

Mutineer-Exeter Cessation of Production and Decommissioning Environment Plan

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Units of measurement

Unit	Description
°C	degrees centigrade
g/m ²	grams per square metre
cP	centipoise
dB	decibels
dB(A)	decibels A-weighting
hrs	hours
Hz	hertz
kHz	kilohertz
km	kilometre (1000 metres)
km ²	square kilometres
L	litre (1000 ml)
m	metre (100 cm)
m ²	square metre
m ³	cubic metre
mg/L	milligrams per litre
ml	millilitre
nm	nautical mile (1.856 km)
Pa	Pascal (unit of pressure)
ppb	parts per billion
ppm	parts per million
t	tonne (1000 kg)

Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym/Abbreviation	Definition
AFFF	aqueous film-forming foam
AFMA	Australian Fishing Management Authority
AHO	Australian Hydrographic Office
ALARP	as low as reasonably practicable
AMOSC	Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre
AMP	Australian Marine Park (Commonwealth)
AMSA	Australian Maritime Safety Authority
API	American Petroleum Institute
APPEA	Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association
ASBTIA	Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association
ATBA	area to be avoided
BIA	biologically important area
CFA	Commonwealth Fishing Association
CHARM	chemical hazard and risk management
CM	control measure
CoP	cessation of production
CP	cathodic protection
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Commonwealth)
DAH	dissolved aromatic hydrocarbon
DAWE	Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment, now Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)
DBCA	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (Western Australia)
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
DEWHA	Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, now Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)
DISR	Department of Industry Science and Resources
DEMIRS	Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety
DNP	Director of National Parks
DoEE	Department of Environment and Energy, now Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)
DoF	the former Department of Fisheries (Western Australia), now amalgamated with other Departments to form Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
DoT	Western Australia Department of Transport
DPIRD	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Acronym/Abbreviation	Definition
DP	dynamic positioning
DSEWPac	the former Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, now Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)
DTM	disconnectable turret mooring
EHU	electro-hydraulic umbilical
EMBA	environment that may be affected
ENVID	environmental hazard identification workshop
ESSA	environmental sensitive sea areas
EP	Environment Plan
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
EPO	environmental performance outcome
EPS	environmental performance standard
EPU	electrical power umbilical
ESD	ecologically sustainable development
FID	Final Investment Decision
FPSO	floating production, storage and offloading unit
GHD	GHD Pty Ltd
GHG	greenhouse gas
HEV	high environmental value
HOCNF	harmonised offshore chemical notification format
HSE	health, safety and environment
IBC	intermediate bulk container
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IMMR	inspection, monitoring, maintenance and repair
IMS	invasive marine species
IMSMP	Invasive Marine Species Management Plan
ISU	integrated services umbilical
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JRCC	Joint Rescue Coordination Centre
KEF	key ecological feature
LOWC	loss of well control
MARPOL	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
MDO	marine diesel oil
ME	Mutineer-Exeter (Development)
MEFF	Mutineer, Exeter, Fletcher, Finucane

Acronym/Abbreviation	Definition
MEG	monoethylene glycol
MEVA	moderate exposure value area
MNES	matter of national environment significance
MoC	management of change
MODU	mobile offshore drilling unit
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPNMP	Marine Park Network Management Plan
MTWA	Marine Tourism WA
MWA	mid-water arch
NC	no contact
NEBA	net environmental benefit analysis
NOPSEMA	National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority
NWS	North West Shelf
OCNS	Offshore Chemical Notification Scheme
ODS	ozone-depleting substance
OIW	oil in water
OPEP	Oil Pollution Emergency Plan
OPGGS(E)R	Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2023
OPGGS Act	<i>Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006</i>
OVID	Offshore Vessel Inspection Database
OWM	oil weathering model
P&A	plug and abandonment
PAH	polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon
PBC	Prescribed Body Corporate
PLONOR	pose little or no risk (to the environment)
PLV	pipelay vessel (PLV)
PMS	planned maintenance system
PMST	Protected Matters Search Tool
PPA	Pearl Producers Association
PSZ	petroleum safety zone
PTS	permanent threshold shift
PUDU	production umbilical distribution unit
ROV	remotely operated vehicle
Santos	Santos Ltd

Acronym/Abbreviation	Definition
SDS	safety datasheet
SEL	sound exposure level measured as dB re 1 $\mu\text{Pa}^2\text{s}$
SINTEF	Foundation for Scientific and Industrial Research at the Norwegian Institute of Technology
SOPEP	Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan
SMPEP	Shipboard Marine Pollution Emergency Plan
SMS	Santos Management System
SPL	sound pressure level
TTS	temporary threshold shift
UTA	umbilical termination assembly
WA	Western Australia
WAFIC	Western Australian Fishing Industry Council
WDCS	Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society
WOMP	Well Operations Management Plan
4LPP	four-layer polypropylene
3LPE	three-layer polyethylene

1. Introduction

1.1 Environment Plan summary

Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2023 (OPGGs(E)R 2023)) Requirements
Regulation 35(6)
Within 10 days after receiving notice that NOPSEMA has accepted an environment plan (whether in full, in part or subject to limitations or conditions), the titleholder must submit a summary of the accepted plan to the NOPSEMA for public disclosure.
Regulation 35(7)
The summary: (a) must include the following material from the environment plan for the activity: (i) the location of the activity; (ii) a description of the receiving environment; (iii) a description of the activity; (iv) details of environmental impacts and risks of the activity; (v) a summary of the control measures for the activity; (vi) a summary of the arrangements for ongoing monitoring of the titleholder's environmental performance; (vii) a summary of the response arrangements in the oil pollution emergency plan; (viii) details of consultation already undertaken, and plans for ongoing consultation; (ix) details of the titleholder's nominated liaison person for the activity; and (b) must be to the satisfaction of NOPSEMA.

This revision of the Mutineer, Exeter, Fletcher and Finucane Cessation of Production Environment Plan Summary has been prepared from material provided in the EP. The summary consists of the following as required by Regulation 35(7):

EP Summary Material Requirement	Relevant Section of EP containing EP Summary Material
The location of the activity	Section 3.1
A description of the receiving environment	Section 5 and Appendix D
A description of the activity	Section 4
Details of the environmental impacts and risks	Sections 8 and 9
The control measures for the activity	Sections 8 and 9
The arrangements for ongoing monitoring of the titleholder's environmental performance	Section 11.11.2
Response arrangements in the oil pollution emergency plan	Sections 8.9, 9.5, 9.6 and 9.8 See Mutineer, Exeter, Fletcher and Finucane Cessation of Production Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (9885-650-PLN-0002)
Consultation already undertaken and plans for ongoing consultation	Section 6
Details of the titleholders nominated liaison person for the activity	Section 1.6.1

1.2 Background

Santos Ltd (Santos) is the registered titleholder for production licences WA-54-L, WA-26-L and WA-27-L, which cover the Mutineer, Exeter, Fletcher and Finucane (MEFF) light crude oil fields, located in water depths of 130 to 160 m on the North West Shelf (NWS), around 160 km offshore from Dampier. Santos produced hydrocarbons from the Mutineer, Exeter, Fletcher and Finucane light crude oil fields (previously known as the Mutineer Exeter (ME) Development) in these permits between 2005 and 2018. Production occurred from a series of subsea wells linked by subsea pipelines via a disconnectable turret mooring (DTM) to a Floating Production Storage and Offloading unit (FPSO).

Operation of the facility was performed under the MEFF Development Field Operations (Operations) Environment Plan (ME-7000-A02-F003), accepted by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) in July 2014. Activities described in the Operations EP included onboard processing of production fluids (and associated discharges), ongoing vessel-based inspection and intervention activities, as well as periodic disconnection of the FPSO, typically in response to cyclones or other operational (e.g., maintenance) requirements. During disconnection periods, the production wells were shut in, the DTM was lowered to around 30 m below the surface and the subsea equipment remained in place.

Production from the fields ceased in 2018, when Santos shut in production from the remaining wells in April 2018. The subsea production system was seawater flushed, preserved then the FPSO was disconnected from the DTM and departed the field in quarter Q3 2018. The subsea equipment remained in place and the development transitioned to a 'cessation' phase that will continue until field decommissioning occurs.

The MEFF fields are currently managed under the following documents approved by NOPSEMA:

- + Mutineer Exeter Cessation of Production (CoP) Environment Plan (9885-650-PLN-0001) last accepted by NOPSEMA on 21st March 2022.
- + Mutineer Exeter Cessation of Production Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (OPEP) (9885-650-PLN-0002) last accepted by NOPSEMA on 21st March 2022.
- + Mutineer Exeter Cessation of Production Safety Case (9885-012-PHA-0001) – accepted 19th July 2023.
- + Mutineer, Exeter, Finucane and Fletcher Inactive and Temporary Abandoned Wells Well Operations Management Plan (WOMP) (9885-200-IMP-0001) – accepted 28th March 2022.

Disconnection of the FPSO and sail away from the Operational Area has already been completed and is not part of the scope of this EP. The last accepted revision of the MEFF CoP EP described the initial phase of subsea equipment decommissioning, being removal of the floating assets (DTM and two mid-water arch (MWA) assemblies), which were removed in Q1 2023 completed under Revision 4 of this EP accepted by NOPSEMA in March 2022. The permanent plug and abandonment (P&A) of the wells commenced in accordance with a separate EP, in Q2 2024 with an estimated campaign length of 280 days to 12 months. This EP provides for decommissioning of the remaining subsea equipment, being the equipment located on the seabed during production. Removal of the remaining subsea equipment is planned to be executed in 2025/2026 with completion planned by the end of 2026. Removal of the majority of the subsea equipment, including flowlines and umbilicals, is planned to commence after completion of the wells P&A. However, early removal of some subsea equipment may be undertaken during well P&A if the opportunity arises.

Timing and duration of these activities is subject to change due to project schedule requirements, vessel availability, unforeseen circumstances and weather. This EP revision for Decommissioning risk assesses decommissioning activities throughout the year (all seasons) to provide operational flexibility. All the above timeframes are subject to change and, as such, no particular time periods have been nominated. Removal of subsea equipment may be carried out over multiple campaigns.

Asset integrity for the purposes of removal has been demonstrated till the end of 2026 using cathodic protection measurements obtained during the 2021 inspection campaign. Several options for removal of the subsea equipment from the seabed have been identified. Selection of the final removal methodology is subject to further studies and availability of suitable vessels and other equipment.

1.3 Scope of this Environment Plan

This EP covers the continued cessation phase of the MEFF Development during the final field decommissioning phase. Cessation phase commenced when production ceased in 2018, flushing activities were completed and the FPSO departed the field. The petroleum activities covered in this EP include:

- + the presence of equipment on title up until removal and during the field decommissioning phase
- + inspection, monitoring, maintenance and repair (IMMR) activities on subsea equipment in the title area until removed or decommissioned under this EP
- + removal of subsea equipment normally located on the seabed during production
- + decommissioning and abandonment in situ of buried anchors and anchor chains

This EP also addresses the requirements for Surrender of title under Sections 269 and 270 of the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006 (OPGGs Act).

This revision of the MEFF CoP and Decommissioning EP is a 5 year revision and as such, Santos seek that the expiry date will be 5 years from the acceptance of the EP to allow for field decommissioning by the end of 2026, and then providing sufficient time for EP compliance reporting and title relinquishment.

1.4 Purpose of this Environment Plan

The purpose of this EP is to meet the requirements of the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2023 (OPGGs(E)R) for acceptance by NOPSEMA, specifically to provide the following:

- + description of all property brought onto title, including its status and condition (**Section 4**)
- + description of how Santos will maintain all property on the title, as required by s572 (2) of the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006 (OPGGs Act) to ensure it can be removed, such that end states are not precluded (**Section 4**)
- + detailed plan for the removal or abandonment in situ of all equipment and execution timing (**Section 4**)
- + description of the activities associated with the ongoing cessation of production phase and field decommissioning phase of the MEFF Development (**Section 4**)
- + description of the existing environment (**Section 5**) that may be affected by the activity
- + implementation strategy (**Section 11.11.2**) that will be used to measure and report on environmental performance to ensure impacts and risks during planned and unplanned events are reduced to as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP) and acceptable levels.

In addition, this EP also details how Santos will meet the requirements of s269 and s270 of the OPGGS Act to allow Santos to surrender titles once the activities under this EP have ended, and all obligations under this EP have been completed. Section 270 of the OPGGS Act requires titleholders applying to surrender a petroleum title (among other things):

- + to provide, to the satisfaction of NOPSEMA, for the conservation and protection of natural resources in the title
- + to the satisfaction of NOPSEMA, make good any damage to the seabed or subsoil in the surrender area caused by any person engaged or concerned in the operations authorised by the title.

A demonstration of how the relevant requirements of s269 and s270 and the associated Section 270 NOPSEMA Advice - Consent to Surrender Title policy (NOPSEMA 2022) requirements are met by this EP is provided in **Section 10**.

1.5 Decommissioning environment plan and project planning activities

Santos has previously committed to an approvals pathway for decommissioning which included the following three steps.

Step 1:

This step involved a revision of the MEFF Cessation of Operations EP to include floating asset removal (DTMs and mid-water arches (MWAs)). This revision of the CoP EP was submitted to NOPSEMA in December 2021 and accepted as Revision 4 on 21 March 2022.

Step 2:

Required Santos to submit a revision to the MEFF CoP EP by no later than 31st August 2022. This submission date was achieved, and this EP revision now provides for the end state decommissioning of the MEFF Field. The matters addressed in the revision to the CoP EP are the same as in Step 1 but have been updated to reflect completion of the floating asset removal and includes additional matters specific to remaining subsea equipment decommissioning as outlined below:

- + detailed plans of the proposed subsea decommissioning activities. In particular, the fate of all property on the title, proposed decommissioning methodology, scope of work and execution strategy
- + an evaluation of the feasibility of all options, including partial and complete property removal
- + an evaluation of environmental impacts and risks of all feasible options, including complete property removal, to enable NOPSEMA to have regard to the Australian Government Decommissioning Guideline policy principle that deviations will provide an equal or better environmental outcome when compared to complete property removal. The evaluation of all the environmental impacts and risks of each option must include consideration of control measures necessary to manage the impacts and risks
- + evaluation of all environmental impacts and risks within Australia's environment including, where relevant, indirect consequences that may arise from the petroleum activity of removing, or not removing, property from a title area
- + where deviation/s to removal of property or relocation of property is proposed, Santos has addressed arrangements for monitoring and management
- + an evaluation of all impacts and risks from the proposed decommissioning end state activities to demonstrate that the end state option provides a net environmental benefit, and impacts and risks are managed to acceptable levels and ALARP
- + consideration of relevant persons' consultation with respect to the options being proposed.

If accepted by NOPSEMA, this EP will be valid for five years from the date of NOPSEMA acceptance.

Step 3:

The 3rd step was for Santos to submit a P&A EP by 31st August 2022 (which was achieved) and accepted by NOPSEMA in February 2024.

In terms of project planning to support Step 2, indicative milestones (at the time of writing this EP), for future decommissioning planning are as follows:

- + seabed asset removal Select phase completed Q4 2022
- + seabed asset removal contract development and tendering in 2023/2024
- + seabed asset removal final investment decision (FID) and main contract award(s) Q1 2025.

The following timings are anticipated with respect to the execution of decommissioning activities:

- + floating asset removal was completed in Q1 2023 for removal of buoyant equipment
- + well P&A activity commenced in Q2 2024, with an expected campaign of around 280 days to 12 months
- + seabed equipment decommissioning is planned to be executed in 2025/2026 ideally after completing the well P&A campaign and be completed by the end of 2026. However, activities to support seabed equipment decommissioning, such as as-found ROV surveys, may commence prior to the conclusion of the P&A campaign (refer to **Section 4.2.2**)
- + early removal of subsea equipment may be undertaken should the opportunity arise.

1.6 Details of the titleholder

Santos is the registered titleholder for WA-26-L, WA-27-L and WA-54-L, authorised pursuant to subsection 775B(2) of the Commonwealth OPGGS Act to take eligible voluntary actions on behalf of the titleholders. **Table 1-1** provides details of the titleholders and their contact details.

1.6.1 Details of Santos' nominated liaison person

Details for Santos' Nominated Liaison Person for the activity are as follows:

Name:	Dawn MacInnes (Manager– Environment WA, NA & TL)
Business address:	100 St Georges Terrace, Perth, Western Australia (WA) 6000
Telephone number:	(08) 6218 7100
Email address:	offshore.environment.admin@santos.com

1.6.2 Notification procedure in the event of changed details

In the event there is a change in the titleholder, the titleholder's nominated liaison person or change in the contact details for the titleholder or liaison person, Santos will notify NOPSEMA and provide updated details as soon as practicable and prior to the change occurring.

Additional information regarding Santos can be obtained from the Santos website at: www.santos.com.

Table 1-1: Titleholder details for WA-26-L, WA-27-L and WA-54-L

Titleholder	ACN	Address
Santos Limited	007550923	Business Address (Head Office): 60 Flinders Street, Adelaide, South Australia 5000 Telephone number: +61 8 8116 5000 Fax number: +61 8 8116 5050 offshore.environment.admin@santos.com
Kufpec (Australia) Pty Ltd	001800924	Business Address: Administrative Shuwaikh – Area 4 – Street 102 – Building No. 9, PO Box 5291 Safat, 13053 Kuwait Telephone number: +965 1836000 Fax number: +965 24951818 Email address: kufpec@kufpec.com
JX Nippon Oil and Gas Exploration (Australia) Pty Ltd	078323743	Business Address (Head Office): 1-2 Otemachi 1-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-8163 Japan Telephone number: +81(0)3-6257-6000 Fax number: +81 (0)3-6213-3511 Email address: jxnoes.operation@jxnoes.com.au

1.7 Environmental management framework

The activity will be conducted in accordance with the Santos Environment, Health and Safety Policy **Appendix A**) and Santos Management System (**Section 11.1**). In addition, there are a number of Commonwealth and Western Australian Acts / Regulations and international agreements and conventions relevant to the activity, as described in **Section 2** and **Appendix B**.

2. Relevant requirements

2.1 Legislative Requirements for Decommissioning

2.1.1 Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006

The OPGGS Act provides the regulatory framework for all offshore exploration and production activities in Commonwealth waters (those areas beyond three nautical miles from the Territorial Sea baseline and in the Commonwealth Petroleum Jurisdiction Boundary). The Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2023 (referred to as the Environment Regulations) have been made under the auspices of the OPGGS Act for the purposes of ensuring (as described in Section 3) “...any petroleum activity or greenhouse gas activity carried out in an offshore area is:

- + carried out in a manner consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development set out in section 3A of the EPBC Act
- + carried out in a manner by which the environmental impacts and risks of the activity will be reduced to as low as reasonably practicable
- + carried out in a manner by which the environmental impacts and risks of the activity will be of an acceptable level”.

Section 572 of the OPGGS Act requires that the titleholder maintain their property and remove their property from a petroleum title area when it is no longer in use, which is consistent with the requirement of Article 60 of UNCLOS. However, the Commonwealth recognises that removal of property may not be feasible, or may result in environmental, safety and economic outcomes that are worse than leaving property in situ. The Offshore Petroleum Decommissioning Guideline (Department of Industry, Science and Resources, 2022)) outlines the Commonwealth’s principles on decommissioning property used for offshore oil and gas exploration and production:

- + decommissioning is the responsibility of the titleholder
- + early planning for decommissioning is encouraged
- + complete removal of property is the base case
- + decommissioning must be completed before the end of the title.

Noting these principles, the Offshore Petroleum Decommissioning Guideline (Department of Industry, Science and Resources, 2022) states that NOPSEMA may consider options other than complete removal. The guideline requires titleholder to demonstrate that any proposed alternatives to full removal must result in equal or better environmental, safety and well integrity outcomes compared to full removal.

The Section 572 Maintenance and Removal of Property policy (NOPSEMA 2022) outlined NOPSEMA’s position on Section 572 of the OPGGS Act and the Offshore Petroleum Decommissioning Guideline ((Department of Industry, Science and Resources, 2022). This policy reinforces full removal of property is the base case for decommissioning and outlines NOPSEMA’s position on alternatives to full removal of property. NOPSEMA expects an EP describing alternative options to removal of all property etc. to include:

- + a feasibility assessment of all decommissioning options that could reasonably be undertaken and are likely to be successful.
- + an evaluation of all environmental impacts and risks of all feasible options. The evaluation should:
 - be appropriate to the nature and scale of the activity.
 - demonstrate compliance with relevant domestic legislation and international guidelines and standards (for examples those provided by the IMO Resolution A.672 (16))

- consider information received during early consultation.
 - demonstrate that alternative arrangements and any subsequent benefits will be consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.
 - consider control measures necessary to manage the impacts and risks.
 - consider impact and risks within Australia’s environment including, where relevant, indirect consequences that may arise from the activity of removing a property etc. from a title area.
- + A description of monitoring or survey activities proposed to be conducted to confirm decommissioning outcomes have been met, and that control measures have been implemented effectively.
- A description of the arrangement for long term management of property etc which is not removed including any on-going monitoring

Section 270 of the OPGGS Act relates to the surrender of petroleum titles.

Section 270 requires titleholders applying to surrender a petroleum title (among other things):

- + to provide, to the satisfaction of NOPSEMA, for the conservation and protection of natural resources in the title
- + to the satisfaction of NOPSEMA, make good any damage to the seabed or subsoil in the surrender area caused by any person engaged or concerned in the operations authorised by the title.

The Section 270 NOPSEMA Advice - Consent to Surrender Title policy (NOPSEMA 2022 provides the most detailed advice to date from NOPSEMA on addressing arrangements for long term monitoring. Section 10.3 – Monitoring and Survey Expectations of Section 270 NOPSEMA Advice - Consent to Surrender Title policy (NOPSEMA 2022) states the following monitoring and survey expectations held by NOPSEMA:

- + the final condition of the surrender area has been delivered as described in permissioning documents and control measures to manage the impacts and risks have been effective
- + the final impacts and risks upon the environment shall be determined by comparison between initial baseline condition monitoring and survey data and the end state condition
- + subsequent monitoring and surveys may be required based upon an assessment of risk to confirm the final condition has not changed and control measures to manage the impacts and risks remain effective. Consideration shall be given to the risks in perpetuity associated with property that is not removed
- + performance reports shall be provided for the duration of monitoring and survey activities.

Section 10– Reporting, of the Section 270 NOPSEMA Advice - Consent to Surrender Title policy (NOPSEMA 2022) outlines NOPSEMA expectations for reporting, which is applicable for reporting on long term monitoring arrangements. NOPSEMA expects reports should:

- + demonstrate that all conditions and obligations included in the accepted final permissioning documents have been met
- + provide evidence that assumptions, performance standards and measurement criteria have been met where applied to conditions or obligations
- + provide detail of any criteria or obligation that has not been met, and any changes to the conditions or obligations approved in the accepted permissioning document
- + describe any variations from the accepted decommissioning operations and work plan

- + confirm the control measures applied to manage the impacts and risks associated with an accepted deviation have been effective
- + describe any immediate consequences observed as a result of decommissioning operations and works.

2.1.2 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

The EPBC Act aims to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places in Australia. These are defined in the Act as Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES). NOPSEMA, through the Streamlining Offshore Petroleum Environmental Approvals Program, implements these requirements with respect to offshore petroleum activity in Commonwealth waters. The Streamlining Offshore Petroleum Environmental Approvals Program is applicable to all offshore petroleum activity authorised by the OPGGS Act and requires the petroleum activity to be conducted in accordance with an accepted EP, consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD). The definition of 'environment' in the Streamlining Offshore Petroleum Environmental Approvals Program is consistent with that used in the EPBC Act and encompasses all matters protected under Part 3 of the EPBC Act. Under s268 of the EPBC Act:

“A Commonwealth agency must not take any action that contravenes a recovery plan or a threat abatement plan.”

In respect to offshore petroleum activities in Commonwealth waters, the above is implemented by NOPSEMA. Commitments relating to listed threatened species and ecological communities under the Act are included in the Program Report (Commonwealth of Australia, 2014):

- + NOPSEMA will not accept an Environment Plan that proposes activities which will result in unacceptable impacts to a listed threatened species or ecological community
- + NOPSEMA will not accept an Environment Plan that is inconsistent with a recovery plan or threat abatement plan for a listed threatened species or ecological community
- + NOPSEMA will have regard to any approved conservation advice relating to a threatened species or ecological community before accepting an Environment Plan.

Recovery and management plans relevant to this EP are discussed as applicable in **Sections 8 and 9**.

2.1.3 Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981

The *Sea Dumping Act 1981* requires sea dumping permits to be obtained for particular activities and gives effect to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention) and associated Protocol.

In instances where infrastructure is proposed to be left on the seabed, the activity may be considered a dumping activity that is regulated under the Sea Dumping Act. In these instances, permits are required from Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) prior to these activities.

2.1.4 Other Commonwealth and State Legislation

Refer to **Appendix B** for further information on other applicable Commonwealth and Western Australian Acts / Regulations relevant to the activity.

2.1.5 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

Article 60 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), to which Australia is a party, states:

“Any installations or structures which are abandoned or disused shall be removed to ensure safety of navigation, taking into account any generally accepted international standards established in this regard by the competent international organization. Such removal shall also have due regard to fishing, the protection of the marine environment and the rights and duties of other States.”

The International Maritime Organization (IMO), a body created by agreement of member states of the United Nations, is regarded as the competent organization to deal with this requirement. Following UNCLOS, the IMO published Resolution A.672(16) Guidelines and Standards for the Removal of Offshore Installations and Structures on the Continental Shelf and in the Exclusive Economic Zone (IMO 1989). This resolution recognizes that structures on the continental shelf should be removed, but coastal states (such as Australia) may make decisions to leave structures partially or completely in the sea. Australia is a member state of the IMO.

3. MEFF overview and decommissioning options

3.1 Location

The MEFF fields are located approximately 160 km north of Dampier in production licences WA-26-L, WA-27-L and WA-54-L (**Figure 3-1**). Water depth at MEFF ranges from 130 m to 160 m.

The activities covered by this EP will occur in the immediate vicinity of the field equipment, located within the operational area shown on **Figure 3-1** and within the coordinates presented in **Table 3-1**. The coordinates of key field equipment are provided in **Table 3-2**.

Table 3-1: Coordinates for the operational area

Operational Area	Latitude	Longitude
Point 1	19° 9' 55.21" S	116° 35' 4.72" E
Point 2	19° 9' 55.21" S	116° 40' 4.72" E
Point 3	19° 14' 55.21" S	116° 40' 4.72" E
Point 4	19° 14' 55.21" S	116° 45' 4.72" E
Point 5	19° 9' 55.21" S	116° 45' 4.72" E
Point 6	19° 9' 55.20" S	116° 50' 4.72" E
Point 7	19° 19' 55.21" S	116° 50' 4.72" E
Point 8	19° 19' 55.22" S	116° 35' 4.72" E
Point 9	19° 19' 55.22" S	116° 30' 4.72" E
Point 10	19° 14' 55.22" S	116° 30' 4.72" E
Point 11	19° 14' 55.21" S	116° 35' 4.72" E
Point 12	19° 9' 55.21" S	116° 35' 4.72" E

Table 3-2: Geographical location of remaining key equipment being removed

Equipment	Latitude	Longitude
Mutineer Booster Pump Manifold (MBPM)	19° 15' 32.8" S	116° 38' 16.3" E
Exeter Booster Pump Manifold (EBPM)	19° 18' 35.4" S	116° 33' 41.1" E
Fletcher Pipeline End Manifold (PLEM)	19° 14' 43.8" S	116° 47' 43.9" E
Finucane Pipeline End Manifold (PLEM)	19° 18' 17.3" S	116° 45' 32.9" E
Exeter MWA Gravity Base	19° 27' 64.40" S	116° 61' 19.27" E
Mutineer MWA Gravity Base	19° 27' 54.31" S	116° 61' 33.95" E

Table 3-3: Coordinates of the Anchors within the Operational Area

Infrastructure	Latitude	Longitude
Anchor 1	19° 27' 52.92" S	116° 62' 03.90" E
Anchor 2	19° 26' 91.56" S	116° 61' 59.60" E
Anchor 3	19° 26' 98.17" S	116° 60' 81.55" E
Anchor 4	19° 27' 65.79" S	116° 60' 47.79" E
Anchor 5	19° 28' 26.61" S	116° 60' 93.04" E
Anchor 6	19° 18' 16.55" S	116° 61' 73.29" E

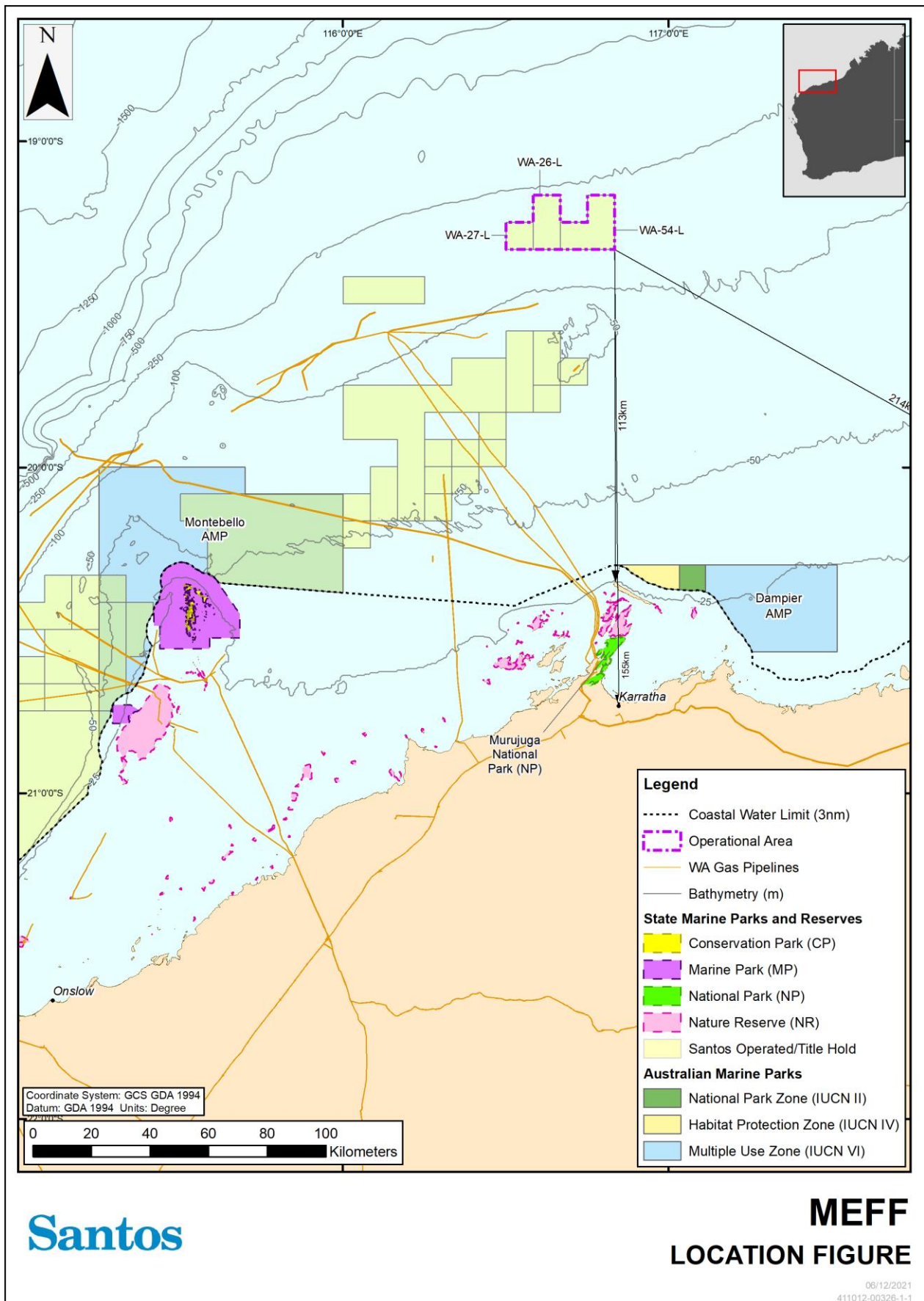


Figure 3-1: Mutineer, Exeter, Fletcher, Finucane Field location map

3.2 General details

Cessation Phase

The MEFF Development at the commencement of the cessation phase comprised the following:

- + a subsea production system with a production centre in each of the MEFF fields. The subsea production system has been flushed of hydrocarbons with treated seawater and left in a preservation state since the FPSO departed the field in July 2018. The reservoirs are isolated from the subsea production system at the Xmas trees (XTs).
- + a DTM (approximately 30 m below the sea surface) with six deeply buried steel anchors and the six corresponding steel mooring chains of approximately 710 m per mooring (whereby approximately 130 m is unburied), and two MWAs (approximately 82 m below the sea surface) are located between the Mutineer and Exeter fields. The DTM and MWA were removed from the field in Q1 2023 and only the anchors and mooring chains remain on the seabed.

For the cessation period, between flushing before the FPSO left the field in 2018 and final decommissioning, all well valves will remain isolated unless they are required to be operated to allow decommissioning activities.

During this time, subsea inspections of the subsea production system on title, will occur to ensure ongoing integrity. These inspections and interventions are performed by remotely operated vehicle (ROV) or diving from a support vessel. Typical subsea inspection and intervention activities performed may include:

- + riser, flowline and umbilical inspections
- + subsea production centre inspections, such as inspecting the XTs, manifolds, spools, umbilical termination assemblies (UTAs), production umbilical distribution units (PUDUs), jumpers, etc
- + cathodic potential measurements
- + maintenance and repair, such as replacing anodes or installing anode skids
- + recovery of dropped objects
- + clearing debris (e.g., calcareous marine growth) using high pressure water jetter and/or flapper tool
- + close visual inspection and measurements of critical components
- + seabed burial and environmental survey using:
 - multi-beam echo sounder
 - side scan sonar
 - sub bottom profiling
 - seabed grab sampling
 - autonomous underwater vehicle towed camera for identifying debris or raise seabed features.

Once decommissioning commences it will proceed progressively, meaning that there will be periods of decommissioning activity and then periods with no activity in the field, when the activity is in cessation phase.

Decommissioning Phase

Based on the outcomes from the comparative environmental impact assessment of feasible decommissioning options (detailed in **Section 3**), Santos proposes the following decommissioning strategy:

Equipment to be left in situ:

- + six steel anchors expected to be buried at a depth of 6 – 13 m below mudline (to the top of the fluke)
- + the buried section (~580 m) of the six corresponding steel mooring chains of up to 712 m overall length. It is proposed to remove the unburied section (approximately 130 m in length).

Equipment to be removed:

All other equipment will be removed and disposed of, including:

- + gravity bases (approximately 19m x 6m x 3.1m high) complete with concrete ballast weighing about 330t each
- + 12" rigid production flowlines and piggybacked 2" coiled tubing well service flowlines
- + 10.2", 9" and 3" flexible flowlines, umbilicals and flexible risers
- + manifolds (including flowmeters) and mudmats
- + pipeline end manifolds
- + rigid tie-in spools
- + hydraulic flying leads and electric flying leads
- + production umbilical distribution units (PUDU) and umbilical termination assemblies (UTA) xmas trees complete with guidebase (if not recovered during P&A)
- + wellheads (if not removed during P&A)
- + MWA tether chains
- + DTM mooring riser wires
- + Unburied section of mooring chains (approximately 130 m x 6 in length)
- + umbilical riser bases
- + anode skids
- + auxiliary items (concrete mattresses, grout bags, sandbags, etc).

3.3 Facilities description

The MEFF subsea equipment is depicted in Figure 3-2. Ongoing integrity management is as per a risk based- inspection regime to ensure all subsea equipment can be removed from title. **Table 3-4** shows the quantities, condition and status of subsea equipment that remains in place post cessation of production and FPSO sail away.

In 2018, prior to FPSO disconnection and sail away, flushing of the subsea production system was performed and confirmed to achieve a residual oil in water (OIW) concentration of 30 to 40 ppm at the FPSO. The initial flowline flushing was completed using filtered seawater treated with oxygen scavenger (120 ppm) and biocide (500 ppm). The flowline was then flushed with for long term preservation using filtered seawater treated with 1700 ppm of corrosion inhibitor cocktail. (Ref 9885-011-TIN-0001 – MEFF Historical Flushing Records).

3.4 Contaminants (non-hydrocarbon)

Production infrastructure can be contaminated over time from components of the produced fluids. The two contaminants of interest are naturally occurring radioactive material (NORMs) and mercury. The MEFF field is considered low risk for NORMs contaminants. However, parts of the MEFF field may contain traces of NORMs and will be managed and disposed of in accordance with a NORM and HAZMAT Management Plan. During the FAR campaign in Q1 2023, NORMs were detected on

Exeter 12" production riser end fitting (specifically the isolation valve). The highest surface reading was 2.74Bq/cm². NORMs readings were also taken on the 12" Mutineer Production Riser, 2" Exeter Well Service Riser and 2" Mutineer Well Service Riser and all readings were below the limit to be considered a radioactive material. Mercury contamination is not expected, as explained in further detail below.

Due to the well completion design, a relatively large number of well workovers for a subsea development were performed during the life of field. During each of the seven workovers, NORMs and mercury testing was conducted on recovered tubing hangers, production tubing and pumps, with no positive results reported. Radiation surveys of the FPSO production equipment were conducted in 2006 and 2018. These identified very low-level radiation from some items on board the FPSO such as first stage separator, second stage separator, produced water break drum and produced water degasser. The leased FPSO was decommissioned by the owner and there is no record of any decontamination being required.

The P&A of the MEFF wells, presents further opportunity to gather additional information on the presence or otherwise of NORMS in the subsea system.

Further NORMs testing will be conducted during removal of equipment, as further detailed in the activity description (**Section 4.6.7**). Only infrastructure that has been exposed to produced fluids could have been contaminated and will be tested for NORMS during removal. Provision for managing NORMs should they be detected, will be incorporated into all offshore and onshore material handling and disposal contracts (**Section 8.7.3**).

Elevated levels of mercury in sediment have been detected by field sampling within 50 m of the Exeter manifold (**Section 10.2**). Levels were found to be above trigger default guideline values (DVG) but below the high DVG. However, it is not considered credible for mercury contamination to be present on recovered subsea equipment or for mercury to be released during the subsea decommissioning activities for the following reasons:

- + mercury contamination was not identified as an issue during the producing life of the field
 - no mercury contamination was identified during decommissioning of the FPSO
 - the subsea production system has not been wet-flowed
 - + there has been no known or recorded leak or break in containment of the subsea production system that could have resulted in a release to the marine environment, ruling out the subsea production system as the source of localised mercury contamination of sediments
- studies have shown that localised elevated levels of mercury in marine sediments in close proximity to offshore drilling sites can be associated with barite from the discharged drilling muds (Neff 2002; Trefry and Smith 2003, Trefry et. al., 2007)
- + mercury has been historically present in drilling fluid barite at ranges from <0.05 ug/g to 31 ug/g (Trefry and Smith 2003)
 - + the sample locations at the Exeter manifold were localised to within 50 m from historical drilling locations (GHD 2021).

Only infrastructure that has been exposed to produced fluids could have been contaminated and will be tested for mercury during removal. If mercury is detected it will be isolated and managed in accordance with the NORM and HAZMAT Management Plan Santos will undertake further environmental monitoring of the field in the future including historic drilling locations, to gain an informed understanding of sediment contamination including mercury contamination, prior to the relinquishment of title, this will be subject to a future EP.

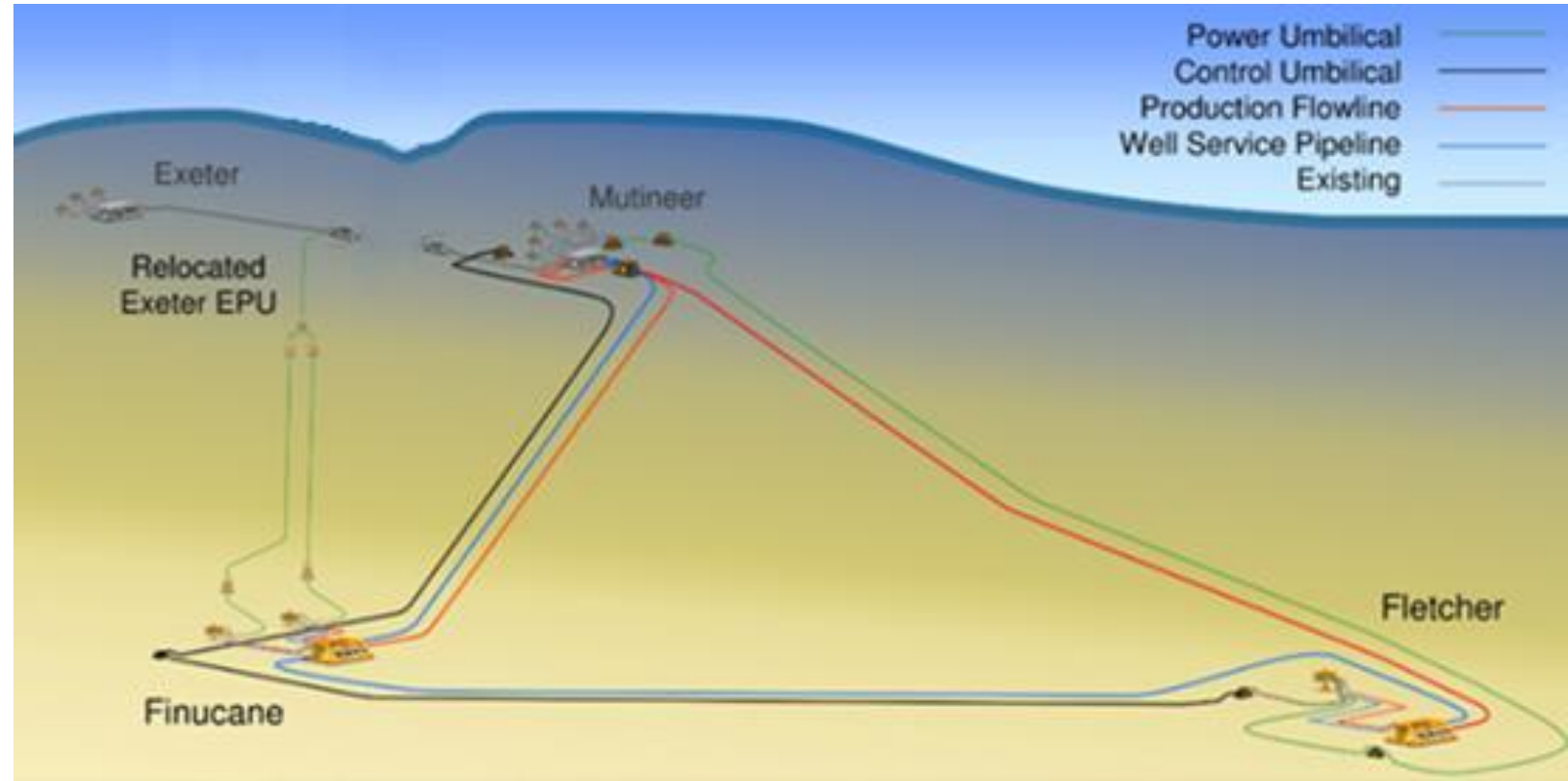


Figure 3-2: Mutineer, Exeter, Fletcher, Finucane subsea facilities schematic

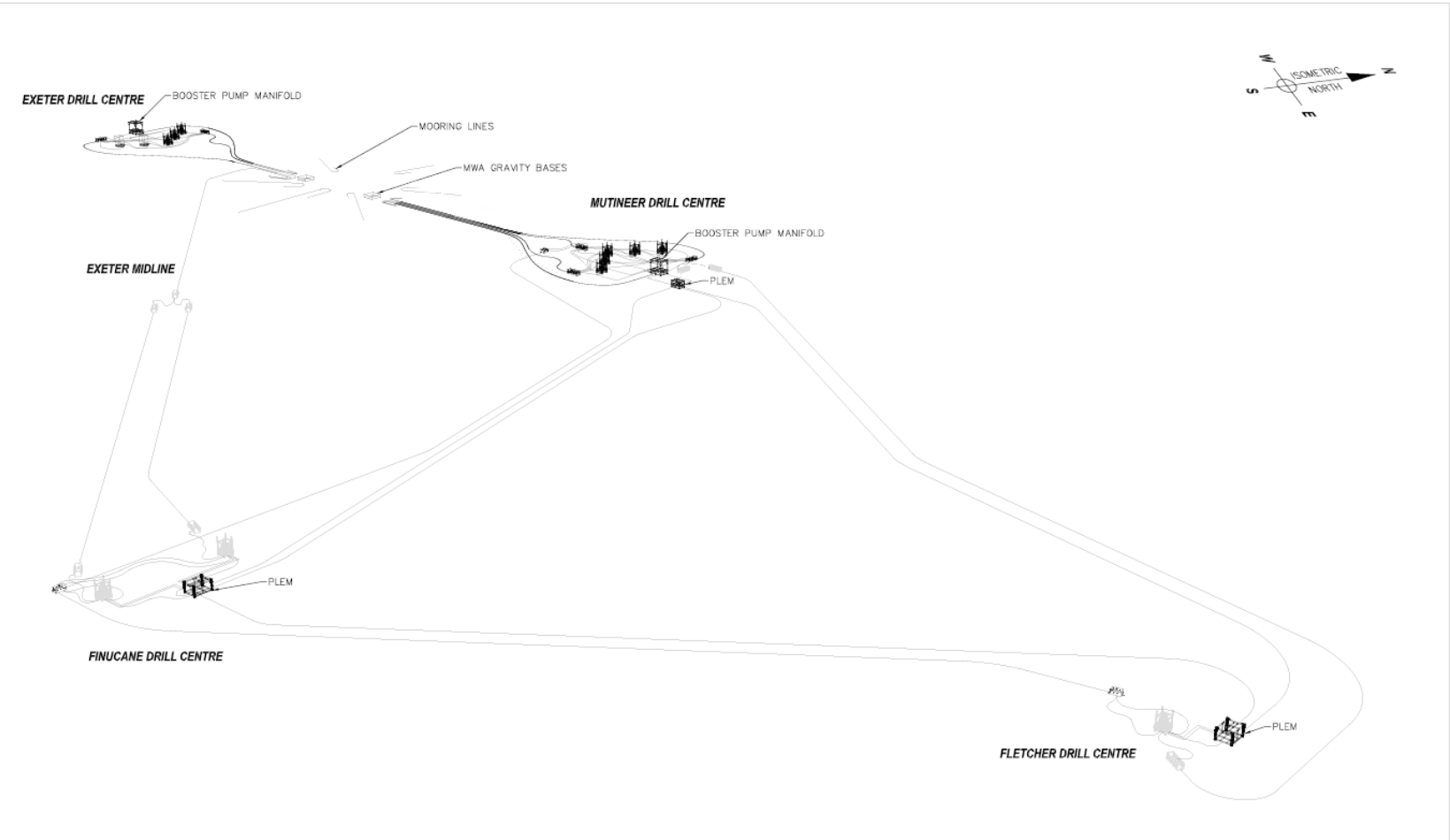


Figure 3-3: Mutineer, Exeter, Fletcher, Finucane subsea facilities overview

Table 3-4: Summary of the status and condition of Mutineer, Exeter, Fletcher, Finucane equipment on title as of April 2023

Equipment Description	Permit (Field)	Qty	Condition	Status	Approximate Dimensions and Weight (each)
Subsea Xmas trees, flowbases and guidebases	WA-27-L (Exeter)	3	Exeter-4H – XT with Guidebase, jumper spool connected to manifold protected by cathodic protection (CP).	Exeter-4H – Shut-in with controls disconnected and barrier tested 2018.	Dimensions: 4.22m x 4.22m x 4.95m Weight: 50 Te
			Exeter-7 – Guidebase only with jumper spool connected to manifold protected by CP.	Exeter-7 – Temporarily abandoned, deep cement plugs installed.	
			Exeter-8HL1 – Guidebase only with jumper spool connected to manifold protected by CP.	Exeter-8HL1 – Temporarily abandoned, cement plug and surface plug installed.	
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	5	Mutieer-4 – XT with Guidebase, jumper spool connected to manifold protected by CP.	Mutieer-4 – Shut-in with controls disconnected and barrier tested 2018.	Dimensions: 4.22m x 4.22m x 4.95m Weight: 50 Te
			Mutieer-5 – XT with Guidebase, jumper spool connected to manifold protected by CP.	Mutieer-5 – Shut-in with controls disconnected and barrier tested 2018.	
			Mutieer-9H – XT with Guidebase, jumper spool connected to manifold protected by CP.	Mutieer-9H – Shut-in with controls disconnected and barrier tested 2018.	
			Mutieer-12 – XT with Flowbase, jumper spool connected to manifold protected by CP.	Mutieer-12 – Shut-in with controls disconnected and barrier tested 2018.	
			Mutieer-15 – XT with Flowbase, jumper spool connected to manifold protected by CP.	Mutieer-15 – Shut-in with controls disconnected and barrier tested 2018.	
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	1	Fletcher-5H – XT with Flowbase, jumper spool connected to manifold protected by CP.	Fletcher-5H – Shut-in with controls disconnected and barrier tested 2018.	Dimensions: 3.9 m x 3.9 m x 2.9 m Weight: 55Te
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	2	Finucane South-2H – XT with Flowbase, jumper spool connected to manifold protected by CP.	Finucane South-2H – Shut-in with controls disconnected and barrier tested 2018.	Dimensions: 3.9 m x 3.9 m x 2.9 m Weight: 55 Te
			Finucane South-3H – XT with Flowbase, jumper spool connected to manifold protected by CP.	Finucane South-3H – Shut-in with controls disconnected and barrier tested 2018.	
			Finucane South-1A – well head only.	Finucane South-1A – Temporarily abandoned, deep/shallow cement plugs installed.	
12-inch flexible production risers	WA-27-L (Exeter)	1	Production risers flushed before FPSO disconnection 2018.	Both risers are wet-stored on the seabed near the original DTM position with a blind flange (pulling head) installed	Length: 0.43 km Weight: 75 t
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	1			Length: 0.43 km Weight: 75 t
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	0			
2-inch flexible well service risers	WA-27-L (Exeter)	1	Well service risers flushed before FPSO disconnection 2018.	Both risers are wet-stored on the seabed near the original DTM position with a blind flange (pulling head) installed	Length: 0.43 km Weight: 25 t
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	1			Length: 0.43 km Weight: 25 t
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	0			

Equipment Description	Permit (Field)	Qty	Condition	Status	Approximate Dimensions and Weight (each)
Umbilical dynamic risers (integrated services and electrical power types)	WA-27-L (Exeter)	3	Integrated service umbilical (ISU) cores containing Morlina Oil were flushed with treated seawater before FPSO disconnection in 2018, remaining cores contain fluids approved for discharge under the OECA process.	All umbilical dynamic risers are wet-stored on the seabed near the original DTM position. Noting there are two shorter lengths of the E-ISU that are separate from the main umbilical.	
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	3			
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	0	N/A	N/A	
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	0	N/A	N/A	
MWA tether and gravity base	WA-27-L (Exeter)	1	Gravity Base shackle measurements taken in 2023 and within tolerance.	Gravity Base shackle measurements taken in 2023 and within tolerance.	Dimensions: 19 m x 6.4 m x 3.1 m Weight (Gravity Base): 229Te Weight (2 x Concrete Ballast): 104Te Weight (2 x Chain Tether): 26.5Te
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	1			Dimensions: 19 m x 6.4 m x 3.1 m Weight (Gravity Base): 229Te Weight (2 x Concrete Ballast): 104Te Weight (2 x Chain Tether): 26.5Te
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	0	N/A	N/A	
Production flexible flowline (10.2-inch and 9-inch)	WA-27-L (Exeter)	0	N/A; only rigid flowlines for Mutineer and Exeter.	N/A	
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	0			
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	1	9-inch flexible flowline is protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnection 2018.	The 16,911 m flowline is currently connected to manifolds at each end.	Length: 17 km Weight: 1,698 Te
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	1	10.2-inch flexible flowline is protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnection 2018.	The 14,137 m flowline is currently connected to manifolds at each end.	Length: 14.2 km Weight: 1,358 Te
3-inch well service flexible flowline	WA-27-L (Exeter)	0	N/A; only flexible flowlines for Finucane and Fletcher.	N/A	
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	0			
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	1	3-inch flexible flowline is protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnection 2018.	The 6,582 m flowlines are currently connected to manifolds and/or well service riser.	Length: 6.6 km Weight: 107 Te
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	1	3-inch flexible flowline is protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnection 2018.	The 14,123 m flowlines are currently connected to manifolds and/or well service riser.	Length: 14.2 km Weight: 237 Te
12-inch production rigid flowline	WA-27-L (Exeter)	1	12-inch rigid flowline is protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnection 2018.	The 6,235 m flowline is currently connected to manifold and production riser.	Length: 9.2 km combined Weight: 1,525 Te combined
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	1	12-inch rigid flowline is protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnection 2018.	The 2,934 m flowline is currently connected to manifold and production riser.	
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	0	N/A; only flexible flowlines for Finucane and Fletcher.	N/A	N/A
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	0			
2-inch well service rigid flowline	WA-27-L (Exeter)	1	2-inch rigid flowline is protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnection 2018.	The 6,235 m flowline is piggybacked with to the 12-inch rigid production flowline and currently connected to manifold and well service riser	Length: 9.2 km combined Weight: 72 Te combined
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	1	2-inch rigid flowline is protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnection 2018.	The 2,934 m flowline is piggybacked to the 12-inch rigid production flowline and currently connected to manifold and well service riser.	

Equipment Description	Permit (Field)	Qty	Condition	Status	Approximate Dimensions and Weight (each)
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	0	N/A, only flexible flowlines for Finucane and Fletcher.	N/A	N/A
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	0			
Rigid production tie-in spool (manifold tie-in)	WA-27-L (Exeter)	1	12-inch rigid tie-in spool is protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnection 2018.	The spool is currently connected to Exeter manifold and the Exeter rigid production flowline.	Weight (12-inch): 13.9 Te
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	2	8-inch rigid tie-in spool is protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnection 2018.	The spool is currently connected to Mutineer manifold and Finucane/Mutineer pipeline end manifold.	Weight (8-inch): 6.1 Te Weight (12-inch): 13.9 Te
			12-inch rigid tie-in spool is protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnection 2018	The spool is currently connected to Mutineer manifold and the Mutineer rigid production flowline.	
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	0	N/A; flexible flowline connected to manifold rigid pipework via a bolted flange.	N/A	N/A
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	0			
	Rigid well services tie-in spool (manifold tie-in)	WA-27-L (Exeter)	1	2-inch rigid well service tie-in spool is protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnection 2018.	The spool is currently piggybacked to the 12-inch production spool connected to Exeter manifold and the Exeter rigid production flowline.
WA-26-L (Mutineer)		2	3.5-inch rigid well service tie-in spool is protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnection 2018.	The spool is currently connected to Mutineer manifold and Finucane/Mutineer pipeline end manifold.	
			2-inch rigid well service tie-in spool is protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnection 2018.	The spool is currently piggybacked to the 12-inch production flowline section connected to Mutineer manifold and the Mutineer flexible riser.	
WA-54-L (Fletcher)		0	N/A	N/A	
WA-54-L (Finucane)		0			
6-inch / 2-inch rigid well jumper spool bundle	WA-27-L (Exeter)	3	Well jumper spools are protected by CP and flushed before the FPSO disconnected 2018 (applicable to wells with XTs only).	The 6-inch well jumper spools with piggybacked 2-inch well service spool are connected to XTs and manifolds.	Weight: 7 Te
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	5			Weight: 14 Te
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	1			Weight: 6 Te
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	2			Weight: 12 Te
Umbilicals (electrical power umbilicals (EPUs), electro-hydraulic umbilicals (EHUs) and integrated service umbilicals (ISU))	WA-27-L (Exeter)	3	EPU1 6894 m length (including riser section)	In situ connected to UTA at drill centre and wet-parked at the original DTM location.	Length: 90.9 km combined Weight: 1,895 Te combined
			EPU2 6934 m length (including riser section)	In situ connected to mid-way UTA (Finucane) and wet-parked at the original DTM location.	
			ISU 6874 m length (including riser section) Integrated service umbilical (ISU) cores containing Morlina Oil were flushed with treated seawater before FPSO disconnection in 2018, remaining cores contain fluids approved for discharge under the OECA process.	In situ connected to PUDU at drill centre and wet-parked at the original DTM location. Noting there are two shorter lengths of the E-ISU that are separate from the main umbilical..	
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	3	EPU1 3534 m length (including riser section)	In situ connected to UTA at drill centre and wet-parked at the original DTM location.	

Equipment Description	Permit (Field)	Qty	Condition	Status	Approximate Dimensions and Weight (each)
			EPU2 3584 m length (including riser section)	In situ connected to UTA at drill centre and wet-parked at the original DTM location.	
			ISU 3475 m length (including riser section) Integrated service umbilical (ISU) cores containing Morlina Oil were flushed with treated seawater before FPSO disconnection in 2018, remaining cores contain fluids approved for discharge under the OECA process.	In situ flushed clean 2018, connected to PUDU at drill centre and wet-parked at the original DTM location.	
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	1	EPU 16,999 m length	In situ connected to UTA at Fletcher drill centre and UTA at Mutineer drill centre.	
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	4	EPU1 10,940 m length	In situ connected to UTA at drill centre and mid-way UTA.	
			EPU2 10,978 m length	In situ connected to UTA at drill centre and mid-way UTA.	
			EHU 14,193 m length	In situ flushed clean 2018, connected to UTA at Finucane drill centre and UTA at Mutineer drill centre.	
			EHU 6,469 m length (between Finucane & Fletcher).	In situ flushed clean 2018, connected to UTA at Finucane drill centre and UTA at Fletcher drill centre.	
Umbilical UTAs	WA-27-L (Exeter)	4	Protected by CP.	In situ connected to umbilicals.	Dimensions: 4 m x 3 m x 3 m Weight (combined): 20 Te
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	4			Dimensions: 4 m x 3 m x 3 m Weight (combined): 23 Te
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	2			Dimensions: 3 m x 3 m x 3 m Weight (combined): 10 Te
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	3			Dimensions: 3 m x 3 m x 3 m Weight (combined): 15 Te
Umbilical PUDUs	WA-27-L (Exeter)	1	Exeter PUDU protected by CP.	In situ connected to umbilicals.	Dimensions: 5.1 m x 3 m x 3 m Weight: 8 Te
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	1	Mutineer PUDU is currently unprotected from CP.		Dimensions: 5.1m x 3 m x 3 m Weight: 8 Te
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Electrical flying leads	WA-27-L (Exeter inc. midline)	25	Connected to assets.	In situ stabilised with sandbags.	25 m to 100 m long 4.3 km total length
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	49			
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	4			
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	11			
Hydraulic flying leads	WA-27-L (Exeter)	7	Nine hydraulic flying leads were disconnected from the XTs in 2018, the rest remain connected.	In situ stabilised with sandbags.	35 m to 100 m long 1.2 km total length
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	10			
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	1			

Equipment Description	Permit (Field)	Qty	Condition	Status	Approximate Dimensions and Weight (each)
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	2			
Manifold structures (with base foundation)	WA-27-L (Exeter)	1	Booster pump manifold pipework flushed before FPSO disconnection 2018. The structure and pipework are protected by CP.	In situ	Dimensions: 11.5 m x 8 m x 5.3 m Weight (Module): 87 Te Weight (Base): 29 Te Flowmeter Weight (2 No.): 5 Te
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	1			Dimensions: 11.5 m x 8 m x 5.3 m Weight (Module): 106 Te Weight (Base): 29 Te Flowmeter Weight (4 No.): 9 Te
	WA-54-L (Fletcher)	1	Pipeline end manifold pipework flushed before FPSO disconnection 2018. The structure and pipework are protected by CP.		Dimensions: 4.7m x 4.7 m x 4.4 m Weight: 22 Te Flowmeter Weight (1No.): 1 Te
	WA-54-L (Finucane)	1			Dimensions: 6 m x 4.5 m x 4.4 m Weight: 32 Te Flowmeter Weight (2 No.): 2 Te
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	1	Pipeline end manifold (FC-M2) pipework flushed before FPSO disconnection 2018. The structure and pipework are protected by CP.		Dimensions: 6.9 m x 4.8 m x 4 m Weight: 31 Te
Anode skid	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	2	For CP of manifold and EPU1 UTA structures.	In situ	Dimensions: 2.5 m x 1.5 m x 2.3 m Weight (combined): 12 Te
	WA-27-L (Exeter)	2	For CP of manifold and EPU1 UTA structures.	In situ	
Pipe crossing structure	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	1	Support structure for Finucane EHU crossing the Mutineer flowlines.	In situ	Dimensions: 2.5 m x 2 m x 1.5 m Weight: 2.5 Te
Umbilical riser base	WA-27-L (Exeter)	1	Protected by CP.	In situ under umbilical riser sections	Dimensions: 6 m x 3 m x 1.1 m
	WA-26-L (Mutineer)	1			Weight (combined): 11 Te

Notes:

(1) The flowlines and risers are not thought to contain any hazardous materials however will be screened for NORMs if they are recovered to deck. In the event NORMs was to be detected it will be disposed of accordingly at a licensed disposal facility.

3.5 Decommissioning options assessment

3.5.1 Overview

Section 572(3) of the OPGGS Act requires that “a titleholder must remove from the title area all structures that are, and all equipment and other property that is, neither used nor to be used in connection with the operations in which the titleholder is or will be engaged and that are authorised by the permit, lease, licence or authority.”

The National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority’s (NOPSEMA’s) policy *Section 572 Maintenance and Removal of Property* (2022) and the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources’ *Guideline: Offshore Petroleum Decommissioning* (2022) provide for alternative arrangements to the removal of equipment to be accepted under the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2023 (OPGGS (E) Regulations) on the conditions that:

- + the Environment Plan (EP) detailing the alternative arrangements meets the criteria for acceptance under the OPGGS (E) Regulations
- + the EP demonstrates that the alternative arrangements proposed, delivers environmental performance outcomes that ensure that environmental impacts and risks are reduced to ALARP, are of an acceptable level and are carried out in a manner consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.
- + Santos has identified feasible alternatives to full removal for the following equipment groups in the MEFF fields (referred to as candidate equipment groups) Buried mooring anchors and chains:
 - full removal
 - abandonment in situ

As required by the *Section 572 Maintenance and Removal of Property* (NOPSEMA, 2022) policy, this section of the EP compares the environmental outcomes of the feasible decommissioning options for the candidate equipment groups to determine their relative environmental outcomes. The relative environmental outcomes were determined by a comparative environmental impact assessment of the feasible decommissioning options.

In accordance with the *Section 572 Maintenance and Removal of Property* (NOPSEMA, 2022) policy, the EP must include a feasibility assessment of all decommissioning options; therefore, technical feasibility criteria are also considered in the options assessment.

Relevant persons were consulted and provided information and the opportunity to comment on the decommissioning options assessment as described in **Section 6**.

Section 3.5.2 describes the decommissioning options assessment process to determine Santos’ preferred option for decommissioning the candidate equipment groups.

An assessment of the environmental impacts and risks of the preferred decommissioning options for the candidate equipment groups is provided in **Section 8** and **Section 9**.

3.5.2 Process

The process used to evaluate the decommissioning options for the candidate equipment groups comprised three steps:

1. Identify feasible decommissioning options, including consideration of the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD)
2. Define environmental criteria for assessment (including short, and long term impacts)

3. Assess the feasible decommissioning options using the environmental criteria relating to the ‘removal’ decommissioning requirement under S573 (3) of the OPGGS Act. The method used to compare the feasible decommissioning options for the candidate equipment groups aligns with Method A – narrative / Red-Amber-Green described in the *Guidelines for Comparative Assessment in Decommissioning Programs* (Oil and Gas UK, 2015).

3.5.2.1 Feasible decommissioning options

Santos undertook a screening assessment to identify the feasible decommissioning options for the candidate equipment groups. This assessment was supported by external studies by GHD (2021) and Xodus (2021). The feasible decommissioning options identified through this study were, full removal, partial removal, augmentation and leave in situ. The study identified that gravity bases, concrete ballast, buried section of mooring chains, anchors were suitable for leaving in situ. However, with further assessment, Santos has decided to only pursue leaving the buried mooring chains and anchors in situ and remove the gravity bases and concrete ballast.

3.5.2.2 Decommissioning options assessment

Equipment recovered by the full removal and partial removal options will be managed in accordance with the waste management hierarchy (refer to **Section 4.6.7** for further details):

- + avoid
- + reduce
- + reuse
- + repurpose
- + recycle
- + dispose

Each of the feasible decommissioning options was assessed to determine if it was aligned with the principles of ESD in s3A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), which are:

decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long-term and short-term economic, environmental, social and equitable considerations

- + if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation
- the principle of inter-generational equity – that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations
- + the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision-making
- + improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms should be promoted.

The description of the feasible decommissioning options is provided in **Table 3-5**. Conceptual diagrams for the feasible decommissioning options for the candidate equipment group is provided in **Figure 3-4**. The comparative assessment of the feasible decommissioning options for the mooring anchors and chains are in **Table 3-8** respectively. The assessment of each of the feasible decommissioning options for the candidate equipment group against the principles of ESD is in **Table 3-9**.

Table 3-5: Description of feasible decommissioning options for the candidate equipment group

Decommissioning Options	Description and Feasibility
Anchors and Chains	
Full removal	Feasible The anchors were not designed to be removed. Recovery of the anchors is assumed to be done by pulling the anchors free in the opposite direction to which they were installed. If the anchors were unable to be removed by pulling free, seabed intervention may be required to free the anchors, such as mass flow excavation. The anchors are embedded approximately 6-13 metres below the seabed. Removal of the anchors will result in substantial disruption of the seabed above, around and along the removal path of the anchors. The buried section of the chain would also require mass flow excavation for removal and cause damage to the seabed. It is estimated that removal of anchors and chains would result in a seabed disturbance volume of 22,441 m³ based on a burial depth of 6 m or a disturbance volume of 64,500 m³ based on their expected burial depth of 13 m. All anchors and chains removed would be recovered to vessels and brought to shore for disposal in accordance with the waste management hierarchy (Section 4.6.7). The comparative assessment assumes that steel from the mooring anchors and chains is recycled.
Abandonment <i>in situ</i>	Feasible Abandonment in situ of the mooring anchors and chains consists of leaving the anchors and buried sections of the chains in situ. Riser wires, which form part of the mooring system, will be removed due to the plastic sheath around the wire core. The unburied sections of the mooring chains will also be removed. This will be done as part of an equipment removal campaign.

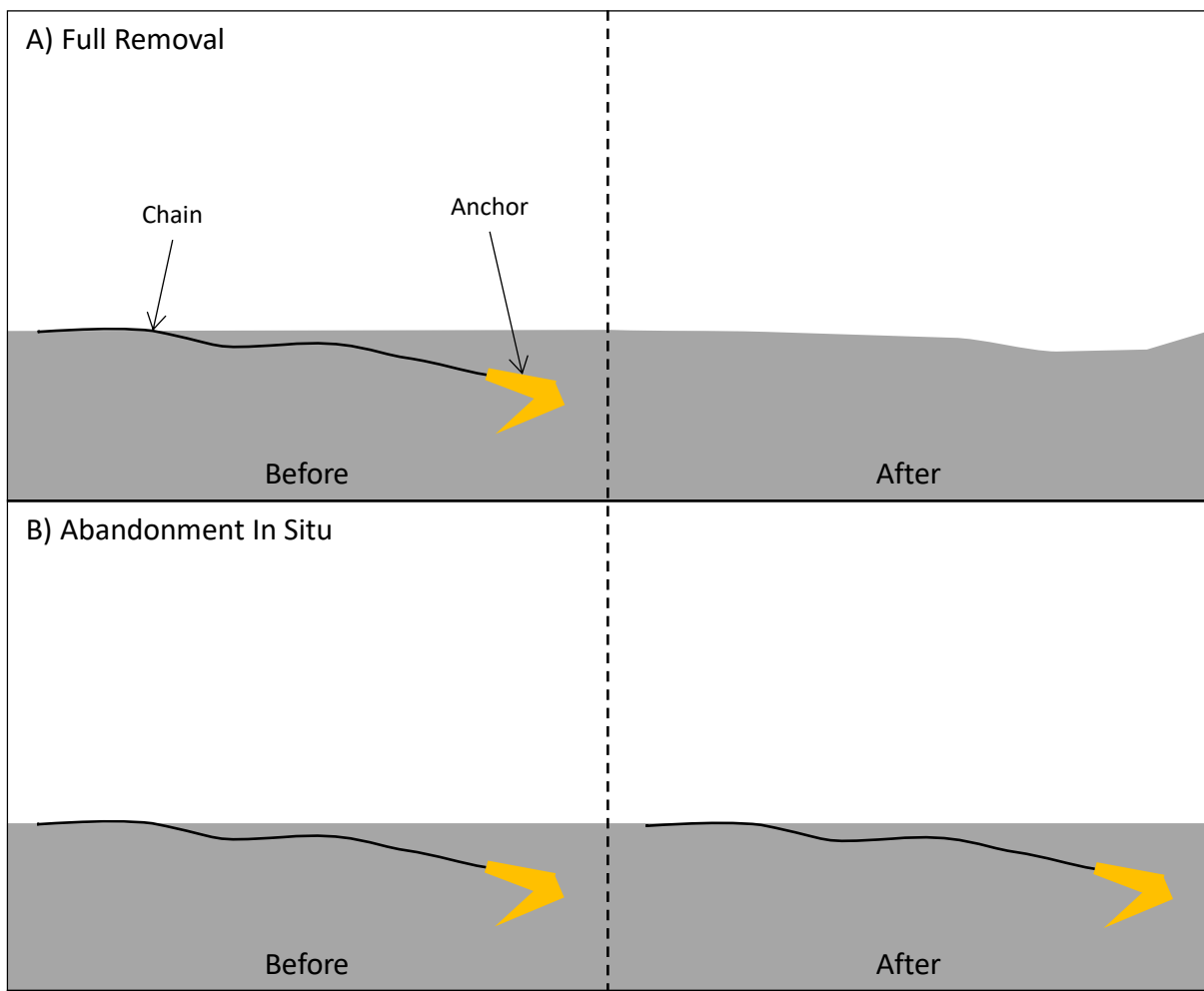


Figure 3-4: Conceptual diagrams of feasible decommissioning options for mooring anchors and chains

3.5.2.3 Assessment criteria and rating details

The criteria and sub-criteria used for the options assessment are detailed in **Table 3-6** and the rating are described in **Table 3-7**. The assessment of the feasible decommissioning options using these criteria is summarised in Section 3.5.2.4 and **Table 3-8**.

Table 3-6: Options assessment criteria and sub-criteria

Criteria	Sub-criteria	Description
Environment	Benthic habitats	The benthic habitats that may be impacted by the feasible decommissioning options for the candidate equipment groups. Localised around the equipment groups (10's of metres).
	Fauna	Fauna that may be impacted by the feasible decommissioning options for the candidate equipment groups.
	GHG emissions (excluding materials management)	Greenhouse gas emissions (e.g., CO ₂ , CH ₄ etc.), excluding emissions associated with handling of materials recovered by full removal of the candidate equipment groups (which are considered in the waste management sub-criterion).
	Sediment quality	The quality of the sediment, including physical (e.g., grain size) and chemical (e.g., concentrations of potential toxicants) characteristics. Natural conditions are considered desirable.
	Water quality	The quality of the water, including physical (e.g., temperature) and chemical (e.g., concentrations of potential toxicants) characteristics. Natural conditions are considered desirable.
	Waste management	Management of the waste in the MEFF field, includes consideration of the materials hierarchy (in order of preference): + avoid + reuse + repurpose + recycle + dispose
Social	Other users	Other uses of the sea, such as commercial shipping, commercial fishing, and energy producers. There was very little activity by other users of the sea in the vicinity of the candidate equipment groups.

Table 3-7: Feasible options rating definitions

Criteria		Sub-criteria	Score	
		More Preferred	Neutral	Less Preferred
Environment	Benthic habitat	Materially better outcomes for benthic habitat – increased physical and biological resources available to support survival of species.	Benthic habitat outcomes are the same as the full removal base case.	Materially worse outcomes for benthic habitat – reduced physical and biological resources available to support survival of species.
	Fauna	Materially better outcomes for fauna – increased species diversity or species richness than the full removal base case.	Fauna outcomes are the same as the full removal base case.	Materially worse outcomes for fauna – reduced species diversity or species richness than the full removal base case.
	GHG emissions (excluding materials management)	Materially less GHG emissions than the full removal base case.	GHG emissions outcomes are the same as the full removal base case.	Materially greater GHG emissions than the full removal base case.
	Sediment quality	Materially better outcomes for sediment quality – lower modification of physical and chemical characteristics of sediments than the full removal base case.	Sediment quality outcomes are the same as the full removal base case.	Materially worse outcomes for sediment quality – greater modification of physical and chemical characteristics of sediments than the full removal base case.

Criteria		Sub-criteria	Score	
	Water quality	Materially better outcomes for water quality – lower modification of physical and chemical characteristics of water than the full removal base case.	Water quality outcomes are the same as the full removal base case.	Materially worse outcomes for water quality – lower modification of physical and chemical characteristics of water than the full removal base case.
	Materials management	Materially better outcomes for materials management – materials management higher in the materials hierarchy than the full removal base case.	Materials management outcomes are the same as the full removal base case.	Materially worse outcomes for materials management – materials management lower in the materials hierarchy than the full removal base case.
Social	Other users	Materially better outcomes for other users of the sea – less disruption to other users than the full removal base case.	Outcomes for other users of the sea are the same as the full removal base case.	Materially worse outcomes for other users of the sea – greater disruption of other users than the full removal base case.

3.5.2.4 Option evaluation

An evaluation of the feasible decommissioning options was undertaken by Santos. The assessment considered available information, such as engineering studies, environmental conditions in the MEFF fields and stakeholder consultation outcomes.

The full removal option is the base case for decommissioning, to which the other feasible options were compared. Accordingly, the full removal option for the candidate equipment group was scored as being neutral (as per the definitions in **Table 3-7**). Each of the feasible options to full removal were scored relative to the full removal option.

The outcomes of the evaluation of the feasible decommissioning options for the mooring anchors and chains are summarised in **Table 3-8**. The assessment against the principles of ESD for the feasible decommissioning options for the mooring anchors and chains are summarised in **Table 3-9**.

Table 3-8: Feasible decommissioning options evaluation for the mooring anchors and buried section of chains

Criteria	Sub-criteria	Short (During Removal) - and Long-term (Post Removal) Consideration	Base Case Justification	Base Case Score	Abandonment In Situ Justification	Abandonment In Situ Score
Environment	Benthic Habitats	During removal campaign	Full removal of the anchors will result in substantial disturbance of the benthic habitats above and around the anchors. It is estimated that removal of anchors and chains would result in a seabed disturbance volume of 22,441 m ³ based on a burial depth of 6 m or a disturbance volume of 64,500 m ³ based on their expected burial depth of 13 m. However, this habitat is very widely represented in the region and does not hold significant conservation value.	Neutral	No disturbance to benthic habitats. Existing habitat retained. The preservation of benthic habitat results in this option being preferred relative to the base case.	More Preferred
		Post removal campaign	Benthic habitats will return to bare sediment habitat following removal of the anchors and is expected to be consistent with the natural state prior to MEFF development. Removal eliminates the release of degradation products. The unconsolidated sediment habitat around the mooring anchors and chains will recover over time. The environmental survey by GHD (2021) did not observe historical seabed disturbance from installation. Some of the equipment, such as the rigid flowlines, had become partially buried since installation occurred. Hence, these observations suggest natural sediment transport and deposition would take at least 18 years (the time since installation occurred) to remediate any disturbance to the seabed topography.	Neutral	The abandonment in situ option will preserve the benthic habitats and associated species above and around the anchors. These unconsolidated habitats and associated biota are widely represented in the region. Rust from corrosion of steel will be deposited in the sediments immediately around the equipment. This will occur over a prolonged period of time (hundreds to thousands of years) (Atteris, 2021). The steel used in the mooring anchors and chains is carbon steel, with relatively low quantities of other metals and carbon (refer to sediment quality criterion for a consideration of sediment contamination). Potential contaminants in sediments are expected to have low bioavailability. The majority of the degradation products will be buried and not readily available to biota.	Neutral

Criteria	Sub-criteria	Short (During Removal) - and Long-term (Post Removal) Consideration	Base Case Justification	Base Case Score	Abandonment In Situ Justification	Abandonment In Situ Score
	Fauna	During removal campaign	The full removal option will entirely remove the mooring anchors and chains. The fauna associated with the unconsolidated sediment habitat is characterised by infauna with sparse epifauna, which will be lost during full removal activities. Mobile fauna that can move away from the disturbance (e.g., fishes) will be displaced rather than lost. The fauna is widely represented in the region and are not of significant conservation value. Underwater noise emissions from the full removal options are unlikely to cause hearing impairment in marine mammals, reptiles or fishes, such as permanent and temporary threshold shifts (Popper et al., 2014; Southall et al., 2019, 2007). However, there is the potential for behavioural disturbance and masking to occur. Behavioural impacts will depend on the audible frequency range of each potential receptor in relation to the frequency of the noise, as well as the intensity of the noise. Unlike fishes, marine mammals and reptiles must surface to breathe and are more closely associated with the sea surface. Behavioural disturbance from the physical presence of vessels undertaking the full removal options may affect marine mammals and reptiles within the MEFF fields. Such disturbance is expected to only affect a small number of animals, as there are no known concentrations of marine mammals or reptiles within the MEFF fields and suitable habitat is widespread in the region.	Neutral	No impacts during removal campaign. Hence this option is preferred compared to full removal.	More Preferred
		Post removal campaign	Fauna will recover rapidly following full removal through natural recruitment and movement of animals.	Neutral	The abandonment <i>in situ</i> option will leave the mooring anchors and chains in the environment, which will degrade over time. Degradation products will become part of the sediment, and hence may come into contact with infauna and epifauna in proximity to the equipment (a very small subset of these species in the MEFF field). Most of the degradation products will be from the anchors, which are deeply buried and well below the bioturbation layer (Kristensen et al., 2012), hence the chains are the equipment with the greatest potential interaction with fauna. The degradation products from the chains are not expected to result in toxic effects to infauna or epifauna (refer to assessment of sediment quality). Given the equipment is made from steel and mostly deeply buried, impacts of degradation on fauna will be negligible.	Neutral

Criteria	Sub-criteria	Short (During Removal) - and Long-term (Post Removal) Consideration	Base Case Justification	Base Case Score	Abandonment In Situ Justification	Abandonment In Situ Score
	GHG Emissions (excluding waste management)	During removal campaign	The mooring anchors and chains are buried to depths of between 6 and 13 m. Consequently, the degradation products will be buried and unlikely to be available to marine fauna. Fauna such as demersal fishes, epifauna and infauna will only be exposed to degradation products on the seabed of within the layer of sediment that may be reworked through bioturbation (primarily through infauna burrowing and deposit feeding). Bioturbation is typically concentrated in the upper 30 cm (Kristensen et al, 2012). Based on the burial depth of the anchors and chains 6-13 m is it unlikely that the degradation products will come in contact with marine fauna. In the unlikely event that demersal fishes, epifauna and infauna came in contact with degradation products, based in the low toxicity of iron and the slow release rate any impacts to marine fauna would be localised and minor.	Neutral	The abandonment in situ option does not generate of offset GHG or atmospheric emissions during the removal campaign. Hence this option is more preferred compared to full removal.	More Preferred
		Post removal campaign	No GHG emissions (excluding waste management) following removal of the equipment.	Neutral	The abandonment in situ option does not generate or offset GHG or atmospheric emissions following the removal campaign. Hence this option is neutral compared to full removal.	Neutral
	Waste Management	During removal campaign	The full removal option provides the opportunity to re-use, repurpose or recycle the mooring anchors and chains. These all sit above the disposal option in the waste management hierarchy.	Neutral	There is no opportunity to reuse, repurpose or recycle the mooring anchors and chain. This option scores lower in the waste management hierarchy than full removal, hence it is less preferred.	Less Preferred
		Post removal campaign	The full removal option provides the opportunity to re-use, repurpose or recycle the mooring anchors and chains. These all sit above the disposal option in the waste management hierarchy.	Neutral	There is no opportunity to reuse, repurpose or recycle the mooring anchors and chain. This option scores lower in the waste management hierarchy than full removal, hence it is less preferred.	Less Preferred
	Sediment Quality	During removal campaign	Extensive sediment relocation will be required to remove the anchors from the seabed. It is estimated that removal of anchors and chains would result in a seabed disturbance volume of 22,441 m ³ based on a burial depth of 6 m or a disturbance volume of 64,500 m ³ based on their expected burial depth of 13 m This will result in sediment resuspension and may result in some modification of the particle size distribution (i.e., a reduction in the portion of fine sediments) and localised depressions in the seabed. Recovery to natural conditions is expected to occur through natural sediment transport processes within years, predominantly through redistribution of local sediments by tidal currents as bedload.	Neutral	Negligible or no impacts to sediment quality in the short-term.	More Preferred

Criteria	Sub-criteria	Short (During Removal) - and Long-term (Post Removal) Consideration	Base Case Justification	Base Case Score	Abandonment In Situ Justification	Abandonment In Situ Score
		Post removal campaign	No impacts to water quality following completion of the removal activities. No impacts to sediment quality in the longer term.	Neutral	Negligible or no impacts to sediment quality in the long term. Hence this option is equally preferred compared to full removal. The mooring anchors and chains consist mainly of steel, and the anchors are buried within the seabed. Corrosion products will be concentrated in the sediments around the anchors and will not be readily available to fauna. Iron, the major component of the equipment, is not generally recognised as toxic in sediments and the Australian and New Zealand guidelines for fresh and marine water quality (Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand Government, 2018) do not provide a default guideline value or guideline value-high for this element. Hence, this option is slightly less preferred to full removal.	Less preferred
	Water Quality	During removal campaign	The removal of the anchors from the seabed will result in sediment resuspension, leading to a short-term increase in turbidity over 100's of metres. Suspended sediment will be redeposited to the seabed within hours following completion of the removal activities. Vessel operations for the full removal option will result in utility discharges within the MEFF fields. Impacts to water quality from vessel utility discharges may include: + Increases in nutrients, + Increased biochemical oxygen demand, + Increased turbidity, + Reduced visual amenity, and + Increases in potential contaminants such as hydrocarbons and chemicals. The open water environment receiving utility discharges is expected to result in rapid mixing of utility discharges from vessels undertaking the augmentation and full removal options. As a result, the potential impacts to water quality will be highly localised and restricted to the immediate area (i.e., 10's to 100's of metres) around the discharge point.	Neutral	Negligible or no impacts to water quality in the short-term. Hence this option is more preferred than full removal.	More Preferred
		Post removal campaign	No impacts to water quality following completion of the removal activities.	Neutral	Negligible or no impacts to water quality in the long term. Hence this option is equally preferred compared to full removal.	Less preferred
Social	Other Users	During removal campaign	The removal activities may temporarily displace other users from the operational area.	Neutral	No potential for displacement of other users as no vessel activities required. Hence this option is preferred to full removal.	More Preferred

Criteria	Sub-criteria	Short (During Removal) - and Long-term (Post Removal) Consideration	Base Case Justification	Base Case Score	Abandonment In Situ Justification	Abandonment In Situ Score
		Post removal campaign	No impacts to other users following full removal.	Neutral	The mooring anchors and chains are predominantly buried in the soft sediments in the MEFF field, with the relatively small portion of unburied chain becoming buried over time. No parts of the anchors or chains protrude above the seabed. Hence the snagging risk to trawled fishing gear is negligible. The most active trawl fishery in the region is the Pilbara Fish Trawl managed fishery. However, this fishery is prohibited from operating in the vicinity of the MEFF fields. The snag risk assessment undertaken for MEFF (AMC, 2024) considered mooring chains to be of low risk to trawl gear. The chains position on the seabed, the 80 mm link size and heaviness mean trawl gear will most likely ride over it unimpeded. The trawlers operating in the Pilbara Trawl Managed Fishery are also constrained to a depth of 50 to 100 m bathymetry, and the anchors and chains lie beyond this depth. Hence the likelihood of trawl fishing activity around moorings and anchor chains is negligible. Potential future uses of the environment, such as oil and gas or renewable energy could easily avoid the mooring anchors and chains. Santos is not aware of any planned future uses of the environment around the mooring anchors and chains.	Neutral

Table 3-9: Alignment with Principles of ESD for the Mooring Anchors and Buried Section of Chains

Equipment Group - Mooring Anchors and buried section of Chains		
Decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long-term and short-term economic, environmental, social and equitable considerations	The decision-making process by which Santos has assessed the feasible decommissioning options for the mooring anchors and chains considers environmental (e.g., water and sediment quality), social (e.g., the rights of other users of the marine environment) and equitable (e.g., the rights of other users of the marine environment) criteria. Short-term (i.e., during removal campaign) and long-term (i.e., following the removal campaign) timeframes have been explicitly considered in the comparative assessment of the full removal option. Santos has considered the economics of the feasible decommissioning options, however this is not presented in the comparative assessment as NOPSEMA's <i>Section 572 Maintenance and Removal of Property</i> (2022) policy only considers the relative environmental outcomes of decommissioning alternatives. Hence, the assessment of the feasible decommissioning options is consistent with this principle of ESD.	
If there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation	The full removal option does not pose the risk of irreversible environmental damage. However substantial disturbance to the seabed through dredging or excavation to expose the anchors and chains for removal would result in the disturbance of 64, 500 m³ of sediment This would recover over time through natural sedimentary processes, but it could take years. The impacts from such seabed disturbance can be predicted with a high degree of certainty. Hence, the assessment of the full removal option is consistent with this principle of ESD.	The abandonment <i>in situ</i> option will result in the degradation of the buried mooring anchors and buried section of chains over hundreds to thousands of years. The anchors will degrade very slowly as they are deeply embedded in the seabed, where there is very little oxygen in the sediment and hence very slow rates of corrosion. The materials from which the mooring anchors and chains are made are well known, including the relative portions of potential contaminants. Atteris (2021) identified the credible degradation mechanisms and provided estimated timeframes over which degradation would occur. While there is some uncertainty about the timeframe over which degradation would occur, reasonable efforts have been made to quantify this uncertainty (Atteris, 2021). Given the nature and scale of potential environmental impacts from degradation of the mooring anchors and chains, there is no threat of serious or irreversible environmental damage from the abandonment <i>in situ</i> option. Hence, the assessment of the abandonment <i>in situ</i> option is consistent with this principle of ESD.
The principle of inter-generational equity – that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations	The full removal option will cause substantial disturbance of the seabed, and whilst this will recover over time through natural sedimentary processes it is expected to take several years. However, there are no long-term impacts to the environment that would impact upon the health, diversity and productivity of the environment. Hence, the assessment of the full removal option is consistent with this principle of ESD.	The abandonment <i>in situ</i> option will not reduce the health, diversity and productivity of the environment such that future generations would not benefit from the environment. The abandonment <i>in situ</i> of the buried mooring anchors and buried section of chains affects a small area of the seabed environment where anchors are buried with anchoring touch down locations known. Any future uses of the seabed may experience displacement, but only if their proposed activity involves contact below the seabed (e.g., installation of offshore structures which involves dredging or placement of infrastructure below the seabed). However, they can avoid the anchors and mooring chains which will be marked on nautical charts, and any such displacement of future uses would only be on the scale of tens to hundreds of metres, within a wide open/unconstrained ocean environment Hence, the assessment of the abandonment <i>in situ</i> option is consistent with this principle of ESD.
The conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision-making	The environmental criteria either relate to biological diversity and ecological integrity (e.g., fauna, benthic habitat) or are strongly connected to biological diversity and ecological integrity (e.g., water and sediment quality). Hence, the assessment of the feasible decommissioning options is consistent with this principle of ESD.	
Improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms should be promoted	Santos' waste management arrangements propose the reuse, repurposing and recycling of the steel which is the primary component of the mooring anchors and chains. The full removal option has the greatest potential for reuse, repurposing and recycling of infrastructure compared to leaving the mooring anchors and chains in situ. However full removal of buried infrastructure will cost \$6-\$8M AUD and also cause disturbance to the seabed that will take several years to recover through natural sedimentary processes.	
	On the basis that there is a potential to reuse, repurpose or recycle steel, this is consistent with the principles of ESD.	

3.5.3 Recommendations

The options assessment demonstrates that abandonment *in situ* options for the candidate equipment groups yield equal or better environmental outcomes, thus satisfying NOPSEMA's *Section 572 Maintenance and Removal of Property* (2022) policy.

3.5.3.1 Anchors and buried section of chains

The options assessment summarised in **Table 3-8** indicates that abandonment *in situ* results in equal or better environmental outcomes than full removal. Full removal is the least preferred outcome from an environmental perspective as it would result in substantial damage to the seabed.

Abandonment *in situ* option does not have the significant short-term impacts from vessel activities and significant seabed disturbance that the full removal option presents. However, planned vessel-related and seabed disturbance impacts are acceptable for the removal campaign for other equipment on top of the seabed, as removal would result in less seabed disturbance. Abandonment *in situ* would result in some localised sediment contamination. However, this would be concentrated in sediment around the anchors (which are buried within the sediments) and hence, potential impacts would be limited to infauna, if present at 6-13m deep, and localised within metres of the anchors and remaining chains. Abandonment *in situ* is less preferred in the materials management hierarchy than full removal and partial removal, as it provides no opportunity for recycling.

However, full removal of the anchors and buried section of chains would result in substantial disturbance of the seabed, which would not occur if the abandonment *in situ* was implemented. It is estimated that removal of anchors and chains would result in a seabed disturbance volume of 22,441 m³ based on a burial depth of 6 m or a disturbance volume of 64,500 m³ based on their expected burial depth of 13 m. It is expected to take several years to recover through natural sedimentary processes.

All feasible options for the anchors result in a clear seabed, with negligible risk to other users, such as trawl fishing even if the area reopened to trawl fishing. On this basis leave *in situ* is the preferred option as it would result in the least damage to the seabed.

4. Activity description

4.1 Activity overview

This EP is revised to build on the previously accepted version (Revision 4) which provided for floating asset removal. This version now provides for the ongoing MEFF Cessation of Production activities and seabed decommissioning activities which includes seabed asset removal and the abandonment of some equipment in situ, below the seabed. Santos' approval pathway for decommissioning is outlined in Section 1.5. A description of the activities is provided in **Section 4.1** to **Section 4.10**.

4.2 Activity duration and timing

4.2.1 Floating asset removal and inspection and maintenance campaigns

Floating asset removal is described in the previous NOPSEMA accepted revision of this EP (Revision 4) and was completed in Q1 2023.

4.2.2 Seabed asset removal and preparation for leaving in situ

Decommissioning of the seabed assets in the operational area is planned to be executed in 2025/2026 with completion planned by the end of 2026, subject to activity schedule requirements, vessel availability and weather. In-field activities may take up to 12 months cumulative duration. However, the current median estimate is approximately six to seven months assuming no concurrent activities. Two or more campaigns of work are envisioned and multiple trips in and out of the field may be required during each campaign. There are likely to be periods of no in-field activity between campaigns and in the extreme case this period could be up to eight months.

The scope, mobilisation window and expected duration of each activity campaign will be determined during the next phase of the project which includes contracting activities. Vessel availability is anticipated to be the main determining factor. This planning and contracting work is currently planned to be completed in Q1 2025.

Some activities associated with the decommissioning of seabed assets may commence prior to the conclusion of P&A activities, such as ROV surveys, preparing seabed equipment for later removal by removing marine growth, clearing sediment and / or cutting and seabed equipment recovery to vessel. These activities may occur concurrently with the P&A campaign but in different parts of the field.

When ongoing, activities will be 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Timing and duration of these activities is subject to change due to project schedule requirements, vessel availability, unforeseen circumstances and weather. This EP has risk assessed decommissioning activities throughout the year (all seasons) to provide operational flexibility. Asset integrity for the purposes of safely removing all equipment has been demonstrated until the end of 2026 (CP results from the 2021 inspection campaign considered asset integrity until this time).

4.3 Vessels

Seabed asset removal and abandonment in situ activities will be carried out by at least one primary vessel and may be supported by one or more support vessel. Typically, there will be two vessels in the operational area with a maximum of four at any one time. Primary vessels will typically be a dynamic positioning (DP) vessel with crane (or other lift means) and minimum one work class ROV. The primary vessel/s is expected to depart and then re-enter the operational area on several occasions. The support vessel(s) will provide operational, logistical, safety and equipment management support and will be used on an ad-hoc basis such that it may not be in the field throughout the entire duration of the activity and may come and go as required in its logistical and support capacity to provision the primary vessel(s). The exact vessels are yet to be confirmed.

The activity may be supported by one or a combination of:

- + tugs including anchor handling tugs
- + barges
- + crew transfer vessel
- + heavy lift vessel
- + dynamically positioned pipelay vessel (PLV)
- + supply vessel
- + dive support vessel and rescue vessel.

Inspection and maintenance activities are expected to be conducted with one vessel with minimum one ROV.

Positioning beacons may also be placed on vessel equipment (e.g., cranes), ROV or structures while undertaking the activities.

4.3.1 Logistics support

Helicopters may be used to transfer crew and equipment to and from vessels and assist in an emergency as required. Support vessels may also be required for materials, equipment, provisions, personnel, and waste transfers.

4.4 Field management activities (general)

A risk-based inspection (RBI) assessment has been completed to determine the requirements and optimum intervals for undertaking inspection, monitoring, maintenance and repair (IMMR) activities with the maximum interval for inspection not exceeding five years.

IMMR of subsea field equipment will be performed in accordance with the MEFF Integrity Management Plan (Ref ME-7000-REP-0071).

The IMMR tasks that may be undertaken are:

- + subsea production centre inspections, such as inspecting the XTs, manifolds, spools, UTAs, PUDUs and jumpers
- + cathodic potential measurements
- + maintenance and repair, such as replacing anodes or installing anode skids
- + recovery of dropped objects
- + clearing debris (e.g., calcareous marine growth) using high-pressure water jetter and/or flapper tool
- + close visual inspection and measurements of critical components
- + seabed surveys:
 - multi-beam echo sounder
 - side scan sonar
 - sub bottom profiling
 - seabed grab sampling
 - autonomous underwater vehicle
 - towed camera for identification of debris or raised seabed features.

The last inspection campaign was completed in 2021 which assessed:

- + condition and location of the floating assets (DTM & MWA) including the mooring lines

- + condition of equipment at all four production centres, including close visual inspection of wellheads and trees
- + condition of the production risers and rigid flowlines, including observation of the extent of burial
- + a CP check across the field.

A CP assessment was performed based on the field results obtained that demonstrates integrity for all hydrocarbon retaining assets until the end of 2026.

Post floating asset removal, IMMR will continue to be carried out as required in accordance with the Integrity Management Plan (ME-7000-REP-0071) so as to not preclude future removal of subsea equipment.

