

### **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:**

Wendy Wiley from the Dept of Veterans' Affairs has been promoted to the part-time position of Executive Officer to the NOPSA Advisory Board.

### **INDUSTRY MATTERS:**

- Piper Alpha Remembered: Two current NOPSA Inspectors, who were both with the UK Dept of Energy (the regulatory agency at the time of the Piper Alpha disaster), gave a presentation to NOPSA staff, a member of the Board and a representative from APPEA on their perspectives as investigators of the disaster. The magnitude of the event and its impact on families, workers and the department were highlighted in this very valuable presentation.
- NOPSA has recently engaged an occupational hygiene/human factors consultant to review international accommodation guidance material and recommend a range of acceptable criteria for offshore accommodation. This work commenced in April 2007. Consultation with the industry will follow.
- NOPSA continues to identify significant shortcomings in Operators' audit processes. Recent worldwide incidents have confirmed this to be a consistent problem. NOPSA will address this matter through detailed assessments in forthcoming inspections.
- Victoria's radiation safety laws will change later this year. Currently, the relevant laws are made under the Health Act, which is limited to municipal areas and hence does not apply at offshore facilities. The Radiation Act 2005, which commences on 1 September 2007, does not have this limitation. It will also implement a much more modern radiation safety regime. Persons and organisations who deal with radiation sources offshore should review the information being made available by Victoria's [Department of Human Services](#) (DHS), and may wish to attend the workshops being held by DHS through May. NOPSA is consulting with DHS about cooperative working arrangements and a Memorandum of Understanding.

**STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS:**

The NOPSA Board held its twelfth meeting in Adelaide on 19 and 20 April 2007. Significant matters discussed at the meeting included a discussion with DITR, a presentation of APPEA safety initiatives and lessons learned from the Baker Report on the Texas City Refinery incident. The next NOPSA Board meeting is to be held on the June 7 and 8 in Melbourne.

**NATIONAL PROGRAMMES:**

NOPSA was very pleased to attend an industry meeting hosted by BHP Billiton Petroleum which was looking at Offshore Lifting Operations. NOPSA presented findings from its National Programme inspection activities. These findings appear to coincide with the concerns expressed at the meeting and NOPSA looks forward to working with the group as they formalise their approach to issues such as crane operator competency.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES:**

As mentioned in the February newsletter, the 2007 HSR Forum is to be held at the Burswood convention and entertainment complex in Perth, WA, on Tuesday 7 August 2007, back-to-back with the APPEA National Oil and Gas Safety Conference. Further details regarding the Forum are available from Tim McGrath at APPEA: 08 9321 9775 / [tmcgrath@appea.com.au](mailto:tmcgrath@appea.com.au) .

**CONFERENCES:**

NOPSA was pleased to sponsor and exhibit at the APPEA 2007 Conference last week in Adelaide. The conference was very well attended and it offered NOPSA the opportunity to promote health and safety awareness to a large and targeted audience. Information packs containing all the relevant regulations and guidelines were distributed, and these are still available by contacting the Information Team at NOPSA by email at [information@nopsa.gov.au](mailto:information@nopsa.gov.au) .

NOPSA attended a meeting of the Major Hazard Facilities Working Group (MHFWG) in Brisbane on 26 April. MHFWG is an informal grouping of major hazards regulators from Australia and New Zealand. NOPSA also attended an MHF Forum the following day on the topic of "Lessons Learnt from Chemical Industry Accidents". The key-note speaker at the Forum was Carolyn Merrit, Chair of the US Chemical Safety Bureau, who spoke in particular about the BP Texas City explosion.

**WEBSITE and COMMUNICATIONS:**

To assist Operators to navigate the various regulations administered by NOPSA, the provisions of the offshore petroleum operations OHS regulatory regime are set out on the [legislation page](#) of the NOPSA website. These provisions have been summarised as an [overview](#) of the regime.

One of the main issues identified during the use of NOPSA's Safety Case Assessment Core Process is the level of detail expected in a safety case submission. A [new draft discussion paper](#) provides guidance on the level of detail expected to be included in

relation to each of the major aspects of a safety case submission. NOPSA would appreciate your feedback on the draft discussion paper. Any comments and suggestions can be sent to: [information@nopsa.gov.au](mailto:information@nopsa.gov.au).

**INTERNATIONAL:**

There are now 8 confirmed fatalities on the [Bourbon Dolphin](#)<sup>i</sup>, when it capsized during anchor handling activities west of the Shetland Islands. NOPSA regrets the terrible loss of life in this incident and will continue to monitor the outcomes of the investigation.

On a local level, NOPSA has noted two anchor handling incidents during the month of March. Both of these incidents caused injury and had potential for more serious consequences. NOPSA is consulting with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority on jurisdictional matters around these incidents.

In further sad news, NOPSA notes the report of [three deaths](#)<sup>ii</sup> when a cable broke on a drilling platform in southern Mexico. This is a timely reminder how a simple equipment failure can cause multiple fatalities.

**REGULATORY ACTIVITIES in April 2007:**

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

**Safety Case Assessment**

One new and three revised Safety Cases were accepted during April.

As at 26 April 2007, 11 Safety Cases (including one PSMP) and two Diving Safety Management Systems are still under assessment.

**Inspections**

Eight Inspections were conducted. Issues included personnel competency, performance standards and integrity management; and concerns that safety critical information was not being disseminated throughout the company.

**Incidents & Complaints:**

Nine dangerous occurrences and four Lost Time Injuries were reported. There was one complaint reported.

Of the reported incidents, one was a gas release; one could have caused death or serious injury (a crane boom inadvertently lowered to the deck during maintenance); three were unplanned events that required implementation of emergency response plans and two incidents could have caused lost time of three days or more.

Root causes identified so far include insufficient preventative / predictive maintenance and human error.



NATIONAL OFFSHORE PETROLEUM SAFETY AUTHORITY

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

ISSUE No. 52 APRIL 27, 2007

### **Enforcement**

One Improvement Notice was issued in April for failing to ensure adequate competency.

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

[http://www.nopsa.gov.au/CEO\\_emails/](http://www.nopsa.gov.au/CEO_emails/)

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<sup>i</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/scotland/north\\_east/6552467.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/north_east/6552467.stm)

<sup>ii</sup> [http://biz.yahoo.com/ap/070426/mexico\\_platform\\_accident.html?.v=1](http://biz.yahoo.com/ap/070426/mexico_platform_accident.html?.v=1)