



From CEO John Clegg

Welcome to our new-look newsletter. We are committed to providing useful information that will assist all industry participants improve health and safety outcomes and we are pleased at the strong readership we have gained since NOPSA's beginnings. I am very pleased this month to see the overwhelming demand for places at our National Programme workshops (facility integrity and lifting operations) in Perth and Melbourne. This indicates a strong interest by all of you in the industry to keep looking for ways to lift safety standards. A link in this newsletter to an investigation by the Norwegian Petroleum Safety Authority into a fatality on a lifting vessel is a salutary lesson in how failure to properly managed safety can kill. This is why we value safety alerts so highly as we seek to collaborate with industry to encourage it to share lessons and constantly work together to reduce risks in the industry to an acceptable level. We can never afford to become complacent.

Industry matters

Industry encouraged to issue Safety Alerts

Safety Alerts are widely recognised as very valuable tools for sharing lessons learnt. NOPSA issues Safety Alerts as part of its function to promote occupational health and safety. However, NOPSA prefers Operators, or other responsible parties, to issue alerts following significant incidents.

Despite concern by regulators and the industry about issuing alerts while incidents are under investigation, NOPSA encourages those involved in incident investigation to share the most important lessons as soon as is reasonably possible. The Operator is generally best placed to issue detailed, technically correct information in alerts which are a vital aid in preventing similar incidents.

[Alerts may be issued by NOPSA](#)¹ if the Operator is reluctant, or slow, in issuing them. In some cases, NOPSA may also be able to identify trends across the industry, which justifies it in releasing these important lessons to a wider industry audience. NOPSA's view is that industry is best placed to develop alerts and there are a number of excellent industry sources of alerts including those coordinated through [APPEA](#)² and other examples on NOPSA's website.

Reminder of MoSOF obligations

Operators are reminded of their obligations under the accident and dangerous occurrence requirements of the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) (Management of Safety on Offshore Facilities) Regulations 1996* (MoSOF). These require them to notify NOPSA as soon as practicable and then to report within three days on the 21 items set out in the NOPSA determination on reporting.

In cases of incidents involving hydrocarbon releases, Operators of fixed hydrocarbon producing facilities are requested to complete a standardised [Hydrocarbon Release form](#)³, jointly developed by APPEA and NOPSA

Know a top HSR?

APPEA is now inviting nominations for the 2007 Offshore Health and Safety Representative Award which will be presented at the 2008 HSR Forum to be held at the Burswood Convention Centre, Perth on Tuesday, August 5. The forum is being organised by a steering committee drawn from range of stakeholders including NOPSA.

Any person who was an HSR in Australia's offshore petroleum industry during 2007 may be nominated. Details of the HSR's contribution to offshore safety during this period will be required along with contact details of at least one referee. Nominations can be submitted by email to mtaylor@appea.com.au before Tuesday July 22.

Call for conference papers

Interested parties are [invited to submit conference presentations](#)⁴ for the APPEA National Oil & Gas Safety Conference to be held at the Burswood Convention Centre on August 6 and 7. Topics of interest include health and wellbeing, process safety, managing the skills shortage and sharing best practice. The deadline for 250 word proposals is March 27. Contact Miranda Taylor, senior safety advisor, APPEA for more information: mtaylor@appea.com.au

HSR forum presentations sought

Leading into the APPEA Oil & Gas Safety Conference is the HSR Forum to be held on August 5. HSRs are invited to submit presentations for this forum, "Sharing Solutions for Safety". Topics sought include safety solutions and good practice for noise, heat stress and fatigue management, risk management, production versus safety, conducting job/hazard/safety analysis. The deadline for 250 word proposals is April 24. Contact mtaylor@appea.com.au for more information.

More awareness needed of workplace laws

NOPSA encourages operators of facilities and members of the workforce to be aware of the workplace provisions in Part 3, Schedule 7 to the PSLA 1967, including the arrangements for designated work groups and health and safety representatives. A key feature of the clause is that it enables the whole workforce at a facility to be included in one or more designated work groups. It does not limit any work group to the employees of a particular employer. For an overview of the provisions of Part 3 see the [presentation](#)⁵ on the NOPSA website. A summary of [arrangements](#)⁶ for designated work groups and health and safety representatives is also available on the NOPSA site.

