



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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**NATIONAL OFFSHORE PETROLEUM SAFETY AUTHORITY**  
**WEDNESDAY, 13 APRIL 2005 – 11:30AM**

The National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority (NOPSA) is a newly formed national body with headquarters in Perth, Western Australia.

The Hon Ian Macfarlane MP, Minister for Industry, Tourism & Resources was scheduled to officially open the headquarters of NOPSA located at Level 22, St Martins Tower, 44 St Georges Terrace, Perth on Wednesday, 13 April 2005. Due to last-minute, high-priority commitments, the Hon Ian Macfarlane is unable to officiate at the function. In his absence, Minister Macfarlane has requested John Hartwell, Head of Resources Division in the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, to read his speech on his behalf and to unveil the plaque.

The Hon Alan Carpenter, Minister for State Development; Energy (WA), and The Hon Theo Theophanous, Minister for Energy Industries & Resources (Vic), will attend the opening.

NOPSA began operations on 1 January 2005. Its role is to:

- work with the industry, workforce and other authorities to ensure all health and safety risks from offshore petroleum operations are properly managed
- administer offshore petroleum safety regulation
- establish and maintain a legislative framework which encourages continuous improvement in the management of health and safety offshore.

In 1999 the Commonwealth Government commissioned an Independent Review Team (IRT) which reported in 2001 and recommended the current framework of laws be revised and the regulatory system be restructured by establishing a national petroleum safety regulatory authority

In 2002 the Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources (MCMPR) endorsed principles for regulation that included:

- Consistent national approach
- Safety case approach

- Legislative framework that is clear and enforceable and that requires operators to discharge their responsibilities for safety

The establishment of NOPSA was preceded by extensive work on the form of the regulatory regime. Recommendations from the MCMPR and various working groups included:

- Australia's offshore safety regulatory regime be amended to ensure that safety of offshore petroleum activities in Commonwealth and State/NT coastal waters are regulated by a single national authority.
- The role of the Regulator be clearly defined, based on guiding principles, working to performance standards and assisted by technical guidance to assure consistency of enforcement.
- Amended Occupational Health and Safety law include, but not be limited to, the provision of duty of care requirements, safety case assessment and enforcement, comprehensive incident reporting requirements and adequate powers for regulatory authorities, including graduated enforcement measures.
- The development and implementation of safety case performance standards that are commensurate with the magnitude of the hazard being managed.

An important aspect of the governance arrangements for NOPSA is that it has an Advisory Board and a CEO, John Clegg. The Board provides advice and gives recommendations directly to Commonwealth, State and Northern Territory Ministers on offshore safety policy, strategic matters, and the performance of NOPSA. The CEO keeps the Board informed of NOPSA's operations. The CEO and members of the Board were nominated for appointment by the Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources, and appointed by the Commonwealth Minister.

As NOPSA is a Commonwealth statutory agency, the Commonwealth Minister is responsible for issuing policy principles or directions. Any directions that are given will not relate to operations at a particular facility, although the Minister will be able to direct the Authority to investigate a particular act or dangerous occurrence at a facility.

In addition to its headquarters in Perth, NOPSA has offices in Melbourne and Darwin. Staff currently comprises 24 OHS inspectors and a small administrative staff.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: -    JOHN CLEGG, CEO:        PH: (08) 6461 7000**  
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**Key talking points follow:**

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- Unusually, the total running costs of NOPSA are met from the industry safety levies. The levy structure was designed to be as equitable across the industry and linked to NOPSA's activities and costs. As was agreed with industry the cost recovery arrangements will be reviewed after 12 months of operation. The basis of levies is set in the Offshore Petroleum (Safety Levies) Regulations 2004. The mechanism for charging is consistent with the Government's cost recovery policy.
- Australia is the only country to have carried out a root and branch review of its offshore petroleum health and safety regulation without it being pre-empted by a major accident.
- NOPSA is one of only two Commonwealth Authorities that have their head office in Perth.