

**Meeting Date: Wednesday 15 May 2024**

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## Meeting objectives:

To seek the group's feedback and provide a variety of community perspectives on specific matters of interest to NOPSEMA or members of the reference group, relevant to offshore energy environmental management, to help guide NOPSEMA's approach to regulation of environmental management.

## Meeting details:

The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams at 9:00am AWST on Wednesday 15 May 2024.

Attendees included representatives of NOPSEMA and members of the Community and Environment Reference Group (CERG), as listed in Attachment 1.

## Meeting record:

### Agenda Item 1 – Introduction and welcome

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed participants.

The agenda and objectives for the meeting were confirmed, it was noted that Danielle Hartshorn was unable to attend the meeting, but she has provided points to Cameron via email for discussion points at agenda item 5.4.

### Agenda Item 2 – Register of interests

The Chair noted the update to the register.

### Agenda Item 3 – Confirmation of record of Meeting 12 and review of actions

The record of the meeting of 8 November 2023 were accepted.

The action items were reviewed and updated as appropriate.

### Agenda Item 4 – Recent community interactions

#### Agenda Item 4.1 – update from CERG members

CERG members provided an update to the reference group with their most recent community interactions.

Common themes included:

- Interest from the community regarding oil and gas industry in general and greenhouse gas emissions / implications for climate change increasingly influencing community stance.

#### **Decommissioning**

- Approach to decommissioning of assets will this be happening in a safe manner and concern regarding deviating from full removal.

#### **Carbon Capture & Storage (CCS)**

- Whether there is scientific reasoning regarding carbon capture storage (CCS) activities and their feasibility or effectiveness. Queries regarding Geoscience Australia or CSIRO and other agency role in providing more education needed around what happens and how it occurs.
- Information packages and links should be readily available and commitment to ongoing long-term monitoring on CCS.
- Continued lack of education or not effective communication available to the community on topics such as CCS and Decommissioning.
- Improving publicly available information and community education on what CCS is, how it is planned and assessed (scientific reasoning), how it monitored, it's connection with programs such as the future gas strategy and how the community will be impacted or be consulted.

### **Consultation and public expectations re offshore energy**

- The community continues to seek clarification and improved relationships with the offshore energy industry on consultation. Timeframes continue to be problematic.
- There are clear differences in community relationships and consultation /engagement expectations between states
- Suggestions that NOPSEMA has a role to play in improving relationships and educating the community on the offshore energy sector and its regulation, including strengthening first nations relationships and understanding.
- Groups and individuals want to engage and help with consultation, there is a general sentiment that the east coast of Australia has more engaging relationships which seems to be more valuable.
- History and backgrounds are different from each state, Victoria is further along than other states with regard to how consultation works.
- Community is concerned as a result of offshore wind areas changing and community feels ignored especially in SE Victoria.
- Community is keen to understand how oil and gas works and for NOPSEMA to provide more information on consultation and hold community consultation with not only wildlife parks but also First Nation groups.

### **First nations**

- Coastal groups are feeling consultation fatigue/frustration and offshore matters don't get the attention they deserve. There seems to be a power dynamic in the Pilbara between resourced companies and Elders with a long history of conflicting dynamics.
- The challenge for Traditional Owners to adjust from onshore to offshore, the relationship needs to be strengthened. NOPSEMA needs to continue fostering these relationships.
- Feeling that the problem is consultation timelines are too short and timelines impossible to meet, requesting consultation commence earlier with better quality information provided.

### **Other**

- Lack of trust from the community in the collaboration between Commonwealth and states on topics such as spatial planning is creating tensions that are not surprisingly flowing into NOPSEMA's approval processes even though there are issues for the planning stages.
- Communities concerned with companies saying they intend reuse of assets only as a means to delay decommissioning and associated consultation with communities.

## Agenda Item 5 – Topics for discussion/information

### Agenda Item 5.1 – Consultation practices of titleholders with relevant persons and expectations of good practice on consultation – what does ‘good’ look like under current regulations

CERG members discussed the discussion paper presented with perspectives offered including:

- The pressure on timelines for companies to make progress with project deadlines is creating issues and would be better to look at things with a longer-term commitment.
- Consultation starts too late in the process and there needs to be a balance between amount and quality of information otherwise when Eps are submitted the consultation will have been perceived as inadequate.
- Important that NOPSEMA continues to build trust and maintain transparency with the community and stakeholders.

### Agenda Item 5.2 – Marine geophysical surveys and investigations – clarifying terminology and misinformation

CERG members discussed the discussion paper presented with perspectives offered including:

- The term blasting can reflect negatively on the community. The misuse of the language can be misleading and open to interpretation. It would be helpful to have a good description on what a good seismic airgun discharge looks like.
- There are broader issues around environmental consequences, with the sentiment that the regulator does not look at the impacts. There appears to be increased community concern around these projects. Can NOPSEMA focus on what controls can be put in place so impacts can be managed to acceptable levels.
- The cultural impact on sea/country is felt very deeply, reiterating the need to minimise impact.
- Risks of oil spills is difficult to understand.
- The regulator needs to stay on top of research around the marine environment that we operate in.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to circulate Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) research on impacts from seismic surveys to pearl oysters and other marine life.

See below:

- [North West Shoals to Shore | AIMS](#)

<https://www.aims.gov.au/research-topics/monitoring-and-discovery/north-west-shoals-shore>

### Agenda Item 5.3 – Public access and amenity management for offshore wind projects

CERG members discussed the discussion paper ([link](#)) and agreed to include the OIR in CERG meeting going forward. Topics of spatial planning and environment in relation to offshore wind projects.

**ACTION:** NOPSEMA to provide members with a survey of possible topics to discuss at future meetings.

### Agenda Item 5.4 – Community interactions with the offshore petroleum industry that might benefit from the influence of the regulator (element two ) – What would CERG like to know more about on this topic for presentation at the next meeting?

The chair welcomed suggestions in addition to those provided and advised that a survey would be sent out following the meeting to prioritise the topics of most interest, which would then be used to inform future meeting agenda topics for discussion.

**ACTION:** Invite DCCEEW to attend next meeting to discuss marine parks.

**ACTION:** What environment assessments look like - NOSPEMA to provide members with a link to

- [Environmental Assessment Plan Policy Environmental Assessment Plan Policy](#)
- [Offshore project proposal assessment policy.pdf \(nopsema.gov.au\)](#)

## Agenda Item 6 – Review and close out

### Agenda Item 6.1 – Date of next meeting

Secretariat will contact CERG in the new year with a proposed next meeting date.

The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and closed the meeting at 11:24am.

## Attachment 1

### Attendees list

<b>NOPSEMA representatives</b>	
Sue McCarrey, Chief Executive Officer (Chair)	
Cameron Grebe, Deputy CEO – Strategic Regulation and Improvement	
Leah Wilson/Natalie Kelly, Secretariat, CERG	
<b>Reference group members</b>	
Jacqueline Hine	Andrew Levings
Robyn Glindemann	Sander Scheffers
Sean-Paul Stephens	Piers Verstegen
Kirsten Rough	Luke Skinner
Stuart Field	Terry Atkinson
<b>Apologies</b>	
Danielle Hartshorn	
Jason Froud	
Jess Lerch	