4.5 Wet storage of equipment

During the removal of floating assets (DTM and MWAs) in Q1 2023, the 10 risers and 6 mooring lines were temporarily wet-stored until recovery during the seabed asset removal campaign. This equipment has been wet-stored close to original DTM position, and wholly within the footprint of the existing mooring anchor pattern.

The two 12 inch production risers and 2 inch well service risers were plugged and the six umbilicals will be left uncapped.

As part of the seabed asset removal campaign equipment may be temporarily wet-stored throughout the campaign. All temporarily wet-stored items will be recovered and decommissioned as part of the activities described in this EP.

4.6 Removal of seabed equipment

Decommissioning activities of infrastructure on the seabed described below may occur in any sequence and in multiple campaigns if required, depending on technical requirements, site and weather conditions and availability of personnel, equipment and vessels at the time.

Removal of seabed equipment will include a variety of supporting activities as outlined in **Section 4.6.1** to **Section 4.6.7**.

4.6.1 Marine and calcareous growth removal

Significant marine growth cover was observed throughout the fields during the 2021 subsea inspection. The marine growth was mainly a base layer of hard types such as barnacles with soft sponges and hydroids over that. Average thickness was noted to range from approximately 10 to 80mm, with most structures have around 40mm thickness and 70% coverage.

Marine and calcareous growth may be removed subsea prior to equipment removal using tools such as either high-pressure water jetter, flapper tool, scraping tool and/or acid soaking. Removal of marine growth will be done to the extent required to enable safe operations. Marine growth may need to be removed to access and inspect lifting points or to reduce the weight of the equipment to aid recovery and lift operations.

Marine growth from recovered seabed equipment will be removed either in the water column or may be removed on the vessel deck using high-pressure water and brushes. Any removed marine growth on the vessel deck will be discharged to the marine environment from the deck.

4.6.2 Sediment relocation

If sediment build up around seabed equipment has the potential to impede decommissioning activities, a water jet, ROV-mounted suction pump or mass flow excavator may be used to move

sediment in the immediate vicinity of the equipment, to allow inspection / intervention works and removal of equipment to be performed.

4.6.3 As-found ROV surveys

As found surveys using an ROV may be conducted on seabed equipment present in the field and planned for removal. The survey aims to identify any issues with the equipment which have the potential to affect the approach to decommissioning. The as-found survey may also identify miscellaneous debris for recovery.

4.6.4 Release of residual gas and / or hydrocarbons

The flowlines, manifolds and spools were flushed with treated seawater during the operational phase to ALARP and acceptable concentrations of hydrocarbons but may contain some residual hydrocarbons that were not able to be flushed. As this equipment is recovered, the contents will be drained or vented to the environment.

4.6.5 Release of chemicals from umbilicals and electrical / hydraulic flying leads

As the umbilicals and flying leads are recovered, the contents will be drained to the environment.

4.6.6 Removal and recovery of equipment

Removal and recovery of seabed equipment is described in **Table 4-1**.

Table 4-1: Removal and recovery of equipment

Equipment	Removal Options
Flexible flowlines	Flexible and rigid lines may be recovered via methods such as: + reverse lay to vessel and subsequently cut up on deck, reeled or loaded into a carousel + cut up on seabed and recovered to deck via crane, either loose or in baskets. Pipework will be left open ended.
Rigid flowlines	
Umbilicals	
Flexible risers	
Manifolds and mudmats	Manifolds and mudmats will be cut free of adjoining pipework then recovered with rigging connected to structure lift points or alternative locations using a crane or winch. Pipework will be left open ended.
Pipeline end manifolds (PLEM)	PLEMs will be cut free of adjoining pipework then recovered with rigging connected to structure lift points or alternative locations using a crane or winch. Alternatively, a grapple system may be utilised for recovery. Pipework will be left open ended.
Rigid tie-in spools	Spools will be cut free and lifted either directly to deck or in a subsea basket. Spools may be recovered whole or in sections. Pipework will be left open ended.
Hydraulic and electric flying leads (HFLs and EFLs)	Flying leads will be disconnected or cut free from the associated structures and recovered by crane, winch or in an ROV basket. Flying leads may be recovered whole or in sections. Pipework will be left open ended.

Equipment	Removal Options
Production umbilical distribution unit (PUDU) and umbilical termination assemblies (UTA)	PUDUs and UTAs may be recovered attached to their umbilical or cut free and recovered separately. Recovery will be via rigging connected to structure lift points or alternative locations using crane, winch or in an ROV basket. Alternatively, a grapple system may be utilised for recovery. Pipework will be left open ended.
Riser wire	Riser wire will be cut free and recovered using a crane, winch or in an ROV basket.
Tether chains	Tether chains will be cut free and recovered using a crane, winch or in an ROV basket.
Umbilical riser base, anode skids and pipe crossing structures	These structures will be recovered with rigging connected to structure lift points or alternative locations using a crane, winch or in an ROV basket. Alternatively, a grapple system may be utilised for recovery.
Auxiliary items including concrete mattresses, grout bags and sandbags	Sand / grout bags may be cut open to release contents to seabed, then bags lifted via attached slings to recover to surface or in ROV basket. Concrete mattresses will be recovered using rigging connected to a crane, winch or in a subsea basket. Alternatively, a grapple system may be utilised for recovery.
Xmas trees (if not recovered during P&A)	These structures will be recovered with rigging using a crane, winch or in an ROV basket. Alternatively, a grapple system may be utilised for recovery. Pipework will be left open ended.
Wellhead removal	P&A activities may be completed without removing wellheads. In this scenario, wellheads may be cut and recovered under this EP as part of the removal of seabed assets activities. Wellheads will be cut using a subsea cutting tool, such as a diamond wire cutter, and recovered to vessel directly by crane.
Unburied section of mooring chains	Unburied mooring chains will be cut free and recovered using a crane, winch or in an ROV basket.
Gravity Bases	Subsea relocation of the gravity bases into bespoke recovery cradles, Subsea cutting of the gravity base buoyancy tanks to aid draining during recovery

4.6.7 Waste management

All waste resulting from removal of equipment will be managed through application of the waste management hierarchy:

1. Avoid
2. Reduce
3. Reuse
4. Repurpose
5. Recycle
6. Dispose.

Santos will seek opportunities to reuse and recycle materials where possible with disposal as a last resort. Licenced waste management contractors will be engaged to perform the onshore waste management during the infrastructure removal phase of the project. Santos will undertake a waste management contractor selection audit to ensure contractors comply with State and Commonwealth legislation. The likely performance of bidders against the waste management hierarchy will be considered in the Santos evaluation of tenders and agreed performance indicators will be included in the final contract.

The waste management contractor will be required to prepare the following documents:

- + Waste management plan (onshore) this plan includes:
 - Requirement for a Radiation/ HAZMAT inspector to inspect recovered equipment that has been in contact with production fluids for NORM and Mercury when handed over, prior to transportation.
 - Details on the applicable waste legislation and standards.
 - Details on required licenses for the quayside/ laydown area for receipt of contaminated materials.
 - Details on handling, storage and disposal of waste.
 - Details on decontamination process (if this is performed quayside prior to transport).
 - Details on material and waste tracking.
- + Waste transportation plan

Waste management plan subsea umbilicals, risers and flowlines (SURF) disposal facility

Onshore waste disposal will be at licensed facilities. Waste management planning is expected to continue post-contract award with full details of material end-fates included in project execution plans that will be in place before removal activities commence.

Hazardous material will be managed in accordance with a Santos NORMS and HAZMAT Management Plan (9885-236-HSM-0004). Removed subsea equipment that has been exposed to produced fluids will be monitored for NORMs and mercury contamination by a radiation HAZMAT inspector on the vessel when it is recovered. Any material assessed as NORMS contaminated will be classified as hazardous waste and will be handled and transported in accordance with Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) guidelines and disposed of at a licensed facility. The recovery, management, transport and disposal of recovered waste/equipment contaminated with radiation or NORMs is described in further detail **Section 8.6**

4.6.7.1 Preliminary inventory of recovered materials

Indicative outcomes for the major seabed equipment categories are provided in Table 4-2 below. Opportunities to improve on the current assumed outcome will continue to be considered as they are identified but are not being actively pursued unless noted as such in **Table 4-2**. A full breakdown of material for each recovered seabed asset is provided in **Appendix C**.

Recovered equipment may be recycled within Australia or transported overseas for recycling. All waste streams will be managed in accordance with relevant legislation of the receiving jurisdiction and by suitably qualified contractors.

Table 4-2: Indicative outcomes for major seabed equipment categories

Equipment Type	Approximate Mass (t)	Current Assumed Outcome	Worst Outcome	Comment
Gravity Bases	670t (455 t metals and 215 t concrete)	Recycling	Recycling	Mature steel scrap market exists, and high (>95%) recycling rates are anticipated. Plastic valve componentry (~400g) within the structure will be recycled or landfilled. Opportunities for recycling concrete will be explored throughout the execution phase.
Steel Structures	460	Recycling	Recycling	Mature steel scrap market exists, and high (>95%) recycling rates are anticipated.
Rigid Flowlines and Spools	1630t (1400 t metals and 230 t plastics/resins)	Recycling	Landfill	Opportunities for recycling are still being explored. Potential challenges: + The plastic coating must be removed from the steel + The plastic outer layer appears to be of a non-recyclable material type + The 316L liner may need to be separated from the carbon steel pipe body.
Flexible Flowlines / Risers	3950t (3250 t metals + 700 t plastics/resins)	Recycling	Landfill	Given the total mass involved, pursuing recycling of these products is a high priority activity for the project. However, no established recycling pathway has been identified and landfill may be required. Opportunities for recycling will continue to be explored in 2024 and throughout the execution phase. It is thought that ~75% of flexible flowlines/ risers/ umbilicals may be recycled.
Umbilicals	1920t (1100 t metals + 820 t plastics/resins)			
Mooring lines (plastic-coated wire)	25t	Landfill	Landfill	
Stabilisation, EFLs, HFLs	105t	Landfill	Landfill	
MWA tether chains	60t	Recycling	Recycling	Mature steel scrap market exists, and high (>95%) recycling rates are anticipated.

Equipment Type	Approximate Mass (t)	Current Assumed Outcome	Worst Outcome	Comment
Mooring chains (top chains, excursion limiter load chains and weight chains)	810t*	Recycling	Recycling	Mature steel scrap market exists, and high (>95%) recycling rates are anticipated. *Assumes excursion limiter load chains are exposed/ unburied until the ground chain interface. Actual burial extent to be confirmed by ROV inspection on site prior to removal operations.
Marine Growth	400t	Landfill	Landfill	Not an equipment type but will need to be cleaned from equipment and disposed of to landfill, if not removed infield.

- (1) The stated marine growth mass is an estimate extrapolated from the mid-water arch weight control report, which is very conservative as it is the basis for lifting plans. Among other things it assumes that the maximum thickness of marine growth observed is uniformly covering the entire structure. While the MWA have previously been removed from the field, the same ratio of marine growth to steel is assumed for all the steel structures to be removed from the seabed. Flowlines and flexibles have been observed to be covered in sediment and it is assumed they will have significantly less marine growth coverage. Weight in air is stated.

Waste monitoring and reporting will be undertaken in accordance with Santos procedure SMS-EXA-OS01-PD02-PD01 Waste Monitoring and Reporting standard, to enable accurate and consistent reporting and waste performance management as provided in **Section 11.11**.

4.6.7.2 Manifold and PLEM flowmeter disposal

The waste materials from the flowmeters will be classified in accordance with the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) radioactive waste classification scheme and disposed of accordingly.

4.7 Abandonment in situ of seabed equipment

As outlined in **Section 3.5** Santos undertook a Comparative Environment Impact Assessment of feasible decommissioning options and the subsea equipment was determined to be suitable for abandonment in situ as outlined in **Table 4-3**.

Table 4-3: Abandonment in situ of equipment

Equipment	Abandonment Process
Mooring anchors and buried sections of chains	Abandonment in situ of the mooring anchors and buried sections of chain consists of leaving the buried section of chains and anchors in situ following disconnection and recovery of the riser wires and unburied section of chains.

4.7.1 Mooring chains and anchors – component details

All six DTM mooring anchors were confirmed fully buried during the 2021 ROV environmental survey (GHD 2021). No seabed disturbance was observed at any of the anchor locations. The anchors are expected to be buried at a depth of 6 m to 13 m based on the anchor suitability design report and installation guidelines. This report was made based on site-specific geotechnical data and shallow geology assessment. The shallow geology of the Mutineer-Exeter field is characterised by

predominately a soft layer for the top 12 m to 15 m overlying a slightly stronger (but still uncemented) layer. As-built confirmation of the anchor installation per design was done by way of a proof load test. No direct measurement of the anchor depth has been made.

The 2021 survey also confirmed that approximately 580 m of each mooring chain was buried, leaving approximately 130 m of each chain unburied (refer **Figure 4-1**).

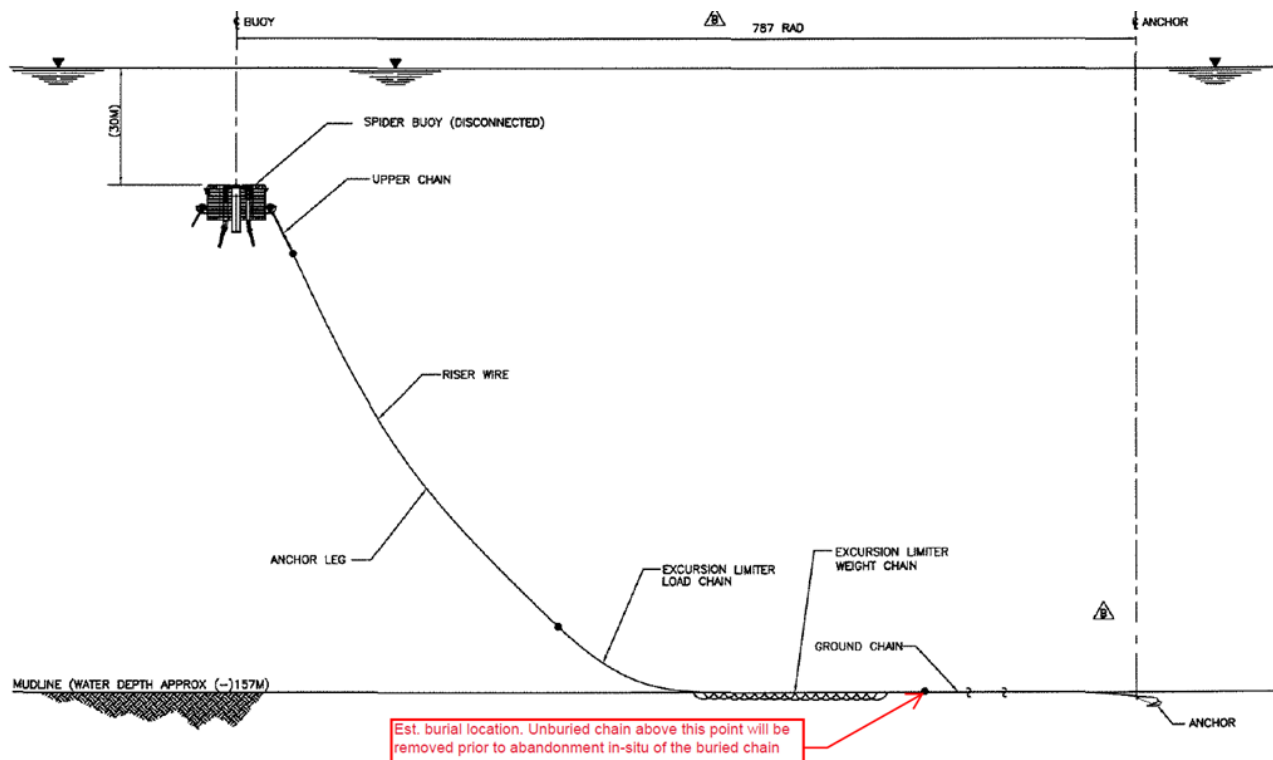


Figure 4-1: Mooring System with anchor

Paint:

The anchors are coated with a thin layer of black epoxy-based paint (estimated DFT of 40 microns). Total weight of paint per anchor is estimated to be under 5 kg. Anchor chains are unpainted.

The mooring anchors and chains do not have anodes attached.

Steel:

The anchors, chains and shackles are made entirely of steel with the chains and shackles being chain grade RQ3.

The chemical composition of the steel alloys used in the mooring components are similar to other structural steel grades, with an iron content in the order of 97%, and the remaining percentage made up by a combination of other trace elements (e.g. carbon, manganese, aluminium, vanadium, niobium, titanium, etc).

Mooring chains and anchor details are provided in **Table 4-4**.

Table 4-4: Mooring chains and anchor details

Item	Qty	Approximate Unit Weight	Length		Approximate Combined Weight (t)
			Each	Total	
Anchor Carbon Steel 17t Vryhof Stevpris MK 5 Steel Anchor c/w shackle	6 units	17,000 kg each	-	-	102
Ground Chain (RQ3) Carbon Steel 80 mm Studless Steel Chain	6 lengths	125 kg/m	500m	3,000m	376
Joining Shackle (RQ3S) Carbon Steel 112 mm Steel 'D' Shackle	6 units	229.5 kg each	-	-	1.5
TOTAL WEIGHT (t)					479.5

4.8 Diving

Diving operations have been included as there is the possibility that diving is required to support the activities described in this EP. It is currently anticipated that all equipment can be removed using remotely operated equipment. Since the subsea equipment was diver-installed there is a remote possibility that during detailed engineering a need to use divers during its removal may be identified. If divers were to be utilised, they may be used for activities such as unfastening equipment, attaching lifting gear, positioning remotely operated equipment or removing marine growth.

Diving is not considered to pose any credible environmental impacts or risks other than the impacts and risk already identified in the EP associated with the vessels used to support any diving activity.

4.9 As-left seabed surveys

An as-left survey will be undertaken during recovery operations, or, after removal of the subsea equipment above the seabed, using an ROV to confirm that only mooring components (chains and anchors) which are buried will be left in- situ. The survey will:

- verify that all equipment above the seabed has been removed as described in **Section 4.6** and seabed around former sites of infrastructure is clear of hazards
- ROV footage will be undertaken commensurate with the nature and scale of the removal activities. E.g.
 - approximately 30m around recovered infrastructure (e.g. gravity bases)
 - approximately 5m either side of the recovery path of subsea umbilical risers and flowlines (SURF), exposed mooring chain and the rigid pipeline
- Visually identify and confirm the extent of any seabed disturbance around the former sites of seabed equipment as a result of removal activities
- confirm the position and depth of the buried mooring components (anchors and chains) left in situ, as described in **Section 4.7** at the time of abandonment using best endeavours via a magnetometer or similar tool.

The as-left survey may use equipment or methods such as:

- acoustic surveying (e.g. Side scan sonar towed behind a vessel or in combination with an ROV)
- mounted camera on an ROV
- magnetometer

4.10 Environmental monitoring

Santos may undertake environmental monitoring to support the future decommissioning program.

The program is likely to involve at least one vessel undertaking activities potentially using the following pieces equipment:

- + multi-beam echo sounder
- + side scan sonar
- + sub bottom profiling
- + seabed grab for sediment sampling
- + ROV surveys
- + autonomous underwater vehicle.

4.11 Chemical assessment

A risk-based approach to select chemical products ranked under the OCNS is applied for those chemicals used and discharged to the marine environment. This scheme lists and ranks all chemicals used in the exploration, exploitation, and associated offshore processing of petroleum on the UK Continental Shelf.

Chemicals are ranked according to their calculated hazard quotients by the Chemical Hazard Assessment and Risk Management (CHARM) mathematical model, which uses aquatic toxicity, biodegradation and bioaccumulation data. The hazard quotient is converted to a colour banding with Gold and Silver colour bands representing the least environmentally hazardous chemicals. Chemicals not amenable to the CHARM model (i.e., inorganic substances, hydraulic fluids or chemicals used only in pipelines) are assigned an OCNS grouping based on the worst-case ecotoxicity data with Group E and D representing the least hazard potential.

The Santos Operations Chemical Selection, Evaluation and Approval Procedure (EA-91-II-10001) accepts CHARM ranked Gold/Silver, or non-CHARM ranked E/D chemicals for use and discharge without a detailed environmental risk assessment. The same applies to chemicals that are OSPAR Pose Little or No Risk to the Environment (PLONOR) List. The PLONOR Listed, agreed upon by the OSPAR Convention (Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic), contains a list of substances that will pose little or no risk to the environment in offshore waters. If chemicals are ranked lower than Gold, Silver, E or D (i.e., CHARM ranked purple, orange, blue or white, or non-CHARM A, B or C ranked chemicals) and no alternatives are available, a risk assessment is conducted providing technical justification for their use, and showing their use and associated risk is acceptable and ALARP.

As described above, potential alternative chemicals are investigated when chemicals are ranked lower than CHARM Gold, Silver, E or D (i.e., CHARM ranked purple, orange, blue or white, or non-CHARM A, B or C ranked chemicals). There is a preference for chemical options that are CHARM-ranked Gold/Silver, or non-CHARM-ranked E/D chemicals and chemicals that have a low aquatic toxicity, are readily biodegradable and do not bioaccumulate (discussed below).

Any chemicals that may be discharged to the marine environment and that are not OCNS CHARM or non-CHARM-ranked are risk -assessed using the OCNS CHARM or non-CHARM models. The chemical is assigned a pseudo-ranking based on the available aquatic toxicity, biodegradation and

bioaccumulation data (discussed below) and assessed for environmental acceptability for discharge to the marine environment.

4.11.1 Ecotoxicity assessment

Table 4-5 and **Table 4-6** act as guidance in assessing the ecotoxicity of chemicals during the investigation of potential alternatives. **Table 4-5** is used by CEFAS to group a chemical based on ecotoxicity results, 'A' representing highest toxicity/risk to environment and 'E' lowest. **Table 4-6** shows classifications/categories of toxicity against aquatic toxicity results.

Table 4-5: Initial Offshore Chemical Notification Scheme ranking

Initial grouping	A	B	C	D	E
Result for aquatic-toxicity data (ppm)	<1	≥1-10	>10-100	>100-1000	>1000
Result for sediment-toxicity data (ppm)	<10	≥10-100	>100-1000	>1000-10,000	>10,000

Note: Aquatic toxicity refers to the *Skeletonema costatum* EC50, *Acartia tonsa* LC50, and *Scophthalmus maximus* (juvenile turbot) LC50 toxicity tests. Sediment toxicity refers to the *Corophium volutator* LC50 test.

Source: Cefas Standard Procedure 2019, OCNS 011 NL Protocol PART 1: Core Elements

Table 4-6: Aquatic species toxicity grouping

Category	Species	LC ₅₀ and EC ₅₀ criteria
Category Acute 1 Hazard statement – Very toxic to aquatic life	Fish	LC ₅₀ (96hr) of ≤1 mg/L
	Crustacea	EC ₅₀ (48hr) of ≤1 mg/L
	Algae/other aquatic plant species	ErC ₅₀ (72 or 96hr) of ≤1 mg/L
Category Acute 2 Hazard statement – Toxic to aquatic life	Fish	LC ₅₀ (96hr) of >1 mg/L to ≤10 mg/L
	Crustacea	EC ₅₀ (48hr) of >1 mg/L to ≤10 mg/L
	Algae/other aquatic plant species	ErC ₅₀ (72 or 96hr) of >1 mg/L to ≤10 mg/L
Category Acute 3 Hazard statement – Harmful to aquatic life	Fish	LC ₅₀ (96hr) of >10 mg/L to ≤100 mg/L
	Crustacea	EC ₅₀ (48hr) of >10 mg/L to ≤100 mg/L
	Algae/other aquatic plant species	ErC ₅₀ (72 or 96hr) of >10 mg/L to ≤100 mg/L

Source: United Nations (2019) Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS), Eighth Revised Edition

4.11.2 Biodegradation assessment

The biodegradation of chemicals is assessed using the Cefas biodegradation criteria, which aligns with the categorisation outlined in the United Nations GHS Annex 9 Guidance on Hazards to the Aquatic Environment (2019). The below is used as a guide during the investigation of potential chemical alternatives. Preference is to select readily biodegradable chemicals.

Cefas categorises biodegradation into the following groups:

- a. Readily biodegradable: results of >X% biodegradation in 28 days to an OSPAR harmonised offshore chemical notification format (HOCNF)-accepted ready biodegradation protocol.

Moderately biodegradable: results >20% and <X% to an OSPAR HOCNF-accepted ready biodegradation protocol.

Poorly biodegradable: results from OSPAR HOCNF-accepted ready biodegradation protocol.

Where X is equal to:

60% in 28 days in OECD 306, Marine BODIS or any other acceptable marine protocols, or in the absence of valid results for such tests

- + 60% in 28 days (OECD 301B, 301C, 301D, 301F, Freshwater BODIS)
- + 70% in 28 days (OECD 301A, 301E).

4.11.3 Bioaccumulation assessment

The bioaccumulation of chemicals is assessed using the Cefas bioaccumulation criteria, which aligns with the categorisation outlined in the United Nations GHS Annex 9 Guidance on Hazards to the Aquatic Environment (2019). Preference is to select non bioaccumulative chemicals.

The following guidance is used by Cefas:

- a. Non-bioaccumulative/non-bioaccumulating: Log Pow <3, or results from a bioaccumulation test (preferably using *Mytilus edulis*) demonstrates a satisfactory rate of uptake and depuration, and the molecular mass is ≥ 700 .
- b. Bioaccumulative/Bioaccumulates: Log Pow ≥ 3 , or results from a bioaccumulation test (preferably using *Mytilus edulis*) demonstrates an unsatisfactory rate of uptake and depuration, and the molecular mass is <700.

All chemicals will be selected in accordance with the Santos Operations Chemical Selection, Evaluation and Approval Procedure (EA-91-II-10001), as applicable.

5. Existing environment description

OPGGS(E)R 2023 Requirements
Regulation 21. Environmental assessment.
Description of the environment 21(2) The environment plan must — (a) describe the existing environment that may be affected by the activity; and (b) include details of the particular relevant values and sensitivities (if any) of that environment. Note: The definition of <i>environment</i> in section 5 includes its social, economic and cultural features. 21(3) Without limiting paragraph (2)(b), relevant values and sensitivities may include any of the following: (a) the world heritage values of a declared World Heritage property; (b) the national heritage values of a National Heritage place; (c) the ecological character of a declared Ramsar wetland; (d) the presence of a listed threatened species or listed threatened ecological community; (e) the presence of a listed migratory species; (f) any values and sensitivities that exist in, or in relation to, part or all of: (i) a Commonwealth marine area; or (ii) Commonwealth land.

5.1 Environment that may be affected

This section describes the key physical, biological, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the existing environment that may be affected by the activity, from both planned and unplanned events associated with the activity. The description of the environment applies to the operational area (the area within which planned activities will occur), and the environment that may be affected (EMBA) by unplanned events within the operational area.

A detailed and comprehensive description of the environment (required by OPGGS(E)R 2023, Section 21(3)) in the operational area and EMBA is provided in **Section 5.2** and within the *Values and Sensitivities of the Western Australian Marine Environment* (EA-00-RI-10062, **Appendix D**). Copies of the DCCEE Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) outputs for the operational area and the EMBA are also available in **Appendix E**. An updated PMST report was generated to identify any changes to listed MNES between the submission of the previous revision of this EP and this current revision. Recent changes to the PMST mean that the updated tool uses a discrete grid system to determine the MNES that might be impacted in an area of interest. Therefore, the PMST returns all the MNES that intersect the same grid cells that are intersected by an area of interest. With marine matters of national environmental significance, a coarser grid resolution is used. This means there is an increased likelihood of “false positives” in marine areas. The results of the updated PMST report were screened against GIS data sets and current literature to determine and remove those sensitivities identified by the report that are outside of the area of interest. As a result, no additional sensitivities were identified within the area of interest in the updated PMST report.

The EMBA encompasses the environment that may be affected by planned and unplanned events. Most planned and unplanned events associated with the activity may affect the environment up to a few kilometres from the operational area e.g., from noise impacts (as identified in **Section 8**) However, a large unplanned hydrocarbon spill would extend substantially beyond this (**Section 9**).

5.1.1 Protected Matters Search Tool reports

PMST searches were undertaken on the operational area and the EMBA. The PMST searches were completed using the exact co-ordinates that are used to produce the figures throughout **Section 3**,

ensuring the EMBA encompasses the full range of environmental receptors that might be contacted by surface and subsurface hydrocarbons at the low exposure level, in the highly unlikely event of a worst-case oil spill.

On the first page of the PMST report is a coarse graphic showing the area over which the search has been conducted. However, the granularity of this can make the output look different to the spatial area represented on figures within the EP.

The coordinates are also provided within the PMST report to allow for duplication of the search and verification if required. Santos does not have control over the PMST output, but instead has provided the reports and coordinates to ensure transparency.

5.1.2 Determining the environment that may be affected

Stochastic hydrocarbon dispersion and fate modelling, applied to the worst-case spill scenario identified as relevant to the activity (**Section 9.5**), was undertaken to inform the EMBA. Stochastic modelling is created by overlaying hundreds of individual hypothetical oil spill simulations from an oil spill into a single map, with each simulation subject to a different set of metocean conditions drawn from historical records. Stochastic modelling is completed to reduce uncertainty in risk assessment and spill response planning.

The modelling considered four key physical or chemical phases of hydrocarbons that pose differing environmental and socioeconomic risks: surface, entrained, dissolved aromatic and shoreline accumulated hydrocarbons. The modelling used defined hydrocarbon exposure values, as relevant, to identifying an area that might be contacted by hydrocarbons, environment risk assessment and oil spill response planning, for the various hydrocarbon phases. Refer to **Table 5-2** for the exposure values used and to **Section 9.5.4** for further information about the reasons why these exposure values have been selected and how they relate to the risk assessment.

While the EMBA represents the largest possible spatial extent that could be contacted by any of the worst-case spill events modelled, an actual spill event is more accurately represented by only one of the simulations from the stochastic modelling, resulting in a much smaller spatial footprint in the event of an actual spill.

5.1.2.1 Modelling locations

The worst-case discharge from the worst -case credible loss of well control (LOWC) scenario has been modelled at the Mutineer-4 well location, as this was identified as the highest -oil producing well, given lower water cut and higher reservoir pressure. The worst-case marine diesel oil (MDO) discharge from a vessel collision scenario was modelled at the southeast corner of the operational area as this represented the closest point of the operational area to any environmental sensitivities. The co-ordinates of these location are provided in **Table 5-1**.

Table 5-1: Spill modelling locations

Scenario	Latitude	Longitude
Worst-case LOWC	19° 15' 32.8" S	116° 38' 16.3" E
Worst-case MDO discharge	19° 20' S	116° 50' E

The MEFF decommissioning campaign may also overlap the P&A campaign. In this case the seabed assets will only be dismantled/recovered from drill centres where P&A has already been completed and the MODU/intervention vessel has moved off location to another drill centre.

To ensure a representative EMBA was correctly assessed in this EP, the EMBA for both modelled scenarios (LOWC and Vessel Collision) were combined to show the greatest extent of a potential spill with the area and create one defined EMBA (**Figure 5-1**). To provide context for the extent of the EMBA for the vessel collision scenario only (for vessel based decommissioning activities), a

comparison of the EMBA of both scenarios is provided in **Figure 5-3**. However, this EP assess the impacts and risks of the activities based on the overall combined EMBA (**Figure 5-1**).

5.1.2.2 Hydrocarbon exposure values

The low exposure values are used as a predictive tool to set the outer boundaries of an EMBA and may not necessarily result in ecologically significant impacts. To inform the evaluation of potential environmental consequences of a hydrocarbon release (impact assessment), modelling is undertaken using higher exposure values (i.e., the concentrations at which environmental consequences may result). The higher exposure values are known as 'moderate' and 'high' are described and explained within **Section 9.5.4**. Applying the same method used to determine the EMBA, spatial areas were derived for moderate and high exposure values (**Figure 5-2**).

A low exposure threshold, which approximates a range of socio-economic effects, is considered to provide a conservative extent of potential impacts. Biological impacts are expected to occur within the moderate and high exposure values which represent a subset of the EMBA. The EMBA exposure values are shown in **Table 5-2**. Refer to **Section 9.5.4** for further information about the spill trajectory modelling thresholds that have been selected. The moderate exposure value area (MEVA) is represented in this section to inform the impact assessment in **Section 9.6** and **Section 9.7**.

Table 5-2: Hydrocarbon exposure values of the environment that may be affected

Hydrocarbon Phase	Exposure Value		
	Low	Moderate	High
Surface (g/m ²)	1	10	50
Shoreline accumulation (g/m ²)	10	100	1000
Dissolved aromatics (ppb)	10	50	400
Entrained (ppb)	10	100	-

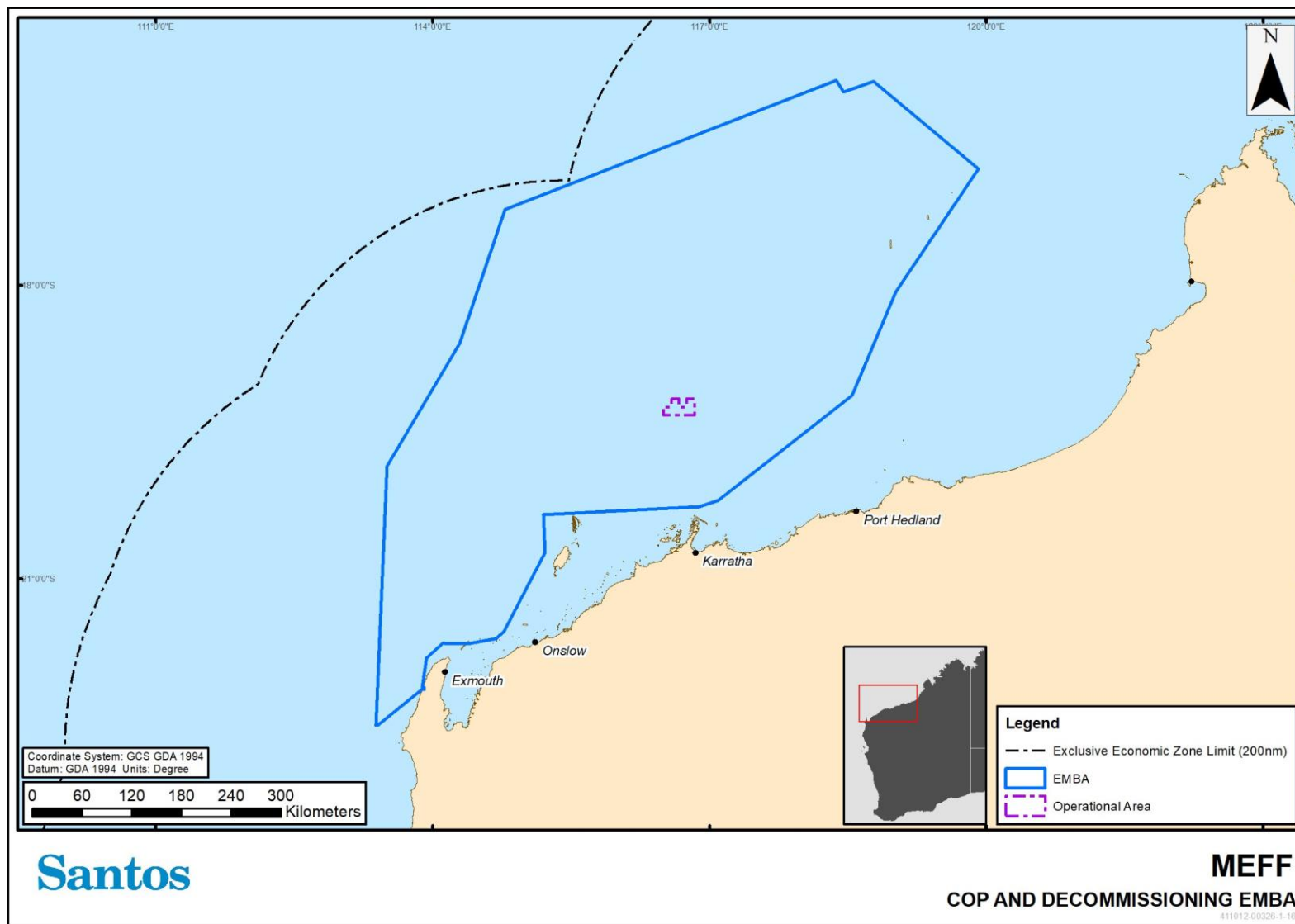


Figure 5-1: Environment that may be affected

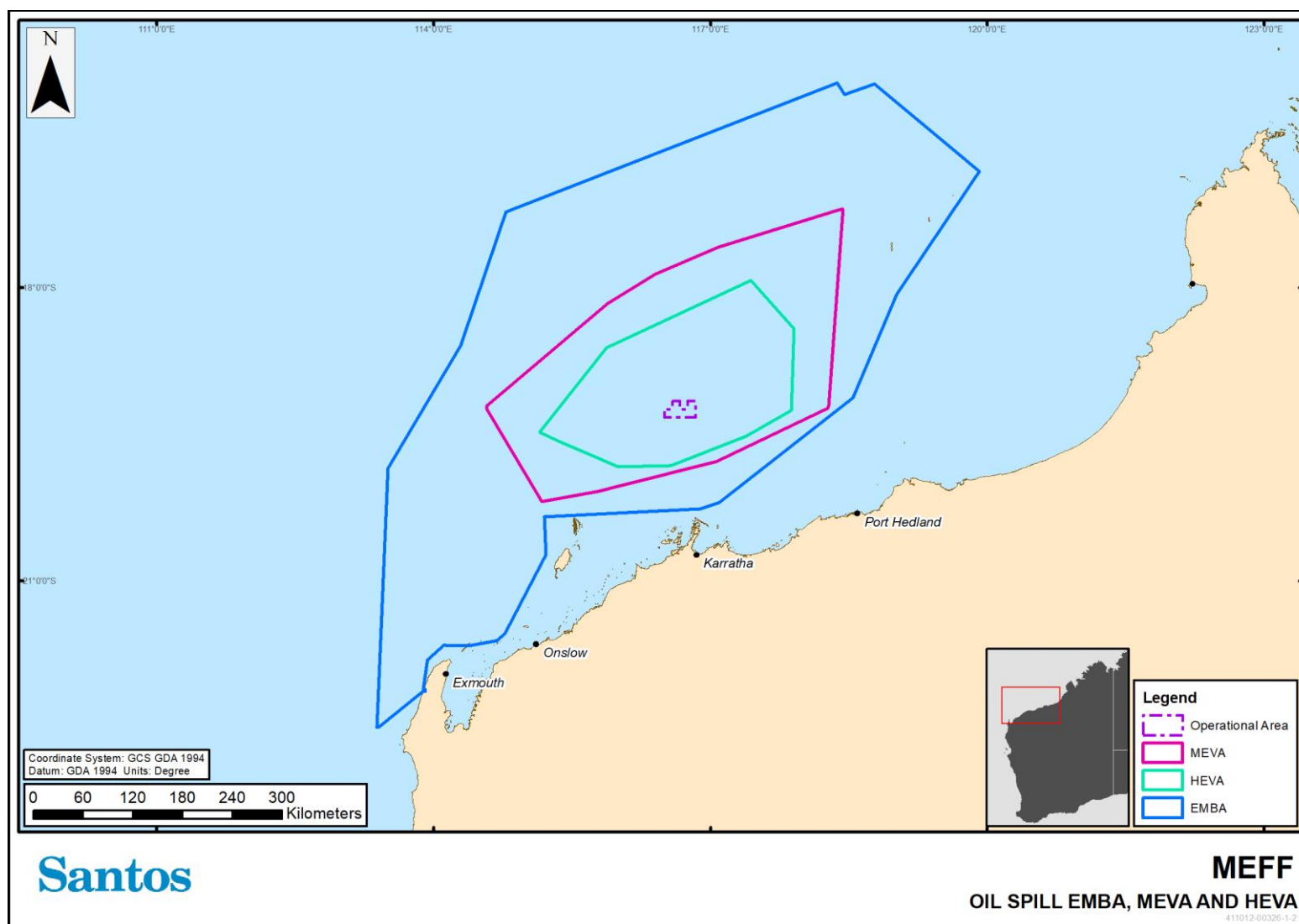


Figure 5-2: Overall environment that may be affected, moderate exposure value area and high exposure value area for the loss of well control and marine diesel oil scenarios

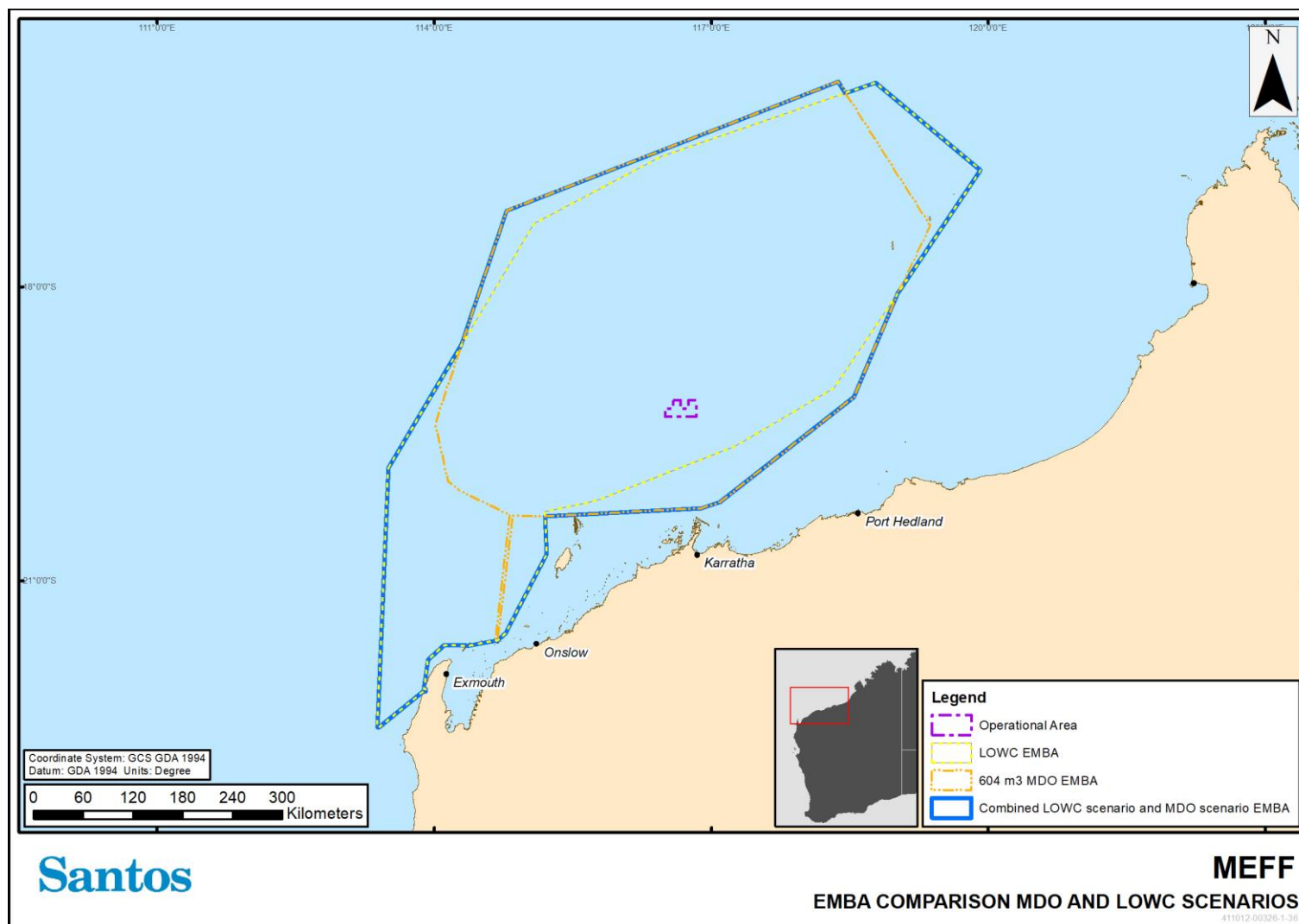


Figure 5-3: EMBA comparison loss of well control and marine diesel scenarios

5.2 Environmental values and sensitivities

5.2.1 Bioregions

Based on the Integrated Marine and Coastal Regionalisation of Australia (IMCRA) Version 4.0 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006), the bioregions overlapped by the operational area and EMBA are provided in **Table 5-3** and **Figure 5-4**.

Table 5-3: Integrated Marine and Coastal Regionalisation of Australia 4.0 provincial bioregions relevant to the activity

Bioregion	Operational Area	EMBA
Northwest Shelf Province	✓	✓
Northwest Transition	✓	✓
Central Western Transition	X	✓
Central Western Shelf Transition	X	✓
Northwest Province	X	✓

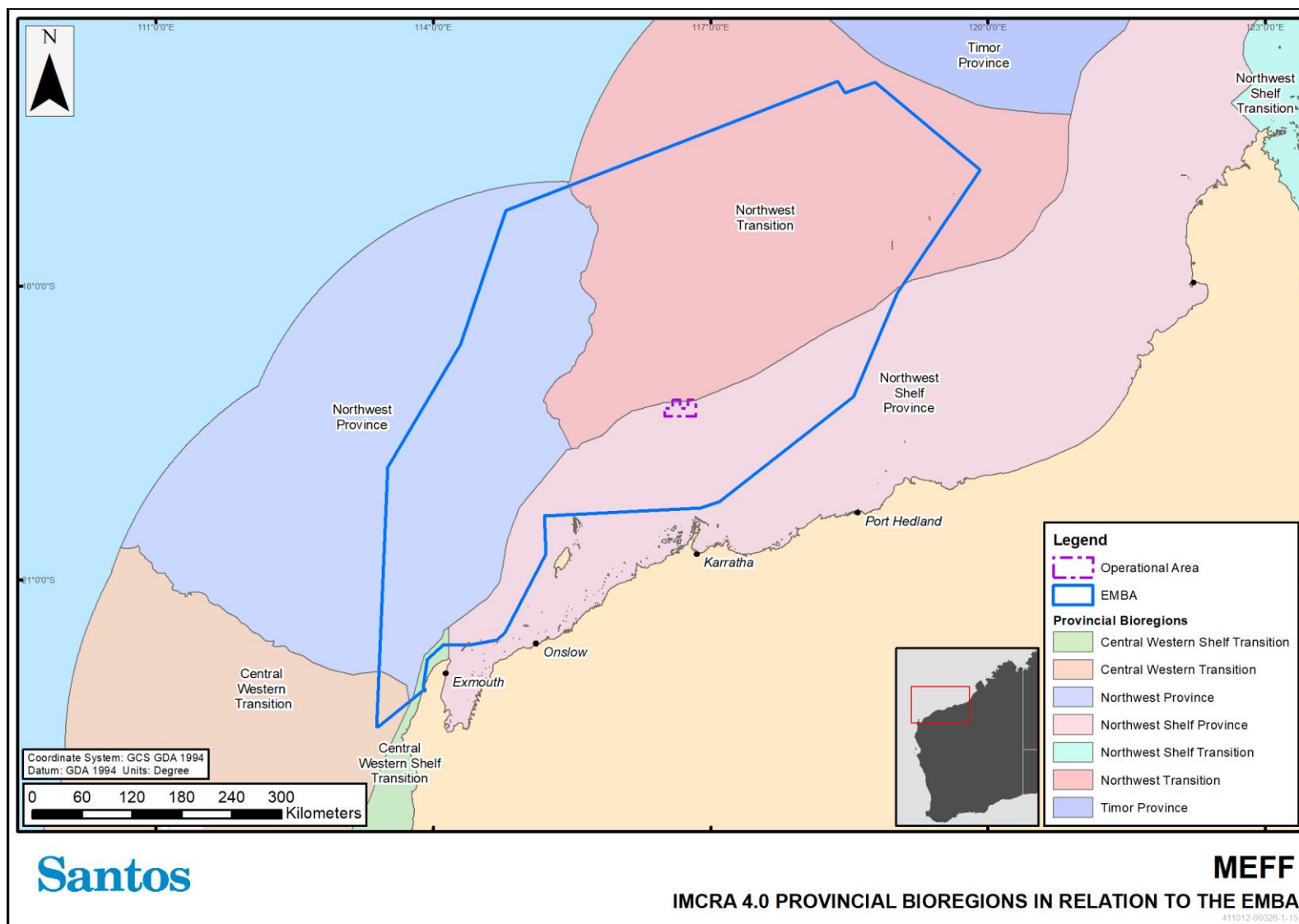


Figure 5-4: Integrated Marine and Coastal Regionalisation of Australia 4.0 provincial bioregions in relation to the environment that may be affected

5.2.2 Physical environment

5.2.2.1 Oceanography

Ocean currents on the NWS are dominated by the southward-flowing warm surface Indonesian Throughflow which flows from the tropics to the waters of southwest Western Australia (CSIRO, 2007), with the Leeuwin Current a distinct current south of North West Cape, near Exmouth (DSEWPaC, 2007).

Ocean currents are semi-diurnal, flowing across the local bathymetry in a south-east/north-west direction. Tropical cyclone storm currents seldom penetrate below 100 m water depth, therefore, near-seabed extremes are caused by turn of tide, internal waves and baroclinic currents. Internal waves and baroclinic currents are caused by summertime water stratification and density differences between water bodies.

The area of the MEFF field is believed to have the strongest internal tides of the entire NWS, particularly in water depths between 50 and 500 m (DSEWPaC, 2007). Internal tides result in the drawing of deep cool water into the photic zone, which stirs up nutrients and triggers primary production (DSEWPaC, 2007). It is suggested that the weak upwellings occur on the NWS during summer and may provide up to half of the nitrogen used on the NWS (CSIRO, 2007).

Swells are predominately from the south-west to west but wind generated waves can develop from any direction, reflecting the region at the time.

5.2.2.2 Tides

Tides are semi-diurnal and generally quite large, about 2.7 m in the operational area, and ranging from 0.95 m near Exmouth to more than 3 m near Broome (CSIRO, 2007). Tides contribute to the vertical mixing of surface water layers and sediments, though this is more evident in shallow waters than deep waters (DSEWPaC, 2008).

5.2.2.3 Waves

The normal wave climate is composed of locally-generated wind waves and swells that are propagated from distant areas (WNI, 1995). Sea directions run roughly parallel to prevailing wind directions. Hence, in summer, seas typically approach from the west and southwest, while in winter, seas typically approach from the south and east. Mean sea wave heights of less than 1 m with peak heights of less than 2 m are experienced in all months of the year (WNI, 1995). Mean swell heights are low at around 0.4 to 0.6 m in all months of the year. Due to the proximity of the mainland, the greatest exposure to swells is from the west (SSE, 1993).

Tropical cyclones have generated significant swell heights of up to 5 m, although the predicted frequency of swells exceeding 2 m is less than 5% (WNI, 1996).

5.2.3 Benthic habitats

The presence of marine and coastal habitats within the operational area and EMBA is summarised in **Table 5-4** and a detailed description of these habitats with reference to the IMCRA provincial bioregions is provided in Values and Sensitivities of the Western Australian Marine Environment (EA-00-RI-10062, **Appendix D**).

5.2.3.1 Operational area

A geophysical and geotechnical survey of the operational area undertaken in August 2011 indicates the seabed is relatively flat, smooth and featureless, in water depths ranging from around 132 m at lowest astronomical tide in the southeast to 163 m at lowest astronomical tide in the north-west. The only bathymetric features identified were those associated with Santos' existing petroleum

production equipment linked to the Mutineer-Exeter operations and previous drilling campaigns (Neptune Geomatics, 2011).

Only one seabed type was identified in the operational area by the survey, this being low relief unconsolidated (high volume) calcareous silty fine sand (Neptune Geomatics, 2011). This is consistent with other studies (DEWHA, 2007), which indicate more than 60% of the sediments on the NWS are carbonate-derived.

Table 5-4: Habitats associated with receptors identified within the environment that may be affected

Category	Receptor	Operational Area Presence	EMBA Presence						Relevant Events That May Impact on the Receptors
			Northwest Province	Northwest Shelf Province	Northwest Transition	Northwest Shelf Transition	Central Western Province	Central Western Shelf Transition	
Benthic Habitats	Coral reefs	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<u>Unplanned</u> Hydrocarbon release due to subsea or surface loss of well control. Diesel release from vessel collision.
	Seagrass	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Macroalgae	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Non-coral benthic invertebrates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<u>Planned</u> Seabed disturbance. Planned operational discharges. <u>Unplanned</u> Hydrocarbon release due to subsea or surface loss of well control. Diesel release from vessel collision. Unplanned release of solids.
Shoreline Habitats	Mangroves	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	<u>Unplanned</u> Hydrocarbon release due to subsea or surface well release. Diesel release from vessel collision.
	Intertidal platforms	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Sandy beaches	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	
	Rocky shorelines	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

5.2.4 Protected and significant areas

Protected and significant areas identified in the operational areas and EMBA are listed in **Table 5-5** and illustrated in **Figure 5-5** to **Figure 5-8**. Note: protected and significant areas that are terrestrial and not linked to the shoreline but occur in the EPBC Protected Matters search of the EMBA have been excluded as they are not relevant with respect to hydrocarbon concentrations of floating oil, in-water hydrocarbons (entrained and dissolved oil) and shoreline accumulations

5.2.4.1 Australian marine parks and state marine parks, management areas and reserves

The operational area does not intercept any Australian Marine Parks (AMPs) or State Marine Parks, Management Areas or Reserves. The closest AMP is the Montebello AMP, located around 99 km from the operational area. AMPs are recognised under the EPBC Act for protecting and maintaining biological diversity and contributing to a national representative network of marine protected areas. Management plans for AMPs have been developed and came into force on 1 July 2018. Under these plans AMPs are allocated conservation objectives (International Union for Conservation of Nature [IUCN] Protected Area Category) based on the Australian IUCN reserve management principles in Schedule 8 of the EPBC Regulations 2000. These principles determine what activities are acceptable within a protected area under the EPBC Act. The management zones, associated with the AMPs, and the relevant objectives are detailed in **Table 5-6**.

The EMBA overlaps a number of AMPs and state marine parks, management areas and nature reserves. These areas are shown in **Figure 5-5** and **Figure 5-6** and are further discussed in **Appendix D**.

5.2.4.2 Key ecological features

Key ecological features (KEFs) which are components of the marine ecosystem that are considered to be important for biodiversity or ecosystem function and integrity of the Commonwealth Marine Area, are also included in the EPBC Act Protected Matters Database results **Appendix E**). The Ancient Coastline at 12 m depth contour KEF (the Ancient Coastline KEF) intersects the south-eastern portion of the Operational area. A number of other KEFs are present within the EMBA (**Figure 5-7**).

5.2.4.3 Heritage areas

Australia's heritage is managed by various levels of government and peak bodies that identify and list places for their heritage values. Significant heritage places are identified and grouped (by type) into lists that guide the protection and management of heritage values. No heritage areas are located within the operational areas, but several are within the EMBA. These areas are shown in **Figure 5-8** and are further discussed in **Appendix D**.

5.2.4.4 Wetlands of international or national importance

Wetlands are a critical part of our natural environment. They protect our shores from wave action, reduce the impacts of floods, absorb pollutants and improve water quality. They provide habitat for animals and plants, and many contain a wide diversity of life, supporting plants and animals that are found nowhere else. No wetlands of international importance are located within the operational area. The nationally important wetlands of Mermaid Reef and Cape Range subterranean waterways are located within the EMBA.

Table 5-5: Distance from respective operational area boundaries to protected areas within the environment that may be affected

Value/Sensitivity Name	Status, Zone or IUCN Classification	Presence in Operational Area	Presence in MEVA	Presence in EMBA	Distance to Operational Area (km)
North-West Marine Region					
Australian Marine Parks					
Montebello Marine Park (MP)	Multiple Use Zone (IUCN VI)	X	✓	✓	98
Gascoyne MP	Multiple Use Zone (IUCN VI)	X	✓	✓	325
Ningaloo MP	Recreational Use Zone (IUCN IV)	X	✓	✓	351
Argo-Rowley Terrace MP	Multiple Use Zone (IUCN VI)	X	✓	✓	158
	Special Purpose Zone (Trawl) (IUCN VI)	X	X	✓	271
Mermaid Reef MP	National Park Zone (IUCN II)	X	X	✓	358
State Marine Parks, Management Areas and Reserves					
Montebello Islands MP	Multiple Use Zone (IUCN VI)	X	✓	✓	146
Muiron Islands Marine Management Area	Unclassified (IUCN VI)	X	X	✓	332
	Conservation Area (IUCN IA)	X	X	✓	336
Ningaloo MP	Recreational Use Zone (IUCN IV)	X	X	✓	351
Rowley Shoals MP	Sanctuary Zone (IUCN IA)	X	X	✓	339
	Recreation Zone (IUCN II)	X	X	✓	271
	General Use (IUCN II)	X	X	✓	288
World and National Heritage Areas					
The Ningaloo Coast	–	X	X	✓	332
Barrow Island and the Montebello-Barrow Islands Marine Conservation Reserves	–	X	X	✓	146

Value/Sensitivity Name	Status, Zone or IUCN Classification	Presence in Operational Area	Presence in MEVA	Presence in EMBA	Distance to Operational Area (km)
Commonwealth Heritage Places					
Mermaid Reef – Rowley Shoals	–	X	X	✓	368
Ningaloo Marine Area – Commonwealth Waters	–	X	X	✓	351
Wetlands of National Importance					
Mermaid Reef	–	X	X	✓	368
Cape Range Subterranean Waterways	–	X	X	✓	388
Key Ecological Features					
Ancient coastline at 125 m depth contour	–	✓	✓	✓	0
Glomar Shoals	–	X	✓	✓	16
Continental slope demersal fish communities	–	X	✓	✓	112
Exmouth Plateau	–	X	X	✓	221
Mermaid Reef and Commonwealth waters	–	X	X	✓	262
Canyons linking the Cuvier Abyssal Plain and the Cape Range Peninsula	–	X	X	✓	305
Commonwealth waters adjacent to Ningaloo Reef	–	X	X	✓	351

Table 5-6: Management zones for the Australian and State marine parks found within the environment that may be affected and the associated objectives

Management Zones	Objective
Australian Marine Parks	
Multiple Use (IUCN VI)	The objective is to provide for ecologically sustainable use and the conservation of ecosystems, habitats and native species.
Recreational Use (IUCN IV)	The objective is to provide for the conservation of ecosystems, habitats and native species in as natural a state as possible, while providing for recreational use.
Habitat Protection Zone (IUCN IV)	The objective is to provide for the conservation of ecosystems, habitats and native species in as natural a state as possible, while allowing activities that do not harm or cause destruction to seafloor habitats.
National Park Zone (IUCN II)	The objective is to protect natural biodiversity with its underlying ecological structure and supporting environmental processes, and to promote education and recreation.
Special Purpose Zone	The objective is to protect natural ecosystems and use natural resources sustainably, when conservation and sustainable use can be mutually beneficial.
State Marine Parks	
Sanctuary Zones	The primary purpose of sanctuary zones is for the protection and conservation of marine biodiversity. Sanctuary zones are 'no-take' areas managed solely for nature conservation and low-impact recreation and tourism.
Special Purpose Zones	<i>Special purpose (benthic protection) zone:</i> This zone has the priority purpose of conservation of benthic habitat. <i>Special purpose (shore-based activities) zone:</i> Special purpose zones in marine parks are managed for a priority purpose or use, such as a seasonal event (e.g., wildlife breeding, whale watching) or a commercial activity (e.g., pearling).
Recreation Zones	Recreation zones have the primary purpose of providing opportunities for recreational activities, including fishing, for visitors and for commercial tourism operators, where these activities are compatible with the maintenance of the values of the zone.
General Use Zones	Conservation of natural values is still the priority of general use zones, but activities such as sustainable commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture, pearling and petroleum exploration and production may be permitted provided they do not compromise the ecological values of the marine park.

Oil and gas operations and associated oil spill response may be conducted in a Multiple Use Zone (IUCN VI) subject to the class approval and prescriptions in the North-West Marine Parks Network Management Plan (North-west MPNMP) (Director of National Parks, 2018). The Class Approval – Mining Operations and Greenhouse Gas Activities for the North-west MPNMP, which is applicable to petroleum-related activities, came into effect on 1 July 2018. Prescriptions/conditions of the North-west MPNMP and Class Approval for the North-west MPNMP that are considered relevant to the scope of this EP are provided in **Table 5-7**.

Table 5-7: Prescriptions/conditions from the North-West and North Marine Parks Network Management Plan 2018 relevant to the activities in this Environment Plan

Prescription/ Condition Number	Prescription/Condition	Relevant Section of EP
North-West MPNMP (Director of National Parks (DNP), 2018a)		
4.2.9.8	Notwithstanding section 4.2.9.1 (of the North-West MPNMP), actions required to respond to oil pollution incidents, including environmental monitoring and remediation, in connection with mining operations authorised under the OPGGS Act, may be conducted in all zones without an authorisation issued by the Director, provided that the actions are taken in accordance with: + an environment plan that has been accepted by NOPSEMA + the Director is notified in the event of oil pollution within a marine park, or where an oil spill response action must be taken within a marine park, so far as reasonably practicable, prior to response action being taken.	This EP (Table 6-2) (Stakeholder Consultation), reporting under Section 7 of the OPEP
Class Approval – Mining Operations and Green House Gas Activities – for North-West MPNMP (DNP, 2018)		
1	Approved action must be conducted in accordance with:	The OPEP (some proposed response activities in the event of an oil pollution incident may be undertaken within the North-West Marine Park Network)
	(a) an Environment Plan accepted under the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations (2023)	
	(b) the EPBC Act	Appendix B (Legislation)
	(c) the EPBC Regulations	This EP
	(d) the North-west Network Management Plan	This table
	(e) any prohibitions, restrictions or determinations made under the EPBC Regulations by the Director of National Parks	Not applicable
2	(f) all other applicable Commonwealth and state and territory laws (to the extent those laws are capable of operating concurrently with the laws and instruments described in paragraphs a to e)).	Appendix B (Legislation), and the OPEP
	If requested by the Director of National Parks, an Approved Person must notify the Director prior to conducting Approved Actions within Approved Zones. Note: the timeframe for prior notice will be agreed to by the Director of National Parks and the Approved Person.	Section 11.10 (Reporting) and Section 7 of the OPEP

Prescription/ Condition Number	Prescription/Condition	Relevant Section of EP
3	If requested by the Director of National Parks, an Approved Person must provide the Director with information relating to undertaking the Approved Actions (or gathered while undertaking the Approved Actions), that is relevant to the Director's management of the Approved Zones. Note: the information required, and timeframe within which it is required, will be agreed to by the Director of National Parks and the Approved Person.	Not applicable

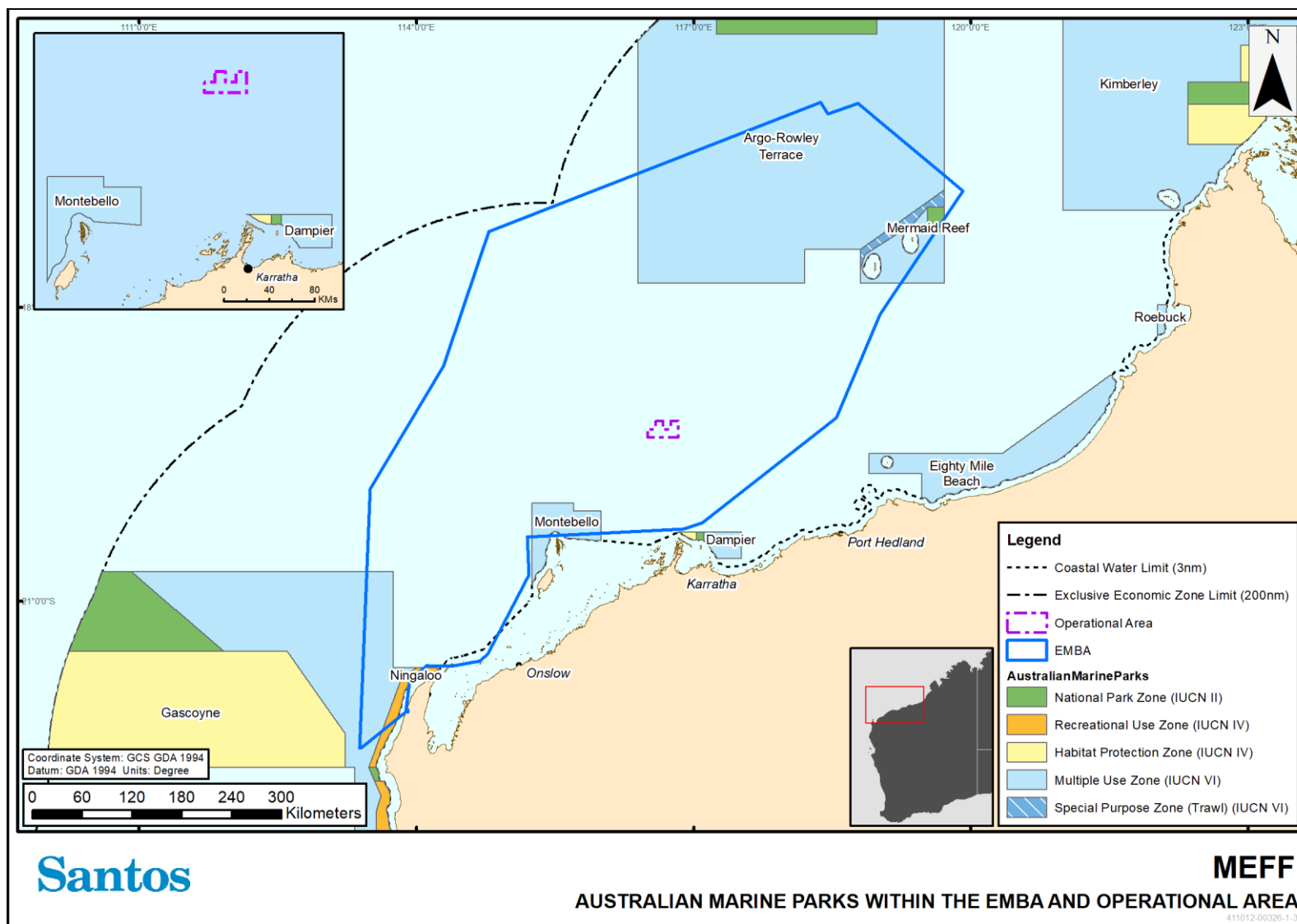


Figure 5-5: Australian marine parks within the environment that may be affected and operational area

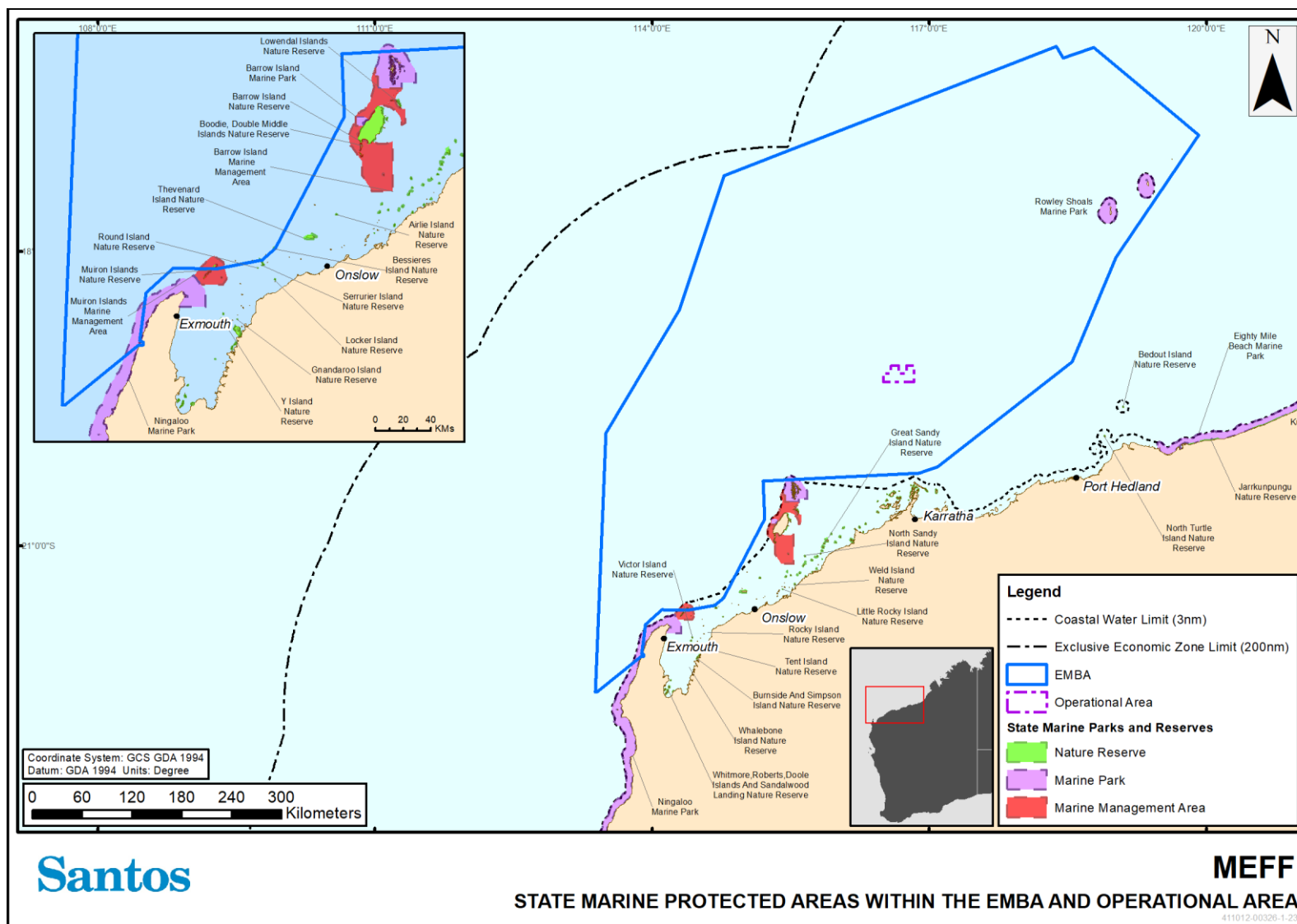


Figure 5-6: State marine protected areas within the environment that may be affected and operational area

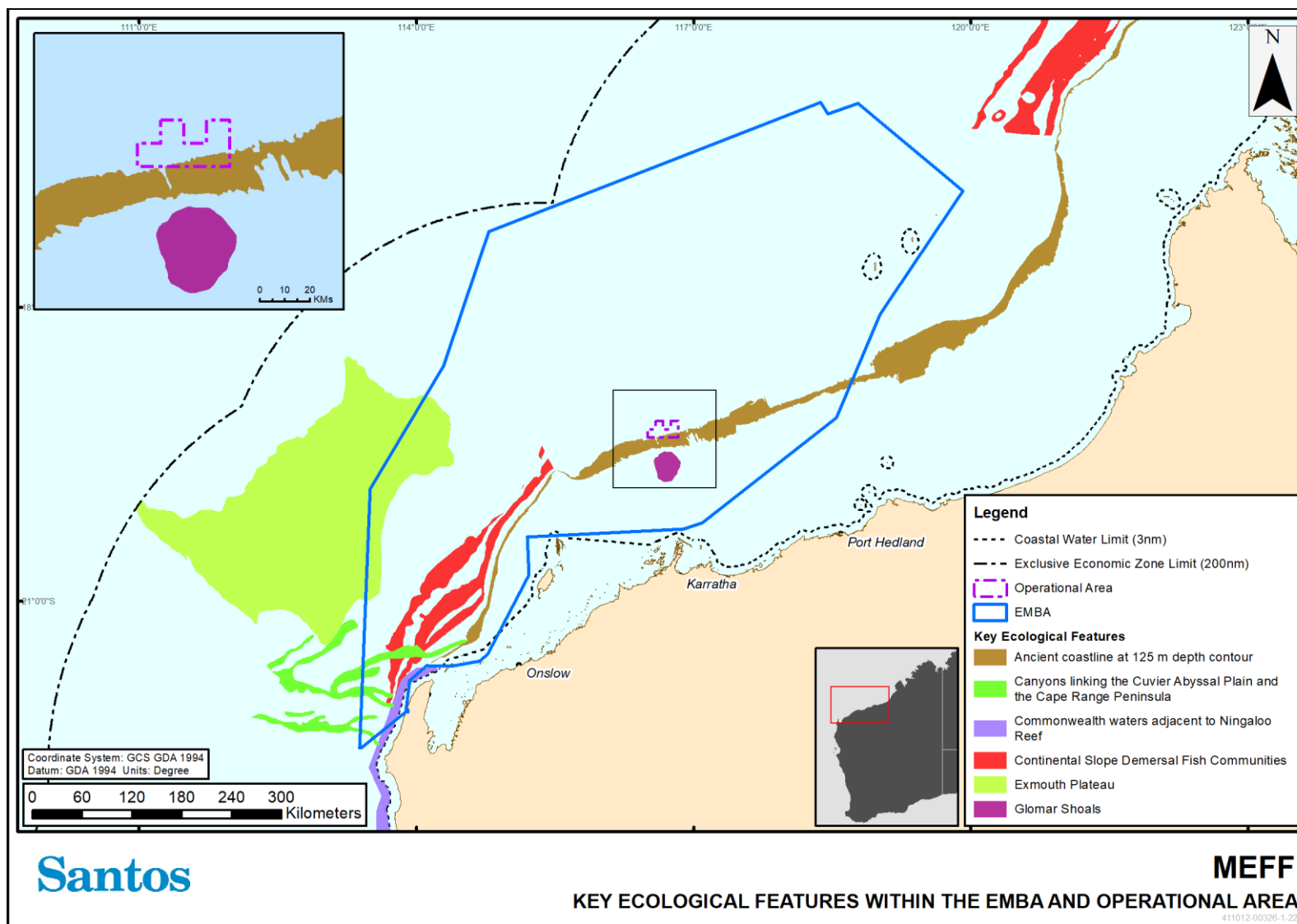


Figure 5-7: Key ecological features within and near the environment that may be affected and operational area

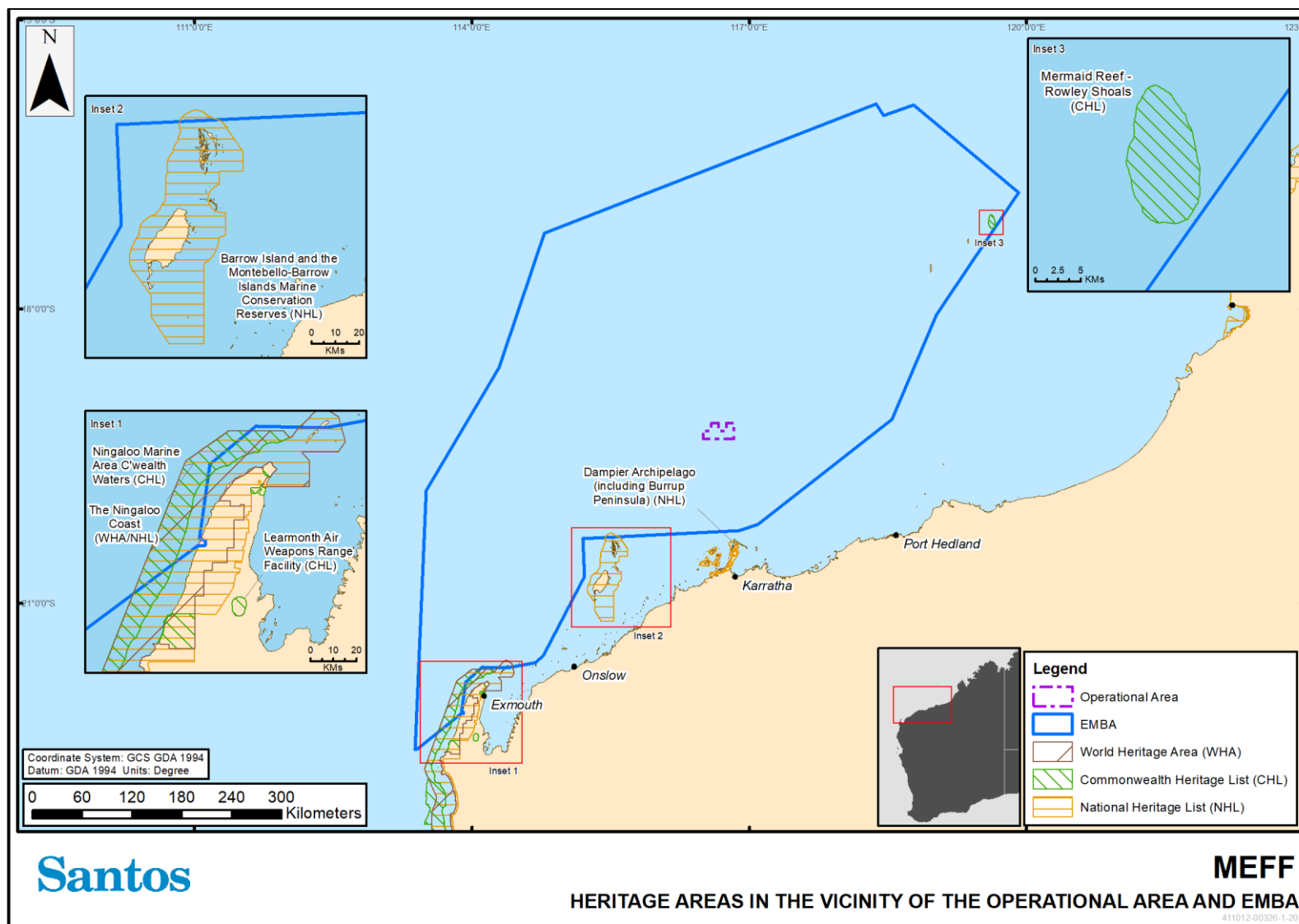


Figure 5-8: Heritage areas in the vicinity of the operational area and within the environment that may be affected

5.2.5 Threatened and migratory fauna

The Protected Matters Search Tool (Appendix E) identified 14 listed threatened species and 31 migratory species under the EPBC Act 1999 in the operational area.

In the EMBA, 34 listed threatened species and 56 migratory species were identified as potentially occurring in marine or shoreline habitats. An examination of the species profile and threats database showed that some listed threatened species are not expected to occur in significant numbers in the marine and coastal environments due to their terrestrial distributions. Species that may occur on shorelines include shorebirds, but terrestrial mammals, reptiles (such as pythons) and bird species that do not have habitats along shorelines have been excluded. These species will not come into contact with any potential oil spill and therefore are not discussed further.

Those listed as threatened species groups or vulnerable species groups and that have been identified as potentially being present in the operational area, MEVA or the EMBA and the relevant planned and unplanned events that may impact them are discussed in **Table 5-8**.

Appendix D provides a comprehensive description of species that may be present within the EMBA.

Table 5-8: Environmental values and sensitivities within the environment that may be affected and operational area – threatened and migratory marine fauna

Value/sensitivity		EPBC Act Status	Operational Area		MEVA		EMBA		Relevant events
Common name	Scientific name		Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	
Protected Species and Communities: Fish and Sharks									
Narrow sawfish, knifetooth sawfish	<i>Anoxypristis cuspidata</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	<u>Planned</u> Light emissions Noise emissions <u>Planned</u> operational discharges <u>Planned</u> chemical and hydrocarbon discharges Spill response operations <u>Unplanned</u> Hydrocarbon releases/spills Interaction with marine fauna Introduction of invasive marine species (IMS)
Grey nurse shark (west coast population)	<i>Carcharias taurus</i> (west coast population)	Vulnerable	✗	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	
Oceanic whitetip shark	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	
White shark, great white shark	<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>	Vulnerable, Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	
Dwarf sawfish, Queensland sawfish	<i>Pristis clavata</i>	Vulnerable, Migratory	✗	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	

Value/sensitivity		EPBC Act Status	Operational Area		MEVA		EMBA		Relevant events
Common name	Scientific name		Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	
Green sawfish, Dindagubba, narrow snout sawfish	<i>Pristis zijsron</i>	Vulnerable, Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	
Whale shark	<i>Rhincodon typus</i>	Vulnerable, Migratory	✓	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur in area	✓	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur in area	✓	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur in area	
Shortfin mako, mako shark	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	
Longfin mako shark	<i>Isurus paucus</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	
Reef manta ray, coastal manta ray	<i>Manta alfredi</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	

Value/sensitivity		EPBC Act Status	Operational Area		MEVA		EMBA		Relevant events
Common name	Scientific name		Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	
Giant manta ray, chevron manta ray, Pacific manta ray	<i>Manta birostris</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	
Protected Species and Communities: Marine Mammals									
Sei whale	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>	Vulnerable, Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	<u>Planned</u> Noise emissions Planned operational discharges Planned hydrocarbon and chemical discharges Spill response operations <u>Unplanned</u> Hydrocarbon releases/spills Marine fauna interaction
Fin whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>	Vulnerable, Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	
Blue whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>	Endangered, Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Migration route known to occur in area	✓	Migration route known to occur in area	
Humpback whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	

Value/sensitivity		EPBC Act Status	Operational Area		MEVA		EMBA		Relevant events
Common name	Scientific name		Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	
Antarctic minke whale, dark-shoulder minke whale	<i>Balaenoptera bonaerensis</i>	Migratory	✗	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	
Bryde's whale	<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area.	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	
Sperm whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	
Dugong	<i>Dugong dugon</i>	Migratory	✗	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	
Killer whale, orca	<i>Orcinus orca</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	
Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin	<i>Sousa chinensis</i>	Migratory	✗	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	

Value/sensitivity		EPBC Act Status	Operational Area		MEVA		EMBA		Relevant events
Common name	Scientific name		Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	
Spotted bottlenose dolphin	<i>Tursiops aduncus</i> (Arafura/Timor Sea populations)	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	
Australian snubfin/snubnose dolphin	<i>Orcaella heinsohni</i>	Migratory	✗	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	
Southern Right Whale	<i>Eubalaena australis</i>	Migratory	✗	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	
Protected Species and Communities: Marine Reptiles									
Short-nosed seasnake	<i>Aipysurus apraefrontalis</i>	Critically Endangered	✗	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	Planned Light emissions Noise emissions Planned operational discharges Planned hydrocarbon
Leaf-scaled seasnake	<i>Aipysurus foliosquama</i>	Critically Endangered	✗	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	

Value/sensitivity		EPBC Act Status	Operational Area		MEVA		EMBA		Relevant events
Common name	Scientific name		Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	
Loggerhead turtle	<i>Caretta</i>	Endangered, Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur in area	✓	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur in area	and chemical discharges Spill response operations <u>Unplanned</u> Hydrocarbon releases/spills Marine fauna interactions Introduction of IMS
Green turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	Vulnerable, Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	
Leatherback turtle	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	Endangered, Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	
Hawksbill turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	Vulnerable, Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	
Flatback turtle	<i>Natator depressus</i>	Vulnerable, Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	

Value/sensitivity		EPBC Act Status	Operational Area		MEVA		EMBA		Relevant events
Common name	Scientific name		Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	
Protected Species and Communities: Marine Birds									
Red knot, knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Endangered, Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	<u>Planned</u> Light emissions Planned operational discharges <u>Unplanned</u> Spill response operations Hydrocarbon releases/spills
Eastern curlew, far eastern curlew	<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	Critically Endangered, Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	
Common noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	
Streaked shearwater	<i>Calonectris leucomelas</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	
Lesser frigatebird	<i>Fregata ariel</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	

Value/sensitivity		EPBC Act Status	Operational Area		MEVA		EMBA		Relevant events
Common name	Scientific name		Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	
Great frigatebird	<i>Fregata minor</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	
Common sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	
Sharp-tailed sandpiper	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	
Pectoral sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	Migratory	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	
Curlew sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Critically Endangered, Migratory	✗	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	

Value/sensitivity		EPBC Act Status	Operational Area		MEVA		EMBA		Relevant events
Common name	Scientific name		Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	
Greater sand plover, large sand plover	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	Vulnerable, Migratory	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	
Northern Siberian bar-tailed godwit, bar-tailed godwit (menzbieri)	<i>Limosa lapponica menzbieri</i>	Critically Endangered	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	
Southern giant-petrel, southern giant petrel	<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	Endangered, Migratory	X	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	
Abbott's booby	<i>Papasula abbotti</i>	Endangered	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	
Night parrot	<i>Pezoporus occidentalis</i>	Endangered	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	
Soft-plumaged petrel	<i>Pterodroma mollis</i>	Vulnerable	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur in area	

Value/sensitivity		EPBC Act Status	Operational Area		MEVA		EMBA		Relevant events
Common name	Scientific name		Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	
Australian painted snipe	<i>Rostratula australis</i>	Endangered	X	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	
Australian fairy tern	<i>Sternula nereis</i>	Vulnerable	X	N/A	✓	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur in area	✓	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur in area	
Campbell albatross	<i>Thalassarache impavida</i>	Vulnerable, Migratory	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	
Fork-tailed swift	<i>Apus pacificus</i>	Migratory	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	
Flesh-footed shearwater	<i>Ardenna carneipes</i>	Migratory	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur in area	
Wedge-tailed shearwater	<i>Ardenna pacifica</i>	Migratory	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	

Value/sensitivity		EPBC Act Status	Operational Area		MEVA		EMBA		Relevant events
Common name	Scientific name		Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	
White-tailed tropicbird	<i>Phaethon lepturus</i>	Migratory	X	N/A	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	
Red-tailed tropicbird	<i>Phaethon rubricauda</i>	Migratory	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	
Roseate tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	Migratory	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Breeding likely to occur in area	
Little tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	Migratory	X	N/A	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	
Oriental plover	<i>Charadrius veredus</i>	Migratory	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	
Oriental pratincole	<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>	Migratory	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	
Bar-tailed godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	Migratory	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat known to occur in area	

Value/sensitivity		EPBC Act Status	Operational Area		MEVA		EMBA		Relevant events
Common name	Scientific name		Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	Presence	Type of Presence	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Migratory	X	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat may occur in area	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	
Greater crested tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	Migratory	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Breeding known to occur in area	
Common greenshank, greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Migratory	X	N/A	X	N/A	✓	Species or species habitat likely to occur in area	

5.2.5.1 Biologically important areas and critical habitat

Biologically important areas (BIAs) such as an aggregation, breeding, resting, nesting or feeding area, or known migratory routes for these species within the operational area and EMBA, are shown in **Figure 5-9** to **Figure 5-16** and are also described in **Table 5-9**.

DCCEEW may make recovery plans for threatened fauna listed under the EPBC Act. The Act requires that 'habitat critical to the survival of the listed threatened species' is identified in recovery plans. Critical habitat within the EMBA has only been identified for marine reptiles as listed in **Table 5-9**.

Table 5-9: Biologically important areas identified in the operational area and environment that may be affected

Fauna group	Species	BIA Type	Presence in Operational Area	Presence in MEVA	Presence in EMBA	Habitat critical within EMBA
Sharks and Rays	Whale shark	Foraging	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Marine Mammals	Dugong	Breeding	X	X	✓	N/A
		Calving	X	X	✓	N/A
		Nursing	X	X	✓	N/A
		Foraging	X	X	✓	N/A
	Humpback whale	Migration	X	✓	✓	N/A
	Pygmy blue whale	Migration	X	✓	✓	N/A
		Distribution	✓	✓	✓	N/A
		Foraging	X	X	✓	N/A
	Southern Right Whale	Migration	X	X	✓	N/A
		Breeding	X	X	✓	N/A
Marine Reptiles	Flatback turtle	Foraging	X	X	✓	Barrow Island, Montebello Islands; 60 km internesting buffer Dampier Archipelago, including 60 km Internesting buffer
		Aggregation	X	X	✓	
		Mating	X	X	✓	
		Migration	X	X	✓	
		Nesting/ internesting	X	✓	✓	
	Green turtle	Foraging	X	✓	✓	Montebello Islands and Ningaloo coast; 20 km internesting buffer
		Nesting/ internesting	X	✓	✓	
		Mating	X	X	✓	
		Basking	X	X	X	
		Migration	X	X	X	

Fauna group	Species	BIA Type	Presence in Operational Area	Presence in MEVA	Presence in EMBA	Habitat critical within EMBA
		Aggregation	X	X	X	
	Hawksbill turtle	Foraging	X	X	X	Montebello Islands, Lowendal Islands, Ningaloo Coast and Dampier Archipelago, 20 km internesting buffer
		Nesting/ internesting	X	✓	✓	
		Mating	X	X	X	
		Migration	X	X	X	
	Loggerhead turtle	Foraging	X	X	✓	Ningaloo coast, 20 km internesting buffer
		Nesting/ internesting	X	X	✓	
	Lesser crested tern	Breeding	X	X	✓	N/A
	Fairy tern	Breeding	X	X	✓	N/A
	Lesser frigatebird	Breeding	X	X	✓	N/A
	Little tern	Resting	X	X	✓	N/A
	Roseate tern	Breeding	X	✓	✓	N/A
	Wedge-tailed shearwater	Breeding	X	✓	✓	N/A
	White-tailed tropicbird	Breeding	X	X	✓	N/A

Relevant conservation advices, recovery plans and management plans for marine fauna identified in the PMST are provided in **Table 5-10**.

