



ExxonMobil

CONSULTATION

# Bass Strait Operations

Jack-Up Rig – Well Works – Barracouta

INFORMATION BULLETIN  
August 2025



Esso is committed to engaging with the communities where we operate and helping our stakeholders 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 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 of 19 platforms with approximately 425 wells, six subsea facilities and more than 800 kilometres of subsea pipelines.

Esso is planning to undertake well works, including Plug and Abandon (P&A) and workover activities on up to 10 platform-based wells at the Barracouta platform in the Gippsland Basin, off the Victorian coastline. These activities will be undertaken by a Jack-Up Rig (JUR).

## Activity location

The P&A and workover activities involve up to 10 wells at the Barracouta platform in the Bass Strait, southeast of Lakes Entrance.

None of these activities are located within established or proposed Commonwealth or

State Marine Protected Areas, Critical Habitats or Threatened Ecological Communities.

While carrying out these activities, the JUR will potentially be visible from the shore.

## Activity description

P&A is the industry term for the permanent closure of a well and is a safe and long-standing practice. The planned activities involve the P&A of platform-based wells, that are non-producing, by installing cement plugs in the wellbores to permanently seal any hydrocarbon reservoirs from the surface.

Workover activities are undertaken on a well to repair, clean or upgrade equipment to restore or improve production.

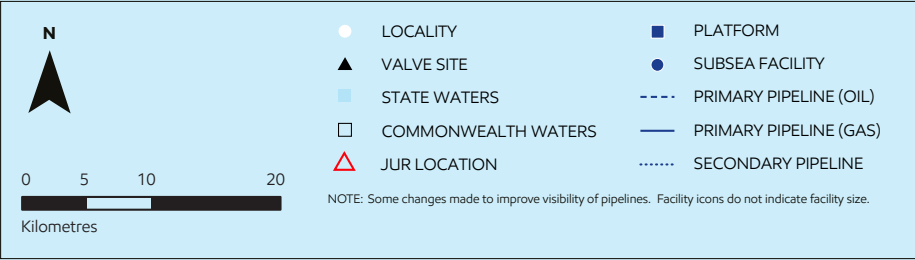
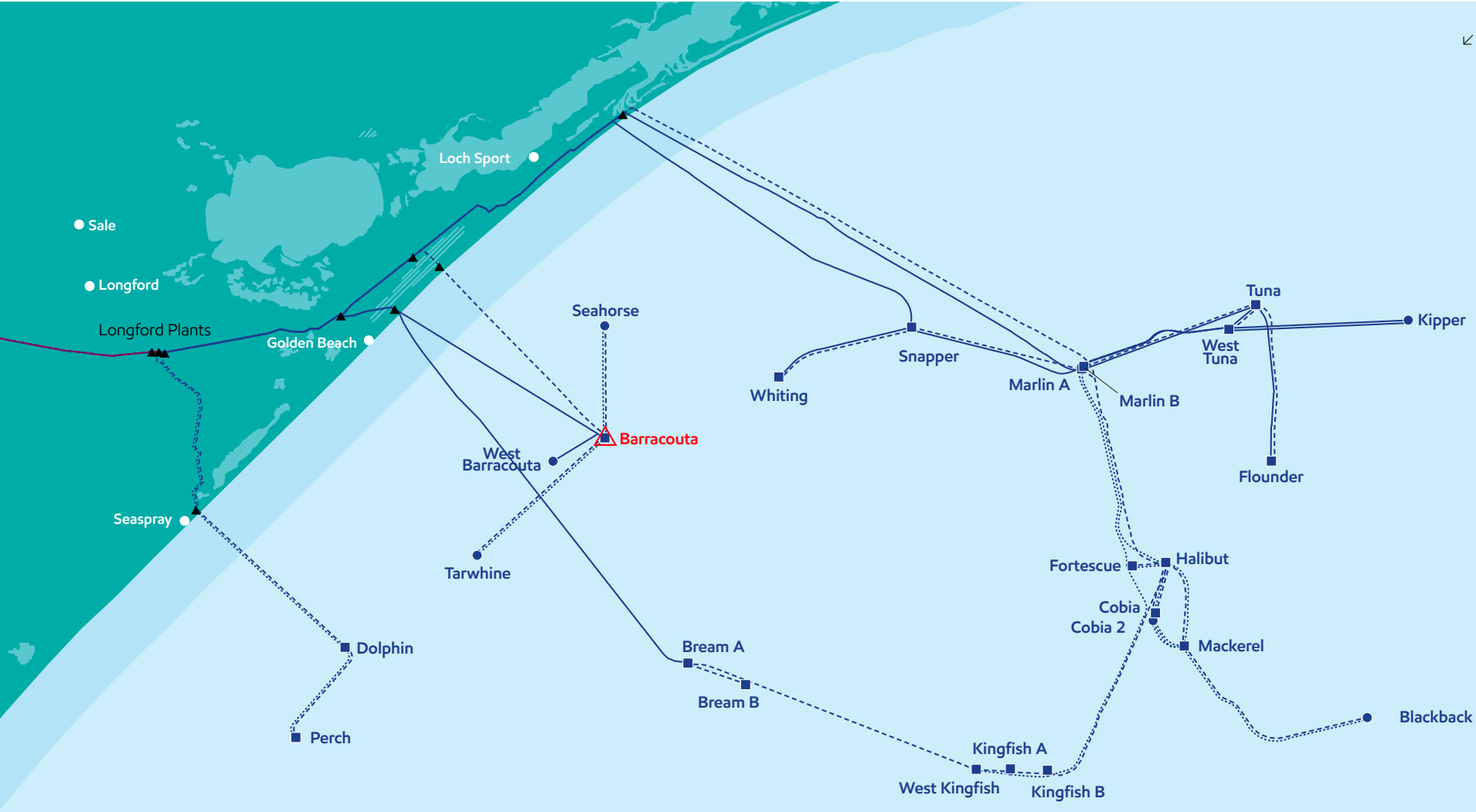
Accidental release of hydrocarbons during P&A and workover activities will be prevented with a mechanical safety device called a 'blowout preventer', which will be installed on each well. In the unlikely event of trapped gas, there may be a requirement to undertake venting or flaring of gas, depending on the volume.

