



HOMEVALE-1

ENVIRONMENT PLAN SUMMARY

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Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	LOCATION OF THE ACTIVITY	3
2.1	Project Location	3
3	DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION	5
3.1	Timeframe	5
4	DESCRIPTION OF RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT	6
4.1	Natural Environment	6
4.2	Biological Environment	6
4.2.1	.. Biodiversity	7
4.2.2	.. Cetaceans	7
4.2.3	.. Reptiles.....	8
4.2.4	.. Fish.....	9
4.2.5	.. Birds	9
4.3	Socio-Economic Environment.....	9
4.3.1	.. Conservation Zones	10
4.3.2	.. Fisheries	10
4.3.3	.. Petroleum Industry Activities	10
4.3.4	.. Shipping.....	10
4.4	Cultural Environment	10
4.4.1	.. Shipwreck and Heritage Sites	10
5	MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS AND CONTROLS	11
6	MANAGEMENT APPROACH	13
7	CONSULTATION	14
8	CONTACT DETAILS	14

1 INTRODUCTION

BHP Billiton Petroleum Pty Ltd (BHP Billiton) acting as operator on behalf of a joint venture comprising BHP Billiton Petroleum (Australia) Pty Ltd and Apache Northwest Pty Ltd, are the holders of Petroleum Exploration Permit WA-475-P, plan to drill a single exploration well labeled the Homevale-1 exploration well. The well will be drilled in Exploration Permit Area WA-475-P as a vertical exploration well to a planned depth of 4,200 m below the seabed targeting a formation that is predicted to contain gas with some condensate.

The project specific Environment Plan (EP) has been accepted by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) and ensures that all operations are planned and conducted in line with BHPBP's environmental standards and comply with statutory requirements.

The EP will serve as a practicable environmental management tool to be used throughout the activity by operators to implement targeted environmental control measures.

This summary EP contains the findings and conclusions of the environmental impact assessment undertaken for the proposed activity. This process ensures any potential environmental impacts associated with the activity, during both routine and non-routine (abnormal) operations, have been identified and appropriately assessed. Relevant preventative and mitigation measures have been developed and implemented to ensure any adverse impacts are eliminated where possible or managed to be as low as reasonably possible.

2 LOCATION OF THE ACTIVITY

2.1 Project Location

The Homevale-1 "Area of Interest" (Aoi) lies on the Exmouth Plateau and at its closest part is approximately 133 km north-west of Exmouth, 113 km north-west of the closest point of the Ningaloo Marine Park and approximately 117 km from the closest reef or coastline of Ningaloo Marine Park or Muiron Island Marine Reserve. The bounding coordinates for an Aoi within which the well will be drilled is presented in Table 2-1 and illustrated by Figure 2.1. The Homevale Aoi is approximately 15.7 km by 25.5 km in size and includes an additional 3.5 km on all sides to accommodate a drilling rig mooring spread. Water depth ranges from 1,112 m to 1,338 m and the seabed geomorphology is complex with large escarpments, seafloor fluid expulsion depressions (pockmarks) and isolated mounds. There is no existing subsea infrastructure in the vicinity of the Homevale-1 Aoi.

Table 2-1. Homevale-1 well area of interest (GDA94 UTM 49S)

Well	Latitude	Longitude
NW corner	20° 53' 2.10"	113° 03' 2.16"
NE corner	20° 52' 59.75"	113° 12' 4.67"
SE corner	21° 06' 21.56"	113° 12' 7.78"
SW corner	21° 06' 50.66"	113° 03' 5.21"

The exact location of the proposed well has not yet been finalized however the most probable location is:

- Latitude: 20° 57' 29.47" S
- Longitude: 113° 05' 40.03" E

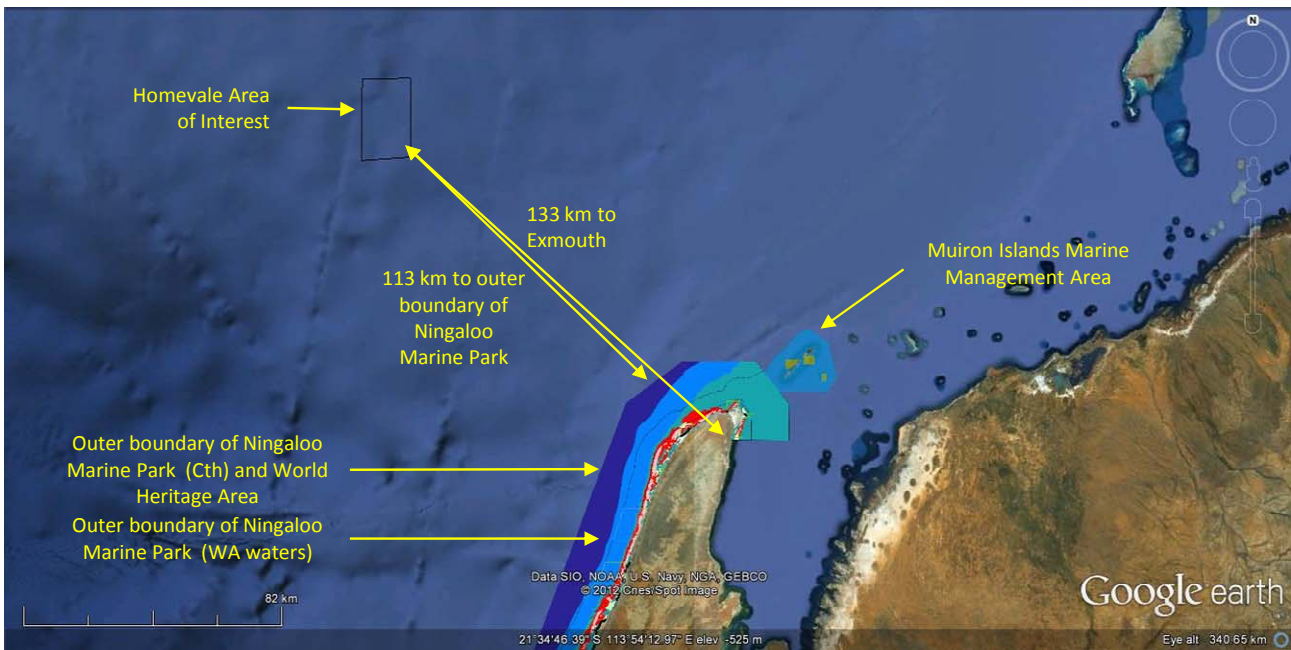


Figure 2-2. Homevale-1 location map

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

A semi-submersible drilling rig will be used to drill the single Homevale-1 exploration well. This type of drilling rig has been used previously by BHP Billiton to drill production wells and other exploration wells in the region. A semi-submersible drilling rig of this size normally has a complement of about 100 to 130 personnel and is supported by a minimum of two Anchor Handling and Supply Vessels (AHSVs). The AHSV's will be travelling to and from Dampier Port with one vessel on location at all times.

The AHSV's will be used to supply bulk drilling fluid material, fuel, food and transportation of the equipment used during the drilling activity.

The rig will be secured to the seafloor at all times when not under tow via a maximum of 16 anchors. A 'Rig Move and Positioning Plan' will be in place to ensure exact configuration of the anchors necessary to keep the rig securely on location. The outer extent of anchor reach is a 3,700 m with the anchor chain contacting the seafloor between the anchor embedment point and a 2,300 m radius point from the rig. All potential anchor zones avoid placement of the anchor or chain across an escarpment. The anchors will be carried by the AHSVs to the pre-identified deployment spot and lowered to the seabed. The rig will then winch in the slack from the mooring lines to the required tension. Removal of anchors is reverse of the deployment procedures described above.

Aircraft (helicopter) transfers associated with the drilling activities will transfer personnel between the rig and Learmonth airport.

