



Long Term Environmental Monitoring in Timor Sea

Date: 15 October 2009

PTTEP Australasia (PTTEP) welcomes the announcement of an agreement with the Federal Government for the implementation of an environmental monitoring program to cover both short and long term potential impacts resulting from the leak from the company's Montara well head platform in the Timor Sea.

The scientific monitoring program is in addition to operational monitoring – which includes surveillance and wildlife protection actions already underway in the region – and is based on agreed trigger points.

PTTEP is to fund the environmental monitoring program which will be carried out by relevant experts and managed by the company in conjunction with Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA). The scientific studies are expected to continue for at least two years.

The company is also paying the Australian Maritime Safety Authority's (AMSA) costs for managing the oil spill control and clean up operation.

“PTTEP is committed to working with Commonwealth and State government authorities to support the joint efforts to protect the marine environment,” Mr José Martins, Director and Chief Financial Officer of PTTEP Australasia, said.

“The agreement with the Federal Government will allow a scientifically robust and comprehensive monitoring program to help us better understand what is actually happening in the marine environment in this type of incident. This will allow the development of actions to safeguard the local ecology and marine species now and in the future.

“PTTEP has been working on a multi-faceted environmental response since the incident began. The goal has been to identify any impacts to ensure responses which might be required are targeted through the efficient use of available resources.”

PTTEP last month appointed leading Australian environmental scientist John A. Wardrop to manage the implementation of immediate and long term monitoring programs. He has been leading the development of the monitoring program and working with DEWHA and AMSA to finalise its detailed elements.

Mr Wardrop has more than 28 years' experience in Australia and internationally working for the private sector and governments in oil spill response planning, environmental impact and ecological assessment and biological monitoring.

His previous work for private sector operators has included environmental risk assessments and management plans in the Timor Sea and for Ashmore-Cartier. He has also been involved in the post-spill clean up of high profile incidents in Australia including the *Iron Baron* in northern Tasmania in 1995. His work for governments has included:

- Preparation of the Western Australian (National Plan) Marine Oil Pollution Emergency Management Plan (2000) and the WA Transport Oil Spill Contingency Plan (2000).
- Writing handbooks on post-spill monitoring for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and Marine Safety New Zealand.
- Spill monitoring and training for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.



Not long after the incident on 21 August, PTTEP began working with AMSA to undertake operational environmental monitoring. This included daily aerial surveys and wildlife monitoring of affected areas and key marine reserves, such as Cartier and Ashmore reefs habitat. Some oil and water sampling was also undertaken by the company, working under AMSA.

The monitoring program announced by the Federal Government will engage marine science experts from around Australia who are eminent in their respective fields to work in the following key areas:

- Marine fauna (including turtles, sea snakes, birds, fish, cetaceans and dugongs)
- Habitat (coral reefs, mangroves, sea grasses and marine water quality)
- Commercial fisheries
- Remote sensing, field sampling and assessment
- Hydrocarbon analysis

The program will include studies, if triggered, of:

- Marine megafauna and aerial assessment surveys
- Shoreline ecological assessment aerial surveys
- Assessment of fish catch for the presence of oil
- Assessment of the effects on Timor Sea fish and fisheries
- Offshore banks assessment survey
- Shoreline ecological ground surveys
- Oil fate and effects assessment

When each monitoring study is completed, individual reports will be submitted to DEWHA. Copies will also be supplied to other relevant Commonwealth and State government agencies.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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