

# Thebe-1 Wellhead Decommissioning

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## 1. Purpose of this report

NOPSEMA has accepted the Thebe-1 Wellhead Decommissioning Environment Plan (Document Number: SA0006UF1401763645, Revision 2 dated August 2022) submitted by the titleholder, Woodside Energy Scarborough Pty Ltd (Woodside) for a wellhead abandonment activity within WA-63-R in the Northern Carnarvon Basin.

This report explains how NOPSEMA took into account matters that may be of interest to the public and accompanies the accepted EP, submitted by Woodside, which is available on the NOPSEMA website and should be referred for further information.

### 1.1. Information relevant to NOPSEMA's decision:

In making the decision to accept this EP, NOPSEMA took into account:

- the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* (OPGGGS Act)
- the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulation 2009 (Environment Regulations)
- NOPSEMA Assessment Policy (PL0050), Environment Plan Assessment Policy (PL1347) and Environment Plan Decision Making Guidelines (GL1721)
- the Department of Industry, Science and Resources' Offshore Petroleum Decommissioning Guideline, March 2022
- NOPSEMA Section 572 regulatory Policy (PL1903) and Section 270 regulatory Policy (PL1959)
- the Thebe-1 Wellhead Decommissioning EP
- information raised by relevant persons, government departments and agencies relevant to making a decision
- available technical information and scientific literature relevant to making a decision.
- relevant plans of management and threatened species recovery plans developed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and relevant guidance published by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

## 2. Next steps

Responsibility for the ongoing environmental performance of the activity remains, at all times, with Woodside.

NOPSEMA has legislated responsibilities to inspect and investigate offshore petroleum and greenhouse gas storage activities, and to enforce compliance with environmental law. These functions will be applied to this activity in accordance with NOPSEMA's policies.

### **3. Sensitive Information**

Sensitive information received during the public comment period, such as the names and contact details of commenters and specific information identified by the commenter or relevant person as 'sensitive', is not published in this report. Sensitive information is contained in a sensitive information part of the EP which has been considered by NOPSEMA during its assessment process.

### **4. Further information**

If you would like further information about the activity, please contact the titleholder's nominated liaison person specified in the EP and on NOPSEMA's webpage for the Thebe-1 Wellhead Decommissioning.

If you would like to be notified of regulatory information on the activity, such as start and end dates and enforcement actions (if any), please subscribe to updates from the [Approved projects and activities](#) on NOPSEMA's website.

## How NOPSEMA has taken into account key matters raised during the assessment and decision-making process for Thebe-1 Wellhead Decommissioning

#	Matter	Titleholder response	NOPSEMA's assessment and decision
1	Leaving the wellhead in situ may not be acceptable and result in short and long term impacts and risks to the environment.	<p>The EP describes the permanent abandonment in situ of the Thebe-1 exploration wellhead, following the drilling, plugging, abandonment of the well in 2007, in 1168 meters of water.</p> <p>This includes providing detail on the location, status, condition and composition of the wellhead structure, and information on the unsuccessful wellhead removal attempt that was made at the time. The information is supported by diagrams and extracts from the well completion reports, well abandonment report and equipment technical specifications.</p> <p>Woodside have provided an assessment of the technical feasibility of wellhead removal and compared the environmental impacts and risks of removal versus those arising from leaving the Thebe-1 wellhead in situ as the basis for the petroleum activity described in the EP.</p> <p>In preparing the EP, Woodside engaged with relevant persons to seek their feedback on the proposal. This included Commonwealth and State government agencies, fishing industry bodies and relevant fishing licence holders. Woodside responded to all objection and claims made, presenting this information in the EP.</p> <p>Woodside undertook an environmental impact and risk assessment for the wellhead proposed to be left in situ, taking into account the limited environmental sensitivities present. This included evaluating impacts from the degradation of the wellhead materials over time and immediate and future snagging risks to fishers from leaving the wellhead in place. Woodside concluded that with controls measures in place,</p>	<p>NOPSEMA recognises the importance of ensuring petroleum titleholders meet their decommissioning obligations as required under section 572 of the OPGGS Act.</p> <p>Woodside is seeking to deviate from the requirement to remove all property, which may be considered when the titleholder demonstrates in the EP that the proposed deviation delivers equal or better environmental outcomes compared to complete property removal, while impacts and risks are reduced to ALARP and will be of an acceptable level.</p> <p>During the course of the assessment, NOPSEMA required Woodside to provide additional information about specifications of the property and surrounding environment, and additional analysis of the impacts to the environment from degradation of the wellhead, efficiency of control measures and incorporation of outcome of consultation with relevant persons to demonstrate leaving the wellhead in-situ presented an equal or better environmental outcome.</p> <p>In response, Woodside commissioned a subject matter expert report to evaluate snagging risks to fishers, performed additional consultation with fishing licence holders and reviewed prior operational and technical documentation about the drilling campaign and property left in place, including a re-evaluation of events and unsuccessful attempt to cut and retrieve the wellhead using a cutting tool when the well was drilled</p>

	<p>impacts and risks are reduced to ALARP and will be of an acceptable level. The controls measures identified include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with the <i>Environmental Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981</i>.</li> <li>• Ensuring the structure continues to be suitably marked on Australian Hydrographic Office (AHO) navigational charts.</li> <li>• Ensuring that final abandonment status and location has been communicated to relevant stakeholders, who will also implement standard fishing safety navigational controls.</li> </ul>	<p>and permanently plugged and abandoned in 2007. Woodside also provided further details on the impacts from the release of contaminants to the environment from the degradation of the wellhead structure.</p> <p>After taking into consideration Woodside's response and the information provided in the EP, NOPSEMA has concluded that the proposed deviation delivers equal or better environmental outcomes compared to complete property removal and the impacts and risks have been reduced to ALARP and will be of an acceptable level. A suitable case has therefore been made for leaving the wellhead in situ.</p> <p>In making a decision, NOPSEMA also took into account the relevant available technical information and scientific literature, views expressed by relevant persons, section 572 and 270 of the OPGGS Act, and NOPSEMA's Decision Making Guidelines (GL1721).</p>
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