3.1 Timeframe

Timing for the drilling operations is subject to rig availability and will occur between January 2013 to December 2013 inclusive. Drilling will take place 24hours a day and is expected to take about 30 - 40 days depending on operational efficiencies and weather conditions.

4 DESCRIPTION OF RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Natural Environment

The Homevale-1 Aol is located on the Exmouth Plateau beyond the outer edge of the shelf break, in water of 1,110 m to 1,340 m deep. The Exmouth Plateau is the largest topographic feature in the Northwest Marine Region. The Plateau covers an area of approximately 51,000 km² (Baker *et al.* 2008). The surface of the plateau is generally rough and undulating with water depths of approximately 500 to 5,000 m.

The region's climate is characterised as arid and sub-tropical. Tropical cyclones occur in the region, mainly from January to March.

4.2 Biological Environment

The characteristics of the seabed at the Homevale-1 Aol, are described by the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts in the Northwest Marine Region (DEWHA 2008) as facilitating benthic communities which are likely to include filter feeders and epifauna. Soft-bottom environments are likely to support patchy distributions of mobile epibenthos, such as sea cucumbers, ophiuroids, echinoderms, polychaetes and sea-pens.

The EPBC Act Protected Matters database indicates that 11 threatened species and 17 migratory species may occur within or travel through the survey area (Table 4.1). There are no threatened ecological communities within or in close proximity to the survey area.

Table 4.1 EPBC Act Listed Threatened and Migratory Fauna that May Occur in the Survey Areas

Species	Common Name	Commonwealth Status ¹
Mammals		
<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	Minke whale	C
<i>Balaenoptera bonaerensis</i>	Antarctic Minke Whale	C, M
<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>	Bryde's whale	C, M
<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>	Blue whale	E, C, M
<i>Delphinus delphis</i>	Common dolphin	C
<i>Eubalaena australis</i>	Southern right whale	E, C, M
<i>Feresa attenuate</i>	Pygmy killer whale	C
<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>	Short-finned pilot whale	C
<i>Grampus griseus</i>	Risso's dolphin	C
<i>Kogia breviceps</i>	Pygmy sperm whale	C
<i>Kogia simus</i>	Dwarf sperm whale	C
<i>Lagenodelphis hosei</i>	Fraser's Dolphin	C
<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	Humpback whale	V, C, M
<i>Mesoplodon densirostris</i>	Blainville's Beaked Whale	C
<i>Orcinus orca</i>	Killer whale	C, M
<i>Peponocephala electra</i>	Melon-headed whale	C
<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>	Sperm whale	C, M
<i>Pseudorca crassidens</i>	False killer whale	C
<i>Stenella attenuate</i>	Spotted dolphin	C

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<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>	Striped dolphin	C
<i>Stenella longirostris</i>	Long-snouted spinner dolphin	C
<i>Steno bredanensis</i>	Rough-toothed dolphin	C
<i>Tursiops truncatus s. str.</i>	Bottlenose dolphin	C
<i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>	Cuvier's Beaked Whale	C
Birds		
<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	Southern giant petrel	E, M, L
<i>Pterodroma mollis</i>	Soft-plumaged Petrel	V, M, L
Reptiles		
<i>Caretta caretta</i>	Loggerhead turtle	E, M, L
<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	Green turtle	V, M, L
<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	Leathery turtle	E, M, L
<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	Hawksbill turtle	V, M, L
<i>Natator depressus</i>	Flatback turtle	V, M, L
<i>Aipysurus laevis</i>	Olive sea snake	L
<i>Disteira kingii</i>	Spectacled sea snake	L
<i>Disteira major</i>	Olive-headed sea snake	L
<i>Ephalophis greyi</i>	North-western mangrove sea snake	L
<i>Hydrophis elegans</i>	Elegant sea snake	L
<i>Pelamis platurus</i>	Yellow-bellied sea snake	L
Fish		
<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>	Shortfin mako shark	M
<i>Isurus paucus</i>	Longfin mako shark	M
<i>Rhincodon typus</i>	Whale shark	V, M