A third-party contracted JUR will undertake P&A and workover activities. A JUR is a type of Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit (MODU) that floats while travelling and has movable steel legs that can be jacked down to the seabed to provide a stable working platform.

The JUR will operate in accordance with international safety and environmental standards, and will hold a Safety Case accepted by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA), the Australian regulator.



Figure 1: Location of JUR





**Activity timing**

Date of commencement

**1H 2026**

Field activities estimated to take

**120 days**

Activities will be conducted

**24/7**

The timing of the activity may vary and is contingent on regulatory approvals, joint venture approvals, weather and rig/vessel schedules.

**Petroleum Safety Zones and Notice to Mariners**

An existing 500-metre Petroleum Safety Zone (PSZ) around the Barracouta platform, established by NOPSEMA, will remain in place for the duration of the activity, in accordance with Section 616 of the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* (Cth) (OPGGG Act).

The exact location of the JUR will be communicated to marine vessels via a Notice to Mariners, issued by the Australian Hydrographic Service and AUSCOAST warnings issued by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

**Interaction with commercial fishing**

The activity location is located within existing Commonwealth fisheries that may be used by commercial fishers.

The 500-metre PSZ has previously been communicated to the Lakes Entrance Fishermen's Co-op, South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association and Seafood Industry Victoria as it is a legal requirement that the area be avoided during petroleum-related activities.

**Environment Plan**

Under the OPPGS Act, before any petroleum-related activities in Commonwealth Waters can begin, an EP must be accepted by NOPSEMA.

The EP is a comprehensive document that describes the existing environment, including relevant persons, how Esso will undertake the well works 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.

While 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.

**Oil Pollution Emergency Plan**

In accordance with the OPPGS 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 leverages its membership with national oil spill response organisations to access 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 Benefits Assessment is undertaken, in consultation with relevant government agencies, to determine the most appropriate spill response option.

**Potential impacts, risks, consequences and control measures**

Esso's aim is to minimise environmental and social impacts associated with the proposed activities. As such, Esso has undertaken an assessment to identify potential impacts and consequences to the environment resulting from the proposed activities, considering timing, duration, location, values and sensitivities.

For each potential impact, Esso has developed the control measures outlined on the following pages 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**