Duty to keep health records

Operators are reminded of their obligation to keep health records for all members of the workforce, not just their own employees: PSLA 67, Schedule 7, Clause 3, duties of operators includes: *Cl. 3 (2) (g): monitor the health and safety of all members of the workforce and keep records of that monitoring.* Examples of monitoring include exposure assessments including noise, hazardous substances, heat stress and fatigue. Health surveillance records will include this monitoring data. More details about [health record](#)⁷ requirements are on the NOPSA website.

Duties of contractors, employers, manufacturers and suppliers

NOPSA has developed comprehensive policies and procedures for dealing with operators but is less advanced with respect to contractors, employers, manufacturers and suppliers (CEM&S). Their duties can include Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act, Schedule 7 clauses 4, 5, 6 & 7 and include various regulations. It is feasible that NOPSA could undertake both OHS compliance and promotional work with CEM&S.

CEM&S are not a relatively small and tightly defined group like operators. It is possible that the regulation of CEM&S requires quite different strategies. NOPSA intends to study the issues involved during 2008-09. This is expected to result in a report to NOPSA management with proposals and recommendations on how to discharge NOPSA's statutory functions in relation to CEM&S.

Inspection feedback

NOPSA is committed to continuous improvement of its regulatory practices. Industry personnel involved in a NOPSA offshore facility inspection may now submit feedback on the inspection via email to feedback.inspection@nopsa.gov.au

International

Findings from investigation into fatality on Saipem 7000

A 48-year-old sailor from the Philippines working on the lifting vessel Saipem 7000 in the North Sea fell into the water from a winch platform about 30 metres above sea level and drowned in August 2007. An [investigation report](#)⁸ prepared by the Petroleum Safety Authority Norway (PSA) into the incident has been translated into English and is available on the PSA website. The investigation found a number of nonconformities with safety and risk procedures and concluded that the deceased was probably hit by a hydraulic hose as it was tightened suddenly. The investigation presents a detailed examination of the course of events leading up to the incident and many lessons can be learned from the safety and risk analysis in the detailed report.

Report into casing incident

A report into an incident on the mobile facility, [West Epsilon](#)⁹ in September 2007, when a casing weighing 8.5 tonnes fell on the drilling hut is now available in English on the PSA website. The direct cause of the accident was a lifting collar not properly closed and locked when the casing was lifted. However the report examines a range of underlying contributing factors.

National Programmes

NOPSA'S NATIONAL RISK FOCUS

Workshops prove popular

Strong demand for places at the two national programme workshops held by NOPSA this month in Perth and Melbourne saw the workshops over-subscribed. Speakers with extensive experience in industry and regulatory fields provided detailed information and latest findings to promote safe practice for operators and health and safety representatives on the two key issues of facility integrity and lifting operations. Presentations from the workshops are expected to be available on the NOPSA website under National Programmes shortly.



At the Perth workshop (from left): Mary Hackett (Woodside Energy), Eric Weddell (Esso Australia), John Clegg, Simon Schubach (NOPSA), Chris Cain (MUA), Linda Morich (Unions WA)

Stakeholder relations

Review of NOPSA now underway

A review of the operations of NOPSA as required by Section 150Z of the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967* (PSLA) is now underway with public consultations taking place in Perth, Melbourne and Canberra until March 7. The review will look at progress in bringing about improvements in the occupational health and safety of the offshore oil and gas industry since NOPSA began operations in 2005. The review team is scheduled to report to the Federal Minister for Resources and Energy within six months. The team comprises: Magne Ognedal (CEO Petroleum Safety Authority, Norway), Bruce Lake (MD Vermillion Oil & Gas Australia), Derek Griffiths (Consultant, previously H&S Director Rio Tinto). The review team contact is Linda Tyndall-Mather: linda.tyndall-mather@ret.gov.au

Levy review

Following the operational review of NOPSA, a three-yearly [review](#)¹⁰ of NOSPAs cost recovery arrangements will be conducted by the Federal Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism.

Visit NOPSA at APPEA exhibition

NOPSA will be one of the exhibitors at the approaching APPEA conference and exhibition at the Perth Convention Centre from 6-9 April 2008. We welcome visitors to our exhibit so call in to get more information on our activities or just have a chat with our representatives.

