surveys, who was the worthy winner of NOPSA's prize at AOG2007 Exhibition in Perth last month. Visitors to NOPSA's booth were invited to submit success stories and major issues relating to health and safety at their workplaces. Adrian's observation about the risks in being exposed to varying safety cultures across organisations was a point that resonated with NOPSA. It was pleasing to note the many safety initiatives submitted in the entries, including increased consultation with the workforce and the issue of improved personnel protective equipment. Common themes in the issues raised included an ageing workforce, complacency and staff competencies.

NOPSA attended the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia's 2007 Occupational Safety and Health Conference. The conference theme was Safety Excellence through Innovation and Influence and it provided an opportunity to share industry experiences in safety culture, fatigue management, past incidents, safety regulation and promoting risk awareness.

NOPSA is exhibiting at [APPEA 2007](#)⁵, 15-18 April, in Adelaide. This event represents the largest annual gathering of the upstream oil and gas industry in the southern hemisphere with over 1300 participants expected to attend.

The CEO made a presentation to the National Mine Safety Framework initiative - Steering Group Meeting in Perth on 14 March, sharing his experiences of regulating within duty of care regimes and the need for an independent, competent and well resourced regulator.

WEBSITE:

NOPSA has recently developed draft guidelines on [vessels laying equipment other than pipe for petroleum](#) and heavy lift construction vessel activities. NOPSA is seeking feedback on the approach taken in this general guidance. Please provide your feedback by email to information@nopsa.gov.au.

NOPSA's Safety Case Workshop presentations and answers to questions submitted at the workshop can be found on the [NOPSA website](#)³.

INTERNATIONAL:

NOPSA notes the endorsement by the US CSB Board, and release of the CSB report, into the BP Texas City refinery explosion of March 2005. NOPSA continues to review all the material related to this event, to identify issues for our Industry, and for us, as Regulator. NOPSA strongly encourages all Operators to consider the various BP Texas City studies and reports, to assess any implications upon their own operations, such as maintenance cutbacks, possible impacts on safety, defective or poorly designed controls and instrumentation, ageing plant, supervisory controls etc.

NOPSA was invited to participate in a Woodside review to examine issues identified in the Baker Report findings on the BP Texas City incident. This 10 day long review, which was led by external experts in Technical Integrity Management and Organizational Safety involved a series of interviews, workshops and staff surveys to identify what was working well in Technical Integrity Management across all of the Woodside operations and the opportunities for improvement. Woodside management are currently reviewing the issues raised from the review and the recommendations of the review experts and are developing an appropriate improvement plan.

NOPSA hosted a further visit from a senior official of Qatar Petroleum (QP). QP is setting up an internal HSE regulatory department, and has consulted with NOPSA and others on the way forward with this project.

REGULATORY ACTIVITIES in March 2007:

The following activities occurred during March. Activity and incident quantities identified here may vary as further information becomes available.

Safety Case Assessment

2 new and 2 revised Safety Cases were accepted during March.
As at 29/3/07, 4 Safety Cases and 2 PSMP's are still under assessment.
One Diving Safety Management System is in progress.

Inspections

6 Inspections were conducted. Two were to follow up Major Accident Investigations. Other issues included crane and lifting operations, fatigue management and emergency response capabilities.

Incidents & Complaints

10 incidents, all classified as "Dangerous Occurrences" and 1 complaint were reported. Of the reported incidents, one involved minor gas release and one caused an injury resulting in lost time of three days or more.

Enforcement

Two Improvement Notices were issued in March. One was because Safety critical equipment had been defeated without adequate risk assessment and authorisation; the other for failure to complete precautionary down-manning in face of approaching Cyclone George.

1. <http://www.slp.wa.gov.au/statutes/swans.nsf>
2. <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/operator.asp>
3. <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/document/Safety-Case-Workshop-Feb-2007/>
4. <http://tinyurl.com/yv27cf>
5. <http://www.appea.com.au/>

Past issues of this newsletter are available from the NOPSA website at:

http://www.nopsa.gov.au/CEO_emails/