



CONSULTATION

Bass Strait Environment Plan

Five-year revision

Esso is committed to engaging with the communities where we operate and helping our stakeholders to understand our business. This information bulletin has been developed as part of Esso's commitment to keep relevant persons and other stakeholders informed of planned activities in Bass Strait and to provide them with sufficient information about the nature and scale of the activity, as well as its potential risks and impacts, so that they can make an informed decision as to whether their functions, interests or activities are affected.

Overview

Esso Australia Resources Pty Ltd (Esso) is a wholly owned subsidiary of ExxonMobil Australia Pty Ltd. Esso is the operator of the assets in Bass Strait that are part of the Gippsland Basin Joint Venture between Esso and Woodside Energy (Bass Strait) Pty Ltd (Woodside Energy) and the Kipper Unit Joint Venture (Esso, Woodside Energy, and Mitsui E&P Australia Pty Ltd). These assets comprise 19 platforms with approximately 425 wells, six subsea facilities and more than 800 kilometres of subsea pipelines.

Esso conducts its Bass Strait activities in accordance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development, and accepted environment plans (EPs). EPs are developed in accordance with the requirements of the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* (Cth) (OPGGGS Act), require acceptance by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA), and are reviewed and updated every five years. They are a comprehensive document that describes the existing environment, including relevant persons, and how Esso will undertake activities to avoid, minimise or manage potential environmental impacts to As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP) and meet regulatory acceptability criteria. Demonstrating ALARP requires a titleholder to implement all available control measures where the cost is not grossly disproportionate to the environmental benefit gained from implementing the control measure.

In the course of preparing an EP, Esso must consult with relevant authorities, persons and organisations whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by the proposed activities (i.e. a relevant person) and provide the opportunity for any feedback.

This information bulletin has been developed as part of stakeholder consultation for the five-year revision of Esso's Bass Strait Environment Plan (BSEP).

The currently-accepted BSEP is publicly available at: https://info.nopsema.gov.au/environment_plans/470/show_public.

Scope

Esso's Bass Strait facilities are operated in accordance with defined stages of petroleum activity as shown in Figure 1.

In accordance with the OPPGS Act, the BSEP is developed to identify, evaluate and manage the environmental impacts and risks associated with all Esso activities in the Production, Cessation of Production and Stasis Mode stages of petroleum activity, in Commonwealth waters. Decommissioning-related activities that fall within the Cessation of Production and Stasis Mode stages include plugging and abandonment of wells and facilities preparation for removal.

Location

Esso's Bass Strait operations are located off Victoria's Gippsland coast in Australia. Esso's facilities are in water depths that range from 38 metres (Dolphin platform) to 402 metres (Blackback subsea facility). Their distance from the coast ranges from 12 kilometres (Seahorse subsea facility) to 87 kilometres (Blackback subsea facility). Figure 2 shows the location of the Bass Strait facilities.

An Area to Be Avoided (ATBA) excludes unauthorised vessels greater than 200 tonnes or 24 metres in length from entering the area around the Bass Strait platforms. The ATBA is defined in Schedule 2 of the OPGGS Act and is administered by NOPSEMA. A traffic separation scheme operates to the south of the ATBA to control coastal shipping.

All Esso's Bass Strait facilities are located within the ATBA, with the exception of the Perch and Dolphin platforms, the Blackback and Kipper subsea facilities, and the associated pipelines.

IN BSEP SCOPE

PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION

Producing gas and condensate from wells and transporting product to shore via pipelines

PREPARATORY DECOMMISSIONING ACTIVITIES

CESSATION OF PRODUCTION

Facility no longer producing. Wells will be plugged and abandoned and facility prepared for decommissioning

STASIS MODE

Platform not in use, visited on 'as needs' basis.

