



**PTTEP Australasia TIMOR SEA OPERATIONS  
Incident Information #56**

***Date: 5 October 2009 1330 WST***

PTTEP Australasia today reported the main drilling phase for the relief well operation to stop the flow of oil, gas and water from the Montara well head platform in the Timor Sea had reached the target zone 2.6km below the sea bed.

The drilling by the *West Triton* rig of the 8½ inch hole for the final section from 2,375m to 2,600m was now at a position approximately five metres above the leaking well bore.

From this position, a first approach should be attempted tomorrow to intercept the leaking well.

“We are entering a very complex phase of the relief well operation. The drilling team is trying to locate and intersect a piece of steel casing about 25cm in diameter, 2.6km below the sea bed,” PTTEP Australasia Director and Chief Financial Officer José Martins said.

“The intercept operation may involve several passes and complex calculations using sophisticated equipment and software to narrow down the exact location of the leaking well casing. Each pass narrows that zone of uncertainty.

“If the first approach did not succeed, each successive pass sequence takes up to four days to complete. This would mean a second pass being able to be undertaken on Friday or Saturday.”

This phase of the operation must be undertaken during daylight hours for safety reasons.

The relief well drilling assembly will be removed today and replaced with an assembly of specialist milling equipment needed to cut a hole in the leaking well to allow for the pumping of heavy mud to commence ‘well kill’ operations.

If the first pass intercept - now likely to occur tomorrow - misses the intercept point, a specialist electromagnetic tool will be run down the relief well to locate the target well with more accuracy. The vector magnetic tool emits a current to charge the steel casing of the leaking well. The casing then emits an electromagnetic field which is detected by tool sensors. A surface computer uses the readings to calculate the distance and direction of the casing from the current location.

A team from leading international oil and gas well control engineering specialists ALERT Well Control ([www.alertdisastercontrol.com](http://www.alertdisastercontrol.com)) have been providing PTTEP’s technical group with technical planning advice on the relief well drilling program.

Mr Martins said ALERT Well Control had successfully completed some 1,200 well control operations over the past 25 years. The electro magnetic ranging technology had been used successfully in similar operations around the world over many years. There has never been a situation where this has not been achieved.

Mr Martins said the relief well operation to drill to full depth, complete the interception and inject heavy mud to stop the flow remains on schedule to take a total of three-and-a-half weeks (from the drilling start date of 14 September) to stop the leak.



Some 24 hours after the flow has stopped, a specialist crew from ALERT Well Control will board the *West Atlas* drilling rig and the Montara well head platform from the support vessel *Nor Captain* to further secure the well by plugging the well bore. This phase of the operation is expected to take about another week.

Members of the ALERT reboarding team are on stand-by at the Truscott air base in the Kimberley and a Perth-based boarding team is also on stand-by.

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NOTE:                                      This media statement and all previous statements issued by the company can be viewed at [www.au.pttep.com](http://www.au.pttep.com).