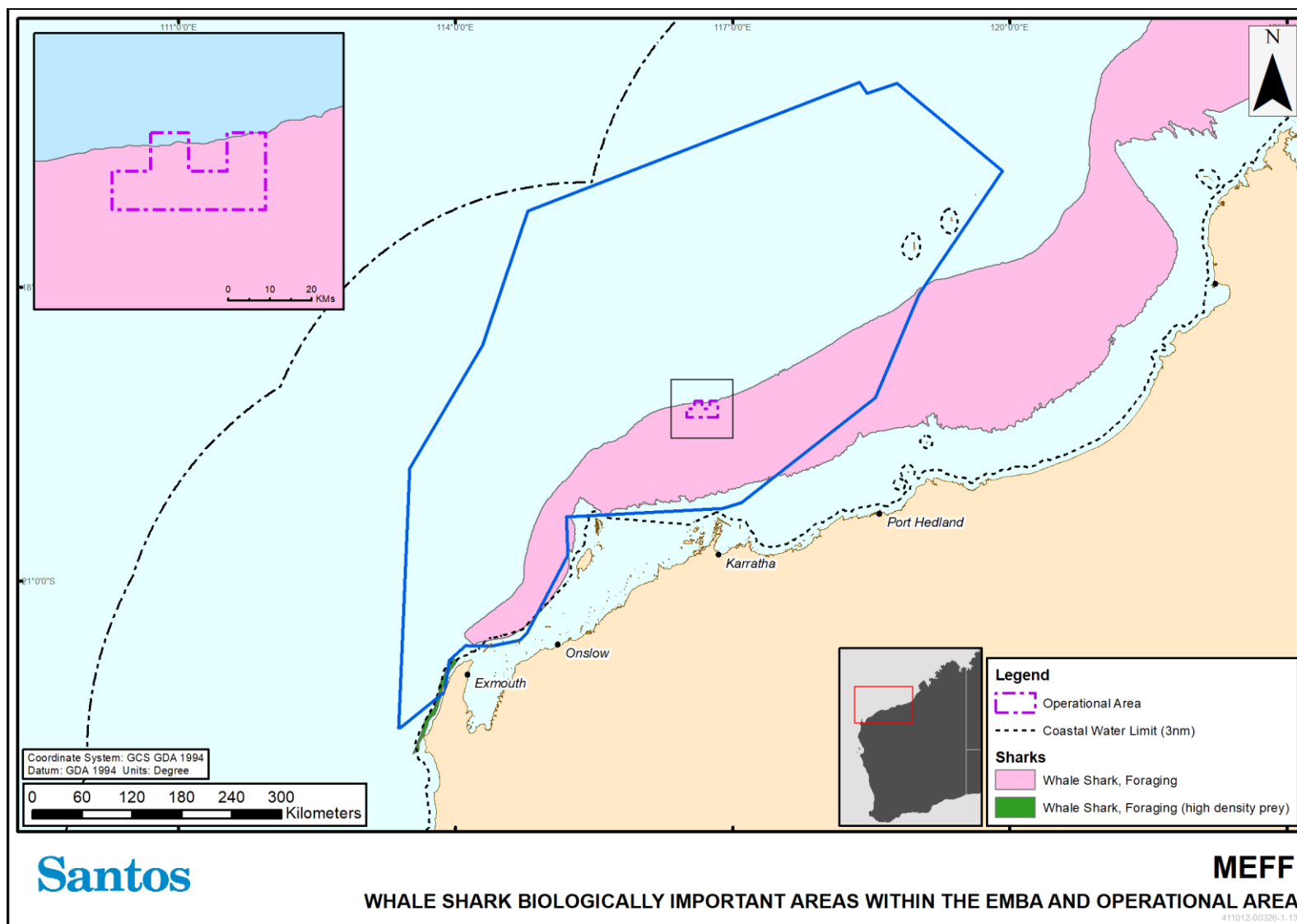


Figure 5-9: Biologically important areas for protected whale sharks within the vicinity of the environment that may be affected and operational area

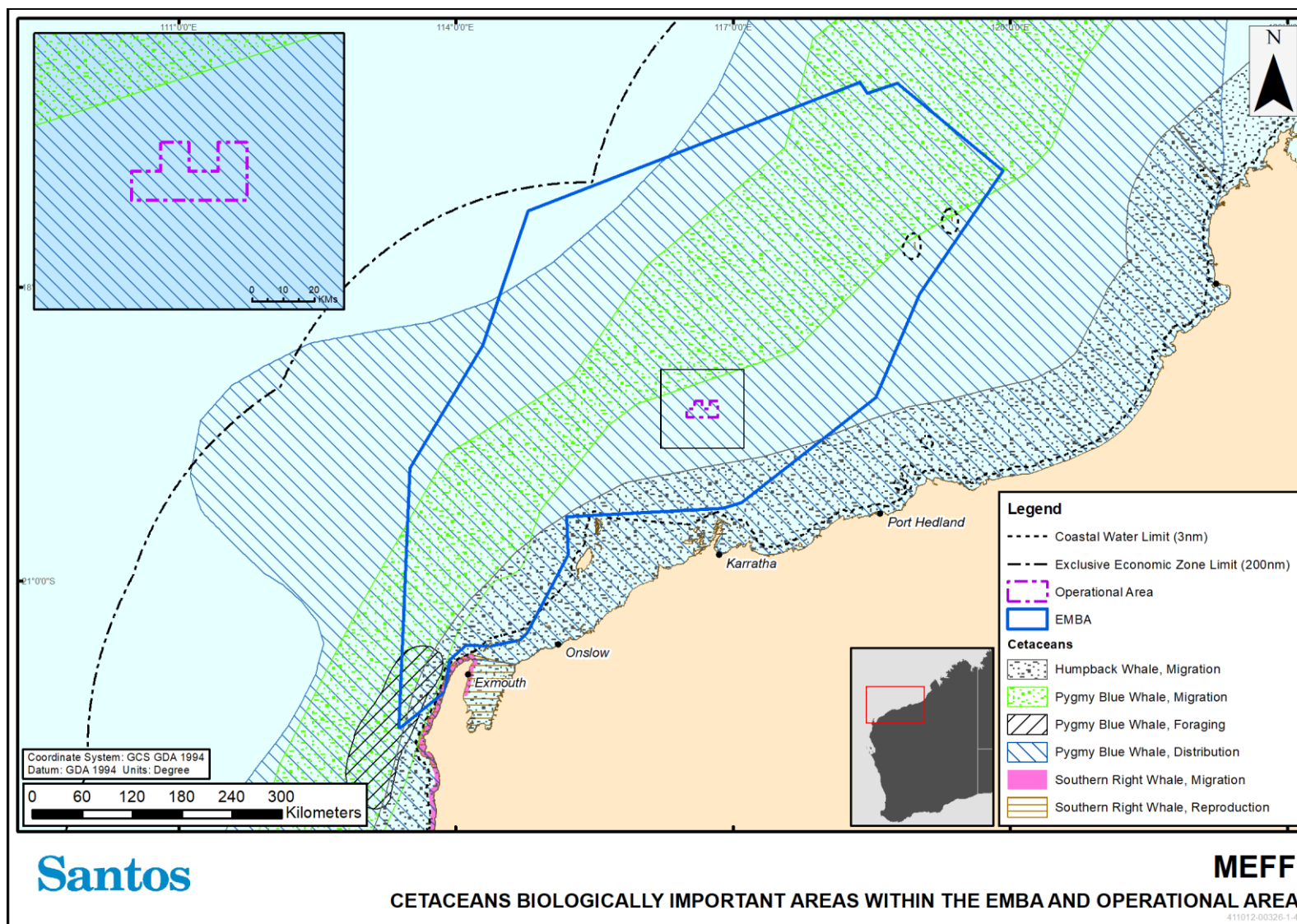


Figure 5-10: Biologically important areas for protected cetaceans within the vicinity of the environment that may be affected and operational area

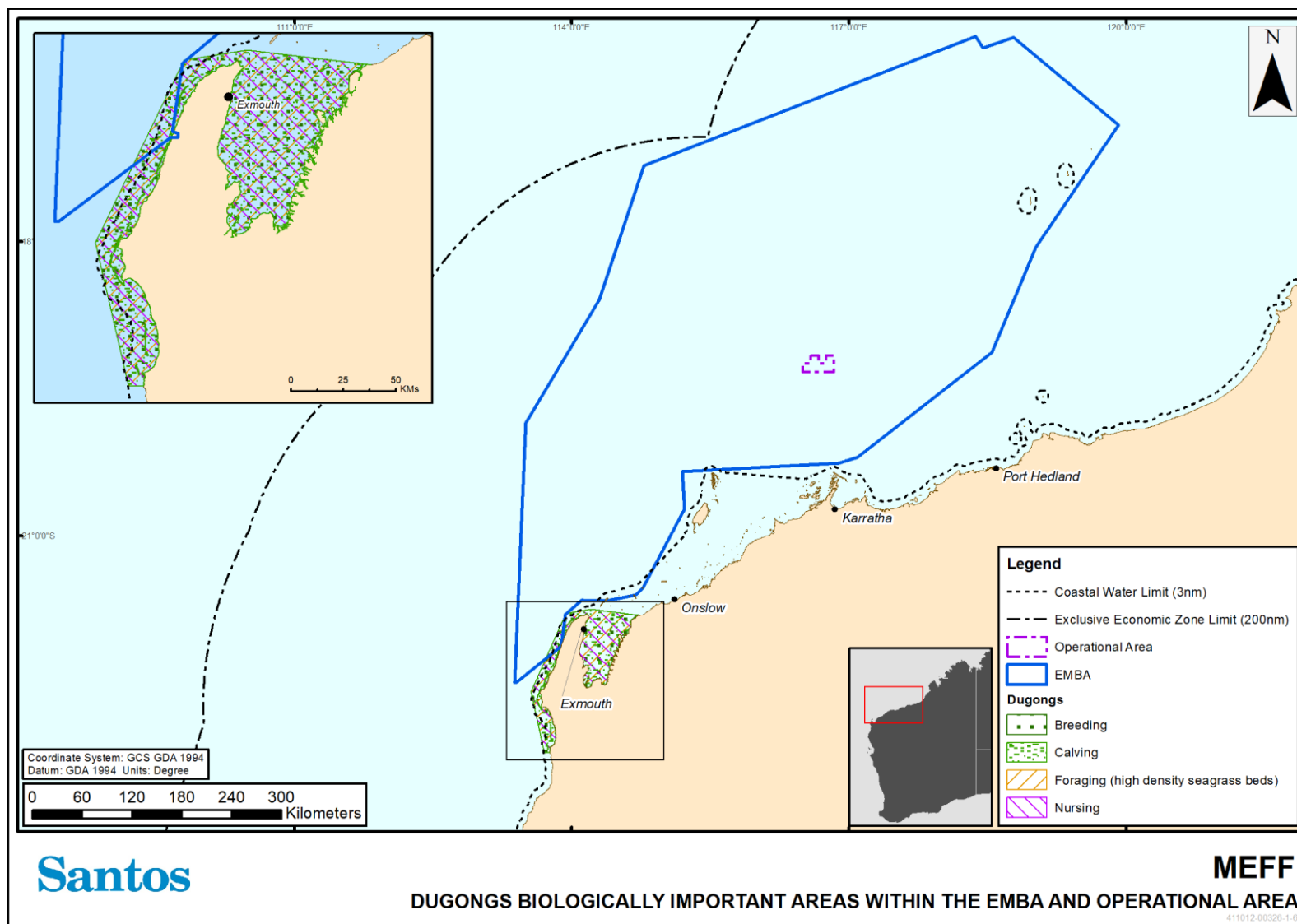


Figure 5-11: Biologically important areas for dugong within the vicinity of the environment that may be affected and operational area

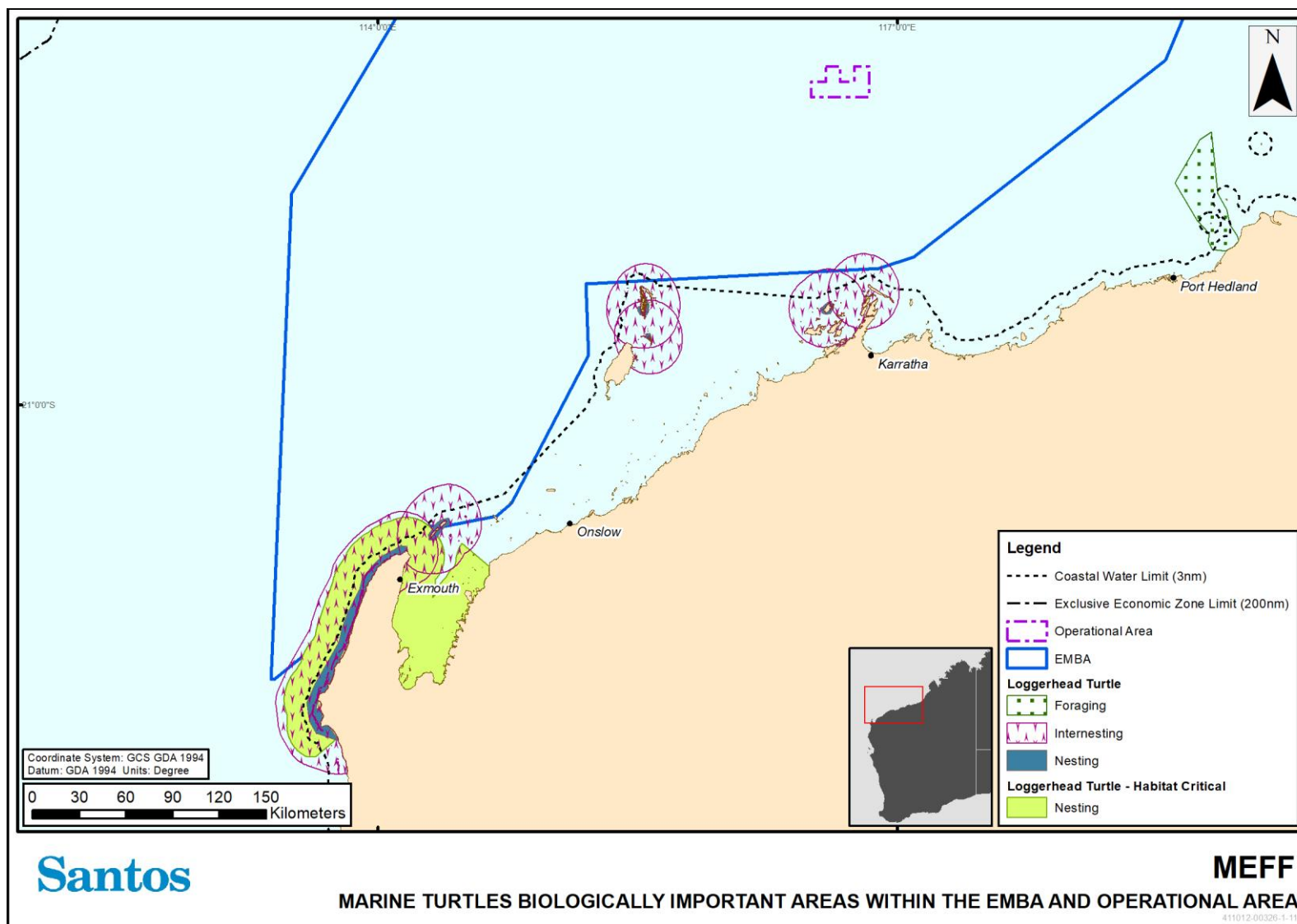


Figure 5-12: Biologically important areas for loggerhead turtles within the vicinity of the environment that may be affected and operational area

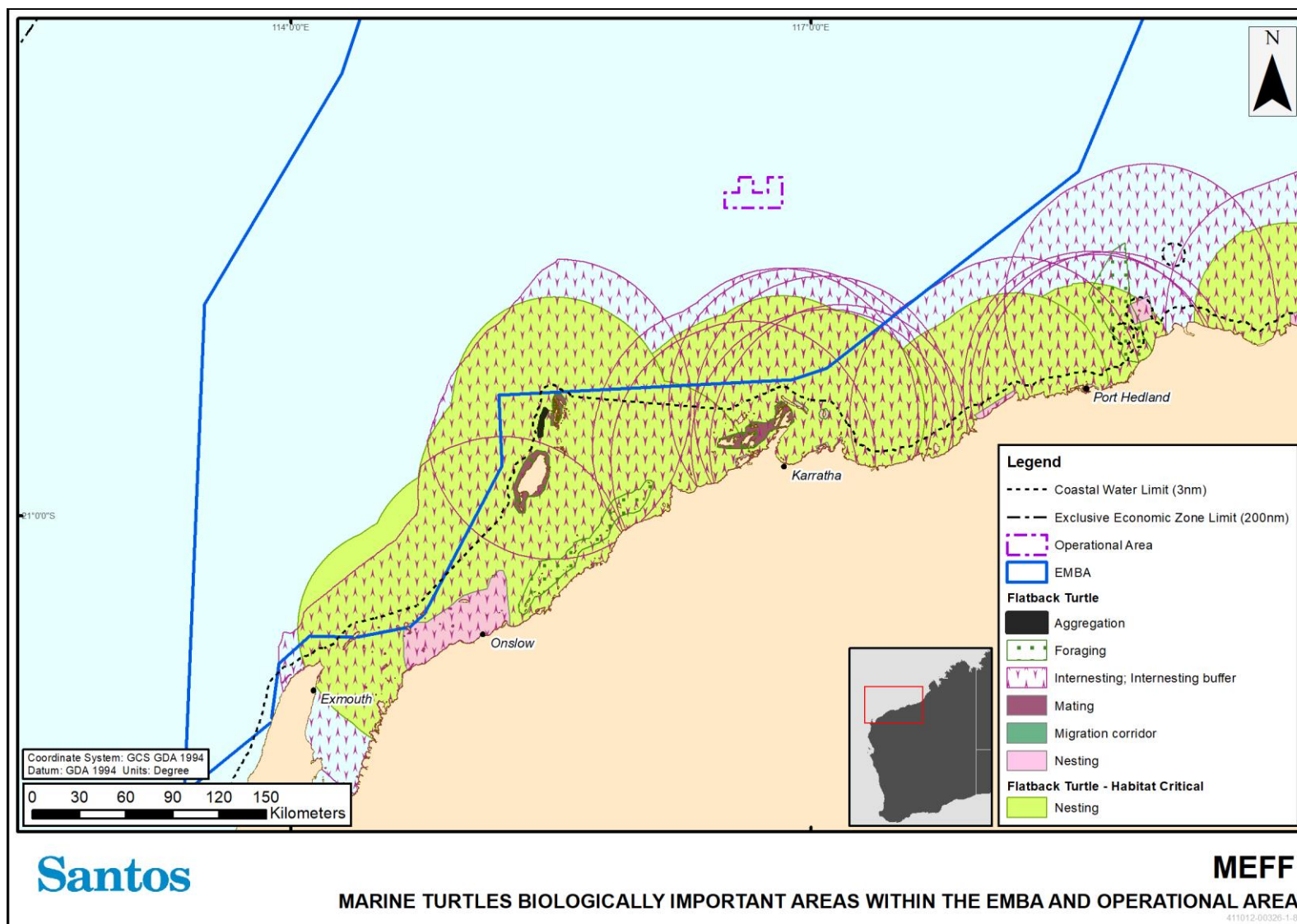


Figure 5-13: Biologically important areas for flatback turtles within the vicinity of the environment that may be affected and operational area

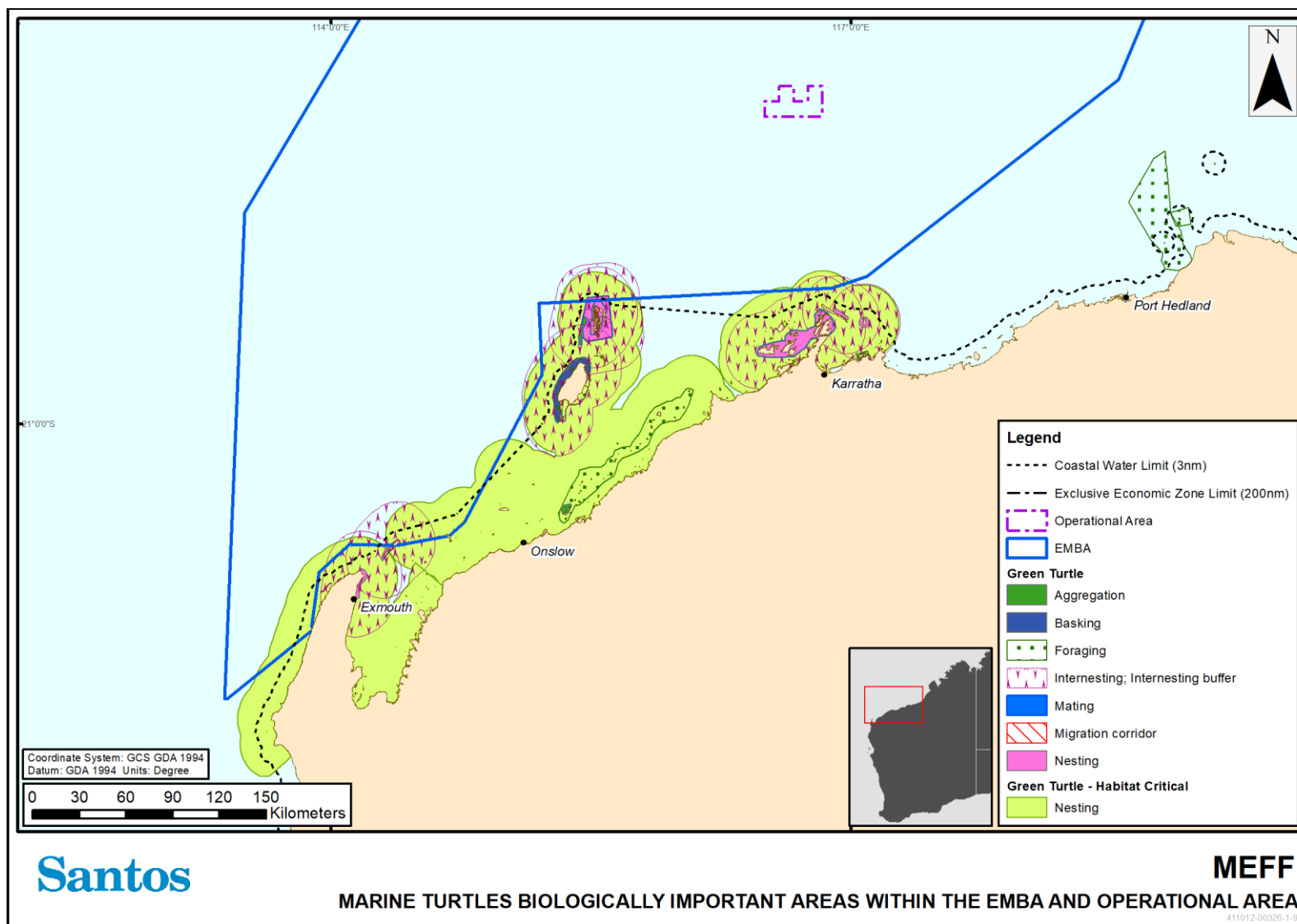


Figure 5-14: Biologically important areas for green turtles within the vicinity of the environment that may be affected and operational area

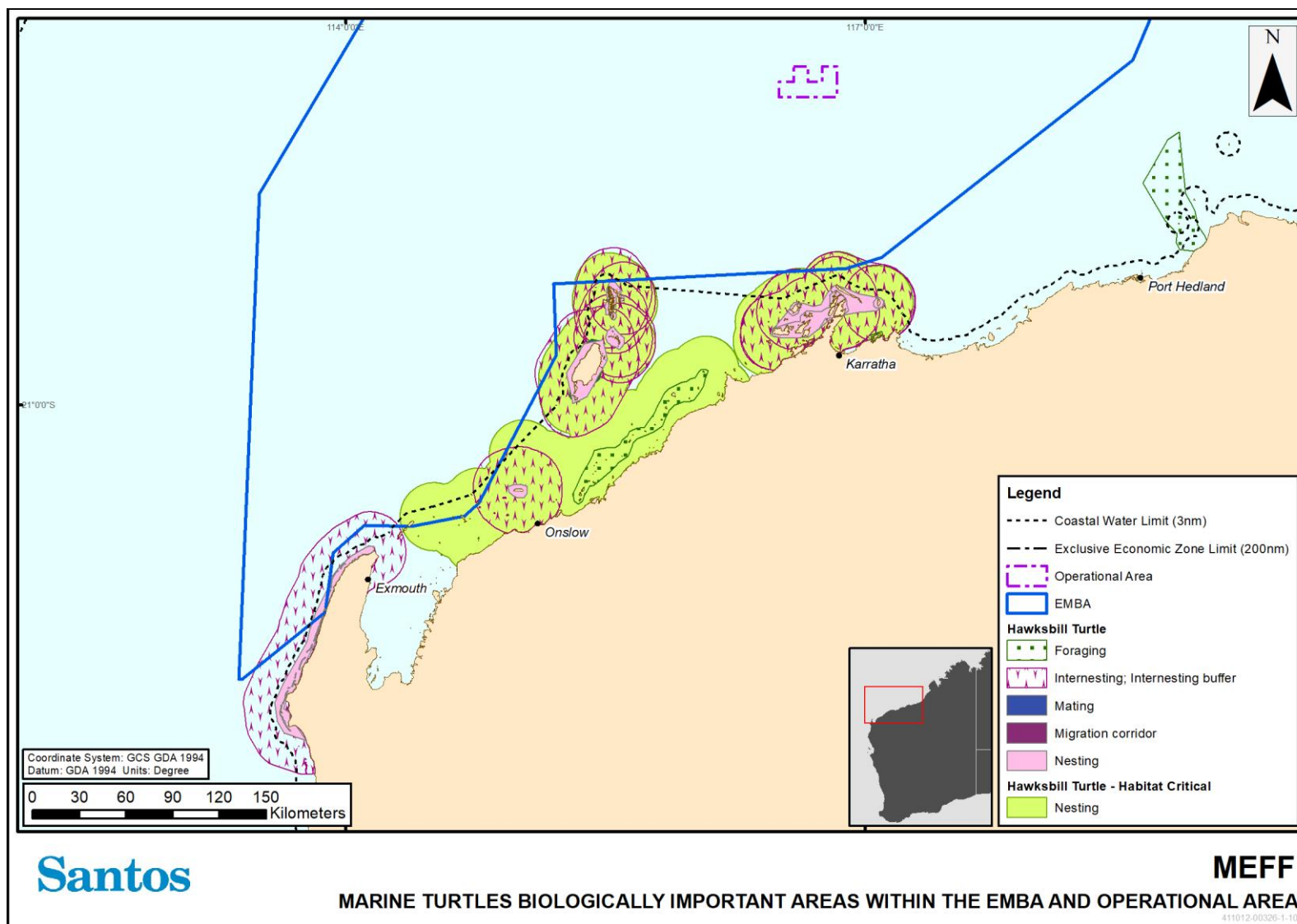


Figure 5-15: Biologically important areas for hawksbill turtles within the vicinity of the environment that may be affected and operational area

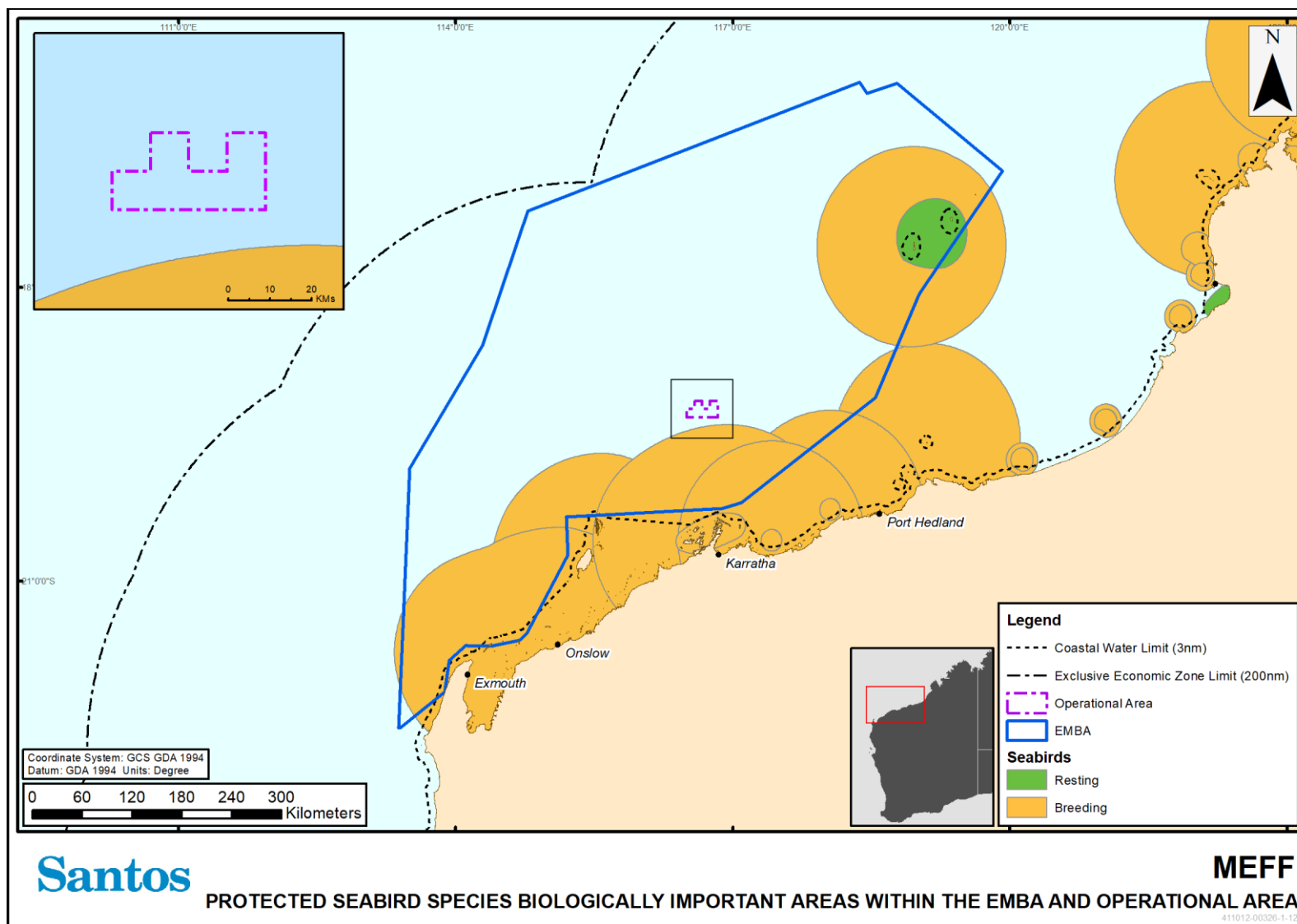


Figure 5-16: Biologically important areas for seabirds within the vicinity of the environment that may be affected and operational area

5.2.5.2 Recovery plans

Recovery plans set out the research and management actions necessary to stop the decline of and support the recovery of listed threatened species. **Table 5-10** summarises the actions relevant to the activity, with more information about the specific requirements of the relevant plans of management (including Conservation Advice and Conservation Management Plans) that would be applicable to the activity and demonstrates where current management requirements have been considered.

Table 5-10: Relevant threats identified in recovery plans, conservation advice and management plans for species that occur or may occur within the operational area and environment that may be affected

Fauna type		Recovery plan / conservation advice / management plan	Threats / strategies identified as relevant to the activity	Addressed (where relevant) in EP section
All	All vertebrate fauna	Threat Abatement Plan for Impacts of Marine Debris on Vertebrate wildlife of Australia's coasts and oceans (Department of Environment and Energy (DoEE), 2018)	Marine debris	8.8
Fish and Sharks	Dwarf sawfish	Sawfish and River Sharks Multispecies Recovery Plan (DoE, 2015a)	Habitat degradation and modification	9.6, 9.7
	Green sawfish	Commonwealth Conservation Advice on <i>Pristis zijsron</i> (green sawfish) (DEWHA, 2008)	Habitat degradation and modification	9.6, 9.7
		Sawfish and River Sharks Multispecies Recovery Plan (DoE, 2015a)		
	Narrow sawfish	Sawfish and River Sharks Multispecies Recovery Plan (DoE, 2015a)	Habitat degradation and modification	9.6, 9.7
	Great white shark	Recovery plan for the White Shark (<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>) (DSEWPaC, 2013a)	Ecosystem effects as a result of habitat modification and climate change	9.6, 9.7
	Grey nurse shark	Recovery Plan for the Grey Nurse Shark (<i>Carcharias taurus</i>) (DoE, 2014)	Pollution and disease	9.6, 9.7
			Ecosystem effects – habitat modification and climate change	9.6, 9.7
	Whale shark	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Rhincodon typus</i> (whale shark) (TSSC, 2015a)	Boat strike from large vessels	9.3
			Habitat disruption from mineral exploration, production and transportation	9.6, 9.7

Fauna type		Recovery plan / conservation advice / management plan	Threats / strategies identified as relevant to the activity	Addressed (where relevant) in EP section
Marine mammals	Blue whale	Blue Whale Conservation Management Plan 2015–2025 (DoE, 2015b)	Noise interference	8.4
			Habitat modification	9.6, 9.7
			Vessel disturbance	9.3
	Southern right whale	Conservation Management Plan for the Southern Right Whale 2011–2021 (DSEWPaC, 2012)	Vessel disturbance	9.3
			Habitat modification	9.6, 9.7
			Noise interference	8.4
			Entanglement (marine debris)	9.3
		National Recovery Plan for the Southern Right Whale (DCCEEW, 2024)	Anthropogenic climate change and climate variability	8.5
			Marine Debris	9.1
			Anthropogenic underwater noise including Vessel noise	8.4
			Collision / Vessel strike	9.3
			Pollution	8.6, 9.4, 9.6 to 9.8
	Fin whale	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Balaenoptera physalus</i> (fin whale) (TSSC, 2015b)	Habitat degradation including pollution (increasing port expansion and coastal development)	9.6, 9.7
			Pollution (persistent toxic pollutants)	9.6, 9.7
			Noise interference	8.4
			Vessel strike	9.3
	Sei whale	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Balaenoptera borealis</i> (sei whale) (TSSC, 2015c)	Habitat degradation including pollution (increasing port expansion and coastal development)	9.6, 9.7
			Pollution (persistent toxic pollutants)	9.6, 9.7

Fauna type		Recovery plan / conservation advice / management plan	Threats / strategies identified as relevant to the activity	Addressed (where relevant) in EP section
			Vessel strike	9.3
Reptiles	Short-nosed sea snake	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Aipysurus apraefrontalis</i> (Short-nosed Sea Snake) (TSSC, 2011a)	Habitat degradation	9.6, 9.7
	All marine turtle	National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife Including Marine Turtles, Seabirds and Migratory Shorebirds (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020)	Light pollution	8.3
	Loggerhead turtle	Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia 2017–2027 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017)	Deteriorating water quality	9.4, 9.6, 9.7
			Marine debris	8.8
			Loss of habitat	9.6, 9.7
			Vessel disturbance	9.3
			Light pollution	8.3
	Green turtle	Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia 2017–2027 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017)	Deteriorating water quality	9.4, 9.6, 9.7
			Marine debris	8.8, 9.1
			Vessel disturbance	9.6, 9.7
			Light pollution	8.3
	Leatherback turtle	Commonwealth Conservation Advice on <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i> (2008)	Boat strike	9.3
			Changes to breeding sites	9.6, 9.7
		Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia 2017–2027 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017)	Deteriorating water quality	9.4, 9.6, 9.7
			Marine debris	8.8
			Loss of habitat	9.6, 9.7
			Vessel disturbance	9.3
			Light pollution	8.3

Fauna type		Recovery plan / conservation advice / management plan	Threats / strategies identified as relevant to the activity	Addressed (where relevant) in EP section
	Hawksbill turtle	Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia 2017–2027 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017)	Deteriorating water quality	9.4, 9.6, 9.7
			Marine debris	8.8
			Loss of habitat	9.6, 9.7
			Vessel disturbance	9.3
			Light pollution	8.3
	Flatback turtle	Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia 2017–2027 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017)	Deteriorating water quality	9.4, 9.6, 9.7
			Marine debris	8.89.1
			Loss of habitat	9.6, 9.7
			Noise interference	8.4
			Vessel disturbance	9.3
			Light pollution	8.3
	Olive Ridley turtle	Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia 2017–2027 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017)	Deteriorating water quality	9.4, 9.6, 9.7
			Marine debris	8.8
			Loss of habitat	9.6, 9.7
			Vessel disturbance	9.3
			Light pollution	8.3

Fauna type		Recovery plan / conservation advice / management plan	Threats / strategies identified as relevant to the activity	Addressed (where relevant) in EP section
Birds	All seabirds and shorebirds	National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife Including Marine Turtles, Seabirds and Migratory Shorebirds (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020)	Light pollution	8.3
	All seabirds	Wildlife Conservation Plan for Seabirds (Commonwealth of Australia 2022)	Light pollution	8.3
			Habitat loss and degradation from pollution	9.6, 9.7
	Australian fairy tern	Commonwealth Conservation Advice on <i>Sternula nereis</i> (Fairy Tern) (DSEWPaC 2011b)	Oil spills, particularly in Victoria	9.6, 9.7
	Curlew sandpiper	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Calidris ferruginea</i> (Curlew Sandpiper) (DoE 2015d)	Habitat loss and degradation from pollution	9.6, 9.7
	Eastern curlew	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Numenius madagascariensis</i> (Eastern Curlew) (DoE, 2015c)	Habitat loss and degradation from pollution	9.6, 9.7
	Red knot	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Calidris canutus</i> (Red knot) (TSSC, 2016a)	Pollution/contamination impacts	9.6, 9.7
			Habitat loss and degradation	9.6, 9.7
	Southern giant petrel	National Recovery Plan for Threatened Albatrosses and Giant Petrels 2011–2016 (DSEWPaC, 2011c)	Marine pollution	9.6, 9.7
	Northern Siberian bar-tailed godwit	Conservation Advice <i>Limosa lapponica menzbieri</i> (Bar-tailed godwit (northern Siberian)) (TSSC, 2016b)	Habitat loss disturbance and modifications	9.6, 9.7
	Australian painted snipe	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Rostratula australis</i> (Australian Painted Snipe) (DSEWPaC, 2013b)	Habitat loss disturbance and modifications	9.6, 9.7

5.2.6 Socio-economic receptors

The operational area is located around 160 km north of Dampier. Socio-economic activities that may occur in the operational area include commercial fishing, oil and gas exploration and production, and, to a lesser extent, recreational fishing and tourism, as summarised in **Table 5-11**.

Table 5-11: Socio-economic activities that may occur in the operational areas

Value/ Sensitivity	Description	Operational Area Presence	Relevant Events Within Operational Area	Relevant Events Within EMBA
Commercial fisheries – Commonwealth (Figure 5-17)	Three Commonwealth fisheries overlap the operational area (Section 5.2.6.1): + Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery + Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery + Western Skipjack Tuna Fishery. Although the fishery management zones overlap the operational area, activity within or near the operational area is not expected: + Since 2005, there has been fewer than five vessels active in the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery, down from 50 active vessels in 2000 (ABARES Fishery Status Reports, 2023). + The Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery is only active in waters offshore of south and south eastern Australia, confirmed in consultation with the Australia Southern Bluefin Tuna Association in consultation for previous Santos offshore activities (ABARES Fishery Status Reports, 2023). There has been no fishing effort in the Skipjack Tuna Fishery since the 2009 season, during which activity concentrated off South Australia (ABARES Fishery Status Reports, 2023).	✓	<u>Planned</u> Interaction with other users (Section 8.1)	<u>Unplanned</u> MDO spill from vessel collision and hydrocarbon release LOWC (Sections 9.6 and 9.7)

Value/ Sensitivity	Description	Operational Area Presence	Relevant Events Within Operational Area	Relevant Events Within EMBA
Commercial fisheries – State (Figure 5-18 and Figure 5-19)	State fisheries that overlap the operational area are (Section 5.2.6.1): + Pilbara Trawl and Trap Managed Fisheries + Pilbara Line Managed Fishery + Pilbara Crab Managed Fishery + Mackerel Managed Fishery Area 2 + Onslow Prawn Limited Entry Fishery + South-West Coast Salmon Fishery + Nickol Bay Prawn Limited Fishery + Abalone Fishery + Marine Aquarium Managed Fishery + Specimen Shell Managed Fishery + West Coast Deep Sea Crustacean Managed Fishery. A number of these fisheries are open within the operational area and EMBA; however, they are not active in these areas.	✓	Planned Interaction with other users (Section 8.1)	<u>Unplanned</u> (MDO spill from vessel collision and hydrocarbon release LOWC (Sections 9.6 and 9.7)
Oil and gas (Figure 5-20)	Various petroleum exploration and production activities have been undertaken within the NWS; however, there are none in the vicinity of the operational area. The nearest operating facility to the operational areas is Woodside's Angel oil field and associated equipment, located around 25 km south of the operational area. Vessels servicing oil and gas operations in the region may pass through the area enroute to facilities. However, since vessel transit is not classed as a petroleum activity, potential	-	Planned Interaction with other users (Section 8.1)	<u>Unplanned</u> MDO spill from vessel collision and hydrocarbon release LOWC (Sections 9.6 and 9.7)

Value/ Sensitivity	Description	Operational Area Presence	Relevant Events Within Operational Area	Relevant Events Within EMBA
	impacts to vessels are discussed under 'Shipping' below. Oil and gas facilities occur within the EMBA as do permits operated by other titleholders. Thus, oil and gas activities could be impacted by unplanned events.			
Shipping (Figure 5-21)	Shipping using NWS waters includes iron ore carriers, oil tankers and other vessels proceeding to or from the ports of Dampier, Port Walcott and Port Hedland. However, these are predominantly heading north from these ports. The eastern boundary of the operational area abuts the Dampier shipping fairway. The shipping fairways of the region service Dampier and Karratha. Therefore, vessel traffic is expected in the vicinity of the operational area.	✓	<u>Planned</u> Interaction with other users (Section 8.1)	<u>Unplanned</u> MDO spill from vessel collision and hydrocarbon release LOWC (Sections 9.6 and 9.7)
Recreational fishing	Within the operational area, there are no known natural seabed features that would aggregate fishes and that are typically targeted by recreational fishers. Given the water depths and distance from the nearest mainland, it is unlikely recreational fishing would occur in the vicinity. Recreational fishing does occur within the EMBA and therefore could be impacted by a LOWC.	-	N/A	<u>Unplanned</u> MDO spill from vessel collision and hydrocarbon release LOWC (Sections 9.6 and 9.7)
Defence	In consultation, Defence has not raised any concerns with this proposed activity (Section 5.2.6.8).	-	N/A	N/A
Shipwrecks	No shipwrecks were found to intercept the operational area. Multiple shipwrecks are listed within the EMBA	-	- N/A	<u>Unplanned</u> MDO spill from vessel collision and

Value/ Sensitivity	Description	Operational Area Presence	Relevant Events Within Operational Area	Relevant Events Within EMBA
				hydrocarbon release LOWC (Sections 9.6 and 9.7)

5.2.6.1 Commercial fisheries

Offshore and coastal waters in the North-West Marine Region support a valuable and diverse commercial fishing industry. The major fisheries in the Pilbara region target tropical finfish, large pelagic fish, crustaceans (prawns and scampi) and pearl oysters (Patterson *et al.*, 2019).

These NWS region fisheries are managed by either the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) (State fisheries) with specific management plans, regulations and a variety of subsidiary regulatory instruments under the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*; or by Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) who manages Commonwealth fisheries (within the 200 nautical mile Australian Fishing Zone).

Commonwealth and State fisheries overlapping with the operational area and the EMBA are illustrated in **Figure 5-17** to **Figure 5-19**. **Table 5-12** describes each of these fisheries.

Previous consultation with DPIRD has identified commercial fishing interests that exist in or close to proposed activities under this EP. This consultation also identified key fish species that may be aggregating or spawning in the EMBA. This information is provided, together with other key periods of sensitivity for socio-economic receptors in **Section 5.2.7**.

Table 5-12: Commonwealth and State managed fisheries permitted within the operational area

Fishery	Overlap		Description	Relevant Events within the Operational Area
	Op Area	EMBA		
Commonwealth Managed Fisheries				
Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery	✓	✓	Extends westward from Cape York Peninsula (142°30' E) off Queensland to 34° S off the WA west coast. It also extends eastward from 34° S off the west coast of WA across the Great Australian Bight to 141° E at the South Australian–Victorian border. Since 2005, there has been fewer than five vessels active in the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery each year, which has reportedly declined from 50 active vessels in 2000 (Williams <i>et al.</i> , 2019). Fishing activity in the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery concentrates in waters off southwest Western Australia, and off South Australia (Williams <i>et al.</i> , 2019).	No active commercial fishing in the area in the past years.
Southern Bluefin Tuna	✓	✓	Since 1992 juvenile Southern Bluefin Tuna have been targeted in the Great Australian Bight and waters off South Australia.	No active commercial fishing effort reported in WA, as fishing efforts are concentrated off South Australia.
Western Skipjack Tuna Fishery	✓	✓	There has been no fishing effort since the 2009 season in South Australia. No current effort on the NWS.	There has been no effort in the fishery since the 2008-09 fishing season (Patterson <i>et al.</i> , 2019).
North West Slope Trawl	✗	✓	Extends from 114° E to around 125° E off the WA coast between the 200 m isobath and the outer limit of the Australian Fishing Zone. Targets scampi and prawns.	N/A
Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery	✗	✓	Demersal trawl seaward of the 200 m isobaths. Fishing effort for a diverse range of tropical and temperate species.	N/A

Fishery	Overlap		Description	Relevant Events within the Operational Area
	Op Area	EMBA		
State Managed Fisheries (North-west Bioregion)				
Exmouth Gulf Prawn Managed Fishery	X	✓	Sheltered waters of Exmouth Gulf. Essentially the western half of the Exmouth Gulf (eastern part is a nursery ground). The Muiron Islands and Point Murat provide the western boundary; Serrurier Island provides the northern limit.	N/A
Nickol Bay Prawn Managed Fishery	✓	✓	Primarily targets banana prawns using otter trawl methods along the western part of the NWS in coastal shallow waters. There has been no record of any fishing effort from this fishery in the operational area.	N/A
Onslow Prawn Limited Entry Fishery	✓	✓	The boundaries of this fishery are ‘all the Western Australian waters between the Exmouth Prawn Fishery and the Nickol Bay Prawn Fishery east of 114°39.9’ on the landward side of the 200 m depth isobath’. Prawn trawling activities focus on inshore areas between Onslow and Karratha. Only five days of fishing effort was undertaken (one boat) in 2017, and total landings were negligible (Kangas <i>et al.</i>, 2019). There has been no record of any fishing effort from this fishery in the operational area.	As prawn trawling activities focus on inshore, shallow waters, planned events are not expected to impact fishing activities.

Fishery	Overlap		Description	Relevant Events within the Operational Area
	Op Area	EMBA		
Pilbara Demersal Scalefish Fisheries (includes trap and trawl fisheries)	✓	✓	Use a combination of vessels, effort allocations (time), gear limits, plus spatial zones (including extensive trawl closures) as management measures. The Trawl Fishery lands the largest component of the catch of demersal finfish in the Pilbara (and North Coast Bioregion) comprising more than 50 scalefish species. In comparison, the trap fishery retains a subset of about 45 to 50 scalefish species.	The operational area intersects the trap fishery and a closed area for the trawl fishery. FishCube data identified the trawl fishery as being the only fishery active in data blocks that overlap the operational area within the last ten years. However, given the operational area overlaps the closed area for this fishery, the activity was likely further to the south in the open zone (but still within the same FishCube data blocks). No trap fishing activity has been recorded in the operational area.
Pilbara Line Fishery	✓	✓	The Pilbara Line Fishery fishing boat licensees are permitted to operate anywhere within 'Pilbara waters', bounded by a line commencing at the intersection of 21° 56' S latitude and the high water mark on the western side of the North West Cape on the mainland of Western Australia west along the parallel to the intersection of 21° 56' S latitude and the boundary of the Australian Fishing Zone and north to longitude 120° E. In the 2018 season there were nine individual licences in the Pilbara Line Fishery, held by seven operators (Newman <i>et al.</i> , 2019).	In the 2018 season there were nine individual licences in the Pilbara Line Fishery, held by seven operators. According to FishCube data less than three vessels were active during the season. No activity from this fishery has been recorded within the operational area.
Pilbara Crab Managed Fishery	✓	✓	The boundaries of this fishery include waters between 114°39.9' E and 120° E, and on the landward side of the 200 m depth isobath.	Crabbing activity along the Pilbara coast is centred largely on the inshore waters from Onslow through to Port Hedland, with most commercial and recreational activity occurring in and around Nickol Bay (Gaughan and Santoro, 2018). No activity from this fishery has been recorded within the operational area.

Fishery	Overlap		Description	Relevant Events within the Operational Area
	Op Area	EMBA		
Mackerel Managed Fishery	✓	✓	Trolling or handline. Near-surface trolling gear from vessels in coastal areas around reefs, shoals and headlands.	Very low level of activity was recorded in the FishCube data blocks that operational area ten years ago. There has been no recent (less than ten years) activity from this fishery in the operational area. The bulk of the total catch is taken in the Kimberley area.
State Managed Fisheries (Whole of State)				
Marine Aquarium Fish Fishery	✓	✓	All year. Effort in the operational area is unlikely due to the depth and the dive-based method of collection. Unlikely to occur.	Disruption to fishing activities unlikely, given water depths in which fisheries operate.
Specimen Shell Managed Fishery	✓	✓	All year. Effort in the operational area is unlikely due to the depth and the dive-based method of collection. Unlikely to occur.	
West Coast Deep Sea Crustacean Managed Fishery	✓	✓	Baited pots targeting crabs, occurs between Cape Leeuwin and the Northern Territory border on the seaward side of the 150 m isobath. There were six vessels operating in 2017 (How and Orme, 2019).	Given fishing effort is concentrated south of Exmouth, interaction with fishers during the activity is unlikely.
Abalone Managed Fishery	✓	✓	The commercial fishery harvest method is a single diver working off a 'hookah' (surface-supplied breathing apparatus) using an abalone 'iron' to prise the shellfish off rocks.	Disruption is unlikely to occur in the operational area due to depths and method of collection.
South-West Coast Salmon Fishery	✓	✓	There are currently six licences. Licensees are not restricted to specific beaches but in practice only a few beaches are fished (DEH, 2004). In 2018 there were three active vessels in this fishery (Stewart <i>et al.</i> , 2018).	Given the methods of fishing and level of effort and catch in previous years, interaction with fishers is not expected during the activity.

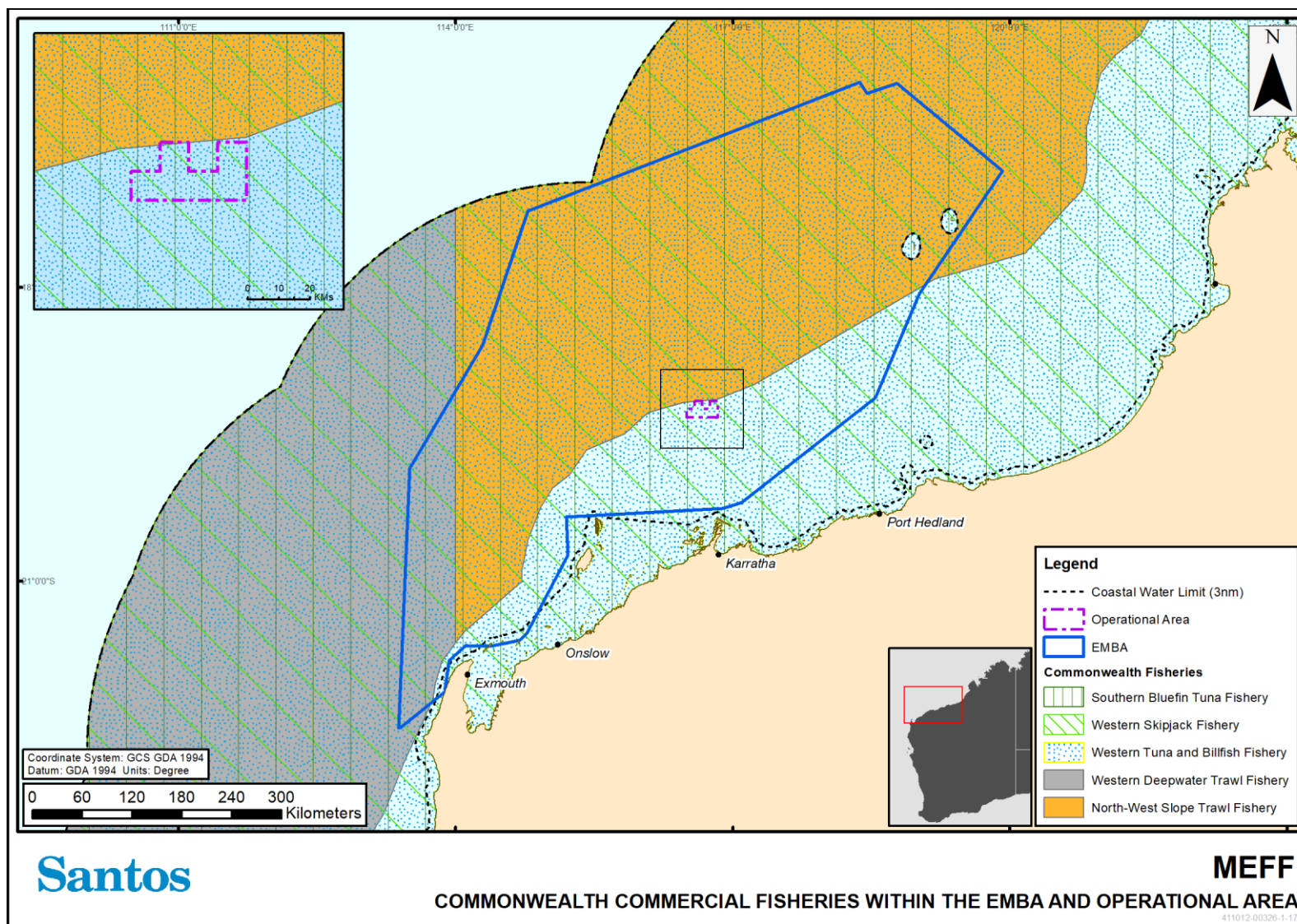


Figure 5-17: Commonwealth commercial fisheries within the environment that may be affected and operational area

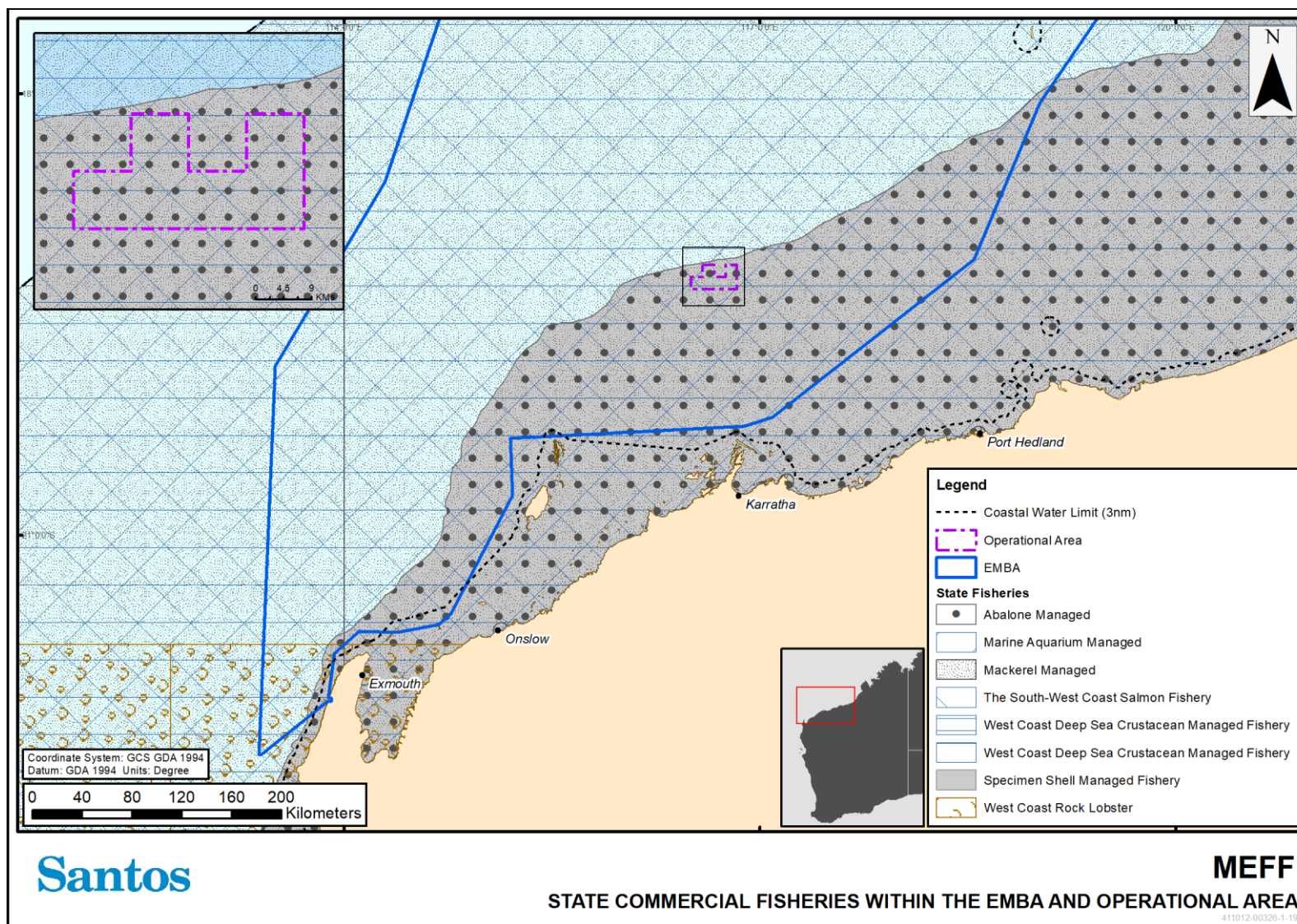


Figure 5-18: State commercial fisheries within the environment that may be affected and the operational area

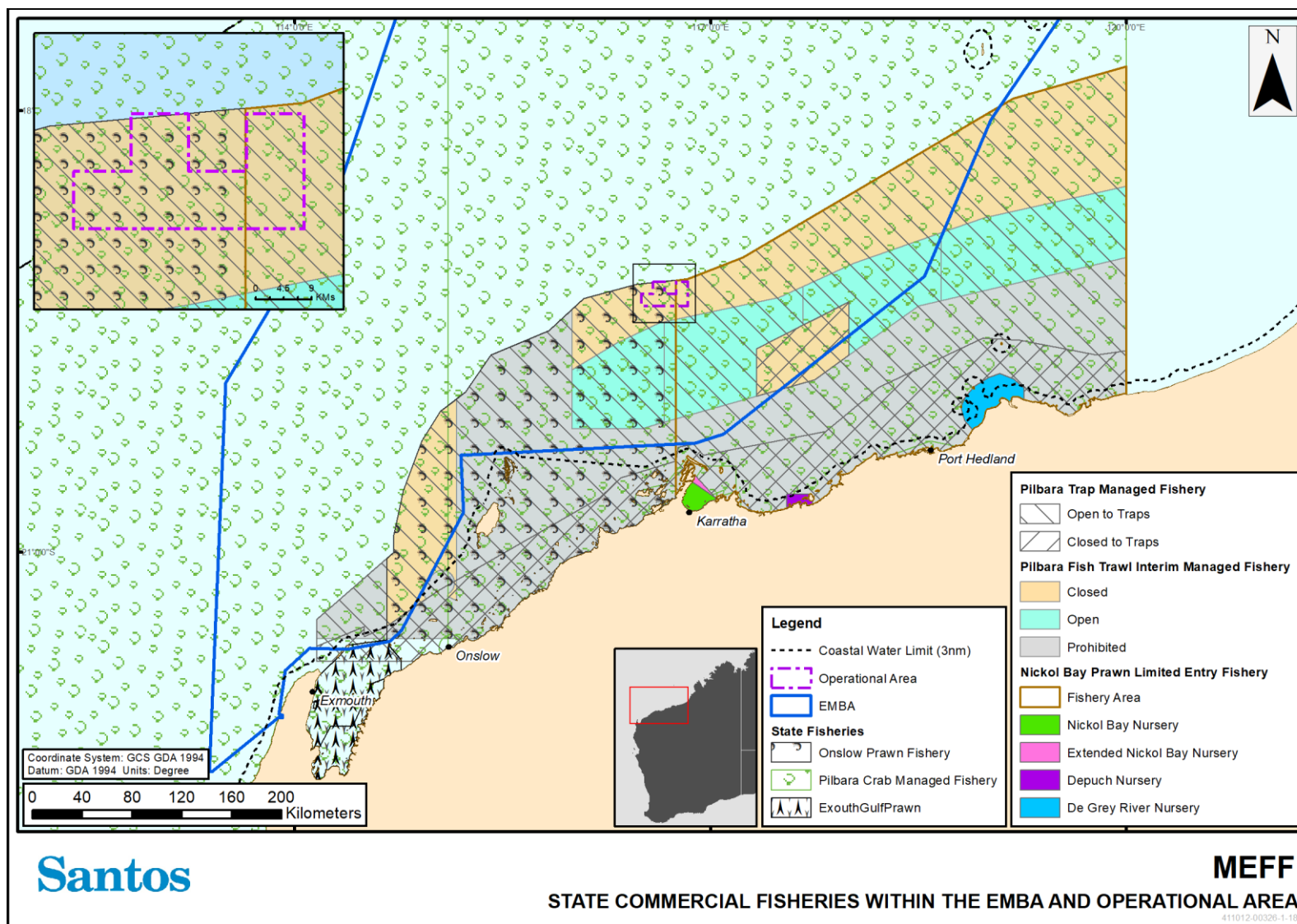


Figure 5-19: State commercial fisheries within the environment that may be affected and the operational area

5.2.6.2 Recreational fisheries

The operational area occurs in the North Coast Bioregion, where recreational fishing is experiencing significant growth, with a distinct seasonal peak in winter (Gaughan and Santoro, 2018). Offshore islands, coral reefs and continental shelf provide species of major recreational interest including tropical snapper, cods, coral and coronation trout, sharks, trevally, tuskfish, tunas, mackerels and billfish (Gaughan and Santoro, 2018). Given the water depths, lack of seabed features and distance offshore of the operational area, recreational fishing activity is not expected. Therefore, no interaction with recreational fishers is anticipated in the operational areas but may occur in the EMBA.

5.2.6.3 Tourism and recreation

Tourism and recreational use, including recreation fishing, is unlikely in the operational area due to the water depth, absence of seabed features and distance (around 160 km) from the mainland and island shorelines and the presence of the exclusion area around existing petroleum equipment (noted on navigation charts).

5.2.6.4 Oil and gas industry

The NWS is a major oil and gas hub in Australia, with various companies operating on the Shelf. The operational area is in a relatively isolated area of the NWS with respect to the main oil and gas operational and exploratory fields and there are no other oil and gas operations present.

The flowlines and associated platforms and subsea wells that form part of the NWS Joint Venture are the major petroleum features of the immediate region (**Figure 5-20**). There are two sales gas trunklines orientated in a southeast direction to Dampier, where gas and condensate are processed at the Woodside-operated gas plant.

Further to the southwest of the operational area (about 195 km), Santos operates the Varanus Island oil and gas hub, which processes oil and gas from platforms and subsea wells in the region, offloading oil from the island to shipping tankers and piping processed gas to the WA mainland (connecting to the Dampier to Bunbury Natural Gas Pipeline) via two sales gas flowlines.

5.2.6.5 Commercial shipping

The Dampier shipping fairway is the main northern approach to the Port of Dampier and overlaps the eastern boundary of the operational area (**Figure 5-21**). However, the DTM location, where wet storage and other seabed asset removal activities will occur, is located around 13 nm away from the shipping fairway. General marine vessel traffic may traverse the operational area.

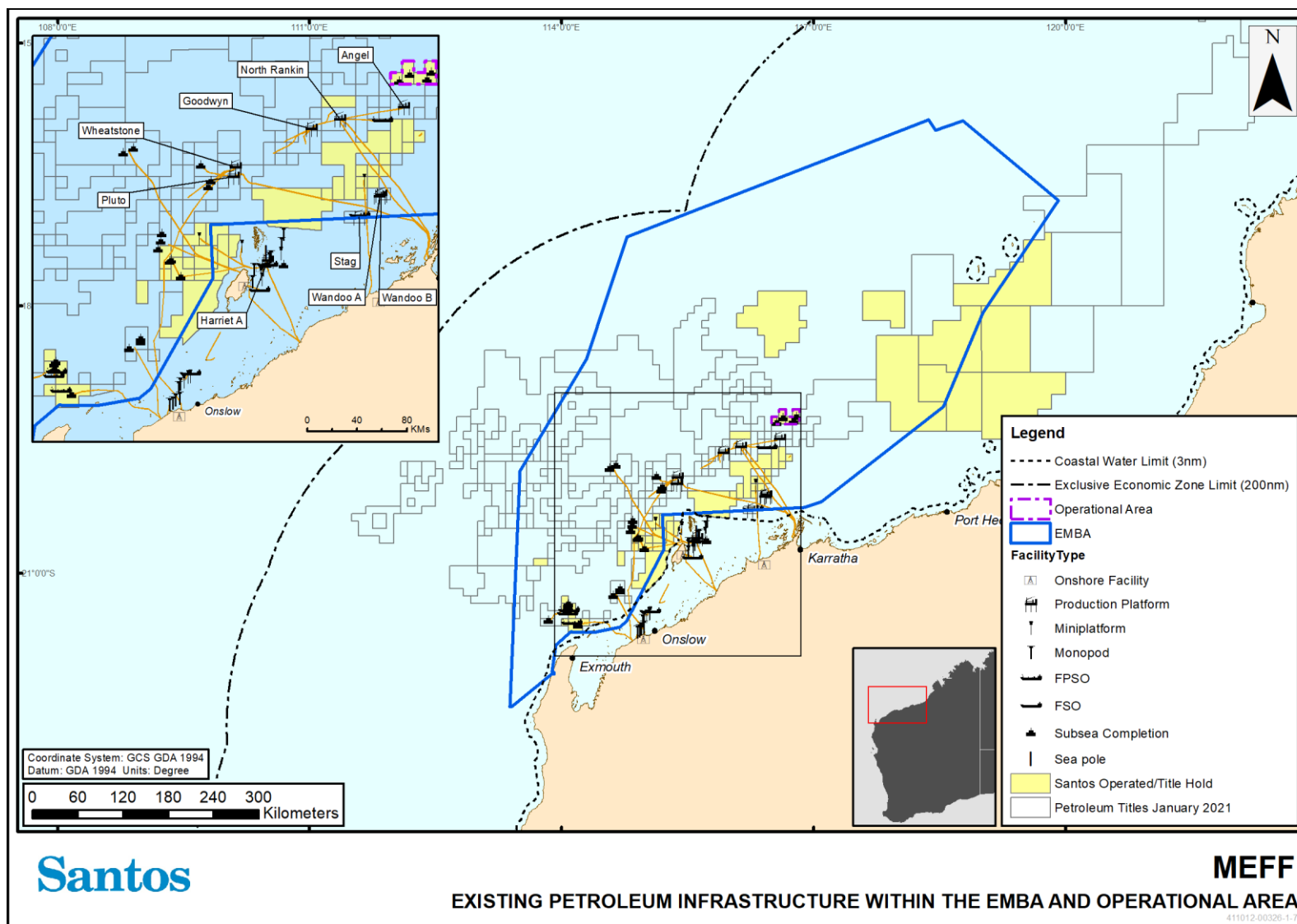


Figure 5-20: Existing oil and gas equipment within the environment that may be affected

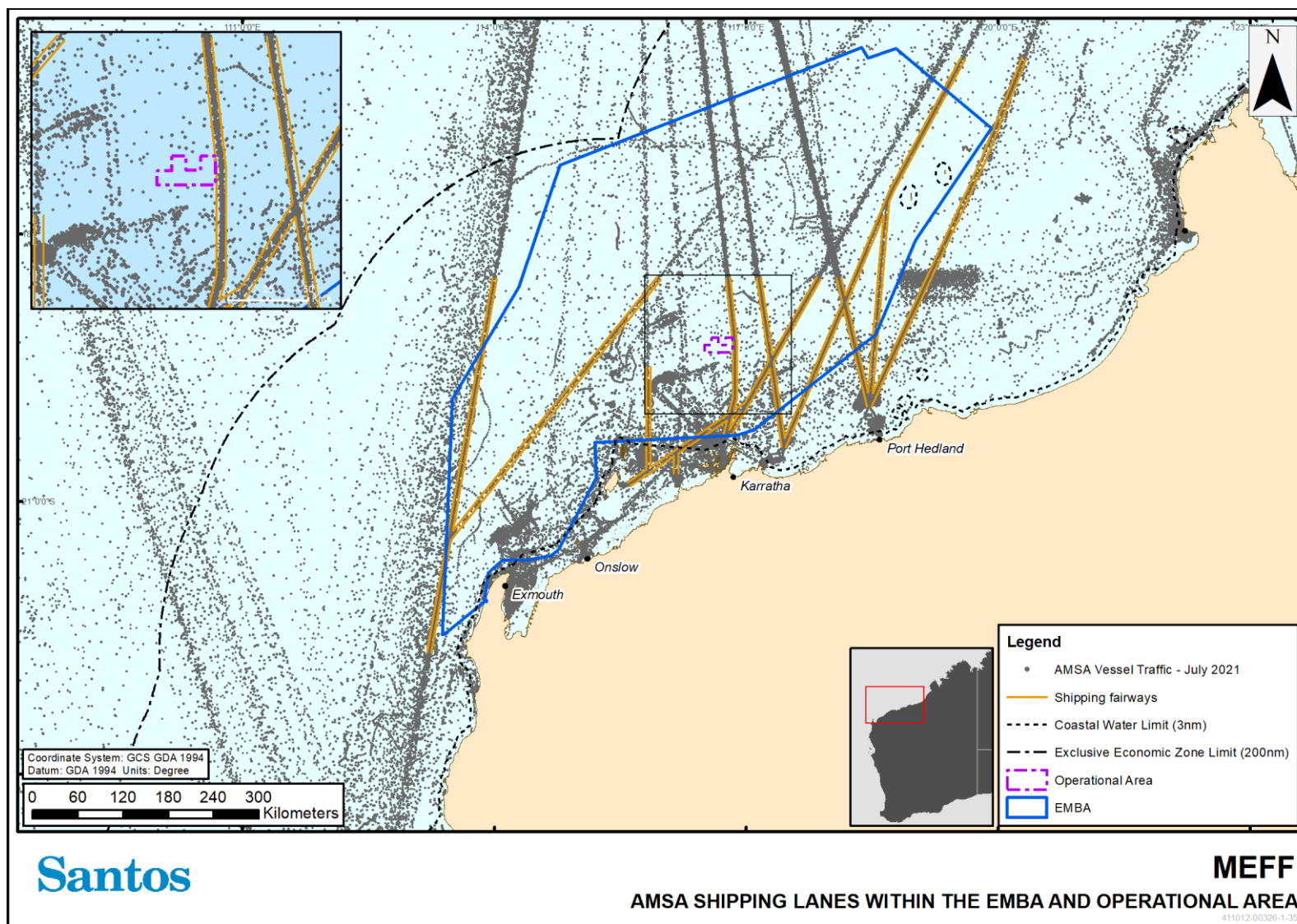


Figure 5-21: Australian Maritime Safety Authority ship locations and shipping routes within and close to the environment that may be affected

5.2.6.6 Heritage values and shipwrecks

There are no listed World Heritage Areas, aboriginal heritage, cultural heritage places or records of shipwrecks within or in the vicinity of the operational area.

Based on the predictions from the spill modelling, the Ningaloo Coast is the only World Heritage Area and National Heritage Property within the EMBA in the event of a worst-case spill.

Refer to **Appendix D** for further information.

5.2.6.7 Cultural Features

Introduction

Santos acknowledges the tradition of the First Nations people of Australia includes a cultural and spiritual connection to their land and waters, including sea country. These connections are rooted in their traditional communal beliefs and practices. First Nations people view their land and waters as integral to their identity, culture, and spirituality and they have a deep respect for the natural world.

The cultural heritage of First Nations peoples includes a vast array of tangible and intangible cultural artifacts, practices and beliefs. The protected heritage of First Nations peoples is also of cultural value to Australia and the global community. The cultural value of First Nations protected heritage to Australia is evidenced and given force by a range of factors, including the laws, regulations and institutions established across Australia that are designed specifically to protect First Nations rights and interests in relation to sacred sites and other aspects of First Nations cultural heritage including the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth) (NT Act), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 (Cth) (ATSIHP Act), Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018(Cth) (UCH Act).

Country is an important concept to First Nations people and the term is often to describe family origins and associations with particular parts of Australia, both land and sea (Smyth, 2007). The expressions Country and Sea Country are used to refer to the land and waters which constitute Aboriginal traditional areas as ancestrally distinct and linguistically bounded geographic areas (Kearney et al, 2023 p106).

Country is inclusive of many environments that are ecologically, geographically, ancestrally and socially configured (Kearney et al 2023). For First Nations Indigenous People, Country is a combination of the land, sea, rivers and islands and all that they contain and sustain. “Country refers to more than just a geographical area: it is shorthand for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that geographical area.” (Smyth, 2007).

First Nations people in northwest WA continue to rely on coastal and marine environments and resources of the region for their cultural identity, health and wellbeing, and their domestic and commercial economies (Smyth, 2007).

Numerous different Indigenous groups have connections to different parts of Country. These family groups are representative of many different Indigenous language groups.

Submerged archaeological landscapes have recently been identified in WA through combined evidence of terrestrial ecology, coastal and marine geomorphology and sea-level studies (Benjamin et al 2020; McCarthy et al 2022). There is a potential for the existence of submerged landscapes with associated Aboriginal heritage values due to strong cultural connections between Traditional Owners and the sea (McCarthy et al 2022).

Sea country

The Australian Marine Parks North-west Marine Parks Network Management Plan 2018 defines sea country as “the areas of the sea that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups are particularly affiliated with through their traditional lore and customs”. Sea country is valued for Aboriginal cultural identity, health and wellbeing. Aboriginal people of north-western Australia have been sustainably

using and managing their sea country for tens of thousands of years, in some cases since before rising sea levels created these marine environments (DNP, 2018).

A common feature of coastal Aboriginal cultures is the connectedness of land and sea: together they form a country of significant cultural sites and dreaming tracks of the creation ancestors (NOO, 2002). As a result, coastal environments are an integrated cultural landscape/seascape that is conceptually different from the broader Australian view of land and sea (NOO, 2002).

Animals can be totems for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people share the land and water with animals and their relationship with totem animals is fundamental to continued practice and cultural responsibility; for food, health, shelter, cultural expression and spiritual wellbeing (VAHC, 2021). Caring for plants, animals and their habitats is therefore seen as a key way of expressing culture (VAHC, 2021).

It is recognised that spiritual corridors extend from terrestrial areas into nearshore and offshore waters, that a number of marine animals are totems for Indigenous people.

Aboriginal people use and actively manage the coastal and marine environments as a resource and to maintain cultural identity, health and wellbeing. Fishing, hunting and the maintenance of culture and heritage through ritual, stories and traditional knowledge continue as important uses of nearshore and adjacent areas.

Sea country is described in both State, Territory and Commonwealth Marine Park Management Plans. The Australian Marine Park Management Plans include the objective to provide for the protection and conservation of biodiversity and other natural, cultural and heritage values of marine parks. The plans define cultural values as “living and cultural heritage recognising Indigenous beliefs, practices and obligations for country, places of cultural significance and cultural heritage sites” (DNP, 2018). Australian Marine Park Management Plans list the Aboriginal people who have responsibilities for sea country in the Marine Parks, and the Native Title Representative Body for the region.

The PMST Report determined the EMBA for this EP overlaps the North-west Marine Park network which is managed by the North-west Marine Parks Network Management Plan. The following information is considered correct at the time of writing from the North-West Marine Parks Network Management Plan 2018 (DNP, 2018).

Montebello Marine Park-At the commencement of this plan there was limited information on the cultural significance of this Marine Park. The Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation is the Native Title Representative Body for the Pilbara region.

Gascoyne Marine Park and Ningaloo Marine Park-The Gnulli people have responsibility for sea country in the Marine Park. The Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation is the Native Title Representative Body for the Yamatji region.

There is limited information about the cultural significance of Argo-Rowley Terrace and Mermaid Reef Marine Parks.

These people/groups have been consulted, in some cases via representative prescribed body corporates as outlined in **Section 6**.

Indigenous Land use Agreements

An “Indigenous land use agreement” (ILUA) is a voluntary, legally binding agreement about the use and management of land or waters, made between one or more native title groups and non-native title interest holders in the ILUA area (such as grantee parties, pastoralists or governments).

The Register of Indigenous Land Use Agreements is kept by the Native Title Registrar in accordance with s199A of the NTA and includes a description of the ILUA area, the parties’ names, the term of the ILUA and other information as the Registrar considers is appropriate (s199B of the NTA).

Registration confers a contractual effect on the ILUA and binds all persons holding native title regardless as to whether they are already parties to the ILUA (s24EA of the NTA).

A search of the Native Title Register found the following ILUAs within the EMBA

- + Kuruma Marthudunera and Yaburara and Coastal Mardudhunera Indigenous Land Use Agreement- Area Agreement

KM & YM Indigenous Land Use Agreement 2018-Area Agreement

Indigenous Protected Areas

Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) are areas of land and sea that Traditional Owners have agreed to manage for biodiversity conservation. IPAs represent more than 50% of National Reserve System.

The Sea Country Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) Program seeks to increase the area of sea in IPAs to strengthen the conservation and protection of Australia's unique marine and coastal environments, while creating employment and economic opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

A search of the Native Title Register identified no IPAs within the operational area or EMBA.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Inquiry System

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Inquiry System (ACHIS) provides information about Aboriginal sites (as defined under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (WA)) in Western Australia. To identify Aboriginal sites that may be affected by the Activities, a search of the ACHIS (undertaken November 2023, DPLH, 2023) indicated there are:

- no registered Aboriginal sites within the Operational Area; and
- two registered Aboriginal sites within the EMBA, comprising:
 - Mesa Camp
 - Tulki Well Midden

None of these Aboriginal sites will be disturbed by planned activities. Santos has consulted with First Nations groups within the EMBA (including Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal corporation, which represents groups around the locations of Mesa Camp and Tulki well Midden) and no feedback or concerns regarding impacts to Aboriginal sites within the Operational Area or EMBA were raised.

5.2.6.8 Defence

There are no defence areas within or in the vicinity of the operational area. The Learmonth Royal Australian Air Force base maintains a restricted airspace area, which overlaps the region. Relevant existing defence areas within the EMBA are shown in **Figure 5-22**.

5.2.6.9 Telecommunication Cables

The JASURAUS cable system and the North West Cable System and are located approximately 181 km and 185 km east of the operational area. These cables extend seaward from Port Hedland. Given the distance to these submarine cables, there is not expected to be any impact from the planned activities.

5.2.7 Windows of sensitivity

Timing of peak activity for threatened species and other relevant, significant sensitivities is summarised in **Table 5-13**.

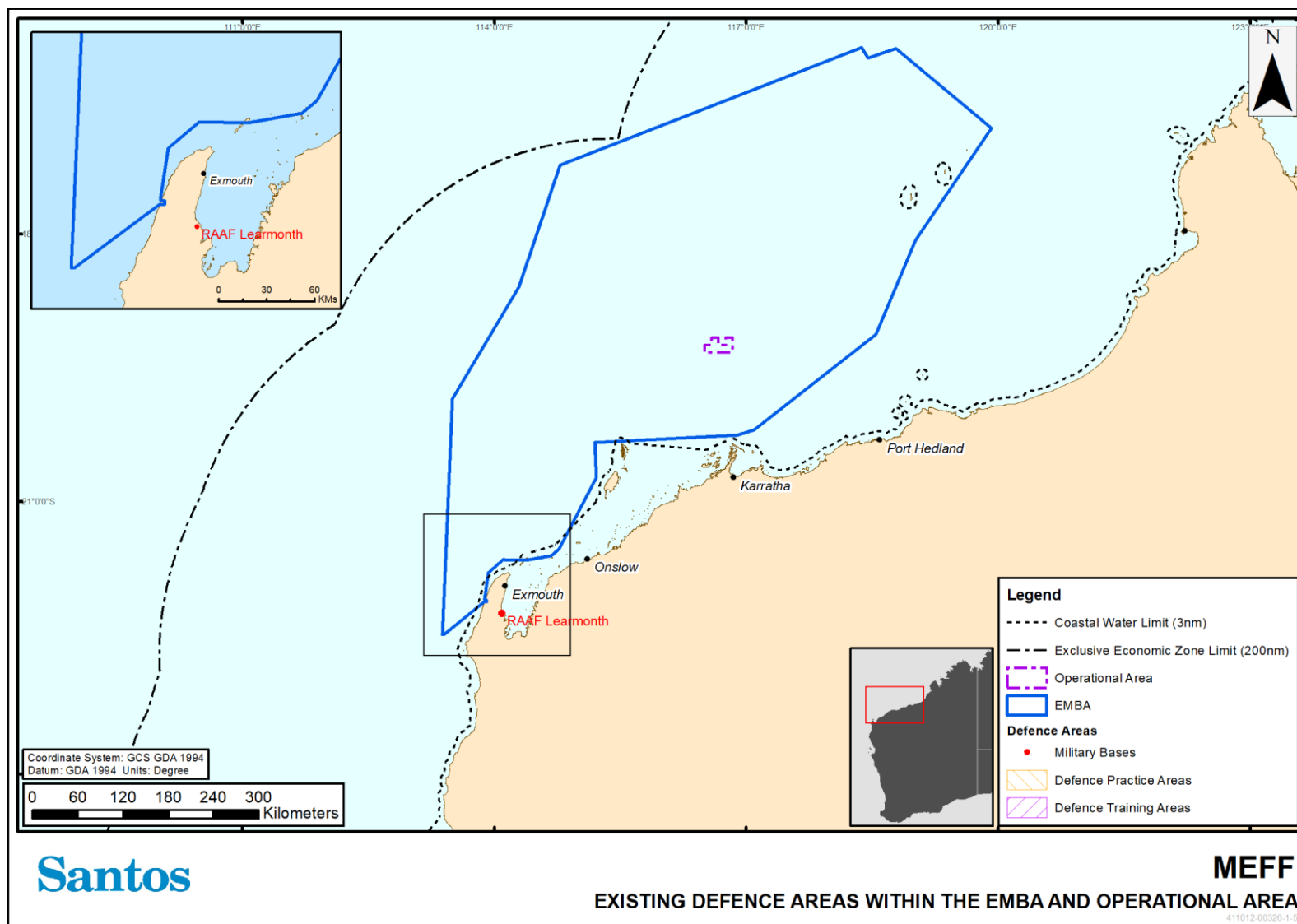


Figure 5-22: Existing defence equipment within the environment that may be affected

Table 5-13: Windows of sensitivity in the vicinity of the operational area and environment that may be affected

Categories	Receptors (critical life stages)	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Proposed activity timing													
Physical environment and habitats	Non-coral benthic invertebrates												
	Coral (spawning)												
	Macroalgae	growing				shedding fronds				growing			
	Other benthic habitats												
Marine fauna (including threatened or migratory species)	Whale sharks			Aggregations at Ningaloo Coast									
	Fisheries species spawning/aggregation times ¹												
	Baldchin groper												
	Blacktip shark												
	Crystal crab												
	Goldband snapper												
	King George whiting												
	Pink snapper												
	Rankin cod												
	Red emperor												
	Spangled emperor												
	Sandbar shark												
	Spanish mackerel												
	Marine Mammals												

Categories	Receptors (critical life stages)	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
	Dugong (breeding)												
	Australian sea lion (breeding)	Breeding and caring for young											
	Humpback whale (migration)						northern			southern			
	Sei whales (migration)					Low density, same general pattern of migration as most other baleen whales							
	Southern right whale (migration)					northern				southern			
	Blue whale (migration)					northern					southern		
	Marine Reptiles												
	Hawksbill turtles (resident adult and juveniles) ²	Widespread throughout NWS waters, highest density of adults and juveniles over hard bottom habitat (coral reef, rocky reef, pipelines, etc)											
	Hawksbill turtle (mating aggregations) ²												
	Hawksbill turtle (nesting and interesting) ²												
	Hawksbill turtle (hatching) ¹												
	Flatback turtles (resident adult and juveniles) ²	Widespread throughout NWS waters, increased density over soft bottom habitat 10 to 60 m deep, post-hatchling age classes and juveniles spread across shelf waters											
	Flatback turtle (mating aggregations) ²												
	Flatback turtle (nesting and interesting) ²												
	Flatback turtle (hatching) ²												
	Flatback turtle (nesting) ²												

Categories	Receptors (critical life stages)	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
	Green turtles (resident adult and juveniles) ²	Widespread throughout the NWS waters, highest density associated with seagrass beds and macroalgae communities, high density juveniles in shallow waters off beaches, among mangroves and in creeks											
	Green turtle (mating aggregations) ²												
	Green turtle nesting and internesting) ²												
	Green turtle (hatching) ²												
	Loggerhead turtles (resident adult and juveniles) ²	Widespread throughout the NWS waters, increased density associated with soft bottom habitat supporting their bivalve food source, juveniles associated with nearshore reef habitat											
	Loggerhead turtle (mating aggregations) ²												
	Loggerhead turtle (nesting and internesting) ²												
	Loggerhead turtle (hatching) ²												
	Leatherback turtles	Can occur at low density across the NWS year-round											
	Olive Ridley turtles	Can occur at low density across the NWS year-round											
	Short-nosed seasnake	Can occur at low density across the NWS year-round											
	Seabirds												
	Terns, shearwaters, petrels (nesting)												
Socio Economic Receptors	Commercial Managed Fisheries												
	Oil and gas												
	Shipping												

Categories	Receptors (critical life stages)	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
	Tourism/ recreational	None applicable											
Key/Notes		Peak activity, presence reliable and predictable						¹ Information provided from previous DPIRD consultation					
		Lower level of abundance, activity or presence						² Information provided by K. Pendoley					
		Very low activity or presence											
		Activity can occur throughout year											
		Proposed timing of activity											

6. Stakeholder consultation

OPGGS(E)R 2023 Requirements
Regulation 28(1)
If NOPSEMA's provisional decision under section 27 is that the environment plan includes material apparently addressing all the provisions of Division 2 (Contents of an environment plan), NOPSEMA must publish on NOPSEMA's website as soon as practicable: (a) the plan with the sensitive information part removed; and (b) the name of the titleholder who submitted the plan; and (c) a description of the activity or stage of the activity to which the plan relates; and (d) the location of the activity; and (e) a link or other reference to the place where the accepted offshore project proposal (if any) is published; and (f) details of the titleholder's nominated liaison person for the activity.
Regulation 25
(1) In the course of preparing an environment plan (including a revised environment plan referred to in Division 5), a titleholder must consult each of the following (a <i>relevant person</i>): (a) each Commonwealth, State or Northern Territory agency or authority to which the activities to be carried out under the environment plan may be relevant; (b) if the plan relates to activities in the offshore area of a State— the Department of the responsible State Minister; (c) if the plan relates to activities in the Principal Northern Territory offshore area—the Department of the responsible Northern Territory Minister; (d) a person or organisation whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by the activities to be carried out under the environment plan; (e) any other person or organisation that the titleholder considers relevant. (2) For the purpose of the consultation, the titleholder must give each relevant person sufficient information to allow the relevant person to make an informed assessment of the possible consequences of the activity on the functions, interests or activities of the relevant person. (3) The titleholder must allow a relevant person a reasonable period for the consultation. (4) The titleholder must tell each relevant person the titleholder consults that: (a) the relevant person may request that particular information the relevant person provides in the consultation not be published; and (b) information subject to such a request is not to be published under this Part.
Regulation 22(15)
The implementation strategy must provide for appropriate consultation with: (a) relevant authorities of the Commonwealth, a State or Territory; and (b) other relevant interested persons or organisations.

Regulation 24

The environment plan must contain the following:

- (a) (a) a statement of the titleholder's corporate environmental policy
- (b) a report on all consultations under section 25 of any relevant person by the titleholder, that contains:
 - (i) a summary of each response made by a relevant person; and
 - (ii) an assessment of the merits of any objection or claim about the adverse impact of each activity to which the environment plan relates; and
 - (iii) a statement of the titleholder's response, or proposed response, if any, to each objection or claim; and
 - (iv) a copy of the full text of any response by a relevant person.

6.1 Consultation background

Initial relevant person consultation under regulation 25 of the OPGGS (E)R commenced in December 2021 to support development of this EP, which was submitted to NOPSEMA in February 2022 for assessment.

Additional consultation under regulation 25 of the OPGGS(E)R was undertaken by Santos from June 2023 to comply with NOPSEMA's *Guidance GL2086 – Consultation in the course of preparing an environment plan*, applicable regulations and recent caselaw.

This is reflected in Santos' consultation methodology outlined in **Section 6.5**, with additional consultation activities for this EP undertaken in two phases:

- + **Preliminary consultation (29 May – 26 June 2023)** – This included:
 - + activities to allow authorities, persons and organisations opportunities to self-identify as relevant persons; and
 - + engagement with potential relevant persons to confirm consultation expectations. Potential relevant persons that did not provide any feedback during preliminary consultation were still carried into the consultation phase.

Consultation (26 June – 26 July 2023) – activity-based consultation activities seeking feedback from relevant persons to inform development of this EP.

Santos continued to accept feedback from relevant persons up until 10 November 2023, prior to the submission of this EP.

A summary report of the additional consultation carried out under regulation 25 is included in Table 6-6 acknowledging that the list of relevant persons has changed (compared to initial consultation in 2021) due to the application of NOPSEMA *Guidance GL2086* and Santos' consultation methodology for this EP. For reference, a summary of initial consultation is included at **Appendix F**.

Section 11.14 includes Santos' post acceptance consultation implementation strategy for the Activities covered by this EP in accordance with regulation 22(15) of the OPGGS(E)R.

6.2 Regulatory requirements

Table 6-1 outlines the applicable regulatory requirements for consultation with relevant persons for this EP.

Table 6-1: Applicable regulatory requirements

Regulation	Relevant Extract of Regulation
Section 280(2) of the OPGGS Act	(2) A person (the first person) carrying out activities in an offshore area under the permit, lease, licence, authority or consent must carry on those activities in a manner that does not interfere with: (a) navigation; or (b) fishing; or (c) the conservation of the resources of the sea and seabed; or (d) any activities of another person being lawfully carried on by way of: (i) exploration for, recovery of or conveyance of a mineral (whether petroleum or not); or (ii) construction or operation of a pipeline; or (iii) offshore infrastructure activities (within the meaning of the <i>Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021</i>); or (e) the enjoyment of native title rights and interests (within the meaning of the <i>Native Title Act 1993</i>); to a greater extent than is necessary for the reasonable exercise of the rights and performance of the duties of the first person.
Regulation 5 of the OPGGS(E)R	environment means: (a) ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities; and (b) natural and physical resources; and (c) the qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas; and (d) the heritage value of places; and includes (e) the social, economic and cultural features of the matters mentioned in paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d).
Regulation 27(8) of the OPGGS(E)R	(8) All sensitive information (if any) in an environment plan, and the full text of any response by a relevant person to consultation under regulation 25 in the course of preparation of the plan, must be contained in the sensitive information part of the plan and not anywhere else in the plan.
Regulation 34 of the OPGGS(E)R	For the purposes of section 33, the criteria for acceptance of an environment plan are that the plan: ... (g) demonstrates that: (i) the titleholder has carried out the consultations required by section 25; and (ii) the measures (if any) that the titleholder has adopted, or proposes to adopt, because of the consultations are appropriate.

Regulation	Relevant Extract of Regulation
Regulation 25(1) of the OPGGS(E)R	In the course of preparing an environment plan (including a revised environment plan referred to in Division 5) a titleholder must consult each of the following (a relevant person): (a) each Commonwealth, State or Northern Territory agency or authority to which the activities to be carried out under the environment plan may be relevant; (b) if the plan relates to activities in the offshore area of a State—the Department of the responsible State Minister; (c) if the plan relates to activities in the Principal Northern Territory offshore area—the Department of the responsible Northern Territory Minister; (d) a person or organisation whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by the activities to be carried out under the environment plan; (e) any other person or organisation that the titleholder considers relevant.
Regulation 25(2) of the OPGGS(E)R	For the purpose of the consultation, the titleholder must give each relevant person sufficient information to allow the relevant person to make an informed assessment of the possible consequences of the activity on the functions, interests or activities of the relevant person.
Regulation 25(3) of the OPGGS(E)R	The titleholder must allow a relevant person a reasonable period for the consultation.
Regulation 25(4) of the OPGGS(E)R	(1) The titleholder must tell each relevant person the titleholder consults that: (a) the relevant person may request that particular information the relevant person provides in the consultation not be published; and (b) information subject to such a request is not to be published under this Part.
Regulation 22(2)(3) of the OPGGS(E)R	<i>Description of the environment</i> (2) The environment plan must: (a) describe the existing environment that may be affected by the activity; and (b) include details of the relevant values and sensitivities (if any) of that environment. Note: The definition of <i>environment</i> in section 5 includes its social, economic and cultural features. (3) Without limiting paragraph (2)(b), particular relevant values and sensitivities may include any of the following: (a) the world heritage values of a declared World Heritage property; (b) the National Heritage values of a National Heritage place; (c) the ecological character of a declared Ramsar wetland; (d) the presence of a listed threatened species or listed threatened ecological community; (e) the presence of a listed migratory species; (f) any values and sensitivities that exist in, or in relation to, part or all of: (g) a Commonwealth marine area; or (h) Commonwealth land.
Regulation 22(15) of the OPGGS(E)R	(15) The implementation strategy must provide for appropriate consultation with: (a) relevant authorities of the Commonwealth, a State or Territory; and (b) other relevant interested persons or organisations.

Regulation	Relevant Extract of Regulation
Regulation 24(b) of the OPGGS(E)R	The environment plan must contain the following: ... (b) a report on all consultations under section 25 of any relevant person by the titleholder, that contains: (i) a summary of each response made by a relevant person; and (ii) an assessment of the merits of any objection or claim about the adverse impact of each activity to which the environment plan relates; and (iii) a statement of the titleholder's response, or proposed response, if any, to each objection or claim; and (iv) a copy of the full text of any response by a relevant person.

6.3 Government and industry guidance

Santos has considered the following NOPSEMA guidance in developing its consultation activities and approach:

- + *GL2086 – Consultation in the course of preparing an environment plan – May 2023* (superseding the interim Guideline of the same title issued in December 2022) (EP Consultation Guideline)
- + *GL1887 – Consultation with Commonwealth agencies with responsibilities in the marine area – January 2023*
- + *GL1721 – Environment Plan decision making – December 2022*
- + *GN1344 – Environment plan content requirement – December 2022*
- + *GN1488 – Oil Pollution Risk Management – July 2021*

Santos has also considered other government and industry guidance, including:

- + International Standards Organisation: *ISO14001:2015 Environmental Management Systems*
- + Australian Fisheries Management Authority: *Petroleum industry consultation with the commercial fishing industry*
- + Australian Heritage Commission: *Ask First - A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values*
- + Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: *Fisheries and the Environment – Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Act 2006 and Offshore Installations Biosecurity Guide*
- + Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water: *Interim Engaging with First Nations People and Communities on Assessments and Approvals under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- + Commonwealth Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources: *Principles for Engagement with Communities and Stakeholders*
- + International Association for Public Participation: *Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement*
- + WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development: *Guidance statement for oil and gas industry consultation with the Department of Fisheries*
- + WA Department of Transport: *Offshore Petroleum Industry Guidance Note - Marine Oil Pollution: Response and Consultation Arrangements*
- + Western Australian Fishing Industry Council: *Commercial Fishing Consultation Framework for the Offshore Oil and Gas Sector and Consultation approach for unplanned events*

6.4 Applicable case law and guidance

In addition to considering the regulatory requirements and guidance set out above, in developing this EP Santos has considered the judgments of:

- + Justice Bromberg in *Tipakalippa v National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (No. 2)* [2022] FCA 1121;
- + the Full Federal Court in *Santos NA Barossa Pty Ltd v Tipakalippa* [2022] FCAFC 193 (Appeal Judgement); and
- + Justice Calvin in *Cooper v National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (No 2)* [2023] FCA 1158.

The EP Consultation Guideline referred to above provides a summary of the Full Federal Court's interpretation of “functions”, “activities” and “interests” referenced in regulation 25(1)(d), adopted by NOPSEMA to assist in informing who may be a relevant person and how relevant persons may be identified, as follows:

Term	Definition
Functions	Refers to “a power or duty to do something”
Activities	To be read broadly and is broader than the definition of “activity” in Regulation 5 of the OPGGS(E)R and is likely directed to what the relevant person is already doing
Interests	To be construed as conforming with the accepted concept of “interest” in other areas of public administrative law Includes “any interest possessed by an individual whether or not the interest amounts to a legal right or is a proprietary or financial interest or relates to reputation”

Santos has also had regard to the purpose of consultation as outlined in the Appeal Judgment and EP Consultation Guideline, the emphasis that superficial or tokenistic consultation is not sufficient and that:

- + consultation must be appropriate and adapted to the nature of each relevant person;
- + for each relevant person, the appropriate manner and method of consultation (including the nature of information, time periods for consultation and mode of communication) may differ; and
- + there is good reason to adopt pragmatic and practical approaches to consultation conducted in accordance with regulation 25.

6.5 Santos’ consultation methodology

6.5.1 Overview

Santos consults to ensure that any activity proposed under EPs is carried out in a manner:

- + consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development set out in section 3A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*;
- + by which the environmental impacts and risks of the activity will be reduced as low as reasonably practicable (**ALARP**); and
- + by which the environmental impacts and risks of the activity will be of an acceptable level.

The consultation process is designed to assist Santos to further ascertain, understand and assess values and sensitivities of the environment that may be affected by a proposed activity, and the potential environmental impacts and risks, through information obtained during consultations.

Santos may then refine or change its proposed control measures to address potential environmental impacts and risks of the activity based on that information or any claims or objections raised through consultation.

Santos’ consultation methodology and process adopted in developing this EP comprised the following key steps:

- + identifying potential relevant person categories

- + identifying relevant persons
- + providing opportunities for relevant persons to identify themselves if they wished to be consulted (e.g. through advertising)
- + consultation planning and preliminary consultation activities
- + consulting relevant persons
- + assessing the merits of objections or claims made by relevant persons about the adverse impact of each activity to which the EP relates
- + providing responses to queries, requests and feedback.

6.5.2 Identifying relevant persons

This section outlines the methodology and steps that Santos has used to identify relevant persons.

As described in **Table 6-2**, Santos considered the spatial extent of the environment that maybe affected by the activity and the particular aspects of the relevant environment as part of its process for identifying relevant persons.

Table 6-2: Relevant person identification process steps

Process steps
1. Identify the impacts of the planned activities and the risks and impacts of unplanned events.
2. Consider the spatial extent of the environment that may be affected by the Activity impacts and risks.
3. Consider and identify aspects of the environment within the environment that may be affected, having regard to: (a) ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities (b) natural and physical resources (c) the qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas (d) the heritage value of places (e) the social, economic and cultural features of the matters mentioned in paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d).
4. Identify relevant person categories, having regard to: (a) aspects of the environment identified at Item 3 (b) the departments or agencies of Commonwealth and Western Australian Governments that could therefore be relevant (c) the kinds of functions, interests or activities of people or organisations that could therefore be affected (d) submissions received in response to Santos' activities to allow authorities, persons and organisations to self-identify as a relevant person. Update during consultation based on new information, if appropriate.
5. Identify relevant persons within relevant person categories, having regard to items 1-4 above.

Santos considered the nature of the Activity (and key component activities) (described in **Section 4**), the location of the Activity (described and depicted in **Section 3.1**), the impacts of planned Activities (described in **Section 8**) and the risks and impacts of unplanned events (described in **Section 9**).

Santos also considered the spatial extent of the environment that may be affected by the Activity impacts and risks (described **Section 5** and **Appendix D**).

Table 6-3 outlines the environmental aspects (described in detail in **Section 5**) Santos considered for the purpose of identifying relevant person categories.

