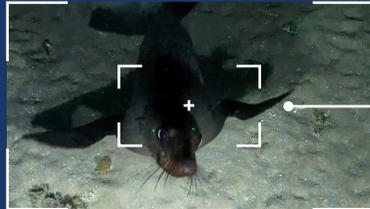


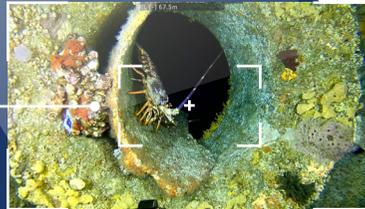
Maori octopus – Halibut



Jewel anemone – Flounder



Australian fur seal – Kingfish A



Southern rock lobster – Fortescue

All underwater images in this bulletin are sourced from Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) surveys undertaken between 2021 – 2024

## Background

After delivering energy to Australia for over 50 years, many of the Bass Strait fields have reached or are approaching, the end of their production life. Esso Australia Pty Ltd and Joint Venture partner, Woodside Energy, have committed to the progressive decommissioning of the Bass Strait infrastructure safely and effectively. Esso will be removing offshore platforms (topsides and upper sections of the steel piled jackets) as part of the first execution campaign outlined in Gippsland Basin Decommissioning Campaign #1 Execution Environment Plan. This bulletin addresses the proposed decommissioning in situ activity (the activity) of the lower steel piled jackets (also known as LSPJs). Decommissioning in situ activities relate to leaving property in place, rather than removing it, following the end of its productive life.

## Key regulatory requirements

Under the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2023 (Cth), any petroleum activity in Commonwealth waters must have an Environment Plan accepted by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA). This plan outlines how Esso will reduce the impacts and risks of the activity to as low as reasonably practicable and an acceptable level.

The *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* (Cth) provides for alternatives to fully removing infrastructure.

Infrastructure decommissioned in situ also requires a permit under the *Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981* (Cth).

## Proposed activity

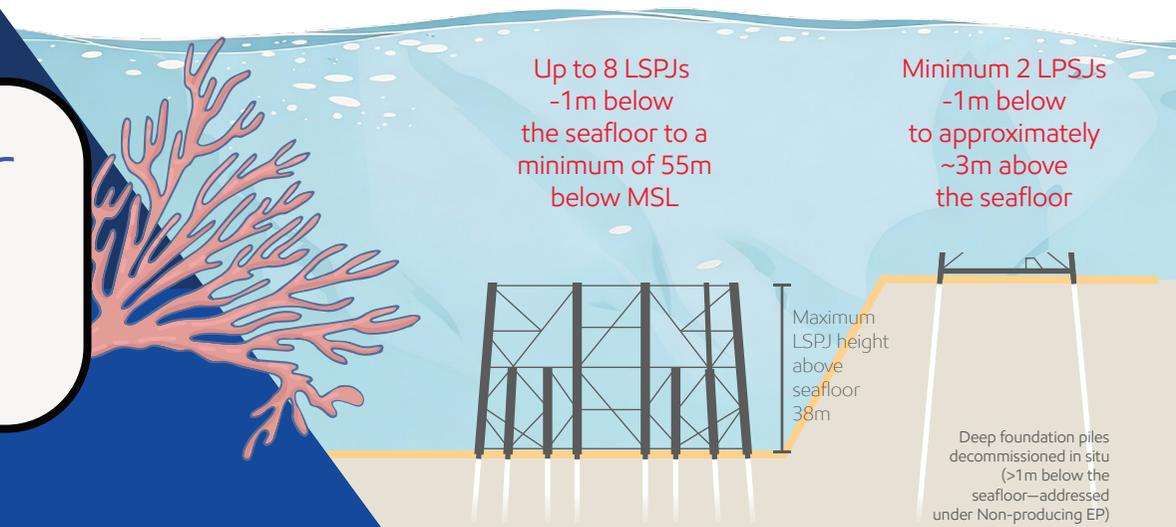
Esso proposes decommissioning in situ of up to 10 LSPJs and ancillary subsea property (e.g. strut footings, well conductors, anodes) within the LSPJs footprint. The company plans to submit an Environment Plan to NOPSEMA in 4Q 2026.

## What are Lower Steel Piled Jackets?

- Steel piled jackets are the 'metal legs' that were used to support the offshore topsides. The topsides and upper sections of the steel piled jackets will be removed under the Campaign #1 Execution EP.
- LSPJs are completely under water and cannot be seen from the coast or the sea surface.
- They extend from approximately 1m below the seabed to a maximum of 55m below mean sea level (MSL), and assessed as adequate for safe navigation.
- LSPJs are not part of the production process and have not come into contact with oil, gas, or any production fluids.

