



# Media Release

---

## Media Release

1 June 2009

### Offshore health and safety report indicates challenges facing industry

The National Petroleum Safety Authority (NOPSA) today launched its first annual *Offshore Health and Safety Performance Report 2007-08* which indicates a number of safety challenges facing the Australian offshore petroleum industry.

The report contains analyses of incidents reported during the year 2007-08 and summary data for previous years.

“Although the safety record of Australia’s offshore petroleum industry is reasonable compared with many other industries, there is room for improvement, particularly when the performance is compared to that of petroleum operations in other countries,” said NOPSA CEO John Clegg.

According to the report, challenges facing the Australian industry include:

- improving leadership - strong leadership is required for the Australian industry to move to the next level
- dealing with a shortage of skilled personnel
- managing ageing facilities and minimising gas releases

Mr Clegg said gas releases are a concern as they are an indicator of the potential for a Major Accident Event on an offshore facility. Gas releases are often related to facility integrity issues and the most common root causes for incidents related to facility integrity continue to be equipment design and maintenance deficiencies, particularly backlogs in the maintenance of safety critical equipment. NOPSA continues to emphasise the need for operators to focus on the integrity of their facilities and the implementation and auditing of effective maintenance systems.

The report indicates that personal injury rates in the industry have remained fairly steady over the years but are relatively high compared with other countries. A significant number of personal injuries related to lifting operations where the most common root causes were problems relating to procedures, training and maintenance. It is worth noting that many of those injured were relatively inexperienced in the job.

Dangerous occurrences, which although not involving personal injury, are considered useful lead indicators of how industry is managing safety, increased over the reporting period. In particular, the rate of dangerous occurrences involving damage to safety critical equipment showed significant increase. This highlights an ongoing challenge that industry faces in dealing with ageing facilities.

NOPSA will use the results in its performance report to influence its inspections of offshore facilities over the coming period. NOPSA will issue the industry performance reports on an annual basis.

“Industry must rise to the challenge of improving safety outcomes further. The nature of the offshore safety regime means that the principal duty of care for the safe operation of a facility rests with its operator.

“Our aim is to move beyond the view of safety as compliance with codes and standards and towards an overall improved safety culture within an organisation,” said NOPSA CEO, John Clegg.

Copies of the current report can be viewed on NOPSA’s website ([www.nopsa.gov.au](http://www.nopsa.gov.au)) or ordered from: [info@nopsa.gov.au](mailto:info@nopsa.gov.au)

**Enquiries: NOPSA external affairs officer, Louise Dumas: Tel 0434 565 722**

*The National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority (NOPSA) is the occupational health and safety (OHS) regulator for the Australian offshore petroleum industry. NOPSA is a Commonwealth statutory agency that regulates under the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006 in Commonwealth waters and equivalent OHS legislation in designated coastal waters of the States and Northern Territory.*