REMOVAL ACTIVITIES

Execution of activities required to achieve agreed facility end state

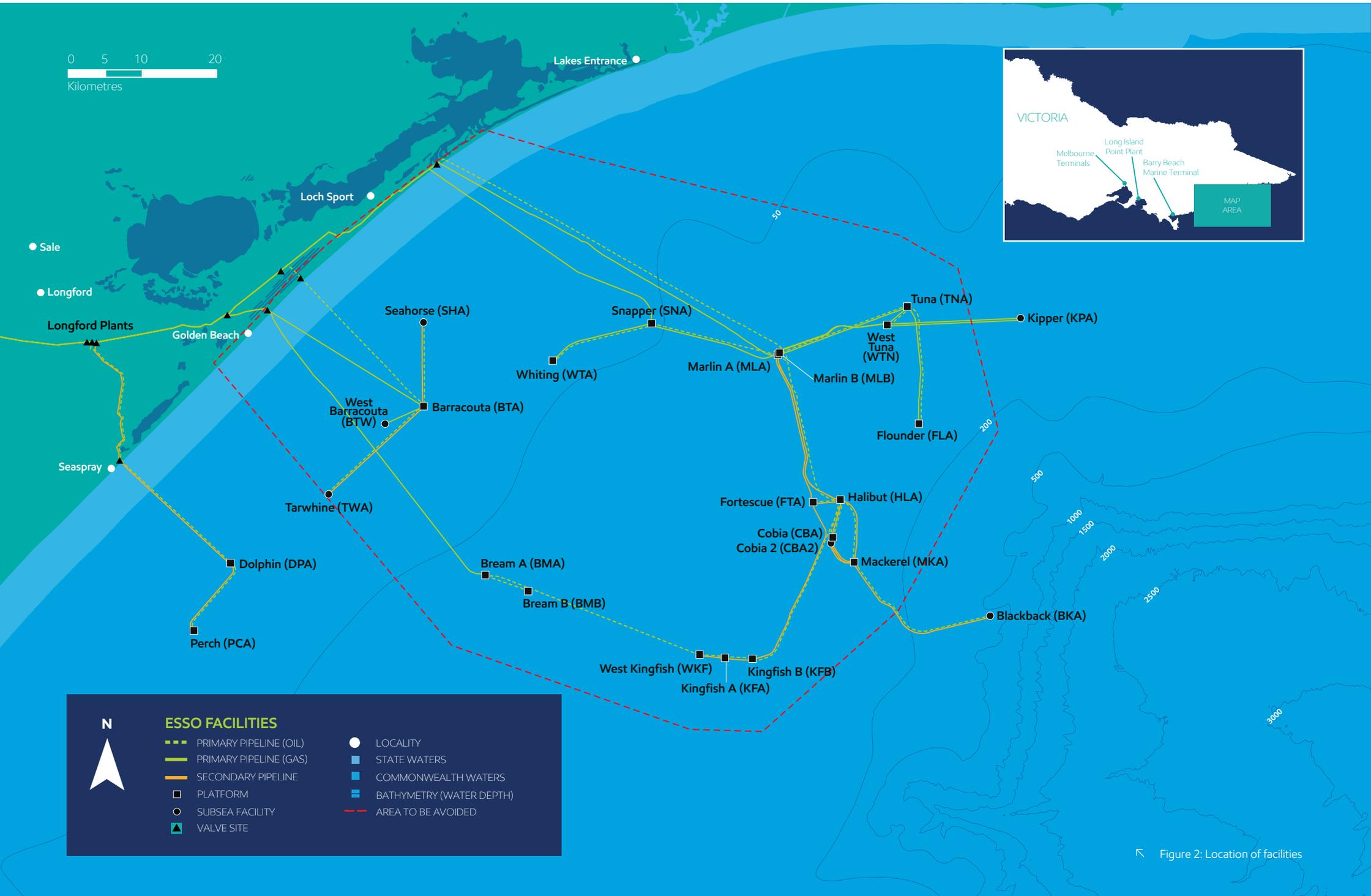
SURRENDER OF TITLES

Following post-removal monitoring as agreed, titleholders apply to National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator to surrender relevant titles

INSPECTION, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

↑ Cover: The Kingfish platforms - West Kingfish, Kingfish A and Kingfish B

↗ Figure 1: Stages of petroleum activity



ESSO FACILITIES

PRIMARY PIPELINE (OIL)	LOCALITY
PRIMARY PIPELINE (GAS)	STATE WATERS
SECONDARY PIPELINE	COMMONWEALTH WATERS
PLATFORM	BATHYMETRY (WATER DEPTH)
SUBSEA FACILITY	AREA TO BE AVOIDED
VALVE SITE	

Figure 2: Location of facilities

Facilities description

Bass Strait infrastructure contains staffed and unstaffed platforms and subsea facilities that have interconnecting pipelines and umbilicals.

Platforms

Esso's facilities currently include 19 platforms with five producing and 14 non-producing. The Barracouta, Marlin, Snapper, Tuna and West Tuna platforms continue gas and condensate production. Production of oil ceased in Bass Strait in 2024.

The majority of platforms support 'topsides', as shown in Figure 3, that include the production facilities, living quarters for platform workers, and a helicopter landing pad.