Table 6-3: Environmental aspects considered for relevant person category identification

Aspects of the environment	EP/EP Reference
Physical environment	Section 5
Provincial bioregions	Section 5.2.1
Benthic habitats	Section 5.2.3
Australian marine parks and state marine parks, management areas, reserves	Section 5.2.4.1
Key ecological features	Section 5.2.4.2
Commonwealth Heritage Areas (Indigenous and Non-Indigenous)	Section 5.2.4.3
Wetlands of International and National Significance	Section 5.2.4.4
Biologically Important Areas and Critical Habitat	Section 5.2.5.1
Recovery Plans	Section 5.2.5.2
Commercial fisheries	Section 5.2.6.1
Energy industry	Section 5.2.6.4
Telecommunication cables	Section 5.2.6.9
Defence activities	Section 5.2.6.8
Shipping	Section 5.2.6.5
Recreation and tourism	Section 5.2.6.3
Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Heritage	Section 5.2.6.7
Cultural Features	Section 5.2.6.7

Consideration of the above environmental aspects resulted in the identification of the following relevant person categories:

Reg 25(1)(a)

- + Commonwealth Government Departments/Agencies

Reg 25(1)(a)(b)

- + Western Australian Government Departments/Agencies

Reg 25(1)(d)(e)

- + Academic and research organisations
- + Commercial fishing (Commonwealth-managed)
- + Commercial fishing (Western Australian-managed)
- + Energy industry titleholders / operators
- + Environmental conservation organisations
- + First Nations peoples and groups
- + Infrastructure operators
- + Industry associations
- + Local government and recognised community reference/liaison groups
- + Recreational fishing
- + Shipping

- + Tourism operators

Santos then undertook the actions outlined below to identify relevant persons within those categories.

Table 6-4: Actions for identifying relevant persons by category

Relevant person category	Actions to identify relevant persons
All relevant person categories	+ Review of Santos' historical consultation in the region. + Review of identified relevant persons in publicly available EPs submitted by other operators that may be relevant to proposed activities to be managed under this EP. + Conducting key-word searches using online search engines and reviewing media coverage and organisation websites to identify persons and organisations with reasonably ascertainable functions, interests and activities that may be affected by the activities under this EP. + Regional and State-wide advertising as outlined in Table 6-7
Reg 25(1)(a)	
Commonwealth Government Departments/Agencies	+ Review of government agency websites and directories to understand agency roles, functions and responsibilities. + Review of NOPSEMA and government agency guidance on consultation expectations.
Reg 25(1)(and (b)	
Western Australian Government Departments/Agencies	+ Review of government agency websites and directories to understand agency roles, functions and responsibilities. + Review of NOPSEMA and government agency guidance on consultation expectations.
Reg 25(1)(d)(e)	
Academic and research organisations	+ Desktop review of publicly available and reasonably ascertainable published research having regard to the region, activities or risks/impacts under this EP.
Commercial fishing	+ Review of EMBA overlap with commercial fisheries. + Review of WA commercial fishery activity in the Operational Area to inform consultation as per WA industry association guidance.
Energy industry	+ Review of EMBA overlap with petroleum, greenhouse gas and any other National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator (NOPTA) issued titles.
Environmental conservation organisations	+ Conduct key-word searches of publicly available online search engines, review media coverage and review organisation websites to identify organisations with reasonably ascertainable functions, interests and activities that may be affected, having regard to the region, activities or risks/impacts under this EP. + Review of other publicly available information, e.g. websites of conservation organisations whose functions, interests or activities within the EMBA may be affected.

Relevant person category	Actions to identify relevant persons
First Nations peoples and groups	+ Review of the Judgment and the Appeal Judgment. + Review of publicly available studies, reports and/or other information sources that may assist in identifying or mapping relevant cultural features interests in the EMBA. + Review of EMBA overlap with Native Title determined areas and claims, ILUAs, sacred sites, land rights and IPAs to identify areas over which a First Nations group may have functions, interests or activities that may be affected. + Review of Representative Aboriginal/Torres Strait Island Bodies (RATSIBs) on Native Title website. + Review of prescribed bodies corporate on the Native Title website. + Conducting searches of public cultural heritage databases relevant to the EMBA. + Review of marine park management plans relevant to the EMBA. + Engagement with government departments/agencies with relevant knowledge or relevant responsibilities.
Industry associations	+ Review of industry representation of the following relevant person groups: – Commercial fishing – Local Government Authorities – Local industry – Recreational fishing – Shipping – Tourism operators
Infrastructure operators	+ Review of EMBA overlap with offshore and onshore infrastructure, such as submarine telecommunications cables or ports. + Review of potential presence in the Operational Area.
Local government and recognised community reference/liaison groups	+ Review of EMBA overlap with boundaries of Local Government Areas. + Review of community reference/liaison groups where EMBA overlaps the boundaries of Local Government Areas.
Recreational fishing	+ Review of EMBA overlap with areas of interest to recreational fishing. + Review of potential presence of recreational fishing club members in the Operational Area. + Review of website information of relevant agencies/organisations that represent recreational fishing interests.
Shipping	+ Review of EMBA overlap with shipping fairways or areas of high marine traffic.
Tourism operators	+ Review of EMBA overlap with areas of interest to charter and tourism operators. + Review of potential presence in the Operational Area. + Review of website information of relevant operators/organisations that represent commercial tourism interests.

6.5.3 Identification and consultation of First Nations people and groups

Santos has developed a comprehensive process for identifying and undertaking effective consultation with First Nations Relevant Persons, which includes, but is not limited to:

- + Active steps to identify First Nations people and groups who may be Relevant Persons as per actions outlined in Table 6-4, including advertising broadly to ensure that Relevant Persons that are not otherwise identified by Santos' examination of the EMBA are given the opportunity to self identify.
- + Providing opportunities for Relevant Persons to provide input to EP development, including:
 - Registered Native Title Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs), groups associated with Native Title Determinations and groups in active Native Title Claims;
 - Native Title Representative Bodies;
 - groups who may be parties to Indigenous Protected Areas, or named in Indigenous Land Use Agreements; existing liaison committees or reference groups, where these committees or groups have been established between Native Title Parties, Native Title Representative Bodies and industry/government; and
 - Individual First Nations people that self-identify as relevant (if any).

For this EP, consultation effort has focused in particular on providing opportunities for PBCs to provide input, given their responsibilities under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) for representing Native Title holders who have been recognised by Australian law of their rights and interests to traditional land and waters.

Santos recognises that PBCs are bound by the traditional laws and customs of the native title group they represent. This includes, among other things, management and protection of cultural values.

Santos provided consultation opportunities and supporting information to PBCs where the EMBA intersects Native Title Determined Areas, allowing them to participate in the consultation process.

The EMBA specific for this EP however, is largely open ocean based, with shoreline/coastal contact in the Pilbara region. The EMBA includes large areas where only unplanned activities such as a spill event with a unlikely probability of occurrence, could have any impact on the environment.

There is significant conservatism associated with the EMBA based on low exposure values (as described in Section 5.1.2) and the large number of individual spill simulations (150) which Santos has used in developing the EMBA. As such, Santos' methodology has provided for a very broad capture of potential relevant persons and provided ample opportunities for them to provide input on the development of the EP if they feel they may be impacted by the activities.

The modelling at low exposure values is also primarily used to inform Santos preparedness for potential spill response. The EMBA as modelled does not take into account any spill response activities by Santos which would be implemented and reduce the EMBA extent in event of a spill.

Santos notes that for those groups at the EMBA extremities (over 400km from the activity location, such as the southern Pilbara region), there is a low likelihood of any impacts to cultural values (functions, interests and activities) by planned activities, based on a review of the registered cultural sites in proximity to the activity location.

There is also a low likelihood of impacts to cultural values by unplanned events. In the unlikely event of a worst-case oil spill (Section 9.7.2) the risk for those groups with Natives Title interests at the extremities of the EMBA is considered to be low, given the significant distances from the activity location.

Therefore, while Santos' methodology has provided for very broad consultation, Santos has given particular focus to those PBCs that are most proximate to the activity location, including PBCs with interests in lands and waters of the Pilbara region. Santos has been, since mid-2023, actively working with PBCs in this region to establish consultation agreements to support ongoing, regular and effective consultation and engagement activities.

In addition to direct consultation, Santos also undertakes a range of communications to promote opportunities for other First Nations people and groups, and other organisations or individuals, to self-identify as potential Relevant Persons if they feel that their functions, interests or activities may be affected. These promotional activities include widespread public information campaigns using a range of appropriate media, including, radio, print media, and targeted social media. Details of the public information campaign for this EP are included in **Table 6-7** and a schedule of advertising is included in **Table 6-6**. Advertisements used during this widespread campaign also noted that further information is available on the Santos Consultation Hub website.

Santos also has an online self-nomination form on its Consultation Hub website, where fact sheets and other consultation materials are published and available for download.

Such activities provide a more than reasonable opportunity for First Nations people to self-identify as a Relevant Person for the purpose of Regulation 25 consultation, where they considered themselves to have interests, functions or activities that may be affected by the planned activities and for Relevant Persons to provide their input.

Santos' process involves the provision of reasonable timeframes for the self-identification or nomination of others as Relevant Persons for Relevant Persons to consider consultation information, ask questions and give their input, and for Santos' consideration and assessment of the merits of objections and claims.

6.5.4 Relevant persons

A list of potential relevant persons was developed through application of the above methodology for the purposes of undertaking preliminary consultation to confirm consultation expectations.

This consultation phase was supported by an advertising campaign outlined in **Table 6-7** to raise public awareness about the proposed Activity and provide opportunities for authorities, persons or organisations to identify themselves if they wished to be consulted.

For this EP (Rev 07A), one party self-identified as a relevant person.

Relevant persons consulted for this EP are listed in **Table 6-5**.

Table 6-5: Relevant persons for this EP

Relevant person	Summary of relevance
Regulation 25(1)(a): Departments or agencies of the Commonwealth to which the activities to be carried out under the environment plan may be relevant	
Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA)	AFMA is responsible for managing Commonwealth fisheries and is a relevant agency where the Activity has the potential to impact on fisheries resources in AFMA managed fisheries. AFMA expects petroleum operators to consult directly with fishing operators about all activities and projects which may affect day to day fishing activities. AFMA also provides industry association contacts for petroleum operators to use when consultation with fishing operators is required.
Australian Hydrographic Office (AHO)	AHO is responsible for maintaining and disseminating nautical charts, including the distribution of Notice to Mariners.

Relevant person	Summary of relevance
Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)	AIMS is Australia's tropical marine research agency and is established under the <i>Australian Institute of Marine Science Act 1972</i> (AIMS Act).
Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) – maritime safety	AMSA is the statutory and control agency for maritime safety and vessel emergencies in Commonwealth Waters. AMSA is a relevant agency when proposed offshore activities may impact on the safe navigation of commercial shipping in Australian waters.
Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) – marine pollution	AMSA is the statutory and control agency for maritime safety and vessel emergencies in Commonwealth Waters. AMSA is a relevant agency when proposed offshore activities may impact on the safe navigation of commercial shipping in Australian waters.
Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) – Fisheries	DAFF (fisheries) has primary policy responsibility for promoting the biological, economic and social sustainability of Australian fisheries. The Department is the relevant agency where the Activity has the potential to negatively impact fishing operations and/or fishing habitats in Commonwealth waters.
Department of Defence (DoD)	DoD manages the development, maintenance and disposal of the Defence estate, including unexploded ordinance (UXO).
Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR)	DISR responsibilities include offshore oil and gas development and safety, and greenhouse gas storage.
Director of National Parks (DNP)	DNP is the statutory authority responsible for administration, management and control of Commonwealth marine reserves (CMRs). The DNP is a Relevant Person for consultation where: + the Activity or part of the Activity is within the boundaries of a proclaimed Commonwealth marine reserve; + activities proposed to occur outside a reserve may impact on the values within a Commonwealth marine reserve; and / or + an environmental incident occurs in Commonwealth waters surrounding a Commonwealth marine reserve and may impact on the values within the reserve.
Regulation 25(1)(a) and (b): Departments or agencies of Western Australia to which the activities to be carried out under the environment plan may be relevant	
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)	DBCA is a relevant State agency responsible for the management of State marine parks and reserves and protected marine fauna and flora.
Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation (JTSI)	JTSI is a Western Australian Government statutory authority responsible for promoting Western Australia as a holiday destination.
Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH)	DPLH is responsible for WA state level land use planning and management, and oversight of Aboriginal cultural heritage and built heritage matters.
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)	DPIRD is responsible for managing West Australian fisheries.

Relevant person	Summary of relevance
Department of Transport (DoT)	DoT is the control agency for marine pollution emergencies in Western Australian State waters.
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER)	DWER is responsible for environment and water regulation.
Gascoyne Development Commission (GDC)	GDC is a Western Australian Government statutory authority dedicated to the economic and social development of the Gascoyne region.
Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Advisory Committee (NCWHAC)	The NCWHAC provides advice to the Commonwealth and State Environment Ministers on the protection, conservation and management of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage area.
Pilbara Development Commission (PDC)	PDC is a statutory authority of the WA Government that partners with communities, government, business and industry to identify and support projects that benefit its region of interest.
Pilbara Ports Authority (PPA)	PPA manages port land and waters for the Ports of Dampier, Port Hedland, Ashburton, Varanus Island and Cape Preston West.
Western Australian Museum (WAM)	WAM maintains a database of shipwrecks off the Western Australian coast.
Regulation 25(1)(b): Departments or agencies of the responsible Western Australian Minister to which the activities to be carried out under the environment plan may be relevant	
Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DEMIRS)	DEMIRS is the department of the relevant State Minister and is required to be consulted under sub regulation 25(1) of the Environment Regulations.
Regulation 25(1)(d)(e): Persons or organisations whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by the activities to be carried out under the environment plan, or the revision of the environment plan	
Academic and research organisations	
Australian Marine Sciences Association (WA Branch)	Marine research organisation.
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	Marine research organisation.
Geoscience Australia (GA)	Marine research organisation.
Charles Darwin University (CDU)	Marine research organisation.
University of Tasmania - Marine Biodiversity Hub (UTAS)	Marine research organisation.
University of Western Australia (UWA)	Marine research organisation.
Western Australian Marine Science Institution (WAMSI)	Marine research organisation.

Relevant person	Summary of relevance
Commercial fishing – Commonwealth managed	
Commonwealth fisheries that overlap the EMBA (AFMA guidance): + Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery + North West Slope Fishery + Western Deep Water Trawl Fishery + Western Skipjack Fishery + Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery	Licence holders of these fisheries are entitled to fish within the EMBA and should be consulted based on published AFMA guidance.
Commercial fishing – Western Australian managed	
State fisheries that overlap the EMBA and are active in the Operational Area (WAFIC guidance). + Mackerel Managed Fishery (Area 2) + Pilbara Fish Trawl (Interim) Managed Fishery + Pilbara Line Fishery (Condition) + Pilbara Trap Managed Fishery + West Coast Deep Sea Crustacean Managed Fishery	Licence holders of these fisheries are active at the activity location and should be consulted based on published WAFIC guidance.
Energy industry – Petroleum titleholders and GHG permit holders	
Beagle No.1	Titleholder within the EMBA.
BP Developments Australia	Titleholder within the EMBA.
Carnarvon Energy	Titleholder within the EMBA.
Chevron Australia	Titleholder within the EMBA.
Eni Australia	Titleholder within the EMBA.
Finder	Titleholder within the EMBA.
Jadestone Energy	Titleholder within the EMBA.
Kato Energy	Titleholder within the EMBA.
Kufpec	Titleholder within the EMBA.
Mobil Australia	Titleholder within the EMBA.
Pathfinder Energy	Titleholder within the EMBA.
Skye Petroleum	Titleholder within the EMBA.
Vermilion Oil & Gas Australia	Titleholder within the EMBA.
Western Gas	Titleholder within the EMBA.
Woodside Energy	Titleholder within the EMBA.
Environmental conservation organisations	
Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF)	ACF is a peak conservation body with an interest in activities that may affect the marine environment.

Relevant person	Summary of relevance
Cape Conservation Group (CCG)	CCG is a volunteer, not-for-profit organisation that is involved in protecting the terrestrial and marine environment of the North West Cape.
Care for Hedland	Care for Hedland is an independent environmental interest group, that pursues a shared vision of environmental awareness and improvements for the townships of Port and South Hedland, along with the wider Pilbara region.
Conservation Council of WA (CCWA)	CCWA is a peak conservation body with an interest in activities that may affect the marine environment.
Greenpeace Australia Pacific (GAP)	GAP is a peak conservation body with an interest in activities that may affect the marine environment.
International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)	IFAW is a peak conservation body with an interest in activities that may affect the marine environment.
Protect Ningaloo	The Protect Ningaloo campaign aims to protect Exmouth Gulf from the threat of industrialisation, and conserve its outstanding natural, cultural and social values.
Wilderness Society (WS)	WS is a peak conservation body with an interest in activities that may affect the marine environment.
World Wildlife Fund (WWF)	WWF is a peak conservation body with an interest in activities that may affect the marine environment.
First Nations peoples and groups – Pilbara Region	
The following groups have interests that intersect the EMBA. Information was also provided to these organisations to help identify and consult groups or individuals whose spiritual or cultural connections to land and sea country in accordance with Indigenous tradition may be affected by proposed activities. In addition, targeted regional advertising was conducted across the Pilbara region to provide opportunity for individuals whose functions, interests and activities may be affected by the proposed activity to self-identify as relevant persons. No groups or individuals self-identified as relevant persons and none were identified via consultation with the following organisations.	
Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Council	Native Title Representative Body, which facilitates native claims on behalf of First Nations people and groups, as well as acting in the interests of Native Title Prescribed Body Corporates, where directed by Corporation Directors.
Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation	Body Corporate that represents the interests of five language groups with interest in the lands and waters of the Burrup Peninsula.
Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation	Native Title Prescribed Body Corporate that represents the interests of the Corporation's membership who may have interests or activities at the activity location.
Wirrawandi Aboriginal Corporation	Native Title Prescribed Body Corporate that represents the interests of the Corporation's membership who may have interests or activities at the activity location.
Yinggarda Aboriginal Corporation	Native Title Prescribed Body Corporate that represents the interests of the Corporation's membership who may have interests or activities at the activity location.

Relevant person	Summary of relevance
Industry associations - Commercial fishing	
Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association (ASBTIA)	ASBTIA represents the interests of the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery and Western Skipjack Fishery
Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA)	CFA represents the interests of commercial fishers with licences in Commonwealth waters.
Tuna Australia (TA)	TA represents the interests of the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery.
Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC)	WAFIC represents the interests of the WA commercial fishing, pearling and aquaculture sector.
Western Rock Lobster (WRL)	WRL is the peak industry body representing the interests of the western rock lobster fishery.
Industry associations - Energy industry	
Australian Energy Producers (AEP)	AEP represents the interests of oil and gas explorers and producers in Australia.
Industry associations - Local government	
Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)	WALGA is an independent, member based, not for profit organisation representing and supporting the WA Local Government sector.
Industry associations - Local industry	
Exmouth Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Regional representative organisation representing the interests of local business.
Onslow Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Regional representative organisation representing the interests of local business.
Industry associations - Recreational fishing	
Recfishwest	Recfishwest represents the interests of Western Australia's recreational fishing sector
WA Game Fishing Association (WAGFA)	WAGFA co-ordinates the activities of game fishing throughout Western Australia, maintains State game fishing records and data concerning open game fishing tournaments of its member clubs. WAGFA members are: + Broome Fishing Club + Cockburn Power Boats + Exmouth Game Fishing Club + Fremantle Sailing Club + Geraldton and District Offshore Fishing Club + King Bay Gamefishing Club + Marmion Angling and Aquatic Club + Naturaliste Game and Sports Fishing Club + Nor-West Game Fishing Club + Perth Game Fishing Club
Industry associations - Commercial shipping	
Maritime Industry Australia Ltd (MIAL)	MIAL is Australia's national shipping industry peak body.

Relevant person	Summary of relevance
Industry Associations - tourism	
Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC)	ATIC is the national representative body for tourism.
Tourism Council of Western Australia (TCWA)	Tourism Council WA is the peak body representing tourism businesses, industries and regions in Western Australia.
Marine Tourism WA (MTWA)	The MTWA is an association made up of charter industry owners and operators.
Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC)	WAITOC is the peak representative for Aboriginal tours and experiences in Western Australia.
Infrastructure operators	
Vocus	Operator of the following telecommunications cables: + Darwin-Jakarta-Singapore Cable (DJSC). + North West Cable System (NWCS).
Local Government and Community Liaison Groups	
Shire of Exmouth	The Shire of Exmouth is a local government area in the Gascoyne region of Western Australia.
Shire of Ashburton	The Shire of Ashburton is a local government area in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.
Exmouth Community Liaison Group	The Exmouth Community Liaison Group convenes three times a year in Exmouth, in collaboration with neighbouring oil and gas operators. The membership of this group is diverse and currently includes about 40 community representatives. Santos consults with the CLG as part of informing good environmental management practices.
Recreational fishers	
Exmouth Game Fishing Club (EGFC)	EGFC is an Exmouth based fishing club that represents local fishers who may be active in the Operational Area.
Ashburton Anglers	Ashburton Anglers is an Onslow based fishing club that represents local fishers who may be active in the Operational Area.
Tourism operators	
+ Exmouth-based operators + Dampier / Karratha operators	Marine tourism operators active within the EMBA.
Unions	
Maritime Union of Australia (MUA)	The Maritime Union of Australia is a union that covers waterside workers, seafarers, port workers, professional divers, and office workers associated with Australian ports.

6.5.5 Provision of sufficient information

Santos provided relevant persons with sufficient information so they can make an informed assessment about the possible consequences of the Activity on their functions, interests or activities. Santos provided relevant persons with information regarding:

- + The Activity proposed under this EP;

- + the environment that may be affected by the Activity, including depictions of the modelled EMBA and explaining how the EMBA is determined;
- + the potential environmental impacts and risks of the Activity and proposed control measures;
- + the environmental approval process;
- + the purpose of consultation, who may be a relevant person and how to self-nominate as a potential relevant person;
- + the titleholder's obligations during consultation in the course of preparing an environment plan, including the obligation of the titleholder not to publish particular information if so requested by the relevant person; and
- + how to provide feedback.

At a minimum, this information was available on the Santos website and also included in the fact sheets which Santos sent to relevant persons by email or made available during consultation sessions.

Relevant persons were provided access to information using different mediums and platforms, including by telephone, email, website (www.santos.com/offshoreconsultation), hard copy and electronic materials, and in person and virtual meetings.

Examples of the consultation materials used are included in **Appendix G**.

6.5.6 Consultation approach

In developing this EP, Santos has sought to work with authorities, persons and organisations on pragmatic and practical approaches to Regulation 25 consultation.

Santos sought feedback about consultation methods and information needs in its correspondence and via consultation meetings. Santos also sought information as to functions, interests or activities that may be affected by the Activity.

This approach has included:

- + Providing relevant persons access to information using different mediums and platforms, including by telephone, email, website, electronic materials, in person and virtual meetings.
- + Making information about proposed activities to be managed under this EP available on the Santos website at www.santos.com/offshoreconsultation. Hyperlinks to this website were included in consultation emails.
- + Recognising WAFIC's published guidance that petroleum titleholders consult directly with those licence holders historically active in Operational Areas, while providing a list of all entitled fisheries that overlap the EMBA. This approach acknowledges previous feedback from WAFIC regarding consultation fatigue among Western Australia's estimated 1500 fishing boat licence holders.
- + Using WAFIC fee-for-service arrangements to circulate Santos' consultation information via email to licence holders.
- + Making information available to potentially affected commercial fishing licence holders in Western Australian managed fisheries on the WAFIC web site at <https://www.wafic.org.au/what-we-do/access-sustainability/oil-gas/consultationhubtrial/> for the duration of the consultation period.
- + Recognising previous feedback from Recfishwest that petroleum titleholders consult directly with those fishing clubs with regional proximity to Operational Areas, while providing information on activity EMBA's that may have broader implications for recreational fishers. This approach acknowledges DPIRD's estimated 620,000 recreational fishers in Western Australia.

Santos also circulated information to subscribers of the *WA Offshore Quarterly Update (July 2023)* during the consultation period for this EP, including to some relevant persons identified in this EP. This Update provides subscribers with a regular update on proposed, planned, current and completed Activities.

All authorities, persons and organisations engaged during the preliminary consultation and consultation phases were provided a link to the NOPSEMA brochure: *Consultation on offshore petroleum environment plans*.

A schedule of consultation activities is included at **Table 6-6** and a schedule of advertising is included at **Table 6-7**.

6.5.7 Reasonable period for consultation

Santos directly contacted relevant persons notifying them of the consultation process and consultation period. Emails were sent to relevant persons to invite feedback for the EP, confirming the date by which feedback was sought.

Santos provided approximately 30 days from the date of initial consultation information being provided to review and respond with feedback about the proposed activities. In some cases, more time was provided. Santos also sought to accommodate reasonable requests for additional time.

For most identified relevant persons, the consultation period followed a 30-day preliminary consultation period.

6.5.8 Consultation opportunities

Santos offered multiple avenues and mediums for consultation, including:

- + Provision of a toll free 1800 number.
- + Dedicated email address.
- + In-person or virtual meetings, as appropriate.

Attempts were made to follow up contact and a response if/where no response was received.

6.5.9 Ongoing consultation

Santos carries out ongoing consultation during the life of an EP, including after an EP has been accepted by NOPSEMA.

Santos' post EP acceptance consultation implementation strategy is described in **Section 11.14** and Activity notifications are outlined in **Section 11.11**.

If, during the course of post acceptance consultation, Santos receives information demonstrating a new or increased environmental impact or risk that is not provided for in this EP, (as in force at the time) Santos will apply its Management of Change process outlined in 11.11.2.

Table 6-6: Additional Consultation Schedule

Activity	Purpose	Timing
Preliminary Consultation		
Website Website content and activity fact sheets developed and made available at https://www.santos.com/offshoreconsultation/	Provide relevant persons with: + Information about Santos' consultation obligations and approach. + Descriptions of proposed activities, including potential activity impacts and risks, and proposed management measures. + Contact information to enable relevant persons to provide feedback. + Information about how to self-identify as a relevant person, including an on-line nomination form. + Details about how feedback will be managed, including provision of Santos' offshore Western Australia privacy notice.	From 26 May 2023

Activity	Purpose	Timing
Advertising + Advertisements in the following publications: + The West Australian + Mid West Times and Geraldton Guardian + Pilbara News + North West Telegraph	Promote awareness of proposed activities to create opportunities for relevant persons to self-identify and seek feedback from relevant persons in addition to those identified by Santos as part of its initial public review process.	From 29 May 2023 (publication details are included in Table 6-7)
Consultation materials Email to identified relevant persons with a link to the fact sheet for this EP		From 29 May 2023
One-to-one meetings Meetings held with authorities, persons and organisations	Provide relevant persons with details on proposed activities and establish consultation expectations.	From 29 May 2023
Consultation		
Consultation materials Email to identified relevant persons advising the commencement of consultation	Reminder to Santos identified relevant persons of the commencement and closing dates for consultation.	From 26 June 2023
Advertising Advertisement confirming commencement of consultation in the following publications: + The West Australian + Mid West Times and Geraldton Guardian + Pilbara News + North West Telegraph	Promote awareness of proposed activities and seek feedback from relevant persons.	From 26 June 2023 (additional publication details are included in Table 6-7)
Consultation email Reminder email to identified relevant persons advising pending closure of consultation period	Reminder to Santos identified relevant persons of the closing dates for consultation.	From 19 July 2023
Community meetings Exmouth Community Liaison Group meeting	Information provided to the Group on a number of Santos proposed activities, including for this EP.	27 July 2023

Table 6-7: Consultation advertising (May to June 2023)

Publication date	Advertising type	Towns / Communities	Reach
Preliminary consultation			
Tuesday, 29 May 2023	Press ad – The West Australian	WA State-wide	341,000
Wednesday, 31 May 2023	Press ad – Midwest Times and Geraldton Guardian	Carnamah, Carnarvon, Chapman Valley, Coorow, Coral Bay, Cue, Dongara, Eneabba, Geraldton, Greenough, Jurien, Kalbarri, Leeman, Meekatharra, Mingenew, Moonyoonooka, Morowa, Mount Magnet, Mullewa, Northampton, Perenjori, Port Denison, Shark Bay, Tardun, Tenindewa, Three Springs, Useless Loop, Walkaway, Wandina and Yalgoo	16,739
Wednesday, 31 May 2023	Press ad – Pilbara News	Dampier, Karratha, Onslow, Pannawonica, Paraburdoo, Point Samson, Port Hedland, Roebourne, South Hedland, Tom Price and Wickham	11,545
Wednesday, 31 May 2023	Press ad – North West Telegraph	Marble Bar, Newman, Nullagine, Port Hedland, South Hedland and Wedgefield	5,485
Tuesday, 6 June 2023	Press ad – The West Australian	As above	341,000
Wednesday, 7 June 2023	Press ad – Midwest Times	As above	16,739
Wednesday, 7 June 2023	Press ad – Pilbara News	As above	11,545
Wednesday, 7 June 2023	Press ad – North West Telegraph	As above	5,485
Consultation			
Monday, 26 June 2023	Press ad – The West Australian	As above	415,000
Wednesday, 28 June 2023	Press ad – Midwest Times	As above	16,739
Wednesday, 28 June 2023	Press ad – Pilbara News	As above	11,545
Wednesday, 28 June 2023	Press ad – North West Telegraph	As above	5,485
Friday, 30 June 2023	Press ad – Geraldton Guardian	As above	10,012

6.6 Consultation report

Santos has considered and responded to feedback from relevant persons, which is summarised in **Table 6-8** addressing the requirements of regulation 16(b)(i)-(iii). Santos has also included in this table feedback that was received during the preliminary consultation phase.

Table 6-8: Summary of consultation activities.

Regulation 25(1)(a): Departments or agencies of the Commonwealth to which the activities to be carried out under the environment plan may be relevant			
Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA)			
+ On 29 May 2023, Santos emailed AFMA and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2133] + On 31 May 2023, AFMA emailed Santos advising it would like to meet to discuss the proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. [Con-2110] + On 7 June 2023, Santos met with AFMA regarding the proposed activities and discussed opportunities to adopt pragmatic and practical approaches for the consultation of licence holders entitled to fish in Commonwealth fisheries. [Con-2027] + On 12 June 2023, Santos responds to AFMA, in follow-up to their meeting the previous week. Santos notes its consultation principles and requested if AFMA could suggest a contact at DAFF. [Con-2134] + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed AFMA seeking feedback and advised it had directly consulted licence holders entitled to fish in the EMBA for this activity and had also provided information to organisations that represent these fisheries. [Con-1778] + On 30 June 2023, AFMA emailed Santos advising it had no feedback. [Con-1773]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
AFMA confirmed at the meeting of 7 June 2023 that it required pre-start and activity completion notifications	Santos notes AFMA's feedback.	Santos will send AFMA activity notifications.	Activity notifications are included in Table 11-4
Australian Hydrographic Office (AHO)			
+ On 26 June 2023, Santos emailed AHO seeking feedback on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, and included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-1646] + On 27 June 2023, Santos received a standard response email from AHO stating that the data supplied will be registered, assessed, prioritised and validated in preparation for updating our Navigational Charting products. [Con-1768]			

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
AHO provided its standard response on activity notifications that is issued to an operator developing an EP.	Santos noted AHO's advice.	There are no vessel-based activities planned for this EP.	No additional EP controls required.
Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)			
+ On 12 June 2023, Santos emailed AIMS and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2135] + On 26 June 2023, Santos emailed AIMS seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1657] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed AIMS by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1666] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
+ Summary of Objection or Claim	+ Assessment of Merits	+ Santos' Response Statement	+ EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) – maritime safety			
+ On 30 May 2023, Santos emailed AMSA and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2136] + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed AMSA seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1659] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed AMSA by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1667] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
While no feedback has been received from AMSA, Santos notes feedback from previous regional consultation activities, including: + Contacting the AHO at datacentre@hydro.gov.au no less than four weeks before operations, with details relevant to the operations to	Santos notes previous feedback provided by AMSA.	Santos will notify the AHO no less than four weeks before operations commence where practicable. Santos will notify AMSA's JRCC at least 24–48 hours before operations commence for each activity and advise when operations start and end.	Activity notifications are included in Table 11-4.

promulgate the appropriate Notice to Mariners. + Notify AMSA's Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) by email rccaus@amsa.gov.au for promulgation of radio-navigation warnings at least 24-48 hours before operations commence. + Provide updates to both the Australian Hydrographic Office and the JRCC on progress and, importantly, any changes to the intended operations. + Exhibit appropriate lights and shapes to reflect the nature of operations. + Set navigation status correctly in the ship's Automatic Identification System (AIS) unit.		Santos will notify both AHO and AMSA's JRCC on any changes to the intended operations. Santos noted the advice on obligations to comply with COLREGs, in particular, the use of appropriate lights and shapes to reflect the nature of operations and this is addressed in Section 8.1.3.	
Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) – marine pollution			
+ On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed AMSA seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1658] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed AMSA by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-2461] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	AMSA's roles and responsibilities are defined in the National Plan for Maritime Environmental Emergencies.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) – Fisheries			
+ On 29 May 2023, Santos emailed DAFF and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2138] + On 15 June 2023, Santos met with DAFF (domestic fisheries branch) regarding the proposed activities and discussed opportunities to adopt pragmatic and practical approaches for the consultation of licence holders entitled to fish in Commonwealth fisheries. [Con-2032] + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed DAFF seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1671] + On 23 July 2023, Santos emailed DAFF by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1672] + On 31 July 2023, DAFF emailed Santos and provided the following feedback: [Con-2121] + AFMA could provide information on fishing effort in areas likely to be directly impacted by proposed activities. + DAFF had no comment in relation to the activity location, further to Santos engaging AFMA on fishing effort and activity implications for licence holders. + DAFF noted more broadly that there were increasing activities occurring in the marine space with numerous consultation processes, with the fishing industry reporting significant consultation fatigue and a lack of capacity to adequately respond to all consultations. DAFF suggested keeping this in mind when Santos conducts its consultations with the fishing industry. + On 9 August 2023, Santos emailed DAFF that it had engaged AFMA for activity consultation, reviewed AFMA fishing effort publications, and had provided consultation information to licence holders and representative organisations. Santos also confirmed it was working with a number of government authorities and representative organisations to develop consultation methods that met Regulatory requirements while minimising fatigue to licence holders. [Con-2216]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
DAFF confirmed at the meeting of 29 May 2023 that it required pre-start and activity completion notifications	Santos notes DAFF's feedback.	Santos will send DAFF activity notifications.	Activity notifications are included in Table 11-4
DAFF advised that AFMA could provide fishing effort data on areas that were likely to be impacted by proposed activities.	Santos notes DAFF advice on sourcing fishing effort data.	Santos has reviewed ABARES fishery status reports in the development of this EP.	See Section
DAFF had no additional comments on proposed activities.	Santos notes DAFF feedback.	NA	NA
DAFF commented on consultation fatigue in the fishing industry.	Outside the consultation scope of this EP.	NA	NA

Department of Defence (DoD)			
+ On 29 May 2023, Santos emailed DoD and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2238] + On 26 June 2023, Santos emailed DoD seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1662] + On 7 July 2023, DoD emailed Santos with feedback regarding the proposed activities. DoD advised Santos must inform itself as to the risks associated with conducting activities in the NAXA and restricted airspace. DoD advised continued liaison with Australian Hydrographic Service for Notices to Mariners (NOTMAR) at least three weeks prior to the commencement of activities. [Con-1796] + On 24 July 2023, Santos emailed DoD to confirm Santos will notify DoD for any activities and also confirm the AHO is being consulted. Santos acknowledged DoD's advice in regard to location, identification, removal or damage to equipment from UXOs. [Con-1798]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
DoD advised Santos that the activities will occur within an area designated for military exercises and provided advice on the responsibilities of an Operator in the area.	Santos noted DoD's advice.	Santos will confirm restricted air space status with the Department as part of its commencement of activity notification.	Activity notifications are included in Table 11-4.
DoD confirmed it required pre-start and activity completion notifications.	Santos noted DoD's advice.	Santos confirmed activity notifications.	Activity notifications are included in Table 11-4.
Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR)			
+ On 26 June 2023, Santos emailed DISR seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1665] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed DISR by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1669] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Nil	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	Nil	No additional EP controls required.

Director of National Parks (DNP)			
+ On 30 May 2023, Santos emailed DNP and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2140] + On 26 June 2023, Santos emailed DNP seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1664] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed DNP by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1670] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
While no feedback has been received from DNP, Santos notes feedback from previous regional consultation activities, including: + Consideration of activity overlap with Australian Marine Parks. + Consideration of Biologically Important Areas and Key Ecological Features. + Consideration of Australian marine parks and their representativeness. + In the case of an emergency response, the DNP should be made aware of oil/gas pollution incidences which occur within a marine park or are likely to impact on a marine park as soon as possible. Notification should be provided to the 24-hour Marine Compliance Duty Officer.	Santos notes previous feedback provided by DNP.	All previously advised considerations are included in the relevant sections of the EP.	Santos notes DNPs notification requirements. These can be found in Table 11-4.

Regulation 25(1)(a): Departments or agencies of Western Australia to which the activities to be carried out under the environment plan may be relevant			
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)			
+ On 30 May 2023, Santos emailed DBCA and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2144] + On 26 June 2023, Santos emailed DBCA seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1647] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed DBCA by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1723] + On 26 July 2023, DBCA emailed Santos with feedback regarding the proposed activities as per the table below. [Con-2142] + On 14 Aug 2023, Santos emailed DBCA with feedback to address their queries. [Con-2281]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
DBCA commented that there were a number of ecologically important areas including marine parks and island reserves within the area of the EMBA for proposed activities, including but not limited to the Montebello Island Marine Park (M 9) and Rowley Shoals Marine Park (M 3). DBCA commented that Santos should appropriately understand and document the baseline values and state of the potentially affected environment prior to operations commencing that have the potential to impact on the conservation values of these areas.	Santos notes feedback provided by DBCA.	Santos acknowledges there are ecologically important areas located in the vicinity of the proposed operations, and within the wider EMBA. The values and sensitivities are documented in Section 5 of the EP, which provides the state of environment to inform the risk and impacts of the proposed activities. In addition, the potential area that could be affected by an unplanned hydrocarbon release are risk and impact assessed in Sections 9.6 and 9.7 of the EP, with appropriate measures applied to reduce the potential risk and impacts to ALARP and acceptable levels.	No additional EP controls required.
DBCA stated it would like to have the confidence that Santos has established appropriate baseline survey data on the current state of the areas supporting important ecological values and any	Santos notes feedback provided by DBCA.	Santos acknowledges DBCA's comments in relation to baseline survey data. Santos' existing baseline data is reviewed every two years. In areas where limited	No additional EP controls required.

current contamination if present within the area of potential impact by a hydrocarbon release (as identified by Santos' modelling). DBCA stated that following a desktop review and risk assessment, Santos should also collect appropriate baseline abundance and distribution data for benthic habitat and marine fauna species in the area of potential impact, including information on the key habitats used by threatened and specially protected fauna for activities like foraging, breeding and aggregating. If baseline information is not available, Santos should thoroughly assess what baseline information is required commensurate with the level of risk associated with the proposed activities and identify suitable sources/methods to attain that information.		baseline data is available, post spill pre-impact monitoring for the relevant receptors will be carried out in line with Santos' Operational and Scientific Monitoring Plan (OSMP). However, the ability to undertake this monitoring will depend on the arrival time for the oil to contact the sensitive receptors. The predicted arrival time for oil to contact key sensitive receptors is outlined in Sections 9.6 and 9.7 of the EP. Section 7 of the EP outlines the process Santos follows to identify and manage the potential risk and impact of an activity to ALARP and Acceptable levels. Furthermore, Sections 9.6 and 9.7 of the EP details the risk and impact assessment on High Environment Value areas and the Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (OPEP) identifies Priority Protection Areas for response arrangements in the event of an unplanned hydrocarbon release.	
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DBCA advised it undertakes monitoring in marine parks and reserves and publishes monitoring reports which are available on the department's website. DBCA commented that Santos should be aware that this monitoring is targeted to inform DBCA's values and objectives relating to marine park management and is not necessarily suitable to provide all baseline information required for oil spill risk assessment and management planning. DBCA encouraged Santos to acquire necessary information to implement a Before-After, Control-Impact (BACI) framework in planning and evaluating its management response.	Santos notes feedback provided by DBCA.	Santos acknowledges the monitoring reports available from the DBCA website. Santos notes DBCA's comments in relation to the BACI framework and advise the required responses to satisfy the BACI framework are contained within the Scientific Monitoring Plans attachment included in the OPEP.	No additional EP controls required.
In developing its Environment Plan, DBCA recommended that Santos refer to the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife as a best-practice industry standard for managing potential impacts of light pollution on marine fauna (https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/national-light-pollution-guidelines-wildlife).	Santos notes feedback provided by DBCA.	Santos assesses the potential risk and impacts of light emissions within Section 8.3 of the EP and in this case the light assessment boundary of 20 km from the source has been used as the extent of light exposure in accordance with the National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020).	No additional EP controls required.

DBCA acknowledged that in the event of an actual or impending hydrocarbon release, Santos had committed to notifying DBCA verbally within two hours of an event in its Mutineer Exeter Fletcher Finucane Cessation of Production Oil Pollution Emergency Plan. DBCA reiterated that it is requested Santos notify DBCA's Pilbara regional office on (08) 9182 2000 as soon as practicable in the event of a hydrocarbon release. DBCA advised it would not implement an oiled wildlife management response on behalf of a petroleum operator except as part of a whole of government response mandated by regulatory decision makers, and any advice or assistance from DBCA, at any scale, will occur on a full cost recovery basis. Santos should also commit to the monitoring and clean-up of any DBCA interests affected by an oil spill in consultation with DBCA.	Santos notes feedback provided by DBCA.	Santos confirms in the event of a hydrocarbon release, it will notify DBCA's Pilbara office as soon as practicable on telephone number 08 9182 2000. Santos will also work with the Department of Transport to ensure effective management, monitoring and clean-up of any DBCA interests if affected by an oil spill, in consultation with DBCA. Santos also acknowledges DBCA's advice that it will not implement an oiled wildlife management response on behalf of a petroleum operator except as part of a whole of government response mandated by regulatory decision makers led by DoT (state's Hazard Management Agency) and any advice or assistance from DBCA, at any scale, will occur on a full cost recovery basis	Activity notifications are included in Table 11-4.
Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation (JTSI)			
+ On 30 May 2023, Santos emailed JTSI and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2239] + On 26 June 2023, Santos emailed JTSI seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1645] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed JTSI by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1720] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Nil	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	Nil	No additional EP controls required.

Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH)			
+ On 30 May 2023, Santos emailed DPLH and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2240] + On 26 June 2023, Santos emailed DPLH seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1648] + On 28 July 2023, DPLH emailed Santos it had not reviewed the proposed MEFF Decommissioning project area against the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Directory as it was not a new project and was not required. [Con-1765] + On 31 July 2023, Santos emailed DPLH acknowledging it had no feedback. [Con-1754]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Nil	NA	NA	NA
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)			
+ On 30 May 2023, Santos emailed DPIRD and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2148] + On 9 June 2023, Santos met with DPIRD regarding the proposed activities and discussed opportunities to adopt pragmatic and practical approaches for the consultation of licence holders entitled to fish in Western Australian fisheries. [Con-2035] + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed DPIRD seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1710] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed DPIRD by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1742] + On 20 July 2023, DPIRD emailed Santos and advised it noted Santos' advice that it was actively consulting with relevant commercial fishing sectors and had no further comments at this time regarding proposed activities. [Con-1759] + On 26 July 2023, Santos emailed DPIRD acknowledging DPIRD had no comments on proposed activities. [Con-1749]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
DPIRD confirmed at the meeting of 9 June 2023 that it required pre-start and activity completion notifications.	Santos notes DPIRD's feedback.	Santos will send DPIRD activity notifications.	Activity notifications are included in Table 11-4.

Department of Transport (DoT)			
+ On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed DoT seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1711] + On 5 July 2023, DoT emailed Santos advising if there is a risk of a spill impacting State waters from any of the proposed activities, please ensure the DoT is consulted as outlined in the Department of Transport Offshore Petroleum Industry Guidance Note – Marine Oil Pollution: Response and Consultation Arrangements (July 2020). [Con-1757] + On 26 July 2023, Santos emailed DoT acknowledging its request via email on 5 July 2023. In accordance with this guidance Santos will provide draft OPEPs for respective activities, noting that we have already received feedback for those Environment Plans currently under assessment by the Regulator. [Con-1750] + On 21 August 2023, DoT emailed Santos stating if there is no change in risk to State waters, then it does not need to see the updated draft OPEP. [Con-2309]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Nil	NA	NA	Activity notifications are included in Table 11-4.
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER)			
+ On 30 June 2023, Santos emailed DWER seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1673] + On 23 July 2023, Santos emailed DWER by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1716] + On 26 July 2023, DWER emailed Santos requesting until 4 August 2023 to provide feedback. [Con-1763] + On 31 July 2023, Santos emailed DWER advising it could provide feedback by 4 August 2023. [Con-1753] + On 4 August 2023, DWER emailed Santos with feedback as per the below summary. [Con-2153] + On 18 August 2023, Santos emailed DWER a response to the feedback provided on 4 August 2023. [Con-2300]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
DWER requested to be notified in the event of a spill.	Santos has considered DWER's feedback.	Santos will notify DWER in the event of a reportable spill incident as soon as practicable. Santos will contact DWER on the 24-hour pollution watch hotline 1300 784 782 and email: pollutionwatch@dwer.wa.gov.au consistent with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 (Section 72) and Environmental Protection	Activity notifications are included in Table 11-4.

		(Unauthorised Discharge) Regulations 2004. Please advise if there have been any changes to the contact details you wish to be included in the EP.	
DWER advised it was not clear whether or not the project area overlaps with BIAs for listed marine mammals. DWER added that if the project area overlapped BIAs Santos should consider seasonal exclusions for migratory marine mammals.	Santos has considered DWER's feedback	The MEFF operational area and EMBA overlaps with some BIAs for Migratory Species (e.g. Pygmy Blue and Humpback Whales) which is outlined in Section 5 of the EP. Given this, Santos has considered the potential risks and impacts to marine fauna and an assessment has been made for the activities to occur at any time of the year, within Section 8 of the EP to ensure that potential risks and impacts are ALARP and acceptable. No seasonal restrictions are proposed for the activity as risks and impacts are considered to be ALARP and acceptable.	No additional controls required.
Gascoyne Development Commission (GDC)			
+ On 30 May 2023, Santos emailed Gascoyne Development Commission and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2278] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Gascoyne Development Commission seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1655] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Gascoyne Development Commission by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1734] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Advisory Committee (NCWHAC)			
+ On 30 May 2023, Santos emailed NCWHAC and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2277] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed NCWHAC seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1649] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed NCWHAC by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1725] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Pilbara Development Commission (PDC)			
+ On 30 May 2023, Santos emailed PDC and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2150] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed PDC seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1656] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed PDC by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1736] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Pilbara Ports Authority (PPA)			
+ On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed PPA seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1714] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed PPA by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1743] + On 20 July 2023, PPA emailed Santos advising all marine activities within port waters must be presented to their office for review. [Con-1760] + On 20 July 2023, Santos emailed PPA advising it would like to arrange a meeting to discuss planned activities and emergency response implications. [Con-1746] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Western Australian Museum (WA Museum)			
+ On 30 May 2023, Santos emailed WA Museum and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2275] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed WA Museum seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1651] + On 17 July 2023, WA Museum emailed Santos with feedback regarding the proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. [Con-2137] + On 18 August 2023, Santos emailed WA Museum with responses to their feedback on 17 July 2023. [Con-2302]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Santos should in the first instance consult the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (underwater heritage branch) and then engage the WA Museum as its delegate if necessary.	Santos notes WA Museum's guidance.	Santos confirms it has provided consultation information to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (underwater heritage branch) about proposed activities.	No additional EP controls required.
Not undertake activities that will have, or are likely to have, direct or indirect adverse impact on protected underwater cultural heritage (UCH) without a permit.	Santos notes WA Museum's guidance.	Santos will comply with the Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018, and will not undertake activities that will have, or are likely to have, direct or indirect adverse impact on protected underwater cultural heritage (UCH) without an appropriate risk assessment and a permit.	No additional EP controls required.
Observe the requirements of protected zones and obtain a permit to enter or operate in a protected zone if it is required;	Santos notes WA Museum's guidance.	Santos will observe the requirements of protected zones and obtain a permit to enter or operate in a protected zone if it is required.	No additional EP controls required.

Notify regulators of the discovery of any suspected UCH identified during the planning, development, operation, or decommissioning phases of a project within 21 days of the discovery.	Santos notes WA Museum's guidance.	Santos will comply with the Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018, and will not undertake activities that will have, or are likely to have, direct or indirect adverse impact on protected underwater cultural heritage (UCH) without an appropriate risk assessment and a permit. Santos will observe the requirements of protected zones and obtain a permit to enter or operate in a protected zone if it is required; and will also notify regulators of the discovery of any suspected UCH identified during the planning, development, operation, or decommissioning phases of a project within 21 days of the discovery.	Underwater Cultural Heritage Aspects are included in Section 5.2.6.7 of the EP. Activity notifications are included in Table 11-4.
Engage a suitably qualified and experienced maritime archaeologist to undertake a UCH Desktop Assessment to identify Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal UCH within the project area. This will assist compliance with Section 30 of the UCH Act. The Desktop Assessment report produced by the maritime archaeologist may recommend further work such as geophysical or geotechnical surveys, evaluative investigations (e.g. diving, ROV inspection), community consultation, or a UCH Impact Assessment.	Santos notes WA Museum's guidance.	Santos has consulted the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage for proposed activities, which has confirmed that the projects areas for proposed activities do not intersect with any known submerged Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.	No additional EP controls required.

Consult with Traditional Owners where appropriate if the project involves seabed disturbance in water shallower than 130m, the maritime archaeologist may advise proponents to undertake consultation with relevant Aboriginal Cultural Heritage services and Traditional Owners.	Santos notes WA Museum's guidance.	Santos has provided consultation information to Traditional Owners, where appropriate, for proposed activities.	No additional EP controls required.
Regulation 25(1)(b): Department of the responsible Western Australian Minister			
Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DEMIRS)			
+ On 19 June 2023, Santos met with DEMIRS to discuss clarification on the notifications DEMIRS like to receive on Santos' EPs. Feedback is: – DEMIRS advised that historically, DEMIRS has asked for us to notify them with a commencement and cessation notification (without specifying a timeframe). – Moving forwards Santos will provide DEMIRS a commencement and cessation notification on EPs in C'wlth waters that may impact state waters (but might be easier to run notifications as a default given size of EMBA's). – In terms of timing of notifications, alignment to the NOPSEMA ten-day notification would be useful for all Santos' EPs (C'wlth and State (noting that the State regs don't specify a timeframe so the 10 day one provides consistency). [Con-2115] + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed DEMIRS seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1712] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed DEMIRS by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1898] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
DEMIRS confirmed at that it required pre-start and activity completion notifications.	Santos notes DEMIRS feedback.	Santos will send DEMIRS activity notifications.	Activity notifications are included in Table 11-4.
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

Regulation 25(1)(d): Persons or organisations whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by the activities to be carried out under the environment plan, or the revision of the environment plan

Academic and research organisations

Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA) (WA Branch)

- + On 12 June 2023, Santos emailed AMSA and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of AMSA may be affected. [Con-2179]
- + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed AMSA seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1674]
- + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed AMSA by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1681]
- + No correspondence or feedback has been received.

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Nil	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	Nil	No additional EP controls required.

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)

- + On 12 June 2023, Santos emailed CSIRO and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of CSIRO may be affected. [Con-2154]
- + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed CSIRO seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1675]
- + On 29 June 2023, CSIRO emailed Santos and advised it was not able to pursue a collaboration [Con-1806]

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Nil	NA	NA	NA

Geoscience Australia (GA)

- + On 12 June 2023, Santos emailed GA and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of GA may be affected. [Con-2155]
- + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed GA seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1676]
- + On 14 July 2023, Santos received a response email from GA, GA advised it had no input or feedback. [Con-1808]
- + On 26 July 2023, Santos responded to the email from GA acknowledging it had no input or feedback for the proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. [Con-1797]

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Nil	NA	NA	NA
Charles Darwin University (CDU)			
+ On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed CDU seeking feedback on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of GA may be affected. [Con-1680] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed CDU by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1682] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
University of Tasmania - Marine Biodiversity Hub (UTAS)			
+ On 12 June 2023, Santos emailed UTAS and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of UTAS may be affected. [Con-2156] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed UTAS seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1677] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed UTAS by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1683] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
University of Western Australia (UWA)			
+ On 12 June 2023, Santos emailed UWA and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of UWA may be affected. [Con-2157] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed UWA seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1678] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed UWA by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1684] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Western Australian Marine Science Institution (WAMSI)			
+ On 12 June 2023, Santos emailed WAMSI and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of WAMSI may be affected. [Con-2158] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed WAMSI seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1679] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed WAMSI by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1685] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Commercial fishing – Commonwealth managed			
Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery			
+ As part of preliminary consultation activities Santos sought to engage with AFMA, DAFF and representative organisations on pragmatic and practical approaches for the consultation of licence holders entitled to fish in Commonwealth fisheries. + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed licence holders in the Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1900] + On 28 July 2023, Santos emailed licence holders in the Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1915] + On 29 June 2023, a licence holder advised Santos refer to the tuna industry association - Tuna Australia – on consultation matters. [Con-2161] + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed the licence holder and advised it was consulting Tuna Australia as part of consultation activities. [Con-2166] + No other correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

North West Slope Trawl Fishery			
+ As part of preliminary consultation activities Santos sought to engage with AFMA, DAFF and representative organisations on pragmatic and practical approaches for the consultation of licence holders entitled to fish in Commonwealth fisheries. + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed licence holders in the North West Slope Trawl Fishery and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on proposed activities. [Con-3057] + On 28 July 2023, Santos emailed licence holders in the North West Slope Trawl Fishery by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-3058] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery			
+ As part of preliminary consultation activities Santos sought to engage with AFMA, DAFF and representative organisations on pragmatic and practical approaches for the consultation of licence holders entitled to fish in Commonwealth fisheries. + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed licence holders in the Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on proposed activities.[Con-3060] + On 28 July 2023, Santos emailed licence holders in the Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-3061] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Western Skipjack Fishery			
+ As part of preliminary consultation activities Santos sought to engage with AFMA, DAFF and representative organisations on pragmatic and practical approaches for the consultation of licence holders entitled to fish in Commonwealth fisheries. + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed licence holders in the Western Skipjack Fishery and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on proposed activities. [Con-3062] + On 28 July 2023, Santos emailed licence holders in the Western Skipjack Fishery by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-3063] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery			
+ As part of preliminary consultation activities Santos sought to engage with AFMA, DAFF and representative organisations on pragmatic and practical approaches for the consultation of licence holders entitled to fish in Commonwealth fisheries. + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed licence holders in the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on proposed activities. [Con-3065] + On 28 July 2023, Santos emailed licence holders in the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-3066] + No other correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Commercial fishing – Western Australian managed			
Mackerel Managed Fishery (Area 2)			
+ As part of preliminary consultation activities Santos sought to engage with DPIRD and WAFIC on pragmatic and practical approaches for the consultation of licence holders entitled to fish in Western Australian fisheries. Santos followed WAFIC guidance to consult licence holders who may be directly affected. Santos also used WAFIC fee-for-service arrangements to circulate consultation information to fishers. + On 29 June 2023, WAFIC emailed licence holders in the Mackerel Managed Fishery and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. WAFIC correspondence included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on proposed activities. WAFIC also provided a summary of Santos consultation activities on a trial Consultation Hub on its web site. [Con-1891] + On 24 July 2023, WAFIC emailed licence holders in the Mackerel Managed Fishery by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-2182] + No correspondence or feedback has been received from licence holders.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

Pilbara Fish Trawl (Interim) Managed Fishery			
+ As part of preliminary consultation activities Santos sought to engage with DPIRD and WAFIC on pragmatic and practical approaches for the consultation of licence holders entitled to fish in Western Australian fisheries. Santos followed WAFIC guidance to consult licence holders who may be directly affected. Santos also used WAFIC fee-for-service arrangements to circulate consultation information to fishers. + On 29 June 2023, WAFIC emailed licence holders in the Pilbara Fish Trawl Managed Fishery and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. WAFIC correspondence included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on proposed activities. WAFIC also provided a summary of Santos consultation activities on a trial Consultation Hub on its web site. [Con-1891] + On 24 July 2023, WAFIC emailed licence holders in the Pilbara Fish Trawl (Interim) Managed Fishery by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-2182] + No correspondence or feedback has been received from licence holders.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Pilbara Line Fishery (Condition)			
+ As part of preliminary consultation activities Santos sought to engage with DPIRD and WAFIC on pragmatic and practical approaches for the consultation of licence holders entitled to fish in Western Australian fisheries. Santos followed WAFIC guidance to consult licence holders who may be directly affected. Santos also used WAFIC fee-for-service arrangements to circulate consultation information to fishers. + On 29 June 2023, WAFIC emailed licence holders in the Pilbara Line Fishery and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. WAFIC correspondence included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on proposed activities. WAFIC also provided a summary of Santos consultation activities on a trial Consultation Hub on its web site. [Con-1891] + On 24 July 2023, WAFIC emailed licence holders in the Pilbara Line Fishery by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-2182] + No correspondence or feedback has been received from licence holders.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

Pilbara Trap Managed Fishery			
+ As part of preliminary consultation activities Santos sought to engage with DPIRD and WAFIC on pragmatic and practical approaches for the consultation of licence holders entitled to fish in Western Australian fisheries. Santos followed WAFIC guidance to consult licence holders who may be directly affected. Santos also used WAFIC fee-for-service arrangements to circulate consultation information to fishers. + On 29 June 2023, WAFIC emailed licence holders in the Pilbara Demersal Trap Managed Fishery and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. WAFIC correspondence included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on proposed activities. WAFIC also provided a summary of Santos consultation activities on a trial Consultation Hub on its web site. [Con-1891] + On 24 July 2023, WAFIC emailed licence holders in the Pilbara Demersal Trap Managed Fishery by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-2182] + No correspondence or feedback has been received from licence holders.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
West Coast Deep Sea Crustacean Managed Fishery			
+ As part of preliminary consultation activities Santos sought to engage with DPIRD and WAFIC on pragmatic and practical approaches for the consultation of licence holders entitled to fish in Western Australian fisheries. Santos followed WAFIC guidance to consult licence holders who may be directly affected. Santos also used WAFIC fee-for-service arrangements to circulate consultation information to fishers. + On 29 June 2023, WAFIC emailed licence holders in the West Coast Deep Sea Crustacean Managed Fishery and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. WAFIC corresponded included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on proposed activities. WAFIC also provided a summary of Santos consultation activities on a trial Consultation Hub on its web site. [Con-1891] + On 24 July 2023, WAFIC emailed licence holders in the West Coast Deep Sea Crustacean Managed Fishery- by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-2182] + No correspondence or feedback has been received from licence holders.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

Energy industry – Petroleum titleholders and GHG permit holders			
Beagle No.1			
+ On 21 August 2023, Santos emailed Beagle No 1 and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2307] + On 14 September 2023 Beagle No 1 emailed Santos regarding its proposed Carnarvon Basin activities and advised Santos' activities are not going to impact its activities at WA-542-P and therefore though it acknowledges and thanks Santos for consultation procedure its does not feel it necessary to request further information or provide additional feedback at this time. [Con-2393]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Nil	NA	NA	NA
BP Developments Australia			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed BP Developments Australia and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2273] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed BP Developments Australia seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1688] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed BP Developments Australia by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1717] + On 25 July 2023, BP Developments Australia emailed Santos advising it had no comments or objection to the proposed activities. [Con-1762] + On 26 July 2023, Santos emailed BP Developments Australia acknowledging their feedback received via email on 25 July 2023. [Con-1767]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Nil	NA	NA	NA
Carnarvon Energy			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed Carnarvon Energy and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-1882] + On 12 June 2023, Carnarvon Energy emailed advising it had no further requests for information. [Con-1884]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Nil	NA	NA	NA

Chevron Australia			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed Chevron and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-1879] + On 12 June 2023, Chevron emailed Santos advising all consultation emails are to go to ABUConsultation@chevron.com. Chevron requested Santos provide GIS shape files for the activities. [Con-1885] + On 11 August 2023, Chevron emailed Santos regarding the proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Chevron advised it had no issues with the proposed activities. Chevron requested should any work planned is executed during the cyclone season, please provide cyclone anchor configuration, as well as mooring design, site specific geophysical and geotechnical data, anchor analysis, risk mitigations to inform Chevron Australia of the potential risks to our assets within the affected leases. [Con-2280] + On 1 September 2023, Santos emailed Chevron with an assessment of potential risks to Chevron assets arising from cyclone conditions. [Con-2334]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
While Chevron had no objections or claims about proposed activities, it requested additional information should activities be undertaken during cyclone season to inform potential risks to Chevron assets.	These activities are more than 200km from the nearest Chevron asset.	These activities are more than 200km from the nearest Chevron asset. No further information provided.	No additional EP controls required.
Eni Australia			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed Eni Australia and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2272] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Eni Australia seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1689] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Eni Australia by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1718] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

Finder			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed Finder and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2271] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Finder seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1690] + On 28 June 2023, Finder emailed notifying Santos that it has no objection or feedback on proposed activities in the Carnarvon Basin. [Con-1756] + On 14 July 2023, Santos emailed Finder acknowledging its email from 28 June 2023. [Con-1751]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Nil	NA	NA	NA
Jadestone Energy			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed Jadestone and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2270] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Jadestone seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1693] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Jadestone by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1722] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Kato Energy			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed Kato Energy and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2269] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Kato Energy seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1694] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Kato Energy by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1724] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

Kufpec			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed Kufpec and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2268] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Kufpec seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1695] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Kufpec by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1726] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Mobil Australia			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed Mobil Australia and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2267] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Mobil Australia seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1697] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Mobil Australia by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1728] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Pathfinder Energy			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed Pathfinder Energy and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2266] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Pathfinder Energy seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1698] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Pathfinder Energy by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1730] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

Skye Petroleum			
+ On 21 August 2023, Santos emailed Skye Petroleum and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2308] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Vermilion Oil & Gas Australia			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed Vermilion Oil & Gas Australia and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2265] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Vermilion Oil & Gas Australia seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1703] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Vermilion Oil & Gas Australia by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1741] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Western Gas			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed Western Gas and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2264] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Western Gas seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1704] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Western Gas by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1745] + On 8 August 2023, Western Gas emailed Santos and advised it will not be directly impacted by the proposed activities and had no feedback. [Con-2224]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Nil	NA	NA	NA

Woodside Energy			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed Woodside Energy and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2263] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Woodside Energy seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1705] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Woodside Energy by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1747] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Environmental conservation organisations			
Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF)			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed ACF and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of ACF may be affected. [Con-2159] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed ACF seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1769] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed ACF by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1783] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Cape Conservation Group (CCG)			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed CCG and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2262] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed CCG seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1770] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed CCG by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1784] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Care for Hedland			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed Care for Hedland and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2261] + On 12 June 2023, Care for Hedland emailed Santos advising it would like to be involved in the preliminary consultation for proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. [Con-2104] + On 6 July 2023, Santos met with Care for Hedland to provide an overview of the proposed Carnarvon Basin activities; learn more about Care for Hedland and their purpose and objectives; listen to any concerns Care for Hedland had with the proposed activities; and to discuss how it wanted to be consulted and if it wanted to receive activity notifications and emergency communications. Care for Hedland confirmed it required pre-start and activity completion notifications. [Con-2026] + On 14 July 2023, Santos emailed Care for Hedland thanking it for the meeting and providing information including the AMSA National Emergency Response Plan and DoT Hazard Maritime Emergency Plan. Santos confirmed it would add Care for Hedland onto the emergency communication list for the Carnarvon Basin activities. [Con-1781] + On 21 July 2023, Santos emailed Care for Hedland requesting additional feedback for the proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. [Con-1795] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Care for Hedland confirmed at the meeting of 6 July 2023 that it required pre-start and activity completion notifications	Santos notes Care for Hedland's feedback.	Santos will send Care for Hedland activity notifications.	Activity notifications are included in Section 11.11.1
Conservation Council of WA (CCWA)			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed CCWA and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of CCWA may be affected. [Con-2160] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed CCWA seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1771] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed CCWA by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1785] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Greenpeace Australia Pacific (GAP)			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed GAP and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of GAP may be affected. [Con-2162] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed GAP seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1774] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed GAP by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1787] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed IFAW and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of IFAW may be affected. [Con-2163] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed IFAW seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1775] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed IFAW by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1789] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Protect Ningaloo			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed Protect Ningaloo and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2260] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Protect Ningaloo seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1780] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Protect Ningaloo by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1790] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Wilderness Society (WS)			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed WS and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of WS may be affected. [Con-2164] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed WS seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1777] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed WS by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1793] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
World Wildlife Fund (WWF)			
+ On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed WWF and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of WWF may be affected. [Con-2165] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed WWF seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1779] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed WWF by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1794] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

First Nations peoples and groups			
Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Council (YMAC)			
+ On 29 May 2023, Santos emailed YMAC and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of YMAC may be affected. [Con-2181] + On 12 June 2023, Santos sent a follow up email to YMAC to discuss consultation expectations for proposed activities. [Con-2183] + On 19 June 2023, YMAC sent Santos an email with a proposed draft consultation framework in regard to oil and gas projects. YMAC also provided a letter to Santos stating it would contact Santos to discuss the framework and its administration. [Con-2106] + On 20 July 2023, Santos sent an email to YMAC acknowledging the provision of the draft consultation framework. Santos suggested an initial meeting to progress discussions in accordance with YMAC's expectations, including recognition and contribution for consultation of Rep Bodies and PBCs, as well as processes for the identification and protection of areas of cultural importance that may be affected by Santos' proposed activities. [Con-2076] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation. Santos considers reg 25(1)(d) consultation complete for this EP.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation (MAC)			
+ On 29 May 2023, Santos emailed MAC and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of MAC and its members may be affected. [Con-2184] + On 30 May 2023, MAC emailed Santos and advised it didn't have the capacity to be involved in the consultation process. [Con-2105] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed MAC seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-2095] + On 20 July 2023, Santos emailed MAC by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-2067] + On 21 July 2023, MAC emailed Santos advising it did not consider itself a relevant person for consultation. [Con-2058] + On 21 July 2023, Santos emailed MAC thanking it for its response. [Con-2198]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Nil	NA	NA	NA

Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation (NTGAC)

- + On 29 May 2023, Santos emailed YMAC on behalf of NTGAC and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of NTGAC may be affected. [Con-2188]
- + On 19 June 2023, YMAC emailed Santos on behalf of NTGAC and referred Santos to YMAC's draft consultation framework. [Con-2107]
- + On 7 July 2023, Santos called YMAC on behalf of NTGAC by way of a follow-up to set a meeting date. YMAC confirmed Santos would receive advice by email for a proposed meeting date with NTGAC in September 2023.
- + On 20 July 2023, Santos emailed YMAC on behalf of NTGAC proposing a meeting to discuss how to approach consultation for proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. [Con-2075]
- + On 7 August 2023, Santos called YMAC by way of a follow-up to set a meeting date. YMAC confirmed that Santos would receive advice by email for a proposed meeting date with NTGAC in September 2023.
- + On 21 August 2023, YMAC on behalf of NTGAC sent Santos an email with a draft budget estimate for a proposed meeting with the NTGAC Board of Directors in September 2023. [Con-2313]
- + On 22 August 2023, Santos emailed NTGAC advising it would consider the proposed meeting budget estimate. [Con-2397]
- + On 4 September 2023, YMAC emailed Santos advising it would like to meet with Santos on 11 September 2023 to discuss the agenda for the proposed meeting regarding future consultation. [Con-2335]
- + On 7 September 2023, Santos emailed YMAC confirming attendance at the meeting. Santos requested if it would be online or in person. [Con-2371]
- + On 8 September 2023, NTGAC emailed Santos following up on the proposed meeting budget. [Con-2379]
- + On 11 September 2023, Santos responded to NTGAC's email from 8 September 2023 confirming it accepts the proposed budget for the meeting on 28 September 2023. [Con-2383], [2384], [2429], [2437], [2439], [2452], [2454], [2456], [2431], [2432], [2433]
- + On 28 September 2023, Santos met with NTGAC to discuss Santos activities and consultation expectations, including the development of a consultation agreement and supporting consultation materials. [Con-2645]
- + On 5 October 2023, Santos emailed NTGAC a commitment to the codesign of a consultation agreement, as well as list of proposed Santos activities in the Carnarvon Basin, with planned EP submission and activity commencement dates. [Con-2487]
- + On 25 October 2023 Santos emailed YMAC on behalf of NTGAC with a request for feedback on the proposed Carnarvon Basin activities by 30 October 2023 given pending EP submission to NOPSEMA. Santos included an engagement protocol to support the consultation. [Con-2560]
- + On 1 November 2023 Santos emailed YMAC (NTGAC) to follow up on the opportunity to discuss a way forward on the Draft Agreement, Rates Schedule and the General Report, the latter of which we have in draft. Santos advised it would be pleased to meet. [Con-2604]
- + On 3 November 2023 YMAC (on behalf of NTGAC) emailed Santos advising it has been a busy period. YMAC advised it would be in touch later in November to discuss and proposed the 20 November 2023 for a meeting. [Con-2613]
- + On 10 November 2023 Santos emailed NTGAC to confirm a meeting the week of 20 November 2023 to progress consultation. Santos provided a draft general report for NTGAC to review and provide feedback to finalise a consultation agreement. [Con-2649]

+ On 27 November 2023 Santos emailed NTGAC to follow up on previous correspondence and request feedback on the draft general report. [Con-3103] + On 29 January 2024 Santos emailed NTGAC to again follow up on the provision of the draft report, seek feedback, and progress the consultation agreement, with a view to then organisation consultation meetings. [Con-3090]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
At the time of EP submission to NOPSEMA, NTGAC had not provided any concerns in relation to proposed activities relating to this EP.	The consultation process for this EP has been running for more than five months, since the first engagement on 29 May 2023. In order for the EP to meet the decommissioning schedule, the EP was submitted to allow for NOPSEMA's assessment to commence. NTGAC was advised before the EP was submitted to allow them an opportunity for any feedback. Santos has made considerable and significant efforts to date to try and engage and consult with NTGAC and within a reasonable timeframe to obtain their feedback. Santos considers reg 25(1)(d) consultation complete for this EP. Santos will continue to engage with NTGAC to conclude a consultation framework for the purposes of future engagement and consultation for other EPs.	In response to NTGAC's request to be consulted, Santos has provided NTGAC with the following information for consultation: Santos' consultation materials specific to the activity. Follow up emails and calls as per the NOPSEMA sensitive information report to endeavour to close out EP consultation. A prioritised list of Carnarvon Basin activities and EP submission dates, including an emphasis on the pending submission of this EP. An email and letter providing a final opportunity to provide feedback prior to EP submission. With respect to the development of consultation framework Santos has: Attended relationship meeting on 28 September 2023 to discuss consultation expectations. Provided a draft consultation protocol and supporting schedule of rates. Provided a draft general report containing plain English	All information and communication with NTGAC have been included in the NOPSEMA sensitive information report for this EP.

		descriptions of Santos' existing, planned and proposed activities that are regionally proximate to NTGAC's interests. Santos will continue to engage with NTGAC to conclude a consultation framework.	
Wirrawandi Aboriginal Corporation (WAC)			
+ In May 2023, Santos confirmed a meeting with WAC CEO and Directors in Karratha on 6 June 2023. The meeting did not proceed due to weather constraints for attendees travelling to the meeting. + On 2 June 2023, Santos emailed the WAC CEO to coordinate a follow up meeting, with a focus on introducing Santos, its people and its activities ahead of formal consultation.[Con-3102] + On 6 June 2023, WAC CEO emailed Santos to advise proposed date was not possible due to EWAC Board commitments and recommended 21 June as an alternative meeting date. [Con-3102] + On 21 June 2023, Santos met with WAC CEO and Directors. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce Santos and provide an overview of a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. The meeting resulted in the following actions: + WAC and Santos to develop a consultation framework to support ongoing consultation. + On 17 August 2023, WAC emailed a subsequent acceptance letter for consideration to support a range of activities, including Environment Plan consultation. [Con-2314] + On 20 August 2023, Santos responded to WAC and advised that the consultation letter was being considered. [Con-2315] + On 23 August 2023, WAC emailed Santos advising it is open to modifying the letter. [Con-2327] + On 10 September 2023 Santos emailed WAC regarding consultation for the proposed offshore activities. [Con-2380] + On 5 October 2023, Santos emailed WAC a commitment to the codesign of a consultation agreement, as well as list of proposed Santos activities in the Carnarvon Basin, with planned EP submission and activity commencement dates. [Con 2493] + On 25 October 2023, Santos emailed WAC with a request for feedback on the proposed Carnarvon Basin activities by 30 October 2023 given pending EP submission to NOPSEMA. Santos included an engagement protocol to support the consultation. [Con-2562] + On 4 November 2023, WAC emailed Santos providing an executed Cost Acceptance Letter (letter dated 26 October 2023) and NOPSEMA activities engagement letter, including a request for maps (within the letter dated 26 October 2023 and attached to the 4th November email) and further information to understand whether or not it should consider itself a relevant person. [Con-2621] + On 30 November 2023, Santos emailed WAC to provide a copy of an Engagement Protocol for consideration. [Con-3101] + On 4 December 2023 Santos emailed WAC to provide a copy of the Resourcing (costs) protocol. [Con-2826]			

- + On 21 December 2023 Santos provided WAC a General Report to WAC in response to a request (within email dated 4 November 2023, including maps and detail on project activities. [Con-3075]
- + On 2 January 2024, WAC emailed Santos suggesting a meeting in Perth between 23/1 and 25/1 2024. [Con-3081]
- + On 2 January 2024, Santos emailed WAC and agreed to meet during the proposed time period. [Con-3082]
- + On 15 January 2024, Santos emailed WAC and indicated that the purpose of the meeting was not for consultation but to informally meet (the new CEO). [Con-3084]
- + On 18 January 2024, WAC emailed Santos and agreed with proposed meeting objectives. [Con-3086]
- + On 29 January 2024, Santos emailed WAC advised that final copies of engagement and resourcing protocols were almost complete. WAC acknowledged that email on the same day. [Con-3092]
- + On 1 February 2024 Santos emailed WAC to acknowledge that Santos would align meetings with WAC availability. [Con-3130]
- + On 9 February 2024 Santos emailed WAC Protocol documents to sign via electronically via DocuSign [Con-3192]
- + On 21 February 2024 Santos emailed WAC seeking conformation that Protocols were received and proposed dates in March for a meeting with the WAC Executive. [Con-3131]

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
At the time of EP submission to NOPSEMA, WAC had not provided any concerns in relation to proposed activities relating to this EP.	The consultation process for this EP has been running for more than four months, since the first engagement on 21 June 2023. In order for the EP to meet the decommissioning schedule, the EP was submitted to allow for NOPSEMA's assessment to commence. WAC was advised before the EP was submitted to allow them an opportunity for any feedback. Santos has made considerable and significant efforts to date to try and engage and consult with WAC and within a reasonable timeframe to obtain their feedback. Santos considers reg 25(1)(d) consultation complete for this EP.	In response to WAC's request to be consulted, Santos has provided WAC with the following information for consultation: Santos' consultation materials specific to the activity. Follow up emails and calls as per the NOPSEMA sensitive information report to endeavour to close out EP consultation. A prioritised list of Carnarvon Basin activities and EP submission dates, including an emphasis on the pending submission of this EP. An email and letter providing a final opportunity to provide feedback prior to EP submission.	All information and communication with WAC has been included in the NOPSEMA sensitive information report for this EP.

	Santos will continue to engage with WAC to conclude a consultation agreement for the purposes of future engagement and consultation for other EPs.	With respect to the development of a consultation agreement Santos has: Attended a relationship meeting on 21 June 2023 to discuss consultation expectations. Provided a draft consultation protocol and supporting schedule of rates. Santos will continue to engage with WAC to conclude a consultation agreement.	
Yingarrda Aboriginal Corporation (YAC)			
+ On 26 June 2023, Santos emailed YAC and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of YAC may be affected. [Con-2102] + On 20 July 2023, Santos emailed YAC by way of reminder to set a meeting date. [Con-2073] + On 8 September 2023, Santos emailed Yingarrda Aboriginal Corporation a reminder of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities for consultation requesting feedback if it believed that its functions, interests, or activities may be affected by Santos' proposed activities, including consideration of potential impacts to or risks associated with: – Traditional lands and waters – Sea country interests – Totemic species – Other values or sensitivities of importance. [Con-2372] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation. Santos considers reg 25(1)(d) consultation complete for this EP.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

Industry Associations - Commercial Fishing			
Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association (ASBTIA)			
+ On 30 May 2023, Santos emailed ASBTIA and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of ASBTIA may be affected, as well as consideration of ASBTIA's expectation for consultation of licence holders. [Con-2291] + On 8 June 2023, Santos emailed ASBTIA regarding consultation for proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. [Con-2292] + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed ASBTIA seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1900] + On 28 July 2023, Santos emailed ASBTIA as a reminder its consultation for proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. [Con-1915] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA)			
+ On 30 May 2023, Santos emailed CFA and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of CFA may be affected, as well as consideration of CFA's expectation for consultation of licence holders. [Con-2170] + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed CFA seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1899] + On 25 July 2023, Santos emailed CFA by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1906] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Tuna Australia (TA)			
+ On 30 May 2023, Santos emailed TA and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of TA may be affected, as well as consideration of TA's expectation for consultation of licence holders. [Con-2172] + On 31 May 2023, TA emailed Santos advising it required a service agreement to enable it to effectively manage its member base for consultation. [Con-2117]			

- + On 1 June 2023, Santos met with TA to provide information on proposed activities. [Con-2028]
- + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed TA regarding consultation for proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. [Con-1896]
- + On 28 July 2023, Santos emailed TA and proposed an alternative approach to the service agreement and sought feedback on whether this approach would be acceptable to TA. [Con-1920]
- + On 31 July 2023, TA emailed Santos and advised a TA representative would respond. [Con-1923]
- + On 1 August 2023, Santos emailed TA and advised it would discuss proposed consultation approaches with the TA representative. [Con-1926]
- + On 1 August 2023, TA provided feedback to Santos advising it was disappointed that Santos was unable to enter a service agreement with Tuna Australia. [Con-2123]
- + On 1 August 2023, Santos called the TA representative to provide further context on the service agreement and the alternate consultation approach. Santos committed to further reviewing the matter and its intent for meaningful consultation of tuna fishery licence holders.
- + On 23 August 2023, Santos emailed Tuna Australia informing them that the Santos contracts team would like to discuss the potential amendments to the proposed T&Cs given Santos' particular needs. Santos will wait until it receives consent from Tuna Australia before passing contact details to the Contracting team. [Con-2316]
- + On 23 August 2023, Tuna Australia emailed Santos giving their consent to forward their details to the Santos Contracting team. [Con-2317]
- + On 24 August 2023, Santos emailed Tuna Australia with mark ups to their services agreement for their review. [Con-2323]
- + On 29 August 2023, Tuna Australia emailed Santos advising it does not agree with the proposed changes by Santos to its service agreement. [Con-2326]
- + On 13 September 2023, Santos emailed Tuna Australia to discuss the service agreement. [Con-2390]
- + On 13 September 2023, Tuna Australia emailed Santos to confirm a meeting via phone to discuss the service agreement. [Con-2391]
- + On 13 September 2023, Santos emailed Tuna Australia following a call with an updated service agreement for their review. [Con-2392]
- + On 18 September 2023, Tuna Australia emailed Santos, stating that Tuna Australia has discussed internally the rationale for the joint interest / joint venture and public indemnity insurance clauses Santos would like to keep included in the agreement. Tuna Australia is pleased to say we have no concerns with agreeing to this latest draft and happy for Santos to take the lead of progressing the agreement to signing. [Con-2426]
- + On 19 September 2023, Santos emailed Tuna Australia, requesting that there is a minor addition to the Agreement, which is the inclusion of an Agreement number (indicates that it is a negotiated Agreement); Santos asks if Tuna Australia is acceptable of this addition? Santos also requests for contact details of someone who can provide vendor details, so Santos can create a new vendor in the system. [Con-2450]
- + On 19 September 2023, Tuna Australia emailed Santos, confirming that they are happy for the Agreement number to be added to the document. Tuna Australia also provided contact details of whom Santos should contact to set-up Tuna Australia as a vendor in the system. [Con-2451]
- + On 5 October 2023, Tuna Australia emailed Santos the agreement executed by Tuna Australia. [Con-2473]
- + On 5 October 2023, Santos acknowledged receipt of the executed agreement from Tuna Australia.[Con-2474]

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
TA has requested Santos to support the development of a consultation agreement in order to undertake consultation activities.	Santos has finalised arrangements with TA to support engagement and consultation on future EPs. Santos has not received any comments on the activities associated with this EP. Santos considers Reg 25(1)(d) consultation complete for this EP.	Santos is committed securing consultation arrangements with TA.	NA
Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC)			
+ On 7 June 2023, Santos met with WAFIC regarding the proposed activities and discussed opportunities to adopt pragmatic and practical approaches for the consultation of licence holders, noting WAFIC's published guidance on this matter. [Con-2037] + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed WAFIC and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of WAFIC may be affected, as well as consideration of WAFIC's expectation for consultation of licence holders. [Con-1901] + On 27 July 2023, WAFIC emailed Santos with feedback regarding proposed activities and sought additional information on the following topics: [Con-2149] + General comments + Compensation framework for marine users where infrastructure left in results in a permanent loss of fishing grounds and/or ocean access. + Long-term plans to monitor the degradation of infrastructure to be left in situ. + Prohibition of recreational fishing within the Operational Area + Consideration of WAFIC decommissioning guidelines + MEFF Decommissioning comments + Chemical and hydrocarbon discharges – Can Santos clarify if they are proposing to leave rigid flowlines in situ? + Degradation of abandoned seabed equipment – The proposal to leave steel mooring chains of approximately 710 m / ~190 t per mooring in situ, with a statement it will bury overtime, what modelling has Santos done to assess this? + On 9 August 2023, Santos emailed WAFIC and provided a response as summarised below [Con-2212]. + On 24 August 2023, WAFIC emailed Santos with feedback in response to the email from Santos on 9 August 202309/08. [Con-2324]			

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
WAFIC asked what compensation framework Santos has in place for marine users where infrastructure left in situ results in a permanent loss of fishing grounds and/or ocean access.	Santos has considered WAFIC's feedback, which is relevant to the Mutineer Exeter Cessation of Production and Decommissioning EP (9885-650-PLN-0001) https://info.nopsema.gov.au/home/under_assessment?utf8=%E2%9C%93&keyword_search=mutineer	Santos does not have a compensation framework in place for decommissioning where infrastructure is proposed to be left in situ. Santos has assessed the potential interaction with other marine users, from infrastructure within the EPs which includes assessing impacts on commercial fishing.	No additional EP controls required.
WAFIC asked what long-term plans Santos had in place to monitor the degradation of infrastructure to be left in situ.	Santos has considered WAFIC's feedback, which is relevant to the Mutineer Exeter Cessation of Production and Decommissioning EP (9885-650-PLN-0001) https://info.nopsema.gov.au/home/under_assessment?utf8=%E2%9C%93&keyword_search=mutineer .	Each specific Decommissioning EP will include monitoring (if required) to address legislative requirements based on the scientific and engineering studies done to inform the end state. Long term monitoring will be specific to each EP depending on a variety of factors such as location and proposed end states.	No additional EP controls required.
WAFIC requested the prohibition of recreational fishing within the Operational Areas for proposed activities.	Santos has considered WAFIC's feedback.	Santos prohibits recreational fishing within the operational area and it is already included as a control in the EPs WAFIC listed, even if not listed as a "key management measure" in the factsheets.	No additional EP controls required.

WAFIC asked Santos to demonstrate how Santos had considered WAFIC's decommissioning guidelines.	Santos has considered WAFIC's feedback.	Santos notes WAFIC's position within the WA Commercial Fishing Consultation Guidance Framework July 2023 and considers that the EP addresses the potential risks and impacts associated with snagging, contaminants, benthic surveys, consultation processes, and reefing.	No additional EP controls required.
WAFIC asked if Santos was proposing to leave rigid flowlines in situ and, if so, do they contain plastic as WAFIC expects all plastic to be removed. WAFIC asked if the expected discharge and degradation of infrastructure left in situ was subject to any monitoring to ensure that the expected environmental impacts do not exceed Australian standards.	Santos has considered WAFIC's feedback.	Santos does not propose to leave the rigid flowline in situ thereby removing nearly all plastics, and the consultation factsheet and EP content reflects this position. Section confirms that the only plastic left in situ are two 4" ball valves and the EP concludes this is ALARP and acceptable. Section 8.8 (Degradation of abandoned seabed equipment) of the EP, risk and impact assesses the case to leave six deeply buried anchors, six lengths of mooring chain and two gravity bases in situ and demonstrates that long term monitoring associated with such equipment is not required, ALARP and acceptable. Section 10 (Environmental Monitoring Arrangements) addresses monitoring requirements to meet Section 270 of the OPGGS Act. Santos will undertake a survey to confirm the state and position of the equipment at the time of	No additional EP controls required.

		abandonment, referred to as an as left survey., and describes the post decommissioning environmental survey to confirm the conditions at the time of abandonment are ALARP and acceptable, and satisfy the NOPSEMA Section 270 guidance.	
WAFIC asked with respect to snag risk what modelling had been done to support Santos' statement that the steel mooring chains of approximately 710 m / ~190 t per mooring in situ will bury over time.	Santos has considered WAFIC's feedback.	Santos has not modelled the snag risk associated with mooring chains laying on the seabed. Trawl fishing is not currently permitted at the activity location area, but the ongoing physical presence of the gravity bases, anchors and mooring chains abandoned in situ will not preclude commercial trawling activities from occurring in Area 6, should that area open to trawl fishing in the future. Section 9.9.2 assesses the potential risk and impact of unplanned interaction with other marine users and demonstrates that leave in situ is ALARP and acceptable in that location. Section 9.9.3 contains a control to ensure the presence of the equipment is known and marked on nautical charts.	No additional EP controls required.

Western Rock Lobster (WRL)			
+ On 31 May 2023, Santos emailed Western Rock Lobster and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2259] + On 19 June 2023, Santos met with Western Rock Lobster to provide information about the proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Western Rock Lobster confirmed it required pre-start and activity completion notifications. [Con-2030] + On 20 June 2023, Santos emailed information to Western Rock Lobster regarding proposed Carnarvon Basin activities and oil pollution management plans. [Con-2120] + On 30 June 2023, Santos emailed Western Rock Lobster seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1904] + On 25 July 2023, Santos emailed Western Rock by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1910] + No further correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Western Rock Lobster confirmed at the meeting of 19 June 2023 that it required pre-start and activity completion notifications.	Santos notes Western Rock Lobster's feedback.	Santos will send Western Rock Lobster activity notifications.	Activity notifications are included in Table 11-4.
Industry Associations – Energy industry			
Australian Energy Producers (AEP)			
+ On 31 May 2023, Santos emailed AEP and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2168] + On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed AEP seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1880] + On 21 July 2023, Santos emailed AEP by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1809] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

Industry Associations – Local Government			
Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)			
+ On 1 June 2023, Santos emailed WALGA and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2257] + On 30 June 2023, Santos emailed WALGA seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1807] + On 21 July 2023, Santos emailed WALGA by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1810] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Industry associations - Local industry			
Exmouth Chamber of Commerce and Industry			
+ On 31 May 2023, Santos emailed Exmouth CCI and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2255] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Exmouth CCI seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1813] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Exmouth CCI by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1834] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Summary of Objection or Claim	Summary of Objection or Claim	Summary of Objection or Claim
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Onslow Chamber of Commerce and Industry			
+ On 31 May 2023, Santos emailed Onslow CCI and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2254] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Onslow CCI seeking feedback on proposed activities outlined in this EP. [Con-1812] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Onslow CCI by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1833] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Industry Associations - Recreational Fishing			
Recfishwest			
+ On 30 May 2023, Santos emailed Recfishwest and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of Recfishwest may be affected, as well as consideration of Recfishwest's expectation for consultation of regional fishing clubs for proposed activities. [Con-2211] + On 30 June 2023, Santos emailed Recfishwest regarding consultation for proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. [Con-1902] + On 25 July 2023, Santos emailed Recfishwest as a reminder its consultation for proposed Carnarvon Basin [Con-1913] + On 27 July 2023, a representative from Recfishwest called Santos asking for an extension of time to provide feedback. Santos confirmed that an extension was acceptable. + On 16 August 2023, Recfishwest emailed Santos with feedback regarding the proposed MEFF Decommissioning activities as per the table below. [Con-2298] + On 22 August 2023, Santos emailed Recfishwest acknowledging its feedback regarding the proposed MEFF Decommissioning activities. [Con-2311]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
It is noted that the proposed plug and abandonment of 12 subsea wells will be conducted within the Mutineer-Exeter, Fletcher and Finucane production licences. In review of the works planned in the information sheet, Recfishwest also notes that there will be a 500 m PSZ exclusion zone in place around the MODU or LWIV for the duration of activities. Given that the MEFF Decommissioning activities will be conducted approximately 147 km north of Dampier, recreational fishing is likely to be less frequent in the area. Nonetheless, please keep us informed as the proposal progresses.	Santos has noted this information.	Santos acknowledges the feedback provided and Santos will ensure Recfishwest is kept informed of the progress of the project through activity notifications and provision of the Santos WA Quarterly Update. Santos also acknowledges that Recfishwest has no objections to the proposed MEFF decommissioning activities. A summary of your response will be included the relevant Environment Plan for proposed activities.	Activity notifications are included in

Based on the information provided, Recfishwest has no objections to the proposed activities.			
WA Game Fishing Association (WAGFA)			
+ On 31 May 2023, Santos emailed WGFA and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. Santos included a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP and sought feedback on whether the functions, interests or activities of WGFA may be affected, as well as consideration of WGFA 's expectation for consultation of regional fishing clubs for proposed activities. [Con-2294] + On 30 June 2023, Santos emailed WGFA regarding consultation for proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. [Con-1903] + On 25 July 2023, Santos emailed WGFA as a reminder its consultation for proposed Carnarvon Basin [Con-1909] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Industry associations - Commercial shipping			
Maritime Industry Australia Ltd (MIAL)			
+ On 1 June 2023, Santos emailed Maritime Industry Australia and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2251] + On 7 June 2023, Maritime Industry Australia advised it was sharing information about the proposed Carnarvon Basin activities with its members on 7 June 2023. [Con-2119] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Maritime Industry Australia seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1861] + On 21 July 2023, Santos emailed Maritime Industry Australia by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1862] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

Industry Associations - tourism			
Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC)			
+ On 1 June 2023, Santos emailed Australia Tourism Industry Council and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2250] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Australia Tourism Industry Council seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1865] + On 25 July 2023, Santos emailed Australia Tourism Industry Council by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1868] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Tourism Council of Western Australia (TCWA)			
+ On 1 June 2023, Santos emailed Tourism Council of Western Australia and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2249] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Tourism Council of Western Australia seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1866] + On 25 July 2023, Santos emailed Tourism Council of Western Australia by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1869] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Marine Tourism WA (MTWA)			
+ On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed Marine Tourism WA seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1878] + On 25 July 2023, Santos emailed Marine Tourism WA by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1872] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC)			
+ On 1 June 2023, Santos emailed WAITOC and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2248] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed WAITOC seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1867] + On 25 July 2023, Santos emailed WAITOC by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1870] + On 26 July 2023, WAITOC emailed Santos requesting it considers the newly endorsed Whadjuk climate change declaration. [Con-2139] + On 21 August 2023, Santos emailed WAITOC confirming it had considered the declaration. [Con-2310]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Nil	NA	NA	NA
Infrastructure operators			
Vocus			
+ On 1 June 2023, Santos emailed Vocus and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2247] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Vocus seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1817] + On 21 July 2023, Santos emailed Vocus by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1821] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Local Government Authorities and Community Liaison Groups			
Shire of Exmouth			
+ On 31 May 2023, Santos emailed Shire of Exmouth and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2245] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Shire of Exmouth seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1912] + On 28 June 2023, Shire of Exmouth emailed Santos advising the email was received and forwarded to the relevant departments. [Con-2279] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Shire of Exmouth by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-2021] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Shire of Ashburton			
+ On 31 May 2023, Santos emailed Shire of Ashburton and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-2244] + On 27 June 2023, Santos emailed Shire of Ashburton seeking feedback on proposed activities. [Con- 1911] + On 12 July 2023, Shire of Ashburton provided feedback regarding the emergency response actions and queries to address. It did not raise any objectives to the planned activities. [Con-1958] + On 26 July 2023, Santos emailed Shire of Ashburton providing information requested and answering its queries. [Con-1981] + On 2 August 2023, Shire of Ashburton emailed Santos acknowledging response and requesting it receive activity notifications and other information as required. [Con-2151] + On 7 August 2023, Santos emailed Shire of Ashburton confirming it would add it to the activity notifications and emergency notifications lists for the proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. [Con-2152] + On 7 August 2023, Shire of Ashburton emailed Santos a list of names to add to the activity notifications and emergency notification lists. [Con-2235] + On 10 August 2023, Santos emailed Shire of Ashburton confirming it would add the emails to the activity notifications and emergency contacts list. [Con-2237]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
Shire of Ashburton requested pre-start and activity completion notifications.	Santos notes Shire of Ashburton's feedback.	Santos will send Shire of Ashburton activity notifications.	Activity notifications are included in Table 11-4.
Exmouth Community Liaison Group (ECLG)			
+ On 12 June 2023, Santos emailed ECLG and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. [Con-3069] + On 30 June 2023, Santos emailed ECLG and provided information on a number of proposed Carnarvon Basin activities, seeking to discuss opportunities for consultation and provided a link to an information fact sheet about proposed activities in this EP. [Con-3070] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed ECLG by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-3071][Con3072] + On 27 July 2023, Santos met with the ECLG and provided an overview of the proposed Carnarvon Basin activities. No questions or feedback were raised in the meeting.[Con-3072] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			

Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Recreational fishers			
Exmouth Game Fishing Club (EGFC)			
+ On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed Exmouth Game Fishing Club feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1860] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Exmouth Game Fishing Club by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1843] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Ashburton Anglers			
+ On 29 June 2023, Santos emailed Ashburton Anglers feedback on proposed activities. [Con-1863] + On 19 July 2023, Santos emailed Ashburton Anglers by way of reminder on the timeframe for providing feedback. [Con-1846] + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.
Tourism operators			
Exmouth-based operators			
Dampier / Karratha operators			
+ On 24 July 2023, Santos emailed tourism operators based in Exmouth and Dampier/Karratha seeking feedback on proposed activities. + No correspondence or feedback has been received.			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference
NA	Santos considers it has provided sufficient time and opportunity for consultation.	NA	No additional EP controls required.