Notes:

1. EPBC Act 1999 Threatened (E = Endangered; V = Vulnerable); C = Cetacean; M = Migratory; L = Listed Marine Species

4.2.1 Biodiversity

The main centre of biodiversity in the region is the Ningaloo Reef (113km to Ningaloo Marine Park), with an extremely diverse and abundant array of marine habitats and communities. One of the underlying factors behind its high biodiversity is the overlap of tropical and temperate biogeographical zones.

4.2.2 Cetaceans

The abundance of the whales present of the Homevale Aol is likely to vary seasonally from low numbers (comprised of minke and blue whales and occasional humpback whales) during December to May and low to moderate abundance (comprised overwhelmingly of humpback whales) from June to November.

The most common whale species in the North West Shelf region is the humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) which migrates through the region, during their movement along the Western Australian coast. Humpback whale migration in this region is characterised by three directional phases (BHP Billiton, 2004), these are:

- Northbound phase – starts June, peaks July and tapers off by early August
- Transitional phase (peak numbers expected at this time) - occurring late August and early September

- Southbound phase - occurring early August until the end of November (this phase is segmented by 2-3 week delay in appearance of peak numbers of cow/calf pods after the main migratory body has passed).

In addition to the humpback whale, the blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*) listed as endangered status, the minke whale and several other toothed whales may be sighted in the vicinity of the proposed Homevale-1 Aol.

The migratory habits of pygmy blue whales along the WA coast are now reasonably well established (Gales *et al.*, 2010): animals migrate south from northern tropical waters late in the year, many of these animals pass close to the WA coast in the Exmouth-Monte Bello Islands area from where they move steadily south along the continental shelf slope then pass around Cape Naturaliste to fan out across southern Australia. On the return northern migratory leg, which appears to be more staggered in time than the southern migratory phase, pygmy blue whales pass north into the Perth Canyon over January to May then head up the coast passing Exmouth over April to August before continuing north The Cuvier Canyon (approximately 100 km to the south west) thought to be an area regularly visited by blue whales for feeding during the northern migration.

4.2.3 Reptiles

There are five species of marine turtle known to occur in the region:

- flatback turtle (*Natator depressus*);
- green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*);
- hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*);
- leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*); and
- loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*).

Green turtles are found in tropical and subtropical waters throughout the world and are the most abundant marine turtle species in northern Western Australian waters. They are known to nest in the Exmouth region between October and March, with peak nesting in December to January (EPA, 2010).

Leatherback turtles are found in tropical, subtropical and temperate waters throughout the world. Leatherback turtles feed in pelagic and coastal waters from tropical to temperate and boreal waters. They can be found throughout the water column, from the surface layer to depths of more than 200 m (DSEWPaC, 2011a).

Hawksbill turtles have a widespread distribution in tropical, subtropical and temperate waters. The species feed mainly on benthic habitats which include coral and rocky reefs. Hawksbill turtles nest from August to December in Western Australia, with a peak between October and November (EPA, 2010).

Flatback turtles are found in the tropical waters of northern Australia, Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya. All recorded nesting beaches are in Australia (Limpus et al., 1989). Regionally important rookeries are located at Cape Thouin (430 km away), the eastern beaches of Barrow Island (50 km away), Lacepede Islands (980 km away), Dampier Archipelago (270 km away), Port Headland (470 km away) and the Lowendal and Montebello Islands (approximately 170 and 180 km away, respectively) (DSEWPaC, 2011b). Flatback turtle nesting in Western Australia occurs from November to March, with a peak from December to January (EPA, 2010).