Subsea facilities

Esso currently operates six subsea facilities in Bass Strait including two producing and four non-producing facilities. The Kipper and West Barracouta subsea facilities continue production.

Pipelines

Esso's offshore pipeline network in Commonwealth waters currently comprises around 790 kilometres of pipelines at depths ranging from approximately 25 to 30 metres. The pipeline network includes primary and secondary pipelines, in addition to umbilicals and ancillary subsea property. Of the 34 primary pipelines, 11 are transporting production hydrocarbons, with the remainder in Cessation of Production or Stasis Mode. The pipelines vary in size from 65 millimetres up to 600 millimetres nominal diameter. They also vary in age, with the oldest installed in 1968 and the most recent in 2021.

Activity description

The Production stage activities covered by the BSEP include all activities required for the facilities to produce hydrocarbons (now gas and condensate only), which is then distributed via pipelines. This includes all:

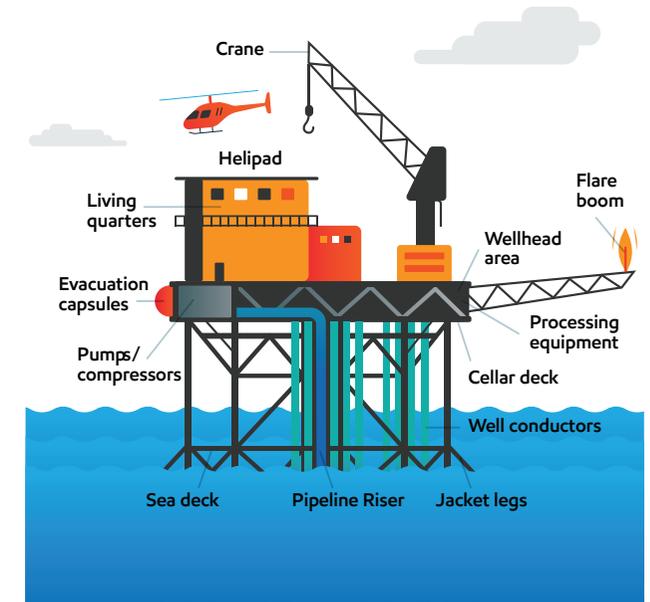
- operations, including platform, subsea facility and pipelines
- wellwork

- inspection, maintenance and repair (IMR) including well integrity testing, structural and corrosion control maintenance/repair as required, and checks on operating systems such as fuel gas, air compressors, crane and lifting equipment, open and closed piles, and safety systems
- support operations, including vessels, remotely operated vehicles (ROV) and helicopters.

A facility will move to the Cessation of Production stage when it no longer produces hydrocarbons, or pipelines no longer transport hydrocarbons to shore or supply other facilities with resources. The Cessation of Production stage activities covered by the BSEP involve platform-based activities including:

- well plug and secure using a wireline rig to preserve wellbore integrity prior to plug and abandonment activities
- care and preservation, which involves the shut-in of wells before plug and abandonment activities, except in circumstances such as for the supply of fuel gas for power generation
- well plug and abandonment that involves the permanent closure of a well
- well conductor pull, where well conductors are removed either post-plug and abandonment or as part of decommissioning activities
- facility preparation activities to prepare topsides and jackets for lifting; bulk removal of hydrocarbons; cleaning import and export pipelines; and other activities required to prepare for decommissioning
- pipelines being filled with inhibited water
- removal of wellheads and smaller items of subsea property.

In Stasis Mode, facilities and pipelines are deemed to 'not be in use, nor to be used' in connection with operations as per Section 572 of the OPGGS Act. This indicates the facility, or pipeline is ready for decommissioning. The BSEP includes IMR activities throughout both the Cessation of Production and Stasis Mode stages and includes future decommissioning planning for facilities which are currently producing.



↑ Figure 3: Typical platform

Petroleum Safety Zones and Notice to Mariners

Each platform and subsea facility has a 500-metre Petroleum Safety Zone (PSZ), established by NOPSEMA, around all platforms and subsea facilities, in accordance with Section 616 of the OPGGS Act. There is also a 200-metre operational zone around primary and secondary pipelines more than 3 nautical miles from shore (Commonwealth waters). These PSZs and operational zones are in effect under the current BSEP and will not change under the five-year revision. As such, the existing Notice to Mariners issued by the Australian Hydrographic Service and AUSCOAST warnings issued by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority will continue to apply.