POTENTIAL IMPACTS	POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES	CONTROL MEASURES
Physical presence - Seabed disturbance	Smothering/alteration of benthic habitats; localised and temporary increase in turbidity near the seabed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site-specific geotechnical assessment previously completed confirms there are no sensitive seabed features.</li> </ul>
Planned discharges to the marine environment <sup>1</sup>	Temporary and localised reduction in water quality; temporary change to predator/prey dynamics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routine discharges and vessel waste treatment systems are maintained to meet the requirements of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973 as modified by the Protocol of 1978, (MARPOL 73/78).</li> <li>Food scraps will be macerated prior to discharge.</li> <li>Discharged bilge water will have less than 15 parts per million oil in water content.</li> <li>Chemicals planned for discharge will undergo an environmental assessment to confirm suitability for discharge prior to use.</li> </ul>
Noise emissions	Temporary displacement of sound sensitive fauna around active vessels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support vessels and helicopters will comply with Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000 (Cth) Part 8 Division 8.1 interacting with cetaceans, for example helicopters adhering to strict distances from cetaceans when sighted.</li> <li>If certain listed species of whales are spotted, additional controls are in place to help protect and minimise noise disturbance.</li> </ul>
Light emissions	Attraction of light sensitive species; change in fauna behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lighting will be used in accordance with the National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife.</li> <li>Lighting will be kept to a minimum while still meeting navigational and workplace safety requirements.</li> <li>Flaring (if required) would be kept to a minimum whilst meeting operational and safety requirements.</li> <li>Flare system selection, maintenance and operational procedures in place for efficient flaring operations.</li> </ul>
Air emissions	Temporary and localised reduction in air quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marine engines are routinely maintained and air emissions will meet MARPOL 73/78 requirements.</li> <li>Flaring (if required) would be kept to a minimum whilst meeting operational and safety requirements.</li> <li>Flare system selection, maintenance and operational procedures ensure efficient flaring operations.</li> </ul>
Unplanned interaction with marine fauna (vessel strike)	Injury or death of marine fauna.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support vessels will comply with Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000 (Cth) Part B Division 8.1.</li> <li>Any injury/mortality of <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth) - listed fauna will be reported to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Including treated sewage and food waste; treated bilge and deck wash; cooling water and brine; and operational fluids.

**Table 1: Potential key environmental impacts and control measures continued**

POTENTIAL IMPACTS	POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES	CONTROL MEASURES
Unplanned introduction of invasive marine species	Displacement of native species and habitat domination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JUR and all support vessels will have a ballast water management plan and associated certificate.</li> <li>JUR and all support vessels will comply with Australian Ballast Water Management requirements.</li> <li>A biofouling risk assessment process will be completed.</li> <li>Submersible equipment will be rinsed on completion of each activity and is normally stored on deck, minimising invasive marine species risk.</li> </ul>
Discharge of cement	Temporary and localised reduction in water quality; smothering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low toxicity cement additives have been selected for use.</li> <li>Low volumes of cement will be discharged.</li> <li>Cement hose flushing and slurry releases will be rapidly diluted and dispersed by the dynamic marine environment.</li> </ul>
Well fluid discharges	Increased salinity; potential toxicity effects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low toxicity chemical additives will be selected for use in abandonment and completion fluids.</li> <li>Chemicals used in well fluids will undergo environmental assessment to confirm suitability for discharge prior to use.</li> </ul>
Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (NORM)	Temporary exposure of marine fauna to radioactive material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No NORM is expected. If production tubing is removed from a well, it can be tested for NORM.</li> <li>Any NORM found will be treated as prescribed waste and transported back to shore in accordance with the waste management manual.</li> </ul>
Vessel collisions	Vessel impacts; injury or death; spill risk; interruption to P&A and workover activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marine users will be informed (including Notices to Mariners) prior to commencement of P&amp;A and workover activities so that they will be able to plan their activities and avoid unexpected interactions.</li> <li>Established PSZ in accordance with the OPGGS Act remain in place.</li> <li>Establishment of adequate navigation aids and communication systems.</li> <li>Implementation of vessel communication procedures.</li> </ul>
Loss of well control	Potential toxicity; oiling of fauna; reduction in visual aesthetic; and socioeconomic impacts to the fishing and tourism industries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NOPSEMA-accepted WOMP and Safety Case prior to commencement of activity.</li> <li>Esso-approved P&amp;A and workover procedures.</li> <li>Preventative maintenance systems in place.</li> <li>Well control equipment testing.</li> <li>Emergency response preparedness including: OPEP; Operational and Scientific Monitoring Plan; Source Control Plan; availability of suitable MODU to drill a relief well; and P&amp;A Bridging Emergency Response Plan.</li> </ul>

## Environment That May Be Affected

The Environment That May Be Affected (EMBA) is the largest spatial extent where the activities could potentially have an environmental consequence (direct or indirect impact). For this activity, the broadest extent of the EMBA is determined by a highly unlikely release of hydrocarbons from a loss of well containment.

