



Media Release

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For Immediate Release

Oil company admits breach of offshore safety laws

Coogee Resources (Ashmore Cartier) Pty Ltd has admitted breaching occupational health and safety laws on its Jabiru Venture offshore oil production facility, 600 km west of Darwin.

In a first for the offshore industry, the National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority (NOPSA) prosecuted Coogee in the Darwin Magistrates Court after investigating an accident that occurred in May 2006 on the Timor Sea floating production, storage and offloading facility (FPSO). A man was badly injured in a fall.

The NOPSA investigation found a work crew was working without fall restraint devices on an elevated platform that was not protected by guardrails. One of the men fell 4.7 meters and suffered broken arms, but survived and has since recovered.

NOPSA's investigation found the company failed to ensure that their safety management system was properly implemented in that work activities were not carried out safely. In particular, the company did not provide sufficient and relevant training and there was a failure to undertake appropriate Job Safety Analysis which would have identified the hazards and the necessary risk control measures.

"It is clear that Coogee's safety management system could have prevented this accident," NOPSA's CEO, John Clegg, said.

"However, in this case, elements like hazard identification and in particular risk control measures were not being implemented. We charged the operating company, rather than an individual, because the accident was attributable to failures in the implementation of the safety management system at the facility.

"This penalty is a warning to all companies in the offshore petroleum industry that it is essential to foster a work environment and culture that recognises and proactively seeks to reduce the hazards and risks to protect their most valuable resource, their people.

I believe a good safety culture is essential to ensure meaningful implementation of an Operator's safety management system commitments."

In the Darwin Magistrates Court, Coogee pleaded guilty to a breach of schedule 7, Occupational health and safety, of the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967. NOPSA is a Commonwealth statutory agency established in 2005 to administer this law, regulate occupational health and safety and to improve health and safety outcomes and reduce the likelihood and consequences of major accident events in the Australian offshore oil and gas industry.

The case has been adjourned to 5 December 2007 for a decision on penalty.

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