Interaction with commercial fishing

The BSEP activities are located within existing Commonwealth fisheries that may be used by commercial fishers. The impacts to commercial fishing will be minimal as fishers are already required to avoid the established PSZ. Ongoing consultation will continue with the South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association and Seafood Industry Victoria on a quarterly basis.

Oil Pollution Emergency Plan

In accordance with the OPGGS Act, Esso must demonstrate and document oil spill response arrangements. The Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (OPEP) forms part of an EP submission and demonstrates Esso's capability to respond in the unlikely event of an oil spill.

Esso is a member of the Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre, a co-operative national oil spill response organisation, which provides access to additional oil spill response resources if required.

Esso's OPEP interfaces with national, state and industry response plans prepared and implemented by the Australian Government via the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (NatPlan), the Victorian Government (Maritime Emergencies (non-search and rescue) Plan), the Tasmanian Government (TasPlan), the NSW Government (NSW Marine Oil and Chemical Spill Contingency Plan) and the Australian Oil industry's Australian Marine Oil Spill Plan (AMOSPlan) administered by the Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre.

The OPEP defines spill response options which may be applied to a spill event. The selected spill response option(s) would depend upon the size and type of spill; environmental sensitivities within the spill path; prevailing weather conditions; access restrictions and available resources. In all instances, a Net Environmental Benefit Analysis is undertaken, in consultation with relevant government agencies, to determine the most appropriate spill response option.

Potential impacts, consequences and control measures

Esso's aim is to minimise environmental and social impacts associated with the activities outlined in the BSEP. As such, Esso has undertaken an initial assessment to identify potential impacts and consequences to the environment and relevant persons resulting from the activities.

For each potential impact, Esso has outlined control measures to assist relevant persons in making an informed assessment of possible impacts to their functions, interests or activities.

Table 1: Potential key environmental impacts and control measures - Operations, wellwork, IMR, support operations and preparatory decommissioning activities

POTENTIAL IMPACTS	POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES	POTENTIAL CONTROL MEASURES
Physical presence - Seabed disturbance	Localised and temporary increase in turbidity; smothering/alteration of benthic habitats near the seafloor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ROVs will inspect the seafloor post wellwork and IMR activities to confirm that no unplanned equipment has inadvertently been left on the seafloor and is removed where practicable.
Physical interaction - Other marine users	Changes to the function, interests or activities of other users through disruption to activities: commercial fishing; recreational fishing; other marine users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSZs are established in accordance with OPGGS Act. Relevant persons whose activities are within activity locations outside of PSZs will be informed in advance of the commencement of activities. Collaboration with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority in providing adequate warnings and Notices to Mariners.
Planned discharges to the marine environment ¹	Temporary and localised reduction in water quality; temporary change to predator/prey dynamics; injury/mortality to fauna.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routine discharges and vessel waste treatment systems are maintained to international standards. Food scraps will be macerated prior to discharge. Discharged bilge water will have less than 15 parts per million oil in water content. Chemicals planned for discharge will be evaluated to confirm suitability for discharge prior to use. Produced formation water start up procedures to be implemented if required (Marlin B only) Open and closed drains will remain fit-for-purpose.
Noise emissions	Temporary displacement of sound sensitive fauna around active vessels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noise and adaptive management procedures will continue to be implemented. Support vessels and helicopters will comply with Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000 (Cth) Part 8 Division 8.1 interacting with cetaceans.
Light emissions	Temporary and localised changes in ambient light; attraction of light sensitive species; change in fauna behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighting will be kept to a minimum while still meeting navigational and workplace safety requirements. Lighting will be used in accordance with the <i>National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife</i>.

¹ Including treated sewage and food waste; treated bilge and deck wash; cement; cooling water and brine; produced formation water and operational fluids.

Table 1: Potential key environmental impacts and control measures - Operations, wellwork, IMR, support operations and preparatory decommissioning activities continued