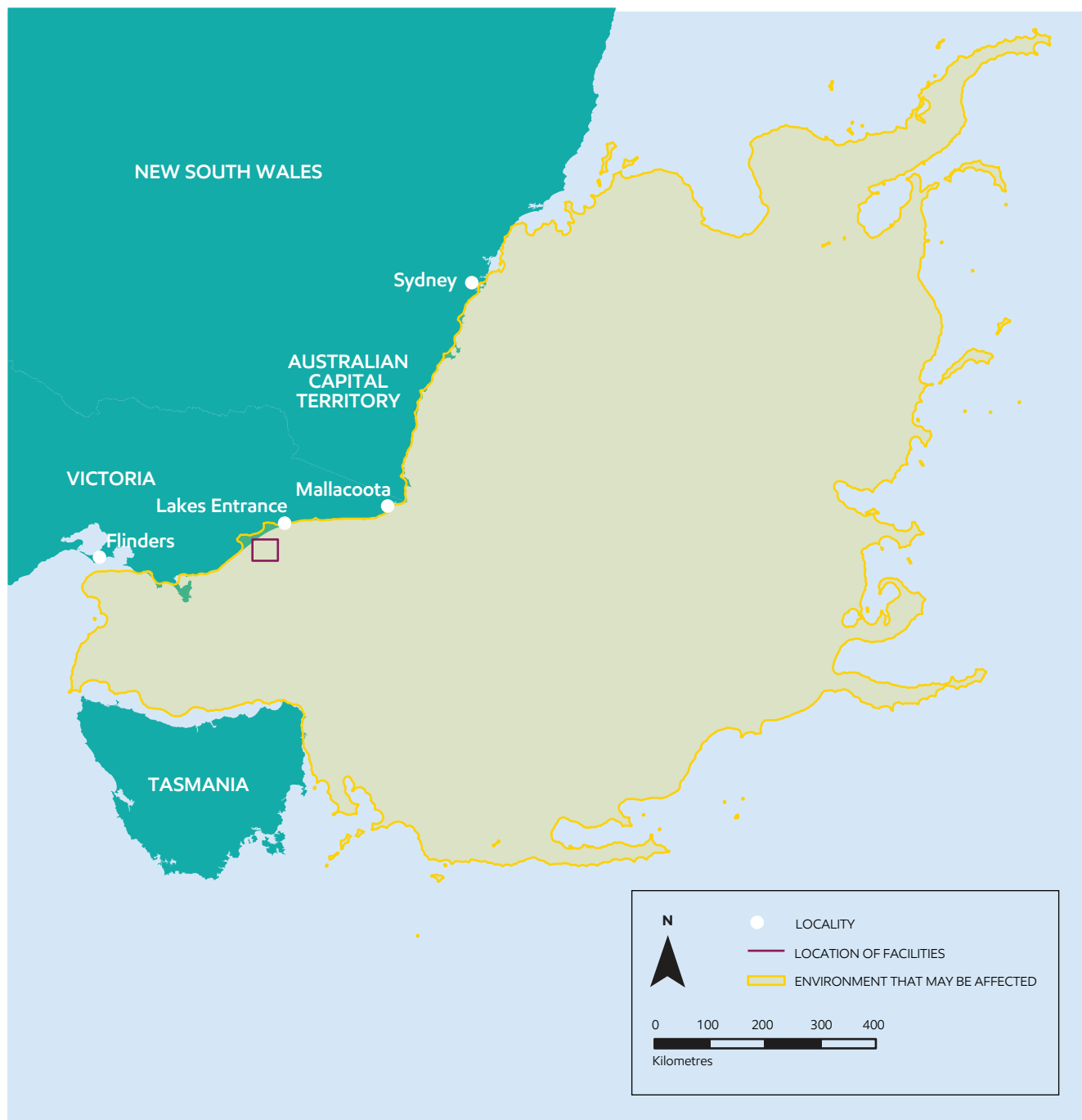
The EMBA represents the area that could be exposed to hydrocarbon, including trace concentrations of oil in the water column, as a result of activity loss of well containment. Each spill simulation is subject to different wind and ocean currents at different times of the year. The 100 individual spill simulations for each scenario are then combined to identify the largest envelope in which a single spill could occur. The EMBA is not representative of a single spill; an individual spill would affect a significantly smaller area. For this activity, Esso has defined the EMBA by combining the potential spatial extent of surface and in-water (dissolved and entrained) hydrocarbons, resulting from a loss of well containment.

## 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 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 (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 on the proposed activities outlined in this information bulletin, or would like additional information, please contact us.





### How to contact us

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

T: +61 3 9261 0000

E: [consultation@exxonmobil.com](mailto:consultation@exxonmobil.com)

W: [corporate.exxonmobil.com/locations/australia](https://corporate.exxonmobil.com/locations/australia)



Scan to access the  
Consultation Hub and  
Esso Consultation Questionnaire

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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.