# Decommissioning Lower Steel Piled Jackets

Information Bulletin - March 2026



## Materials

LSPJs and ancillary subsea property are predominantly (>95%) made from steel and concrete. The remaining <5% contains rubber, aluminium anodes, mineral sands and timber. The materials will break down slowly over time.

## Marine ecosystems on Lower Steel Piled Jackets

When these structures were first installed nearly 60 years ago, they were designed for strength and stability. Over time, extensive marine life has established in and around them. Sponges attached, invertebrates settled, and the steel became home to thriving underwater communities.

Today, these structures support a healthy marine ecosystem, providing important feeding and shelter areas for a wide range of species.

Remotely operated vehicle surveys undertaken around the LSPJ structures have shown:



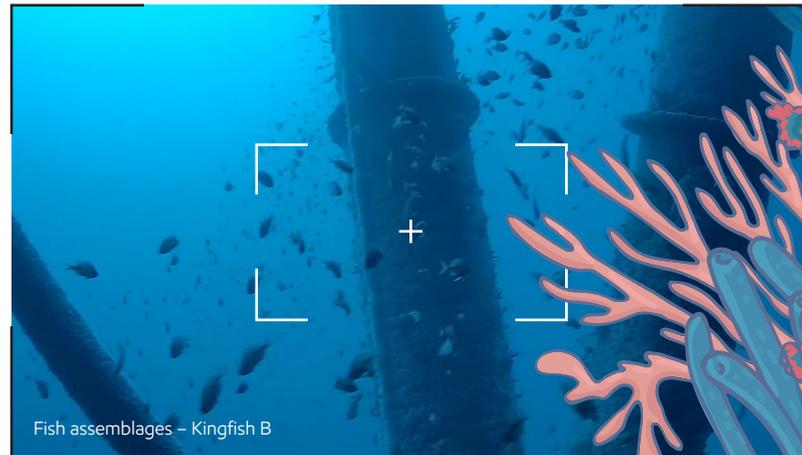
55+ fish species and other types of marine life support biodiversity of the region.



Species important to recreational and commercial fishers, such as: jackass morwong, silver trevally, redfish, banded morwong and southern rock lobster.



Species protected under the EPBC Act commonly observed near the structures, include Australian fur seals and humpback whales.



## Why decommission in situ?

The LSPJs:

- Increase habitat complexity by adding both vertical and horizontal features.
- Support higher local fish abundance and species richness (including fishery species) and multi-trophic food webs.
- Provide foraging and refuge habitat for marine fauna.

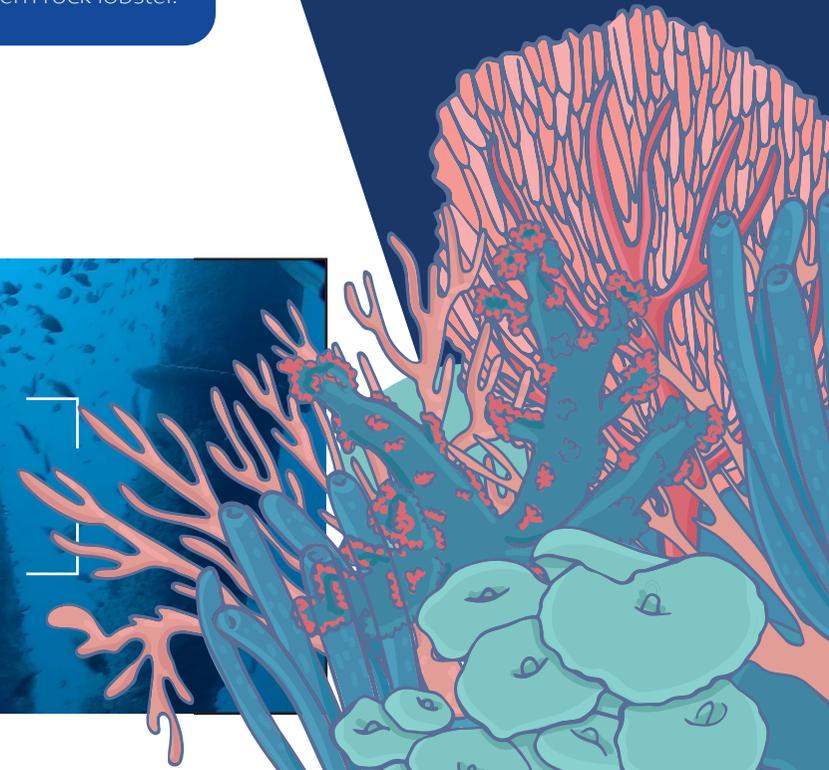
Esso wants to keep these parts of the structures that support marine life. This would allow the existing marine communities to remain with minimal disturbance.