Unions			
Maritime Union of Australia (MUA)			
+ On 11 June 2024, Santos received an email at (offshore.environment.admin@santos.com) from the MUA whereby they self-identified as a relevant person for consultation purposes, and provided a document outlining the union's position on offshore decommissioning and the manner in which the MUA wishes to be consulted in relation to the MEFF CoP and Decommissioning Environment Plan. [Con-5068] + On 10 July 2024, Santos emailed the MUA advising receipt of their 11 June 2024 email. Santos provided the MEFF fact sheet for this activity and information outlining consultation requirements under Commonwealth Government Environmental Regulations. To accommodate any additional feedback that MUA may have had, the consultation feedback period for the MUA was extended to 20 July 2024. [Con-5070] + On 16 July 2024, the MUA emailed Santos requesting a zoom meeting and seeking information on Santos' marine contractors and the destination of Santos' retired equipment, once onshore. [Con-5269] + On 18 July 2024, Santos replied to the 16 July 2024 correspondence with MUA by way of email accepting the MUA's offer to meet. Santos explained it no longer contracts vessels, equipment or waste management services until all environmental approvals are in place and appeals periods have passed. Santos did not consider information requested by the MUA on 16 July 2024 relevant to the consultation process for the EP [Con-5145]. + On 18 July 2024, Santos received an email from MUA proposing a meeting on 24 July 2024 [Con-5257]. + On 22 July 2024 MUA sent an email to seek confirmation of a proposed meeting for the 24 July 2024 [Con-5187]. + On 24 July 2024 a meeting was held between Santos and MUA. Santos noted MUA interest in MEFF and its position outlined in the document provided to Santos on 11 June 2024. Santos noted it was proposing to remove all property above the sea-floor and studies indicated this would provide a stronger environmental outcome. Santos responded to an MUA comment in the meeting relating to the cost difference between full removal and leaving property in-situ, assuring the MUA that environmental outcomes are very important to Santos and that our assessment of equipment proposed to be left in situ, results in a stronger environmental outcome. [Con-5232]			
Summary of Objection or Claim	Assessment of Merits	Santos' Response Statement	EP Reference

The MUA self-identified as a relevant person for consultation purposes in relation to the MEFF CoP and Decommissioning EP. The MUA provided Santos with its “Preferred Consultation – For Titleholders In The Course Of Preparing For Offshore Infrastructure Decommissioning” document and reiterated this position in the meeting. The MUA claimed that the science on the environmental outcomes of leaving property in-situ is inconclusive.	Santos acknowledges MUA’s position within the “Preferred Consultation – For Titleholders In The Course Of Preparing For Offshore Infrastructure Decommissioning” document and agreed to consult with MUA on this EP. Santos considers Reg 25(1)(d) consultation complete for this EP.	Santos is proposing to remove all subsea infrastructure above the sea-floor. The EP demonstrates that there is an equal or better environment outcome to leave the buried anchors and anchor chains in situ, when compared to complete property removal.	Section 8.8 Degradation of abandoned seabed equipment
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7. Environmental impact and risk assessment

OPGGS(E)R 2023 Requirements
Regulation 21. Environmental assessment
Evaluation of environmental impacts and risks 21(5) The environment plan must include: (a) details of the environmental impacts and risks for the activity; and (b) an evaluation of all the impacts and risks, appropriate to the nature and scale of each impact or risk; and (c) details of the control measures that will be used to reduce the impacts and risks of the activity to as low as reasonably practicable and an acceptable level. 21(6) To avoid doubt, the evaluation mentioned in paragraph (5)(b) must evaluate all the environmental impacts and risks arising directly or indirectly from: (a) all operations of the activity; and (b) potential emergency conditions, whether resulting from accident or any other cause.

Environmental impact and risk assessment refers to a process whereby planned and unplanned events that will or may occur during an activity are quantitatively and/or qualitatively assessed for their impacts on the environment (physical, biological, and socio-economic) at a defined location and specified period of time. In addition, unplanned events are assessed on the basis of their likelihood of occurrence which contributes to their level of risk.

Santos has undertaken environmental impact and risk assessments for the planned events (including any routine, non-routine and contingency activities) and unplanned events in accordance with the OPGGS(E)R.

Provided in this section of the EP relating to the environmental impact and risk assessment approach are:

- + terminology used
- + summary of the approach.

A full description of the process applied in identifying, analysing and evaluating the impacts and risks relating to the planned activity is documented in *Santos' Offshore Division Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Guideline* (EA-91-IG-00004_5).

The outcome of the impact and risk assessment process is detailed in **Sections 8 and 9**.

7.1 Impact and risk assessment terminology

Common terms applied during the impact and risk assessment process and used in this EP are defined in **Table 7-1**. For a more comprehensive listing of the terms and definitions used in environmental impact and risk assessment, refer to Santos' Offshore Division Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5).

Table 7-1: Impact and risk assessment terms

Name	Definition
Acceptability	Determined for both impacts and risks. Acceptability of events is in part determined by the consequence of the impact following management controls. Acceptability of unplanned events is in part determined from its risk ranking following management controls. For both impacts and risks, acceptability is also determined from a demonstration of the ALARP principle, consistency with Santos Policies, consistency with all applicable legislation and consideration of relevant stakeholder consultation when determining management controls.
Activity	Specific tasks and actions undertaken throughout the lifecycle of oil and gas exploration, production and decommissioning.
ALARP	As Low As Reasonably Practicable. The term refers to reducing risk to a level that is As Low As Reasonably Practicable. In practice, this means showing through reasoned and supported arguments, that there are no other practicable options that could reasonably be adopted to reduce risks further.
Authorised Person	Person with authority to make the decision or take the action. Examples are Vessel Master, Field Superintendent, Supervisor, Person-in-Charge, Company Authorised Representative, and Project Manager.
Control Measure	Means a system, an item of equipment, a person or a procedure, that is used as a basis for managing environmental impacts and risks ¹ .
DEMIRS	Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety.
Environment	Includes the natural and socio-economic values and sensitivities which will or may be affected by the activity. Is defined by NOPSEMA and DMIRS as: (a) ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities (b) natural and physical resources (c) the qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas (d) the heritage value of places (e) the social, economic and cultural features of the matters mentioned in paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d).
Environmental consequence	A consequence is the outcome of an event affecting objectives. Note 1 An event can be one or more occurrences and can have several cases. Note 2 An event can consist of something not happening. (Reference ISO 73:2009 Risk Vocabulary).
Environmental impact	Defined by NOPSEMA ¹ as any change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partly resulting from a planned or unplanned event ¹ . Defined by DMIRS as any change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, that wholly or partly results from a petroleum activity of an operator.
ENVID	Environmental hazard identification workshop.
Environmental risk	Applies to unplanned events. Risk is a function of the likelihood of the unplanned event occurring and the consequence of the environmental impact that arises from that event.

¹ Defined by the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2023

Name	Definition
Hazard	A situation with the potential to cause harm.
Grossly disproportionate	Where the sacrifice (cost and effort) of implementing a control measure to reduce impact or risk grossly exceeds the environmental benefit to be gained.
Impact assessment	The process of determining the consequence of an impact (in terms of the consequence to the environment) arising from a planned or unplanned event over a specified period of time.
Likelihood	The chance of an unplanned event occurring.
Non-routine planned event	An attribute of the planned activity that may occur or will occur infrequently during the planned activity. A non-routine planned event is intended to occur at the time.
Planned activity	A description of the activity to be undertaken, including the services, equipment, products, assets, personnel, timing, duration and location and aspect of the activity.
Planned event	An event arising from the activity which is done with intent (i.e., not an unplanned event) and has some level of environmental impact. A planned event could be routine (expected to occur consistently throughout the activity) or non-routine (may occur infrequently if at all). Air emissions, bilge water discharge and drill cuttings discharge would be examples of planned events.
Receptor	A feature of the environment that may have environmental, social and/or economic values.
Risk	The effect of uncertainty on objectives.
Risk assessment	The process of determining the likelihood of an unplanned event and the consequence of the impact (in terms of economic, human safety and health, or ecological effects) arising from the event over a specified period of time.
Routine planned event	An attribute of the planned activity that results in some level of environmental impact and will occur continuously or frequently through the duration of the planned activity.
SLT	Senior Leadership Team.
Unplanned event	An event that results in some level of environmental impact and may occur despite preventive safeguards and control measures being in place. An unplanned event is not intended to occur during the activity.

7.2 Summary of the environmental impact and risk assessment approach

7.2.1 Overview

Santos operates under an overarching Risk Management Policy. The company Risk Procedure (SMS MS1 ST01) underpins the Risk Management Policy and is consistent with the requirements of AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018, Risk Management – Guidelines (ISO, 2018).

The key steps to risk management are illustrated in **Figure 7-1**. The forum used to perform the assessment is the environmental hazard workshop, referred to as an ENVID, which is described in Section 4 of Santos' Offshore Division Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Guideline (EA-91-IG-00004_5).



Figure 7-1 Environmental impact and risk assessment process

Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Guideline (EA-91-IG-00004) includes consideration of the key areas in an impact and risk assessment, being:

- + description of the activity (including location and timing)
- + description of the environment (potentially affected by both planned and unplanned activities)
- + identification of relevant persons
- + identification of legal requirements ('legislative controls') that apply to the activity
- + Santos' policy and Safety Management System requirements
- + principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD)
- + Santos' acceptable levels of impact and risk.

These factors are considered in environmental impact and risk assessment workshops in which environmental hazards are identified and assessed (ENVID workshop). The workshop involves participants from Santos' Health, Safety and Environment (HSE), Project and Spill Response departments and specialist environmental consultants.

7.2.2 Describe the activities and hazards (planned and unplanned events)

A description of the activity is required in order to determine the planned events that will take place and the credible unplanned events that may occur. The location, timing and scope of the activity must be described to determine the impacts from planned events, and the impacts and risks from unplanned events since these have a bearing upon the EMBA, by the activity.

The outcome of this assessment is detailed in the relevant sub-sections of **Sections 8 and 9**.

7.2.3 Identify receptors and determine nature and scale of impacts

A description of the environment (natural and socio-economic) within which hazards from the activity will, or may occur, is required. This constitutes a crucial stage of the risk assessment, as an understanding of the environment that will or may be affected is required to determine the type and consequence of impacts from the activity being assessed. The environment must be understood with respect to the spatial and temporal limits of the activity and key resources at risk that will or could be impacted by planned and unplanned events. Santos has developed a Values and Sensitivities of the Marine and Coastal Environment (EA-00-RI-10062, **Appendix D**) reference document that describes the existing environment that may be affected by Santos' activities and is reviewed and updated annually.

Where the existing environment is being reviewed for regulatory approvals, a comparison shall be made against the Values and Sensitivities of the Marine and Coastal Environment (EA-00-RI-10062). A new protected matters search is required to ensure a thorough understanding of the existing environment to ensure all risks are assessed.

The extent of actual impacts from each planned activity or risks from each unplanned activity, are assessed using, where required, modelling (e.g., hydrocarbon spills) and scientific reports. The duration of the event is also described including the potential duration of any impacts should they occur. Receptors identified as potentially occurring within impacted area(s) are detailed in **Section 5** and **Appendix D**.

7.3 Describe the environmental performance outcomes and control measures

For each planned and unplanned event, a set of Environmental Performance Outcome(s), Control Measures, Environmental Performance Standards and Measurement Criteria are identified. The definitions of the performance outcomes, control measures, standards and measurement criteria must be consistent with the OPGGS(E)R 2023, and the NOPSEMA EP Content Requirements Guidance Note (NOPSEMA, 2019).

For any hazard, additional controls, must also be considered and either accepted for use or rejected based on whether the standard controls reduce impacts and risks to levels that are ALARP and acceptable (refer **Sections 7.3.2** and **7.4**).

Controls are allocated in order of preference according to **Figure 7-2**.

Control	Effectiveness	Example
Eliminate		<i>Removal of the risk.</i> Refueling of vessels at port eliminates the risks of an offshore refueling.
Substitute		<i>Change the risk for a lower one.</i> The use of low-toxicity chemicals that perform the same task as a more toxic additive.
Engineering		<i>Engineer out the risk.</i> The use of oil-in-water separator to minimise the volume of oil discharged.
Isolation		<i>Isolate people or the environment from the risk.</i> The use of bunding for containment of bulk liquid materials.
Administrative		<i>Provide instructions or training to people to lower the risk.</i> The use of Job Hazard Analysis to assess and minimise the environmental risks of an activity.
Protective		<i>Use of protective equipment.</i> Containment and recovery of spilt hydrocarbons.

Figure 7-2: Hierarchy of controls

7.3.1 Determine the impact consequence level and risk rankings (on the basis that all control measures have been implemented)

This step looks at the causal effect between the aspect/hazard and the identified receptor. Impact mechanisms and any thresholds for impacts are determined and described, using scientific literature and modelling where required. Impact thresholds for different critical life stages are also identified where relevant.

The consequence level of the impact is then determined for each planned and unplanned event using the Santos Environment Consequence Descriptors (**Appendix H**).

These detailed environmental consequence descriptions are based on the consequence of the impact to relevant receptors in the categories of:

- + threatened/migratory/local fauna
- + physical environment/habitat
- + threatened ecological communities
- + protected areas
- + socio-economic receptors.

This process determines a consequence level, based on set criteria for each receptor category, and takes into consideration the duration and extent of the impact, receptor recovery time and the effect of the impact at a population, ecosystem or industry level. The level of information required to complete the impact or risk assessment depends on the nature and scale of the impact or risk. This process determines a consequence level based on set criteria for each receptor category and takes into consideration the duration and extent of the impact, receptor recovery time and the effect of the impact at a population, ecosystem or industry level. Impacts to social and economic values are also considered based on existing knowledge and feedback from stakeholder consultation. As the result

of historic consultation with stakeholders, the social and economic values in the region that are of interest are evident.

As planned events are expected to occur during the activity, the likelihood of their occurrence is not considered during the risk assessment, and only a consequence level is assigned (**Table 7-2**).

Table 7-2: Summary environmental consequence descriptors

Consequence Level	Consequence Level Description
I	Negligible – No impact or negligible impact
II	Minor – Detectable but insignificant change to local population, industry or ecosystem factors
III	Moderate – Significant impact to local population, industry or ecosystem factors
IV	Major – Major long-term effect on local population, industry or ecosystem factors
V	Severe – Complete loss of local population, industry or ecosystem factors AND/OR extensive regional impacts with slow recovery
VI	Critical – Irreversible impact to regional population, industry or ecosystem factors

For unplanned events, the consequence level of the impact is combined with the likelihood of the impact occurring (**Table 7-3**), to determine a residual risk ranking using the corporate Santos risk matrix (**Table 7-4**). For oil spill events, potential impacts to environmental receptors are assessed where they occur within the EMBA using results from modelling.

Table 7-3: Likelihood description

No.	Matrix	Description
f	Almost Certain	Occurs in almost all circumstances OR could occur <i>within days to weeks</i>
e	Likely	Occurs in most circumstances OR could occur <i>within weeks to months</i>
d	Occasional	Has occurred before in Santos OR could occur <i>within months to years</i>
c	Possible	Has occurred before in the industry OR could occur <i>within the next few years</i>
b	Unlikely	Has occurred elsewhere OR could occur <i>within decades</i>
a	Remote	Requires exceptional circumstances and is unlikely even in the long term

Table 7-4: Santos risk matrix

		Consequence					
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Likelihood	f	Low	Medium	High	Very High	Very High	Very High
	e	Low	Medium	High	High	Very High	Very High
	d	Low	Low	Medium	High	High	Very High
	c	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	b	Very Low	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium	High
	a	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Low	Medium	Medium

7.3.2 Evaluate if impacts and risks are as low as reasonably practicable

For planned and unplanned events, an ALARP assessment is undertaken to demonstrate that the standard control measures adopted reduce the impact (consequence level) or risk to ALARP. This process relies on demonstrating that further potential control measures would require a disproportionate level of cost/effort in order to reduce the level of impact or risk. If this cannot be demonstrated, then further control measures are adopted. The level of detail included within the ALARP assessment is based upon the nature and scale of the potential impact or risk. For example, more detail is required for a risk ranked as 'Medium' compared to a risk ranked as 'Low'.

7.4 Evaluate impact and risk acceptability

Santos considers an impact or risk associated with the proposed activity to be acceptable if the following criteria are met:

- + The consequence of a planned event is ranked as A or B; or a risk of impact from an unplanned event is ranked Low to Medium.

An assessment has been completed to determine whether further information or studies are required to support or validate the consequence assessment.

The acceptable levels of impact and risks have been informed by relevant species recovery plans, threat abatement plans and conservation advice can be demonstrated.

- + Performance standards are consistent with legal and regulatory requirements.

Performance standards are consistent with the Santos Environment, Health and Safety Policy.

- + Performance standards are consistent with industry standards and best practice guidance (e.g., National Biofouling Management Guidance Guidelines for the Petroleum Production and Exploration Industry (Marine Pest Sectoral Committee, 2018) and the Australian Biofouling Management Requirements (DAWE, 2022)).
- + Performance outcomes and standards are consistent with stakeholder expectations.

Performance standards have been demonstrated to reduce the impact or risk to ALARP.

The consequence and risks associated with the proposed activity are not inconsistent with the outcomes of relevant principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) under the EPBC Act (**Table 7-5**).

Table 7-5: Activity Relevant Principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development

No.	ESD Principle	Relevance
(a)	decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long-term and short-term economic, environmental, social and equitable considerations	Santos' environmental impact and risk assessment determines impact consequence levels considering the duration and extent of the impact, receptor recovery time and the effect of the impact at a population, ecosystem, or industry level. The Santos Environment Consequence Descriptors highlights the integration of long-term and short-term environmental, and socio-economic considerations (Appendix H – Santos Environment Consequence Descriptors). The assessment of impact consequence levels for the proposed activity simultaneously assesses of the activity's potential implications against this principle. Additional assessment of this principle in relation to acceptability will not be conducted.
(b)	if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation	For planned activities, assessment of this ESD principle is inherent in Santos' environmental impact and risk assessment process, as Santos does not proceed with activities if the consequence of a planned event is ranked III (Moderate) or above. For unplanned events, if the residual risk is ranked between Medium and Very High, an assessment against this principle is required. If the residual risk is Medium to Very High and there is significant scientific uncertainty associated with the aspect, additional assessment against this principle is required.
(c)	the principle of inter-generational equity—that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations	For planned activities, assessment of this ESD principle is inherent in Santos' environmental impact and risk assessment process, as Santos does not proceed with activities if the consequence of a planned event is ranked III (Moderate). For an unplanned event, if the residual risk is ranked between Medium and Very High, an assessment against this principle is required. The assessment of this principle is implemented through further details on ALARP assessment highlighting assurance that potential impacts and risks are managed, and the environment is maintained for the benefit of future generations. Evaluation of the importance and relevance of stakeholder interest for this principle, if triggered, is fundamental in demonstrating that the environment is maintained for the benefit of future generations.
(d)	the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision-making	Evaluate if there is the potential to affect biological diversity and ecological integrity.
(e)	improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms should be promoted	This principle refers to activities which involve valuation, pricing and/or incentive mechanisms for the production, delivery, distribution or consumption of goods and services, especially those that are derived from natural or social capital or from ecological services. This principle is not relevant to the proposed activity as the proposed activity does not involve the production, delivery, distribution or consumption of goods and services.

8. Environmental risk and impact assessment for planned activities

OPGGS(E)R 2023 Requirements
Regulation 21. Environmental assessment.
21(5) The environment plan must include: (a) details of the environmental impacts and risks for the activity; and (b) an evaluation of all the impacts and risks, appropriate to the nature and scale of each impact or risk; and (c) details of the control measures that will be used to reduce the impacts and risks of the activity to as low as reasonably practicable and an acceptable level. 21(6) To avoid doubt, the evaluation mentioned in paragraph (5)(b) must evaluate all the environmental impacts and risks arising directly or indirectly from: (a) all operations of the activity; and (b) potential emergency conditions, whether resulting from accident or any other reason. Environmental performance outcomes and standards. 21(7) The environment plan must: (a) set environmental performance standards for the control measures identified under paragraph (5)(c); and (b) set out the environmental performance outcomes against which the performance of the titleholder in protecting the environment is to be measured; and (c) include measurement criteria that the titleholder will use to determine whether each environmental performance outcome and environmental performance standard is being met.

An ENVID workshop (as described in **Section 7**) for planned activities was held in August 2021 for floating asset removal activities (to inform the previously accepted MEFF CoP EP (Revision 4), and in February 2022 for seabed asset removal and abandonment in situ activities (included as part of this EP revision (Revision 5). This workshop identified potential sources of environmental impact associated with the planned activities for this activity. The consequence rankings resulting from the environmental assessments are summarised in **Table 8-1**. A comprehensive risk and impact assessment for each of the planned events, and subsequent control measures proposed by Santos to reduce the risk and impacts to ALARP and acceptable levels are details in the following subsections.

Table 8-1: Summary of the consequence level rankings for hazards associated with planned events

EP Section	Hazard	Activity / Planned Event	Consequence Ranking
8.1	Interaction with other marine users (cessation phase activities and removal execution activities)	Physical presence of vessels and ROVs for surveys, barrier testing, seabed asset removal and other activities. Continued presence of seabed assets until removed.	I – Negligible
8.2	Seabed and benthic habitat disturbance	Seabed asset removal, wet storage of equipment until future decommissioning. Sand and / or grout bags to provide stabilisation to end of disconnected, flowlines and umbilicals at the seabed. Sediment grab samples for environmental analysis. Deburial of seabed assets and seabed asset removal. Continued presence of seabed assets abandoned in situ.	II – Minor
8.3	Light emissions	Light spill from artificial lighting on vessels. Underwater light from ROV activities.	I – Negligible
8.4	Noise emissions	Vessel and ROV activities including equipment positioning, cutting activities, marine growth removal and removal of equipment. Helicopter activities.	II – Minor
8.5	Atmospheric emissions	Vessel and helicopter engine and equipment fuel combustion.	I – Negligible
8.6	Operational discharges	Sewage and grey water disposal; putrescible waste disposal; desalination brine disposal; cooling water disposal; boiler blowdown water; deck drainage disposal; bilge water disposal. Potential impacts may also occur outside of the operational area as a result of decommissioning activities, such as during transport of seabed assets via vessel to the port of landing, and the associated onshore disposal aspect.	II – Minor

EP Section	Hazard	Activity / Planned Event	Consequence Ranking
8.7	Planned chemical and hydrocarbon discharges	During barrier testing activities there may be release of small amounts of barrier testing fluids (such as hydraulic fluid, MEG or methanol) and potential residual hydrocarbons. There may be potential for minor discharge from ROV or tooling hydraulics (typically mineral oil) during subsea operations. Leak testing fluid discharge for barrier testing and flowline testing. Some OIW may be discharged when risers are cut or disconnected. There may be a small release of production riser contents during pressure bleed off prior to cutting, if required. Treated seawater, OIW and residual hydrocarbons may be released during disconnection and removal of seabed equipment. Scale inhibitor, hydraulic control fluid and glycol discharges during disconnection and removal of control systems. Potential NORMs contamination.	II – Minor
8.8	Degradation of abandoned seabed equipment	Degradation and corrosion of buried mooring chains and anchors.	I – Negligible
8.9	Contingency spill response operations	Light emissions.	I – Negligible
		Noise emissions.	I – Negligible
		Atmospheric emissions.	I – Negligible
		Operational discharges and waste.	I – Negligible
		Physical presence and disturbance.	II – Minor
		Chemical dispersant application.	II – Minor
		Disruption to other users of marine and coastal areas and townships.	II – Minor

8.1 Interaction with other marine users

8.1.1 Description of event

Event	The physical presence of vessels and ROVs involved with the cessation phase activities (Section 4.4) and seabed equipment removal activities (Section 4.6) as well as the presence of the following equipment has the potential to interact with other marine users: + seabed equipment (wells, pipelines, flowlines, umbilicals, jumpers, trees, mooring systems, etc) and the associated safety exclusion zones; + wet-stored equipment; + Vessel based activities for IMMR; and + continued presence of infrastructure on the seabed until its removal under this EP. + Vessel based activities for concurrent MEFF decommissioning and MEFF P&A activities. Note: Buried equipment does not pose a credible risk of interaction with other marine users Note: Unplanned interaction with other marine users that may result in vessel collisions is addressed in Section 9.6. Unplanned interaction with other marine users from the ongoing presence of seabed equipment abandoned in situ is addressed in Section 9.9
Extent	Operational area.
Duration	For the duration of the activity, as described in Section 4.1 .

8.1.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Potential receptors: Socio-economic (commercial fishers, tourism, shipping traffic and other oil and gas activities).

Potential impacts to tourism and recreational fisheries include displacement from the area while the vessels are in the operational area.

Socio-economic

There are three Commonwealth fisheries that overlap with the operational area and are actively fished (**Section 5.2.6**). An analysis of the current fishery closures, depth range of activity, historical fishing effort data, fishing methods and consultation feedback (**Section 6**) has revealed that there is a low potential for interaction with Commonwealth commercial fisheries. None of the Commonwealth fisheries identified in **Section 5.2.6** are likely to be significantly active in the operational area; the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery is the only fishery with limited activity in the area with only five active vessels since 2005.

There are two State commercial fisheries that overlap the operational area and may also be active within the area. The Pilbara Fish Interim Trawl Managed Fishery has a Closed Area (Area 6) that overlaps the operational area. As such, this fishery is unlikely to be active in the operational area during cessation of operations and decommissioning activities. The Mackerel Managed Fishery also overlaps the operational area. Low level fishing effort from the Mackerel Managed Fishery was recorded in the southern-most part of the operational area ten years ago. Consultation with WAFIC and licence holders in both fisheries suggests that there is likely to be no direct impact to fishing operations in the area. The licence holders in this fishery have not raised any concerns during MEFF Development operations, nor in the recent stakeholder consultation.

WAFIC sought additional information regarding the wet storage of equipment during cessation of operations and floating asset removal activities and this request was closed out during the consultation process during the development of Revision 4 with no further requests from WAFIC (**Section 8.1.6**). A number of other State commercial fisheries overlap the operational area; however, disruption to these fisheries is not expected, given the typical water depths they operate in (shallower than the operational area) and the vast areas available to the fisheries.

The planned abandonment in situ of seabed equipment may have a negligible impact to the area available for commercial fishing activities in the future. The Closed Area (Area 6) of the Pilbara Fish Interim Trawl Managed Fishery, which overlaps the Operational Area, has been closed since current management arrangements for the fishery came into effect in 1998 (Gaughan and Santoro, 2021). The seabed in the operational area is relatively flat, smooth and featureless. The only bathymetric features identified were those associated with the MEFF seabed equipment (**Section 5.2.3.1**). Therefore, the operational area is unlikely to support habitat for aggregations of target species for the fishery (e.g., goldband snapper, rankin cod, bluespot emperor and threadfin bream). Santos has consulted with fishing industry bodies, WAFIC and individual fishing licence holders within the Pilbara Fish Interim Trawl Managed Fishery on the ongoing physical presence of decommissioned seabed equipment (**Section 6.6**). No queries were received from WAFIC or licence holders related to the potential interaction with marine users. Recfishwest requested to be consulted on future exploration activities [sic] and for charts to be updated so that recreational fishers can locate the areas (**Section 8.1.3**).

It is proposed to leave the six buried anchors and the buried section of the mooring chains in situ. All six DTM anchors were confirmed fully buried by the 2021 in field environmental survey (GHD, 2021) at depth estimated between 6 to 13 m and are therefore expected to remain buried. Approximately 580 m of each mooring chain is buried (**Section 4.7.1**). Buried infrastructure does not pose a credible risk of interaction with commercial trawling activities.

No trap fishing has been recorded in the operational area. The Mackerel Managed Fishery has recorded low fishing effort in the area, although no activity from this fishery has been recorded in the operational area for more than ten years. The Mackerel Managed Fishery is a line fishery, focusing on pelagic fish species in the upper water column and is not expected to interact with seabed assets abandoned in situ. Buried infrastructure does not pose a credible risk of interaction with commercial fishing activities.

The far-north corner of the eastern-most boundary of the operational area marginally overlaps the Dampier Shipping Fairway (**Figure 5-21**) (overlap of 0.764 km²). Impacts on shipping movements are therefore expected to be minimal. The ongoing presence of exclusion zones until decommissioning activities have been completed may cause shipping to deviate from its preferred course to avoid the area. Any equipment temporarily wet stored in the course of decommissioning will be located within the existing gazetted petroleum safety zones (PSZs). Safety exclusion zones associated with the primary vessels will be communicated through a Notice to Mariners, marine users will be aware of their presence and as such they are not expected to present any change in the navigation hazard. Existing PSZs will be revoked once decommissioning has been completed prior to title relinquishment.

Buried infrastructure abandoned in situ is not expected to interfere with commercial shipping, Refer to decommissioning options assessment in Section 3.5.

Given the distance offshore, the depths at the site and the absence of reefs, it is unlikely any recreational fishing occurs in the area. There are no tourism related activities expected to occur in the area, given the distance from nearest shore.

Unplanned interactions with other users (including the potential snag risk to commercial fishing activities) from seabed equipment abandoned in situ are addressed in **Section 9.9**.

8.1.2.1 Cumulative Impacts

There is a potential for concurrent operations to occur with MEFF decommissioning SAR activities and MEFF P&A activities within the operational area. A maximum of seven vessels and a MODU may be present in the operational area at one time should concurrent operations with MEFF P&A activities (covered under separate EP) to occur. There are no non-Santos operated oil and gas facilities or infrastructure within the operational area. Other operators may have vessels traversing the region that will need to avoid the operational area to access exploration and development sites.

While it is unlikely that the two activities would overlap, cumulative impacts to other marine users have the potential to occur due to an increased chance of interaction. Activities would be at least 1 km apart due to operational requirements and any impacts are expected to be limited to short term localised displacement of users from the operational area.

8.1.3 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

Environmental performance outcomes (EPOs) relating to this event include:

- + Reduce impacts on other marine users through the provision of information to relevant stakeholders such that they are able to plan for their activities and avoid unexpected interference [MEFF-EPO-01].

The control measures (CM) considered for this activity are shown in **Table 8-2**, with environmental performance standards (EPSs) and measurement criteria for the EPOs described in **Section 11.4**.

Table 8-2: Control measures evaluation for interaction with other marine users

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Control Measures				
MEFF-CM-01	Maritime Notices	Ensures other marine users are aware of the presence of vessels.	Costs associated with the personnel time in issuing notifications and closing out queries and responses.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs. Maritime requirement to issue marine notices.
MEFF-CM-02	Santos' stakeholder consultation strategy	Santos will notify all relevant stakeholders listed, or as revised, in Section 6 of relevant activity details prior to commencement, including activity timing, vessel movements, proposed cessation date and vessel details. Ensures other marine users, such as commercial fishers, are aware of upcoming operations so they can plan their business accordingly.	Limited additional costs to Santos. Stakeholders' time required to review consultation material and communicate with Santos.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs. Important control to ensure other marine users are aware of upcoming operations and potential business disruptions.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
MEFF-CM-03	No fishing from project vessels	Reduce potential impacts to fisheries in the vicinity of the activity.	Negligible costs.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs to Santos.
MEFF-CM-04	Existing (gazetted) PSZs established around the MEFF DTM and manifold locations	Gazetted 500 m PSZ around the MEFF DTM and manifolds prevents vessels from getting too close and causing damage to equipment of either party.	No additional costs. PSZs already gazetted.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh no costs to Santos.
MEFF-CM-05	Safety Exclusion Zone established around primary vessels during seabed asset removal activities to reduce potential for collision or interference with other marine user activities	Requested Safety Exclusion Zone around the primary vessels prevents other vessels from getting too close and causing damage to equipment of either party.	No additional costs to Santos. Other marine users may be temporarily excluded from small areas.	Adopted – The exclusion of other marine users is temporary. Marine users will still be able to access the operational area. Normal navigation at sea process whereby shipping vessels avoid navigational risks. Hence, the safety benefits to all marine users outweighs any potential costs.
MEFF-CM-06	Lighting will be used as required for safe work conditions and navigational purposes	Ensures the vessels are seen by other marine users. Reduces the risk of collisions with other marine users.	No additional costs to Santos. Standard requirement for vessel navigation lighting and equipment to be compliant with COLREGS / Marine Orders 30: Prevention of Collisions, and with Marine Orders 21: Safety of Navigation and Emergency Procedures.	Adopted – The safety benefits of having navigation and lighting equipment and procedures outweighs any cost. This is a maritime requirement.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
MEFF-CM-07	Seafarer certification	Requires appropriately trained and competent personnel to navigate vessels to reduce interaction with other marine users.	Costs associated with personnel time in obtaining qualifications.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh costs and is a legislated requirement.
MEFF-CM-08	Identification system	Primary vessels have an Automatic Identification System to aid in their detection at sea.	Negligible costs of operating navigational equipment. Standard equipment on vessels.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs to Santos.
MEFF-CM-09	Constant bridge watch	Crew of the primary vessels will maintain constant bridge watch, including for third party vessels which may be approaching or enter the exclusion zone.	No additional costs.	Adopted – No additional costs. This is a maritime requirement.
MEFF-CM-10	Primary vessel personnel inductions	Reinforcing the importance of marine communications in the event of any potential interactions with active commercial fishers will minimise project potential to displace other marine users.	Negligible, given this is standard industry practice.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs.
MEFF-CM-12	Recovery Procedures	Recovery procedures for seabed asset recovery within the operational area will minimise potential to interfere with or displace other marine users.	Negligible, given this is standard industry practice.	Adopted - Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
MEFF-CM-13	As left survey	Confirms removal of infrastructure above seabed and the location of buried infrastructure in the operational area post activities.	Costs associated with personnel and operations time in conducting surveys.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs to Santos.
MEFF-CM-14	Notify AHO of locations for equipment abandoned in situ for marking on navigational charts	Ensures other marine users are aware of the presence of equipment abandoned in situ.	Negligible, given this is standard industry practice.	Adopted - Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs.
MEFF-CM-15	Relinquish petroleum safety zone (PSZ) after completion of seabed asset removal	Ensures other marine users are aware of access permissions.	Negligible, given this is standard industry practice.	Adopted - Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs.
Additional Control Measures				
MEFF-CM-16	1 km distance between the centre of the vessel safety exclusion zone around the decommissioning vessel and the centre of the PSZ around the Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit (MODU) (used for P&A activities)	Ensures no SIMOPS between MEFF decommissioning and P&A activities.	Negligible, given this is standard industry practice.	Adopted - Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Manage the timing of the operational activities to avoid peak marine user periods (e.g., fishing)	Would eliminate potential impacts to other marine users.	Not considered feasible as marine users could potentially be in the area all year round. The area that stakeholders are excluded from is small when compared to the area available to other marine users, and there is low fishing activity in the area as evidenced through consultation.	Rejected – Stakeholders and shipping in the area all year round (difficult to determine a peak user period). Cost grossly disproportionate to low socio-economic benefit, given the location of the activity has low usage by commercial fishers or areas of tourism.
N/A	Dedicated guard vessel in place during the activity to reduce potential for collision or interference with other marine users	Identifies and communicates with approaching third-party vessels to ensure exclusion (safety) zone is observed, preventing potential interaction or interference.	Significant additional cost of guard vessel for the duration of activities/campaigns.	Rejected – Cost grossly disproportionate to benefit, given the location of the activity has low usage by commercial fishers and does not overlap with any commercial shipping lanes or areas of tourism.
N/A	Avoidance of other active marine users, where safe to do so	The primary vessels don't have the ability to avoid other vessels under own propulsion when on station for project activities, in the unlikely event interaction with marine user requires a primary vessel to avoid other user. Note, primary controls around stakeholder engagement and navigational lighting will suffice for this control to not be implemented.	Additional costs as the primary vessels will need to be stationary and not able to move from position. If move from position is required, this may delay the activity.	Rejected – Not feasible as the primary vessel needs to be stationary. However, primary controls to avoid other marine users is thorough stakeholder engagement.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Eliminate the use of vessels	Would eliminate potential impacts to other marine users.	Not considered feasible as vessels are the only form of transport that can undertake the activities.	Rejected – Not feasible as vessels are required to complete the activities.
N/A	Do not recover and remove seabed assets identified for removal from the MEFF field to port of landing	Would eliminate the potential impacts to other users of the marine environment from transporting recovered seabed assets.	Removal of selected seabed assets is a requirement of Santos' decommissioning of the MEFF Field.	Rejected – Removal of seabed assets proposed for removal is a requirement of Santos' decommissioning of the MEFF Field. Transport of recovered equipment is expected to have a negligible additional impact on other users of the marine environment.

8.1.4 Environmental impact assessment

Receptor	Consequence Level
Interaction with other marine users	
Threatened, migratory or local fauna	Not applicable – related to socio-economic receptors only.
Physical environment or habitat	
Threatened ecological communities	
Protected areas	

Receptor	Consequence Level
Socio-economic receptors	The impact of the vessel operations during IMMR and decommissioning activities, or the ongoing presence of seabed equipment on socio-economic receptors is considered to be I (Negligible) due to the fact that: + the operational area is largely not within an AMSA defined shipping fairway (eastern-most boundary of the operational area marginally overlaps the Dampier Shipping Fairway), + tourism activities are not expected to occur in the operational area, given the water depth, lack of seafloor features and distance from shore + the operational area is not extensively fished – commercially, traditionally or recreationally + EP stakeholder consultation and a review of recent shipping data did not raise any concerns regarding disruptions to commercial shipping or other oil and gas operators + other operators may have vessels traversing the region that will need to avoid the operational area to access exploration and development sites. Any interaction would be temporary and other operators' vessels can go around the operational area. + The planned continued presence of buried seabed equipment in situ is not expected to significantly impact other marine users or fishery resources and is unlikely to result in changes in distribution and abundance of fish species outside the operational area. The ongoing physical presence of buried seabed equipment abandoned in situ will not preclude commercial trawling activities from occurring in Area 6 of the Pilbara Fish Interim Trawl Managed Fishery, should that area open to trawl fishing in the future. + During the preparation of this EP revision Santos consulted with WAFIC and invited feedback from individual fishing licence holders within the Pilbara Fish Interim Trawl Managed Fishery regards the ongoing physical presence of decommissioned seabed equipment (Section 6.6). + EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country.
Overall worst-case consequence	I – Negligible

8.1.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

Vessels are required for IMMR activities, ROV surveys, seabed asset removal and other related activities. The presence of seabed equipment in offshore fields is normal industry practice. The management of impacts, including interactions with other marine users, is well established, understood and regulated. Given the remote offshore location, recreational and tourism activities are not expected to occur in the area. Impacts to commercial fishing activities are not expected during cessation or decommissioning activities, and the planned abandonment of equipment in situ will not preclude trawl fishers from operating in the Closed Area (Area 6) should that area become open to trawl fishing in the future. There is little uncertainty associated with the vessel and ROV activities in relation to this aspect. No objections or concerns were raised by relevant stakeholders regarding the activity.

Stakeholders have been informed of the proposed decommissioning activity. Ongoing consultation, along with Notice to Mariners issued via Santos' notifications to Australian Hydrographic Service AHS before commencing in-field campaigns and for the locations of seabed assets abandoned in situ upon completion of the field decommissioning to minimise the risk of interference with other marine users.

With the controls adopted, the assessed residual consequence for this impact is negligible. Additional control measures were considered but rejected, since the associated cost / effort was

grossly disproportionate to any benefit as detailed above. Therefore, impact is considered to be ALARP.

8.1.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the consequence ranked as I (Negligible) or II (Minor)?	Yes – maximum consequence from interaction with or impact on other marine users is I (Negligible).
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5), which considers principles of ESD. The consequence against this aspect is I (Negligible) and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5.
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	Yes – management consistent with Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) 1974 and Navigation Act 2012.
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environmental, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environmental, Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to cessation phase activities	Yes – WAFIC requested further information regarding timing (duration of temporary wet storage) and the associated risks to the marine environment and commercial fishing. Santos responded to these requests made during consultation (Table 6-8), advising the equipment planned for temporary wet storage is connected to the DTM and MWAs. As per Table 6-8 Santos proposed to disconnect the equipment when the DTM and MWAs are removed and, if these were not removed, these are temporarily stored / wet parked until full field decommissioning, which is planned to be executed in 2025/2026 with completion planned by the end of 2026. Santos does not envisage any additional risk or impact to the marine environment or commercial fishing as the equipment is currently in the water column and will be laid on the seabed and stabilised after disconnection from the DTM and MWAs. The production risers, if wet stored, were capped before being placed on the seabed. Additionally, all equipment currently related to the MEFF field was marked on nautical maps, which also show cautionary zones around the area. Santos considers these requests have been addressed.

Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities	Yes Recfishwest requested charts be updated. Santos notes that this is already managed through environmental performance standard MEFF-CM-14 (Section 11.4). AMSA requested its maritime safety notification requirements which are addressed in Table 11-4.
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

The presence of the vessels and seabed equipment and removal of seabed equipment during decommissioning and abandonment of select seabed equipment in situ is not expected to significantly affect other marine users, including commercial fishing operations or shipping traffic, given the following:

- + small existing (gazetted) PSZs established around the MEFF DTM and manifold locations in relation to the wider areas for shipping transit and navigation. The PSZ's will be relinquished on completion of decommissioning activities.

short duration of the activity, depending on weather, equipment and operational issues:

- approximately 14 days for IMMR activities
- short-term, multiple campaigns over approximately 12 months for seabed asset removal and preparation for leaving in situ activities

seabed assets abandoned in situ will be completely buried and marked on navigational charts
outcomes of stakeholder engagement did not identify any concerns by relevant stakeholders.

Therefore, the impacts on marine users is considered ALARP and acceptable.

8.2 Seabed and benthic habitat disturbance

8.2.1 Description of event

Event	Potential seabed disturbance (temporary) may occur in the operational area as a result of: + wet storage of equipment until future decommissioning + placement of ROV baskets and lifting cradles + sand and / or grout bags to provide stabilisation to end of disconnected risers, flowlines and umbilicals at the seabed + IMMR activities during the cessation phase + environmental sediment sampling + localised seabed disturbance if required, to provide for activities such as installing plugs / caps + deburial and/or cutting of seabed assets, where required, and removal of all infrastructure above the seabed + continued presence of abandoned seabed equipment During cessation phase IMMR activities and seabed asset removal activities seabed disturbance may potentially occur in the operational area due to ROV activities, temporary wet parking of equipment, such as risers, and deburial of seabed assets where required to facilitate recovery. There will be no anchoring of primary vessels or support vessels within the operational area during cessation or decommissioning phase activities. Physical impacts from the continued presence of seabed equipment are discussed further in Section 8.8.
Extent	All planned seabed disturbance will occur within the operational area. Seabed disturbance from wet storage of equipment laid to the seabed during the decommissioning campaign will be limited to an area within the existing DTM mooring anchor pattern. Other wet storage (e.g. placement of baskets or placement of infrastructure during removal campaigns may be required but will most likely be limited to 50 m of existing infrastructure). Seabed disturbance from environmental sampling is estimated to be up to 1 m² per grab sample. Seabed disturbance from deburial (where required) and removal activities during decommissioning is expected to be predominantly localised creating a sediment plume that settles within the lay corridor (i.e. 5-10 m either side of the assets). The sediment plume may be distributed by currents which is expected to rapidly disperse and be temporary in nature.
Duration	For the duration of the activity, as described in Section 4.1 .

8.2.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Potential receptors: Benthic habitats and fauna.

Activities may disturb seabed and benthic habitat through:

- + direct physical disturbance of an area of seabed habitat, including benthic fauna, of up to around 200 m² per riser (including sand / grout bags required for stabilisation) if wet-stored until future decommissioning
- + direct physical disturbance of an area of seabed habitat, including benthic fauna, of up to around 1 m² per grab sediment sample
- + direct physical disturbance of an area of seabed habitat, including benthic fauna, of up to around 16 m² per ROV basket placement on the seabed

direct physical disturbance of an area of seabed habitat, including benthic fauna, limited to within the lay corridor (5-10 m either side of the asset) during deburial (where required to ensure load safety during removal activities) and removal of seabed assets direct physical disturbance of an area of seabed habitat, including benthic fauna, limited to the footprint and general vicinity around the equipment being removed.

- + direct physical disturbance of an area of approximately 170m² for removal of gravity bases
- + potential relocation of contaminated sediments (including from one area to another due to relocation of ROV baskets as part of removal operations)
- + indirect disturbance to benthic habitats and associated marine fauna by sedimentation
- + increased turbidity of the near-seabed water column.

Sensitive receptors identified in the operational area potentially impacted by operational activities include:

- + soft sediments and benthic fauna.

Physical environment

The cessation of production and decommissioning activities described in **Section 8.2.1** will inevitably result in localised impact (direct and indirect) to benthic habitat (and associated fauna) in the operational area.

Impacts may occur from direct disturbance to the seabed or from elevated turbidity in the water column, which has the potential for slight and short-term impacts to benthic fauna through clogging of respiratory and feeding parts of filter-feeding organisms. Removal of equipment using ROV baskets also has the potential to redistribute contaminated sediments. Sediment sampling undertaken in 2021 found elevated levels of mercury within 50 m of the Exeter manifold a historical drilling location. Levels were found to be above trigger DVG but below high DVG. Studies have shown that localised elevated levels of mercury in marine sediments in close proximity to offshore drilling sites can be associated with barite from the discharged drilling muds (Neff 2002; Trefry and Smith 2003, Trefry et. al., 2007). It is considered highly unlikely that mercury contamination will be present on the recovered subsea equipment as no mercury has been identified during the producing life of the field or during decommissioning activities (Section 3.4). Trefry and Smith (2003) investigated the bioavailability of mercury from drill cuttings and recorded very limited uptake. They stated that mercury associated with barite from drilling fluids was mainly present in metal sulfides with very low solubility and was not detectably leached into seawater. Contaminants in sediments as a result of other activities is unlikely as no further contamination has been identified during previous sediment sampling surveys and all chemicals selected have been approved via a chemical selection process. Based on the low levels of contaminants expected within the sediments, remobilisation and increased bioavailability of sediments as a result of placing ROV baskets is unlikely.

Localised scouring or burial of abandoned equipment is expected to occur. Physical impacts to the seabed from the continued presence of seabed equipment may impact on sediment-burrowing infauna and surface epifauna invertebrates, particularly filter feeders. Impacts are expected to be intermittent with ocean currents and localised to the footprint and general vicinity around the abandoned equipment.

The operational area does not contain any significant or unique areas of benthic habitat. As described in **Section 5.2.2**, the benthic habitats within the operational area are primarily low relief unconsolidated (high volume) calcareous silty fine sand. The only bathymetric features identified were those associated with existing Santos petroleum production equipment linked to the MEFF operations and previous drilling campaigns (Neptune Geomatics, 2011).

The potential impacts of seabed disturbance caused by the planned activities are considered minor due to the following:

Although the Ancient Coastline at 125 m Depth Contour KEF is present in the southern-most portion of the operational area (**Section 5.2.4, Figure 5-7**), no known sensitive features associated with the KEF have been observed in the operational area and wet-stored equipment will be located close to its original location, away from the KEF. No seabed assets overlap with the KEF. No known sensitive seabed features (e.g., reefs, canyons, shipwrecks) or benthic primary producer habitat (e.g. areas of hard corals, seagrass, macroalgae or mangroves) are present in the operational area.

Depressions on the seabed left by the placement of risers, DTM mooring chains and wetstored equipment are expected to infill as a result of- movement of sediments by water currents and by the deposition of detrital matter. Given the nature of the habitat and associated benthic communities (**Section 5.2.2**), recolonisation would also be expected to be rapid.

Any temporary turbidity and sedimentation associated with the retrieval of wet-stored equipment, environmental sediment grab sampling, seabed asset deburial and removal activities is not considered likely to cause a significant environmental impact, including to the ancient coastline KEF, given the high background levels of natural sediment movement in the area, the minor disturbance caused by the activity and the short duration of the activity.

Benthic habitats in the MEFF field are largely unconsolidated sediments with associated sparse assemblages of filter- and deposit-feeders. This habitat type and associated biota are very widely represented in the region and not of conservation significance. The field is in approximately 130-160 m water depth and insufficient light reaches the seabed to support photosynthetic organisms such as zooxanthellate corals, seagrasses and macroalgae. Given the widespread representation of these communities and the localised and intermitted physical disturbance, negligible impacts are expected to occur as a result of the continued presence of seabed equipment in situ.

8.2.3 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

EPOs relating to this event include:

- + Seabed disturbance is limited to planned activities and defined locations within the operational area [MEFF-EPO-02].
- + Decommissioning Surveys implemented as outlined in Section 10.3 will demonstrate that there are no unacceptable impacts to the natural resources, and provides for the protection and conservation of natural resources and any damage to the seabed or subsoil will be made good on the three title areas (surrender area) [MEFF-EP0-10].

The control measures considered for this activity are shown in **Table 8-3** with EPSs and measurement criteria for the EPOs described in **Section 11.4**.

Table 8-3: Control measures evaluation for seabed disturbance

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Control Measures				
MEFF-CM-17	Wet storage positioning	Any equipment that has been temporarily wet stored during decommissioning is surveyed to record its position (and limited to within 50m of existing infrastructure), and the site is surveyed to confirm removal at end of decommissioning.	Negligible costs of acquiring and operating ultra-short baseline / low baseline to position equipment that is wet-stored.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs to Santos.
MEFF-CM-18	Post decommissioning environmental monitoring will be undertaken in accordance with a Santos decommissioning sediment sampling survey program .	Confirms condition of the soil and seabed within the title area.	Costs associated with the supply and use of vessel and personnel mobilising to the operational area in order to undertake physical environmental monitoring, as well as post campaign report development	Adopted – To support relinquishment of title information on natural resources and seabed in the title area is required
MEFF-CM-19	ROV assessment of substrate at sediment sampling locations	Ensures no hard substrate communities impacted as a result of environmental sediment sampling.	Costs associated with personnel and operations time in conducting surveys.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh costs.
MEFF-CM-13	As left survey	Confirms removal of infrastructure above seabed and the location of buried infrastructure in the operational area post activities.	Costs associated with personnel and operations time in conducting surveys.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh costs to Santos.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
MEFF-CM-53	Post decommissioning environmental monitoring adaptive management measures	Confirms no damage to seabed or subsoil remains prior to relinquishment of title and allows for the protection and conservation of natural resources	Costs with additional studies or environmental monitoring required.	Adopted- – Benefits considered to outweigh costs to Santos.
Additional Control Measures				
N/A	No wet storage of equipment on the seabed	Would eliminate the seabed disturbance caused by wet storage.	Not considered as wet storage is required for some equipment prior to decommissioning campaigns.	Rejected – Not feasible. Wet storage is required for some equipment and as a contingency. Impact of seabed disturbance is low, given the lack of sensitive receptors.
N/A	Prohibit wet storage of equipment within a 50 m radius of the Exeter Manifold location	Reduces the potential for relocation/mobilisation of contaminated sediments observed within close proximity (approx. 30 m) of the Exeter manifold location.	Landing baskets >50m from the work site would mean that equipment being recovered from potentially contaminated seabed is relocated >50m subsea, thus increasing the spread of potential contaminants whilst sediment is dislodged from the structure.	Rejected- Potential to spread contaminants over a wider area.
N/A	No deburial of seabed assets prior to removal	Reduction of seabed disturbance and sediment plume during seabed asset removal activities.	Option cannot be ruled out due to safety concerns; the recovery load may be too great without deburial.	Rejected – Deburling may be required to reduce recovery loads to enable safe recovery of equipment. Seabed disturbance will occur without deburial activities, as sediment will be disturbed if buried assets are lifted prior to deburial. Deburling will be minimised as much as practicable.
N/A	Monitoring of the seabed to determine environmental	Identifies any impacts to seabed during seabed	Additional costs associated with seabed monitoring at each lifting location	Rejected – the additional costs are grossly disproportionate to any environmental

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
	impact during seabed asset removal activities.	asset removal activities.	and during each recovery operation of seabed assets.	benefit gained. Environmental benefit is considered to be negligible given the seabed type (low relief unconsolidated calcareous silty fine sand) and benthic habitats within the MEFF field are deemed to be well represented throughout the NWS Province and NW Transition Bioregions with which the operational area overlaps. No seabed assets overlap with the KEF. No known sensitive seabed features (e.g., reefs, canyons, shipwrecks) or benthic primary producer habitat (e.g. areas of hard corals, seagrass, macroalgae or mangroves) are present in the operational area, or in close proximity that that could be contacted by small, temporary and localised sediment plumes that may be present during seabed asset removal activities.
MEFF-CM-20	Controlled landout of baskets on seabed (limit set down speeds)	Minimises seabed disturbance at the landout location.	Negligible costs as active heave compensation is available for set down of equipment and recovery of other assets in field.	Adopted – benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs to Santos

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Suspending baskets above sea floor	Eliminates seabed disturbance as baskets do not require landout on the seabed.	Unable to suspend baskets due to sling obstruction for safe loading of recovered items. Requires a vessel with two lifting devices and also presents an entanglement risk.	Rejected – not practicable.
MEFF-CM-54	Soil bearing capacities to be checked for baskets (either designed or hired).	Minimises basket penetration into seabed.	Negligible costs associated with performing bearing checks or sourcing suitable baskets.	Adopted - benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs to Santos.
N/A	Recover all equipment directly to deck.	Would eliminate the seabed disturbance caused by subsea baskets.	Dropped object risk as some equipment cannot be recovered directly to deck. Unable to perform detailed inspection of asset integrity prior to recovery.	Rejected – Safety risk to personnel outweighs minor seabed disturbance caused by a controlled basket land out.
N/A	Schedule recovery work only during slack water and neap tides.	Minimises relocation distance of disturbed sediments.	All subsea work be it recovery of equipment, landout of baskets or ROV intervention at seabed will result in some seabed disturbance. Limiting these operations to slack water or neap tides will result in significant standby durations waiting for appropriate current, wave and wind conditions.	Rejected - Cost impact to only work during slack water or neap tides is grossly disproportionate to the environmental benefit provided by only working during neap tides.

8.2.4 Environmental impact assessment

Receptor	Consequence Level
Seabed disturbance	
Threatened, migratory or local fauna	No sensitive seabed features are known to occur within the operational area. The areas of seabed that will be impacted are expected to be characterised by homogenous, flat, featureless soft sediment, predominately comprised of sand with small rubble / shell fragments. These sediments are un-vegetated and likely to have sparse benthic and epi-benthic communities with low biodiversity (refer to Section 5.2.2). Marine invertebrates may inhabit soft sediments and can contribute to the diet of some fauna. The area of soft sediment habitat that is potentially impacted is small compared to the amount of habitat available and therefore the disturbance is not expected to affect prey availability, or protected fauna species. Habitat modification is identified as a potential threat to a number of marine fauna species in relevant recovery plans and conservation advice (Table 5-10). However, the area of disturbance has not been identified as a habitat that supports any protected species. Impacts will be temporary, and the area potentially impacted is small compared to the size of the areas used by these species for foraging. Therefore, no long-term impacts to these species are expected. No decrease in local population size, area of occupancy of species, loss or disruption of critical habitat or disruption to the breeding cycle of any of these protected matters is expected. Given the small-scale area of the activity, minor and short-term nature of direct and indirect impacts and the regional availability of the habitats present, seabed and benthic habitat disturbance is not expected to impact threatened or migratory species at a population level. The consequence level is therefore considered to be II (Minor).

Receptor	Consequence Level
Physical environment or habitat	Impacts may occur from direct disturbance to the seabed or from elevated turbidity in the water column, which has the potential for slight and short-term impacts to benthic fauna through clogging of respiratory and feeding parts of filter-feeding organisms. Impacts may occur from direct disturbance to the seabed or from elevated turbidity in the water column, which has the potential for slight and short-term impacts to benthic fauna through clogging of respiratory and feeding parts of filter-feeding organisms. Removal of equipment using ROV baskets also has the potential to redistribute contaminated sediments. Sediment sampling undertaken in 2021 found elevated levels of mercury within 50 m of the Exeter manifold a historical drilling location. Levels were found to be above trigger DVG but below high DVG. It is considered highly unlikely that mercury contamination will be present on the recovered subsea equipment as no mercury has been identified during the producing life of the field or during decommissioning activities (Section 3.4). Trefry and Smith (2003) investigated the bioavailability of mercury from drill cuttings and recorded very limited uptake. They stated that mercury associated with barite from drilling fluids was mainly present in metal sulfides with very low solubility and was not detectably leached into seawater. Contaminants in sediments as a result of other activities is unlikely as no further contamination has been identified during previous sediment sampling surveys and all chemicals selected have been approved via a chemical selection process. Based on the low levels of contaminants expected within the sediments remobilisation and increased bioavailability of sediments as a result of placing ROV baskets is unlikely. The area of physical environment and habitat that will be impacted during the proposed activities is small compared to the area of similar habitat in the wider environment and is expected to re-establish following disturbance. Given the widespread representation of these communities and the localised physical disturbance, long-term or significant impacts to habitat values or ecosystem function are not expected. Impacts to the physical environment or habitat are assessed as II (Minor).
Threatened ecological communities	Not applicable – No threatened ecological communities are identified in the area where seabed disturbance could occur.
Protected areas	Not applicable – No Protected Areas are identified in the area where seabed disturbance could occur.
Socio-economic receptors	Not applicable – Disturbance of the seabed and benthic habitat within the operational area is highly unlikely to impact socio-economic receptors such as shipping and tourism. Any minor alteration or modification to habitats is not expected to impact commercial fisheries' target species based on the small size of disturbance relative to the available fishing grounds. No stakeholder concerns have been raised regarding this aspect. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country.
Worst-case consequence level	II – Minor

8.2.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

The presence of seabed equipment in offshore fields is normal industry practice. The planned activities will cause some disturbance of the seabed and associated fauna / habitats as well as short-term and localised turbidity. With regards to the continued presence of abandoned seabed equipment, any scouring and turbidity is also likely to be localised and seasonal.

There is also potential for the removal of equipment using ROV baskets, to redistribute contaminated sediments. Sediment sampling undertaken in 2021 found elevated levels of mercury within 50 m of the Exeter manifold a historical drilling location. Levels were found to be above trigger DVG but below high DVG. It is considered highly unlikely that mercury contamination will be present on the recovered subsea equipment as no mercury has been identified during the producing life of the field or during decommissioning activities (Section 3.4). Trefry and Smith (2003) investigated the bioavailability of mercury from drill cuttings and recorded very limited uptake. They stated that mercury associated with barite from drilling fluids was mainly present in metal sulfides with very low solubility and was not detectably leached into seawater. Contaminants in sediments as a result of other activities is considered unlikely, as no further contamination has been identified during previous sediment sampling surveys and all chemicals selected for use on title have been approved via a chemical selection process. Based on the low levels of contaminants expected within the sediments, remobilisation and increased bioavailability of sediments as a result of placing ROV baskets is unlikely.

The planned activities will take place in an area that has been previously disturbed. Given the remote offshore location, the sparse habitats in the operational area and the absence of significant fishing effort in the area, no sensitive environmental receptors will be affected. There is little uncertainty associated with this aspect. A stakeholder request for further information regarding timing, location and duration of wet storage, and potential environmental impacts, was addressed by Santos with no further requests from the stakeholder.

All practicable control measures have been reviewed (**Section 8.2.3**) and those adopted are considered appropriate to manage the impacts such that the residual consequence is assessed to be minor and cannot be reduced further. The proposed management controls for seabed disturbance are in accordance with Santos' risk management criteria and are considered appropriate to manage the risk to ALARP.

8.2.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the consequence ranked as I (Negligible) or II (Minor)?	Yes – maximum consequence from seabed disturbance is II (Minor).
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5), which considers principles of ESD. The consequence against this aspect is II (Minor) and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	N/A – no relevant requirements regarding this event in this area, given the localised nature and extent of the operational facilities.
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environmental, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environmental, Health and Safety Policy.

Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to cessation phase activities	Yes – WAFIC requested further information regarding timing (duration of temporary wet storage) and the associated risks to the marine environment and commercial fishing. Santos responded to these requests made during consultation (Table 6-8), advising the equipment planned for temporary wet storage is connected to the DTM and MWAs. As per (Table 6-8) Santos proposed to disconnect the equipment when the DTM and MWAs are removed and, if these were not removed, they are temporarily stored / wet parked until full field decommissioning, which is to be executed in 2025/2026 with completion planned by the end of 2026. Santos does not envisage any additional risk or impact to the marine environment or commercial fishing as the equipment is currently laid on the seabed and stabilised after disconnection from the DTM and MWAs. The production risers, if wet stored, were capped before being placed on the seabed. Additionally, all equipment currently related to the MEFF field was marked on nautical maps, which also show cautionary zones around the area. Santos considers these requests have been addressed.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

The potential consequence of seabed disturbance on receptors is assessed as Minor (II). With the control measures in place, including compliance with industry standards and legislation, no significant impacts are expected. Therefore, the impacts of seabed and benthic habitat disturbance considered ALARP and environmentally acceptable.

8.3 Light emissions

8.3.1 Description of the event

Event	Light emissions will occur as a result of: + vessel operations + ROV operations + Concurrent MEFF decommissioning and MEFF P&A activities Vessels will routinely have external lighting to facilitate navigation and safe operations at night. Lighting typically consists of bright white (i.e. metal halide, halogen, fluorescent) lights, and are not dissimilar to other offshore activities in the region, including fishing and shipping. The ROV will be used during the activity and it will require the use of spot lighting while it is underwater working. Lighting will typically consist of bright white (i.e. metal halide, halogen, fluorescent) lights.
Extent	The light assessment boundary of 20 km from the source will be used as the extent of light exposure in accordance with National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020).
Duration	Navigational and safety lighting will be required on a 24-hour basis for the duration of the activity as described in Section 4.1.

8.3.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Potential receptors: Threatened, migratory or local fauna (marine mammals, marine turtles, sharks, rays, fish and seabirds).

Continuous lighting emanating from the same location for an extended period of time may result in alterations to fauna behaviour. The combination of colour, intensity, closeness, direction and persistence of a light source are key factors in determining the magnitude of environmental impact (EPA, 2010). Disturbance may include the following:

- + Seabirds may either be attracted by the light source itself or indirectly due to marine fauna prey (such as fish and invertebrates) being attracted to light.
- + Marine turtles and turtle hatchlings may be misoriented and disoriented by lights.
- + Fish and zooplankton may be directly or indirectly attracted to lights.

According to the National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife, a 20 km threshold provides a precautionary limit based on observed effects of sky glow on marine turtle hatchlings, demonstrated to occur at 15 to 18 km from the light source and fledgling seabirds grounded in response to artificial light 15 km away. The intensity and extent of light glow, and the potential to result in biological impact, will depend on the light source itself, including the number, intensity, spectral output and position of individual lights at the source. The effect of light glow may occur at distances greater than 20 km for some species and under certain environmental conditions (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020).

Marine mammals

As described in **Section 5.2.5**, the pygmy blue whale distribution BIA overlaps the operational area. However, cetaceans and other marine mammals are not known to be significantly attracted to light sources at sea. Cetaceans predominantly use acoustic senses to monitor their environment rather than visual cues (Simmonds *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, impacts are considered unlikely.

Marine turtles

The operational area does not intersect any BIAs for marine turtles (**Table 5-9**). The closest BIA for marine turtles (an internesting buffer BIA for the green turtle) lies more than 60 km away, and the

nearest turtle nesting beach is more than 120 km away, at Dampier Archipelago, including Delambre Island and Haug Island. However, it is possible individuals may traverse the operational area.

Marine turtles are particularly sensitive to artificial lighting, which is known to disrupt breeding adult turtles, post-emergent hatchlings and hatchlings dispersing in nearshore waters (Limpus, 1971; Salmon *et al.*, 1992; Limpus, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2009a, 2009b; Wilson *et al.*, 2018).

The Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia: 2017–2027 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) highlights artificial light as one of several threats to marine turtles. The recovery plan indicates that artificial light may reduce the overall reproductive output of a stock, and therefore recovery of the species, by:

- + inhibiting nesting by females
- + disrupting hatchling orientation and sea-finding behaviour
- + creating pools of light that attract swimming hatchlings and increase their risk of predation.

The most significant risk posed to marine turtles from artificial lighting is the potential disorientation of hatchlings following their emergence from nests by light spill on beaches, although breeding adult turtles can also be disoriented (Longcore and Rich, 2016, in EPA, 2010). This disruption can occur because hatchlings orient themselves to the lowest-elevation light horizon and away from high silhouettes when moving from the nest to the sea. When the direction of the lowest elevation light horizon is not clear, hatchlings move towards the brightest, lowest horizon (Limpus & Kamrowski, 2013).

However, given the distance to the nearest turtle nesting beach is more than 120 km away (Dampier Archipelago), light from the vessel will not be visible and therefore impacts to nesting females, emerging hatchlings and internesting females are not credible. At these distances post-dispersal hatchlings will be well dispersed, so the potential for them to drift through the operational area is reduced compared to nearshore areas adjacent to nesting beaches.

The National Light Pollution Guidelines states that a 20 km buffer (based on sky glow) to important habitat for turtles should be applied when considering possible impacts (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020). However, the demonstrated impacts on which this buffer is based were in response to light emissions associated with a liquefied natural gas plant. Although details around the individual light sources of the case study and the light sources on the vessels are unknown, it is expected that light emissions associated with vessels will be notably lower compared to a liquefied natural gas plant. Given the operational area is located greater than 120 km away from the nearest turtle nesting BIA, light emissions will not be visible. Experienced nesting females are unlikely to be disturbed by light, but first-time nesters may be disturbed by light when they are selecting their first nesting beach (Pendoley, 2014). Given the closest nesting BIA is greater than 60 km from the operational area, nesting females should not be disorientated by light emissions. Furthermore, once in the water, turtle hatchlings orientate by wave fronts and do not appear to rely on visual cues (Pendoley, 2014); therefore, light emissions should not cause disorientation at that distance (i.e. greater than 20 km).

Impacts to turtles from operational activity lighting are expected to be restricted to localised attraction and temporary disorientation of individuals passing through the area, but with no long-term or residual impact due to the activity's relatively short-term nature (i.e. approximately 14 days for IMMR activities and approximately 12 months cumulative duration, likely over multiple campaigns, for seabed asset removal and preparation for leaving equipment in situ, depending on weather delays and operational downtime), and the unlikely presence of hatchlings due to the distance from the nearest shorelines. It is considered that the activity will not compromise the objectives as set out in the marine turtle recovery plan and that the impact of lighting associated with the activity to turtles is negligible.

Sharks, Fish and Rays

The response of fish to light emissions varies according to species and habitat. Experiments using light traps have found that some fish and zooplankton species are attracted to light sources (Meekan

et al., 2001), with traps drawing catches from up to 90 m (Milicich *et al.*, 1992). Lindquist *et al.* (2005) concluded from a study that artificial lighting associated with offshore oil and gas activities resulted in an increased abundance of clupeids (herring and sardines) and engraulids (anchovies); these species are known to be highly photopositive. Lighting impacts may increase the risk of predation to these fish species. Shaw *et al.* (2002), in a similar light trap study, noted that juvenile tunas (Scombridae) and jacks (Carangidae), which are highly predatory, may have been preying upon concentrations of zooplankton attracted to the light field of the platforms. This could potentially lead to increased predation rates compared to unlit areas.

However, the low level of light emitted from a vessel is unlikely to lead to large-scale changes in species abundance or distribution. Impacts to transient fish will therefore be limited to short-term behavioural effects, with no decrease in local population size or area of occupancy of species nor loss or disruption of critical habitat or disruption to breeding cycles.

A localised increase in fish activity as a result of vessel lighting is expected to occur as a result of the activity.

Birds (seabirds / shorebirds)

Lighting from vessels may result in behavioural impacts to seabirds including terns and shearwaters. However, as activities will be for a relatively short duration, the consequence is considered negligible.

Studies conducted between 1992 and 2002 in the North Sea confirmed that artificial light was the reason birds were attracted to, and accumulated around, illuminated offshore equipment (Marquenie *et al.*, 2008) and that lighting can attract birds from large catchment areas (Wiese *et al.*, 2001). Birds may either be attracted by the light source itself or indirectly as structures in deep-water environments tend to attract marine life at all trophic levels, creating food sources and shelter for seabirds. The light from vessels may also provide enhanced capability for seabirds to forage at night.

Light potentially impacts breeding seabirds in the operational area in much the same way as it does marine turtles, though is species-dependent, and some seabirds may not be expected to experience any impact at all due to their diurnal behaviour (such as terns). Disoriented adult birds may not be able to return to their nests to relieve their mates or feed their young. Fledglings are particularly vulnerable to light through misorientation and disorientation when departing the colony for the first time.

Although a breeding BIA for the wedge-tailed shearwater is located within 20 km of the operational area, the operational area itself does not overlap any BIAs for seabirds; therefore, the location of the operational area should not significantly impact seabird behaviour, given the large distances typically covered by breeding individuals.

8.3.2.1 Cumulative impacts

During MEFF Decommissioning (SAR) activities, there is potential for concurrent operations with MEFF P&A activities. MEFF P&A activities will involve the use of MODU and up to three support vessels. Therefore, if decommissioning activities are undertaken concurrently with P&A activities, there is a potential for light emissions from one activity to be within the field of a separate activity. However, given that these activities will be at least 1 km apart for operational reasons and based on the diminution of light intensity with distance, potential cumulative impacts are not expected. Given the distance of the operational area from the nearest turtle nesting beach (approximately 112 km) and the nearest marine turtle internesting BIA or known critical habitat (more than 60 km), cumulative impacts from light on marine turtles are not expected.

8.3.3 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

EPOs relating to this event include:

- + Reduce impacts to marine fauna from lighting on vessels through limiting lighting to that required by safety and navigational lighting requirements [MEFF-EPO-03].

The control measures considered for this activity are shown in **Table 8-4** with EPSs and measurement criteria for the EPOs described in **Section 11.4**.

Table 8-4: Control measures evaluation for light emissions

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Control Measures				
MEFF-CM-06	Lighting will be used as required for safe work conditions and navigational purposes only	Light spill from unnecessary lighting reduced, even further lowering likelihood of impacts to the fauna from vessel lighting. Lighting is assessed to only provide necessary lighting for safety and navigation during the activity. Reducing the potential for additional light pollution to the environment, thus reducing the potential impacts to fauna.	No additional costs associated with implementing control.	Accepted – Cost is considered acceptable for the benefit that may be realised from this control.
Additional Control Measures				
N/A	Manage the timing of the activity to avoid sensitive periods at the location (e.g. turtle nesting / hatching).	Reduce risk of impacts from light emissions during environmentally sensitive periods for listed marine fauna (e.g. turtle nesting / hatching).	The operational area is not located in an area that is likely to cause impact to turtle nesting or hatching and therefore timing the activity to avoid this would not change the potential environmental impacts.	Rejected – Given the minimal risk of impacts to listed marine species (e.g. turtles) occurring due to lighting, the financial and environmental costs of extending the activity duration are deemed grossly disproportionate to low environmental benefits.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Use of shrouding on external lights	Reduce potential for impacts on turtles from light emissions during hours of darkness when light sources are more apparent and potential impacts are greatest.	Cost associated with retro fitting external lighting with shrouding / shielding. Can only be done for lighting that does not impact on navigational requirements or safety.	Rejected – Given the minimal risk of impacts to listed marine species (e.g. turtles) occurring due to lighting, the financial costs of retrofitting external lighting are deemed grossly disproportionate to the low environmental benefits.
N/A	Use of dark, matt surfaces to reduce sky glow across all activities	Reduce potential for impacts on turtles from light emissions during hours of darkness when light sources are more apparent and potential impacts are greatest.	Additional cost to repaint vessel surfaces.	Rejected – Given the minimal risk of impacts to listed marine species (e.g. turtles) occurring due to lighting, the financial costs of repainting vessels surfaces are deemed grossly disproportionate to low environmental benefits.
N/A	Review lighting to a type (colour) that has less impact	Could reduce potential impacts of artificial light on certain fauna.	High cost to complete lighting change out on vessels in area of low sensitivity. Navigational lighting colours are stipulated by law.	Rejected – Given the minimal risk of impacts to listed marine species (e.g., turtles) occurring due to lighting, the financial costs of replacing lighting types on vessels are deemed grossly disproportionate to low environmental benefits.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Limit or exclude night-time operations	Would eliminate potential impacts of artificial light during hours of darkness when light sources are more apparent and potential impacts are greatest.	Would double duration of activity, increase impacts or potential impacts in other areas, including increase in waste, air emissions, risk of vessel collision, etc. A minimal level of artificial lighting will still be required on-board the vessels on a 24-hour basis for safety reasons.	Rejected – Given the minimal risk of impacts to turtles occurring, the financial and environmental costs by requiring all works to be undertaken during daylight hours only are not considered appropriate, given the extended duration of the activity that would occur.

8.3.4 Environmental impact assessment

Receptor	Consequence Level
Light Emissions	
Threatened, migratory or local fauna	Sensitive receptors that may be impacted by light emissions in the same location for an extended period of time include fish at the surface, marine turtles and seabirds. Impacts to marine fauna are expected to be restricted to localised attraction and temporary disorientation but with no long-term or residual impact and no decrease in local population size, area of occupancy of species or loss or disruption of critical habitat / disruption to the breeding cycle. The potential impacts are therefore considered to be I (Negligible).
Physical environment or habitat	Not applicable – No impacts to physical environments and / or habitats from light emissions are expected.
Threatened ecological communities	Not applicable – No threatened ecological communities identified in the area over which light emissions are expected.
Protected areas	Not applicable – No protected areas are identified in the area over which light emissions are expected.
Socio-economic receptors	Not applicable – Lighting is not expected to cause an impact to socio-economic receptors other than to act as a visual cue for avoidance of the area by other marine users for safety purposes. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country.
Overall worst-case consequence	I – Negligible

8.3.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

With the described controls, the consequence of artificial light on marine fauna and seabirds is considered negligible, with insignificant impacts to ecological function. No population level impacts are expected and the consequence is considered environmentally acceptable. A minimum level of artificial lighting is required for operational and navigational safety during the activity, including to

alert other marine users of the activity. There are also minimum light requirements that will be necessary to provide safe working conditions. Limiting or excluding night-time operations would result in the activity taking around twice as long to complete. This would increase the period of time the operational area would need to be avoided by other marine users and the volume of waste, vessel discharges and emissions produced.

As the operational area is located more than 120 km from the nearest turtle nesting beaches (Dampier Archipelago), vessel light emissions will not be visible from the beaches. The operational area does not overlap any BIAs for seabirds; therefore, the location of the operational area should not significantly impact seabird behaviour, given the large distances typically covered by breeding individuals.

The activity will not compromise the objectives as set out in the Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017), the Wildlife Conservation Plan for Seabirds (Commonwealth of Australia, 2022) or the National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020), as biologically important behaviours of nesting turtle and seabird adults and emerging / dispersing hatchlings can continue, given the distance from the nearest nesting beaches. The assessed residual consequence for this impact is negligible and cannot be reduced further.

Additional control measures were considered but rejected since the associated cost or effort was grossly disproportionate to any benefit, as detailed in **Section 8.3.3**. Given lighting on the vessels will be consistent with industry standards, will result in negligible consequences, the use of 24-hour per day artificial lighting at an intensity to allow work to proceed safely is considered ALARP and acceptable.

8.3.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the consequence ranked as I (Negligible) or II (Minor)?	Yes – maximum consequence from light emissions is I (Negligible).
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5) which considers principles of ecologically sustainable development. The consequence against this aspect is I (Negligible) and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	Yes – management consistent with International Convention of the <i>Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) 1974 and the Navigation Act 2012</i> and will not compromise the objectives set out in relevant species recovery plans, conservation management plans and management actions set out in Table 5-10 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to cessation phase activities	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities)	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP.

Artificial lighting is required 24-hours a day for operational and navigational safety during the activity. The potential consequences of the anthropogenic light sources in the operational area are considered to be insignificant in nature and restricted to short-term behavioural impacts on individual fauna that may be present in the operational area during the activity.

The Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) specifies the following priority action for the turtles in relation to light pollution:

Artificial light within or adjacent to habitat critical to the survival of marine turtles will be managed such that marine turtles are not displaced from these habitats.

The operational area does not overlap any BIAs for turtles. Significant impacts are not expected on fauna, including nesting turtles or hatchlings, and will not cause turtles to be displaced from these habitats.

The operational area does not overlap any BIAs for seabirds; therefore, the proposed activities with the operational area should not significantly impact seabird behaviour, given the large distances typically covered by breeding individuals.

The potential consequence of light emissions on receptors is assessed as Negligible (I). With the control measures in place, including compliance with navigational safety legislation, no significant impacts are expected. Therefore, the impacts of light emissions to the receiving environment are ALARP and considered environmentally acceptable.

8.4 Noise emissions

8.4.1 Description of the event

Event	Potential impacts from noise emissions may occur in the operational area from: + vessel activities (vessel engines, thrusters and other machinery such as winches, site surveys using echo sounders, side scan sonar (SSS) or similar) + concurrent MEFF decommissioning and MEFF P&A activities + ROV activities including marine growth removal subsea and ROV sonar + helicopter activities + equipment positioning using low baseline or ultra-short baseline + subsea cutting tools used during infrastructure removal + deburial equipment (such as mass flow excavators, ROV-mounted suction pump or water jet) + recovery equipment (such as mechanical pipe grabs, cranes or winches)
Extent	Impacts from all potential noise sources will be localised. This is based on: + noise from ROV operations being limited to when ROVs are operating within the operational area + vessels using main engines and bow thrusters to maintain their positions will become inaudible above background noise within around 1 km + noise from helicopters being limited to when they are transiting over the operational area. + noise from subsea cutting tools will be limited to when subsea cutting tools are operating. + noise from deburial and recovery equipment will be limited to when they are operating in the operational area. + Cumulative impacts from the activity and from other vessel-based activities conducted in the operational area are expected to be localised, due to the relatively low sound levels generated by continuous noise sources.
Duration	For the duration of the activity, as described in Section 4.1 .

8.4.1.1 Noise generated by vessels

Vessel operational noise consists of machinery noise (e.g. engine noise) and hydrodynamic noise (e.g. water flowing past the hull and propeller singing). All machinery on a ship radiates sound through the hull into the water.

For vessels, the noisiest anticipated activity is when the vessel uses thrusters to maintain its position. Whilst there are no direct studies or data for underwater noise relating to a PLV operating on DP, the PLV is likely to have similar DP thruster power as a MODU. McCauley (1998) reported noise levels generated by a semi-submersible rig, during non-drilling periods the typical broadband level encountered was approximately 113 dB (rms) re 1 μ Pa@125 m with various tones from the machinery observable in the noise spectra. Studies undertaken in the Arctic on different MODU types (including semi-submersible and drill ships) indicate that noise levels dropped to 117 dB re 1 μ Pa within 1 km of the MODU and are much lower than those for large commercial vessels operating at normal speeds (Austin et al., 2018).

McCauley (1998) measured underwater sound pressure levels equivalent to around 182 dB re 1 μ Pa @ 1 m with a frequency range of 20 Hz to 10 kHz from a support vessel holding station in the Timor Sea. The thruster noise dropped below 120 dB re 1 μ Pa within 3 to 4 km and was audible above

ambient noise up to 20 km away (McCauley, 1998). McCauley (1998) also measured underwater sound levels from the Pacific Ariki, a 64 m long support vessel with 8000 HP (6000 kW) main engines during calm conditions in the Timor Sea in 110 m of water while transiting at 11 knots, and found the distance to 120 dB re 1 μ Pa to be around 1 km. More recently, Koessler and McPherson (2020) modelled underwater sound levels from an offshore support vessel (OSV) in 90 m of water, with underwater SPL of 183 dB re 1 μ Pa @ 1 m whilst operating all three thrusters. The modelling indicated that thruster noise dropped below 120 dB re 1 μ Pa within 4 to 5 km. This has been taken as the greatest noise-generating activity for assessment purposes, as other vessel activities will require the vessel to be idle or moving; e.g. inspection and maintenance activities will typically require the vessel to be moving slowly at around four knots.

There is potential for concurrent MEFF decommissioning and P&A activities within the MEFF field. Up to three support vessels may be required for P&A activities and up to four vessels may be required for decommissioning activities. Potential cumulative impacts from concurrent operations with the MEFF P&A activities are described in Section 8.4.2.7.

8.4.1.2 Noise generated by helicopters

Sound traveling from a source in the air (e.g. a helicopter) to a receiver underwater is affected by both in-air and underwater propagation processes, which are further complicated by processes occurring at the air seawater surface interface (e.g. wind and waves). The level of noise received underwater depends on source altitude and lateral distance, receiver depth, water depth, and other variables.

Helicopter engine noise is emitted at various frequencies; however, the dominant tones are generally of a low frequency below 500 Hz (Richardson *et al.*, 1995). Sound pressure in the water directly below a helicopter is greatest at the surface and diminishes with increasing receiver depth. Noise also reduces with increasing helicopter altitude, but the duration of audibility often increases with increasing altitude, with sound penetrating water at angles less than 13°. The noise from the flyover of a Bell 214 helicopter (stated to be a noisy model) has been recorded underwater (Richardson *et al.*, 1995). The sound source was 162 dB re 1 μ Pa @ 1 m at its peak and had frequency of 155 Hz.

8.4.1.3 Noise generated by remote operated vehicles operations

As underwater sound levels are dependent on the primary (noisiest) sound source rather than being strictly additive, and since ROV operations will be undertaken from a vessel, they will make little contribution to the overall noise emissions associated with vessel activities, as described above and are not risk assessed further. The ROV will not be equipped with multi-beam echo sounder, side scan sonar or sub bottom profiling sensors.

8.4.1.4 Noise generated by positioning equipment

A low baseline or ultra-short baseline transponder may be temporarily attached on equipment that is being lowered to or positioned on the seabed. Transponders typically emit pulses of medium frequency sound, generally within the range 21 to 31 kHz. The estimated sound pressure level (SPL) would be 180 to 206 dB re 1 μ Pa at 1 m (Jiménez-Arranz *et al.*, 2017). Transmissions are not continuous but consist of short 'chirps' with a duration that ranges from 3 to 40 milliseconds. A DP compatibility transponder / beacon may also be deployed temporarily on the seabed. All transponders / beacons will be recovered to vessel deck after each deployment.

8.4.1.5 Noise generated by subsea cutting and deburial tools

The subsea cutting of seabed assets using a subsea cutting tool may generate underwater noise. Similarly, deburial equipment (such as mass flow excavators, ROV-mounted suction pump or water jet) may generate underwater noise if required during the activity.

8.4.1.6 Twachtman *et al.* (2004) studied the operations and socio-economic impact of non-explosive removal of offshore structures, including noise, and concluded that mechanical cutting and

abrasive water jet, as well as diamond wire cutting methods, are generally considered harmless to marine life and the environment. Similarly, Pangerc et al. (2016) described the underwater sound measurement data during an underwater diamond wire cutting of a 32-inch conductor (10 m above seabed in around 80 m depth) and found the sound radiated from the diamond wire cutting of the conductor was not easily discernible above the background noise at the closest recorder located 100 m from the source. The sound that could be associated with the diamond wire cutting was primarily detectable above the background noise at the higher acoustic frequencies (above around 5 kHz) (Pangerc et. al., 2016) above the hearing range of low frequency cetaceans.

8.4.1.7 Noise generated from side scan sonar or echo sounders

Side scan sonar (SSS), single-beam echo sounders (SBESs) and multi-beam echo sounders (MBESs) are used to develop high-resolution images of the seafloor or objects on the seafloor such as subsea infrastructure. Sound pressure levels for SBESs and MBESs typically range from 210 to 245 dB re 1 μ Pa @ 1 m, and SSS typically range from 220 to 226 dB re 1 μ Pa @ 1 m (DECC, 2011). A modelling study completed in 2013 (Zykov, 2013) indicated the maximum distances at which sound pressure levels were reduced to just above background level (120 dB re 1 μ Pa) from different equipment types. These were:

- + MBES: Approximately 1 km from the sound source
- + SBES: Approximately 350 m from the sound source
- + SSS: 1.5 km from the sound source.

SDES, MBES and SSS used for surveys have the potential to cause some temporary behavioural disturbance to marine fauna, however noise levels are well below injury thresholds. Due to the short duration chirps, the temporary and intermittent use and the mid-frequencies used by positioning and survey equipment, the acoustic noise from the survey equipment is unlikely to have a substantive effect on the behavioural patterns of marine fauna.

As underwater sound levels are dependent on the primary (noisiest) sound source rather than being strictly additive, and since cutting or deburial operations will be undertaken using an ROV or directly from a vessel, they will make little contribution to the overall noise emissions associated with vessel activities as described above and are not risk assessed further.

8.4.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Potential receptors: Threatened or migratory fauna (marine mammals, marine turtles, sharks, fish and rays).

The operational area, including a 20 km buffer, overlaps three BIAs, outlined in **Table 8-5**.

Table 8-5: Summary of biologically important areas that overlap the operational area (including 20 km buffer)

Location	BIA				
	Internesting BIA	Migration BIA	Foraging BIA	Breeding BIA	Distribution
Operational area	-	Pygmy blue whale (within 20 km buffer only)	Whale shark	-	Pygmy blue whale

The use of sound in the underwater environment is important for marine animals, particularly cetaceans, to navigate, communicate and forage effectively, along with turtles, sharks, rays and

other fish, for a range of functions such as social interaction, foraging and orientation. Underwater noise may impact on marine fauna through:

- + attraction to the noise source
- + increased stress levels
- + disruption to underwater acoustic cues
- + localised avoidance
- + disturbance, leading to behavioural changes or displacement from areas
- + masking or interference with other biologically important sounds such as communication or echolocation
- + physical injury to hearing or other organs
- + indirectly by inducing behavioural and physiological changes in predator or prey species.

The nature and scale of impacts must be considered in the context of the ambient noise environment. Ambient underwater noise levels are dependent on location, and are often dominated by local wind noise, waves, biological noise and ship traffic. Wind speed and seabed conditions have a clear influence on the ambient noise level. Existing anthropogenic underwater noise sources in the region of the proposed activity include shipping, small vessel traffic, and petroleum-production activities.

Marine fauna respond variably when exposed to underwater noise from anthropogenic sources, with effects dependent on a number of factors, including distance from the sound source, water depth and bathymetry, the animal's hearing sensitivity, type and duration of sound exposure and the animal's activity at time of exposure. Broadly, the effects of sound on marine fauna can be categorised as:

- + Acoustic masking – anthropogenic sounds may interfere with, or mask, biological signals, therefore reducing the communication and perceptual space of an individual. Auditory masking impacts may occur when there is a reduction in audibility for one sound (signal) caused by the presence of another sound (noise). For this to occur the noise must be loud enough and have a similar frequency to the signal and both signal and noise must occur at the same time.

Behavioural response – behavioural impacts will depend on the audible frequency range of each potential receptor in relation to the frequency of the noise, as marine animals will only respond to acoustic signals they can detect, as well as the intensity of the noise. The intensity of behavioural responses of marine mammals to sound exposure ranges from subtle responses, which may be difficult to observe and have little implications for the affected animal, to obvious responses, such as avoidance or panic reactions. The context in which the sound is received by an animal affects the nature and extent of responses to a stimulus. The threshold for elicitation of behavioural responses depends on received sound level, as well as multiple contextual factors such as the activity, state of animals exposed to different sounds, the nature and novelty of a sound, spatial relations between a sound source and receiving animals, and the gender, age and reproductive status of the receiving animal.

- + Physiological impacts - auditory threshold shift (temporary and permanent hearing loss) – marine fauna exposed to intense sound may experience a loss of hearing sensitivity, or even potentially mortal injury. Hearing loss may be in the form of a temporary threshold shift (TTS) from which an animal recovers within minutes or hours, or a permanent threshold shift (PTS) from which the animal does not recover.

Available threshold criteria associated with behavioural and physiological impacts for sensitive receptors have been derived from a number of sources (NMFS, 2018; NMFS, 2014; Popper *et al.*, 2014). These criteria have been compared with measured and predicted sound levels for different sound sources to assess potential impacts.

8.4.2.1 Marine mammals

No known aggregation, resting, breeding or feeding areas for cetaceans lie close to the operational area. However, cetaceans may travel through the area; the distribution BIA for the pygmy blue whale overlaps the operational area and the migration BIA for this species is located around 18 km away from the operational area at its closest point. Additionally, the recovery plan for blue whales list noise interference as a potential threat. Pygmy blue whales are low-frequency cetaceans. Low (baleen whales) and high-frequency (toothed whales except porpoises) cetaceans may also frequent the operational area.

To better reflect the auditory similarities between phylogenetically closely related species, but also significant differences between species groups among the marine mammals, Southall *et al.* (2019) assigned the extant marine mammal species to functional hearing groups based on their hearing capabilities and sound production.

Exposure to impulsive noise may be more hazardous to hearing than continuous (non-impulsive) noise. For marine mammals, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued a Technical Guidance document that provides acoustic thresholds for the onset of TTS and PTS in marine mammal hearing for all sound sources (NMFS, 2018). Southall *et al.* (2019) published an updated set of criteria for onset of TTS and PTS in marine mammals. While the authors propose a new nomenclature and classification for the marine mammal functional hearing groups, the proposed thresholds and weighting functions for exposure to underwater sound do not differ in effect from those proposed by NMFS (2018). These thresholds that detail receptor noise impacts and behavioural response for continuous noise (vessels) and impulsive noises, along with the new nomenclature and classifications for marine mammals, are summarised in **Table 8-6** and **Table 8-7**.

Behavioural reactions to acoustic exposure are generally more variable, context-dependent, and less predictable than the effects of noise exposure on hearing or physiology. Hence, it is difficult to determine thresholds for behavioural response in individual cetaceans as the way they respond often varies (Nowacek *et al.*, 2004; Gomez *et al.*, 2016; Southall *et al.*, 2019) and is influenced by both biological and environmental factors such as age, sex and the activity at the time. Observed disturbance responses to anthropogenic sound in cetaceans include altered swimming direction; increased swimming speed including pronounced 'startle' reactions; changes to surfacing, breathing and diving patterns; avoidance of the sound source area and other behavioural changes.

For non-impulsive noise, NMFS currently uses step function (all-or-none) threshold of 120 dB re 1 μ Pa SPL (unweighted) to assess and regulate noise-induced behavioural impacts for marine mammals (NOAA, 2019), while for impulsive noise, NMFS uses step function thresholds of 160 dB re 1 μ Pa SPL (unweighted) (NOAA, 2018; NOAA, 2019). The behavioural disturbance threshold criteria applied summates the most recent scientific literature on the impacts of sound on marine mammal hearing, considered the most relevant to this activity.

Table 8-6: Continuous noise: acoustic effects of continuous noise on low-frequency cetaceans: unweighted sound pressure level and SEL_{24h} thresholds

Hearing Group	NOAA (2019)	NMFS (2018); Southall <i>et al.</i> (2019)	
	Behaviour	PTS onset thresholds (received level)	TTS onset thresholds (received level)
	SPL (Lp; dB re 1 µPa)	Weighted SEL _{24h} (LE,24h; dB re 1 µPa ² ·s)	Weighted SEL _{24h} (LE,24h; dB re 1 µPa ² ·s)
Low-frequency cetaceans	120	199	179
High-frequency cetaceans	120	198	178
Very high-frequency cetaceans	120	173	153

L_e denotes cumulative exposure over a 24-hour period and has a reference value of 1 µPa²·s

Table 8-7: Impulsive noise: unweighted sound pressure level, SEL_{24h} and PK thresholds for acoustic effects on marine mammals

Hearing Group	NOAA (2019)	NMFS (2018); Southall <i>et al.</i> (2019)			
	Behaviour	PTS Onset Thresholds (Received Level)		TTS Onset Thresholds (Received Level)	
	SPL (Lp; dB re 1 µPa)	Weighted SEL _{24h} (LE,24h; dB re 1 µPa ² ·s)	PK (Lpk; dB re 1 µPa)	Weighted SEL _{24h} (LE,24h; dB re 1 µPa ² ·s)	PK (Lpk; dB re 1 µPa)
Low-frequency cetaceans	160	183	219	168	213
High-frequency cetaceans	160	185	230	170	224
Very high-frequency cetaceans	160	155	202	140	196

Potential impacts from vessels

Auditory masking impacts may occur when there is a reduction in audibility for one sound (signal) caused by the presence of another sound (noise). For this to occur the noise must be loud enough and have a similar frequency to the signal, and both signal and noise must occur at the same time. Therefore, the closer the whale is to the vessel, and the more overlap there is with their vocalisation frequencies, the higher the probability of masking. The potential for masking and communication impacts is therefore classified as high near the vessel (within tens of metres), moderate within hundreds to low thousands of metres (Clark *et al.*, 2009).

There is a potential for auditory masking impacts to whales due to vessel noise, however, impacts are considered temporary and localised because the individual and the vessels will be almost constantly moving and therefore no single area will be impacted for any length of time.

Noise from the project vessels would likely exceed PTS thresholds at the source for very high-frequency cetaceans, whilst noise from projects vessels is not expected to be above PTS thresholds

for low-frequency or high-frequency cetaceans at any time. Noise from project vessels would likely exceed TTS thresholds for up to hundreds of meters from the source. However, since marine mammals are transient in the operational area, which lacks aggregating habitat such as resting or calving areas, individuals are expected to pass through the operational area, potentially showing localised avoidance via behavioural responses (see below). PTS to very high-frequency cetaceans is unlikely as individuals will likely show avoidance before getting within range, individuals are therefore not expected to remain within the vicinity of the noise source for the duration (24 hours, **Table 8-6**) required to exceed PTS. Underwater noise generated by vessels (continuous noise) does not have the intensity and characteristics likely to cause physiological damage in marine fauna (Nedwell & Edwards, 2004; Hatch & Southall, 2009). For TTS, individuals would need to pass within hundreds of metres of the project vessels during operations. This would result in a temporary impact to a low proportion of the migrating population.

Based on the field measurements and studies discussed in **Section 8.4.1**, the distance from the source to the behavioural threshold for cetaceans (120 dB re 1 μ Pa) is estimated to be 5 km for a single support vessel present in the operational area.

In addition to levels where PTS and TSS impacts are observed there have been observations of marine mammals reacting to aircraft and other anthropogenic impacts, specifically:

Reactions of cetaceans to circling aircraft (fixed wing or helicopter) are sometimes conspicuous if the aircraft is below an altitude of 300 m, uncommon at 460 m and generally undetectable at 600 m (NMFS, 2001).