Loggerhead turtles have a more temperate distribution than green, hawksbill and flatback turtles and are found throughout tropical, subtropical and temperate waters, preferring waters of coral and rocky reefs, seagrass beds and muddy bays (DSEWPaC, 2011c). Nesting occurs from Shark Bay to North West Cape in Western Australia, with major rookeries at Dirk Hartog Island (approximately 470 km away), the Muiron Islands (approximately 20 km away) and the beaches of North West Cape (22 km away). Nesting occurs between November and March, with a peak from December to February (EPA, 2010).

The short-nosed sea snake is a critically endangered species that is endemic to Western Australia (DSEWPaC, 2011d). This species has been identified in Exmouth Gulf with the primary habitat for this species includes reef flats and shallow waters along the edges of reefs (about 10 m deep).

4.2.4 Fish

Some 1,400 species of finfish are known to occur in the region, mostly of a tropical Indo-West Pacific affinity, with a greater proportion occurring in shallow coastal waters (DEWHA 2008). A number of different pelagic fish occur in the deeper offshore waters of the region and are seasonally abundant and may pass through the area during annual migrations. The most notable species of deep water pelagic fishes in the area are the billfish, which include sailfish, marlin (both Family Istiophoridae) and swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*).

The region also supports diverse and abundant shark and ray populations. Whaler sharks are the most numerous and diverse, occurring in a wide range of habitats such as intertidal (black-tip reef shark), offshore reef drop-offs (grey reef shark) and deep ocean areas (oceanic white-tip). The whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) is also known to frequent the region. The shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) is a coastal, oceanic species occurring from the surface to at least 500 m depth and is widespread in temperate and tropical waters of all oceans from about 50°N (up to 60°N in the northeast Atlantic) to 50°S. It is occasionally found close inshore where the continental shelf is narrow (IUCN 2012).

4.2.5 Birds

A large number of seabird species migrate across the region, and may pass through the permit areas. Migratory birds are more prolific in the region in both numbers and species, with ten species of migratory sea birds being protected under international agreements with Japan, China or Korea. The southern giant petrel (*Marconectes giganteus*) and the soft plumaged petrel (*Pterodroma mollis*), which are listed Threatened species, may be sighted in the vicinity of the Homevale-1 Aol.

4.3 Socio-Economic Environment

The nearest town to the survey area is Exmouth. The Shire of Exmouth has a resident population of approximately 2,207 people, though there are large and short-term fluctuations in population due to the high number of seasonal tourists. The main employment is public administration and safety, accommodation and food services and construction.

4.3.1 Conservation Zones

The Homevale Aol lies within the Multiple Use Zone of the recently proclaimed (November 2012) Gascoyne Commonwealth Marine Reserve. Some of the major values of the Gascoyne Commonwealth Marine Reserve include:

- Important foraging areas for migratory seabirds, the threatened and migratory hawksbills and flatback turtles and the vulnerable and migratory whale shark
- The reserve provides a continuous connectivity corridor from shallow depths around 15 metres out to deep offshore waters on the abyssal plain at over 5000 metres in depth
- The reserve provides protection to many seafloor features including canyon, terrace, ridge, knolls, deep hole/valley and continental rise. It also provides protection for sponge gardens in the south of the reserve adjacent to Western Australian coastal waters
- The reserve therefore provides connectivity between the inshore waters of the existing Ningaloo Commonwealth Marine Reserve and the deeper waters of the area

4.3.2 Fisheries

There are three Commonwealth commercial fisheries operating in the survey area, including:

- Western Deepwater Fishery
- Mackerel Managed Fishery
- Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery
- North West Slope Trawl Fishery.
- West Coast Deep Sea Crustacean (Interim) Managed Fishery

4.3.3 Petroleum Industry Activities

The Stybarrow FPSO in Petroleum Production Permit Area WA-32-L, which came online in 2007 is the closest activity to the proposed Homevale-1 exploration well location.

4.3.4 Shipping

Approximately 1,200 ships pass through the region each year (Woodside, 2002; BHPBP, 2004), with most of the ships running north-south heading up and down the Western Australian coast (approximately 50–60 km offshore).