## Artificial reefs

In over 50 countries, the installation of artificial reefs is a highly valued and common approach to build sustained life and improve marine environments.

To date, more than 150 artificial reefs have been deployed in Australian waters.

Ex-HMAS *Canberra*, former warship which served the Australian Navy between 1981 and 2005, was scuttled off Barwon Heads in 2009. The vessel hull is constructed of steel, and the superstructure is aluminium alloy. Further details at: [Parks Victoria](#)



POTENTIAL KEY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS<sup>1</sup> AND RISKS<sup>2</sup>

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES

POTENTIAL CONTROL MEASURES

	POTENTIAL KEY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS <sup>1</sup> AND RISKS <sup>2</sup>	POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES	POTENTIAL CONTROL MEASURES
PLANNED EVENTS	Physical presence of the LSPJs resulting in interactions with other marine users.	Changes to the function, interests or activities of other marine users through disruption to activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LSPJs will continue to be marked on navigational charts administered by the Australian Hydrographic Office (AHO).</li> <li>Esso will apply to have the 500 metre Petroleum Safety Zones around the LSPJs revoked or reduced to provide greater access for recreational and fishing opportunities.</li> </ul>
	Planned releases to the marine environment from the LSPJs degrading over the lifecycle resulting in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contaminants (predominately metals) being released into the immediate waters and settling in nearby sediments</li> <li>gradual disintegration and collapse of the structures and associated periodic smothering impacts to local infauna.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Localised impacts to water and sediment quality.</li> <li>Localised smothering/alteration of benthic habitats.</li> <li>Potential toxicity impacts.</li> </ul>	Establish an environmental monitoring program to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluate the ongoing impacts that may occur as a result of the LSPJs remaining in place</li> <li>assess if the LSPJs continue to provide habitat for marine ecosystems that have developed on and around the LSPJs, once the upper sections have been removed.</li> </ul>
UNPLANNED EVENTS	Unplanned colonisation or local spread of marine pests due to the presence of the LSPJs.	Change in ecosystem dynamics.	Establish an environmental monitoring program to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluate the ongoing impacts that may occur as a result of the LSPJs remaining in place</li> <li>assess if the LSPJs continue to provide habitat for marine ecosystems that have developed on and around the LSPJs, once the upper sections have been removed.</li> </ul>
	Physical presence of the LSPJs resulting in a potential snag hazard to commercial fishers (trawl, dredge, pot and purse seine).	Fishing gear interaction with the LSPJs, potentially resulting in financial loss (e.g. loss of catch or damage to fishing gear).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LSPJs will continue to be marked on navigational charts administered by the AHO.</li> <li>The Fisherman's Tribunal will remain in place until title surrender.</li> <li>Establish a Fisheries Legacy Trust Fund to support safety initiatives for fishers (e.g. updates to plotters, geofencing, safety programs).</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>An impact relates to a planned event and is defined by the environmental consequence of the event.