Baleen whales sometimes dive or turn away during overflights, but sensitivity seems to vary depending on the activity of the animals. The effects on cetaceans seem transient, and occasional overflights probably have no long-term consequences on cetaceans.

Observations by Richardson and Malme (1993) indicate that, for bowhead whales, most individuals are unlikely to react significantly to occasional single-pass low-flying helicopters transporting personnel and equipment at altitudes above 150 m.

Leatherwood *et al.* (1982) observed that minke whales responded to helicopters at an altitude of 230 m by changing course or slowly diving.

This is relevant to understanding the potential impacts of helicopter operations within the operational area.

8.4.2.2 Marine turtles

As described in **Table 5-9**, there are no BIAs for marine turtles within proximity to the operational area. The nearest BIA is more than 60 km away. However, individual marine turtles may pass through the operational area.

The Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) highlights noise interference from anthropogenic activities as a threat to marine turtles. The plan refers to vessel noise and the operation of some oil and gas equipment as sources of chronic (continuous) noise in the marine environment, exposure to which may lead to avoidance of important turtle habitat.

Finneran *et al.* (2017) presented revised thresholds for sea turtle injury and hearing impairment (TTS and PTS). Their rationale is that sea turtles have best sensitivity at low frequencies and are known to have poor auditory sensitivity (Bartol & Ketten, 2006; Dow Piniak *et al.*, 2012; Martin *et al.*, 2012). Accordingly, TTS and PTS thresholds for turtles are likely more similar to those of fishes than to marine mammals (Popper *et al.*, 2014).

Studies show behavioural responses occur to received sound levels of around 166 dB re 1 μ Pa and that avoidance responses occur at around 175 dB re 1 μ Pa (McCauley *et al.*, 2000). These levels overlap with the sound frequencies produced by vessels. Based on the limited data regarding noise levels that illicit a behavioural response in turtles, the lower level of 166 dB re 1 μ Pa level drawn from National Science Foundation (2011) is typically applied, both in Australia and by NMFS, as the

threshold level at which behavioural disturbance could occur. The recommended criteria for impulsive and continuous sound sources are shown in **Table 8-8** and **Table 8-9**.

Table 8-8: Acoustic effects of continuous noise on sea turtles

Potential Marine Fauna Receptor	Popper <i>et al.</i> (2014)		Finneran <i>et al.</i> (2017) Weighted SEL _{24h} (LE _{24h} ; dB re 1 µPa ² ·s)	
	Masking	Behaviour	PTS onset threshold	TTS onset threshold
Marine Turtle	(N) High (I) High (F) Moderate	(N) High (I) Moderate (F) Low	220	200

Note: Relative risk (high, moderate, low) is given for animals at three distances from the source defined in relative terms as near (N) – tens of metres, intermediate (I) – hundreds of metres, and far (F) – thousands of metres.

Table 8-9: Acoustic effects of impulsive noise on sea turtles: unweighted SPL, SEL24h, and PK thresholds

NFS (2011)	Moein <i>et al.</i> (1995); McCauley <i>et al.</i> (2000b), (2000a)	Finneran <i>et al.</i> (2017)			
Behaviour		PTS onset threshold		TTS onset threshold	
SPL (L _p ; dB re 1 μPa)		Weighted SEL _{24h} (LE _{24h} ; dB re 1 μPa ² ·s)	PK (L _{pk} ; dB re 1 μPa)	Weighted SEL _{24h} (LE _{24h} ; dB re 1 μPa ² ·s)	PK (L _{pk} ; dB re 1 μPa)
166	175	204	232	189	226

Potential impacts

Continuous noise sources are below PTS and TTS criteria for marine turtles. Considering the open-ocean location of the operational area, only individual turtles may be affected as they transit the area, and impacts are not considered significant based on the following:

Vessel noise is expected to be below the thresholds for PTS and TTS, given the typical size vessels used during the activity and the slow vessel speeds within the operational area, the received levels may result in behavioural impacts, but for a limited duration and will not result in significant impacts, and helicopter and ROV noise will be intermittent during the activity, and below the thresholds for behavioural impacts, PTS and TTS.

8.4.2.3 Sea snakes

There is limited information about the effects of noise on sea snakes. A current research project investigating the impacts of seismic surveys found that hearing sensitivity of sea snakes is similar to species of fish without a swim bladder (discussed below). Therefore, it is considered that there is a moderate risk in the near and intermediate distances (which extends hundreds of metres) of behavioural impacts to sea snakes, with the impacts being limited to temporary avoidance of the area.

8.4.2.4 Sharks, rays and fish

The whale shark foraging BIA overlaps the operational area. All fish species can detect noise sources, although hearing ranges and sensitivities vary substantially between species (Dale *et al.*, 2015). Sensitivity to sound pressure seems to be functionally correlated in fishes, to the presence and absence of gas-filled chambers in the sound transduction system. These enable fishes to detect sound pressure and extend their hearing abilities to lower sound levels and higher frequencies

(Ladich & Popper, 2004; Braun & Grande, 2008). Based on their morphology, Popper *et al.* (2014) classified fishes into three groups, comprising fishes:

- + with swim bladders whose hearing does not involve the swim bladder or other gas volumes
- + whose hearing does involve a swim bladder or other gas volume
- + without a swim bladder that can sink and settle on the substrate when inactive.

The criteria defined in Popper *et al.* (2014) for continuous (**Table 8-10**) and impulsive (**Table 8-11**) noise sources have been adopted.

Table 8-10: Continuous noise: criteria for noise exposure for fish (adapted from Popper *et al.*, 2014)

Potential Marine Fauna Receptor	Mortality and Potentially Mortal Injury	Impairment			Behaviour
		Recoverable Injury	TTS	Masking	
Fish: No swim bladder (particle motion detection)	(N) Low (I) Low (F) Low	(N) Low (I) Low (F) Low	(N) Moderate (I) Low (F) Low	(N) High (I) High (F) Moderate	(N) Moderate (I) Moderate (F) Low
Fish: Swim bladder not involved in hearing (particle motion detection)	(N) Low (I) Low (F) Low	(N) Low (I) Low (F) Low	(N) Moderate (I) Low (F) Low	(N) High (I) High (F) Moderate	(N) Moderate (I) Moderate (F) Low
Fish: Swim bladder involved in hearing (primarily pressure detection)	(N) Low (I) Low (F) Low	170 dB SPL for 48 h	158 dB SPL for 12 h	(N) High (I) High (F) High	(N) High (I) Moderate (F) Low
Fish eggs and fish larvae	(N) Low (I) Low (F) Low	(N) Low (I) Low (F) Low	(N) Low (I) Low (F) Low	(N) High (I) Moderate (F) Low	(N) Moderate (I) Moderate (F) Low

Note: Relative risk (high, moderate, low) is given for animals at three distances from the source defined in relative terms as near (N) – tens of metres, intermediate (I) – hundreds of metres, and far (F) – thousands of metres.

Table 8-11: Impulsive noise: criteria for noise exposure for fish (adapted from Popper et al., 2014)

Potential Marine Fauna Receptor	Mortality and Potential Mortal Injury	Impairment			Behaviour
		Recoverable Injury	TTS	Masking	
Fish: No swim bladder (particle motion detection)	> 219 dB SEL _{24h} or > 213 dB PK	> 216 dB SEL _{24h} or > 213 dB PK	> 186 dB SEL _{24h}	(N) Low (I) Low (F) Low	(N) High (I) Moderate (F) Low
Fish: Swim bladder not involved in hearing (particle motion detection)	210 dB SEL _{24h} or > 207 dB PK	203 dB SEL _{24h} or > 207 dB PK	> 186 dB SEL _{24h}	(N) Low (I) Low (F) Low	(N) High (I) Moderate (F) Low
Fish: Swim bladder involved in hearing (primarily pressure detection)	207 dB SEL _{24h} or > 207 dB PK	203 dB SEL _{24h} or > 207 dB PK	186 dB SEL _{24h}	(N) Low (I) Low (F) Moderate	(N) High (I) High (F) Moderate
Fish eggs and fish larvae	> 210 dB SEL _{24h} or > 207 dB PK	(N) Moderate (I) Low (F) Low	(N) Moderate (I) Low (F) Low	(N) Low (I) Low (F) Low	(N) Moderate (I) Low (F) Low

Note: Relative risk (high, moderate, low) is given for animals at three distances from the source defined in relative terms as near (N) – tens of metres, intermediate (I) – hundreds of metres, and far (F) – thousands of metres.

Potential impacts from continuous noise

Based on criteria developed by Popper *et al.* (2014) for noise impacts on fish, vessel, helicopter and ROV noise has a low risk of resulting in mortality and a moderate risk of TTS impacts when fish are within tens of metres from the source. The most likely impacts to fish from noise will be behavioural responses. Popper *et al.* (2014) identified a moderate risk of behavioural impacts to fish in near (tens of metres) and intermediate distances (hundreds of metres) from the noise source. Masking could occur within thousands of metres under a worst-case scenario of vessel operations; however, typically any effect will be limited to within hundreds of metres.

Whale sharks could potentially be impacted from operational noise if in the area, whale sharks would be expected to show avoidance to vessel noise, although they are likely to tolerate low level noise, because whale sharks have been observed swimming close to oil and gas platforms on the NWS.

Potential impacts from impulsive noise

Thresholds for PTS and recoverable injury from impulsive noise are between 207 dB PK and 213 dB PK (depending on the presence or absence of a swim bladder), and the threshold for TTS is 186 dB SEL_{cum} (Popper *et al.*, 2014). Given there is no exposure criteria for sharks and rays, the same criteria are adopted, though typically sharks and rays do not possess a swim bladder.

Individual demersal fish may be impacted in the vicinity of the activity and tuna and billfish and other mobile pelagic species may transverse the operational area. However, the operational area is not known to be an important spawning or aggregation habitat for commercially caught targeted species. Therefore, no impacts to fish stocks are expected.

8.4.2.5 Invertebrates

Underwater noise emissions from the activity are not expected to cause a change in behaviour to benthic invertebrates.

Benthic invertebrates are unlikely to be negatively impacted from noise generated from vessel operations; there is no convincing scientific evidence for any significant effects induced by non-impulsive noise in benthic invertebrates.

Plankton, including fish eggs and larvae, and pelagic invertebrates could drift into proximity to high-energy noise sources (for example, bow thrusters). However, any negative impacts that could occur would be restricted to within metres of the sound source. At such a localised extent, impacts would be negligible at an ecosystem or population level.

8.4.2.6 Protected and significant areas

The operational area does not intersect any marine parks. The nearest AMP is the Montebello AMP (Multiple Use Zone – IUCN Category VI) which is located 99 km from the operational area. Due to the distance of the AMP from the operational area, impacts from noise emissions on the values of the AMP are not expected.

No recognised breeding or resting area for marine mammals, cetaceans, shark or fish species are known to occur in the operational area. However, a foraging BIA for whale sharks and a distribution BIA for the pygmy blue whale overlap the operational area (see impact assessment above).

8.4.2.7 Cumulative impacts

The potential cumulative impacts of the simultaneous presence of all three support vessels being in the operational area have been described above.

During the MEFF Decommissioning SAR activities, there is potential for concurrent operations within the wider MEFF field with MEFF P&A activities described under the MEFF P&A EP (9885-236-EMP-0002). The MEFF P&A activities will typically involve the use of a MODU with up to three support vessels. Therefore, if decommissioning activities are undertaken concurrently with P&A activities, there is a potential for noise generated from one activity to be audible within the field of a separate activity. However, given that these activities will be spatially separated for operational reasons (activities will be at least 1 km apart) (MEFF-CM-16), the reduction of noise with distance, to below injury or disturbance thresholds, means that any potential cumulative impacts are considered minor and short-term. The behavioural threshold for cetaceans is not expected to be exceeded in the pygmy blue whale migration BIA.

8.4.2.8 Summary

Noise emissions associated with the activity are not expected to cause physical injury to marine fauna, particularly marine mammals. Although noise from project vessels is likely to exceed TTS thresholds for marine mammals up to hundreds of meters from the source, marine mammals are transient in the operational area, which lacks aggregating habitat such as resting or calving areas. Individuals are expected to pass through the operational area in a wide open operational area, potentially showing localised avoidance via behavioural responses.

Noise levels from the vessels, helicopters and ROV that may cause behavioural responses are expected to generally be confined to the operational area and concentrated within a radius of 5 km for vessels and a few hundred metres for helicopters and ROVs from the noise source.

Noise impacts on fish from vessel, helicopter and ROV noise has a low risk of resulting in mortality and a moderate risk of TTS impacts when fish are within tens of metres from the source. However, the operational area is not known to be an important spawning or aggregation habitat for commercially caught targeted species and any impact on recreational fishing is also expected to be minimal.

Cumulative impacts from decommissioning activities potentially occurring concurrently with P&A activities are considered minor and short-term (temporary) in nature. The activities will be spatially separated for operational reasons and the behavioural threshold for cetaceans is not expected to be exceeded in the pygmy blue whale migration BIA which is located approximately 18km away from the closest point to the operational area.

8.4.3 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

EPOs relating to this event include:

- + no injury or mortality to EPBC Act 1999 and *WA Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* listed fauna during activities [MEFF-EPO-04].

The control measures (CM) considered for this activity are shown in **Table 8-12** with EPSs and measurement criteria for the EPOs described in **Section 11.4**.

Table 8-12: Control measures evaluation for noise emissions

CM Reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Control Measures				
MEFF-CM-21	Procedures for interacting with marine fauna	Reduces risk of physical and behavioural impacts to marine fauna from vessel, because if they are sighted, then the vessel can slow down or move away, and helicopters can increase distances from sighted fauna if required.	Operational costs to adhere to marine fauna interaction restrictions, such as vessel speed and direction, are based on legislated requirements and must be accepted.	Adopted – Benefits in reducing impacts to marine fauna outweigh the costs incurred by Santos. Control drives compliance with EPBC Regulations (Part 8).
MEFF-CM-22	Vessel Planned Maintenance System (PMS) to maintain vessel DP, engines and machinery	Reduces noise emissions from the vessels because equipment is operating within its parameters.	Costs are standard for routine PMS.	Adopted – Benefits in reducing noise impacts.
MEFF-CM-23	Marine assurance	Ensures contracted vessels are operated, maintained and manned in accordance with industry standards (for example, Marine Orders) and regulatory requirements (this EP) and the relevant Santos procedures mentioned in this EP.	Costs are expected as part of standard procedure.	Adopted – Benefits in reducing noise impacts.

CM Reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Additional Control Measures				
N/A	Dedicated Marine Fauna Observer on vessels ¹	Improved ability to spot and identify marine fauna at risk of impact by vessel noise.	Additional cost of contracting several specialist Marine Fauna Observers while the risk to all listed marine fauna cannot be reduced due to variability in timing of environmentally sensitive periods and unpredictable presence of some species.	Rejected – The operational area is outside of the migration BIA and only covers a very small area within the distribution BIA, reducing the likelihood of encounters with pygmy blue whales. Cost disproportionate to increase in environmental benefit and given that crew members will be observing for marine fauna during activities.
N/A	Site-specific acoustic modelling ¹	The distance at which fauna could experience behavioural impacts can be predicted and compared to literary publications. Additional management controls can then be included if required to support an ALARP justification and reduce potential impacts to marine fauna.	Additional cost to contract consultant to develop a model and produce predicted noise outputs.	Rejected – The cost associated with site specific modelling, outweighs any environmental benefit, and no further controls can be implemented to reduce vessel noise other than not undertaking the activity. Given the potential impacts are expected to be minor and limited to temporary and minor behavioural changes only, and noise levels from vessels and helicopters will decay rapidly; site-specific modelling will not provide additional information which would alter the current ALARP position. Also, the activity does not occur in a

CM Reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
				humpback whale resting, foraging, calving or confined migratory pathway.
N/A	Noise management plan ¹	Impacts are predicted to be minor (e.g., potential temporary and minor behavioural changes); therefore, a management plan, and associated management controls, will have little or no benefit in terms of outcomes; i.e., reducing impacts further.	No additional cost other than negligible personnel costs of preparing and reviewing the management plan.	Rejected – The activity does not occur in any resting, foraging, calving or confined migratory pathway for protected cetacean species. Therefore, the cost associated with developing a management plan outweighs the little or no benefit for a short duration activity which has a minor impact (e.g., potential temporary and minor behavioural changes).
N/A	Use of passive acoustic monitoring	Improve detection of some sensitive receptors.	Costs of passive acoustic monitoring operators. Operational costs of shutdowns potentially prolonging the activity.	Rejected – Cost disproportionate to increase in environmental benefit, given the low-level behavioural response expected. Limited ability of passive acoustic monitoring to detect cetaceans would provide little benefit to the species expected to be present.
N/A	Verification of noise levels	Allow implementation of adaptive management controls should impact be greater than expected.	Costs of deploying noise monitoring equipment and processing of data.	Rejected – Relatively short duration of the activity (approx. 14 days IMMR and 12 months cumulative duration, likely over multiple campaigns, for seabed asset removal) would prevent noise verification being completed before the

CM Reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
				activity is finished. Cost disproportionate to increase in environmental benefit, given the rapid reduction in noise levels from vessels and the low-level behavioural response expected.
N/A	Operational activities to avoid coinciding with sensitive periods for marine fauna present in the operational area (whale shark foraging, pygmy blue whale distribution)	Reduce risk of impacts from noise emissions during environmentally sensitive periods for listed marine fauna.	High cost in moving or delaying activity schedule. The risk to all listed marine fauna cannot be eliminated due to variability in timing of environmentally sensitive periods and unpredictable presence of some species.	Rejected – The operational area overlaps with very small portions of the pygmy blue whale distribution BIA and the whale shark foraging BIA, and these species could be present all year round. However, the potential impacts to whale sharks or pygmy blue whales, if they occur, would be well within 500 m of the vessel and equipment (behavioural impacts within tens of metres of the vessel). With the controls in place to manage interaction with fauna within 500 m of the vessel, the potential for impact is significantly reduced. The activity will not restrict the movement of any species within the area as the BIA and the area within which they are distributed is widespread. Cost is disproportionate to increase in environmental benefit.
N/A	Start-up of acoustic equipment and	Restricts ROV noise emissions to smaller	Not possible – equipment needs	Rejected – Control not feasible.

CM Reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
	ROV equipment only when ROV in position near the seabed.	portion of water column near seabed. Reduces potential noise interactions with marine fauna.	to be functioning on deployment.	
N/A	Before commencing start-up of geophysical survey equipment in-water, the following will be completed: + A trained crew member will observe for marine mammals, whale sharks or turtles within 500 m of the vessel during daylight for 15 minutes before start-up (if no sightings, survey can commence) + If marine mammals, whale sharks or turtles are sighted within 500 m of the geophysical equipment before commencing survey, the operation will be delayed until the animal has moved at least 500 m away or ten minutes has passed since the last sighting + Night operations can commence if there were no more than three delays due to marine fauna in the preceding 24 hours.	May reduce potential for interaction of ROV with marine fauna; however, the benefit is considered limited, given there is no geophysical equipment onboard ROV other than a high frequency sonar which is outside range of marine fauna hearing. The ROV noise is not expected to be greater than that associated with vessel station keeping and operation.	Implementing control could result in survey delays with associated costs.	Rejected – The additional cost associated with the control exceeds the negligible environmental benefit.

CM Reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Adaptive management procedures for managing impacts to pygmy blue whales including: + Restricting the number of support vessels present in the operational area at any one time. + Where pygmy blue whale presence is observed, the area will not be approached by a vessel(s) within 500 m, until there has been 30 minutes with no recorded pygmy blue whale activity.	May reduce potential impacts to pygmy blue whales	Additional costs associated with personnel training, additional personnel required for observations. Potential schedule delays associated with waiting for pygmy blue whale activity to cease/move away.	Rejected – The additional cost associated with the control exceeds the negligible environmental benefit. Although the operational area overlaps the pygmy blue whale distribution BIA, only individuals are expected to pass through the operational area, potentially showing localised avoidance via behavioural responses. The pygmy blue whale migration BIA is located approximately 18 km away from the operational area. Underwater noise levels are expected to be below the behavioural threshold for cetaceans prior to reaching the migration BIA and therefore, significant impacts to pygmy blue whale migration are not expected.

8.4.4 Environmental impact assessment

Receptor	Consequence Level
Noise Emissions	
Threatened, migratory or local fauna	In the Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia, noise interference to marine turtles is separated depending on whether the exposure is short (acute) or long-term (chronic). Activities such as pile driving, seismic activity and some forms of dredging generate acute noise, and sources of chronic noise are identified as including shipping channels and the operation of some oil and gas infrastructure. The level of noise generated by this activity is acute, temporary and may result in behavioural impacts to marine turtles. The operational area is distant from the nearest BIA and habitat critical to the survival of marine turtles (approximately 60 km away at its closest location to the flatback turtle interesting buffer BIA and over flatback turtle nesting critical habitat), however transiting marine turtles have the potential to occur within the operational area. Given the relatively short duration of the activity and the proposed management measures, it is reasonable to conclude noise emissions will not affect the conservation status of marine turtles or compromise the objectives of the marine turtle recovery plan. It is possible that whale sharks could pass through the operational area, as the whale shark foraging BIA overlaps. Whale sharks would be expected to show a behavioural response only, as it is unlikely that this species would swim within close range (within metres) of high energy sound sources (e.g. bow thrusters) that could result in physiological damage. The slow working speed of vessels within the operational area further reduces the risk of any negative impacts attributable to vessel noise. The Conservation Advice Rhincodon typus Whale Shark (TSSC, 2015a) identifies habitat disturbance as a risk. The expected noise levels and behavioural response are not considered to result in habitat disturbance, which is consistent with this advice. The foraging BIA is widespread across the North West Shelf compared to the operational area so no significant impacts are expected to occur to whale shark populations. The National Recovery Plan for the Southern Right Whale (2024), lists vessel noise as a threat to the species. However, the operational area is approximately 350km from the nearest area of the BIA for Southern Right whales, so it is reasonable to conclude that noise emissions will not affect the conservation status of the whales or the objectives of the Recovery Plan. Seabirds are also unlikely to be directly affected by underwater noise generated during the activity. Although a breeding BIA is located within 20 km of the operational area, due to the distance of the operational area from any seabird nesting colonies, the potential for airborne noise from the activity to cause disturbance to seabirds is extremely low. Given the generally low noise level expected from vessels, helicopters and associated activities, the relatively short duration of noise emissions and controls in place to manage interactions with marine fauna, significant impacts to threatened or migratory species are not expected. Some temporary and localised behavioural response may result from noise being emitted, but these will not be at levels that could cause injury or mortality to marine fauna or cause a decrease in local population size or area of occupancy of species. The consequence level for fauna is considered to be II-Minor.
Physical environment or habitat	Not applicable – Noise emissions will not impact the physical environment / habitats, apart from increasing ambient noise levels which is considered under other receptors.

Receptor	Consequence Level
Threatened ecological communities	Not applicable – No threatened ecological communities identified in the area over which noise emissions are expected.
Protected areas	Not applicable – Noise levels are not expected to impact on habitats or species at a population or community level. The nearest protected area is the Montebello AMP, located 99 km from the operational area.
Socio-economic receptors	Noise levels are not expected to impact on socio-economic receptors due to their low activity level within the vicinity of the operational area. There are no recreation areas within the area expected to be impacted by noise. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country. The consequence level for socio-economic receptors is I – Negligible.
Overall worst-case consequence	II – Minor

8.4.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

The use of vessels is unavoidable if the operational activities are to proceed as required 24 hours a day. Equipment maintenance will keep the vessel noise levels to within normal operating limits, which will also aid in keeping noise emissions within the boundaries that have been risk assessed.

The vessels are also expected to produce similar noise emissions to other marine vessels that frequent or transit through the vicinity of the operational area (oil and gas industry vessels, commercial shipping). The vessels will adhere to the EPBC Regulations (Part 8) to ensure actions are undertaken to avoid marine mammals (and whale sharks) within 100 m of a vessel, and all crews will be inducted into these requirements. It is further expected that the vessels will typically emit sufficient noise for sensitive marine fauna to exhibit avoidance behaviour and move away from the activity to avoid physical impact zones.

The use of helicopters to transfer personnel to and from the vessels is necessary to allow operational activities to occur safely and effectively, with some personnel required to be rotated to and from other locations, and to provide for a rapid method of transferring to and from the vessels in the case of an emergency. A performance standard prohibiting helicopters from landing or taking off in the presence of marine megafauna would introduce an unacceptable risk to human life.

Management controls are in place to reduce operating noise, including vessel and helicopter operational protocols through adherence to the Santos' Protected Marine Fauna Interaction and Sighting Procedure (EA-91-11-00003). This requires compliance with Part 8 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000 and includes controls to reduce the risk of disturbance to or collision with EPBC Act listed marine fauna. Santos has considered the actions prescribed in the Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) when developing these controls to minimise noise impacts on marine turtles.

Any behavioural impact caused by vessel activity noise is likely to be localised and temporary, with marine species expected to resume normal behavioural patterns in the open oceanic waters surrounding the operational area in a short timeframe with no significant impact on their normal behaviour, including during sensitive periods such as migration, nesting or foraging.

Avoiding periods of higher sensitivity such as migration or nesting periods for whales and turtles (for example) is not considered feasible. The operational area overlaps with two BIAs for fauna: pygmy blue whale distribution and whale shark foraging. Given the low potential impacts to individual fauna, there is not expected to be an impact at population level or significant impacts on migratory or breeding behaviours.

Significant impacts are not expected on fauna, including cetaceans and turtles, and the assessed residual consequence for this impact is Minor (II). Additional control measures were considered but rejected since the associated cost or effort was grossly disproportionate to any benefit (see **Section 8.4.3**). Therefore, the impact from noise associated with the activities is considered ALARP.

8.4.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the consequence ranked as I (Negligible) or II (Minor)?	Yes – maximum consequence from noise emissions is II (Minor).
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are the risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5), which considers principles of ESD. The consequence against this aspect is II (Minor) and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian marine park zoning objectives)?	Yes – controls implemented during the activity will minimise the potential impacts to species identified in Recovery Plans as having the potential to be impacted by noise emissions. Relevant species recovery plans, conservation management plans and management actions listed in Table 5-10 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environmental, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environmental, Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to cessation phase activities	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities)	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

The activities will be conducted over a relatively short duration (approximately 14 days for IMMR activities and 12 months cumulative duration, likely over multiple campaigns, for seabed removal activities (dependent on weather delays and operational downtime) in a remote offshore location, with a relatively low probability of encountering significant numbers of noise sensitive fauna. The activities that will generate noise are standard offshore industry practice and the potential impacts are well documented. With the controls proposed and considering the relatively short duration and characteristics of noise types planned, the potential consequences of impacts to noise sensitive receptors in the area, including pygmy blue whales, are assessed to be Minor (II) and ALARP.

Management plans and conservation advice for cetaceans

The operational area intercepts BIAs for pygmy blue whales (distribution) (refer to

Figure 5-10) and the migration corridor for this species is located around 18 km from the operational area at its closest point. The Conservation Management Plan for the Blue Whale (DoE, 2015b) includes the following relevant information and requirements:

+ Interim Objective No. 4: “Anthropogenic threats are demonstrably minimised.”

Section 5C: discusses threats from noise interference including seismic surveys, acute and chronic industrial noise, masking from anthropogenic noise, shipping noise and aircraft noise.

Action A.2.3 under Anthropogenic threats are demonstrably minimised states that “Anthropogenic noise in biologically important areas will be managed such that any blue whale continues to utilise the area without injury, and is not displaced from a foraging area”. The Guidance on Key Terms within in the Blue Whale Conservation Management Plan (CMP) (DAWE, 2021a) provides guidance on what constitutes a foraging area, including opportunistic foraging areas outside of known foraging BIAs.

Activities are considered consistent with the objectives of the conservation management plan and the impacts acceptable for the following reasons:

A review of noise monitoring data from sources associated with the activity, including the vessels, ROV operation, side scan sonar (SSS) or echosounders and positioning equipment, determined that the highest noise emitting activity is associated with support vessels using their thrusters to maintain position. The sound pressure level for continuous noise, such as thrusters, above which behavioural impacts are expected for low-frequency cetaceans including the pygmy blue whale, is 120 dB re 1 μ Pa. Thruster noise from support vessels has been measured below 120 dB re 1 μ Pa within 1-5 km from the noise source (McCauley, 1998 and Koessler and McPherson, 2020). Noise from other continuous noise sources, such as MODU operation, is expected to attenuate to below the behavioural impact threshold of 120 dB re 1 μ Pa within 1 km (Austin et al., 2018).

The sound pressure level above which behavioural impacts are expected for continuous noise is more conservative than for impulsive noise; 120 dB re 1 μ Pa versus 160 dB re 1 μ Pa. Noise monitoring data from impulsive sources, such as SSS or echosounders, have similarly been measured below 120 dB re 1 μ Pa within 1.5 km from the noise source (Zykov, 2013).

Given the migration BIA is 17-18 km away, no significant behavioural impacts to migration activities is expected. No injury to pygmy blue whales that may be encountered during the activity due to noise emissions is also expected. As defined by the Guidance on Key Terms within in the Blue Whale CMP (DAWE, 2021a), injury is considered to be either PTS or TTS from underwater noise. The received levels from vessels will decline rapidly from the source and be below thresholds for PTS and TTS within approximately 12 to 266 m of the source as per **Table 8-6**.

Given the operational area overlaps a very small portion of the distribution BIA, acoustic masking and avoidance behaviour may be expected if pygmy blue whales come within 5 km from the noise source, however no significant impacts to foraging or migration BIAs are expected.

The controls to manage anthropogenic noise include adaptive management in the event that whales are encountered by vessels and helicopters. Santos’ Procedures for Interacting with Marine Fauna (EA-91-11-00003) drives activity compliance with EPBC Regulations (Part 8) for managing the risks of noise to cetaceans. Additionally, the activities will not displace an individual or individuals from foraging areas (located distant from the operational area) or from potential opportunistic foraging.

Additional controls were considered, such as dedicated marine mammal observers, scheduling operational activities outside of sensitive periods, noise monitoring etc, however they were assessed and rejected because the risk of impact from noise on the BIA’s is considered minor and therefore the cost is disproportionate to the increase in environmental benefit.

Recovery plan for marine turtles

The Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia: 2017 to 2027 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) highlights noise interference from anthropogenic activities as a threat to marine turtles. The plan refers to vessel noise and the operation of some oil and gas equipment as sources of chronic (continuous) noise in the marine environment, exposure of which may lead to avoidance of important turtle habitat.

It specifies the following priority action related to noise, for all marine turtle stock:

Manage anthropogenic activities to ensure marine turtles are not displaced from identified habitat critical to the survival.

Although the operational area is distant from the nearest BIA and habitat critical to the survival of marine turtles (more than 60 km away), transiting marine turtles have the potential to occur within the operational area. However, given the relatively short duration of the activity and the proposed management measures, it is reasonable to conclude noise emissions will not affect the conservation status of marine turtles or compromise the objectives of the marine turtle recovery plan. Therefore, potential impacts are acceptable.

Summary

The controls proposed are consistent with relevant standards, including EPBC Regulations Part 8 (Vessels and Aircraft), and aligned with the applicable management actions outlined in relevant Recovery Plans and Approved Conservation Advice. No concerns from stakeholders (including fisheries) have been raised regarding noise emissions during the activity. Therefore, the Minor (II) impacts expected from noise emissions are considered environmentally acceptable.

8.5 Atmospheric emissions

8.5.1 Description of event

Event	Potential impacts from atmospheric emissions may occur in the operational area from: + operation of incinerators on vessels + operation of vessel engines, helicopters, generators, mobile and fixed plant and equipment + concurrent MEFF decommissioning and MEFF P&A activities These emissions will include greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, and non-GHG emissions, such as sulphur oxides, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, particulate matter, non-methane volatile organic compounds and benzene, ethylbenzene, toluene, and xylenes. Although the vessels may use ozone-depleting substances (ODS), this will be in a closed rechargeable refrigeration system and there is no plan to release ODS to the atmosphere. Atmospheric emissions may also result from transport of other recovered seabed equipment to the port of landing and from road transport to the waste management facility. This is discussed further in Section 8.6.2.
Extent	Localised: The quantities of gaseous emissions are relatively small and will, under normal circumstances, quickly dissipate into the surrounding atmosphere.
Duration	Intermittent (incinerators, helicopters, mobile plant etc) to consistent (vessel engines etc) for the duration of the activity as described in Section 4.1.

8.5.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Potential receptors: Physical environment (air quality).

Hydrocarbon combustion may result in a temporary, localised reduction of air quality in the environment immediately surrounding the discharge point during the activity. Non-GHG emissions, such as nitrogen oxides and sulphur oxides, can lead to a reduction in local air quality. GHG emissions are recognised to also contribute to the greenhouse gas emissions loading globally.

As the activity will occur in open-ocean offshore waters, the combustion of fuels and incineration in such remote locations will not impact on air quality in coastal towns. The quantities of gaseous emissions are relatively small and will quickly dissipate into the surrounding atmosphere. Air emissions will be similar to other vessels operating in the region for both petroleum and non-petroleum activities.

Accidental release and fugitive emissions of ODS has the potential to contribute to ozone layer depletion. Maintenance of refrigeration systems containing ODS is on a routine, but infrequent basis, and with controls implemented, the likelihood of an accidental ODS release of material volume is considered rare.

Potential impacts are expected to be short-term, and relate to localised reduction in air quality, limited to the immediate vicinity of the emissions release. Atmospheric emission impacts are not expected to have direct or cumulative impacts on sensitive environmental receptors or be above National Environmental Protection (Ambient Air Quality) measures.

There is potential for concurrent MEFF decommissioning and MEFF P&A activities. However as the activities will be at least 1 km apart there is no potential for cumulative impacts.

8.5.3 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

EPOs relating to this event include:

- + No unplanned objects, emissions or discharges to sea or air [MEFF-EPO-05].

The control measures considered for this activity are shown in **Table 8-13** with EPSs and measurement criteria for the EPOs described in **Section 11.4**.

Table 8-13: Control measures evaluation for atmospheric emissions

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Control Measures				
MEFF-CM-24	Waste incineration	Reduces the potential for emissions or particulates by ensuring only permissible waste is incinerated as per International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) Annex VI and Marine Order 97.	Personnel cost of maintaining waste records and training of staff.	Adopted – Negligible environmental impact outweighs the costs associated with transporting waste to shore for landfill.
MEFF-CM-25	Fuel oil quality	Reduces emissions through use of low sulphur fuel in accordance with Marine Order 97.	No additional costs, as this is a regulatory requirement.	Adopted – No additional costs.
MEFF-CM-26	International air pollution prevention certification	Ensure vessels are operating with acceptable emissions as per international standards. Ensure compliance with Australian Marine Orders as appropriate for vessel class.	No additional costs, as this is a regulatory requirement.	Adopted – Benefit of ensuring vessel is compliant outweighs the minimal costs and it is a legislated requirement.
MEFF-CM-27	Ozone-depleting substance handling procedures	Reduces probability of potential impacts to air quality due to ODS emissions.	Personnel cost of maintaining ODS record book or recording system.	Adopted – Benefit of ensuring no ODS release outweighs the minimal costs.
MEFF-CM-22	Vessel PMS to maintain vessel DP, engines and machinery	Ensure vessel is running efficiently and routine maintenance endeavours to ensure emissions are minimal.	No additional costs, is industry best practice.	Adopted – No additional costs.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
MEFF-CM-23	Marine Assurance Standard	Reduces emissions from vessels because equipment operating within its parameters.	Cost associated with implementing procedures.	Adopted – Benefit of implementing procedure outweighs the minimal costs.
Additional Control Measures				
N/A	No incineration during vessel-based operations activities	Removes all emissions associated with incineration activities during the project.	Increase in health risk from storage of wastes. Limited space available to store additional waste, additional trips to shore would be required to transport waste. Increase in risk due to transfers (increased fuel usage, potential increase in collision risk, disposal on land).	Rejected – Health and safety risks outweigh the benefit, given the offshore location. Cost associated with transporting waste to shore for landfill or incineration outweighs onboard incineration. Incineration on the vessels (outside the 500 m PSZ) is a permitted maritime operation.
N/A	Removal of all ozone-depleting substance-containing equipment	Eliminates potential of ODS emissions occurring, impacting on air quality.	Lack of refrigeration systems on board the vessels would lead to unacceptable workplace conditions (i.e. air conditioning) and poor food hygiene standards, limiting the vessel's ability to undertake the activity; therefore, there is no practical solution to the use of refrigeration. It is noted that ODSs are rarely found on vessels.	Rejected – Based on cost to replace all equipment and there is only a low potential for ODS releases.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Use incinerators and engines with higher environmental efficiency	Improves air quality by more efficient burning or fuel combustion.	Significant cost in changing vessel equipment.	Rejected – Cost grossly disproportionate to low environmental benefit (impact rated Negligible).
N/A	Use green energy sources on vessels	Reduces the GHG emissions associated with the activity.	Significant additional cost associated with contracting vessels or changing out vessel equipment. Significantly restricts the number and types of vessels available to undertake the activities, with potential impacts to schedule and timing. Alternatives such as renewable energy generators (wind and/or sun) are not viable options as they are weather-dependent and do not supply continuous base load power. The vessels will use low sulphur marine diesel as required by MARPOL (MEFF-CM-25).	Rejected – Significant costs to Santos are grossly disproportionate to the negligible environmental benefit that may be gained.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	No support vessels	Reduces the emissions and GHG associated with the activity.	The primary vessels require support vessels for transfer of crew and supplies during a campaign and a vessel is also on standby to provide emergency services. Alternative transfer of supplies via helicopter is not feasible due to the size of containers being transferred.	Rejected – Support vessels are required to undertake the activity and no alternatives are considered feasible.
N/A	Do not recover and transport the proposed seabed assets from the MEFF field to port of landing.	Reduces the emissions and GHG associated with the activity.	Santos has committed to removing the proposed seabed assets from the MEFF field. The proposed seabed assets to be recovered are mostly steel and waste management options are still being assessed.	Rejected – Santos is committed to removing the proposed seabed assets from the MEFF Field. Disposing and recycling of the seabed assets in accordance with local regulations provides an environmental benefit above that of eliminating emissions and GHG associated with their transport.
N/A	Plan vessel operations such that fuel consumption is minimised where practicable. For example, limit vessel speeds, clean biofouling, PMS on vessel equipment.	Reduces the emissions from vessel activities.	Minimal additional costs. However, vessel speeds will already be limited during the activity (i.e., mostly stationary when performing seabed asset removal activities, travelling at limited speed within the operational area). Vessel PMS (MEFF-CM-22), Marine Assurance	Rejected - Vessel PMS (MEFF-CM-22), Marine Assurance Standard (MEFF-CM-23) and Fuel Oil Quality (MEFF-CM-25) are effective controls to minimise the short-term localised reduction in air quality, limited to

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
			Standard (MEFF-CM-23) and Fuel Oil Quality (MEFF-CM-25) are effective controls to minimise emissions from vessel activities.	the immediate vicinity of the emissions.

8.5.4 Environmental impact assessment

Receptor	Consequence Level
Atmospheric emissions	
Threatened, migratory or local fauna	Emissions from the activity are relatively small and will, under normal circumstances quickly dissipate into the surrounding atmosphere. Any potential impacts are not expected to result in a decrease in local population sizes, including that of protected species, particularly to seabirds, or disruption to breeding cycles. The consequence of air emissions to fauna is I (Negligible).
Physical environment or habitat	The activity will occur in the open ocean and offshore waters, the combustion of fuels and rare ODS releases in such a remote location will not impact on air quality in coastal towns. The quantities of gaseous emissions are relatively small and will, under normal circumstances, quickly dissipate into the surrounding atmosphere. The highly dispersive nature of local winds (i.e. strong and consistent) is expected to reduce potentially harmful or 'noticeable' gaseous concentrations within a short distance from the vessels. Therefore, the consequence level is assessed as I (Negligible).
Threatened ecological communities	Not applicable – these receptors will not be impacted by air emissions.
Protected areas	
Socio-economic receptors	The combustion of fuels and ODS releases in these remote offshore locations will not impact on air quality in coastal towns. Similarly, the emissions from road transportation of seabed assets are not expected to impact air quality in towns. The quantities of gaseous emissions are relatively small and will, under normal circumstances, quickly dissipate into the surrounding atmosphere. The highly dispersive nature of local winds (i.e. strong and consistent) is expected to reduce potentially harmful or 'noticeable' gaseous concentrations within a short distance from the source. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country. The consequence is assessed as I (Negligible).
Worst-case consequence level	I – Negligible

8.5.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

Combustion of fossil fuels is essential to undertaking the activity to power the vessels, helicopters and equipment. Practical and reliable alternative fuel types and power sources for the vessels, helicopters and road transportation have not been identified. The use of vessels offshore and generation of atmospheric emissions are normal operations.

Implementation of a zero-incineration policy on the vessels would result in significant costs associated with the transport of waste to shore for disposal. Further transportation of the waste to shore would increase the environmental impacts and risks associated with the activities through increased vessel movements and generate greater volumes of emissions associated with the vessel movements. Additional space would also be required to store waste (including refrigerated storage) which would require larger vessels to allow for the storage, resulting in higher emissions from engine combustion and to power additional refrigeration units. Since incineration is a permitted maritime operation in accordance with Marine Order 97 (reflecting MARPOL Annex VI requirements) it is considered ALARP.

Lack of refrigeration systems (i.e., air conditioning) on-board the vessels would lead to unacceptable workplace conditions and poor food hygiene standards, limiting the vessels' ability to undertake the activities; therefore, there is no practical alternative to the use of refrigeration.

The management of vessel air emissions is well practiced and understood. Given the remote offshore location, no sensitive environmental receptors were identified. There is little uncertainty associated with this aspect. The management of air emissions is well regulated. No objections or concerns were raised by relevant stakeholders regarding atmospheric emissions.

The assessed residual consequence for this impact is Negligible (I) and cannot be reduced further. Additional control measures were considered but rejected, since the associated cost or effort was grossly disproportionate to any benefit and the offshore open environment, where atmospheric emissions dissipate rapidly in the surrounding air, is not close to sensitive receptors as detailed in **Section 8.5.3**. Therefore, the impact of the activities conducted is considered ALARP.

8.5.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the consequence ranked as I (Negligible) or II (Minor)?	Yes – maximum consequence from atmospheric emissions is I (Negligible).
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5), which considers principles of ESD. The consequence against this aspect is I (Negligible) and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	Yes – pursuant to Marine Order 97 (Marine pollution prevention – air pollution), which gives effect under Australian law to MARPOL Annex VI.
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environmental, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environmental Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to cessation phase activities	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities)	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

Atmospheric emissions from vessels are permissible under the Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983, which is enacted in Australian waters by Marine Order 97 (Marine Pollution Prevention – Air Pollution) (which also reflects MARPOL Annex VI requirements). This is an internationally accepted standard that is utilised industry-wide, and compliance with Australian Marine Order standards is considered to be an appropriate management measure in this case.

The overall impacts to the atmosphere and sensitive receptors is expected to be I (Negligible) and the control measures in place effective. Therefore, the impacts from emissions generated as part of the activity are considered to be ALARP and environmentally acceptable.

8.6 Planned operational discharges

8.6.1 Description of event

Event	Potential impacts may occur in the operational area from vessel activities undertaking IMMR and decommissioning activities (seabed asset removal activities). Potential impacts may also occur outside of the operational area as a result of decommissioning activities, such as during transport of seabed assets via vessel to the port of landing, and the associated onshore disposal aspect. Planned discharges and wastes are summarised below: Operational area and vessel transport of recovered seabed assets: + sewage and grey water + food wastes + deck drainage + cooling water + bilge water + brine + ballast water + fire-fighting foam during routine testing + swarf from cutting risers and seabed assets subsea <u>Sewage and grey water</u> The volume of sewage, grey water and food waste is directly proportionate to the number of persons on-board the primary and support vessels. Up to 30 L to 40 L of sewage / greywater will be generated per person per day. Treated sewage will be disposed in accordance with Marine Order 96 (Marine pollution prevention – sewage) requirements. <u>Food waste</u> Putrescible waste is estimated to consist of around 1 L of food waste per person per day. Putrescible waste will be disposed in accordance with Marine Order 95 (Marine pollution prevention – garbage) requirements. <u>Deck drainage</u> Drainage water on offshore facilities consists of rainwater and seawater spray and may potentially contain small residual quantities of oil, grease and detergents, if present or used on the decks. However, controls are in place to prevent, contain and clean up such spills. Deck drainage from rainfall or washdown operations discharges directly to the marine environment. Assessment of the spillage of hydrocarbons and other environmentally hazardous liquids is discussed in Sections 9.6 to 9.8. <u>Vessel cooling water</u> Seawater may be used by some vessels as a heat exchange medium for the cooling of machinery engines. Seawater is drawn from the ocean and flows counter current through closed-circuit heat exchangers, transferring heat from the vessel engines and machinery to the seawater. The seawater is then discharged to the ocean (i.e. it is a once-through system). Cooling water temperatures may vary depending on the vessel's engines' workload and activity. <u>Bilge water</u> While in the operational area, the vessels may discharge oily water after treatment to 15 ppm via a MARPOL-approved oily water filter system. Bilge water will be disposed in accordance with Marine Order 91 (Marine pollution prevention – oil, as appropriate to class) requirements. <u>Brine</u> Brine generated from the water supply systems on board the vessels will be discharged to the ocean at a salinity of around 10% higher than seawater. The volume of the discharge
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	depends on the requirement for fresh (or potable) water and will vary between the vessels and the number of people on board. The effluent may contain scale inhibitors such as Alpacon that controls inorganic scale formation, such as the formation of calcium carbonate and magnesium hydroxide, in water-making plants. Other water purification chemicals such as chlorine may also be added to the potable water. Other water-making plant cleaning chemicals such as Ameroyal or Saf Acid may be used and discharged to sea after completion of the cleaning process. <u>Vessel ballast water</u> Ballast water could potentially be discharged to the marine environment from vessel ballast tanks. <u>Fire-fighting foam</u> During routine testing that could occur during the activity, aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) could be discharged from the foam tanks over each area covered by an AFFF firefighting system. It is unavoidable that some of this foam will be discharged to sea unless it is discharged within a closed bunding system. <u>Swarf from subsea cutting activities</u> Seabed assets, including rigid flowlines and risers, may be cut using a subsea tool, with depth in the water column to be determined. Mooring chains and tethers may be cut in close proximity to the seabed. Although not expected to be present, NORMS may be present in the scale on the inside of rigid flowlines and risers, and could be released to the marine environment on the swarf when these are cut. <u>Onshore aspect discharges / disposal</u> Onshore disposal / recycling of seabed assets may result in the following indirect environmental risks and impacts: + indirect atmospheric and GHG emissions from unavoidable onshore (road) transport and disposal or recycling activities. This is discussed further in Section 8.5. + discharge of minor volumes of metal swarf from cutting the assets prior to loading for road transport. + contribution to landfill (majority of the assets are steel and planned to be recycled). + unplanned release of solid objects causing impacts to sensitive receptors. This is discussed further in Section 9.1.
Extent	<u>Offshore</u> The small volumes of non-hazardous discharges may cause localised nutrient enrichment, organic and particulate loading, toxic impacts to marine fauna, thermal impacts and increased salinity in waters around discharge points and in the direction of the prevailing current. The environment that may be affected by operational discharges will likely be contained within the operational area and is predicted to be restricted to within around 100 m of the discharge point in the upper 5 m of the water column or on the seabed in the case of any swarf. <u>Onshore</u> Port of landing within Australia or internationally (including storage and processing areas), onshore transportation equipment (e.g. roads) and licensed waste management facilities.
Duration	During the activity, as described in Section 4.1, localised impacts to water and / or air quality may occur. However, water and air quality conditions will return to normal within minutes to hours of cessation of discharges.

8.6.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Offshore aspects

Potential receptors: Water quality, fish (pelagic) and sharks, marine mammals, marine turtles and seabirds.

Physical environment

The discharge of small volumes of non-hazardous wastes to the marine environment will result in a localised reduction in water quality. Discharges will be temporary (minutes to hours), localised and limited to surface waters (less than 5 m depth). The discharges are expected to be dispersed and diluted rapidly, with concentrations of wastes significantly dropping with distance from the discharge point. Changes to ambient water quality outside of the operational area are considered unlikely to occur.

Specifics of potential impacts to water quality from the discharge of non-hazardous wastes are as follows:

Eutrophication impacts from sewage, grey water and putrescible wastes

Discharge of food waste, treated sewage and grey water can result in localised increases in nutrient concentrations (e.g. ammonia, nitrite, nitrate and orthophosphate), organics (e.g. volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds, oil and grease, phenols and endocrine-disrupting compounds) and inorganics (e.g. hydrogen sulphide, metals and metalloids, surfactants, phthalates and residual chlorine). Increased biological oxygen demand on the receiving waters may promote localised elevated levels of phytoplankton due to nutrient inputs and bacteria activity due to organic carbon inputs. This could subsequently impact higher order predators.

However, dispersion and dilution of discharges is expected to be rapid, as the discharges are of low volume. The discharges are subject to biodegradation of organics through bacterial action, oxidation and evaporation, and the operational area is located in deep offshore waters dominated by high currents, resulting in short-term changes to surface water quality within the operational area.

In a study of sewage discharge in deep ocean waters, Friligos (1985) reported no appreciable differences in the inorganic nutrient levels between the outfall area and background concentrations suggesting rapid uptake of nutrients and / or rapid dispersion in the surrounding waters. Similar studies (Parnell, 2003) concluded similar results with rapid dispersion and dilution within hours of discharge.

The discharge of sewage, grey water and putrescible wastes is not expected to contact any offshore reefs, islands, shoals or banks or marine parks.

Salinity increases

The desalination of seawater results in a discharge of brine with a slightly elevated salinity (around 10% higher than seawater). On discharge to the sea, the desalination brine, being of greater density than seawater, is expected to sink and disperse in the currents. On average, seawater has a salt concentration of 35,000 ppm. The volume of the discharge depends on the requirement for fresh (or potable) water and the number of people on board.

Most marine species are able to tolerate short-term fluctuations in salinity in the order of 20% to 30% (Walker and McComb, 1990), and it is expected that most pelagic species would be able to tolerate short-term exposure to the slight increase in salinity caused by the discharged brine.

Given the relatively low volume of discharge, low salinity increase and deep, open water surrounding the vessels, impact on water quality in the operational area is expected to be low.

The brine discharge is not expected to contact any offshore reefs, islands, shoals or banks or marine parks.

Changes in temperature

Cooling water will be discharged at a temperature above ambient seawater temperature. Upon discharge it will be subjected to turbulent mixing and transfer of heat to the surrounding waters.

Temperature dispersion modelling shows that the water temperature of discharged water will decrease rapidly as the discharge mixes with the receiving waters, with discharged waters being less than 1°C above background levels within less than 100 m (horizontally) of the discharge point. Vertically, the discharge will be within background levels within 10 m (Woodside, 2011).

Cooling water discharge points vary for each vessel. However, they all adopt the same discharge design, which permits cooling water to be discharged above the water line to facilitate cooling and oxygenation of this wastewater stream before mixing with the surrounding marine environment.

Cooling water discharge to the marine environment could result in a localised and temporary increase in the ambient water temperature. This may cause alteration of the physiological processes (particularly enzyme-mediated processes) in marine biota. Given the relatively low volume of cooling water, the low temperature differential, and the deep, open water surrounding the vessels, impact on water quality is expected to be low and short-term.

The cooling water discharge is not expected to contact any offshore reefs, islands, shoals or banks, or marine parks.

Contamination from releases of bilge water

Discharges of oily bilge water could result in a localised reduction in water quality with impacts on protected marine fauna and plankton. However, oily water discharged from the vessels will be treated to a concentration of less than 15 ppm before release, in accordance with the requirements of Marine Order 91 (Marine pollution prevention – oil), which will unlikely lead to any impacts to the receiving environment. The concentration and dosage within surface waters is expected to be very low and toxic impacts to water quality and benthic habitats would be on a negligible scale.

Contamination from swarf

Metal (steel) swarf discharged during cutting of rigid flowlines, risers and other seabed assets may settle quickly to the seabed or drift with prevailing currents before settling on the seabed distant from the cutting location. Swarf discharged during cutting of flowlines, mooring chains, tethers and other assets close to or on or near the seabed is expected to settle quickly to the seabed, given the close proximity to the seabed for this equipment. Discharge of swarf during cutting activities may result in minor impacts to water quality and sediment quality (e.g. through smothering), however given the very small volume of swarf expected to be discharged, any impacts would be highly localised.

NORM refers to materials containing radionuclides that exist in the natural environment. Radionuclides of interest include long-lived radionuclides such as uranium-238, uranium-235 and thorium-232 and their radioactive decay products (such as isotopes of radium, radon, polonium, bismuth and lead), and individual long-lived radionuclides such as potassium-40, rubidium-87 and indium-115. During the cutting and recovery of seabed assets such as flowlines and risers (**Section 4.6**), minor quantities of NORMs scale may be released to the marine environment.

Given the small release volumes, any exposure to NORMs would be highly temporary due to rapid dilution and dissipation in the marine environment. Marine fauna in the open water environment are highly mobile, transient species, making it unlikely any species would be exposed to discharged material for long enough to cause toxicity. Benthic habitats in the operational are largely unconsolidated sediments supporting infauna and epifauna with associated sparse assemblages of filter- and deposit-feeders. This habitat type and associated biota are very widely represented in the

region and not of conservation. Potential impacts are likely to be highly localised and restricted to within the operational area.

Toxicity

Discharges from vessel systems may include chemicals within sewage systems, greywater, desalination, firefighting systems and residues of those used for cleaning decks.

On discharge to the marine environment, the low volumes of these types of chemicals are expected to rapidly disperse in the offshore marine environment. Hence, any potential impacts would be confined to a localised area immediately surrounding the discharge.

There may be a localised and temporary (hours) reduction in water quality in the immediate vicinity of the release. Toxicity impacts to marine fauna from the release of chemicals are unlikely to eventuate because:

- + strong ocean currents result in the discharge being further diluted upon release to the marine environment, so the duration of exposure of chemicals to fauna will be minimal
- + deck cleaning products planned to be released to sea will meet the criteria for not being harmful to the marine environment according to MARPOL Annex V
- + other products with potential to be released to the sea meet the criteria for not being harmful to the marine environment according to MARPOL Annex V; or Gold/Silver/D or E rated through OCNS; or have a completed Santos ecotoxicological risk assessment so only environmentally acceptable products are used
- + potential discharges will be intermittent and temporary within the operational area.

Threatened or migratory fauna

As discussed in the sections above, the discharge extent for all planned discharges is localised, and rapid dilution is predicted to occur within the offshore waters. Marine fauna within the operational area are likely to be transient. If contact does occur with any marine fauna, it will be for a short duration due to the rapid dispersion of the plume and the transient fauna movement, such that any exposure is likely not of sufficient duration to cause a toxic effect.

Discharges may cause changes to behaviour in marine fauna (avoidance or attraction). Fishes and oceanic seabirds may be attracted to the discharge of food scraps. However, such discharges would be isolated occurrences and not in any one location, so no prolonged influence on faunal behaviour is expected. Discharges of cooling water and brine may cause avoidance behaviour in marine fauna. Given the nature of the discharges (localised, rapid dilution, intermittent), any behavioural impacts are expected to be short-term and minimal.

Given the nature of discharged chemicals, the small volumes expect to be released to the marine environment and the nature of the marine environment within the vicinity of the operational area, the operational planned discharges are not predicted to have ecologically significant effects.

Onshore aspects

Atmospheric and greenhouse gas emissions

The onshore transport (likely by road), recycling and disposal of decommissioned assets may also result in atmospheric and GHG emissions. The disposal and recycling process is expected to require electricity purchased through the local electrical grid, which is generated by a mix of renewable and fossil fuel generation sources.

Any impacts from atmospheric emissions associated with the unavoidable onshore transport and disposal / recycling of the decommissioned assets are expected to be short-term, and relate to localised reduction in air quality, limited to the immediate vicinity of the emissions release. Atmospheric emission impacts are not expected to have direct or cumulative impacts on sensitive

environmental receptors or be above National Environmental Protection (Ambient Air Quality) measures.

Hazardous materials and waste management

All waste resulting from the removal of equipment will be managed through the application of the waste management hierarchy:

- Avoid
- Reduce
- Reuse
- Repurpose
- Recycle
- Dispose

Santos will seek opportunities to reuse and recycle materials where possible with disposal as a last resort. Licenced waste management contractors will be engaged to perform the onshore waste management during the infrastructure removal phase of the project, and major contracts are planned to be in place by Q1 2025.

Santos will undertake a waste management contractor selection audit to ensure contractors comply with State and Commonwealth legislation. The ability of bidders to meet the waste management hierarchy will be considered in the Santos evaluation of tenders, and agreed performance indicators will be included in the final contract.

The waste management contractor will be required to prepare the following documents:

- Waste management plan (onshore) this plan includes:
 - Details on the applicable waste legislation and standards.
 - Details on required licenses for the quayside/ laydown area for receipt of contaminated materials.
 - Details on handling, storage and disposal of waste.
 - Requirement for a Radiation/ HAZMAT inspector to inspect recovered equipment that has been in contact with production fluids for NORM and Mercury when handed over, prior to transportation.
 - Details on decontamination process (if this is performed quayside prior to transport).
 - Details on material and waste tracking.
 - Waste transportation plan
 - Waste management plan subsea umbilicals, risers and flowlines (SURF) disposal facility

Onshore waste disposal will be at licensed facilities. Waste management planning is expected to continue post-contract award with full details of material end-fates included in project execution plans that will be in place before removal activities commence.

Hazardous material will be managed in accordance with a Santos NORMS and HAZMAT Management Plan (9885-236-HSM-0004). Removed subsea equipment that has been exposed to produced fluids will be monitored for NORMs and mercury contamination by a radiation HAZMAT inspector on the vessel when it is recovered. If NORMS or HAZMAT is identified during testing, the effected equipment will be stored in a dedicated area on the vessel and segregated from other equipment, personnel and work areas and clearly labelled. Any material assessed as NORMS contaminated will be classified as hazardous waste and will be handled and transported in

accordance with Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) guidelines and disposed of at a licensed facility.

Table 3-4 and **Appendix C** outlines the materials for each decommissioned asset. Key materials for recycling / disposal include:

metals: majority of decommissioned assets (e.g. xmas trees, manifolds, rigid flowlines, anode skids, pipeline crossing structures, umbilical riser bases, mooring chains) are predominantly steel (carbon steel and stainless steel) structures with epoxy paint coatings and aluminium and other sacrificial metal. Umbilicals and EFLs include copper and galvanised steel and tie-in and jumper spools include Inconel alloy. Metals will be recycled where possible.

plastics: certain decommissioned assets (e.g. rigid and flexible production risers, flexible flowlines and service lines, umbilicals, jumper spools, EFLs and HFLs) contain plastics such as nylon, polypropylene (i.e. 4LPP), polyethylene (i.e. 3LPE), polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF), PVC, XLPE, HDPE, LLDPE, coflon, rislan, polyethylene rods, polypropylene rope, PE coated wire, hoses and tubes. HFLs are constructed primarily of plastics.

other materials: certain decommissioned assets (e.g. umbilicals, flexible production risers and flowlines, jumper spools) contain other materials such as fabric tapes and c-therm FPR-250 (insulation).

radioactive materials: the multi-phase flowmeters (MPFM) contain radioactive sources for their management systems (gamma densitometer). The radioactive source for the MPFMs in the Mutineer and Exeter booster pump manifolds is Ba-133 and in the Fletcher and Finucane pipeline end manifolds is Cs-137. The waste materials from the flowmeters will be classified in accordance with the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) radioactive waste classification scheme and disposed of accordingly.

All waste streams will be managed in accordance with relevant legislation of the receiving jurisdiction and by suitably qualified contractors. Therefore, no impacts from general or hazardous waste materials associated with the onshore disposal of decommissioned assets are expected.

Swarf from onshore cutting

Once the recovered assets have been delivered to port, they may be cut into pieces suitable for transport to the licensed waste management facility. Cutting of decommissioned assets will generate minor volumes of metal (steel) swarf. No impacts from cutting the decommissioned assets onshore are expected.

8.6.3 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

The EPOs relating to this event include:

- + No unplanned objects, emissions or discharges to sea or air [MEFF-EPO-05].
- + No unplanned discharges to sea, air or land as a result of the transport and disposal of recovered seabed assets [MEFF-EPO-08].
- + Waste disposed to landfill will be minimised in accordance with the waste management hierarchy [MEFF-EPO-09].

The control measures considered for this event are shown in **Table 8-14**, and EPSs and measurement criteria for the EPOs are described in **Section 11.4**.

Table 8-14: Control measures evaluation for planned operational discharges

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Control Measures				
MEFF-CM-28	Waste (garbage) management procedure	Reduces probability of garbage being discharged to sea, reducing potential impacts to marine fauna. Stipulates putrescible waste disposal conditions and limitations. Provides compliance with Marine Order 95 (Marine pollution prevention – garbage).	Costs associated with pre-mobilisation audits and inspections and reporting discharge levels.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring vessel is compliant outweigh the minimal costs of personnel time and it is a legislated requirement.
MEFF-CM-29	Deck cleaning product selection	Improves water quality of discharge (reduced toxicity) to the marine environment. Deck cleaning products planned to be released to sea meet the criteria for not being harmful to the marine environment according to MARPOL Annex V.	Personnel costs of implementing the chemical review process, potential additional costs and delays associated with chemical substitution.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring vessels are compliant and deck cleaning products planned to be released to sea meet MARPOL criteria.
MEFF-CM-30	General chemical management procedures	Reduces potential for inappropriate discharge of chemicals at sea through appropriate handling.	Personnel costs associated with vessel inspection and implementation of management procedures.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring vessel is compliant outweigh the minimal costs of personnel time and it is a legislated requirement.
MEFF-CM-31	Chemical selection procedure	Improves water quality discharge (reduced toxicity) to the marine environment e.g. from AFFF and potable water systems.	Personnel costs of implementing the chemical review process, potential additional costs and delays associated with chemical substitution	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring vessels are compliant outweighs the cost.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
MEFF-CM-23	Marine assurance	Vessels selected and on-boarded in accordance with the Offshore Marine Assurance Procedure (SO-91-ZH-10001) to ensure contracted vessels are operated, maintained and manned in accordance with industry standards (for example, Marine Orders) and regulatory requirements (this EP) and the relevant Santos procedures mentioned in this EP.	No additional cost.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring vessel is compliant outweigh the minimal costs of personnel time and it is a legislated requirement.
MEFF-CM-32	Sewage treatment system	Reduces potential impacts of inappropriate discharge of sewage. Provides compliance with Marine Order 96 (Marine pollution prevention – sewage).	Personnel costs associated with ensuring vessel certificates are in place during vessel contracting and in pre-mobilisation audits and inspections, and in reporting discharge levels.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring vessel is compliant outweigh the minimal costs of personnel time and it is a legislated requirement.
MEFF-CM-33	Oily water treatment system	Reduces potential impacts from planned discharge of oily water to the environment. Provides compliance with Marine Order 91 (Marine pollution prevention – oil).	Time and personnel costs associated with maintaining oil record book.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring vessel is compliant outweigh the minimal costs of personnel time and it is a legislated requirement.
MEFF-CM-34	Recycling/onshore disposal of decommissioned assets in accordance with relevant legislative requirements	Reduced potential impacts from landfill or incorrect recycling/disposal of decommissioned assets.	Costs associated with the removal and recycling/disposal of decommissioned assets	Adopted – It is a legislated requirement and the benefits of recycling / onshore disposal of decommissioned assets outweigh the costs (with the exception of assets proposed for abandonment in situ). .

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Additional Control Measures				
MEFF-CM-35	NORM and HAZMAT Management Plan (9885-236-HSM-0004).	Reduces the potential for cross-contamination during the recovery activities and reduces the potential for indirect impacts during transport and disposal of contaminated waste.	Costs associated with implementing the requirements of the plan	Adopted – Environmental benefit gained outweighs the costs to Santos.
N/A	Zero discharge of deck water	Would eliminate potential impacts of contaminants being discharged to sea.	Increased health and safety risks from wet deck not draining. Large amounts of water on a vessel's deck can also cause stability issues (free surface effect). Storage space required for containment of drained liquids, increase in transfers to vessels resulting in increased potential impacts and risks. Increased transfers results in increased fuel usage, increased safety risks to personnel during transfer (e.g. crushing between skips) and increase in crane movements.	Rejected – Safety considerations outweigh the benefit, given the small volumes of contaminants. Deck drainage is a permitted maritime practice and an important safety requirement.
N/A	Zero discharge of bilge water	Would eliminate potential impacts of contaminants being discharged to sea from oily water.	Costs associated with containment and onshore disposal, space required for additional containment on primary vessels could create hazards for working on deck by	Rejected – Safety considerations regarding containment outweigh the environmental benefit, given the small volumes of contaminants. Discharge of treated oily water to sea is

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
			limiting available space.	permitted maritime practice.
N/A	Zero discharge of sewage	Would eliminate potential impacts of contaminants being discharged to sea from sewage.	Costs associated with containment and onshore disposal, space required for additional containment on primary vessels could create hazards for working on deck by limiting available space.	Rejected – Safety considerations regarding containment outweigh the environmental benefit, given small volumes of contaminants. Discharge of treated sewage to sea is permitted maritime practice.
N/A	No discharge of food waste within the operational area	Eliminates localised nutrient enrichment, organic and particulate loading from food wastes.	Additional cost for storage of food waste or disposal onshore.	Rejected – Cost outweighs the benefit, given the low impact expected from planned discharges and high potential impacts from risk transfer.
N/A	Scupper plugs continuously in place to prevent deck drainage	Would eliminate potential impacts of contaminants being discharged to sea in rainwater.	Increased health and safety risks from wet deck not draining. Large amounts of water on a vessel's deck can also cause stability issues (free-surface effect).	Rejected – Safety considerations outweigh the benefit, given small volumes of contaminants.
N/A	Zero discharge of cooling water	Would eliminate potential impacts of cooling water (elevated temperature) being discharged to sea.	Costs associated with containment and onshore disposal, space required for additional containment on primary vessels could create hazards for working on deck by limiting available space.	Rejected – Safety considerations outweigh the benefit, given small volumes of contaminants.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Restrict use of desalination plant	Would eliminate potential impacts from brine discharges by importing potable water.	Cost associated with transporting potable water. Health risks associated with limited supply of potable water.	Rejected – Cost outweighs the benefit, given the low impact expected from planned discharges and high potential impacts from risk transfer.
N/A	Re-design desalination plant effluent discharge system	Limited benefit to be gained given desalination brine will be diluted.	High costs associated with modifications to vessels. May not be feasible with some vessels. Salinity difference would be minimal compared to significant cost of altering the desalination plant effluent discharge system.	Rejected – Cost grossly disproportionate to environmental benefit. Limited benefit to be gained, given low impact. Minimal detectable change in water quality expected. Water making and brine discharge permitted maritime practice.
N/A	Zero discharge of brine water	Would eliminate potential impacts from brine discharges by storing on-board for onshore disposal.	Cost associated with transporting waste brine water, space required for additional containment on primary vessels could create hazards for working on deck by limiting available space.	Rejected – Cost grossly disproportionate to environmental benefit. Limited benefit to be gained, given low impact. No detectable change in water quality expected. Water making and brine discharge permitted maritime practice.
N/A	Do not test AFFF containing fire-fighting equipment on primary vessels	Would eliminate the discharge of the small quantities of AFFF.	Increased safety risk due to potentially untested AFFF system. Inability to fight fire effectively.	Rejected – Safety considerations outweigh the environmental benefit.
N/A	Zero discharge of putrescible waste	Would eliminate potential impacts from putrescible waste discharges by storing on-board for onshore disposal.	Cost associated with transporting putrescible waste to shore, space required for additional containment on primary vessels could create hazards for	Rejected – Cost grossly disproportionate to environmental benefit. Limited benefit to be gained, given low impact. Health risks associated with managing

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
			working on deck by limiting available space. Health risks and costs associated with storage on-board and transport/disposal onshore.	putrescible waste in hot weather conditions, putrescible waste discharge is a permitted maritime practice.
N/A	Do not cut seabed assets	Eliminates the potential discharge of metal (steel) swarf to the environment.	Not performing cuts to seabed assets would prevent the safe removal of seabed assets and is not considered a feasible option. Would also prevent the steel structures being cut for recycling purposes where necessary.	Rejected – Safety and process considerations outweigh the environmental benefit given small volumes and rapid dispersion of the discharges.
N/A	Storage, transport and treatment/disposal onshore of planned operational discharges	Would eliminate potential impacts to the marine environment from planned operational discharges.	Significant additional cost associated with transporting plan operational discharges to shore for disposal, given distance of MEFF field offshore. Significant additional cost associated with dedicated vessel/s for storage of operational discharges, given activity vessels deck space is required to carry out the activity (e.g. deploy lifting gear and recovery of seabed assets).	Reject – Significant additional costs to Santos are grossly disproportionate to the negligible environmental benefit that may be gained.
MEFF-CM-52	Waste Management Plan (contractor) (Onshore).	Reduces the potential for indirect impacts during disposal, including contaminated waste.	Cost associated with implementing the requirements of the plan.	Adopted - environmental benefit gains outweighs the cost to Santos.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
MEFF-CM-53	Waste Transportation Plan (contractor)	Reduces the potential for indirect impacts during transport, including hazardous materials.	Cost associated with implementing the requirements of the plan.	Adopted - environmental benefit gains outweighs the cost to Santos.
MEFF-CM-54	Waste Management Plan (SURF Disposal Facility) (contractor).	Reduces the potential for indirect impacts during disposal, including contaminated waste.	Cost associated with implementing the requirements of the plan.	Adopted - environmental benefit gains outweighs the cost to Santos.
MEFF-CM-55	Waste Management Contractor evaluation/ selection/ audit to confirm compliance with State and Commonwealth legislation.	Reduces the potential for indirect impacts during disposal, including contaminated waste.	Cost associated with implementing the requirements of the audit.	Adopted - environmental benefit gains outweighs the cost to Santos.

8.6.4 Environmental impact assessment

Receptor	Consequence Level
Operational Discharges	
Threatened, migratory or local fauna	<u>Offshore aspects</u> Operational discharges from the vessels have the potential to cause a localised decrease in water quality alteration to marine fauna behaviour. Sensitive receptors that may be impacted include fish at surface, marine turtles, mammals and seabirds. Any effects on water quality are expected to be within the surface waters only and have no effect on seabed receptors. Given the distance from shorelines and that the activity will be for a relatively limited duration, impacts will be limited to short-term water quality impacts and temporary avoidance behaviour in fish, marine mammals, sharks and seabirds. Impacts to water quality will be experienced in the discharge mixing zone which will be localised and will occur only as long as the discharges occur (i.e. no sustained impacts), therefore, recovery will be measured in hours to days. Consequently, only short-term behavioural impacts are expected with no decrease in local population size, area of occupancy of species, loss or disruption of habitat critical or disruption to the breeding cycle and introduction of disease. The National Recovery Plan for the Southern Right Whale (2024), lists pollution as a threat to the species. However, the operational area is approximately 350km from the nearest area of the BIA for Southern Right whales, so it is reasonable to conclude that the planned discharges will not affect the conservation status of the whales or the objectives of the Recovery Plan. Given the nature of the planned operational discharges, the small volumes that could be released to the marine environment, the high levels of dilution and the nature of the marine environment in the vicinity of the operational area, impacts to the physical environment and habitat are expected to be II (Minor). <u>Onshore aspects</u> Emissions associated with the onshore disposal / recycling of decommissioned assets are relatively small and will, under normal circumstances quickly dissipate into the surrounding atmosphere. The activity will occur using existing transport equipment (roads) and at existing licensed waste facilities. No land clearing is required to support onshore disposal / recycling. No impacts to threatened, migratory or local fauna are expected from disposing or recycling the assets at licensed waste facilities.
Physical environment or habitat	
Socio-economic receptors	Not applicable – Planned operational discharges are not expected to impact on socio-economic receptors. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country. In addition, no stakeholder concerns have been raised regarding this event.
Threatened ecological communities	Not applicable – No threatened ecological communities identified in the area over which operational discharges are expected.
Protected areas	Not applicable – No protected areas are identified in the area over which operational discharges are expected.

Receptor	Consequence Level
Overall worst-case consequence	II – Minor

8.6.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

Vessels are required to undertake the activity. The alternative to discharging these small amounts of liquid wastes to the marine environment is to store and transport the wastes to land, where they would be disposed of in line with industry best practice. However, this would result in an increase in environmental impacts through increased fuel consumption and increased atmospheric emissions, from vessels having to return to port a number of times to unload the wastes and by land transport to the nearest disposal facility. Increased energy consumption and atmospheric emissions would also result from the disposal (e.g., incineration, treatment) of the additional wastes. This method would also result in an increased risk of vessel-to-vessel collision, which could lead to a marine diesel spill. Therefore, this option would be of no net environmental benefit and would increase the risk associated with the activity, so it has not been adopted. In some cases, the containment of discharges is difficult without significant modifications to vessels (e.g., additional bunding or containment systems) presenting an increase in safety risk to personnel through the reduction in deck space, increased lifts and health hazards of storing wastes or other discharges.

The use of AFFF is required for emergency response purposes and routine testing the foam fire-fighting system is critical for maintaining emergency response capabilities on vessels. The product has been assessed through the Santos Operations Chemical Selection, Evaluation and Approval Procedure (EA-91-II-10001), ensuring potential impacts are acceptable.

To reduce the impacts and risks associated with discharging liquid wastes, these wastes will be treated in line with industry best practice. Discharge of sewage and other liquid wastes from vessels in Australian waters is permissible under the Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983, which reflects requirements of MARPOL 73/78 Annexes IV, V and I and AMSA Marine Orders 95 and 96.

On-board treatment of most wastes and their subsequent discharge to the marine environment is considered to be the most environmentally sound method of disposal, considering that the waste streams will either be treated to a level unlikely to cause significant environmental harm or will be of a nature not considered to pose significant risk to the receiving environment. The proposed management controls for planned operational discharges are considered appropriate to manage the risk to ALARP. Additional control measures were considered but rejected since the associated cost or effort was grossly disproportionate to any benefit, as detailed in **Section 8.6.3**.

No feasible alternatives to the onshore disposal / recycling for the majority of recovered decommissioned assets (e.g. rigid and flexible flowlines etc) have been identified. Santos is obliged to remove these assets from the MEFF Field as part of decommissioning commitments. Onshore disposal and recycling allows for the safe disposal and recycling of the subsea assets, which are majority steel. Onshore disposal / recycling will only occur using suitably experienced contractors and facilities and in accordance with relevant waste legislation.

8.6.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the consequence ranked as I (Negligible) or II (Minor)?	Yes – maximum consequence from planned operational discharges is II (Minor).
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5), which considers principles of ESD. The consequence against this aspect is II (Minor) and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	Yes – management consistent with the Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983, which in Australian waters is enacted by the Marine Orders. Yes – onshore disposal and recycling will only be carried out in accordance with relevant waste regulations by licensed contractors and at appropriately licensed waste management facilities. Disposal / recycling will be managed in accordance with applicable requirements. For example, within Western Australia will be in accordance with legislation, such as, the Environmental Protection Act 1986.
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environmental, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environmental, Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to cessation activities	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities)	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

Release of non-hazardous discharges into the sea from vessels in Australian waters is permissible under the Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983, which in Australian waters reflects Australian Marine Orders requirements respectively, and is enacted by:

- + Marine Order 91 (Marine pollution prevention – oil)
- + Marine Order 96 (Marine pollution prevention – sewage)
- + Marine Order 95 (Marine pollution prevention – garbage).

The operational discharges are not expected to significantly impact the receiving environment with management controls proposed, including compliance with all MARPOL requirements. The MARPOL standard is considered to be the most appropriate standard, given the nature and scale of the activities. These standards are internationally accepted and utilised industry-wide. Therefore,

compliance with the relevant and appropriate MARPOL requirements and standards is expected to reduce the potential for environmental impacts to a level which is considered environmentally acceptable.

Disposal / recycling of decommissioned assets will be managed in accordance with applicable legislation and requirements, as such the potential for environmental impacts is expected to be reduced to a level which is considered environmentally acceptable.

8.7 Planned chemical and hydrocarbon discharges

8.7.1 Description of the event

Event	The activities that will result in the discharge of residual hydrocarbons and chemicals to the marine environment are: + field management IMMR activities + barrier testing + marine growth removal + removal of seabed assets <u>Field management activities</u> Small volumes of hydraulic fluids (from the use of ROVs) and chemicals are likely to be discharged subsea during the IMMR campaigns. Worst-case discharge volumes are expected to be approximately 10 L. <u>Barrier testing</u> During barrier testing activities, there may be a requirement to release small amounts of barrier testing fluids such as water-based hydraulic oil, MEG or methanol, as well as minor amounts of residual hydrocarbons. Worst-case discharge volumes are expected to be small (approximately 25 L per test). <u>Marine growth removal</u> Small volumes (litres) of inorganic or organic acid wash chemicals (such as citric acid or sulfamic acid) may be discharged during calcareous marine growth removal if water jetting is not sufficient. <u>Removal of seabed assets</u> Some residual hydrocarbons and treated seawater may be released to the marine environment during seabed asset removal. The 2018 flushing campaign (prior to FPSO sail away) achieved a residual hydrocarbon concentration of 30 to 40 ppm in the subsea production system. The release of residual hydrocarbons (at 30 – 40 ppm) within approximately 2,238 m³ of treated seawater, with the potential for residual entrapped hydrocarbons in the carcass of the flexible flowlines, may occur during seabed equipment removal. Some residual chemicals from the treated seawater within the production risers and umbilicals, and production chemicals (e.g. scale inhibitor, hydraulic control fluid, glycol and MEG) are also anticipated. These chemicals are OCNS rated D and/or have been previously approved for discharge to the marine environment in the MEFF Field Operations EP (ME-7000-A02-F003). As discussed in Section 8.6, NORMs may be present in scale of seabed assets such as the rigid risers and flowlines. Therefore, there is the potential for very minor amounts of NORMs to be released to the marine environment as these assets are cut and recovered from the seabed.
Extent	Chemicals, residual hydrocarbons and hydraulic fluids may be discharged to the marine environment from the surface or close to the seabed. Discharges will be relatively minor in volume and dissipate quickly in the open ocean marine environment. Temporary localised decline in water quality in the immediate vicinity of the discharge.

Duration	Various hydrocarbon and chemical discharges will occur intermittently for the duration of the activity and will last for minutes to several hours over the course of the IMMR and decommissioning activities as described in Section 4.1 . The duration will be longer for umbilicals if left uncapped and wet stored during initial decommissioning activities, however the volume released will remain the same. Releases during seabed asset removal activities will be comprised of many, very small volume releases at different times rather than in a single release event.
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8.7.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Potential receptors: Water quality, fish (pelagic) and sharks, marine mammals, marine turtles, seabirds and socio-economic.

The potential environmental impacts from planned chemical and hydrocarbon discharges include:

- + temporary localised decline in water quality in the immediate vicinity of the discharge
- + toxicity to marine fauna.

Hydraulic fluids

Hydraulic fluids are used extensively in the petroleum industry in subsea production systems. Hydraulic fluids are either petroleum or water-based blends with additives. The main properties required of a hydraulic control fluid are low viscosity, low compressibility, corrosion protection, resistance to microbiological attack and compatibility with seawater. The potential impacts of hydraulic fluid discharges near the seabed are a localised reduction in water quality and potential toxicity to benthic marine fauna associated with unconsolidated sediments or attracted / attached to seabed equipment (e.g. fish, infauna and sessile filter feeding organisms). Due to the small volumes (around 25 L per release) it is likely that any impacts to benthic fauna and water quality will be highly localised, if occurring at all.

Hydraulic fluids behave similarly to MDO when discharged in the marine environment (information about MDO is provided in **Section 9.6**). Hydraulic fluids are medium oils of light to moderate viscosity and have a relatively rapid spreading rate and, like MDO, will dissipate quickly, particularly in high sea states.

Acid wash

Inorganic or organic acids used for marine growth removal are expected to rapidly disperse in the offshore marine environment. Due to the small volumes discharged during marine growth removal, impacts to benthic fauna and water quality will be highly localised.

Treated seawater, MEG, methanol, scale inhibitor and glycol

Treated seawater will contain a biocide, likely to be similar to CRW-24830 which is a common biocide used in the offshore oil and gas industry. Although biocides typically contain a substance (quaternary ammonium chloride) which is known to be very toxic to aquatic organisms, the concentration is typically very low (less than 30%) within the biocide itself as a whole. Maximum treated seawater volumes that could be released during seabed asset removal activities are estimated to be 2,238 m³. This is comprised of multiple volumes (largest single volume estimated to be 745 m³). The chemical component in treated seawater is a substantially less volume; CRW-24830 at a concentration of 1700 ppm in 2,238 m³ of treated seawater is 3.81 m³ of chemical with the remainder being seawater.

MEG and methanol both have low toxicity, are readily biodegradable, are rated as PLONOR and E (non-CHARM) in the OCNS rankings.

Scale inhibitor is not expected to biodegrade when released to the marine environment. however, scale inhibitor is not known to bioaccumulate. Scale inhibitor and glycol both have low aquatic toxicity and the small volumes released will dilute rapidly when released to the marine environment. Scale inhibitor and glycol are rated as D (non-CHARM) in the OCNS rankings.

Therefore, it is likely that any impacts to benthic fauna and water quality will be highly localised, if occurring at all.

Residual hydrocarbons

Maximum residual hydrocarbon volumes that could be released during seabed asset removal activities are estimated to be at a concentration of 30-40 ppm as part of the treated water discharge. This is comprised of multiple smaller volumes that will be released at different times rather than in a single release event.

The small volumes and low concentrations of residual hydrocarbon released are expected to rapidly disperse and are unlikely to impact benthic fauna and water quality in the vicinity of the release is expected to quickly return to background.

NORMs

NORMs may be present in minor quantities on the scale on the interior surfaces of seabed equipment such as rigid risers and flowlines and may be released to the marine environment during recovery to vessel. Testing will be performed after the seabed equipment is recovered to deck.

Given the small release volumes, any exposure to NORMs would be highly temporary due to rapid dilution and dissipation in the marine environment. Marine fauna in the open water environment are highly mobile, transient species, making it unlikely any species would be exposed to discharged material for long enough to cause toxicity. Benthic habitats in the operational are largely unconsolidated sediments supporting infauna and epifauna with associated sparse assemblages of filter- and deposit-feeders. This habitat type and associated biota are very widely represented in the region and not of conservation. Potential impacts are likely to be highly localised and restricted to within the operational area.

Mercury

Santos does not anticipate any other contaminants (e.g. mercury) for the following reasons:

- + the leased FPSO was decommissioned by the owner and there is no record of any decontamination being required for that activity.
- + Produced fluid compositions reported from the field during production show mercury content in the range of 0-3ppb in the fluid stream. Mercury contamination was not identified as an issue during the producing life of the field or decommissioning of the FPSO.

Only infrastructure that has been exposed to produced fluids could have been contaminated and will be tested for mercury during removal. If mercury is detected it will be isolated and managed in accordance with the NORM and HAZMAT Management Plan.

Toxicity

On discharge to the marine environment, the low volumes of chemicals and residual hydrocarbons are expected to rapidly disperse in the offshore marine environment. Hence, any potential impacts would be confined to a localised area immediately surrounding the discharge.

There may be a localised and temporary (hours) reduction in water quality in the immediate vicinity of the release. Toxicity impacts to marine fauna from the release of chemicals are unlikely to eventuate because:

- + the chemicals will have been risk assessed for their suitability for discharge using Operations Chemical Selection Evaluation and Approval Procedure (EA-91-II-10001)
- + the sensitivity of the receiving environment is considered low
- + volumes of discharges are relatively small and will be over multiple campaigns rather than simultaneously

- + strong ocean currents mean the discharge will become further diluted upon discharge, so the duration of exposure of chemicals to fauna will be minimal
- + potential discharges will be localised, intermittent and temporary within the operational area.

The recovery, management, transport and disposal of recovered waste/equipment contaminated with radiation or NORMs is described in **Section 8.6**.

Threatened or migratory fauna

As discussed in the sections above, the discharge extent for all planned discharges of chemicals, hydrocarbons and cutting swarf is localised. Rapid dilution of chemicals and hydrocarbons is predicted to occur within the offshore waters. Marine fauna within the operational area are likely to be transient. If contact does occur with any marine fauna, it will be for a short duration due to the rapid dispersion of the plume and the transient fauna movement, such that any exposure is likely not of sufficient duration to cause a toxic effect.

Given the nature of discharged chemicals and hydrocarbons, the small volumes that could be released to the marine environment and the nature of the marine environment within the vicinity of the operational area, the planned discharges are not predicted to have ecologically significant effects. Discharges of chemicals and hydrocarbons may cause avoidance behaviour in marine fauna. Given the nature of the discharges (localised, rapid dilution, majority are intermittent), any behavioural impacts are expected to be short-term and minimal.

8.7.3 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

The EPOs relating to this event include:

- + No unplanned objects, emissions or discharges to sea or air [MEFF-EPO-05].

The control measures considered for this event are shown in **Table 8-15**, and EPSs and measurement criteria for the EPOs are described in **Section 11.4**.

Table 8-15: Control measures evaluation for planned chemical and hydrocarbon discharges

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Control Measures				
MEFF-CM-31	Chemical selection procedure	Ensures planned discharges to sea meet the criteria for not being harmful to the marine environment according to MARPOL Annex V; or Gold/Silver/D or E rated through OCNS; or have a completed Santos ecotoxicological risk assessment so only environmentally acceptable products are used.	Personnel time associated with chemical selection, approval and procurement as per chemical selection procedure.	Adopted – Benefits outweigh minor costs.
MEFF-CM-36	NOPSEMA accepted WOMP for MEFF wells	Includes control measures for well integrity and well control in an accepted	Costs associated with personnel time in writing, reviewing	Adopted –Regulatory requirement must be adopted.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
		WOMP, that reduce the risk of discharges to the marine environment during barrier testing. The WOMP includes: + barriers in place to isolate hydrocarbons from the marine environment + inspection, monitoring and testing of barriers over the life of the well + response to increases in well integrity risk + notification and reporting requirements. Effective barriers manage isolation of the reservoir from the environment, acting to eliminate hydrocarbon releases.	and implementing the WOMP.	
MEFF-CM-34	Recycling/onshore disposal of decommissioned assets in accordance with relevant legislative requirements	Reduced potential impacts from landfill or incorrect recycling/ disposal of decommissioned assets.	Costs associated with the removal and recycling/ disposal of decommissioned assets.	Adopted – It is a legislated requirement and the benefits of recycling / onshore disposal of decommissioned assets outweigh the costs (with the exception of assets proposed for abandonment in situ).
Additional Control Measures				
MEFF-CM-35	NORM and HAZMAT Management Plan (9885-236-HSM-0004). - Details for contaminated waste transport management.	Reduces the potential for cross-contamination during the recovery activities and reduces the potential for indirect impacts during transport and disposal of contaminated waste.	Costs associated with implementing the requirements of the plan	Adopted – Environmental benefit gained outweighs the costs to Santos.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Reduce, capture or eliminate use of chemicals and hydraulic fluid	Would eliminate or reduce the chemical and hydraulic fluid discharge to the marine environment.	Chemicals are assessed to ensure the discharge is environmentally acceptable in accordance with Operations Chemical Selection Evaluation and Approval Procedure (EA-91-II-10001). Excessive use of chemicals is restricted. Eliminating the use of chemicals and hydraulic fluid would cause safety and process issues.	Rejected – Safety and process considerations outweigh the environmental benefit, given small volumes and low toxicity of the discharges.
N/A	Additional flushing of subsea production system (risers and flowlines)	Reducing the concentration of residual hydrocarbons in the subsea system reduces the volume of residual hydrocarbons that would be released to the marine environment during asset removal.	Potentially reduces the maximum volume of residual hydrocarbons in the production risers that could be discharged. However, the 2018 flushing campaign achieved an OIW concentration measured at the FPSO of 30 to 40 ppm. Additional flushing will not remove the residual hydrocarbons that have migrated to high points or that is trapped in the rough bore. The environmental benefits of additional flushing are therefore negligible. There is a significant extra cost associated with contracting dedicated flushing vessels (two	Rejected – Significant additional costs achieve little to no environmental benefit, given small volumes of residual hydrocarbons contained within the production system.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
			construction class vessels required). Around 6600 m³ to 11,050 m³ of treated seawater dosed with Hydrosure 0-3670R at a concentration of 500 ppm required. Estimated flushing time requires 24 to 74 hrs per flowline (three flowlines in total). There would also be additional environmental risks (e.g. failure of downline during flushing, discharge of flushing returns, handling and storage of flushing chemicals, additional operational discharges from vessels, increased vessel collision risk) and indirect impacts (e.g. disposal of oil filter cartridges) to achieve overall negligible reduction in an already low volume of residual hydrocarbons.	
N/A	Do not cut seabed assets	Eliminates the potential discharge of any contaminants to the marine environment.	Not performing cuts to seabed assets would prevent the safe removal of assets and is not considered a feasible option.	Rejected – Safety and process considerations outweigh the environmental benefit, given small volumes and rapid dispersion of the discharges. In addition, decommissioning is a legal requirement.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Cap prior to recovering rigid and flexible flowlines and umbilicals (flooded). Cap rigid and flexible flowlines as a contingency measure in the event that NORMs or HAZMAT are detected.	Would reduce the volume of subsea discharges of hydrocarbons and treated seawater and the associated environmental impacts. Would reduce the volume of subsea discharges of NORMs (if detected) and the associated environmental impacts.	Will require a larger vessel or more trips to remove decommissioned assets resulting in increased costs and environmental impacts. Discharges from the rigid and flexible flowlines and umbilicals will have to be managed onboard the vessel or onshore, resulting in increased costs. Increased safety and spill risk to ocean surface from managing the discharges onboard the vessel. Costs associated with onshore disposal and associated impacts. The forces that the flexible flowlines would be subjected to are expected to be sufficient to blow off any caps or rupture the lines, resulting in release of contents to the environment.	Rejected – Cost outweighs the negligible environmental benefit. There are weight and safety issues associated with recovering flooded equipment and increased risk of surface hydrocarbon spills.
N/A	If NORMs are detected when the 1 st flexible flowline end is recovered to deck, capping the 2 nd end with a mesh filter (or similar engineered method) to capture any potential NORMs flakes during removal, whilst also letting water flow freely.	Reduces the potential for NORMs to be released to the marine environment during removal.	Any loose NORMs (if present) are likely to have been dislodged during flushing and thus removed/ captured at the FPSO. NORMs present as a scale which can typically only be removed using high pressure water jetting or	Rejected – Cost outweighs the negligible environmental benefit.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
			mechanical methods. The 2nd end of the SURF is unable to be monitored during recovery due to the physical length of product (up to 17km) The mesh filter may come loose or be blocked resulting in loss to environment during recovery, which may not be retrievable. Unable to reliably install mesh plug into the cut flexible flowline due to deformation of flowline. High cost associated with design and procurement of bespoke mesh filter caps which will not guarantee prevention of release of NORMS to environment. To ensure flowlines do not become blocked, mesh would need to allow free draining of the product thus allowing an amount of NORMs to be released.	

8.7.4 Environmental impact assessment

Receptor	Consequence Level
Operational Discharges	
Threatened, migratory or local fauna	Planned chemical and hydrocarbon discharges have the potential to cause a localised decrease in water quality and consequent alteration to marine fauna behaviour. Sensitive receptors that may be impacted include fish at surface, marine turtles and mammals and seabirds. Any effects on water quality are expected to be highly localised and have little to no effect on seabed receptors. Given the distance from shorelines and that the activity will be for a relatively limited duration (refer to Section 4.1), impacts will be limited to short-term water quality impacts and temporary avoidance behaviour in fish, marine mammals, sharks and seabirds. Impacts to water quality will be experienced in the discharge mixing zone which will be localised and will occur only as long as the discharges occur (i.e. no sustained impacts), therefore, recovery will be measured in hours to days. Discharges are not planned to occur simultaneously. Consequently, only short-term behavioural impacts are expected with no decrease in local population size, area of occupancy of species, loss or disruption of habitat critical. disruption to the breeding cycle and introduction of disease. Discharge of swarf from cutting activities may also result in localised smothering of benthic habitats. However, given the very small quantities likely to be discharged, and the lack of sensitive benthic habitats within and in proximity to the operational area, any impacts would be highly localised and temporary. The National Recovery Plan for the Southern Right Whale (2024), lists pollution as a threat to the species. However, the operational area is approximately 350km from the nearest area of the BIA for Southern Right whales, so it is reasonable to conclude that pollution will not affect the conservation status of the whales or the objectives of the Recovery Plan. Given the nature of the planned chemical, hydrocarbon and cutting discharges, the small volumes that could be released to the marine environment, the high levels of dilution and the nature of the marine environment in the vicinity of the operational area, impacts to the physical environment and habitat are expected to be II (Minor).
Physical environment or habitat	
Socio-economic receptors	Negligible - planned chemical and hydrocarbon discharges are not expected to impact fishery resources (demersal fish species) and are unlikely to result in changes in distribution and abundance of fish species outside the operational area. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country. WAFIC raised a query regarding the expected volume and impacts of the release of residual hydrocarbons and Santos provided a response to that (Appendix F), with no further concerns raised.
Threatened ecological communities	Not applicable – No threatened ecological communities identified in the area over which planned chemical or hydrocarbon discharges are expected.
Protected areas	Not applicable – No protected areas are identified in the area over which planned chemical or hydrocarbon discharges are expected.
Overall worst-case consequence	II – Minor

8.7.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

The use of chemicals, such as methanol, to conduct testing on seabed equipment is a standard technique that is considered critical in determining the presence of leaks and equipment integrity. Alternatives to the use of methanol include freshwater. The use of freshwater in the subsea system can result in hydrate formation and introduce integrity risks; therefore, it is not considered feasible. The use of treated seawater is also an industry standard and uses chemicals that have been appropriately risk assessed under the Operations Chemical Selection Evaluation and Approval Procedure (EA-91-II-10001).

Marine growth removal is required on seabed assets so they can be safely removed from the operational area as required by legislation and regulations. Acid wash would only be used for marine growth removal if removal by mechanical means could not be achieved.

Similarly, the release of small volumes of residual hydrocarbons during seabed asset removal cannot be avoided. An additional control of additional flushing of the subsea system (additional to the 2018 flushing campaign) with chemicals to reduce the residual hydrocarbon concentration was considered, however, the significant additional safety risks, cost and risks and impacts related to additional vessels in the field, was found to be grossly disproportionate to the negligible environmental benefit gained.

Cutting of subsea equipment, such as rigid flowlines, risers, mooring chains and tethers, with subsea cuttings tools is an industry standard technique to allow removal of equipment, with no feasible alternatives.

The controls in place to manage the volume of treated seawater and chemicals used during the activities manages the volumes released to the ocean to ALARP. The assessed residual consequence for this impact is minor and cannot be reduced further.