4.4 Cultural Environment

4.4.1 Shipwreck and Heritage Sites

There are no World Heritage properties or places of National Heritage in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Homevale-1 Aol. The nearest World Heritage site is Ningaloo Coastline and Marine Park approximately 113 km to the south-east. The closest place of National Heritage is the Ningaloo Coast (including Ningaloo Marine Park and Cape Range National Park) which is included on the National Heritage list. The Western Australian Maritime Museum database identifies five shipwrecks in the general area off North West Cape, but none in the area of the Homevale Aol.

5 MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS AND CONTROLS

Risk analysis has been undertaken for all environmental aspects of the activity, consistent with the procedures outlined in the Australian and New Zealand Standards AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 (Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines) and BHP Billiton's Drilling Worldwide Management Policies (WWD000). These aspects, potential impacts and preventative and mitigative controls are indicated below.

Source of Risk (Hazard)	Potential Environmental Impact	Mitigation Methods
Timing and location of drilling activity/Physical presence	Disturbance to marine fauna in critical habitat Interference with other vessels (fishing and shipping)	Maintenance of a 500m petroleum safety zone during drilling operations. Notice to mariners. Avoidance of the boundaries of the Ningaloo marine park and Muiron Islands MUI.
Anchoring and seabed contact	Damage to benthic habitat	Rig Move and Positioning Plan identifying areas of potential highly sensitive habitat to be avoided.
Vessel/MODU movement	Interference to fauna. Injury/mortality of cetaceans or turtles from vessel collision	Adherence to EPBC Regulations regarding vessel speeds around cetaceans. Briefing/induction of personnel on cetacean, whale sharks and turtle interaction regulations / guidelines.
Noise	Acoustic disturbance to marine fauna	Briefing/induction of personnel on cetacean, whale sharks and turtle interaction regulations / guidelines. Pre-start observations time of commencement and soft start time of commencement and duration for vertical seismic profiling.
Light	Potential light disturbance to marine fauna and visual aesthetics	Illumination of working areas on the MODU and support vessels for safe working practices only.
Use of MODU, supply vessel and machinery engines	Atmospheric emissions from combustion of fuel leading to reduced localised air quality, contribution to global greenhouse gas concentrations and ozone depleting gases.	MODU and vessel/s hold a current IAPP Certificate Use of low sulphur Diesel.
Routine discharge of drilling fluids/ materials to marine environment	Toxic effects to marine biota. Localised burial and smothering of benthic habitats. Localised reduction in water quality (turbidity increase).	Chemical assessment/ratings for fluids operationally discharged to marine environment maintained. Use of drill fluid and additives that are rated gold or silver or D or E on the OCNS database, or if not rated data is provided to demonstrate meet requirements of the gold or silver rating or D or E rating. WBM rated gold or silver on the OCNS database or if not rated data is provided to demonstrate meet requirements of the gold or silver rating.
Routine discharge of sewage, putrescible wastes to marine environment	Nutrient enrichment in surface waters.	MODU and vessel/s hold current International Pollution Prevention (IPP) certificates. Certificate of STP compliance with either MEPC.159(55) [post 2010 installation] or MEPC.2(VI) [installed pre 2010].
Routine discharge of BOP Control Fluid	Potential toxic effects to marine biota.	BOP control fluid is ranked D or better on OCNS ranked list.

