

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](#). Operators and other employers are encouraged to circulate the newsletter to their workforce.

INDUSTRY MATTERS:

- Recent discussions between NOPSA and workforce representatives have highlighted the importance of workforce consultation. NOPSA reminds operators and the workforces of offshore petroleum facilities that the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967* (PSLA 1967), Schedule 7 Clause 3(2)(i) requires each operator to develop, in consultation with the workforce and any HSRs, a policy to:
 - enable cooperation between the workforce and the operator in promoting and developing measures to ensure the occupational health and safety of persons at the facility, and
 - provide adequate mechanisms for reviewing the effectiveness of the measures.
- NOPSA has developed a series of [questions and answers](#)¹ that assist with understanding the role of the safety case in the offshore petroleum OHS regime. NOPSA encourages operators to discuss these matters with members of the workforce.
- NOPSA facilitated a meeting between the Offshore Lifting Industry Working Group and registered training organisations. This Working Group has developed an offshore crane operator standard of competency unit that is nearing its implementation phase and is currently under review by the National Training Quality Council. The crane operator competency unit will be discussed in more detail at the forthcoming NOPSA National Programme Workshops - details provided below.
- NOPSA has been informed that the Offshore Petroleum Act 2006 (OPA 2006) is likely to be proclaimed in mid 2008. This will replace the PSLA 1967 in its entirety. Primarily, the OPA is a re-write of the PSLA in more modern drafting style, although there are some minor policy changes. A brief explanation of the [changes to the OHS provisions](#)² is available on the NOPSA web-site; more material will be added nearer the date of the transition. The PSLA's of the individual States and Northern Territory will not change, except where necessary, to allow reference to the OPA. The regulations under the PSLA 1967 will not change, but will apply under the OPA. The Safety Levies legislation will not change.

¹ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/document/QandA%20-%20Safety%20Case%20in%20Context.pdf>

² <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/regs.asp>

- A brief [set of charts](#)³ describing the industry's safety performance and NOPSA's performance has been provided on NOPSA's website. They include :
 - Injury rates and hours worked
 - Gas releases
 - Major and significant incidents
 - Fixed, normally attended facilities inspected
 - Proportion of OHS inspectorate time
- NOPSA is concerned at the rising trend in significant gas releases which appears in the chart mentioned above. Operators are encouraged to review the effectiveness of their systems for managing facility integrity.
- NOPSA recently received some requests for information about HUET (helicopter underwater escape training) courses, direct from persons who are about to commence work offshore. NOPSA does not accredit or endorse any particular HUET programmes, it being the responsibility of the facility operator to decide on the acceptability of particular courses and certification, and on the frequency of training.
- NOPSA is committed to continuous improvement of its regulatory practices. Personnel involved in a NOPSA offshore facility inspection may now submit feedback on the inspection via email to feedback.inspection@nopsa.gov.au
- A review of the presentations at the recent [International Regulators Forum \(IRF\) Conference 2007](#)⁴ identified important issues arising from inspection findings and major accidents for the industry's consideration. These include:
 - Decision making under stress and understanding of the consequences of decisions by personnel
 - Self audits do not provide an adequate challenge and independent audits where corrective actions are implemented, are necessary to assure safe and reliable operations
 - The importance of maintaining multiple independent barriers to an incident was reinforced, with several different types of barriers preferred.
 - The regular practice of reviewing the circumstances of near misses was found to be valuable, particularly where worker knowledge provided insights into design and process vulnerabilities.
- Comment on the NOPSA discussion papers regarding [Accommodation Standards](#)⁵ and [Helicopter Operations](#)⁶ closes on 31 January 2008

³ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/document/Presentation%20-%20Key%20Performance%20Indicators.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.irfshoresafety.com/conferences/2007conference/>

⁵ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/document/Discussion%20Paper%20on%20Offshore%20Accommodation%20Standards.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/document/NOPSA%20-%20HART%20Aviation%20report%20on%20Offshore%20Helicopter%20Operations%20Research%20-%20public.pdf>

NATIONAL PROGRAMMES:

- NOPSA will be conducting National Programmes workshops regarding Lifting Operations and Facility Integrity on [Monday 25 February in Perth](#)⁷ and [Friday 29 February in Melbourne](#)⁸. Places are still available for both workshops.

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS:

- The industry CEO Safety Leadership Forum has been active in areas which include:
 - sharing best practice
 - promotion of safety improvement through leadership
 - safety culture in the workplace
 - reporting of performance indicators
 - common national induction standards

[Details of the working groups and activities](#)⁹ are available from the APPEA website (see bottom of that page).

- NOPSA has commenced quarterly meetings with representatives of the APPEA Health Safety and Operations (HSO) Committee. The first meeting included discussion of the NOPSA budget, leading safety indicators, safety performance measurement and outcomes of the industry CEO Safety Leadership Forum.
- NOPSA is meeting quarterly with workforce representatives starting in February 2008.
- NOPSA met with representatives of DRET, AMSA and AGS to review the inclusion of small scale construction vessels in the safety case regime. NOPSA also met with officers of CASA to discuss opportunities for joint inspections.

WEBSITE:

- NOPSA has posted onto its web-site a [summary of actions](#)¹⁰ arising, relevant to NOPSA, from the 2007 HSR Forum. The document includes NOPSA's comments and proposed actions.

⁷ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/document/Invitation%20-%20NP%20Workshops%20Perth.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/document/Invitation%20-%20NP%20Workshops%20Melbourne.pdf>

⁹ http://www.2007safetyconference.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=19&Itemid=33

¹⁰ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/document/Summary%20-%20HSR%20Forum%202007%20Actions%20-%20NOPSA%20Response.pdf>

NOPSA PERSONNEL:

- Wayne Vernon has joined NOPSA as an OHS inspector.
- The selection of Simon Schubach and Phil Palmer for promotion to the new positions of General Manager (Regulatory) and General Manager (Business) respectively, formally establishes the new structure of NOPSA which was announced to the industry in December 2007.
- Kevin Clary and Gavin Guyan have been selected from within NOPSA for promotion to Team Leader, filling existing vacant positions.

REGULATORY ACTIVITIES in January 2008:

Disclaimer: Activity and incident quantities identified here may vary as further information becomes available. Statistics are prepared just prior to the last Friday of the month.

As at January 24th 2008

Safety Case Assessment

One new and four revised Safety Cases were accepted.

One new Safety Case was rejected.

Two Safety Cases are still under assessment.

Three Scopes of Validation have been agreed.

Eight Scopes of Validation are still under review.

Inspections

Six Inspections and no audits were conducted. Subjects of interest included:

- Compliance with the Safety Case
- Food safety
- Facility integrity
- Lifting operations
- Close out of previous planned inspection recommendations
- Audit processes
- Liaison with HSR's

Incidents & Complaints:

19 Dangerous Occurrences and five Lost Time Injuries were reported.

Of the reported incidents, significant events include:

- six unplanned events where an Emergency Response Plan was implemented
- one hydrocarbon release
- one petroleum liquid spill
- two incidents that could have caused an LTI ≥ 3 days
- nine incidents caused damage to safety critical equipment

There were five complaints reported.

Enforcement

One Improvement Notice was issued requiring demonstration of the reliability of some items of safety critical equipment.

Nil Prosecution Briefs were prepared.

Nil Prohibition Notices were served.

Nil Letters of warning/advice were issued.

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

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