8.7.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the consequence ranked as I (Negligible) or II (Minor)?	Yes – maximum consequence from planned chemical and hydrocarbon discharges is II (Minor).
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5), which considers principles of ESD. The consequence against this aspect is II (Minor) and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	Yes – management consistent with management and recovery plans.
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environmental, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environmental, Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to cessation phase activities	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities	Yes – WAFIC raised a query regarding the expected volume and impacts of the release of residual hydrocarbons and Santos provided a response to that (Appendix F), with no further concerns raised.
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

The use of hydraulic fluids, acid wash, MEG, methanol and treated seawater is unavoidable as they are required to safely complete the activities and preserve seabed equipment. The release of residual hydrocarbons during decommissioning asset removal is also unavoidable during the activity. However, water quality and benthic impacts will be highly localized to the immediate vicinity of the discharge. The operational area is not located nearby to any sensitive habitat.

The application of the chemical selection procedure is an important control for reducing the toxicity of any chemicals that may be discharged during the activities. In accordance with the procedure, CHARM-rated Gold/Silver and non-CHARM grouped E/D chemicals managed under the OCNS, or PLONOR substances listed by OSPAR, or chemicals risk assessed by Santos and deemed environmentally acceptable, will be selected.

With control measures in place to minimise the environmental impact of chemical and hydrocarbon discharges, the consequence was assessed as Minor (II) and ALARP. The managed discharges will not reduce the habitat values of the area potentially affected as described in relevant Recovery Plans or Approved Conservation Advice or be inconsistent with the strategies of these documents. No concerns have been raised regarding this event by stakeholders. Therefore, the minor impacts expected from the proposed discharges are considered to be environmentally acceptable.

8.8 Degradation of abandoned seabed equipment

8.8.1 Description of the event

Event	Potential impacts from the degradation and corrosion of abandoned buried seabed equipment may occur in the marine environment from: + degradation and corrosion of steel Impacts associated with the continued presence of abandoned buried seabed equipment on other marine users, and the seabed and benthic habitats is discussed in Section 8.1 and Section 8.2 respectively. Impacts associated with releases of treated seawater and residual OIW on disconnection during decommissioning activities are discussed in Section 8.7.1. <u>Corrosion and degradation of assets</u> The equipment proposed for abandonment in situ is constructed from steel that is not water soluble, although corrosion products of steel may be water soluble. Steel is expected to degrade into progressively smaller pieces as the equipment degrades and corrodes over long periods of time (decades to hundreds of years) (Advisian, 2022). Atteris (2021) studied the degradation processes that will affect equipment in the MEFF fields, with findings summarised below relevant to the, mooring anchors and buried section of chains. The buried mooring chains and anchors abandoned in situ are wholly buried in sediments which have very low levels of oxygen compared to the water column, this will result in relatively slow corrosion degradation and the degradation products will be trapped within the sediments surrounding the buried anchors and chains.
Extent	Degradation of the anchors and chains will occur slowly below the seabed within the sediments.
Duration	Degradation and corrosion of steel is estimated over decades to centuries.

8.8.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Potential receptors: Water quality, benthic habitats and fauna, fish (demersal and pelagic), sharks, marine mammals, marine turtles, seabirds and socio-economic.

The potential environmental and socio-economic impacts from the degradation and corrosion of abandoned seabed equipment include:

- + localised decline sediment quality in the vicinity of the abandoned equipment
- + localised impacts to marine infauna

Steel particles

The buried mooring chains and anchors are primarily comprised of steel, of which the main constituent is iron (approximately 97%). Iron is not considered a significant contaminant in the marine environment and is only toxic to marine organisms at high concentrations (Grimwood and Dixon, 1997).

Steel is expected to degrade into iron oxides and iron hydroxides. There are currently no trigger values for iron or its forms of hydroxide for marine water or sediment quality (DAWE, 2022). Iron is not considered a significant contaminant in the marine environment (OSPAR PLONOR) and is an abundant element in marine sedimentary systems (Taylor and Macquaker, 2011).

Elevated levels of iron may appear in the marine sediments directly adjacent to the buried anchors as they corrode and degrade. However, given the rate of corrosion (90 – 250 years), the fact that

any contaminants would remain buried at the anchor locations, and lack of sensitive habitat, iron levels are unlikely to result in an impact greater than a localised change in sediment quality.

The mooring anchors and chains are buried to depths of between 6m and 13 m. Given the anchors are buried to varying degrees, dispersion of steel particles is unlikely, and particles are anticipated to remain buried. Consequently, fauna such as demersal fishes, epifauna and infauna are only expected to be exposed to degradation products on the seabed or within a layer of sediment that may be reworked through bioturbation (primarily through infauna burrowing and deposit feeding). Bioturbation is typically concentrated in the upper 30 cm (Kristensen et al, 2012). Degradation products will be concentrated in sediments around the anchors and buried anchor chains. The anchors and chains are made of ~97% iron which poses little risk to the environment. Iron and its oxides (i.e., rust) listed by the OSPAR Commission as posing little or no risk to the environment (PLONOR).

In the unlikely event that demersal fishes, epifauna and infauna came in contact with degradation products, based in the low toxicity of iron and the slow release rate, any impacts to marine fauna would be localised and minor.

Epoxy /paint coatings

Volumes of epoxy coating the anchors is minor (**Section 4.7.1**).

The paint coatings on the anchors were intended to inhibit corrosion. The coatings were not intended to inhibit marine growth, and hence the coatings do not contain harmful concentrations of anti-fouling substances such as tributyltin or copper compounds. The paint has been exposed to sediment and seawater since the installation of the anchors, hence paint compounds that are soluble in seawater will have largely dissolved and dispersed locally within the sediment. Released volumes from the buried anchors will remain buried as the infrastructure corrodes and degrades.

8.8.3 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

The EPOs relating to this event include:

- + No unplanned objects, emissions or discharges to sea or air [MEFF-EPO-05].
- + Decommissioning Surveys implemented as outlined in Section 10.3 will demonstrate that there are no unacceptable impacts to the natural resources, and provides for the protection and conservation of natural resources and any damage to the seabed or subsoil will be made good on the three title areas (surrender area) [MEFF-EPO-10].

The control measures considered for this event are shown in **Table 8-16**, and EPSs and measurement criteria for the EPOs are described in **Section 11.4**.

Table 8-16: Control measures evaluation for degradation of abandoned seabed equipment in situ

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Control Measures				
MEFF-CM-13	As left survey	Confirms removal of infrastructure above seabed and the location of buried infrastructure in the operational area post activities.	Costs associated with personnel and operations time in conducting surveys.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh costs to Santos.
MEFF-CM-37	Sea dumping permit	Ensure compliance with legislation that assesses environmental risks and impacts associated with permanent abandonment of equipment at sea.	Minimal additional costs, this is a regulatory requirement.	Adopted – Legal requirement.
Additional Control Measures				
MEFF-CM-53	Post decommissioning environment monitoring adaptive management measures	Confirms no damage to seabed or subsoil remains prior to relinquishment of title and allows for the protection and conservation of natural resources	Costs associated with additional monitoring or additional studies required	Adopted — Benefits considered to outweigh cost to Santos

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Monitoring for degradation / dispersal of materials	Awareness of degradation levels to inform environmental risk assessment.	Significant costs associated with monitoring campaign.	Rejected – The degradation timeline for the mooring chains and anchors is expected to proceed very slowly through auto-oxidation, i.e. degradation will release material among seabed sediments over the course of hundreds to thousands of years. Given the low risk that metal corrosion causes toxicity to marine organisms, there is little benefit in monitoring. Monitoring is not expected to provide any useful data given the long degradation timelines.

8.8.4 Environmental impact assessment

Receptor	Consequence Level
Continued presence of seabed equipment	
Threatened, migratory or local fauna	The degradation and corrosion of abandoned seabed assets has the potential to cause impacts from a reduction in water and sediment quality affecting benthic communities and other marine fauna. The mooring chains and anchors are comprised of steel, of which the main constituent is iron (approximately 97%). Iron is not considered a significant contaminant in the marine environment and is only toxic to marine organisms at high concentrations (Grimwood and Dixon, 1997). The mooring anchors and chains are buried to depths of between 6 and 13 m. Consequently, the degradation products will be buried and unlikely to be available to marine fauna. Fauna such as demersal fishes, epifauna and infauna will only be exposed to degradation products on the seabed of within the layer of sediment that may be reworked through bioturbation (primarily through infauna burrowing and deposit feeding). Bioturbation is typically concentrated in the upper 30 cm (Kristensen et al, 2012). Based on the burial depth of the anchors and chains 6-13 m it is unlikely that the degradation products will come in contact with marine fauna.
Physical environment or habitat	

Receptor	Consequence Level
	In the unlikely event that demersal fishes, epifauna and infauna came in contact with degradation products, based in the low toxicity of iron and the slow release rate any impacts to marine fauna would be localised and minor. The Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) identifies ingestion of marine debris as a threat to marine turtle population. Understanding the threat posed by marine debris is identified in the Recovery Plan as a priority action for the NWS green turtle stock. The Recovery Plan identifies the long-term recovery objective for marine turtles in Australia as: <i>to minimise anthropogenic threats to allow for the conservation status of marine turtles to improve so that they can be removed from the EPBC Act threatened species list.</i> However, given that degradation products are not expected to accumulate in densities required for ecological effects, including bioaccumulation and biomagnification, impacts to turtle populations are not expected. The nearest biologically important area or habitat critical to the survival of marine turtles is located more than 35 km from the operational area. Degradation is expected to occur at a slow rate within the sediment, therefore, the abandonment in situ of the buried mooring chains and anchors is highly unlikely to compromise the objectives of the Marine Turtle Recovery Plan. As such, impacts to threatened, migratory or local fauna from corrosion and degradation products are expected to be I (Negligible).
Socio-economic receptors	I (Negligible) – The risk of impacting on fisheries (commercially, traditionally or recreationally) from corrosion and degradation products, is considered negligible due to the relatively minor volumes, long release durations, and limited fishing effort, as discussed in Section 8.1, in the operational area. WAFIC raised a query seeking confirmation that infrastructure proposed to be left in situ was clean and free of toxic substances. Santos confirmed that none of the infrastructure proposed to remain had ever been in contact with produced fluids or hydrocarbons and provided details on the composition of infrastructure proposed to be left in situ (Appendix F). WAFIC then queried in the second round of consultation if the rigid flowline was going to be removed. Santos confirmed that it does not propose to leave the rigid flowline in situ thereby removing nearly all plastics (Section 6.6). EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country.
Threatened ecological communities	Not applicable – No threatened ecological communities identified in the area over which the potential impacts from the continued presence of seabed equipment are expected.
Protected areas	Not applicable – No protected areas are identified in the area over which the potential impacts from the continued presence of seabed equipment are expected.
Overall worst-case consequence	Negligible (I)

8.8.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

Buried mooring Anchors were not designed to be removed. Recovery of the anchors is assumed to be done by pulling the anchors free in the opposite direction to which they were installed. If the

anchors were unable to be removed by pulling free, the anchors would be unburied by relocation of sediments (e.g., by a controlled flow excavator) and lifting equipment secured to the anchors. The anchors and buried chains are embedded between 6 to 13 m below the seabed. Removal of the anchors through excavation/dredging will result in substantial disturbance of the seabed (up to 64,500 m³) above, around and along the removal path of the anchors. Removal of the buried sections of mooring chains would also require deburial using a controlled flow excavator which would result in substantial disturbance to the seabed along the 580 m length of chain. Removed anchors and chains would be recovered to vessels and brought to shore for disposal in accordance with the waste management hierarchy (Section 4.6.7). The comparative assessment assumes that steel from the mooring anchors and chains is recycled.

On this basis, the removal of the buried sections of the mooring chains and the anchors is expected to cost between \$6-8- MM AUD.

As discussed in **Section 3.5**, the results from the (CEIA) demonstrates that the abandonment in situ of buried anchors and anchor chains will result in equal or better environmental outcomes compared to full removal, which is required by NOPSEMA's Section 572 Maintenance and Removal of Property policy (NOPSEMA 2022). The removal of infrastructure is technically very challenging and will result in a substantial volume of seabed disturbance up to 64,500 m³ based in a depth of up to 13 m. Degradation of steel over time will result in negligible impacts to environmental receptors based on the low toxicity of steel, slow degradation rate over time and rapid dilution in the marine environment and given the infrastructure is buried there is no risk of interaction with other marine users. On this basis, leaving infrastructure in situ results in equal or better environment outcomes than removal.

Additional control measures were assessed but were not adopted due to there being limited to no environmental benefits. Additionally, the very small quantities of degradation products released over long time periods locally within the sediments will not be measurable.

Santos has engaged with DCCEEW regarding the application of the Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981 for the permanent abandonment of equipment left in situ and will comply with requirements under the Act.

Therefore, the controls in place to manage the degradation of abandoned seabed equipment is considered ALARP. The assessed residual consequence for this impact is negligible and cannot be reduced further.

8.8.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the consequence ranked as I (Negligible) or II (Minor)?	Yes – maximum consequence from continued presence of seabed equipment is I (Negligible).
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5), which considers principles of ESD. The consequence for this aspect is I (Negligible) and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5. A demonstration of how the abandonment in situ of the buried mooring anchors and chains aligns with the principles of ESD is provided in Section 3.5.2.4 and Table 3-9, respectively.
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	Yes – Consistent with relevant species recovery plans, conservation management plans and management actions set out in Table 5-10, including but not limited to: + The Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) + The Threat Abatement Plan for the Impacts of Marine Debris on Vertebrate Wildlife of Australia's Coasts and Oceans (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018b) Consistent with international agreements and guidelines including: + Annex I(2) of the 1996 London Protocol to the convention on the prevention of marine pollution by dumping of waste and other matter + IMO Resolution A.672 (16) Guidelines and Standards for the Removal of Offshore Installations and Structures on the Continental Shelf and in the Exclusive Economic Zone. Consistency with these plans and guidelines is discussed further below.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to cessation phase activities	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environmental, Health and Safety Policy.

Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities	Yes – WAFIC raised a query seeking Confirmation that infrastructure proposed to be left in situ was clean and free of toxic substances. Santos confirmed that none of the infrastructure proposed to remain had ever been in contact with produced fluids or hydrocarbons and provided details on the composition of infrastructure proposed to be left in situ (Appendix F) and no further concerns were raised. Recfishwest requested charts be updated and this is managed through environmental performance standard MEFF-CM-14 (Section 11.4). AMSA requested its maritime safety notification requirements which are addressed in Table 11-4. MUA contacted Santos and provided feedback on the leaving of infrastructure in situ. Their feedback is assessed within Table 6-8 and Santos considers that abandonment in situ of buried anchors and anchor chains will result in equal or better environmental outcomes compared to full removal.
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

With control measures in place to minimise the environmental impact from degradation and corrosion of abandoned seabed equipment, the consequence was assessed as Negligible (I) and ALARP. The corrosion The Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) identifies ingestion of marine debris as a threat to marine turtle population. Understanding the threat posed by marine debris is identified in the Recovery Plan as a priority action for the NWS green turtle stock. The Recovery Plan identifies the long-term recovery objective for marine turtles in Australia as:

“to minimise anthropogenic threats to allow for the conservation status of marine turtles to improve so that they can be removed from the EPBC Act threatened species list.”

The Threat Abatement Plan for the impacts of Marine Debris on Vertebrate Wildlife of Australia's Coasts and Oceans (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018b) identifies the risk of entanglement in, or ingestion of, plastics a

a key threatening process for several marine species protected under the EPBC Act. This plan was made under section 270A of the EPBC Act and states the following as objectives:

“Understand the scale of impacts from marine plastic and microplastic on key species, ecological communities, and locations.”

The assessment of the potential impacts and risks from degradation of abandoned seabed equipment has considered the potential risks from degradation to the marine environment, including marine turtles and other vertebrate marine fauna.

The mooring anchors and chains are buried to depths of between 6 and 13 m. Consequently, the degradation products will be buried and unlikely to be available to marine fauna. Fauna such as demersal fishes, epifauna and infauna will only be exposed to degradation products on the seabed of within the layer of sediment that may be reworked through bioturbation (primarily through infauna

burrowing and deposit feeding). Bioturbation is typically concentrated in the upper 30 cm (Kristensen et al, 2012). Based on the burial depth of the anchors and chains 6-13 m is it unlikely that the degradation products will come in contact with marine fauna.

Therefore, leaving mooring chains and anchors in situ is not inconsistent with the objectives and actions of the Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) and the Threat Abatement Plan for the impacts of Marine Debris on Vertebrate Wildlife of Australia's Coasts and Oceans (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018b).

The degradation of abandoned and buried seabed equipment is not inconsistent with IMO Resolution A.672 (16) Guidelines and Standards for the Removal of Offshore Installations and Structures on the Continental Shelf and in the Exclusive Economic Zone. The assessment against the IMP Resolution is further detailed in **Table 8-17**.

Table 8-17: Assessment Against IMO Resolution A.672 (16) Guidelines and Standards for the Removal of Offshore Installations and Structures on the Continental Shelf and in the Exclusive Economic Zone:

IMO Resolution A.672 (16) Guidelines and Standards for the Removal of Offshore Installations and Structures on the Continental Shelf and in the Exclusive Economic Zone	Assessment
The rate of deterioration of the material and its present and possible future effect on the marine environment	The DTM anchors will remain deeply buried-and the equipment is expected to remain stable and at its current as left location. Therefore, the potential for any impacts in the short-term is limited to the ongoing physical presence of the abandoned infrastructure. Degradation products will be concentrated in sediments around the anchors and buried anchor chains. The anchors and chains are made of ~97% iron which poses little risk to the environment. Iron and its oxides (i.e., rust) listed by the OSPAR Commission as posing little or no risk to the environment (PLONOR). Further to this, Degradation products are not expected to accumulate in densities required for ecological effects, including bioaccumulation and biomagnification. Therefore, long-term impacts are considered negligible. Significant impacts are not expected.
The potential effect on the marine environment, including living resources	The risk assessment demonstrates that the abandonment in situ of seabed equipment is not expected to result in any serious and/or irreversible environmental damage. The existing environment, including the seabed and associated habitat in the MEFF field is well understood (Section 5). Therefore, although time frames for degradation processes are uncertain (although are likely to be long), there is a level of scientific certainty in the risk assessment relating to the existing environment and potential impacts from the degradation of seabed equipment.
The risk that the material will shift from its position at some future time	The DTM anchors will remain deeply buried and it is expected that the buried length of mooring chain will also remain buried. All abandoned seabed equipment is expected to remain at its as left location until it has completely degraded.

Annex I(2) of the 1996 London Protocol to the convention on the prevention of marine pollution by dumping of waste and other matter (update to London Convention and Protocol 1972) describes that material capable of creating floating debris or otherwise contributes to the pollution of the marine environment has to be removed. The risk assessment for the degradation of abandoned seabed equipment acknowledges that over the degradation will be over a long timeframe (90 to 250 years). Additionally, the CEIA (**Section 3.5**) demonstrates that the abandonment in situ alternative will result in equal or better environmental outcomes compared to full removal, which is required by NOPSEMA's Section 572 Maintenance and Removal of Property policy. The degradation of abandoned seabed equipment is therefore not inconsistent with Annex I(2) of the 1996 London Protocol.

Additional controls were considered and rejected (**Section 8.8.3**). Therefore, the negligible impacts expected from the degradation and corrosion of abandoned seabed equipment are considered to be environmentally acceptable.

8.9 Spill response operations

The spill response strategies that may be adopted in the event of a hydrocarbon spill have been identified in the MEFF Decommissioning OPEP (9885-650-PLN-0002) for worst-credible LOWC and marine diesel spills. Potential impacts arising from the implementation of the following spill response operations or actions were assessed.

Santos' environmental assessment identified potential sources of environmental impacts associated with contingency spill response operations for this activity. The results of the environmental assessment are summarised in **Table 8-1**. A comprehensive risk and impact assessment for each of the contingency spill response operations, and subsequent control measures proposed by Santos to reduce the risk and impacts to ALARP and acceptable levels, are detailed in the following sub-sections.

8.9.1 Description of event

Event	In the event of a hydrocarbon spill, response strategies will be implemented where possible to reduce environmental impacts to ALARP. The selection of strategies will be undertaken through the net environmental benefit analysis (NEBA) process and evaluation of response strategies outlined in this EP and the OPEP. Spill response will be under the direction of the relevant Controlling Agency, as defined in Section 4 of the OPEP, which may be Santos, another agency or both. In all instances, Santos will undertake a 'first-strike' spill response and will act as the Controlling Agency until the designated Controlling Agency assumes control. The response strategies considered to be appropriate for the worst-case oil spill scenarios identified for the activity are provided in Section 6 of the OPEP and comprise: + source control + monitor and evaluate + mechanical dispersion + shoreline protection and deflection + shoreline clean-up + oiled wildlife response + scientific monitoring + waste management. While response strategies are intended to reduce the environmental consequences of a hydrocarbon spill, poorly planned and coordinated response activities can result in a lack of or inadequate information being available upon which poor decisions can be made, exacerbating or causing further environmental harm. An inadequate level of training and guidance during the implementation of spill response strategies can also result in environmental harm over and above that already caused by the spill. The greatest potential for impacts additional to those described for routine operations is from shoreline clean-up and oiled wildlife response operations where coastal and shoreline habitat damage and fauna disturbance may occur.
Extent	Extent of spill. Spill response could occur anywhere within the MEVA for the worst-case spill scenarios. Some strategies will be concentrated in the vicinity of sensitive receptors in coastal waters and along shorelines.
Duration	The spill response effort as a whole will exceed the duration of the worst-case spill, due to persistence of the oil in the environment and the requirement to remove this oil and/or monitor impacts and recovery to sensitive receptors. The OPEP provides further detail the duration of specific response strategies.

8.9.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts and risks for the activities

Light emissions	
Spill response activities will involve the use of vessels, which are required, at a minimum, to display navigational lighting. Vessels may operate close to shoreline areas during spill response activities. Spill response activities will also involve onshore operations, including the use of vehicles and temporary camps, which may require lighting.	
Potential receptors:	Fauna (including threatened, migratory or local fauna) Protected areas
Lighting may cause behavioural changes to fish, mammals, birds and marine turtles that can have a heightened consequence during key lifecycle activities, such as turtle nesting and hatching. Turtles and birds, which includes threatened and migratory fauna (Table 5-8), have been identified as key fauna susceptible to lighting impacts. Section 8.3 provides further detail about the nature of impacts to fish, birds and marine turtles. Spill response activities that require lighting may take place in protected areas important to turtles and birds, such as shoreline locations of the Montebello Islands, Barrow Island, the Muiron Islands, and Ningaloo area, which are seasonally important for turtles and include BIAs and critical habitats. This could result in indirect impacts on the values of the protected areas. During nesting and hatching season (primarily over summer months), lighting may cause behavioural impacts to turtles, including aborted nesting attempts and disorientation of newly hatched turtles, which may increase the hatchling mortality rate. Spill response activities may also occur on shorelines used by nesting and feeding birds, including seabirds and shorebirds. Lighting can cause disorientation in flying birds, disrupt nesting and breeding behaviours and impact on the ability of birds to forage. Disturbance to feeding migratory shorebirds may reduce their ability to replenish energy reserves and alter the timing and success of migratory flights. Lighting impacts to fauna are not considered to have the potential to impact supported industries such as tourism.	
Acoustic disturbance	
Spill response activities will involve the use of aircraft and vessels, which will generate noise both offshore and in proximity to sensitive receptors in coastal areas. Spill response activities will also involve the use of equipment on coastal areas during clean-up of shorelines (e.g., pumps and vehicles), for accessing shoreline areas (e.g., vehicles) and for supporting temporary camps (e.g., diesel generators).	
Potential receptors:	Fauna (including threatened, migratory or local fauna) Protected areas Socio-economic receptors
Underwater noise from the use of vessels may impact marine fauna, such as fish (including commercial species), marine reptiles and marine mammals, in the worst instance causing physical injury to hearing organs but more likely causing short-term behavioural changes; e.g., temporary avoidance of the area, which may impact key lifecycle processes (e.g., spawning, breeding, calving). Underwater noise can also mask communication or echolocation used by cetaceans. Section 8.4 provides further detail on these impacts from vessels and helicopters. Cetaceans have been identified as the key concern for vessel noise within the MEVA. The humpback migration and resting BIA and the pygmy blue whale migration, foraging and distribution BIAs are all within the MEVA. Spill response activities using vessels have the potential to impact fauna in protected areas, which may impact on the conservation values of the protected areas. This includes the Montebello AMP. Noise and vibration from terrestrial activities on shorelines has the potential to cause behavioural disturbance to coastal fauna, including protected seabirds and turtles. Shoreline activities involving the	

use of noise-generating equipment may take place in important nesting areas for turtles and roosting and feeding areas for shorebirds.

As a consequence of impacts to fauna (including shorebirds, marine mammals, fish and sharks), noise has the potential to impact supported industries such as tourism and commercial fishing and recreational values of marine parks.

Atmospheric emissions

The use of fuels to power vessel engines, generators and mobile equipment used during spill response activities will result in emissions of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, along with non-GHGs such as sulphur oxides and nitrogen oxides (NOx). Emissions will result in a localised decrease in air quality.

Potential receptors:

Fauna (including threatened, migratory or local fauna)
Physical environment or habitat (air quality)
Socio-economic receptors

Atmospheric emissions from spill response equipment will be localised, and the use of mobile equipment, vessels and vehicles is not considered to create emissions on a scale where noticeable impacts would be predicted. Emissions may occur in protected areas and/or areas where tourism is important; however, the scale of the impact relative to potential oil spill impacts is not considered great.

Operational discharges and waste

Operational discharges include those routine discharges from vessels used during spill response, which may include:

- + deck drainage
- + putrescible waste and sewage
- + cooling water from operation of engines
- + bilge water
- + ballast water
- + brine discharge.

In addition, there are specific spill response discharges and waste creation that may occur, including:

- + cleaning of oily equipment, vessels and vehicles
- + flushing water for the cleaning of shoreline habitats
- + sewage and putrescible and municipal waste at camp areas
- + creation, storage, transport and disposal of oily waste and contaminated organics.

Potential receptors:

Fauna (including threatened, migratory or local fauna)
Physical environment or habitat
Protected areas
Socio-economic receptors

Operational discharges from vessels may create a localised and temporary reduction in marine water quality. Effects include nutrient enrichment, toxicity, turbidity, and temperature and salinity increases, as detailed in **Section 8.6.2**. Vessel discharges may occur in shallower coastal waters during spill response activities than that described in **Section 8.6.2**. Discharge could potentially occur adjacent to marine habitats, such as corals, seagrass and macroalgae, and in protected areas (i.e., receptors anywhere within the MEVA), which support a more diverse faunal community; however, discharges are still expected to be localised and temporary.

Cleaning of oil-contaminated equipment, vehicles and vessels has the potential to spread oil from contaminated areas to areas not impacted by a spill, potentially spreading the impact area and moving oil into a more sensitive environment.

Flushing of oil from shoreline habitats is a clean-up technique designed to remove oil from the receptor that has been oiled and remobilise it back into the marine environment. It results in further dispersion of

the oil. The process of flushing has the potential to physically damage shoreline receptors such as mangroves and rocky shoreline communities, increase levels of erosion, and create an additional and potentially higher level of impact than if the habitat was left to bioremediate.

Sewage and putrescible and municipal waste will be generated from onshore activities at temporary camps, which may include toilet and washing facilities. These wastes have the potential to attract fauna, impact habitats, flora and fauna, and reduce the aesthetic value of the environment, which may be within protected areas. Disturbance may also impact cultural values of an area. The creation, storage, transport and disposal of oily waste and contaminated organics has the potential to spread impacts of oil to areas, habitats and fauna not previously contaminated. Sewage and putrescible and municipal waste generated onshore will be stored and disposed of at approved locations.

Physical presence and disturbance

The movement and operation of vessels, vehicles, personnel and equipment, the undertaking of clean-up activities, and the set-up of temporary camp areas during spill response activities have the potential to disturb the physical environment and marine and coastal habitats and fauna, which may occur within protected areas. Disturbance may also impact cultural values of an area. Vessel movement and transportation could potentially introduce to nearshore areas invasive marine species attached as biofouling, while vehicle and equipment movement could spread non-indigenous flora and fauna.

Oiled wildlife response activities may involve deliberate disturbance (hazing), capture, handling, cleaning, rehabilitation, transportation and release of wildlife, which could lead to additional impacts to wildlife.

Potential receptors:

Fauna (including threatened, migratory and local fauna)
Physical environment or habitat
Protected areas
Socio-economic receptors

The use of vessels may disturb benthic habitats in coastal waters, including corals, seagrass, macroalgae and mangroves. Impacts to habitats from vessels include damage through the deployment of anchors, chains and nearshore booms and from grounding. Vessel use in shallow coastal waters also increases the chance of contact with or physical disturbance of marine megafauna such as turtles and dugongs. Booms create a physical barrier on the surface waters that has the potential to injure or entangle passing marine fauna that are either surface breathing or feeding.

Vehicles, equipment, personnel and cleaning activities during shoreline response activities have the potential to damage coastal habitats, such as dune vegetation, mangroves and habitats important to threatened and migratory fauna, including nests of turtles and birds and bird roosting and feeding areas. Shoreline clean-up may involve the physical removal of substrates that could cause impact to habitats and coastal hydrodynamics and alter erosion or accretion rates.

The presence of camp areas, although relatively short-term, may disrupt normal behaviour of coastal species, such as shorebirds and turtles, and could potentially interfere with nesting and feeding behaviours.

Oiled wildlife response may include the hazing, capture, handling, cleaning, rehabilitation, transportation, cleaning and release of wildlife susceptible to oiling, such as birds and marine turtles. While oiled wildlife response is aimed at having a net benefit, poor responses can potentially create additional stress and exacerbate impacts from oiling, interfere with lifecycle processes, hamper recovery and, in the worst instance, increase levels of mortality.

Impacts and risks from invasive marine species are described in **Section 9.2** and are not described further in this section. Impacts from invasive terrestrial species are similar in that the invasive species (e.g., weeds) can outcompete local species and interfere with ecosystem processes. Non-native species may be transported attached to equipment, vehicles and clothing. Such an introduction would be especially detrimental to wilderness areas or protected terrestrial reserves, which may have a relatively undisturbed flora and fauna community.

The disturbance to marine and coastal natural habitat, as well as the potential for disruption to culturally sensitive areas, may occur in specially protected areas and may have flow on impacts to socio-economic values and industry (e.g., tourism, fisheries).

Disruption to other users of marine and coastal areas and townships:

Spill response activities may involve the use of vessels, equipment and vehicles and the establishment of temporary camps in areas used by the general public or industry. The mobilisation of spill response personnel into an affected area may also place increased demands on local accommodation and other businesses.

Potential receptors:

Socio-economic receptors

The use of vessels in the nearshore and offshore environment and the undertaking of spill response activities at shoreline locations may exclude the general public and industry use of the affected environment. As well as impacting leisure activities of the general public, this may impact on revenue with respect to industries such as tourism and commercial fishing. The mobilisation of personnel to small communities has the potential to affect the local community through demands on local accommodation and business, reducing the availability of services to members of the public.

8.9.3 Environmental performance and control measures

The control measures considered for this activity are shown in **Table 8-18**. However, EPOs, EPSs and measurement criteria for these spill response control measures are provided within the relevant strategy sections of the OPEP.

Table 8-18: Control measure evaluation for spill response operations

Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Competent Incident Management Team and oil spill responder personnel	Ensures spill response strategy selection and operational activities consider the potential for additional environmental impacts.	Personnel and operational costs associated with maintaining competent Incident Management Team and responder personnel.	Adopted – Considered a standard spill response control.
Use of competent vessel crew and personnel	Reduces potential for environmental impacts from vessel usage.	Personnel and operational costs associated with maintaining contracts with competent vessel crew and personnel.	Adopted – Considered a standard spill response control.
Spill response activities selected on basis of a NEBA	Provides a systematic and repeatable process for evaluating strategies with net least environmental impact.	No cost/issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Considered a standard spill response control.

Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Noise and atmospheric emissions			
Vessels and aircraft compliant with Santos' Protected Marine Fauna Interaction and Sighting Procedure (EA-91-11-00003)	Reduces potential for behavioural disturbance to cetaceans.	No cost/issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted –Ensures compliance with Part 8 of the EPBC Regulations 2000, which is considered a standard spill response control (regulatory requirement).
International Air Pollution Prevention (IAPP) Certificate	Reduces level of air quality impacts.	Personnel and operational costs associated with maintaining Air Pollution Certificate.	Adopted – Considered a standard spill response control (regulatory requirement).
Operational discharges and waste			
Vessels meet applicable sewage disposal requirements	Reduces potential for water quality impacts.	No cost/issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Considered a standard spill response control (regulatory requirement).
Vessels meet applicable requirements for oily water (bilge) discharges	Reduces potential for water quality impacts.	No cost/issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Considered a standard spill response control (regulatory requirement).
Ballast Water Management Plan	Improve quality of water discharged to marine environment to ALARP. Reduce risk of introduced marine species.	No cost/issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Considered a standard spill response control (regulatory requirement).
Compliance with controlled waste, unauthorised discharge and landfill regulations	Ensures correct handling and disposal of oily wastes.	No cost/issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Considered a standard spill response control (regulatory requirement).

Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Physical presence and disturbance			
Vessels and aircraft compliant with Santos' Protected Marine Fauna Interaction and Sighting Procedure (EA-91-11-00003)	Reduces potential for behavioural disturbance to cetaceans.	No cost/issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Ensures compliance with Part 8 of the EPBC Regulations 2000, which is considered a standard spill response control (regulatory requirement).
Use of shallow draft vessels for shoreline and nearshore operations	Reduce seabed and shoreline disturbance.	Operational costs associated with operating shallow draft vessels for shoreline and nearshore operations.	Adopted – Considered a standard control.
Oil Spill Response Team Leader assesses and selects vehicles appropriate to shoreline conditions	Reduce coastal habitat and fauna disturbance.	No cost/issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Considered a standard control.
Conduct shoreline, nearshore habitat, bathymetry assessment	Reduce shoreline habitat disturbance.	Operational costs associated with conducting shoreline nearshore habitat assessment.	Adopted – Considered a standard control.
Establish demarcation zones for vehicle and personnel movement considering sensitive vegetation, bird nesting and roosting areas and turtle nesting habitat	Reduce coastal habitat and fauna disturbance.	No cost/issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Considered a standard control.
Operational restriction of vehicle and personnel movement to limit erosion and compaction	Reduce coastal habitat erosion and compaction.	No cost/issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Considered a standard control.
Prioritise use of existing roads and tracks	Reduce coastal habitat and fauna disturbance.	No cost/issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Considered a standard control.

Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Select temporary base camps in consultation with DoT and DBCA	Reduce coastal habitat and fauna disturbance.	No cost/issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Considered a standard control to be adopted by the relevant Control Agency.
Soil profile assessment prior to earthworks	Reduce habitat disruption and erosion.	Operational costs associated with soil profile assessment.	Adopted – Considered a standard control.
Pre-cleaning and inspection of equipment (quarantine)	Prevent introduction of invasive species.	Operational costs associated with response plan.	Adopted – Considered a standard control.
Use of Heritage Advisor if spill response activities overlap with potential areas of cultural significance	Reduce disturbance to culturally significant sites.	No cost/issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Considered a standard control to be adopted by the relevant Control Agency.
Adhere to WA Oiled Wildlife Response Plan and Pilbara Regional Oiled Wildlife Response Plan	Oiled wildlife hazing, capture, handling and rehabilitation meet minimum standards as outlined within the WA Oiled Wildlife Response Plan.	Operational costs associated with response plan.	Adopted – Considered a standard control to be adopted by the relevant Control Agency.
Disruption to other users of marine and coastal areas and townships			
Stakeholder consultation	Promotes awareness and reduces potential impacts from response to socio-economic activities.	Minimal cost in relation to overall effort/costs in managing incident.	Adopted – Considered a standard control for incident management.
Utility resource assessment and support to be conducted if activity is of significant size in comparison to the size of the coastal community	Reduces potential impact due to higher utility demands causing disruptions to local community.	No cost / issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Considered a standard control.
Accommodation assessment	Reduces strain on accommodation.	No cost / issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Considered a standard control.

Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Transport Management Plan	Reduces potential for traffic disruptions.	No cost / issue associated with this control measure.	Adopted – Considered a standard control for large-scale deployment in highly populated areas.

8.9.4 Environmental impact assessment

Receptor	Consequence Level
Spill Response Operations – Light Emissions	
Threatened, migratory or local fauna	The receptors considered most sensitive to lighting from vessel and shoreline operations are seabirds, shorebirds and marine turtles, particularly over summer months with respect to marine turtles where emerging hatchlings are sensitive to light spill onto beaches. Following restrictions on night-time operations by spill response vessels, which will demobilise to mooring areas offshore with safety lighting only, impacts from vessels are considered to be Negligible (I). Temporary camps will be positioned at the direction of DoT or DBCA and control measures on lighting colour and direction will be followed; therefore, the consequence of shoreline lighting is considered Negligible (I). These species are likely to be values of the protected area they occur in (e.g., Montebello Islands, Barrow Island, Ningaloo, etc), and the impact to the protected area from light is also considered Negligible (I). As a consequence of impacts to fauna, lighting has the potential to impact supported industries, such as tourism; however, as impacts to fauna are considered negligible, any indirect impacts on tourism will also be Negligible (I).
Physical environment or habitat	
Threatened ecological communities	
Protected areas	
Socio-economic receptors	
Overall worst-case consequence level	I – Negligible
Spill Response Operations – Acoustic Disturbance	
Threatened, migratory or local fauna	The receptors considered most sensitive to vessel noise disturbance is the humpback whale during migration season, when these whales come close to the Montebello Islands and Barrow Island during their peak migration (July to October), as well as populations of marine turtles, whale sharks and pygmy blue whales. However, following the adoption of control measures to limit close interaction with protected fauna (i.e., Protected Marine Fauna Interaction and Sighting Procedure (EA-91-II-00003)), a temporary behavioral disturbance is expected only with a consequence of Negligible (I). With respect to noise from onshore operations (mobile equipment and vehicles), nesting, roosting or feeding birds are considered to be the most sensitive to noise, in particular shorebirds that may be aggregating at Montebello Islands, Barrow Island, the Muiron Islands, Lowendal Islands, Dampier Archipelago and the Ningaloo coast. The equipment used is not considered to have excessive sound levels and, following direction by DoT and DBCA on the location of temporary camp areas, the consequence to birds from noise is expected to be Negligible (I). Shorebirds may be official values of the protected area they occur in, and the impact to the protected area from noise is also considered Negligible (I). EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country.
Physical environment or habitat	
Threatened ecological communities	
Protected areas	
Socio-economic receptors	

Receptor	Consequence Level
Overall worst-case consequence level	I – Negligible
Spill Response Operations – Atmospheric Emissions	
Threatened, migratory or local fauna	Atmospheric emissions from spill response equipment will be localised, and impacts to even the most sensitive fauna, such as birds, are expected to be Negligible (I). Because of the emissions will be localised and low level, impacts to protected area values, physical environment and socio-economic receptors are predicted to be Negligible (I). EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country.
Physical environment or habitat	
Threatened ecological communities	
Protected areas	
Socio-economic receptors	
Overall worst-case consequence level	I – Negligible
Spill Response Operations – Operational Discharges and Waste	
Threatened, migratory or local fauna	Operational discharges from vessels may create a localised and temporary reduction in marine water quality, which has the potential to impact shallow coastal habitats in particular. However, following the adoption of regulatory requirements for vessel discharges, which prevent discharges close to shorelines, discharges will have a negligible impact to habitats, fauna or protected area values. Furthermore, washing of vessels and equipment will take place only in defined offshore hot zones preventing impacts to shallow coastal habitats. As a consequence of impacts to fauna, operational discharges from vessels have the potential to impact supported industries, such as tourism and commercial fishing; however, as impacts to fauna are considered Negligible (I), any indirect impacts on socio-economic receptors will also be Negligible (I). Onshore, the use of flushing water has the potential to damage sensitive shoreline and intertidal habitats, e.g., mangroves. However, low-pressure flushing only will be used, preventing further damage to habitats or erosion of sediments. For sensitive habitats, the deployment of booms will be considered to retain flushed hydrocarbons, if this presents a net benefit. Following these control measures, the use of flushing to clean shorelines and intertidal habitats is seen to have a Negligible (I) additional impact to habitats, fauna or protected area values. The cleaning of contaminated vehicles and equipment onshore has the potential to spread oily waste and damage habitats if not contained. Decontamination units will be in used during the spill response, thus containing waste and preventing any secondary contamination. The consequence of cleaning discharges is therefore ranked as Negligible (I) in terms of impacts to habitats, fauna or protected area values. Sewage, putrescible waste and municipal waste generated onshore will be stored and disposed of at approved locations. The storage, transport and disposal of hydrocarbon-contaminated waste arising from spill response operation actions, such as containment and recovery and shoreline clean up, will be managed by Santos' appointed waste management contractor, and dedicated waste
Physical environment or habitat	
Threatened ecological communities	
Protected areas	
Socio-economic receptors	

Receptor	Consequence Level
	containment areas will prevent the spreading or leaching of hydrocarbon contamination. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country. The consequence of sewerage discharges is therefore ranked as Negligible (I) in terms of impacts to habitats, fauna or protected area values.
Overall worst-case consequence level	I – Negligible
Spill Response Operations – Physical Presence and Disturbance	
Threatened, migratory or local fauna	The use of vessels and nearshore booms has the potential to disturb benthic habitats, including sensitive habitats in coastal waters, such as corals, seagrass, macroalgae and mangroves. A review of shoreline and shallow water habitats and of bathymetry and the establishment of demarcated areas for access and anchoring will reduce the level of impact to Negligible (I). The use and movement of vehicles, equipment and personnel during shoreline response activities has the potential to disturb coastal habitats, such as dune vegetation, samphire and mangroves, and important habitats of threatened and migratory fauna, including nests of turtles and birds and bird roosting areas. Furthermore, clean-up can involve physical removal of substrates that could impact habitats and fauna and alter coastal hydrodynamics. As with vessel use, an assessment of appropriate vehicles and equipment to reduce habitat damage, along with the establishment of access routes, demarcation zones, and operational restrictions on equipment and vehicle use, will limit sensitive habitat damage and damage to important fauna areas. The establishment of temporary camp areas will be done under direction of DoT and DBCA with suitable advice sought if access is needed to culturally significant areas. Following these and other control measures, the resultant consequence to the physical environment and habitat is assessed as Minor (II), indicating that there may be a detectable reduction in habitat area from response activities (as separate from spill impacts), but recovery will be relatively rapid once spill response activities cease. As with all spill response activities, this disturbance will only occur if there is a net benefit to accessing and cleaning shoreline areas. The main direct disturbance to fauna would be the hazing, capture, handling, transportation, cleaning and release of wildlife susceptible to oiling impacts, such as birds and marine turtles. This would only be done if this intervention were to deliver a net benefit to the species, but it may result in a Minor (II) consequence following compliance with the WA Oiled Wildlife Response Plan and the Pilbara Region Oiled Wildlife Response Plan. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country. These habitats or environments are likely to be values of the protected area they occur in, and the impact to the protected areas from physical disturbance is therefore also considered Minor (II). The disturbance to marine and coastal natural habitat, as well as the potential for disruption to culturally sensitive areas, which may occur in specially protected areas, may have flow-on impacts to socio-economic values and industry (e.g., tourism, fisheries). This impact is considered Minor (II).
Physical environment or habitat	
Threatened ecological communities	
Protected areas	
Socio-economic receptors	
Overall worst-case consequence level	II – Minor

Receptor	Consequence Level
Spill Response Operations – Disruption to Other Users of Marine and Coastal Areas and Townships	
Socio-economic receptors	The use of vessels in the nearshore and offshore environment and spill response activities at shoreline locations and within townships may exclude general public and industry use. Note that this is distinct from the socio-economic impact of a spill itself, which would have a far greater detrimental impact to industry and recreation. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country. Following the application of control measures, it is considered that the additional impact of spill response activities on affected industries would be Minor (II).
Overall worst-case consequence level	II – Minor

8.9.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

A NEBA is the primary tool used during spill response to evaluate response strategies and has the goal of selecting strategies that result in the least net impact to key environmental sensitivities. The NEBA process will identify and compare net environmental benefits of alternative spill response options. The NEBA will effectively determine whether an environmental benefit will be achieved through implementing a response strategy or by undertaking no response. The NEBA will be undertaken by the relevant Controlling Agency for the activity. For those activities under the control of Santos, the Incident Management Team Environmental Team Leader will be responsible for reviewing the priority receptors and selected response strategies identified in this EP and coordinating the NEBA for each operational period. This will demonstrate that, at the strategy level, the response operations reduce additional environmental impacts to ALARP.

Spill response activities will be conducted in offshore and coastal waters using vessels and aircraft. The greatest potential for additional impacts from implementing spill response is considered to be on wildlife in offshore waters from oiled wildlife response activities and to shoreline habitats and fauna receptors within shallow waters or on shorelines from nearshore booming and shoreline clean-up activities.

Given the types of activities considered appropriate for responding to a worse-case spill and the scale of operations, standard control measures adopted by Santos for spill response to reduce the level of additional impacts are considered to reduce these impacts to ALARP. This includes working with the relevant Controlling Agency for spill response and applying the appropriate processes and standards, e.g., for oiled wildlife response as included within the WA Oiled Wildlife Response Plan and Pilbara Regional Oiled Wildlife Response Plan.

Santos considers the actions prescribed in the Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia 2017 to 2027 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) and approved conservation advices for other threatened fauna (**Table 5-10**) relevant to spill responses for the activities to minimise noise and light impacts on cetaceans, sharks, marine turtles, seabirds and shorebirds. The proposed event will not result in significant impacts on these species, and implementation of identified control measures is in line with the relevant conservation advices and recovery plans. Pollution events (such as hydrocarbon spills) could impact on fauna (as described in **Section 9**), and the use of vessels and equipment during the spill response could result in potential impacts as described in this EP. Control measures in place for vessel and helicopter use as provided in **Sections 8.3, 8.4, 8.5** will reduce potential impacts to marine fauna, which are consistent with current conservation advice. The assessed residual consequence for this impact is minor and cannot be reduced further without disproportionate costs. It is considered, therefore, the impact of the activities conducted are acceptable and ALARP.

8.9.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the consequence ranked as I (Negligible) or II (Minor)?	Yes – maximum consequence is II (Minor) from planned events.
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5) which considers principles of ecologically sustainable development. The consequence against this aspect is II (Minor) and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	Yes – IUCN principles and strategic objectives of nearby reserves (Montebello AMP and the Argo-Rowley Terrace AMP) are met. Consistent with relevant species recovery plans, conservation management plans and management actions set out in Table 5-10 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to cessation phase activities	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities)	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

The implementation of spill response activities to reduce the potential impacts from a spill are required by legislation. The spill response options selected have been demonstrated to show a net environmental benefit, are standard industry practice and are consistent with relevant standards and guidelines, including the National Plan for Maritime Environmental Emergencies (AMSA, 2019). No concerns from stakeholders have been raised regarding response activities, and the controls proposed reduce the consequences of the potential impacts to Minor (II) and ALARP. The controls used during spill response activities are therefore considered to reduce additional impacts to an acceptable level.

9. Environmental risk assessment for unplanned events

OPGGS(E)R 2023 Requirements
Regulation 21. Environmental assessment.
Evaluation of environmental impacts and risks 21(5) The environment plan must include: (a) details of the environmental impacts and risks for the activity; and (b) an evaluation of all the impacts and risks, appropriate to the nature and scale of each impact or risk; and (c) details of the control measures that will be used to reduce the impacts and risks of the activity to as low as reasonably practicable and an acceptable level. 21(6) To avoid doubt, the evaluation mentioned in paragraph (5)(b) must evaluate all the environmental impacts and risks arising directly or indirectly from: (a) all operations of the activity; and (b) potential emergency conditions, whether resulting from accident or any other reason. Environmental performance outcomes and standards 21(7) The environment plan must: (a) set environmental performance standards for the control measures identified under paragraph (5)(c); and (b) set out the environmental performance outcomes against which the performance of the titleholder in protecting the environment is to be measured; and (c) include measurement criteria that the titleholder will use to determine whether each environmental performance outcome and environmental performance standard is being met.

An ENVID workshop for unplanned events was held in September 2021, with a further workshop for loss of well control and hotspot consequence assessment also held in September 2021 once oil spill modelling was received. The outcomes of the workshops were reviewed in February 2022 and still deemed applicable to the full decommissioning scope. These workshops identified potential sources of environmental risks associated with unplanned events for this activity. The results of the environmental assessment are summarised in **Table 9-1**. A comprehensive risk and impact assessment for each of the unplanned events and subsequent control measures proposed by Santos to reduce the risk and impacts to ALARP are detailed in the following subsections.

The unplanned events that were considered to not be a credible scenario and are not discussed further in this section are:

- + catastrophic loss of wellhead integrity
- + hydrocarbon spill due to vessel grounding.

External forces may impact wellhead and subsea trees of the MEFF subsea wells. However, an external force impact resulting in a catastrophic loss of wellhead integrity is not considered credible, as the worst-case failure mechanism as a result of an external force impact is stress cracking at the bend point of the subsea tree or wellhead. This scenario is discussed in **Section 9.7**.

Vessel grounding could occur due to a loss of propulsion or to navigational error resulting in the vessel running aground in shallow areas. Vessel grounding and subsequent fuel tank rupture were not considered a credible scenario for this activity because the operational area is situated in deep water and there are no charted reefs or islands that could pose a grounding hazard in the operational area.

Table 9-1: Summary of the risk assessment ranking for unplanned activities

EP Section Reference	Event	Consequence	Likelihood	Residual Risk Level
9.1	Release of solid objects	II (Minor)	D (Occasional)	Low
9.2	Introduction of invasive marine species	III (Moderate)	C (Possible)	Low
9.3	Marine fauna interaction	II (Minor)	C (Possible)	Low
9.4	Non-hydrocarbon and chemical releases	I (Negligible)	D (Occasional)	Low
9.6	Hydrocarbon release (marine diesel oil)	III (Moderate)	B (Unlikely)	Low
9.7	Hydrocarbon release (loss of well control)	III (Moderate)	A (Remote)	Very Low
9.8	Minor hydrocarbon releases (surface and subsurface)	I (Negligible)	D (Occasional)	Low
9.9	Interactions with other marine users (equipment left in situ)	I Negligible	B (Unlikely)	Very Low

9.1 Release of solid objects

9.1.1 Description of event

Event	Solid objects, such as those listed below, can be accidentally released to the marine environment, and potentially impact on sensitive receptors: + non-hazardous solid wastes, such as paper and packaging + hazardous solid wastes, such as batteries, fluorescent tubes and aerosol cans + equipment and materials, such as hard hats, tools or equipment parts + dropped equipment to the seabed during seabed asset recovery. Release of these objects may occur as a result of overfull and/or uncovered bins, incorrectly disposed items or spills during transfers of waste, or dropped objects/lost equipment.
Extent	The event will only occur within the operational area, and all non-buoyant material or dropped objects are expected to remain within the operational area. Buoyant objects could potentially move beyond the operational area.
Duration	An unplanned release of solids may occur during operational activities and impacts may occur until the solid degrades. Seabed assets selected for removal will be recovered and removed from the operational area as part of the activity.

9.1.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Potential receptors: Physical environment (benthic habitats), threatened or migratory fauna (marine mammals, marine reptiles, sharks and rays, fish and birds), and socio-economic receptors (commercial fishing, tourism and recreation).

Physical environment

Objects accidentally dropped to the seabed could occur during the activity, such as the transfer and lifting of objects and equipment. Equipment and other items lost at sea could be caused by crane failure, adverse weather, human error, rigging failure and vessel motions and potentially could lead to loss of or changes to benthic habitats. The area of potential disturbance from a non-buoyant dropped object would be restricted to the area in which it was dropped. In the unlikely event that seabed equipment being recovered is dropped to the seabed, disturbance to benthic habitat would

occur, the area of which will be confined to the footprint of the equipment. Seabed assets recovered for removal are not expected to be towed.

The seabed within the operational area is a primarily soft sediments with little epifauna, this habitat type is widely distributed and well represented in the NWS region. While soft sediment benthic habitats will not be destroyed, disturbance of the communities on and within them (i.e., the epifauna) will occur in the event of a dropped object, and depressions may remain on the seabed for some time after removal of the dropped object as they gradually infill over time. Although the Ancient Coastline at 125 m Depth Contour KEF is present in the southern-most portion of the operational area (**Section 5.2.4, Figure 5-7**), no known sensitive features associated with the KEF have been observed in the operational area and therefore impacts to the KEF are unlikely.

Impacts to benthic communities from dropped object disturbance are expected to be short-term in duration due to the ability for such communities to recover. Recovery is expected within six to 12 months, based on previous surveys (URS, 2010).

Small buoyant dropped objects have the potential to be transported by marine currents and may impact on reefs, islands, shoals and banks within the region. Accidentally dropped objects, such as plastics, have the potential to smother benthic environments, and the release of hazardous solids (e.g., wastes such as batteries) could also impact water quality through pollution of the immediate receiving environment. Impacts from accidentally released liquids are discussed in **Section 9.4**.

Threatened, migratory or local fauna

Solids such as plastics have the potential to harm marine fauna through entanglement or ingestion. Two BIAs overlap the operational area, pygmy blue whale distribution and whale shark foraging and, therefore, these receptors may be present. Other threatened and migratory marine fauna such as turtles and seabirds may also be present in low numbers within the operational area.

Marine turtles and seabirds are particularly at risk from entanglement. Turtles are known to be indiscriminate feeders and may mistake plastic for jellyfish (Mrosovsky *et al.*, 2009). The *Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia 2017 to 2027* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) identifies ingestion of marine debris as a threat to all species of marine turtles. Seabirds at the sea surface foraging on plankton may eat floating plastic. Once ingested, plastics can damage internal tissues and inhibit physiological processes, which can both potentially result in fatality (Derraik, 2002). Marine debris has been highlighted as a threat to marine turtles and whale sharks in the relevant Recovery Plans and Approved Conservation Advice (**Table 5-10**). These recovery plan and approved conservation advice, as well as the *Threat Abatement Plan for the Impacts of Marine Debris on the Vertebrate Wildlife of Australia's Coasts and Oceans* (DoEE, 2018), have specified a number of recovery actions to help combat this threat. Of relevance to this activity is the legislation for the prevention of garbage disposal from vessels.

Release of hazardous solid objects (e.g., wastes such as batteries) may result in the pollution of the immediate receiving environment, leading to very localised detrimental health impacts to marine flora and fauna. Physiological damage through ingestion or absorption may occur to individual fish, cetaceans, marine reptiles or seabirds.

The recovery plans and approved conservation advice have specified a number of recovery actions to help combat this threat. Of relevance to this activity is the legislation for the prevention of garbage disposal from vessels, which Santos implements through adherence to MARPOL.

Socio-economic receptors

Tourism activities, such as snorkelling, diving, surfing and recreational fishing are not expected to occur in the operational area, given the water depth, lack of seafloor features and distance from shore. Although dropped solid objects have potential to float to nearby areas used for tourism or recreational purposes solid non-hydrocarbon releases are not expected to occur frequently or to a scale that may cause significant pollution that would impact the socio-economic values of these areas. Impacts to socioeconomic receptors could occur should debris interfere with other marine users or their equipment (for example, fishing nets).

9.1.3 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

The EPOs relating to this event include:

- + No unplanned objects, emissions or discharges to sea or air [MEFF-EPO-05].

The control measures for this event are shown in **Table 9-2**, and the EPSs and measurement criteria for the EPOs are described in **Section 11.4**.

Table 9-2: Control measure evaluation for the unplanned release of solid objects

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / Issues	Evaluation
Standard Controls				
MEFF-CM-38	Dropped object prevention procedures	Impacts to environment are reduced by preventing dropped objects and by retrieving dropped objects unless the environmental consequences are negligible or there are risks to safety. Minimises drop risk during lifting operations. Ensures lifting equipment certified and inspected.	Personnel costs involved in implementing procedures and in incident reporting.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring procedures are followed and measures implemented outweigh cost to Santos.
MEFF-CM-28	Waste (Garbage) Management Procedure	Reduces probability of garbage being discharged to sea, reducing potential impacts to marine fauna. Stipulates putrescible waste disposal conditions and limitations. Marine Order 95 (Marine pollution prevention – garbage).	Personnel cost of premobilisation audits and inspections and in reporting discharge levels.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring vessels are compliant outweighs the minimal costs of personnel time and it is a legislated requirement.
MEFF-CM-23	Marine assurance	Reduces probability of release of solid objects as a result of failure of vessel equipment because equipment operating within its parameters.	Cost associated with implementing procedures.	Adopted – Benefit of implementing procedure outweighs the minimal costs.
MEFF-CM-12	Recovery Procedure	Assist with recovering assets in a manner to prevent them drifting away.	Cost associated with implementing procedures.	Adopted – Benefit of implementing procedure outweighs the minimal costs.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / Issues	Evaluation
Additional Controls				
N/A	Eliminate lifting in field	Reduces the risk release of non-hydrocarbon solid to the marine environment due to dropped object.	Eliminating lifting would require vessels storing more equipment and supplies on-board, and/or additional trips to shore. Vessels will not have enough deck space to store all required equipment, materials, supplies needed for the duration of the activity. Lifting also required to recover equipment for removal from the operational area.	Rejected – Not feasible to eliminate lifting in the field.
N/A	Do not recover and remove seabed assets from the MEFF field to port of landing.	Eliminates the potential impacts from dropping or sinking to the seabed during recovery.	Removal of assets proposed for removal is a requirement of Santos' decommissioning of the MEFF Field.	Rejected - Removal of assets is a requirement of Santos' decommissioning of the MEFF Field.

9.1.4 Environmental impact assessment

Description	
Receptors	Physical environment (benthic habitats) Threatened, migratory or local fauna (marine mammals, marine reptiles, sharks and rays, fish and birds) Socio-economic receptors (tourism and recreation)
Consequence	II – Minor
<u>Physical environment</u> Non-buoyant dropped objects are expected to impact the seabed and be limited to the size of the dropped object, and given the size of standard materials transferred, any impact is expected to be very small and limited to within the operational area in which it was dropped. In the unlikely event that seabed equipment being recovered is dropped to the seabed, disturbance to benthic habitat would occur, the area of which will be confined to the footprint of the dropped equipment. Any area of the seabed impacted through dropped objects would be expected to recover. Buoyant dropped objects have the potential to smother benthic habitats and could wash up on island beaches. It is considered that the application of management measures will effectively prevent this impact occurring on a significant scale. Therefore, impacts will result in a Negligible (I) reduction in habitat area or function. <u>Threatened or migratory fauna (marine mammals, marine reptiles, sharks and rays, fish and birds)</u> In the event of a dropped object, the quantities would be limited. The release could cause localised impacts to water quality and the benthic environment if the solid can degrade, leading to localised impacts on flora and fauna. Ingestion of solid wastes by marine fauna could occur in small quantities. Only small volumes of non-hydrocarbon solids would be generated during the activity, as a result, any accidental loss to the environment would be small in size. Any impacts would be restricted to a small number of individuals, if any. Relevant recovery plans and conservation advice have identified marine debris as a potential threat. There is a Threat Abatement Plan for the Impacts of Marine Debris on the Vertebrate Wildlife of Australia's Coasts and Oceans (DoEE, 2018). As such there is the potential for impacts only to a small proportion of a local population with no consequences for conservation status or reproductive success of cetaceans, marine turtles or fish species that may occur in the area. The National Recovery Plan for the Southern Right Whale (2024), also lists marine debris as a threat to the species. However, the operational area is approximately 350km from the nearest area of the BIA for Southern Right whales, so it is reasonable to conclude that marine debris from the MEFF activities (i.e. dropped objects) will not affect the conservation status of the whales or the objectives of the Recovery Plan. The limited quantities associated with this unplanned event indicate that even in a worst-case release of solid waste, the number of fauna fatalities would be limited to individuals and is not expected to result in a decrease of the local population size. Therefore, the consequence is Minor (II). <u>Socio-economic receptors (tourism and recreation)</u> Impacts to tourism and recreation have the potential to occur through buoyant objects floating into areas used for these activities, adversely impacting tourism and recreation values and creating poor aesthetics. Given the limited quantities associated with this unplanned event, even a worst-case release of solid waste is unlikely to have flow-on effects significant enough to impact the tourism and recreation industries. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country. Therefore, the consequence is Negligible (I).	
Likelihood	D – Occasional
Control measures proposed ensure the risk of dropped objects, lost equipment or release of solid objects to the environment has been minimised. Given the controls in place, the likelihood of releasing solid objects to the environment resulting in a minor consequence is considered Occasional (D).	

Description	
Residual Risk	The residual risk associated with this event is Low .

9.1.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

Solid waste will be generated during the activity and lifting operations and vessel operations are required as part of the activity. Equipment loss and dropped objects, which might occur during equipment recovery or vessel transfers in the field will be managed through lifting and transfer procedures and equipment management. The control measures proposed reduce the risk of dropped objects to a residual risk level that is Low and cannot be reduced further. There are no reasonably practicable additional control measures identified that would reduce the chance of a loss of solid objects.

Therefore, it is considered the impact of the activities conducted is ALARP.

9.1.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the risk ranked between Very Low to Medium?	Yes – residual risk is ranked Very Low.
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5), which considers principles of ESD. The residual risk for this aspect is Low and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	Yes – management consistent with Marine Order 95. Controls implemented will minimise the potential impacts from the activity to species identified in recovery plans and approved conservation advices as having the potential to be impacted by solid objects. Specific actions that contribute to the long-term prevention of marine debris (Objective 1 of the Threat Abatement Plan for the Impacts of Marine Debris on the Vertebrate Wildlife of Australia's Coasts and Oceans (DoEE, 2018)) have been adopted, including compliance with applicable legislation in relation to the improvement of waste management practices. Consistent with relevant species recovery plans, conservation management plans and management actions set out in Table 5-10 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to cessation phase activities	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations?	Yes – no concerns raised.

Related to seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities)	
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

The handling of solid objects and recovery of assets is a standard industry and maritime practice and the potential impacts are well understood. This aspect will be managed consistent with relevant legislation, regulations and guidelines and the residual risks are low and ALARP.

The control measures proposed are consistent with applicable actions described in the relevant Recovery Plans and Approved Conservation Advice and no stakeholder concerns have been raised regarding this event.

With the control measures in place to prevent accidental releases or loss of seabed assets during recovery and the negligible impacts predicted from these types of solids, the low risk of solid objects dropped to the environment is considered environmentally acceptable.

9.2 Introduction of invasive marine species

9.2.1 Description of event

Aspect	Introduction of invasive marine species may occur due to matters such as: + biofouling on primary or support vessels and external/internal (e.g., sea chests, seawater systems) niches + biofouling on equipment that is routinely submerged in water (e.g., ROVs) + discharge of high-risk ballast water + cross contamination between vessels + marine growth removal (on deck or subsea). Once established, IMSs have the potential to out-compete indigenous species and affect overall native ecosystem function.
Extent	Localised (seabed within the operational area) to widespread if successfully translocated to new areas via ocean currents or project equipment transit.
Duration	Temporary to long-term (in the event of successful translocation and establishment).

9.2.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Potential receptors: Physical environment (benthic habitats), threatened/migratory fauna (marine mammals, marine reptiles, sharks, fish and rays), protected areas, socio-economic receptors (fisheries, tourism and recreation).

IMS are marine plants, animals and algae that have been introduced into a region that is beyond their natural range but that have the ability to survive and possibly thrive (DAWE, 2019). The majority of climatically compatible IMS to the NWS are found in southeast Asian countries. Some IMS pose a significant risk to environmental values, biodiversity, ecosystem health, human health, fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, ports and tourism (DAWE, 2019; Wells *et al.*, 2009). IMS can cause a variety of adverse effects in a receiving environment, including:

- + over predation of native flora and fauna
 - + displacement of native marine species
 - + outcompeting of native flora and fauna for food
- depletion of viable fishing areas and aquaculture stock
- + reduction of coastal aesthetics.

The above impacts can result in flow-on detrimental effects to fisheries, tourism and recreation.

IMS of concern are those that are not native to the region, are likely to survive and establish in the region, and are able to spread by human mediated or natural means. Species of concern vary from one region to another depending on various environmental factors, such as water temperature, salinity, nutrient levels and habitat type. These factors dictate their survival and invasive capabilities.

It is recognised that artificial, disturbed and/or polluted habitats in tropical regions are susceptible to invasive marine species introductions, which is why ports are often areas of higher IMS risk (Neil *et al.*, 2005). However, in Australia there are limited records of detrimental impact from IMS compared to other tropical regions (such as the Caribbean). Following their establishment, eradication of IMS populations is difficult, limiting management options to ongoing control or impact minimisation. Case studies in Australia indicate that, from detection to eradication, this can take around four weeks (Bax *et al.*, 2003). However, this depends on the environmental conditions and species. For this reason, increased management requirements have been implemented in recent years by Commonwealth and State regulatory agencies. Ballast water is responsible for 20 to 30% of all marine pest incursions into Australian waters. However, research indicates that biofouling (the accumulation of aquatic micro-organisms, algae, plants and animals on vessel hulls and submerged surfaces) has been responsible for more foreign marine introductions than ballast water (DAFF, 2003). The potential biofouling risk presented by vessels will relate to:

the length of time that these vessels have already been operating in Australian waters or, if they have been operating outside Australian waters

- + the locations of the operations they have been undertaking
- + the length of time spent at these locations

whether the vessels have undergone hull inspections, cleaning and application of new anti-foulant coating prior to returning to operate in Australia.

The risk of introducing limited by the operational area occurring in relatively deep, offshore waters that are not directly adjacent to any shoals or banks. IMS are generally unable to establish in deep-water ecosystems (Geiling, 2014), most likely due to a lack of light or suitable habitat to sustain their growth and survival. Most IMS are found in tidal and subtidal zones, with only a few species known to extend into deeper waters of the continental shelf (Bax *et al.*, 2003). Further, it is known that highly disturbed environments (such as marinas and jetties) are more susceptible to colonisation than open-water environments where the number of dilutions and the degree of dispersal are high (Paulay *et al.*, 2002).

Seabed assets are located in water depths between 130 m to 160 m. IMS are unlikely to establish in these water depths. Given that the seabed assets have not come into contact with any vessels, and the water depths they are located in, they are considered to pose no risk of IMS.

9.2.3 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

The EPO relating to this event is:

- + No introduction of marine pest species [MEFF-EPO-06].

The control measures for this event are shown in **Table 9-3**, and the EPSs and measurement criteria for this EPO are described in **Section 11.4**.

Table 9-3: Control measure evaluation for unplanned introduction of invasive marine species

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Controls				
MEFF-CM-39	Implementation of the management controls in the Santos Invasive Marine Species Management Plan (IMSMP) (EA-00-RI-10172)	The risk of introducing IMS is reduced due to assessment procedure and management of ballast water.	Personnel costs involved in risk assessing vessels in accordance with the Invasive Marine Species Management Plan. Costs associating with reducing the vessel risk to 'low' (for example, dry docking, hull cleaning or additional costs due to inspections). Could lead to potential delays and therefore costs in vessel contracting process due to unavailability of vessels.	Adopted – Minimal personnel costs and potential delays or costs to project are considered outweighed by the benefits of reducing the risk of IMS.
MEFF-CM-40	Anti-foulant system	The risk of introducing IMS is reduced due to anti-foulant systems.	Could lead to potential delays and therefore costs, in vessel contracting process due to availability of vessels with appropriate anti-foulant systems.	Adopted – Minimal potential delays or costs to project are considered outweighed by the benefits of reducing the risk of IMS.
Additional Controls				
N/A	Contract vessels only operating in local, State or Commonwealth waters to reduce potential for IMS	Reduce potential for IMS to be transported into area since vessels would not have originated elsewhere.	Vessels and equipment suitable for the activity may not be available in State/Commonwealth waters. Potential significant costs and delay in activity schedule by only contracting vessels working in State/National waters.	Rejected – Not feasible.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Mandatory dry docking of vessels prior to entering field to clean vessel or equipment and remove biofouling	Ensure no IMS are present on vessel or associated equipment.	Significant cost (grossly disproportionate to the risk) would lead to scheduling delays.	Rejected – Costs disproportionately high compared to environmental benefit, given other controls in place already reduce the risk.
N/A	Utilise an alternative ballast system to avoid uptake and discharge of water in vessels	Eliminate need for ballast water exchange, therefore decreasing risk of introducing IMS through ballast water.	Vessels suitable for the activity may not have options for alternative ballast, therefore would require modification at significant cost.	Rejected – Cost disproportionately high compared to environment benefit.
N/A	Zero discharge of ballast water	Would reduce the potential for IMS by implementation of no ballast water exchange policy on vessels.	Ballast water exchange required on the vessels for stability.	Rejected – On the basis that ballast water exchange is a safety-critical activity for marine operations.
N/A	Conduct IMS survey or risk assessment of seabed equipment prior to removal	Would confirm the presence / absence of IMS species and inform the removal / handling activities to minimise potential spread of IMS.	Costs associated with conducting an infield survey or risk assessment	Rejected – Low risk of IMS for the following reasons: Equipment is located on the seabed in water depths of 130-160 m, known to be too deep for IMS establishment; Low vessel interactions in the area; and ROV's and other vessels that have been conducting operational / IMMR activities have passed the IMS assurance activities prior to mobilisation.

9.2.4 Environmental impact assessment

Consequence Level	
Receptors	Physical environment (benthic habitats) Threatened, migratory and local fauna (marine mammals, marine reptiles, sharks, fish and rays) Socio-economic receptors (fisheries, tourism and recreation)
Consequence	III – Moderate
Ballast water is responsible for 20 to 30% of all marine pest incursions into Australian waters. However, research indicates biofouling (the accumulation of aquatic micro-organisms, algae, plants and animals on vessel hulls and submerged surfaces) has been responsible for more foreign marine introductions than ballast water (DAFF, 2003). IMS, if successfully established, can outcompete native species for food or space, prey on native species or change the nature of the environment and can subsequently impact on fisheries or aquaculture. If an IMS is introduced, the species has been known to colonise areas outside of the areas to which it is introduced. In the event an invasive marine species is introduced into the operational area, given the lack of diversity and extensiveness of similar benthic habitat in the region, there would only be a minor reduction in the physical environment. No threatened ecological communities are present in the area that could be affected. The overall consequence level was assessed as Moderate, this also takes into consideration the distance of the activity to protected areas and the requirements of the North-West MPNMP which applies adjacent to the operational area which requires that vessel ballast water exchange is completed in accordance with the Australian Ballast Water Management Requirements. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country.	
Likelihood	C – Possible
The pathways for IMS introduction are well known, consequently, standard preventive measures are proposed. The ability for invasive marine species to colonise a habitat depends on a number of environmental conditions. It has been found that highly disturbed environments (such as marinas) are more susceptible to colonisation than open water environments where the number of dilutions and the degree of dispersal are high (Paulay et al., 2002). Given the depth of the operational area (130 to 160 m) creating an unfavourable habitat for colonisation (i.e., light limiting and low habitat biodiversity with sparse epibiota) and distance from shallow coastal habitats, there is a very low likelihood IMS would be able to survive translocation and subsequently establish and colonise. Given the dispersive open-ocean environment of the operational area, the successful translocation to surrounding shallower habitats of an IMS introduced to the operational area is unlikely. With controls in place to reduce the risk of IMS introduction, the likelihood is considered Remote (A).	
Residual Risk	The residual risk associated with this event is Low.

9.2.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

There are no alternatives to the use of vessels in order to undertake the activity. The risks from IMS are well understood and with the proposed control measures, the activities are considered to comply with relevant regulations and guidelines. The proposed management controls are considered appropriate to manage the risk of introduction of IMS to ALARP.

Ballast water exchange will be managed through Ballast Water Management actions consistent with the Australian Ballast Water Management Requirements, and a vessel biosecurity risk assessment in accordance with the Invasive Marine Species Management Plan (EA-00-RI-10172) will be undertaken to demonstrate the vessels are low risk so IMS are not introduced.

Santos has adopted a risk-based approach to managing biofouling, given it is not practicable or reasonable to inspect and/or clean every vessel before each voyage. Such an approach is consistent with other petroleum operators on the NWS and is beyond that enforced on the majority of commercial and recreation vessels that regularly transit the same bioregion. International vessels are given the highest priority to prevent the introduction of IMS into Australian waters. However, domestic vessels (interstate and locally sourced) are also risk-assessed to reduce the likelihood of spreading marine pest species already established in Australian waters. The biofouling risk assessment approach adopted by Santos will ensure the *Aquatic Resources Management Act 2016* and associated regulations prohibiting the introduction of non-endemic fish species will be met.

With adherence to the proposed management controls, the risk to the environment from IMS has been reduced to ALARP.

9.2.6 Acceptability evaluation

Acceptability evaluationIs the risk ranked between Very Low to Medium?	Yes – introduction of IMS residual risk ranking is Low.
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5), which considers principles of ESD. The residual risk for this aspect is Low and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	Yes – management consistent with <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> , and associated regulations, Australian Biofouling Management Requirements guideline, (DAWE, 2022), National Biofouling Management Guidance for the Petroleum Production and Exploration Industry (Marine Pest Sectoral Committee, 2018) and the <i>Aquatic Resources Management Act 2016</i> .
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to cessation phase activities	Yes – Santos will follow advice of DCCEEW to ensure vessels present low level biosecurity risk.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? Related to seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities)	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

The mobilisation of vessels and equipment to undertake offshore petroleum activities is industry standard practice, and the IMS risks are well understood and subject to regulation. The vessels and equipment that are internationally mobilised will meet Australian biosecurity requirements, and proposed management is consistent with National Biofouling Management Guidance for the

petroleum Production and Exploration Industry (Marine Pest Sectoral Committee, 2018) and Australian Biofouling Management Requirements (DAWE, 2022).

Application of the proposed control measures and adherence to legislation and regulations reduce the likelihood of introducing IMS into the operational area, and the dispersive offshore location in the operational area reduces the probability of successful establishment in the unlikely event of introduction.

No stakeholder concerns have been raised regarding this aspect, and the proposed controls will reduce the residual level of risk to low and ALARP. Therefore, the residual risk associated with IMS is considered by Santos to be environmentally acceptable.

9.3 Marine fauna interactions

9.3.1 Description of event

Event	There is the potential for vessels or equipment from the vessels involved in operational activities to interact with marine fauna, including potential strike or collision, potentially resulting in severe injury or mortality. Fauna strike may also occur from helicopters during take-off and landing.
Extent	Within the operational area, in the immediate vicinity of the vessels and helicopters, while moving.
Duration	Intermittent, when vessels are in the MEFF field completing general inspection activities or subsea asset removal activities.

9.3.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Potential receptors: Threatened or migratory fauna (marine mammals, marine turtles, sharks and rays, fish and birds).

Movement of the vessels in the operational area introduces the potential for interaction with marine fauna present at the same location during the activity. Marine fauna in surface waters that could be most at risk from vessel collision or entanglement include marine mammals, marine turtles and whale sharks. As summarised in **Table 5-9**, the operational area overlaps BIAs for whale shark (foraging) and pygmy blue whale (distribution).

Vessel strike and vessel disturbance are identified as potential threats to a number of marine fauna species in relevant recovery plans and conservation advices (**Table 5-10**). Incidents with marine fauna are recorded and reported by Santos as described in **Section 11.10**.

Marine mammals and sharks/rays

The Approved Conservation Advice for *Rhincodon typus* (whale shark) (TSSC, 2015a) recognises vessel strike as one of the threats to the recovery of whale sharks. Whale sharks aggregate at the Ningaloo coast between March and June each year. Whale sharks are at risk from vessel strikes when feeding at the surface or in shallow waters (where options to dive are limited). The operational area overlaps the whale shark foraging BIA (**Figure 5-9** and **Table 5-9**); therefore, individuals may be encountered during operational activities. However, the whale shark presence within the operational area is not expected to comprise significant numbers, given no main aggregation area exists within the operational area; therefore, their presence would be transitory and of a short duration. No constraints within the operational area (e.g., shallow water or shorelines) would prevent whale sharks from moving away from vessels.

Pygmy blue, sei, Bryde's, orca and/or fin whales may also transit through the operational area, although it is outside the blue whale migration corridor in the region. Given the water depths in the operational area, it is unlikely there will be significant numbers of these species encountered during the activity.

The worst potential impact from vessel collision or entanglement would be mortality or serious injury of an individual. Collisions between vessels and cetaceans are most frequent on continental shelf areas where high vessel traffic and cetacean habitat occur simultaneously (WDCS, 2006). Instances of cetacean deaths as a result of vessel collisions in Australian waters have been recorded (e.g., a Bryde's whale in Bass Strait in 1992) (WDCS, 2006), although the data indicates this is likely to be associated with container ships and fast ferries. The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society also indicates that some cetacean species, such as humpback whales, can detect and change course to avoid a vessel (WDCS, 2006). The reaction of whales to the approach of a ship is quite variable. Some species remain motionless when in the vicinity of a ship while others are known to be curious and often approach ships that have stopped or are slow-moving, although they generally do not approach and sometimes avoid faster-moving ships (Richardson *et al.*, 1995).

Vessel speed has been demonstrated to be a key factor in relation to collision with marine fauna, particularly cetaceans, with faster-moving vessels posing a greater collision risk than slower vessels (Laist *et al.*, 2001; Jensen & Silber, 2003; Hazel, 2009). Laist *et al.* (2001) suggest the most severe and lethal injuries to cetaceans are caused by vessels travelling at 14 knots or faster.

Marine turtles

Turtle/vessel interactions arising from increased vessel traffic is recognised as one of a number of key threats to marine turtles in the Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017). It is likely only low numbers of marine turtles may be transient within the operational area due to the distance (more than 60 km) to the nearest BIA.

Marine turtle mortality due to vessel strike has been identified as an issue in Queensland waters in the Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017). However, turtles appear to be more vulnerable to vessel strike in areas of high urban population where incidents of pleasure crafts are higher. Given the relatively low human population density of the NWS coastline, WA turtle populations are not considered to be the most affected Australian turtle populations by vessel strike.

Turtles will typically avoid vessels by rapidly diving. However, their ability to respond varies greatly depending on the speed of the vessel. Hazel (2009) reported that the number of turtles that fled vessels decreased significantly as vessel speed increased. Turtles are also adapted to detect sound in water (Popper *et al.*, 2014) and will generally move from anthropogenic noise-generating sources, including vessels, within their detection range.

Birds

A number of protected species of marine birds have potential habitats or migratory routes in and around the operational area (**Section 5.2.5**). However, the operational area is distant from any BIA for birds.

The number of helicopter flights required to support the activities is relatively low, and flights occur in the daylight, thereby reducing potential interactions with birds. The risk of helicopter strike is not high because helicopter noise is expected to elicit a behavioural response in birds to avoid collision and because of the relatively low speeds at which helicopters would be flying during take-off or landing.

9.3.3 Environmental performance outcomes

The EPO relating to this event is:

- + No injury or mortality to *EPBC Act 1999 and WA Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* listed fauna during activities [MEF-EPO-04].

The control measures for this event are shown in **Table 9-4**, and the EPSs and measurement criteria for this EPO are described in **Section 11.4**.

Table 9-4: Control measure evaluation for marine fauna interaction

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Controls				
MEFF-CM-21	Procedures for interacting with marine fauna	Reduces risk of physical and behavioural impacts to marine fauna from vessels and helicopters. If marine fauna are sighted, vessels can slow down or move away, and helicopters can increase distances from sighted fauna if required.	Operational costs to adhere to marine fauna interaction restrictions, such as vessel and helicopter speed and direction, are based on legislated requirements and must be accepted.	Adopted – Benefits in reducing impacts to marine fauna outweigh the costs incurred by Santos. Control measure ensures compliance with Part 8 of the EPBC Regulations.
MEFF-CM-09	Constant bridge watch on vessels	Monitoring of surrounding marine environment to identify potential collision risks (and reducing harm) to cetaceans and other marine fauna.	No additional cost for constant bridge watch as it is industry practice and regulated by AMSA.	Adopted – No additional cost, Industry practice.
Additional Controls				
N/A	Restrict the timing of activities to operate outside of sensitive periods only	Reduce risk of collisions (causing harm) during environmentally sensitive periods for listed marine fauna.	High cost in moving or delaying schedule while the risk to all listed marine fauna cannot be reduced due to variability in timing of migration periods and unpredictable presence of some species.	Rejected – Grossly disproportionate to low incremental environmental benefit, given existing low level of risk.
N/A	Dedicated MMO on vessels (EPBC Policy Statement 2.1 Part B)	Improved ability to spot and identify marine fauna at risk of collision (that may cause harm).	Additional cost of contracting MMO.	Rejected – Cost disproportionate to increase in environmental benefit and would severely limit operations, which are required to occur 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Activities will only occur during daylight hours	Reduced potential for a vessel-fauna collision occurring as activities only undertaken during daylight hours when visibility highest.	Lengthens duration of the activity as operations only continue for around ten hours per day. Increased cost due to increased activity time (more than double the cost). Lengthened schedule results in increased impacts and risks (e.g., planned emissions and discharges, interference with other marine users).	Rejected – Substantial additional cost due to doubling of activity duration. No overall environmental benefit as results in increased impacts and risks.
N/A	Adopt further measures to those outlined in 'EPBC Regulations 2000 – Part 8 Division 8.1 during peak periods of ecological sensitivity, for example, additional management considerations for vessels outlined in the Australian National Guidelines for Whale and Dolphin Watching (DoEE, 2017)	Potentially provide an additional level of protection of marine fauna.	Administrative costs to update existing procedure. Operational costs through interruption to activities through implementation of controls developed for an industry trying to get close to marine fauna, when Santos' activities aim to avoid fauna.	Rejected – The existing control ' <i>procedure for interacting with marine fauna</i> ' has been written in accordance with the EPBC Act and other relevant guidelines. A review of this procedure against the Australian National Guidelines for Whale and Dolphin watching (DoEE, 2017) found there are no additional relevant controls in the Australian National Guidelines for Whale and Dolphin Watching. Therefore, adopting this control is not ALARP.

9.3.4 Environmental impact assessment

Description	
Receptors	Threatened or migratory fauna (marine mammals, marine turtles, sharks and rays, fish and birds)
Consequence	II – Minor
In the event of a collision or entanglement with marine fauna, there is the potential for injury or death to an individual. The number of receptors present in the operational area during the short duration of the activity is expected to be limited to a small number of transient individuals. Given the presence of the whale shark and pygmy blue whale BIAs, there may be more of these species in the vicinity but given the distance from the nearest migration and aggregation areas, significant numbers are not expected. Boat strike and vessel disturbance are identified as potential threats to a number of marine fauna species in relevant Recovery Plan and Conservation Advice (Table 5-10). The above information demonstrates that with control measures in place the activity will be conducted in a manner that reduces potential impacts to ALARP and of acceptable level. There is the potential for death or injury of EPBC Act listed individual species. However, as they would represent a small proportion of the local population it is not expected that it would result in a decreased population size over what would usually occur due to natural variation, at a local or regional scale, it is expected that the loss of an individual would be a minor consequence. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country.	
Likelihood	C – Possible
Marine turtles, marine mammals and birds, receptors are expected to be present in the operational area at various times of the year. No known aggregation areas (breeding, resting or calving) occur within the operational area and therefore concentrations of milling individuals are unlikely. Vessels will be stationary or moving very slowly while conducting activities inside the operational area, posing a low risk of collision with marine fauna. In addition, the noise generated from vessel operations will deter marine fauna from coming close to vessels. With controls in place ensuring the vessels are compliant with EPBC Regulations, the likelihood of a collision or entanglement with marine fauna resulting in a low consequence is considered to be Possible (C).	
Residual Risk	The residual risk associated with this event is Low .

9.3.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

There are no alternatives to the use of vessels to undertake the activity. The inherent likelihood of encountering fauna in the operational area is limited by the short duration of the activity and the separation from areas of high surface fauna density. With relatively low vessel speeds and compliance with fauna interaction procedures, including *Regulation 8 of the EPBC Regulations 2000*, fauna collision or entanglement is considered very unlikely.

In the event vessels come close to EPBC Act listed marine fauna, such as whales and whale sharks, EPS have been implemented for limiting vessel operations, as well as for ensuring that the crew are aware through inductions of the risk posed by conducting the activity, in order to reduce the likelihood of a marine fauna collision to ALARP. Inductions for the crew of support vessels will include information about how to interact with cetaceans and whale sharks in accordance with the EPBC Regulations.

With the control measures adopted, the assessed residual risk for this impact is Low and cannot be reduced further. Additional control measures were considered but rejected since the associated cost or effort was grossly disproportionate to any benefit, as detailed in **Section 9.3.3**. Therefore, it is considered the impact of the activities conducted is ALARP.

9.3.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the risk ranked between Very Low to Medium?	Yes – marine fauna interaction residual risk ranking is Low.
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5), which considers principles of ESD. The residual risk for this aspect is Low and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	Yes – management consistent with Part 8 of the EPBC Regulations. Controls implemented will minimise the potential impacts to species identified in recovery plans and conservation advices (Table 5-10).
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? (cessation phase activities)	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? (seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities)	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

Movement of vessels is unavoidable to undertake the activity. The possibility of vessel strike and entanglement is a well understood risk for maritime operations, including for commercial shipping and fishing.

Vessel movements will comply with all relevant maritime standards and regulations, including EPBC regulations to minimise risks to marine fauna. Application of the proposed management controls and adherence to Commonwealth and maritime regulations reduces the likelihood of vessel interactions with marine fauna. While the potential exists for a collision or entanglement to occur, it is considered unlikely. As part of Santos' reporting requirements for the activity, in the unlikely event an impact did occur in the operational area, it will be reported in the National Ship Strike Database (refer to **Table 11-4**).

With application of the proposed control measures, the potential impacts and risks to threatened fauna will be managed consistent with relevant recovery plans and approved conservation advice. No stakeholder concerns have been raised regarding this event. Therefore, the impact is considered to be ALARP and environmentally acceptable.

9.4 Non-hydrocarbon and chemical releases

9.4.1 Description of event

Event	Non-hydrocarbon liquids including miscellaneous chemicals and waste streams (brine, cleaning and cooling agents, stored or spent chemicals and leftover paint materials) are used or stored on-board the vessels during the activity. The presence of non-hydrocarbons liquids and chemicals represents a potential spill risk during chemical storage and handling e.g., due to tank damage, or human error. Another credible spill is due to a hose that parts when loading / offloading brine. Rupture of the pumping hose used to transfer these chemicals may occur due to dropped object, vessel motion or hose failure. An accidental release of chemicals and other non-hydrocarbon liquids into the marine environment has the potential to occur from: + vessel operations + transferring, storing or using chemicals + mechanical failure of equipment + handling and storage spills and leaks + hose or hose connection failure or leak + rupture of ROV mounted bladder during barrier testing activities + lifting – dropped objects damaging liquid vessels (containers). Accidental loss of non-hydrocarbon liquids or chemicals to the marine environment may result in impacts to water quality and hence sensitive environmental receptors.
Extent	The maximum volume of non-hydrocarbon liquids or chemicals that could be released during routine operations is likely to be small and realistically limited to the volume of individual containers (e.g., drums) stored on deck of vessels. The ROV mounted bladder will have a maximum volume of around 365 L of MEG, methanol and/or hydraulic fluid. The worst-case credible scenario, however, would be the accidental loss of contents of an ISO container, estimated to be 1 m³. Dilution from discharges in open waters is rapid, with 1-in-1000 dilution usually occurring within 30 minutes (Costello and Read, 1994). In the event the spill is not contained on deck, a release to the marine environment would be likely to rapidly disperse and evaporate within the operational area. The environment that may be affected for non-hydrocarbon liquids or chemical release resulting in a decrease in water quality is likely to be restricted to around the vessel and predominantly contained within the operational area in which it was released.
Duration	The duration of the impact is limited to the time the released chemical/liquid takes to disperse to below toxic/harmful threshold concentrations. In the ocean, this is expected to be in the order of hours.

9.4.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Potential receptors: Physical environment (water and sediment quality, benthic habitats), threatened, migratory or local fauna (marine mammals, marine reptiles, sharks and rays, fish and birds) and socio-economic receptors (commercial fishing, tourism and recreation).

Physical environment

Non-hydrocarbon liquids or chemicals released to the marine environment may lead to contamination of the water column in the vicinity of the release location. The potential impacts would most likely be highly localised and restricted to the immediate area surrounding the spill, with rapid dispersal to concentrations below impact thresholds likely to occur in the open ocean.

Due to the small volumes and expected rapid dispersal to concentrations below impact thresholds, impacts to water quality are not expected to cause flow-on effects to sediment quality or benthic habitats, including reefs, and offshore islands. There is no emergent or intertidal habitat that could be impacted by a surface spill. Owing to the water depth and location offshore, any spilled material is unlikely to reach land or affect any of benthic habitats.

Threatened or migratory species

Changes to water quality could potentially lead to short-term impacts on marine fauna (e.g., pelagic fish and sharks, marine mammals, marine reptiles and seabirds). As summarised in **Table 5-9**, the operational area overlaps with BIAs for whale shark (foraging) and pygmy blue whale (distribution).

Recovery plans and conservation advices for numerous bird species identify marine pollution and contamination impacts as a threat to the species. In addition, the Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia 2017 to 2027 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017) identifies deteriorating water quality as a threat to all species of marine turtles in Australia. These species have been identified as potentially transiting through the operational area from time to time.

Chemical spills are unlikely to have widespread ecological effects on threatened or migratory fauna, given the nature of the chemicals on board, the small volumes that could be released, and the open-ocean environment of the location. Physical coating of marine fauna, in particular those present at the sea surface (e.g., seabirds), by entrained or surface hazardous liquids and sublethal or lethal effects from toxic chemicals are considered unlikely, given the expected low concentrations and short exposure times.

Socio-economic receptors

Given the localised and temporary impacts of an unplanned hazardous liquid spill, any impact to commercial fishing, tourism and recreation activities is considered unlikely.

9.4.3 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

The EPO relating to this event is:

- + No unplanned objects, emissions or discharges to sea or air [MEFF-EPO-05]

The control measures for this event are shown in **Table 9-5**, and the EPSs and measurement criteria for this EPO are described in **Section 11.4**.

Table 9-5: Control measure evaluation for hazardous liquid releases

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Controls				
MEFF-CM-38	Dropped object prevention procedure	Minimises dropped object risk during vessel lifting operations that may cause secondary spill resulting in reduction in water quality. Ensures lifting equipment certified and inspected.	Cost to maintain lifting equipment and implement procedure.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring procedures are followed and measures implemented outweighs costs.
MEFF-CM-41	Hazardous chemical management procedures	Reduces the risk of spills and leaks (discharges) to the sea by controlling the storage, handling and clean-up of hazardous chemicals.	Cost associated with permanent or temporary storage areas.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring procedures are followed and measures implemented outweigh the costs of personnel time.
MEFF-CM-29	Deck cleaning and product selection	Improves water quality discharge (reduced toxicity) to the marine environment. Those deck cleaning products planned to be released to sea meet the criteria for not being harmful to the marine environment according to MARPOL Annex V.	Personnel costs of implementing, potential additional cost and delays of chemical substitution.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring vessels are compliant and those deck cleaning products planned to be released to sea meet MARPOL criteria.
MEFF-CM-30	General chemical management procedures	Potential impacts to the environment are reduced through following correct procedures for the safe handling and storage of chemicals.	Personnel costs associated with ensuring procedures are in place and implemented.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring procedures are followed and measures implemented outweigh the costs of personnel time.
MEFF-CM-31	Chemical selection procedure	Improves water quality discharge (reduced toxicity) to the marine environment in the event of an unplanned release.	Cost associated with implementation of procedure. Range of chemicals reduced but potentially higher costs. Potential additional cost and delays of chemical substitution.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring procedures are followed and measures implemented outweigh the costs of personnel time.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
MEFF-CM-42	Vessel spill response plans (Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (SOPEP)/ Shipboard Marine Pollution Emergency Plan (SMPEP))	Effective management of an accidental spill (discharge to sea) to reduce impact to the environment.	Personnel cost associated with ongoing management (spill response exercises) and implementation of plans.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring response plans in place, are followed and measures implemented and that the vessels are compliant outweighs costs.
MEFF-CM-22	Vessel Planned Maintenance System to maintain vessel DP, engines and machinery	Reduces potential for unplanned releases of chemicals from the vessels because equipment is operating within its parameters.	Costs are standard for routine PMS.	Adopted – Benefits outweigh the cost.
MEFF-CM-23	Marine assurance	Reduces probability of unplanned release of chemicals as a result of failure of vessel equipment because equipment operating within its parameters.	Costs are expected as part of standard procedure.	Adopted – Benefits outweigh the costs.

9.4.4 Environmental impact assessment

Description	
Receptors	Physical environment (water and sediment quality, benthic habitats) Threatened, migratory or local fauna (marine mammals, marine reptiles, sharks, fish, rays and birds) Protected and significant areas and Socio-economic receptors (marine parks, tourism and recreation)
Consequence	I – Negligible
In the event of a non-hydrocarbon liquid or chemical spill, the quantities of a worst-case liquid release are unlikely to be greater than 1 m³ (the size of the largest storage container). The small volumes, dilution and dispersion from natural weathering processes such as ocean currents indicate the extent of exposure will be limited in area and duration. The susceptibility of marine fauna to non-hydrocarbon liquids and chemicals depends on the type and exposure duration; however, given exposures would be limited in extent and duration, exposure to marine fauna from this hazard is not expected to result in a fauna fatality. Impacts from discharges to the marine environment to water quality would be short-term and localised, due to the nature and behaviour of the chemicals identified as being at risk of spilling, only pelagic fauna present in the immediate vicinity of the spill would likely be at risk of impact. Habitat degradation, deteriorating water quality and marine pollution are identified as potential threats to a number of marine fauna species (that may be present in the operational area) in relevant recovery plans and conservation advice (Table 5-10) and to matters of national environmental significance (MNES) (DoE, 2013). However, the potential non-hydrocarbon releases of liquids or chemicals are not expected to significantly impact the receiving environment with control measures proposed to prevent releases. The National Recovery Plan for the Southern Right Whale (2024), lists pollution as a threat to the species. However, any unplanned discharges that occur within the operational area and will be approximately 350km away from the nearest Southern Right Whale BIA and therefore it is reasonable to conclude the species will not be impacted. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country. Given a non-hydrocarbon or chemical spill would not result in a decreased population size at a local or regional scale, it is expected a spill of this nature would result in a Negligible (I) consequence.	
Likelihood	D – Occasional
A small non-hydrocarbon liquid release is unlikely to have widespread ecological effects, given the nature of the chemicals on board, the small volume that could be released, the depth and transient nature of marine fauna in this area, and the prevention and management procedures in place to clean up a spill. Santos reviewed non-hydrocarbon liquid spills and leaks from equipment and machinery in recent history (due to split hoses, small leaks, or handling errors). Most of the spills and leaks reported occurred within bunded areas, were less than 100 L, did not reach the marine environment and were cleaned up immediately. The likelihood of a small hazardous liquids release occurring is limited, given the set of mitigation and management controls in place for this program. Consequently, the likelihood of releasing hazardous liquids to the environment, which results in a minor consequence, is considered to be Occasional (D).	
Residual Risk	The residual risk associated with this event is Low .