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Routine or accidental discharges (leak from storage and/or equipment) from deck drainage to marine environment	Potential toxic effects to marine biota.	Current IOPP certificate for each vessel. MODU 3rd Party containment audit prior to mobilisation
Physical disturbance from cementing. Potential toxic effects	Alteration of seabed habitat. Potential toxic effects to marine biota.	Cement products ranked D or better on OCNS ranked list.
Solid waste disposal and accidental release	Impact on the marine environment from waste disposal.	Induction of all site personnel on site waste management procedures and BHP Billiton Drilling WMP Waste Management Plan for Homevale-1 drilling, prepared in consultation with rig Contractor and Waste Contractor.
Introduction of invasive marine species	Minimise the risk of the introduction of non-indigenous marine species from ballast water and biofouling.	IMS risk assessment. MODU/Vessels have current Certificates of Anti-Fouling Systems (IAFS).
Release of diesel from storage due to collision	Potential toxic effects to marine biota. Potential oiling of marine wildlife.	Maintenance of a 500m petroleum safety zone during drilling operations. Notice to mariners. MODU and AHSVs have current Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plans (SOPEP) SOPEP drills undertaken on the MODU and AHSVs.
Release of diesel / SBM base fluid during transfer operations	Potential toxic effects to marine biota. Potential oiling of marine wildlife.	Transfer operations only during daylight hours and appropriate sea state. MODU and AHSVs have current Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plans (SOPEP) SOPEP drills undertaken on the MODU and AHSVs.
Loss of well containment	Release of hydrocarbons to sea	Drilling Well Operations Management Plan for the well accepted by NOPSEMA prior to spudding of the well. Compliance with the BHP Billiton Worldwide Drilling Policies.

6 MANAGEMENT APPROACH

A Homevale-1 Environment Plan has been prepared in accordance with Commonwealth regulatory requirements, specifically the Offshore Petroleum Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) 2009 Regulations, as administered by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA).

The Homevale-1 exploration well will be managed in compliance with the Homevale-1 Environment Plan and the company-wide Charter, HSEC Policy and HSEC Management System Framework and associated controls. These systems aim to maximise productivity by adopting sound technical standards and the principles of Zero Harm to people, the environment and the local communities.

During the survey an organisational structure linking BHPB and Drilling Contractor will be utilised to ensure the management system and associated controls identified in the EP are implemented and monitored with all reporting requirements undertaken as required. Each role within the organisational structure has allocated responsibility.

All drilling rig crew will have appropriate competencies and training as required under their conditions of employment as pertains to their role and are outlined in the Well Operations Management Plan (WOMP). All drilling rig crew involved in the activity will attend pre-spud meetings that will incorporate a project specific environmental induction that supports this EP.

The induction includes an Environmental Awareness section which includes details of the EP and presents topics on the following:

- General description of the activity location, including any environmentally sensitive areas
- Adherence to standards and procedures, and the use of Job Safety Analysis and permit to work hazard identification and management process
- Spill management including prevention, response and clean-up, location of spill kits and reporting requirements
- Waste management requirements and process (segregation of landfill, recycle and hazardous wastes) and location of bins
- Reporting of marine mammals and whale sharks – location of forms and charts
- Chemical management requirements – chemicals to be approved and MSDS on board.

BHPB and Drilling Contractors will manage emergency response through an activity specific Emergency Response Plan and vessel contractor emergency plans.

Monitoring, auditing and reporting will be undertaken pre, during and post drilling in accordance with the Homevale-1 EP.

7 CONSULTATION

Under the Petroleum Health, Safety, Environment and Community Management System a Stakeholder Engagement Plan must be in place for all exploration, development and production activities.

An Exmouth Sub-basin Stakeholder Engagement Management Plan (SEMP) has been in place since the start-up of the Stybarrow FPSO in November 2010. The SEMP is reviewed and updated annually.

In support of the Homevale-1 exploration well, BHP Billiton undertook an assessment of the proposed activities and potential environmental, social and economic impacts of the activity which identified the relevant stakeholders.

All relevant stakeholders were sent an Environment Plan Fact Sheet and consulted (phone calls, meetings and email exchanges). This included:

- State Government Departments;
- Commonwealth government Departments;
- Local Government;
- Other oil and gas Operators;
- Local Businesses;
- Indigenous groups;
- NGO's; and
- Safety Authorities

8 CONTACT DETAILS

For further information about this activity please contact BHPB Petroleum Government and External Affairs Team on 1800 110 258 or send an email to bhppetexternalaffairs@bhpbilliton.com.

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