POTENTIAL IMPACTS	POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES	POTENTIAL CONTROL MEASURES
Air emissions	Temporary and localised reduction in air quality; contribution to the global greenhouse gas effect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions. Ongoing maintenance of all emissions generating equipment onboard the platforms and vessels. Implementation of emission reduction strategies. Flare system maintenance will ensure efficient combustion.
Waste management	Contribution to onshore landfill; air, water and land pollution if waste is not managed appropriately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste management procedures continue to be implemented and incorporate consideration of the waste hierarchy and ensure waste is handled, monitored and tracked in accordance with applicable legislation and applicable transportation and Environment Protection Agency licencing requirements.
Unplanned introduction of invasive marine species	Displacement of native marine species and habitat domination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All vessels will implement a ballast water management plan. All vessels will comply with Australian biosecurity and ballast water management requirements and guidance.
Unplanned interaction with marine fauna	Impacts to marine fauna.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support vessels and helicopters will comply with Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000 (Cth) Part 8 Division 8.1 interacting with cetaceans. Injury/mortality of <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)-listed fauna will be reported to appropriate regulatory departments.
Accidental or unplanned release of materials, chemicals; hydraulic fluids, drain systems and/or waste/dropped objects	Temporary and localised change in water quality and marine ecosystems; physical harm to marine fauna resulting from ingestion, inhalation or skin contact with hydrocarbons; potential toxicity impacts; injury/mortality to fauna.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oil and chemical stores are banded and located within a deck bund. Chemicals not approved for discharge are stored away from drains/piles. All personnel made aware of spill cleanup requirements and spill kit locations during induction process. All equipment including level indicators, pumps undergo regular IMR per existing programs. Waste handling, storage and disposal procedures are in place. Lifting equipment will be certified and routinely maintained per IMR program. Lifting plans and procedures are in place. Subsea materials register in place to track unplanned dropped objects that cannot be immediately retrieved. Bulk transfer equipment and procedures will meet <i>Guidelines for Offshore Marine Operations</i> requirements and equipment will be routinely maintained.
Vessel collision resulting in unplanned release of hydrocarbons (marine gas oil)	Impacts to water quality and marine ecosystems; temporary closure of areas (fishing grounds, beaches); visual amenity; physical harm to marine fauna resulting from ingestion, inhalation or skin contact with hydrocarbons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSZs are established in accordance with the OPGGS Act. Navigational aids and communication systems are in place. Compliance with legislative requirements for the prevention of vessel collisions and safety and emergency arrangements. Emergency response preparedness plans are in place.



Table 1: Potential key environmental impacts and control measures - Operations, wellwork, IMR, support operations and preparatory decommissioning activities continued

POTENTIAL IMPACTS	POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES	POTENTIAL CONTROL MEASURES
Naturally occurring radioactive material (NORM)	Temporary exposure of marine fauna to radioactive material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If production tubing is removed from a well, it will be tested for NORM. Any NORM found will be treated as prescribed waste, and transported to shore in accordance with the waste management manual, and handled onshore in accordance with waste management protocols at Barry Beach Marine Terminal.
Loss of containment from a pipeline	Temporary and localised change in water quality; injury/mortality to fauna.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pipeline IMR program is implemented and includes corrosion and leak detection monitoring and annual integrity reporting. An OPEP is in place and will be implemented as required.
Loss of well control	Potential toxicity; oiling of fauna; reduction in visual aesthetic; socioeconomic impacts to the fishing and tourism industries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A NOPSEMA accepted Well Operations Management Plan is in place which provides well integrity assurance. Esso wellwork execution manual/surface well control equipment manual requirements including details of well workover plans will be implemented. NOPSEMA accepted safety case including planned maintenance of pressure well control equipment, testing of well control equipment - validation of activity specific safety critical equipment will be in place prior to commencement of activities. Emergency preparedness and response manual is in place and includes: OPEP; Operational and Scientific Monitoring Plan; Source Control Plan.

Consultation

Esso is committed to ongoing engagement with the communities where we operate. Your functions, interests and activities may mean you, your business or your organisation are a relevant person for these activities. Your participation will help Esso to better understand the impacts and risks that may arise from the BSEP activities. As such, we are seeking your feedback as we develop the BSEP. Please note that your feedback and our response will be included in the BSEP, which will be submitted to NOPSEMA for acceptance in accordance with the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2023 (Cth).

Please let us know if your feedback is sensitive and we will make this known to NOPSEMA upon submission of the EP in order for this information to remain confidential to NOPSEMA. Esso will communicate any material changes to the proposed activity to relevant persons as they arise.

If you would like to comment or would like additional information, please contact us.

ExxonMobil

How to contact us

For more information, visit our Consultation Hub using the QR Code below, or contact our Consultation team at:

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E: consultation@exxonmobil.com

W: www.exxonmobil.com.au



Scan to access the
Consultation Hub and
Esso Consultation Questionnaire

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Acknowledgement of traditional owners



Esso acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country, and the land and sea upon which our operations are located.

We recognise the Traditional Custodians continuing connection to land, sea, culture and community, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.