Website

Dropped blocks safety alert

A MODU was in the final stages of pulling the Blowout Preventer with the travelling block at its uppermost limit when a failure in the drawworks disc braking system led the blocks, complete with riser and suspended BOP to fall about 50 metres in an uncontrolled manner until the Top Drive impacted against the riser gimbal at the rig floor level. NOPSA's [safety alert No 19](#)¹¹ now on the website looks at the background and the key lessons to be drawn from this incident.

New Act in place soon

As noted in the January Newsletter, NOPSA has been informed that the Offshore Petroleum Act 2006 (OPA) which will replace the PSLA 1967 is likely to be proclaimed in mid 2008. Primarily, the OPA is a re-write of the PSLA in more modern drafting style, although it includes some minor policy changes. A brief [explanation of the changes to the OHS provisions](#)¹² is available on the NOPSA website

Media release highlights National Programmes

NOPSA's latest [media release](#)¹³ is aimed at drawing attention to its national programmes and the need for heightened awareness of the two areas of focus, Facility Integrity and Lifting Operations.

Policies published

Additional [policies](#)¹⁴ which NOPSA's regulatory activities are based on have been published on the website. The additions include:

- PL0002 – Operator Nomination and Registration
- PL0050 – Assessment
- PL0243 – Field Development Plan Assessment
- PL0053 – Pipeline Safety Management Plan Assessment
- PL0054 – Diving Submission Assessment
- PL0093 – Notification, Response and Investigation

Regulatory activities

As at 29 February 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.

Safety Case Assessment

One new and eight revised Safety Cases were accepted.

Two revised Safety Cases were rejected.

14 Safety Cases are still under assessment.

Four Scopes of Validation have been agreed.

Eight Scopes of Validation are still under review.

Inspections

Five inspections and no audits were conducted. Subjects of interest included:

- Crane maintenance and manriding
- Loss of well control MAE
- Permit to Work
- Noise Management

Incidents and complaints

There were 23 Dangerous Occurrences and one Lost Time injury reported. Significant events within the reported incidents included:

- Five cases of failure or damage of safety critical equipment
- Five incidents that could have resulted in death or serious injury
- Two hydrocarbon releases between 1 and 300 kg in mass

There were no complaints reported.

Enforcement

Two Improvement Notices were issued requiring:

- compliance with regulations governing noise exposure
- rectification of damaged electrical equipment in hazardous area (close out of recommended actions)

No Prosecution Briefs, Prohibition Notices or Letters of warning/advice were issued.

Subscribe

[Past issues of this newsletter¹⁵](#) are available from the NOPSA website. Operators and other employers are encouraged to circulate this newsletter to their workforce. Please add your details to our [distribution list¹⁶](#) to receive future copies of this newsletter.

Find out more

¹ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/alert/>

² http://www.appea.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=242&Itemid=227

³ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/programmes/N-3000-FM207%20Form%20-%20Hydrocarbon%20Release%20Report.dot>

⁴ http://www.appea.com.au/content/pdfs_docs_xls/call_for_presentations_-_safety.pdf

⁵ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/presentation/NOPSA%20presentation%20on%20Workplace%20Arrangements%20for%20HSRs.pdf>

⁶ http://www.nopsa.gov.au/hsr_designated.asp

⁷ http://www.nopsa.gov.au/occ_health.asp

⁸ http://www.ptil.no/English/Helse+miljo+og+sikkerhet/Tilsyn+og+raadgivning/7_gransking_mob_saipem.htm

⁹ http://www.ptil.no/English/Helse+miljo+og+sikkerhet/Tilsyn+og+raadgivning/7_gransking_hendelse_westpsilon_sept07.htm

¹⁰ <http://www.ret.gov.au/General/Resources-EP/Pages/NationalOffshorePetroleumSafetyAuthorityNOPSA.aspx>

¹¹ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/alert/>

¹² http://www.nopsa.gov.au/legislation_opa_introduction.asp

¹³ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/media/>

¹⁴ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/policy/>

¹⁵ http://www.nopsa.gov.au/CEO_emails/

¹⁶ info@nopsa.gov.au



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