

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](#)¹.

PERSONNEL:

Stuart Allison, Michael Chapman and Kerry Gordon have joined NOPSA as OHS Inspectors.

Stuart has 22 years experience in the offshore industry, 15 years of which were spent serving in offshore positions working in a range of global locations. He has experience in marine operations, subsea engineering and asset management.

Michael has spent the last 5 years as a regulator and OHS Inspector for the onshore petroleum industry in Queensland. Prior to that role he was an LPG Terminal Manager at a major onshore LPG terminal. He has experience in high pressure pipelines, LPG terminals, safety systems auditing, onshore drill rigs, and managing safety in onshore Major Hazards Facilities.

Kerry comes to us from private industry as a safety engineer with broad Safety Case experience, predominantly in the UK sector of the North Sea. She has wide-ranging practical experience of the engineering, operational, management and cultural issues which influence safety in the offshore industry.

NOPSA is happy to announce the commencement of Louise Kierath as the new Executive Assistant with Team 3. Louise has an extensive background in similar roles within the Government of Western Australia, including the Corruption and Crime Commission and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

INDUSTRY MATTERS:

- NOPSA is currently involved in preliminary discussions with the Australian Safety & compensation Council (ASCC) to develop a National database of noise and hazardous substances exposure data for the offshore petroleum workforce. A kick-off meeting with the ASCC occurred in May 2007.
- NOPSA recognises and applauds the initiative by the Queensland Government in the promotion of national drilling safety competencies via a preferred standard. This action resulted from the Queensland State Coroner's recommendation following a fatality. For further information on the proposal contact John Fleming: (07) 3237 1415 / john.fleming@nrm.qld.gov.au

¹ Email information@nopsa.gov.au with 'Newsletter Subscription' in the subject line.

- NOPSA facilitated a meeting of interested parties between a representative of the Norwegian marine simulation company Marintek, and local trade associations, unions, and others. Issues discussed the use of simulation for training in areas such as offshore crane operations, marine vessel operations, and subsea works.
- NOPSA notes with approval the adoption of a self assessment framework for HSE systems by the Department of Primary Industries and Resources, South Australia. The initiative is being supported by regulators throughout Australia. Further details can be obtained at the [PIRSA website](#)², or by contacting Michael Malavazos: (08) 8463 3245 / malavazos.michael@saugov.sa.gov.au

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS:

On 16 May the CEO and General Manager Corporate met with the Hon Fran Logan MLA, WA Minister for Energy & Resources. Items discussed included the health and safety performance of the industry and the continuing skills shortages in the industry.

On 3 April the CEO met with Sandra Parker, Group Manager and Wayne Creaser, Assistant Secretary of Standards and Research Branch, of the Australian Safety and Compensation Council. Items discussed included a comparison of 'duty of care/objective' based regimes and 'prescriptive' regimes and application of the Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC) National OHS Strategy 2002-2012 to offshore petroleum operations.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES:

As mentioned in previous newsletters, the 2007 HSR Forum is to be held at the Burswood convention and entertainment complex in Perth, WA, on Tuesday 7 August 2007. NOPSA encourages HSR's to support and participate in the forthcoming Forum.

Further details regarding the Forum are available from Tim McGrath at APPEA: 08 9321 9775 / tmcgrath@appea.com.au .

At the 2006 HSR Forum a suggestion was made that there be an HSR award system. On behalf of the organising committee for the 2007 Forum, NOPSA would like to call for nominations for the 2006 offshore HSR award, the winner of which will be announced at the 2007 Forum Dinner. Any person who was an HSR in Australia's offshore petroleum industry during 2006 may be nominated. Nominations should outline the HSR's contribution to offshore safety during 2006, give the names and contact details of at least one referee, and be submitted by e-mail to information@nopsa.gov.au

² PIRSA website URL: www.pir.sa.gov.au/dhtml/ss/section.php?sectID=2609&tempID=8

CONFERENCES:

NOPSA attended and presented at the 12th International Symposium on Loss Prevention and Safety Promotion in the Process Industries in UK.

NOPSA attended the IMCA quarterly Asia Pacific regional meeting in Singapore where a presentation was given on NOPSA's Enforcement Management Model.

INTERNATIONAL:

NOPSA notes with regret the recent incident in the North Sea, involving the new anchor handler, 'Bourbon Dolphin' [[BBC News Report](#)³]. The heavy loss of life, and the initial issues raised from the sinking, are of concern to all involved in marine and offshore operations.

NOPSA notes with interest the [comments made by the US Chemical Safety Board \(CSB\) Chair](#)⁴, Ms Carolyn Merritt, to the US House of Representatives, regarding the similarities between the BP incidents at Texas City, and at the Alaskan pipeline.

Ms Merritt noted some factors which were identified in both incidents;

- Poor maintenance management
- The role of budgetary and production pressures in management decision making processes
- Poor management of change
- Delays in close out of audit findings, and;
- An acceptance of deviations from good practice / safe operational procedures, which then became 'accepted' as the norm, leading to increased (and unchallenged) risk levels.

NOPSA is reviewing this latest statement as part of its ongoing review of BP Texas City, and the implications for the Australian offshore industry.

³ The BBC New Report is accessible from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/north_east/6555591.stm

⁴ Ms Carolyn Merritt's comments can be read online at www.chemsafety.gov/index.cfm?folder=news_releases&page=news&NEWS_ID=375

REGULATORY ACTIVITIES in May 2007:

Disclaimer: Activity and incident quantities identified here may vary as further information becomes available.

Safety Case Assessment

Two revised Safety Cases were accepted, and one new PSMP was accepted.

As at 25 May, the following 12 cases are still under assessment: Five Safety Cases, two Diving Safety Management Systems, three Field Development Plans, two Scopes of Validation.

Two Safety Cases are pending Scopes of Validation.

Inspections

Eight Inspections were conducted. Issues of interest included noise management and implementation and auditing of safety management systems.

Incidents & Complaints:

12 Dangerous occurrences (nine significant and three major) were reported, including four Lost Time Injuries (all involving the wrist/hands) and three complaints were reported involving diesel fumes, audits and loose lifting equipment.

The reported incidents included the following: one gas release, a fire/explosion, a marine collision, two resulted in damage to safety-critical equipment. Three events had the potential to cause lost time injuries of three days or more. A falling crane boom dropped a load on the deck which could have caused death or serious injury.

Root causes for the significant dangerous occurrences identified thus far include: wrong procedure and procedures not followed.

Enforcement

Three letters were issued involving a breach of a safety case, failure to report a dangerous occurrence and failure to safely manage scaffold dismantling/modifications.

An Improvement Notice was issued to an Operator in response to a complaint by a member of the workforce. The complaint alleged that the Operator had intentionally left all oil producing wells sub surface safety valves (SSSVs) locked open on evacuating the platform during tropical cyclone 'George'.

Upon investigation (by NOPSA), the allegation was sustained. The Operator was reminded that locking a SSSV open on a well capable of unaided natural flow rendered it ineffective in containing well inventories in the event of damage to the wellhead in severe cyclonic conditions, thus jeopardising the integrity of the facility and the safety of members of the workforce upon re-boarding the facility after the cyclone.

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

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