



Backgrounder – Environmental Monitoring Action

12 September 2009

Leading Australian environmental scientist John A. Wardrop has been appointed by PTTEP Australasia (PTTEP) as its lead consultant to manage the implementation of immediate and long term programs to monitor environmental impacts resulting from the leak from the Montara well head platform in the Timor Sea.

Mr Wardrop, Managing Director of emergency response and contingency planning firm SEER Associates (www.seerassociates.com), 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.

“What is being put in place immediately serves the needs of the oil spill response and will establish a base line for longer term studies,” Mr Wardrop said.

“These longer term studies will be carefully designed and implemented using experts from relevant fields.”

His previous work for private sector operators has included environmental risk assessments and management plans in the Timor Sea and for the Ashmore-Cartier island territories. 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.

Mr Wardrop has developed a comprehensive position paper on long term monitoring which PTTEP has been discussing with the Federal Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA).

“PTTEP has been working on a multi-faceted environmental response since the incident began. The goal is to be able to quickly identify any impacts to help ensure responses which might be required are timely and targeted through the efficient use of available resources,” Mr José Martins, Director and Chief Financial Officer of PTTEP Australasia, said.



He said PTTEP had been involved in discussions with DEWHA about the protocols for any required responses to environmental impacts.

“The comprehensive environmental monitoring and management plan includes a range of measures to provide baseline data to get a true picture of the pre-spill environment to ensure the effects are known and managed,” Mr Martins said.

“The types of measures being considered as part of this monitoring plan include on-site observations and monitoring; aerial surveys of marine fauna; surface and subsurface surveys of shoals and reefs; and shoreline assessments of Ashmore and Cartier Reefs.”

In other measures already implemented since the incident began:

- Personnel on surface vessels in the area under charter to PTTEP have been issued with reporting protocols. They are lodging daily reports to environmental authorities on all marine life seen.
- PTTEP and government agencies have also been staging daily flights over the area to survey marine life and report on any impacts.

The PTTEP work complements a DEHWA plan to put resources in place to help any wildlife which might be affected by the spill. This has seen specialised equipment placed at strategic locations in the region should it be needed.

Wildlife officers have also been sent to Ashmore-Cartier marine reserves. Customs and Border Protection Command officers at Ashmore are now regularly surveying the area for any identifiable impacts.

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