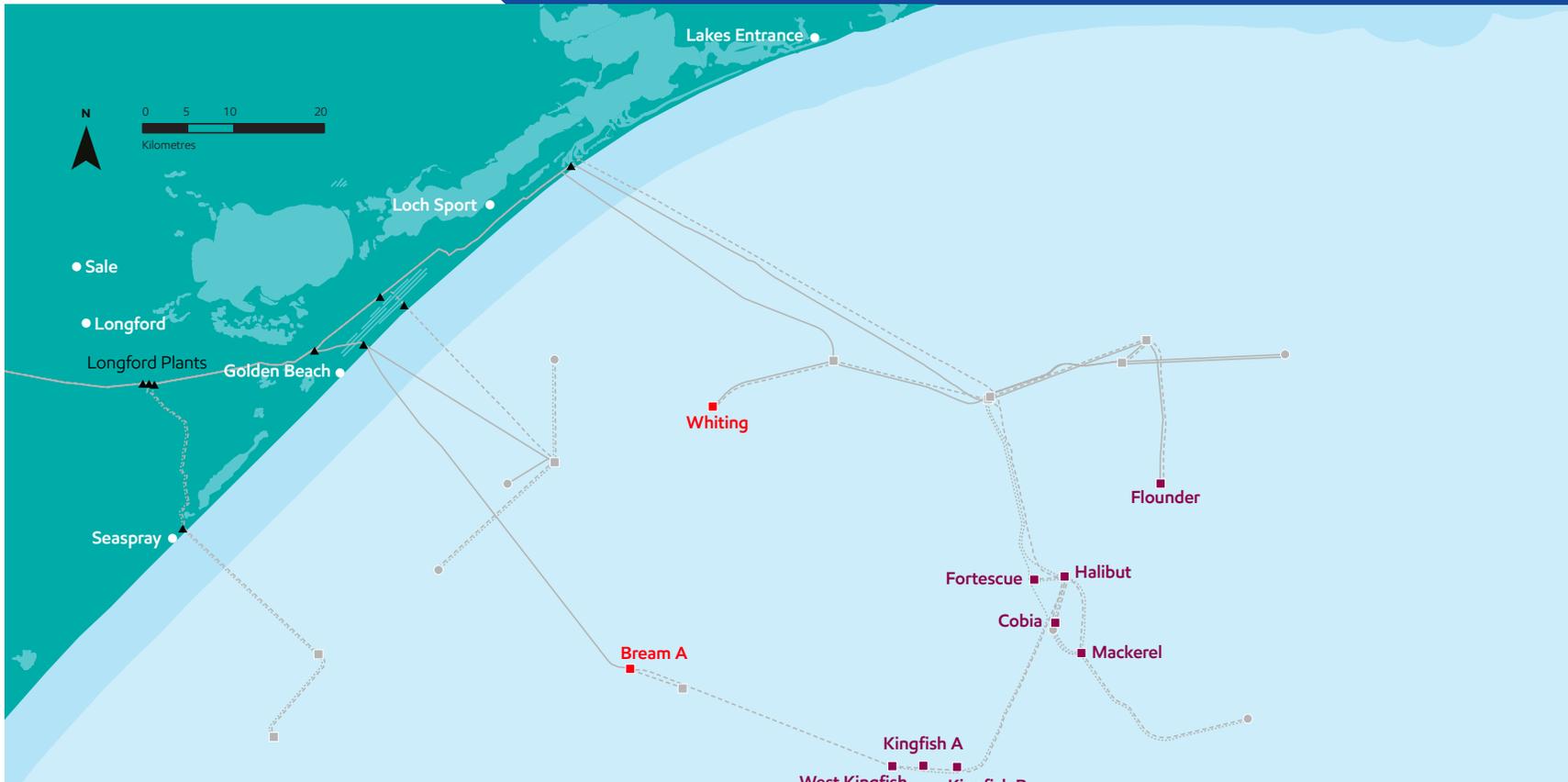
<sup>2</sup>A risk relates to an 'unplanned event' and is defined by a combination of the probability of the event occurring and the environmental consequence if the event does occur.

## Consultation

Esso remains focused on engaging with communities where we operate.

This information bulletin is part of our commitment to advising stakeholders of planned activities in Bass Strait and to provide sufficient information about the nature and scale of the activity, as well as any potential risks and impacts, so interested parties can make an informed decision about whether their functions, interests or activities are affected.

Your functions, interests and activities may mean you, your business or your organisation is relevant for these activities. Your participation helps Esso better understand the impacts and risks that may arise from the activities. As such, we're seeking your feedback as we develop the EP. Please note that your feedback and our response will be included in our EP for the proposed activities, which will be submitted to NOPSEMA for acceptance in accordance with the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2023.



OTHER ESSO FACILITIES	
■ PLATFORM	● LOCALITY
○ SUBSEA FACILITY	▲ VALVE SITE
--- PRIMARY PIPELINE (OIL)	■ STATE WATERS
— PRIMARY PIPELINE (GAS)	□ COMMONWEALTH WATERS
⋯ SECONDARY PIPELINE	■ STEEL PILED JACKETS IN SHALLOWER WATERS - REMOVED AS CLOSE TO PRACTICABLE TO THE SEABED
<small>Some changes made to improve visibility of pipelines. Facility icons do not indicate facility size.</small>	■ STEEL PILED JACKETS IN DEEPER WATERS - REMOVAL TO MINIMUM 55-METRES BELOW MSL

## Specific research papers



**ScienceDirect** Offshore decommissioning horizon scan: Research priorities to support decision-making activities for oil and gas infrastructure



**ScienceDirect** Contribution of offshore platforms and surrounding habitats to fish production in the Bass Strait, south-east Australia



**Frontiers** Marine life and fisheries around offshore oil and gas structures in southeastern Australia and possible consequences for decommissioning



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON THESE PROPOSED ACTIVITIES, OR WOULD LIKE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT US.



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