9.4.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

Non-hydrocarbon liquids and chemicals will be required to undertake the activity, so their removal from the operation is not viable. Procedures are in place for the transfer of bulk liquids, reducing the risk of unplanned releases to sea due to equipment failure, operational error, or overflows and leaks. Objects will need to be moved around the decks of the vessels and transferred from vessel to vessel. Control measures in place will ensure correct lifting, storage and handling procedures are followed

as well as ensuring the maintenance of equipment is undertaken according to preventative management systems. No beneficial additional control measures were identified to further reduce the risk of this hazard.

In addition, administrative controls, such as all vessels being required to have a Garbage Management Plan that describes the on-board controls for preventing unplanned discharges, will minimise the risk of the hazardous liquid being accidentally discharged through mishandling or poor storage.

Other management controls that have been implemented include vessel maintenance systems, chemical management procedures, spill clean-up equipment and Shipboard Marine Pollution Emergency Plan (SMPEP)/OPEPs not only to minimise the risk of an accidental release, but also to reduce the impact in the event a release does occur.

Containment of small spills from bunding, inherent in the design of vessels and from spill containment kits onboard these vessels (detailed in the SMPEP) provides a barrier to any spills reaching the marine environment. The inspection and maintenance of bunding and drainage systems and of spill response kits provides assurance that these are available to contain spills in the event of a small leak. It is considered that barriers in place to contain spills would prevent spills from reaching the marine environment and thus it is considered that there are no further controls that would offer a further benefit to the environment.

A thorough set of controls has been proposed to ensure the risks of minor hazardous liquid spills and leaks occurring and subsequent impacts are minimised. The resulting impacts to marine fauna that could potentially result from a spill of this size would be negligible, with impacts restricted to a small number of individuals within a localised area.

The controls proposed are in line with applicable actions described in relevant recovery plans and conservation advice to reduce the risk of habitat degradation and deteriorating water quality (for example, from pollution) to a level considered to be ALARP by Santos. The assessed residual risk for this impact is low and cannot be reduced further. It is considered therefore that the impact of the activities conducted is ALARP.

9.4.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the risk ranked between Very Low to Medium?	Yes – maximum hazardous liquid release residual risk is ranked Low.
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5), which considers principles of ESD. The residual risk for this aspect is Low and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	Yes – management consistent with Marine Order 94 (Marine pollution prevention – packaged harmful substances) and with relevant recovery plans and conservation advice for species that may occur in the operational area (Table 5-10).
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? (cessation phase activities)	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? (seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities)	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

With the controls in place to prevent an accidental release of small volumes of non-hydrocarbon liquids and chemicals and the negligible impacts predicted from an unplanned release of such material, the risk to the marine environment is considered low. Potential risks are unlikely to be greater than those caused by other commercial marine vessels or offshore petroleum activities in deep water. The materials will be managed in accordance with relevant legislation and standards and Santos' procedures. The small volumes negate the need for any further contingencies to be in place that are included for some of the larger spill scenarios associated with the activity.

With the controls in place to prevent accidental spills and the low impacts predicted from a spill of this size, the environmental risk of using and handling the required chemicals is considered ALARP and environmentally acceptable.

9.5 Overview of unplanned release of hydrocarbons

There is the potential for loss of well control (subsea) resulting in a loss of light crude oil, in addition to loss of containment of marine diesel due to a vessel collision event or refuelling activities within the operational area. Light crude oil and diesel spill trajectory modelling were used to predict the potential extent of a worst-case spill event for both the MDO spills and LOWC scenarios within the operational area (GHD, 2021) (**Appendix I**).

9.5.1 Spill scenario selection

9.5.1.1 Loss of well control

Santos has identified a loss of well control as the worst-case type of credible crude oil release scenario that could potentially occur during the cessation of production phase and decommissioning activities covered under this EP. Santos has undertaken a LOWC scenario review for the wells in the MEFF field, and as a result, a full bore blow out is no longer considered a credible scenario and rather, the worst-case credible scenario is stress cracking of the well head, combined with a failure of a primary barrier (Santos, November 2020). This worst-case scenario would result in a release of 1350 m³ of light crude oil at the seabed, over 126 days (18 weeks), becoming visible on the sea surface after 49 days (seven weeks). Justification for the worst-case scenario is provided as follows:

- + For the planned scope of activities covered by this EP (**Section 8**) and the corresponding controls (**Section 8**) either:
 - they do not interfere with (or have the potential to interfere with) the established Well Barrier Envelope or;
 - the activities occur suitably distant from the wells so as to not present a hazard.
- + Seabed asset removal activities are expected to take place after the wells have been plugged and abandoned (P&A). After P&A activities have been completed (executed 2025/2026) it is not possible for a dropped object in the vicinity of a well to result in a LOWC as the XT's and wellheads will have been removed. Therefore, a LOWC scenario associated with the activities in this EP is not possible once P&A activities have been completed.

In the event that seabed asset removal activities commence prior to the completion of the P&A campaign, safe deployment / recovery zones will be designated and utilised at drill centres where wellheads are still present, such that a collision between dropped objects associated with the activities in this EP and the wells is not possible.

Therefore, consideration of a worst-case discharge (WCD) event (from a planned activity) that is associated with the XT being forcibly removed from the wellhead is not considered possible.

- + The most severe occurrence determined whilst assessing the activities within the scope of this EP is an unplanned event, in which a MODU or large moored vessel, working in proximity to, but not within the permit area breaks free and drifts over the location of the MEFF subsea wells. If the drifting MODU were to drag an anchor and / or anchor chains over the seabed it is possible that it / they latch onto or wrap over the subsea tree of a suspended well. Such an event could in extreme cases impart a significant force on the XT, wellhead and well architecture and was therefore assessed as a WCD potential event.

Typical MODU's operating in the area have an anchor chain tensile strength of approximately 1.46 x 10⁶ lbs (e.g., Atwood Falcon) where as a MEFF conductor has a tensile strength of approximately 6.98 x 10⁶ lbs, more than four times that of the anchor chain and neglects the additional tensile support provided by casing and tubing strings. If a MODU chain or anchor were to apply sufficient bending moment on the well, the wellhead could bend at the soft mudline until it is aligned with the direction of the pulling force. Should the force implied by the drifting MODU continue to increase above the yield strength of the chain, the chain will fail. That is, the anchor chains and pawls are not expected to have strength required to separate the wellhead and the subsea tree off the well. Thus, an anchor from a drifting MODU would not be capable of imparting sufficient load to remove the wellhead and is therefore not considered possible. However, repeated low-tension strain at the wellhead because of anchor/chain entanglement could induce a fatigue load upon the wellhead. The consequence of which in the most extreme of cases could potentially lead to a cracking of the wellhead and/ or the seabed architecture. It is this scenario that has been determined for worst-case discharge scenario. This has been recognised in a more recently accepted EP (Ningaloo Vision

Operations EP, (TV-00-RI-00003.01). As mentioned above, this EP's scope of activities does not plan to interfere with the established Well Barriers Envelope.

It follows that since the wellhead and subsea tree remain in place, an uncontrolled release of well fluids through a full-bore blowout is not a possible scenario as the worst case failure mechanism as a result of this event would be stress cracking at the bend point combined with failure of a primary barrier. The estimated flow area used for the WCD modelling has been selected based on the expectation that it far exceeds the flow area/pathway resulting from any "cracks" that may result from this scenario during the 126 days it takes to control the release:

- primary barrier breach - well fluids exit the tubing through 0.25 inch (6.35mm) equivalent diameter breach in the tubing immediately below the tubing hanger. Stress cracking failure of the production tubing resulting in a crack over 7.5% of the circumference, 1 mm wide (0.25 inch equivalent diameter).
- secondary barrier breach - well fluids are released to the environment through 0.54 inch equivalent diameter breach in the wellhead. Stress cracking failure of the wellhead resulting in a crack over 15% of the circumference, 1 mm wide (0.54 inch equivalent diameter).
- + Note that the worst-case estimated crack size has been used throughout the 126 days discharge period, (no gradual increase in crack size over time), however the load imparted by the entangled MODU would not be applied for the duration of the WCD period. i.e. Its presence would be quickly noted with the chain likely to be cut away within 1-2 weeks of the event occurring.
- + The assumptions for the WCD flow model are based on the SCSSV being in the open position, however the SCSSV on all MEFF wells have been closed and tested to a leak rate of less than 400 cm³/min (0.6m³/d) as per API allowable leak-off rate thus highlighting the conservativeness total fluid leak rate of average 110.7m³/d (90% water cut) presented in this WCD scenario. Importantly, the field SCSSVs cannot be re-opened without the direct application of hydraulic pressure to the SCSSC control-chamber which is not currently possible. To that end, the above estimate is considered appropriately conservative to model the WCD for this scenario.

The primary barrier referred to in the stress cracking of the wellhead is a breach in the production tubing immediately below the tubing hanger. The full hydrocarbon leak path would be as follows:

- oil flows through the production tubing from the reservoir to surface-controlled subsurface safety valve (SCSSV).
- oil flows past the SCSSV (modelled very conservatively as a full bore flow path, no restriction although the SCSSV's are closed and hydraulic pressure is not available in the field to open them).
- oil flows through production tubing up to the tubing hanger in the subsea tree.
- primary barrier breach - well fluids exit the tubing through a breach in the tubing immediately below the tubing hanger.
- secondary barrier breach - well fluids are released to the environment through a breach in the wellhead.

Near virgin reservoir pressures (~100 psi depletion) were assumed in this calculation to accommodate field shut in duration.

No pressure depletion over the WCD period was assumed to support a worst case scenario.

- + The WCD flow rate was calculated using industry recognised Petroleum Experts Prosper software calibrated to field data.

9.5.1.2 Vessel collision

It is considered credible that a release of MDO to the marine environment could occur from a collision between the activity primary vessels and an errant third-party vessel. Such events could have sufficient impact to result in the rupture of a diesel tank leading to a loss of integrity. This is considered credible, given the diesel tanks may not be protected or double-hulled, and fuel tank ruptures resulting in a hydrocarbon release have occurred before within the maritime industry.

The AMSA (2015) Technical Guidelines for Preparing Contingency Plans for Marine and Coastal Facilities recommend that the spill scenario for modelling and impact assessment should be based on the largest single fuel tank volume. The specific vessels to undertake the activities are yet to be confirmed; however, a review of available vessels indicated that the largest single fuel tank is likely to be up to 550 m³ in capacity. Although the likely vessel's largest fuel tank will be smaller, a conservative modelled spill volume of 604 m³ has been used for this EP.

9.5.1.3 Refuelling

A minor spill (approximately 37.5 m³) of MDO could occur during vessel refuelling resulting in a discharge of hydrocarbons to the marine environment at the sea surface. Spills during refuelling can occur through several pathways, including fuel hose breaks, coupling failure or tank overfilling.

Spills resulting from overfilling will be contained within the vessel drains and slops tank system. In the event the refuelling hose is ruptured, the fuel bunkering activity will cease by turning off the pump, the fuel remaining in the transfer line will escape to the environment as well as fuel released prior to the transfer operation being stopped. The AMSA (2015) Technical Guidelines for Preparing Contingency Plans for Marine and Coastal Facilities provides guidance for calculating a maximum credible spill volume for a refuelling spill. The guidance provided by AMSA (2015) for a refuelling spill under continuous supervision is considered appropriate, given refuelling will be constantly supervised. The maximum credible spill volume during refuelling is calculated as: transfer rate (150 m³/hr) × 15 minutes of flow. The detection time of 15 minutes is seen as conservative but applicable following failure of multiple barriers, followed by manual detection and isolation of the fuel supply.

9.5.2 Spill modelling overview

To determine the spatial extent of impacts from potential hydrocarbon spills, modelling was completed for the vessel collision and LOWC scenarios (GHD 2021). A surface spill of MDO during refuelling is considered relatively small in comparison to a surface spill of MDO during a vessel collision. It is therefore assumed the extent of a hydrocarbon spill during refuelling would remain within the extent of the worst-case spill trajectory of diesel from a vessel collision, subsequently, modelling of a smaller spill was not conducted.

Far-field spill modelling was performed with OSCAR. The model was configured in stochastic mode to simulate a range of environmental conditions. The start dates for the stochastic simulations were staggered approximately fortnightly across five years of hydrodynamic and wind data. A total of 150 individual 'realisations' made up the full stochastic simulation set for the LOWC scenario, and a total of 400 simulations made up the full stochastic simulation set for the MDO scenario. For the purpose of modelling, a theoretical release location of the south-east corner of Permit WA-54-L was chosen for the MDO scenario, representing the closest point of the operational area to emergent sensitive receptors. The Mutineer-4 well location was chosen for the LOWC modelling as this well represents the worst-case discharge scenario for any MEFF subsea well.

For each set of stochastic realisations, OSCAR spatially tracked the surface oil, total submerged oil in the water column, dissolved oil and oil on shorelines. The 'total submerged oil' is comprised of dissolved oil and entrained oil (or droplets), and therefore provides a conservative (over) representation of the NOPSEMA (2019a) thresholds for entrained oil.

The outputs of this modelling showed a number of different possible outcomes of a spill, which were then analysed to determine the concentrations of hydrocarbon at each grid cell of the model, providing information about the probability of contact and concentration at contact of hydrocarbons across the EMBA.

A summary of the modelled maximum credible spill scenarios is provided in **Table 9-6**.

Table 9-6: Summary of maximum credible spill scenarios

Worst-case credible spill scenario	Approx. depth of spill	Hydrocarbon type	Maximum credible volume released (m³)	Release duration	Time of year
LOWC – subsea release	162 m	Light crude oil	1350	126 days	All
Surface diesel release	0 m	MDO	604	20 minutes	All

9.5.3 Hydrocarbon characteristics

9.5.3.1 Light crude oil

The hydrocarbon type for the LOWC scenario was identified by Santos as Mutineer-Exeter light crude oil (Intertek, 2005). Key physical and chemical properties of Mutineer-Exeter light crude oil from the assay report are shown in **Table 9-7**.

Oil spill modelling in OSCAR is undertaken by selecting a hydrocarbon analogue from within the SINTEF Oil Library that provides the best match to the expected (target) hydrocarbon. The Foundation for Scientific and Industrial Research at the Norwegian Institute of Technology's (SINTEF) Vale 2013 crude oil was selected as the modelling analogue for Mutineer-Exeter light crude oil based on the following:

The whole crude properties for Vale 2013 are generally well aligned with Mutineer-Exeter, with the exception of a lower boiling point and a higher viscosity.

- + The reported asphaltene content for Vale 2013 provides an exact match to Mutineer-Exeter.
- + The distillation curve (**Figure 9-1**) for Vale 2013 provides a close match to Mutineer-Exeter.

The characteristics of Mutineer-Exeter and Vale 2013 crude oil are presented in **Table 9-7**. The distillation curves of both oils are provided in **Figure 9-1**.

The distillation curve is derived from laboratory tests to determine the percentage of hydrocarbon evaporated (recovered) when heated to various temperatures (or 'cuts'). Lighter oil components evaporate under lower temperatures, whereas heavier oil components have a greater tendency to remain in liquid state, requiring higher temperatures to evaporate. This is analogous to oil weathering in the marine environment, whereby lighter components have a higher tendency to evaporate, dissolve or decay, and heavier components tend to persist as liquid hydrocarbon for extended durations. The distillation curve therefore provides a reasonable prediction of the relative proportions of hydrocarbon components that will have rapid rates of weathering and the relative proportions that will persist.

The comparison of the distillation curves matches well up to 60% mass recovered. Beyond this point, Vale 2013 requires higher temperatures to recover the same proportion of oil as Mutineer – Exeter. This is indicative of a greater proportion of more persistent components within Vale 2013, thereby rendering it as a conservative analogue selection for this modelling assessment.

Table 9-7: Properties of Mutineer-Exeter light crude oil (GHD, 2021)

Parameter	Mutineer-Exeter	Vale 2013 crude oil
API Gravity	43.4	42
Specific Gravity	0.8091	0.816
Wax Content (%)	3	3.26
Pour Point (°C)	12	-9
Asphaltene (%)	0.03	0.03
Viscosity (cSt)	3.027 (@ 20°C)	37 (@13°C)

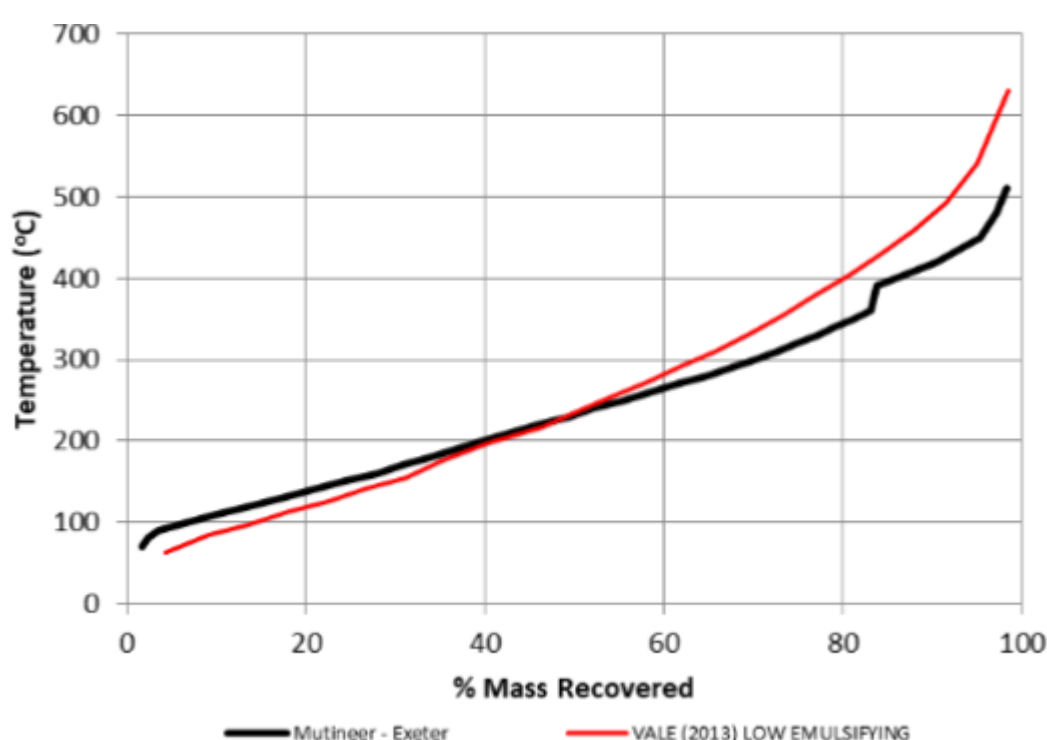


Figure 9-1: Comparison of distillation curves for Mutineer-Exeter and Vale 2013 crude oils

9.5.3.1.1 Light crude oil weathering

Evaporation is the primary weathering mechanism for Vale 2013. Under low wind speeds of 1 m/s, around 55% of the surface slick is predicted to evaporate after five days (120 hours) while wind-driven dispersion into the water column is negligible. Under moderate wind speeds of 5 m/s, around 60% of the surface slick evaporates after five days, while a further approximately 18% is dispersed into the water column and the surface slick makes up the remaining approximately 22%. High wind speeds of 10 m/s are predicted to rapidly (after 48 hours) disperse (45%) and evaporate (55%) the oil with no surface slick remaining. These are shown in **Figure 9-2**.

Vale 2013 has a high tendency for emulsion formation, with peak water contents in the surface slick stabilising at 76% after 72 hours for low winds (1 m/s), while this occurs much more rapidly (within six to 12 hours) under moderate (5 m/s) and high (10 m/s) wind speeds. The predicted changes in viscosity of the surface oil slick due to weathering are presented in **Figure 9-3**.

Peak viscosities of the surface slick within the first five days of weathering ranged from 2100 cP (for the low wind scenario) to 4000 cP (for the moderate wind scenario), with additional increases to viscosity predicted to occur as the surface slick continues to weather. Similarly, the pour point

increases over the first five days of weathering, with peak pour points ranging from 30°C for the low wind scenario to 36°C for the high wind scenario. The relatively high pour point of the weathered oil would suggest a tendency for Vale 2013 to begin to solidify or ‘gel’ once the pour point exceeds environmental temperatures. This process would be aided by the moderate wax content within the oil that would form a waxy network structure (wax content of 3% for fresh oil, but wax would be a higher proportion of the weathered oil). It is therefore likely weathered oil stranded on shorelines would be present as a waxy, solidified residue.

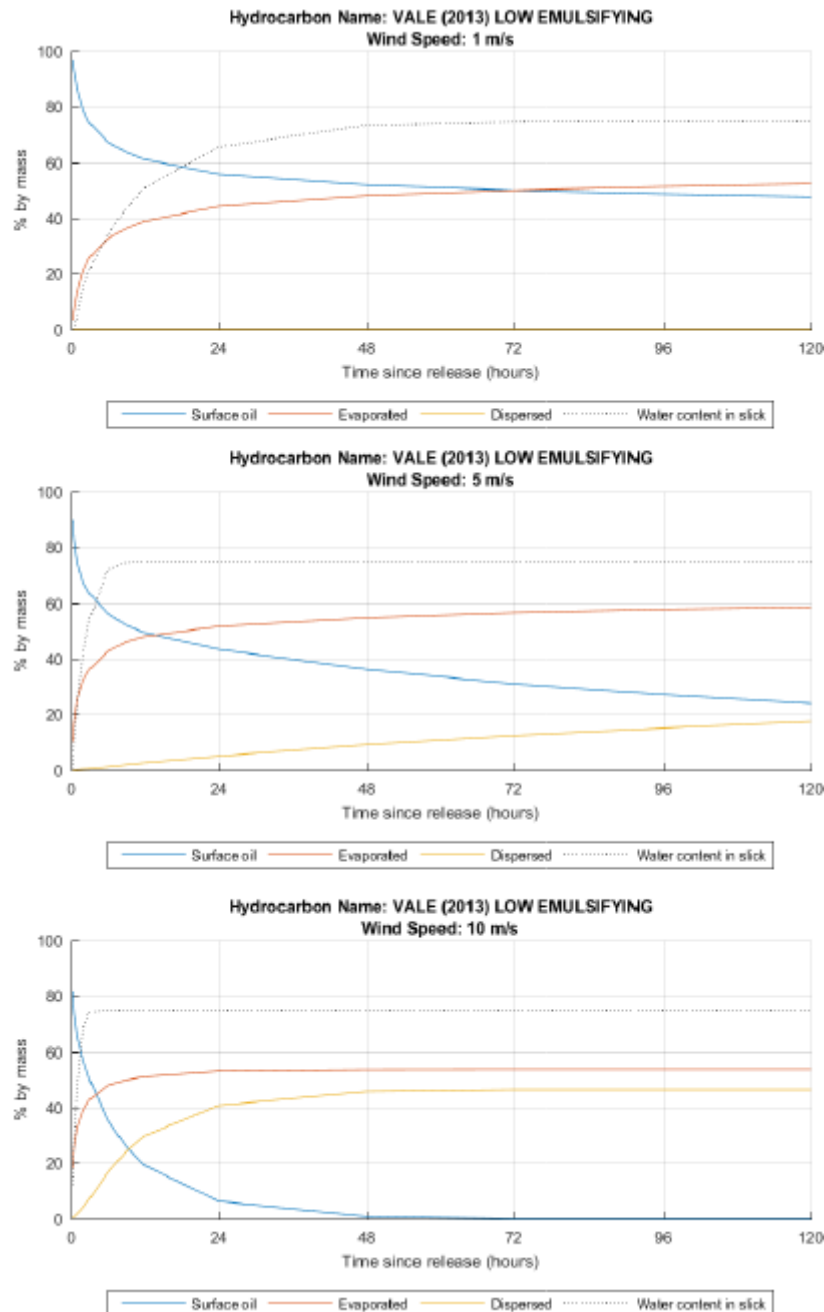


Figure 9-2: Simulated weathering of the SINTEF Vale 2013 hydrocarbon for constant wind speeds of 1 m/s (top), 5 m/s (middle) and 10 m/s (bottom) (GHD, 2021)

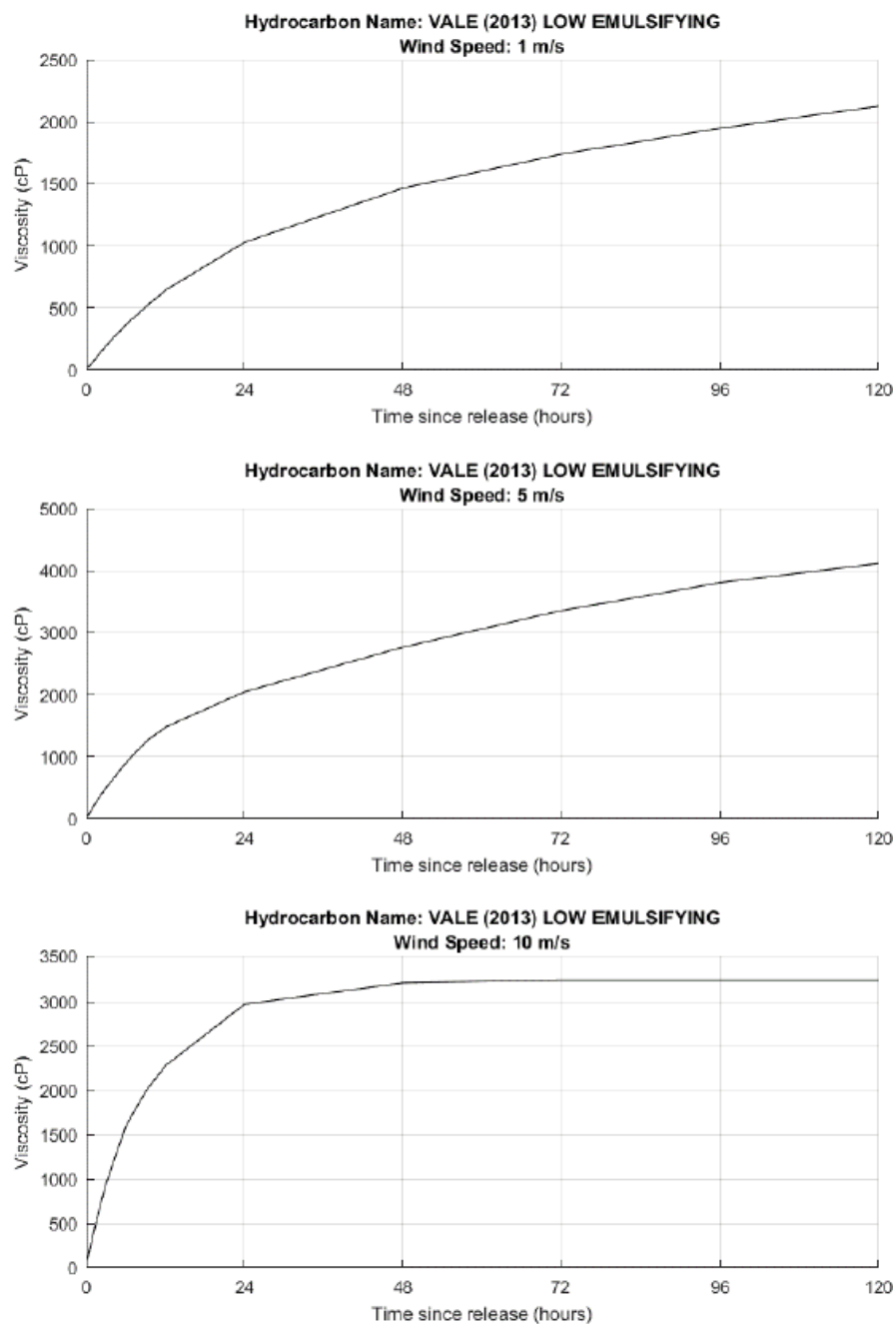


Figure 9-3: Simulated change in viscosity of the SINTEF Vale 2013 hydrocarbon for constant wind speeds of 1 m/s (top), 5 m/s (middle) and 10 m/s (bottom)

9.5.3.2 Marine diesel

International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation (2011) and AMOSC (2011) categorise diesel as a light 'group II' hydrocarbon. In the marine environment, a 5% residual of the total quantity of diesel spilt will remain after the volatilisation and solubilisation processes associated with weathering. In the marine environment, diesel is expected to behave as follows:

- + Diesel will spread rapidly in the direction of the prevailing wind and waves.
- + Evaporation will be the dominant process contributing to the fate of spilled diesel from the sea surface and will account for 60 to 80% reduction of the net hydrocarbon balance.
- + The evaporation rate of diesel will increase in warmer air and sea temperatures.

- + Diesel residues usually consist of heavy compounds that may persist longer and will tend to disperse as oil droplets into the upper layers of the water column.

A surface release of 604 m³ of diesel was modelled from the vessel. Upon release, the diesel is forecast to spread rapidly out to a thin film on the sea surface, and evaporation is forecast to remove around 50% of the released volume within several days of release. The diesel will also become increasingly subject to entrainment into the water column as the density increases after losing the lighter components through evaporation (GHD, 2021).

A summary of the representative characteristics of diesel, as assessed in this EP, is provided in **Table 9-8**.

Table 9-8: Summary of diesel characteristics (GHD, 2021)

Parameter	Diesel
API Gravity	36.4
Specific Gravity	0.843
Wax content (%)	0.05
Pour Point (°C)	Less than -36
Asphaltene (%)	Less than 0.05
viscosity (cSt)	3.9 (@ 20°C)

9.5.3.2.1 Marine diesel weathering

A preliminary analysis of hydrocarbon weathering for marine diesel was undertaken with the SINTEF oil weathering model (OWM) (GHD, 2021). The OWM predicts the fate of spilled hydrocarbons under steady state met-ocean conditions. OWM simulations were run for sustained wind speeds of 1 m/s (low winds), 5 m/s (moderate winds) and 10 m/s (high winds). The OWM simulations are based on 100 m³ of hydrocarbon released instantaneously onto the sea surface.

The results of the weathering analyses are presented in **Figure 9-4**. Marine diesel is a moderate weight and moderately persistent oil in the marine environment. Under low winds (1 m/s), 60% of the surface slick is predicted to remain after 120 hours (five days). Under moderate winds (5 m/s), 40% of the initial surface slick is predicted to remain after 24 hours, decreasing further to around 10% after 48 hours and around 1% after 72 hours. With high winds (10 m/s), the surface slick is predicted to almost entirely evaporate (around 20 to 25%) and disperse (around 75 to 80%) after 12 hours. Marine diesel has a very low tendency for emulsion formation with only around 1% water content entrained into the surface slick after 120 hours across the three constant wind assessment conditions.

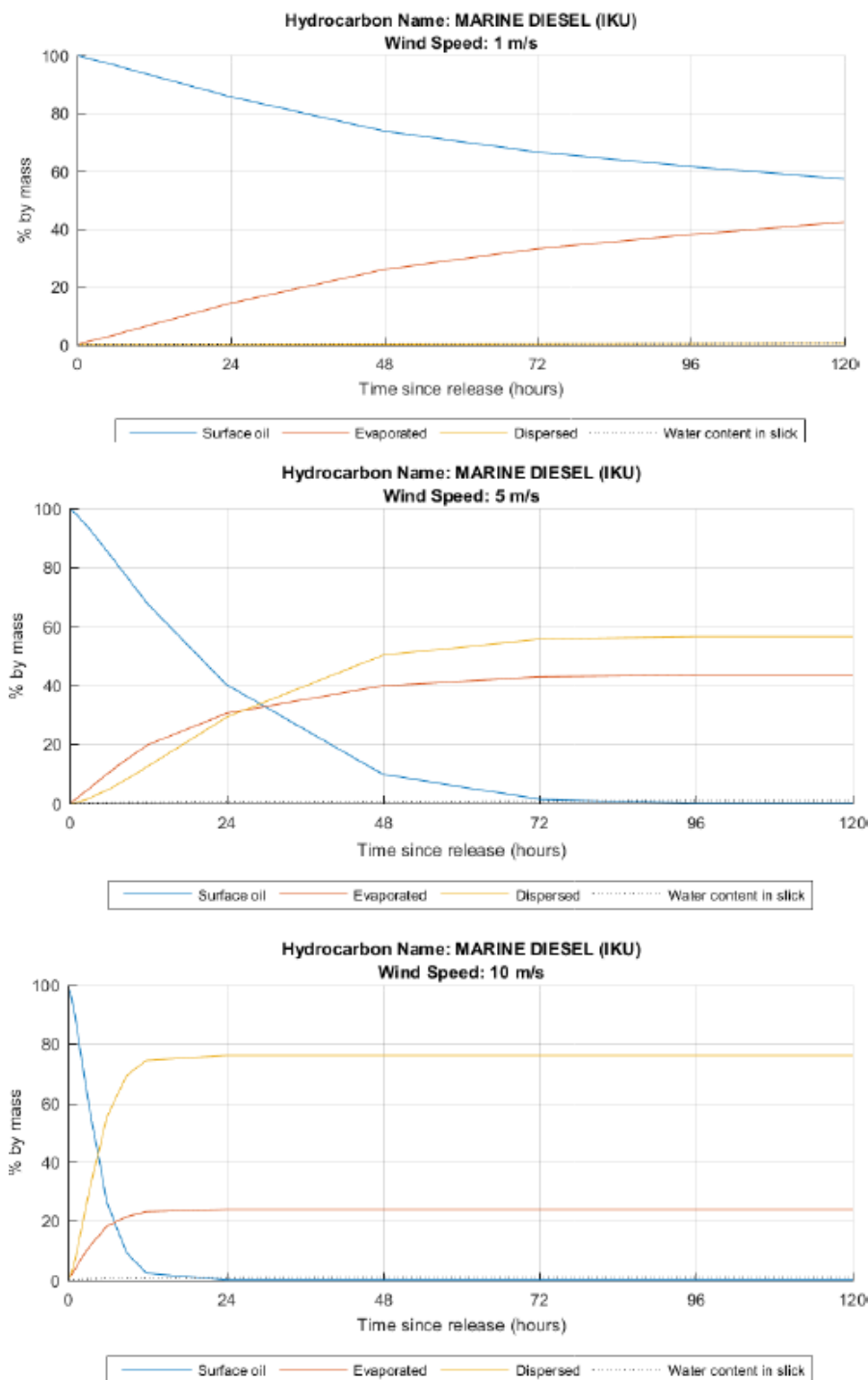


Figure 9-4: Simulated weathering of the SINTEF marine diesel (IKU) hydrocarbon for constant wind speeds of 1 m/s (top), 5 m/s (middle) and 10 m/s (bottom) (GHD, 2021)

9.5.4 Hydrocarbon exposure values

To inform the impact assessment it is important to understand the profile of the concentrations of hydrocarbons after a spill. To do this NOPSEMA recommends identifying hydrocarbon exposure values that broadly reflect the range of consequences that could occur at certain concentrations (NOPSEMA, 2019a). The exposure values that have been applied to this EP are described below.

The EMBA shown in **Figure 5-1** was identified using low exposure values. These low exposure values are not considered to be representative of a biological impact, but they are adequate for

identifying the full range of environmental receptors that might be contacted by surface and/or subsurface hydrocarbons (NOPSEMA, 2019a) and a visible sheen.

To inform impact assessment, exposure values that may be representative of biological impact have also been identified. These are called 'moderate exposure values' (defined by the MEVA) and 'high exposure values' (defined by the high exposure value area) and are shown in **Figure 9-5**. Moderate and high exposure values are modelled for each fate of hydrocarbon to identify what contact is predicted for surface (floating oil), subsurface (entrained oil and dissolved aromatic hydrocarbons), and shoreline accumulation of hydrocarbon at sensitivities.

Determining exposure values that may be representative of biological impact is complex since the degree of impact will depend on the sensitivity of the receptors contacted, the duration of the exposure and the toxicity of the hydrocarbon type making the contact. The toxicity of a hydrocarbon will also change over time, due to weathering processes altering the composition of the hydrocarbon. To identify appropriate exposure values Santos has considered the advice provided by NOPSEMA Bulletin #1 Oil Spill Modelling (NOPSEMA, April 2019) and scientific literature. The selected hydrocarbon exposure values are discussed in **Table 9-9** to **Table 9-12**. These tables explain how the exposure value is relevant to the risk evaluation and provides context on how that exposure value is used to inform response planning (which is addressed further in the OPEP).

Table 9-9: Floating hydrocarbons exposure values

Surface oil concentration (g/m ²)	Exposure Value	Description
1	Low	Risk evaluation It is recognised a lower floating oil concentration of 1 g/m² (equivalent to a thickness of 0.001 mm or 1 ml of oil per m²) is visible as a rainbow sheen on the sea surface. Although this is lower than the exposure value for ecological impacts, it may be relevant to socio-economic receptors and has been used as the exposure value to define the spatial extent of the environment that might be contacted (EMBA) from floating oil. Response planning Contact at 1 g/m² (as predicted by oil spill trajectory modelling) is used as a conservative trigger for activating scientific monitoring plans as detailed in the OPEP.
10	Moderate	Risk evaluation There is a paucity of data on floating oil concentrations with respect to impacts to marine organisms. Hydrocarbon concentrations for registering biological impacts resulting from contact of surface slicks have been estimated by different researchers at about 10 to 25 g/m² (French <i>et al.</i>, 1999; Koops <i>et al.</i>, 2004; NOAA, 1996). The impact of floating oil on birds is better understood than on other receptors. A conservative exposure value of 10 g/m² has been applied to impacts from surface hydrocarbons (floating oil) in this EP. Although based on birds, this hydrocarbon exposure value is also considered appropriate for turtles, sea snakes and marine mammals (NRDAMCME, 1997). This value has been used to define the MEVA. Response planning Contact at 10 g/m² is not specifically used for spill response planning.
50	High	Risk evaluation At greater thicknesses the potential for impact of surface oil to wildlife increases. All other things being equal, contact to wildlife by surface oil at 50 g/m² is expected to result in a greater impact. Response planning Containment and recovery effectiveness drops significantly with reduced oil thickness (McKinney <i>et al.</i>, 2017; NOAA, 2014). McKinney <i>et al.</i> (2017) tested the effectiveness of various oil skimmers at various oil thicknesses. Their results showed that the oil recovery rate of skimmers dropped significantly when oil thickness was less than 50 g/m² (less than Bonn Agreement Code 4). Hence, 50 g/m² has been set as a guide for planning effective containment and recovery operations. Similarly, surface oil greater than 50 g/m² (Bonn Agreement Code 4/5 and equivalent to oil observed as discontinuous or continuous true colour) is considered to be a lower limit for effective dispersant operations and is therefore considered for planning.

Table 9-10: Shoreline hydrocarbon accumulation exposure values

Shoreline accumulation (g/m ²)	Exposure Value	Description
10	Low	Risk evaluation An accumulated concentration of oil above 10 g/m² on shorelines is considered to represent a level of socio-economic effect (NOPSEMA, 2019b). For example, reduction in visual amenity of shorelines. This value has been used in previous studies to represent a low contact value for interpreting shoreline accumulation modelling results (French-McCay, 2005a, 2005b). Response planning Not specifically used for response planning because below the limit that can be effectively cleaned.
100	Moderate	Risk evaluation The impact exposure value for exposure to hydrocarbons stranded on shorelines is derived from levels likely to cause adverse impacts to marine or coastal fauna and habitats. These habitats and marine fauna known to use shorelines are most at risk of exposure to shoreline accumulations of oil, due to smothering of intertidal habitats (such as mangroves and emergent coral reefs) and coating of marine fauna. Environmental risk assessment studies (French-McCay, 2009) report that an oil thickness of 0.1 mm (100 g/m²) on shorelines is assumed as the lethal exposure value for invertebrates on hard substrates (rocky, artificial or human-made) and sediments (mud, silt, sand or gravel) in intertidal habitats. Therefore, a conservative exposure value for impacts of 100 g/m² has been applied to impacts from shoreline accumulation of hydrocarbons. This value has been used to define the MEVA. Response planning A shoreline concentration of 100 g/m², or above, is likely to be representative of the minimum limit that the oil can be effectively cleaned according (AMSA, 2015; NOPSEMA, 2019) and is therefore used as a guide for shoreline clean-up planning. This exposure value equates to around half a cup of oil per square metre of shoreline contacted.
1000	High	Risk evaluation At greater thicknesses, the potential for impact of accumulated oil to shoreline receptors increases. All other things being equal, accumulation of oil above 1000 g/m² is expected to result in a greater impact. Response planning As oil increases in thickness the effectiveness of oil recovery techniques increases. This value can therefore be used to prioritise oil recovery efforts, assuming oil recovery is deemed to have an environmental benefit.

Table 9-11: Dissolved aromatic hydrocarbon exposure values

Dissolved hydrocarbons (ppb)	Exposure Value	Description
10	Low	Risk evaluation Dissolved aromatic hydrocarbons (DAH) include the monoaromatic hydrocarbons (compounds with a single benzene ring such as benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene, and xylenes) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons [PAHs] (compounds with multiple benzene rings such as naphthalenes and phenanthrenes). These compounds have a greater bioavailability than other components of oil and are considered to be main contributors to oil toxicity. The toxicity of DAHs is a function of the concentration and the duration of exposure by sensitive receptors with greater concentration and exposure time causing more severe impacts. Typically tests of toxicity done under laboratory conditions measure toxicity as proportion of test organisms affected (for example, 50% mortality or LC50) at the end of a set time period, often 48 or 96 hours. French-McCay (2002) in a review of literature, reported LC50 for dissolved PAHs with 96-hour exposure, range between 30 ppb for sensitive species (2.5th percentile species) and 2260 ppb for insensitive species (97.5th percentile species), with an average of about 250 ppb. The range of LC50s for PAHs obtained under turbulent conditions (this includes fine oil droplets) was 6 ppb to 410 ppb with an average of 50 ppb (French-McCay, 2002). More recently, French-McKay (2018) described in-water thresholds as 10 to 100 µg/L (equivalent to ppb). Regarding the effect of UV on PAH toxicity, French-McKay <i>et al.</i> (2018) uses the findings of Deepwater Horizon Natural Assessment (DWH NRDA) Trustees (2016) to adjust for this effect by reducing the water column exposure thresholds by ten times in the top 20 m of the water column. The dissolved hydrocarbon 10 ppb exposure value has been used to inform the EMBA within Section 5. An exposure value of 10 ppb is appropriate as it is concentration that could have some potential negative effect. Response planning Contact at 10 ppb (as predicted by oil spill trajectory modelling) is used as a trigger for activating scientific monitoring plans as detailed in the OPEP. Establishes planning area for scientific monitoring based on potential for exceedance of water quality triggers (NOPSEMA, 2019).
50	Moderate	Risk evaluation Approximates potential toxic effects, particularly sublethal effects to sensitive species (refer to above text). Consistent with NOPSEMA (2019). This value has been used to define the MEVA. Response planning Encompassed by response to 10 ppb. There is nothing different for higher exposure values.
400	High	Risk evaluation Approximates toxic effects including lethal effects to sensitive species (NOPSEMA, 2019). Response planning Encompassed by response to 10 ppb. There is nothing different for higher exposure values.

Table 9-12: Entrained hydrocarbon exposure values

Entrained hydrocarbons (ppb)	Exposure Value	Description
10	Low	Risk evaluation Entrained hydrocarbons, as opposed to DAHs, are oil droplets suspended in the water column and insoluble. Entrained hydrocarbons are not as bioavailable to marine organisms compared to DAHs and on that basis are considered to be a less toxic, especially over shorter exposure time frames. Entrained hydrocarbons still have potential effects on marine organisms through direct contact with exposed tissues and ingestion (NRC, 2005). However, the level of exposure causing effects is considered to be considerably higher than for DAHs. Much of the published scientific literature does not provide sufficient information to determine if toxicity is caused by entrained hydrocarbons, but rather the toxicity of total oils which includes both dissolved and entrained components. Variations in the methodology of the total water accommodated fraction (entrained and dissolved) may account for much of the observed wide variation in reported exposure values, which also depend on the test organism types, duration of exposure, oil type and the initial oil concentration. Total oil toxicity acute effects of total oil as LC50 for molluscs range from 500 to 2000 ppb (Clark <i>et al.</i>, 2001; Long and Holdway, 2002). A wider range of LC50 values have been reported for species of crustacea and fish from 100 to 258,000,000 ppb (Gulec <i>et al.</i>, 1997; Gulec and Holdway, 2000; Clark <i>et al.</i>, 2001) and 45 to 465,000,000 ppb (Gulec and Holdway, 2000; Barron <i>et al.</i>, 2004), respectively. The 10 ppb exposure value represents the very lowest concentration and corresponds generally with the lowest trigger levels for chronic exposure for entrained hydrocarbons in the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council and Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia (2000) water quality guidelines. This is consistent with NOPSEMA (2019) guidance. Response planning Contact at 10 ppb (as predicted by oil spill trajectory modelling) is used as a trigger for activating scientific monitoring plans as detailed in the OPEP. Establishes planning area for scientific monitoring based on potential for exceedance of water quality triggers (NOPSEMA, 2019).

Entrained hydrocarbons (ppb)	Exposure Value	Description
100	Moderate	Risk evaluation The 100 ppb exposure value is considered to be more representative of sub-lethal impacts to most species and lethal impacts to sensitive species based on toxicity testing as described above. This is considered conservative as toxicity to marine organisms from oil is likely to be driven by the more bioavailable dissolved aromatic fraction, which is typically not differentiated from entrained oil in toxicity tests using water accommodated fractions (WAFs). Given entrained oil is expected to have lower toxicity than dissolved aromatics, especially over time periods where these soluble fractions have dissolved from entrained oil, the higher Moderate exposure value for entrained oil over DAH (100 versus 50 ppb) is considered appropriate. This value has been used to define the MEVA. Response planning Encompassed by response to 10 ppb. There is nothing different for higher exposure values.

9.5.5 Spill risk assessment approach

The spill risk assessment approach adopted is based on Santos' Oil Spill Risk Assessment and Response Planning Procedure (SO-91-II-20003).

A consistent risk assessment approach is applied to unplanned hydrocarbon release scenarios. The spill risk assessment approach is based on Santos' Oil Spill Risk Assessment and Response Planning Procedure (SO-91-II-20003). The procedure describes the spill risk assessment process as follows:

Identify the spatial extent of the EMBA. This has been completed for this EP as part of the assessment of the existing environment and receptors that are known to occur or may occur within the EMBA are described in **Section 5.2** and **Appendix D**.

Identify areas of high environmental value (HEV) within the EMBA (HEVs are described in **Section 9.5.5.2**).

Identify and then risk-assess hot spots. Hot spots are effectively a subset of HEVs, and their determination is described in **Section 9.5.5.3**.

Identify priorities for protection (for consideration of spill response strategies in the OPEP).

9.5.5.1 Spill environment that may be affected

Defining the EMBA by an oil spill is the first step in oil spill risk and impact assessment. For activities where there is the potential for multiple spill scenarios, the spill scenario, or combination of spill scenarios, resulting in the greatest spatial extent is used to define the overall EMBA for the activity. The EMBA is further described in **Section 5.1**. To determine the potential impact to receptors within the EMBA, the MEVA is used to determine them as described in **Section 5.1**.

9.5.5.2 Areas of high environmental value

Santos has predetermined areas of HEV (**Figure 9-5**) along the Western Australian coastline by ranking these areas based on:

- + Protected area status – This is used as an indicator of the biodiversity values contained within that area, where a World Heritage Area, RAMSAR Wetland and Marine Protected Area will score higher than areas with no protection assigned.

- + BIAs of listed threatened species – These are spatially defined areas where aggregations of individuals of a species are known to display biologically important behaviour, such as breeding, feeding, resting or migration. Each one of these within the predefined areas contributes to the score.

Further input to determine areas of HEV included:

sensitivity of habitats to impact from hydrocarbons in accordance with the guidance document Sensitivity Mapping for Oil Spill Response produced by IPIECA, the International Maritime Organisation and International Association of Oil and Gas Producers

- + sensitivities of receptors with respect to hydrocarbon-impact pathways
- + status of zones within protected areas (IUCN (1A) and sanctuary zones compared to IUCN (VI) and multiple use zones)
- + listed species status and predominant habitat (surface versus subsurface)
- + social values, socio-economic and heritage features (such as commercial fishing, recreational fishing, amenities, aquaculture).

Tallied scores for each predefined area along the Western Australian coastline were then ranked from 1 to 5, with an assignment of 1 representing areas of the highest environmental value and those with 5 representing the areas of the lowest environmental value.

9.5.5.3 Hot spots

While the entire MEVA will be considered during risk assessment and spill response planning, it is best practice to concentrate greatest effort and level of detail on those parts of the EMBA that have the:

- + greatest intrinsic environmental value – considered by Santos to be HEV areas ranked 1 to 3
- + highest probability of contact by oil (either floating, entrained or dissolved aromatic)
- + greatest potential concentration or volume of oil arriving at the area.

These areas are termed 'hot spots'. Defining hot spots is typically the first step in undertaking detailed spill risk assessment and spill response planning. Hot spots are a subset of HEV areas that:

- + have the highest probability of contact (at least higher than 5%) above the impact assessment exposure value for surface hydrocarbons and shoreline accumulation based on modelling results
- + receive the greatest concentration or volume of oil, either floating or stranded oil, entrained oil or DAH above contact exposure values described in **Section 9.5.4**.

During the workshop, additional hotspots may be included through discretion of workshop attendees where they do not strictly meet all of the above criteria. For example, an HEV ranked 1 to 3 with <5% probability, or an HEV ranked 4 or 5, with >5% probability, depending on the concentrations and volumes presented in the modelling report.

During a hotspot workshop, an environment consequence assessment is conducted against each of the hotspots identified using the Santos risk assessment process identified in **Section 7**, the outcome of this is provided in **Appendix I**.

9.5.5.4 Priorities for protection

For the purposes of a spill response preparedness strategy, it is not necessary for all hot spots to have detailed planning. For example, wholly submerged hot spots may only be contacted by entrained oil, and the response would be largely to implement scientific monitoring to determine impact and recovery. Hot spots with features that are not wholly submerged (emergent features) should have specific spill response planning conducted. This final determination of 'Priority for

Protection' sites, for the oil spill response strategy, is based on the worst-case estimate of floating oil concentration, shoreline loading and minimum contact time at exposure value concentrations.

Further detail on selection of Protection Priority Areas process is detailed in the Oil Spill Risk Assessment and Response Planning Procedure (SO-91-II-20003).

The following Hot Spot locations have been identified as Priorities for Protection areas for oil spill response planning within the activity OPEP and are based on the worst-case estimate of surface oil concentration, shoreline loading and minimum contact time at exposure value concentrations:

Imperieuse Reef Marine Park.

The oil spill response strategies for Priority for Protection areas are undertaken within the activity OPEP.

Each protection priority will be assessed to determine the most appropriate spill response strategies based on the type of oil and the values of the protection priority area. This can be done through a strategic NEBA approach.

9.5.5.5 Potential hydrocarbon impact pathways

To help inform the hydrocarbon spill risk assessment receptors within the EMBA and potential impact pathways have been defined (**Table 9-13**). The potential impact pathways consider physical and chemical pathways. Physical pathways include contact from floating oil, accumulated shoreline oil, or entrained oil droplets. Chemical pathways include ingestion, inhalation or contact from any hydrocarbon phase. These are summarised in **Table 9-13** and the information is drawn upon within the hydrocarbon risk assessment for the spill scenario. **Table 9-14** further describes the nature and scale of the hydrocarbon spills for this activity on marine fauna and socio-economic receptors found within the MEVA.

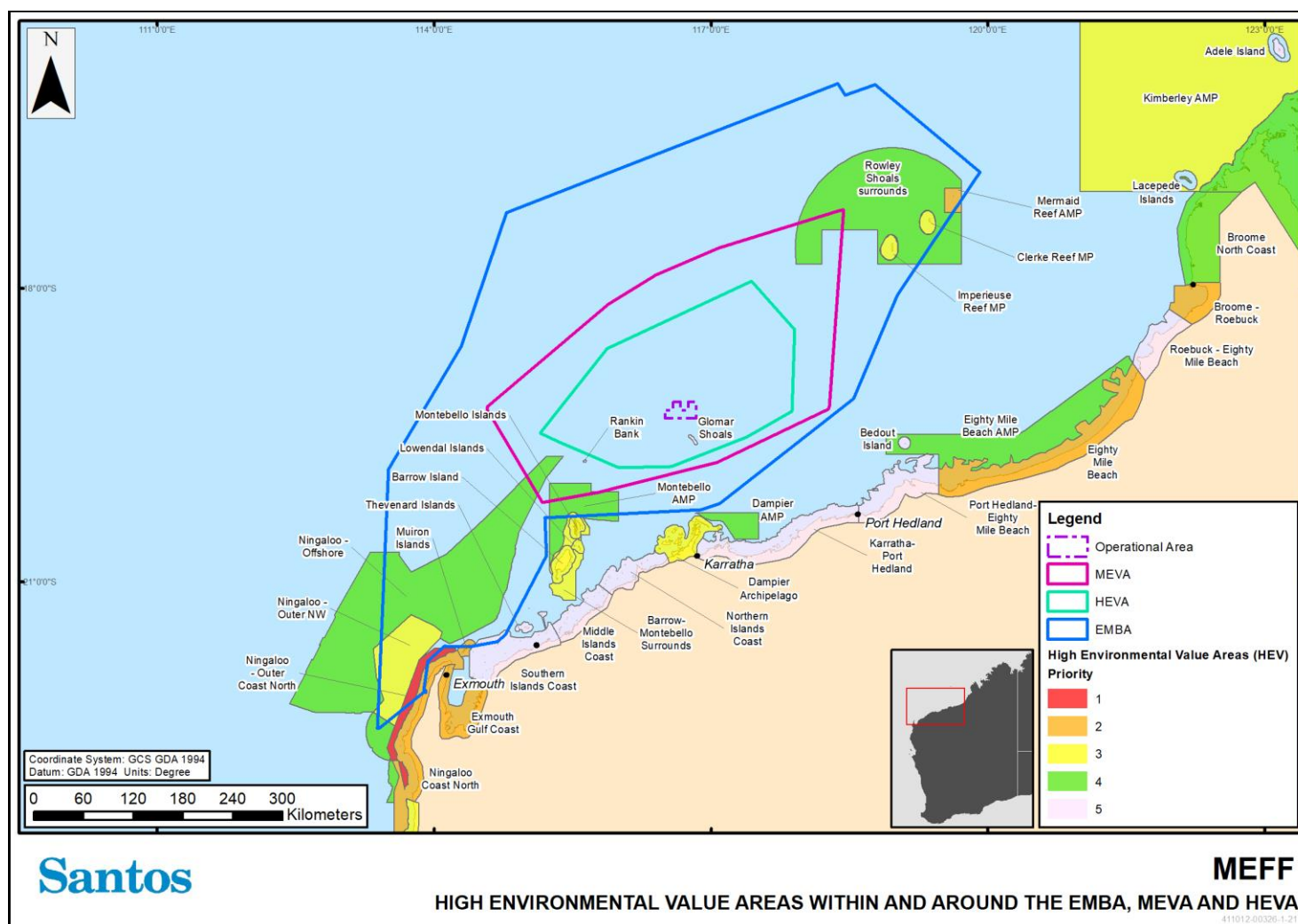


Figure 9-5: High environmental value areas within the environment that may be affected, moderate exposure value area and high exposure value area

Table 9-13: Physical and chemical pathways for hydrocarbon exposure and potential impacts to receptors

Receptor	Physical pathway	Potential impacts	Chemical pathway	Potential impacts
Rocky shorelines	Shoreline loading and attachment may result in thin and sporadic coating of hydrocarbon residues. Degree of oil coating is dependent upon the energy of the shoreline area, the type of the rock formation and continual biodegradation of the oil.	Impacts to flora (mangroves) and fauna further described below.	Chemical pathway to fauna and flora via adsorption through cellular membranes and soft tissue, ingestion, irritation/ burning on contact and inhalation.	Impacts to flora (mangroves) and fauna further described below.
Sandy beaches	Shoreline loading and water movement may allow hydrocarbon residue to filter down into sediments, continue to biodegrade on the surface or remobilise into surf zone. Degree of loading is dependent upon the energy and tidal reach of the shoreline, the type of the sandy shore and continual weathering of the oil.	Indirect impacts to nesting and foraging habitats for birds and turtles. Direct impacts to infauna.	Chemical pathway to fauna and flora via adsorption through cellular membranes and soft tissue, ingestion, irritation/burning on contact and inhalation.	Indirect impacts to nesting and foraging habitats for birds and turtles. Direct impacts (mortality) to infauna through toxic effects and smothering.
Intertidal platforms	Shoreline loading and water movement may allow hydrocarbon residue to filter down into sediments (e.g., within wetlands) or continue to biodegrade on the surface or remobilise into surf zone. Degree of loading is dependent upon the energy and tidal reach of the shoreline, the type of the substrate and continual weathering of the oil.	Indirect impacts to foraging habitats for birds and turtles. Direct impacts to infauna.	Chemical pathway to fauna and flora via adsorption through cellular membranes and soft tissue, ingestion, irritation/burning on contact and inhalation.	Indirect impacts to foraging habitats for birds. Direct impacts (mortality) to infauna through toxic effects and smothering.

Receptor	Physical pathway	Potential impacts	Chemical pathway	Potential impacts
Shallow sub-tidal soft sediments	Hydrocarbon residue in the shallow waters adjacent to shorelines may settle to filter down into sediments. Degree of loading is dependent upon the energy and tidal reach of the shoreline, the type of the substrate and continual weathering of the oil.	Indirect impacts to foraging habitats for turtles and fish. Direct impacts to infauna.	Adsorption via cellular membranes and soft tissue, ingestion, irritation/burning on contact and inhalation.	Indirect impacts to foraging habitats for turtles and fish. Direct impacts (mortality) to infauna through toxic effects and smothering.
Mangroves	Coating of root system reducing air and salt exchange. Degree of coating is dependent upon the energy and tidal reach of the shoreline, the type of the substrate and continual weathering of the oil.	Yellowing of leaves. Defoliation. Increased sensitivity to stressors. Tree death. Reduced growth. Reduced reproductive output. Reduced seed viability.	External contact by oil and adsorption across cellular membranes.	Yellowing of leaves. Defoliation. Increased sensitivity to stressors. Tree death. Reduced growth. Reduced reproductive output. Reduced seed viability. Growth abnormalities.
Seagrasses and macroalgae	Coating of leaves/thalli reducing light availability and gas exchange. Degree of coating depends upon the energy and tidal reach of the shoreline, the type of the receptor and continual weathering of the oil.	Bleaching or blackening of leaves. Defoliation. Reduced growth.	External contact by oil and adsorption across cellular membranes.	Mortality. Bleaching or blackening of leaves. Defoliation. Disease. Reduced growth. Reduced reproductive output. Reduced seed/propagule viability.

Receptor	Physical pathway	Potential impacts	Chemical pathway	Potential impacts
Hard corals (coral reefs)	Coating of polyps, shading resulting in reduction on light availability. Degree of coating is dependent upon the metocean conditions, dilution, if corals are emergent at all and continual weathering of the oil.	Bleaching. Increased mucous production. Reduced growth.	External contact by oil and adsorption across cellular membranes.	Mortality. Cell damage. Reduced metabolic capacity. Reduced immune response. Disease. Reduced growth. Reduced reproductive output. Reduced egg/larval success. Growth abnormalities.
Non-coral benthic invertebrates	Coating of adults, eggs and larvae. Degree of coating is dependent upon the energy and tidal reach of the shoreline, the type of the receptor and continual weathering of the oil.	Mortality. Behavioural disruption. Impaired growth.	Ingestion and inhalation. External contact and adsorption across exposed skin and cellular membranes. Uptake of DAH across cellular membranes. Reduced mobility and capacity for oxygen exchange.	Mortality. Cell damage. Reduced metabolic capacity. Reduced immune response. Disease. Reduced growth. Reduced reproductive output. Reduced egg/larval success. Growth abnormalities. Behavioural disruption.

Receptor	Physical pathway	Potential impacts	Chemical pathway	Potential impacts
Sharks, rays and fish	Coating of adults but primarily eggs and larvae – reduced mobility and capacity for oxygen exchange.	Mortality. Oxygen debt. Starvation. Dehydration. Increased predation. Behavioural disruption.	Ingestion. External contact and adsorption across exposed skin and cellular membranes. Uptake of DAH across cellular membranes (for example, gills).	Mortality. Cell damage. Flesh taint. Reduced metabolic capacity. Reduced immune response. Disease. Reduced growth. Reduced reproductive output. Reduced egg/larval success. Growth abnormalities. Behavioural disruption.
Birds (seabirds and shorebirds)	Degree of coating is dependent upon the energy and tidal reach of the shoreline, the type of the receptor and continual weathering of the oil.	Feather and skin irritation and damage, with the potential to cause secondary impacts such as: + physical restriction of flight and swimming movement + mortality + hypothermia/impairing the waterproofing of feathers + disruption to feeding/starvation + disruption to breeding + disruption to migration.	Ingestion (during feeding or preening). External contact and adsorption across exposed skin and membranes.	Mortality. Cell damage, lesions. Secondary infections. Reduced metabolic capacity. Reduced immune response. Disease. Reduced growth. Reduced reproductive output. Growth abnormalities. Behavioural disruption.

Receptor	Physical pathway	Potential impacts	Chemical pathway	Potential impacts
Marine reptiles	Degree of coating is dependent upon the energy and tidal reach of the shoreline, the type of the receptor and continual weathering of the oil.	Irritation of eyes/mouth and potential illness, which may cause secondary impacts such as: + mortality + disruption to feeding/starvation + physical restriction + behavioural disruption.	Inhalation. Ingestion. External contact and adsorption across exposed skin and membranes.	Mortality. Cell damage, lesions. Secondary infections. Reduced metabolic capacity. Reduced immune response. Disease. Reduced growth. Reduced hatchling success. Reduced reproductive output. Growth abnormalities. Behavioural disruption.
Marine mammals	Fur damage and matting, reduced mobility and buoyancy (for applicable species). Coating of feeding apparatus in some species (baleen whales).	Irritation of eyes/mouth, damage to fur and potential illness, which may cause secondary impacts such as: + mortality + disruption to feeding/starvation + physical restriction + behavioural disruption.	Inhalation. Ingestion. External contact and adsorption across exposed skin and membranes.	Mortality. Cell damage, lesions. Secondary infections. Reduced metabolic capacity. Reduced immune response. Disease. Reduced growth. Reduced reproductive output. Growth abnormalities. Behavioural disruption.
Plankton	Coating of feeding apparatus. Reduced mobility and capacity for oxygen exchange.	Mortality. Behavioural disruption (for example, reduced mobility).	Inhalation. Ingestion. External contact.	Mortality. Impairment of biological activities (for example, feeding, respiration). Reduced mobility.

Receptor	Physical pathway	Potential impacts	Chemical pathway	Potential impacts
Water quality and sediment quality	Presence of hydrocarbon residue in the water, which may filter down to sediments or continue to biodegrade on the surface. Degree of loading in the water column is dependent upon the influence of wave energy and tidal range.	Impacts to flora and fauna, as discussed in rows above.	Adsorption via cellular membranes and soft tissue, ingestion, irritation/burning on contact and inhalation. Impacts to flora and fauna, as discussed in rows above.	Impacts to flora and fauna, as discussed in rows above.
Protected areas	Coating of benthic habitats, shoreline habitats and marine fauna/flora within protected areas as discussed in rows above.	Mortality, injury or behavioural disruption to marine fauna. Death or impairment of habitats within protected areas. Reduction in the quality of the marine environment within protected areas. Environmental value of protected areas is degraded.	Impacts to flora and fauna, as discussed in rows above.	Mortality, injury or behavioural disruption to marine fauna. Death or impairment of habitats within protected areas. Reduced growth of benthic habitats. Reduction in the quality of the marine environment within protected areas. Environmental value of protected areas is degraded.
Socio-economic environment (fisheries, tourism, shipping, defence, shipwrecks, Indigenous users, oil and gas)	Presence of hydrocarbon residue in the water, which may filter down to sediments or continue to biodegrade on the surface. Coating of benthic habitats, shoreline habitats and marine fauna/flora within protected areas as discussed in rows above.	Degradation of cultural or maritime heritage sites. Disruption to tourism, recreation or shipping activities. Reduction in resource available for commercial and recreational fisheries.	Impacts to flora, fauna and the physical environment as discussed in rows above. Commercial/recreational fish species – refer to ‘fish’ as discussed above.	Degradation of cultural or maritime heritage sites. Disruption to tourism, recreation or shipping activities. Reduction in resource available for commercial and recreational fisheries.

Table 9-14: Nature and scale of hydrocarbon spills on environment and socio-economic receptors within the moderate exposure value area

Receptor	Impacts of Hydrocarbon Spills	
	Entrained and dissolved aromatic hydrocarbons in the water column	Surface hydrocarbons
Threatened/Migratory Fauna		
Plankton (including zooplankton, fish and coral larvae)	There is potential for localised mortality of plankton due to reduced water quality and toxicity. Also, through physical contact of small oil droplets, plankton mobility, feeding and/or respiration may be impaired. Plankton could include the eggs and larvae of marine invertebrates and fish; therefore, entrained oil could impact on recruitment of invertebrate/fish species. Effects will be greatest in the upper 10 m of the water column and areas close to the spill source where hydrocarbon concentrations are likely to be highest.	Plankton utilising the sea surface layer could be impacted by floating oil.
	Plankton could include the eggs and larvae of marine invertebrates and fish and therefore impact on recruitment of invertebrate/fish species. The operational area has the potential to overlap with spawning of some fish species, given the year-round spawning of some species. In the unlikely event of a spill occurring, fish larvae may be impacted by hydrocarbons entrained in the water column. Following a hydrocarbon release a portion of the slick will rapidly evaporate and disperse in the offshore environment, reducing the concentration and toxicity of the spill. Maximum entrained oil concentrations were predicted at Glomar Shoals. Plankton utilising the sea surface layer, as well as pelagic invertebrates, could be impacted from floating oil. Exposure to entrained oils and DAHs may result in lethal or sub-lethal impacts to plankton or pelagic invertebrates through a direct contact pathway. Such contact could impair the mobility, feeding and respiration of these fauna and exchange of chemicals could occur.	
Marine mammals	Lethal or sub-lethal physical and toxic effects such as irritation of eyes/mouth and potential illness.	At risk of direct contact with surface hydrocarbons due to chance of surfacing within slick. Effects include irritation of eyes/mouth and potential illness. Surface respiration could lead to accidental ingestion of hydrocarbons or result in the coating of sensitive epidermal surfaces. Potential impact to feeding apparatus of some species (baleen whales).
	Thirteen migratory marine mammal species were identified by the PMST as occurring within the EMBA. Of these, two are listed as endangered (blue whale and southern right whale) and two as vulnerable (fin whale and sei whale) and humpback whale as migratory. The operational area and EMBA overlap with blue whale, humpback whale and dugong BIAs (Figure 5-10 and Figure 5-11). For further information about environmental impacts to marine mammals from hydrocarbon exposure and increased toxicity, refer to Table 9-13 .	

Receptor	Impacts of Hydrocarbon Spills	
	Entrained and dissolved aromatic hydrocarbons in the water column	Surface hydrocarbons
	Other migratory marine mammals may encounter either surface or water column hydrocarbons in the EMBA. Dugongs may be particularly susceptible to surface slicks, a reduction of seagrass habitat for foraging and/or ingestion of seagrass coated with oil. Dugongs occur throughout the shallow waters between the Pilbara offshore islands and the mainland and have been observed in the shallow waters along the east coast of Barrow Island and over the Lowendal Shelf. The EMBA overlaps a BIA for dugongs (Figure 5-11). Aerial surveys of dugong distribution have found that the animals occur around Barrow Island, Airlie Island, Lowendal Islands and the Montebello Islands further offshore (Prince, 2001).	
Marine reptiles	Lethal or sub-lethal physical and toxic effects such as irritation of eyes/mouth and potential illness. The Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia: 2017–2027 (CoA, 2017) highlights acute chemical discharge as one of several threats to marine turtles.	At risk of direct contact with surface hydrocarbons due to chance of surfacing within slick. Effects include irritation of eyes/mouth and potential illness. Surface respiration could lead to accidental ingestion of hydrocarbons or result in the coating of sensitive epidermal surfaces. Contact with hydrocarbons that have accumulated on shorelines particularly at nesting beaches. Oiling of eggs/hatchlings may occur. Shoreline hydrocarbons are expected to be less toxic than fresh oils due to weathering processes such as photo oxidation and biodegradation reducing the levels of lighter chain hydrocarbons which are generally more toxic.
	Seven species of threatened marine reptile were identified as possibly being impacted by a spill. Loggerhead, green, leatherback, hawksbill, flatback and Olive Ridley turtles are widely dispersed across the NWS and in the unlikely event of a hydrocarbon spill occurring, individuals traversing open water may come into contact with water column or surface hydrocarbons. The EMBA overlaps with BIAs and critical habitat for four turtle species (flatback, green, hawksbill and loggerhead) as shown in Figure 5-12 to Figure 5-15. Sea snakes are associated with the offshore reefs and banks within the EMBA, particularly those Glomar Shoals, Imperieuse and Clerke Reef within the Rowley Shoals, which are known for their abundance and diversity of seasnakes. Critical habitat including internesting habitat offshore from important nesting beaches for turtle species are present within the EMBA. However, there was no shoreline contact from surface oil above the 100 g/m² exposure value predicted for any important nesting beach. In the event of a spill, the presence of hydrocarbons on beaches would disrupt behaviour and potentially threaten turtle populations. For further detailed environmental impacts to marine reptiles from hydrocarbon exposure and increased toxicity, refer to Table 9-13.	

Receptor	Impacts of Hydrocarbon Spills	
	Entrained and dissolved aromatic hydrocarbons in the water column	Surface hydrocarbons
Birds (seabirds and shorebirds)	Lethal or sub-lethal physical and toxic effects such as irritation of eyes/mouth and potential illness. May encounter entrained hydrocarbons while diving and foraging.	Particularly vulnerable to surface slicks. As most fish survive beneath floating slicks, they will continue to attract foraging seabirds, which typically do not exhibit avoidance behaviour. Smothering can lead to reduced water proofing of feathers and ingestion while preening. In addition, direct contact with hydrocarbons can erode feathers causing chemical damage to the feather structure that subsequently affects ability to thermoregulate and maintain buoyancy on water. Shorebirds may be impacted by the presence of hydrocarbons accumulated on shorelines which may result in exposure to eggs and ingestion by foraging individuals. Shoreline hydrocarbons are expected to be less toxic than fresh oils due to weathering processes such as photo oxidation and biodegradation reducing the levels of lighter chain hydrocarbons which are generally more toxic.
	Thirty-two threatened or migratory species of seabirds and shorebirds were identified within the EMBA by the PMST (Table 5-8). Of these, only nine species were identified within the operational area. There were no BIAs for seabirds or shorebirds within the operational area. Migratory seabird BIAs for breeding and resting overlap with the EMBA (Table 5-9); therefore, species may be impacted by surface and entrained hydrocarbons while foraging (dive and skim feeding) with higher numbers expected during the breeding periods. Birds (seabirds and shorebirds) are highly susceptible to hydrocarbon spills, with impacts primarily attributed to oiling of birds at the sea surface from slicks and oil on shorelines. Given the EMBA contacts multiple areas where seabirds are known for breeding including Rowley Shoals (Imperieuse and Clerke reefs), impacts to birds may include coating by oil when floating in open water, diving into open and coastal waters to feed on fish, wading and foraging on shallow intertidal mud/sand flats and wetlands or roosting on oil affected sandy beaches. Other impacts could include behavioural impacts whereby birds avoid important nesting and migratory stop-over areas or reduced food availability if important foraging areas are impacted. For further information about environmental impacts to seabirds/shorebirds through hydrocarbon exposure and toxicity effects, refer to Table 9-13.	

Receptor	Impacts of Hydrocarbon Spills	
	Entrained and dissolved aromatic hydrocarbons in the water column	Surface hydrocarbons
Sharks, rays and fish	Hydrocarbon droplets can physically affect fish, sharks and rays exposed for an extended duration (weeks to months). Smothering through coating of gills can lead to the lethal and sub-lethal effects of reduced oxygen exchange, and coating of body surfaces may lead to increased incidence of irritation and infection. Fish may also ingest hydrocarbon droplets or contaminated food, leading to reduced growth. There is potential for localised mortality of fish eggs and larva due to reduced water quality and toxicity. Effects will be greatest in the upper 10 m of the water column and areas close to the spill source where hydrocarbon concentrations are likely to be highest; therefore, demersal fish communities (including those associated with the Ancient Coastline at 125m depth contour KEF, Continental Slope Demersal Fish Communities KEF) and Glomar Shoals may be exposed. For further information about environmental impacts to fish/sharks/rays from hydrocarbon exposure and toxicity effects, refer to Table 9-13.	While fish, sharks and rays do not generally break the sea surface, individuals may feed at the surface. For condensate/diesel spills where a slick is expected to quickly disperse and evaporate, prolonged exposure to surface hydrocarbons by fish, shark and ray species is unlikely. Due to the filter-feeding nature of whale sharks they may be susceptible to ingesting surface hydrocarbons, both fresh and weathered (tar balls) if feeding at the sea surface particularly from diesel spills.
	The NWS supports a diverse assemblage of fish, including 456 species of finfish, particularly in shallower water near the mainland and islands. Threatened species identified by the PMST include the white shark, whale shark, grey nurse shark, sawfishes (dwarf, green and narrow), giant manta ray and reef manta ray, mako sharks and oceanic white tip sharks which may be present in the EMBA. However, given the absence of critical habitat for most of these species, significant numbers are not expected to be exposed to hydrocarbons in the event of a spill. These threatened and migratory fish and sharks could be present at low densities all year round within the operational area and EMBA; however, the absence of any known feeding, resting or breeding areas means significant numbers are unlikely to be impacted if an unplanned release were to occur. The whale shark foraging BIA is presented in Figure 5-9 and the main whale shark aggregation location (Ningaloo Marine Park) is more than 400 km southwest of the operational area. The EPBC Act-listed whale shark may occur in the EMBA, particularly off the Ningaloo coastline between March and June and is known to feed in surface waters. There is, therefore, the potential for this species to ingest oil from surface slicks with resultant damage to gills, other tissues and organs. For further information about environmental impacts to fish/sharks/rays from hydrocarbon exposure and toxicity effects, refer to Table 9-13.	

Receptor	Impacts of Hydrocarbon Spills	
	Entrained and dissolved aromatic hydrocarbons in the water column	Surface hydrocarbons
Socio-economic		
Commercial, recreational and traditional fisheries	Hydrocarbons in the water column can have toxic effects on fish (as outlined above) potentially reducing catch rates and rendering fish unsafe for human consumption.	In addition to the effects of entrained and DAHs, exclusion zones surrounding a spill can directly impact fisheries by restricting access for fishermen. Weathered diesel slicks may form tar balls which may result in oiling of nets and fishing equipment.
	A number of commercial fisheries operate within the EMBA (Section 5.2.6). Impacts to these fisheries from a spill may range from disruption of fishing activities caused by the physical presence of the slick, loss of (or loss of function of) coastal intertidal habitat (for example, seagrass meadows, mangrove communities, intertidal mudflats) which may provide nursery habitat for fishery species (for example, fish and crustaceans) and contact of surface and entrained hydrocarbons with the eggs and larvae of commercially important species. Exposure to entrained and DAHs could result in the accumulation of oil in fish tissues to the extent that could result in hydrocarbon taint of fish flesh. Connell and Miller (1981) compiled a summary of studies listing the exposure value concentrations at which tainting occurred for hydrocarbons. The results contained in their review indicate tainting of fish occurs when fish are exposed to ambient concentrations of 4 to 300 ppm (4000 to 300,000 ppb) of hydrocarbons in the water, for durations of 24 hours or more, with response to phenols and naphthenic acids being the strongest. Given entrained hydrocarbons are predicted to exceed the moderate threshold at some locations in the MEVA, hydrocarbon taint is possible in fish flesh. Although it is difficult to assess how long fish might be exposed for, small, less mobile fishes would be more susceptible. It is possible impacts could be detected to fisheries on a stock level, although it is more likely that natural variation in fish abundance would be on a greater scale than any impacts attributable to a hydrocarbon spill. This would most likely be the case for fisheries species that utilise shallow waters around the Barrow and Montebello Islands and could occur through direct impacts to fish or to fish habitats (for example, seagrass, coral reef, mangrove habitats). The same negative impacts could also occur to important recreational fish species and the recreational fisheries they support although impacts to commercial fisheries could result in the additional impact of loss of income for commercial fishers.	
Recreation and tourism	A number of tourism destinations occur within the EMBA, including Ningaloo Reef (which is within a World Heritage Area, National Heritage Place and a Commonwealth Heritage Place) and offshore islands such as the Montebello Islands and Rowley Shoals. A number of areas with high diversity or which have unique ecological values are protected within AMPs. As well as reducing the visual amenity of these areas, a LOWC spill could impact the habitats and marine fauna of these areas thereby impacting the environmental values of these tourism areas. Depending upon the extent of impact, loss of revenue to coastal towns and communities could also occur.	
Shipping	Multiple shipping fairways intersect the EMBA (Figure 5-21). Hydrocarbons in the water column will have no effect on shipping.	Exclusion zones surrounding a spill will reduce access for shipping vessels for the duration of the response undertaken

Receptor	Impacts of Hydrocarbon Spills	
	Entrained and dissolved aromatic hydrocarbons in the water column	Surface hydrocarbons
		for spill clean-up (if applicable), vessel may have to take large detours leading to potential delays and increased costs.
Defence	The level of defence activities performed in the vicinity of operational area is low, though the EMBA does overlap some of the North West Exercise Area. Interference of defence activities due to a hydrocarbon spill is expected to be minimal.	
Shipwrecks	There are a number of historic (more than 75 years old) shipwrecks within the EMBA. Shipwrecks may be of important heritage value and/or act as dive sites. Surface hydrocarbons will have no impact on shipwrecks. Hydrocarbons in the water column either as entrained oil or DAHS may extend thousands of kilometres from the release location. The potential for in-water hydrocarbons to impact on shipwrecks is poorly documented. However, it has been proposed that exposure to oil may alter bacterial community composition (biofilms) inhabiting shipwrecks possibly altering corrosion potential (Salerno et al., 2016).	
Indigenous users	Marine resource use by Indigenous people is generally restricted to coastal waters. Fishing, hunting and the maintenance of maritime cultures and heritage through ritual, stories and traditional knowledge continue as important uses of the nearshore region and adjacent areas. The level of activities undertaken by indigenous users is expected to be low.	
Existing oil and gas activity	A number of oil and gas operators operate within the EMBA which encompasses the entire NWS with existing projects and equipment in place as well as continuing drilling and exploration programs. A surface slick has the potential to disrupt activity potentially halting production or exploration with associated economic impact. Exclusion zones surrounding spills will reduce access potentially resulting in delays to work schedules with possible subsequent financial implications.	
Protected Areas		
Marine parks and Commonwealth heritage areas	Protected areas are described in Section 5.2.4 . These areas provide key habitats that support an array of marine flora and fauna along with unique natural phenomena.	
	These protected areas support all the habitats and faunal groups described above and support unique/protected habitats/marine fauna or ecological features. Impacts to the habitat/fauna receptors described above therefore have an impact on the values of these reserves which could have flow-on effects to tourism revenue for coastal communities that provide access to these marine reserves. The protected areas may also support nursery/feeding/aggregation areas for fisheries species and therefore may assist in maintaining healthy fish stocks and commercial/recreational fisheries.	
RAMSAR wetlands	No RAMSAR wetlands ae located within the EMBA.	
KEFs	KEFs overlapping the EMBA are described in Section 5.2.4 .	

Receptor	Impacts of Hydrocarbon Spills	
	Entrained and dissolved aromatic hydrocarbons in the water column	Surface hydrocarbons
	While some features associated with the KEFs are subtidal or submerged and would not be directly contacted by a surface slick, they all may support increased productivity or abundance of marine fauna that use surface waters above the features (including plankton, pelagic invertebrates and fish, marine mammals, marine reptiles and seabirds) which may be impacted by floating oil. Impacts to these marine fauna are described above.	
Threatened ecological communities	No threatened ecological communities are located within the EMBA.	

9.5.6 Spill response strategies

Numerous oil spill response strategies are available to be implemented in the event of a spill. These are generally strategies that have been implemented in the past or are considered good industry practice. Section 6 of the OPEP provides a detailed description of the applicable response strategies for this activity, which include, depending on the type and size of the spill:

- + source control
- + monitor and evaluate
- + mechanical dispersion
- + shoreline protection and deflection
- + shoreline clean-up
- + oiled wildlife
- + scientific monitoring.

9.6 Hydrocarbon spill – marine diesel oil

9.6.1 Description of event

Event	<u>Worst-credible marine diesel oil spill</u> It is considered credible that a release of MDO to the marine environment could occur between the primary vessels, between a primary vessel and a support vessel, or between a passing third party vessel and a primary or support vessel. The worst-case environmental incident resulting from a vessel collision is the rupturing of a vessel fuel tank resulting in the release of MDO to the environment. Vessel collision could occur due to factors such as human error, poor navigation, vessel equipment failure or poor weather. A maximum credible spill volume has been determined based on technical guidance provided by AMSA (2015). This guidance states that for a vessel other than an oil tanker, the maximum credible spill from a collision can be determined from the volume of the largest single fuel tank. In reviewing the general arrangements and fuel tank capacities of typical vessels likely to be utilised, the largest single fuel tank capacity identified was no greater than around 604 m³ of MDO for support vessels. This scenario would result in a spill of diesel at the sea surface. <u>Refuelling incident</u> The second most significant MDO spill scenario identified is a primary vessel refuelling incident (fuel hose failure or rupture, coupling failure or tank overfilling) where fuel bunkering would need to be stopped manually. Fuel released prior to the cessation of pumping as well as fuel remaining in the transfer line may escape to the environment. The AMSA (2015) Technical Guidelines for Preparing Contingency Plans for Marine and Coastal Facilities provides guidance for calculating a maximum credible spill volume for a refuelling spill. The guidance provided by AMSA (2015) for a refuelling spill under continuous supervision is considered appropriate, given refuelling will be constantly supervised. The maximum credible spill volume during refuelling is calculated as: transfer rate (150 m³/hr) × 15 minutes of flow giving a volume of 37.5 m³. The detection time of 15 minutes is seen as conservative but applicable following failure of multiple barriers followed by manual detection and isolation of the fuel supply.
Extent	Diesel spill trajectory modelling (GHD, 2021) indicated there was some probability of a 604 m³ MDO spill extending as follows (using the moderate exposure thresholds) based on a summary from all modelling locations: + Shoreline loading above 100 g/m² was only predicted to occur at Imperieuse Reef Marine Park around 300 km northeast of the release location. + Surface oil above 10 g/m² was predicted to occur within around 300 km. + Total submerged oil above 100 ppb was predicted to occur within around 225 km. + Dissolved hydrocarbons above 50 ppb were predicted to occur within around 200 km.
Duration	A 604 m³ release of MDO was modelled for a release over half an hour, replicating the potential duration of a spill arising from a significant collision.

9.6.1.1 Stochastic spill modelling – summary of results for moderate exposure thresholds

Accumulated shoreline oil above 100 g/m²

At the moderate threshold the spatial extent of shoreline accumulation was within around 300 km to the northeast at Imperieuse Reef MP. Imperieuse Reef MP was the only receptor with shoreline accumulation above the moderate threshold of 100 g/m², specifically:

- + maximum total accumulated oil of 12.4 tonnes covering a maximum length of shoreline of 11 km
- + probability of contact above the moderate threshold of 0.5% and a minimum arrival time of 11.7 days.

Surface oil greater than 10 g/m²

Surface oil above the moderate threshold extends up to around 300 km from the release location. Surface oil impacts at the moderate threshold include:

Very low (2%) contact probability was predicted at Glomar Shoals (submerged receptor), with a maximum time-averaged surface oil concentration of 217 g/m² and a minimum arrival time of 0.4 days (ten hours).

Very low (<1%) contact probability was predicted at Montebello AMP, Rowley Shoals surrounds and Ningaloo – Offshore (all submerged receptors), with maximum time-averaged concentrations of 11 to 29 g/m² and minimum arrival times of five to seven days.

Entrained oil greater than 100 ppb

Total submerged oil at the moderate threshold, although sparsely scattered, were predicted to occur up to 225 km from the release location. Total submerged oil impacts at the moderate threshold include:

The only receptor predicted to be contacted by total submerged oil above the moderate threshold (100 ppb) was Glomar Shoals, with a low contact probability of 2%, maximum time-averaged concentration of 450 ppb and a minimum arrive time of 0.5 days (12 hours).

Dissolved oil greater than 50 ppb

Dissolved hydrocarbons at the moderate threshold were predicted to be within around 200 km of the release site. Dissolved oil impacts at the moderate threshold include:

- + The only receptor predicted to be contacted by dissolved hydrocarbons oil above the moderate threshold (50 ppb) was Glomar Shoals, with a low contact probability of 2%, maximum time-averaged concentration of 266 ppb and a minimum arrive time of 0.5 days (12 hours).

Spill modelling results for the MDO scenario are summarised in **Table 9-15**.

Table 9-15: Spill modelling results for surface release of marine diesel oil

Receptor	Receptor Type	Minimum time to contact (days)							Maximum hydrocarbon concentration							Maximum oil ashore	Maximum length of
		Moderate exposure values				High exposure values			Moderate exposure values				High exposure values				
		Shoreline accumulation	Surface hydrocarbons	Dissolved hydrocarbons	Entrained Hydrocarbons	Dissolved hydrocarbons	Shoreline accumulation	Surface hydrocarbons	Shoreline accumulation (100 g/m ²)	Surface hydrocarbons (10 g/m ²)	Dissolved hydrocarbons (50 ppb)	Entrained Hydrocarbons (100 ppb)	Dissolved hydrocarbons	Shoreline accumulation	Surface hydrocarbons	Shoreline accumulation	Shoreline accumulation
Clerke Reef MP	Emergent	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	NC	NC	NC	NC	N	N	N	N	N
Imperie use	Emergent	11.7	N	N	N	N	N	N	888.9	NC	NC	NC	N	N	N	12.4	11.0

Receptor	Receptor Type	Minimum time to contact (days)							Maximum hydrocarbon concentration							Maximum oil ashore	Maximum length of
		Moderate exposure values				High exposure values			Moderate exposure values				High exposure values				
		Shoreline accumulation	Surface hydrocarbons	Dissolved hydrocarbons	Entrained Hydrocarbons	Dissolved hydrocarbons	Shoreline accumulation	Surface hydrocarbons	Shoreline accumulation (100 g/m²)	Surface hydrocarbons (10 g/m²)	Dissolved hydrocarbons (50 mg/l)	Entrained Hydrocarbons (100 mg/l)	Dissolved hydrocarbons	Shoreline accumulation	Surface hydrocarbons	Shoreline accumulation	Shoreline accumulation
Reef MP																	
Southern Islands Coast	Intertidal	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	
Glomar Shoals	Submerged	NC	0.4	0.5	0.5	NC	NC	0.5	NC	217.4	265.6	449.2	NC	NC	0.5	NC	
Montebello MP	Submerged	NC	5.1	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	11.4	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	
Rowley Shoals surrounds	Submerged	NC	6.8	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	21.3	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	
Ningaloo – offshore	Submerged	NC	4.9	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	29.1	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	

Hydrocarbon spills will cause a decline in water quality and may cause chemical (e.g., toxic) and physical (e.g., coating of emergent habitats, oiling of wildlife at sea surface) impacts to marine species. The severity of the impact of a hydrocarbon spill depends on the magnitude of the spill (i.e., extent, duration) and sensitivity of the receptor. The nature and scale of a hydrocarbon spill is described throughout this chapter for a vessel collision scenario, given smaller hydrocarbon spills (from refuelling) will impact a smaller area than a vessel collision.

Potential receptors: Plankton (including zooplankton and fish and coral larvae), Marine mammals, Marine reptiles, Seabirds and shorebirds, Shallow benthic, intertidal and shoreline habitats, Fish and sharks, Fisheries, Tourism, Protected areas, Shipping, Defence, Existing oil and gas activity and KEFs.

As a light hydrocarbon, MDO undergoes rapid spreading and evaporative loss in warm waters, indicating that a surface slick will be temporary, with around 40% of the released volume evaporating within 40 hours. The high rate of evaporation means that little MDO will become entrained and few

aromatic hydrocarbons are predicted to become dissolved. A surface release of MDO to the marine environment would result in a localised reduction in water quality in the upper surface waters of the water column near the location of the spill. Potential impact pathways (physical and chemical) of hydrocarbon exposure for receptors are summarised in **Table 9-13** and potential impacts to receptors found within the EMBA are further described in **Table 9-14**.

9.6.2 Net environmental benefit analysis

Net environmental benefit analysis (NEBA) is a structured approach used by the response community and stakeholders to select spill response strategies that will effectively remove oil, are feasible to use safely in particular conditions, and will reduce the impact of an oil spill on the environment.

The NEBA process is used during pre-spill planning (strategic NEBA) and during a response (operational NEBA). A strategic NEBA is an integral part of the contingency planning process and is used to ensure response strategies for scenarios are well informed. An operational NEBA is used to ensure evolving conditions are understood, so response strategies can be adjusted as necessary to manage individual response actions and end points.

Balancing trade-offs may involve differing and conflicting priorities, values and perceptions of the importance of sensitive receptors. There is no universally accepted way to assign perceived value or importance, and it is not a quantitative process. Overall, the NEBA process provides an estimate of potential environmental effects that are sufficient to allow the parties to compare and select preferred combinations of response strategies to reduce environmental impacts to ALARP.

A strategic NEBA has been developed for all response strategies identified as applicable to credible spills identified in the OPEP related to an unplanned release of condensate, with the potential environmental benefit or potential impact to each protection priority area. This will provide information that will help to select response strategies tailored to the key environmental values within the areas of highest priority. A summary of spill response strategies is available for each of the priorities for protection and the potential impact that a response strategy has on the area's environmental values.

This information is to be considered in the NEBA process that takes place during a spill response (i.e., an operational NEBA). An operational NEBA will also consider real-time monitoring of the effectiveness and potential impacts of a response and will also consider accessibility, feasibility and safety of responders (refer to Section 6 of the OPEP).

9.6.3 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

The EPOs relating to this event include:

- + No loss of containment of hydrocarbon to the marine environment [MEFF-EPO-07].

The control measures applied to prevent hydrocarbon spill from refuelling and vessel collision are shown in **Table 9-16** and the EPSs and measurement criteria for this EPO are described in **Section 11.4**.

Selection of oil spill response strategies and associated performance outcomes, control measures and performance standards, including those required to maintain preparedness and for response, are detailed within the OPEP. The OPEP contains an evaluation of oil spill preparedness arrangements to demonstrate that oil spills will be mitigated to ALARP.

Table 9-16: Control measure evaluation for hydrocarbon spill – marine diesel oil

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Controls				
MEFF-CM-01	Maritime Notices	Ensures other marine users are aware of the presence of vessels.	Costs associated with the personnel time in issuing notifications and closing out queries and responses.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs. Maritime requirement to issue marine notices.
MEFF-CM-02	Santos' stakeholder consultation strategy	Santos will notify all relevant stakeholders listed, or as revised, in Section 6 of relevant activity details prior to commencement, including activity timing, vessel movements, proposed cessation date and vessel details. Ensures other marine users, such as commercial fishers, are aware of upcoming operations so they can plan their business accordingly.	Limited additional costs to Santos. Stakeholders' time required to review consultation material and communicate with Santos.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs. Important control to ensure other marine users are aware of upcoming operations and potential business disruptions.
MEFF-CM-04	Existing (gazetted) PSZs established around the MEFF DTM and manifold locations	Gazetted 500 m PSZ around the MEFF DTM and manifold locations and reduces the potential for third-party vessel collision with the primary vessels when they are working in these PSZs.	No additional costs. PSZs already gazetted.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh no costs to Santos.
MEFF-CM-05	Safety Exclusion Zone established around primary vessels during seabed asset removal activities, to reduce potential for collision or interference with other marine user activities	Requested Safety Exclusion Zone around the primary vessels prevents reduces the potential for vessel collision with third-party vessels.	No additional costs to Santos. Other marine users may be temporarily excluded from small areas.	Adopted – Benefits outweigh the costs.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
MEFF-CM-06	Lighting will be used as required for safe work conditions and navigational purposes	Ensures vessels meet minimum safety standards, therefore reducing potential for vessel collision events with associated diesel spill to the environment. Marine Order Part 30: Prevention of Collisions, and with Marine Order Part 21: Safety of Navigation and Emergency Procedures requires vessels to have navigational equipment to avoid collisions. Requirement of the <i>Navigation Act 2012</i> .	Costs associated with personnel time in checking vessel certifications are in place. Negligible costs of operating navigational equipment.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh costs.
MEFF-CM-07	Seafarer Certification	Requires appropriately trained and competent personnel, in accordance with Marine Order 70, to navigate vessels to reduce interaction with other marine users. Requires appropriately trained and competent personnel to navigate vessels.	Costs associated with personnel time in obtaining qualifications.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh costs.
MEFF-CM-25	Fuel oil quality	Use of diesel reduces the potential impacts to marine environment in the event of unplanned hydrocarbon spills or leaks during bunkering.	Additional personnel costs of ensuring vessels are using the required fuel.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring procedures are followed outweighs the minimal costs of personnel time.
MEFF-CM-42	Vessel spill response plans (SOPEP/ SMPEP)	Implements response plans on board vessels to deal with unplanned hydrocarbon releases and spills quickly and efficiently in order to reduce impacts to the marine environment.	Administrative costs of preparing documents. Generally undertaken by vessel contractor so time for Santos personal to confirm and check SOPEP/ SMPEP in place.	Adopted – Benefits of considered to outweigh costs.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
MEFF-CM-43	Accepted OPEP	Implements response plans to deal with an unplanned hydrocarbon release quickly and efficiently in order to reduce impacts to the marine environment.	Administrative costs of preparing documents and large costs of preparing for and implementing response strategies.	Adopted – Regulatory requirement must be adopted.
MEFF-CM-23	Marine assurance standard	Ensures vessels meet Marine assurance standards to reduce the likelihood of unplanned discharge.	Costs associated with personnel time in checking vessel.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring procedures are followed and measures implemented and that the vessels are compliant outweigh the costs. Regulatory requirement must be adopted.
MEFF-CM-22	Vessel PMS to maintain vessel DP, engines and machinery	Ensure vessel is running efficiently and routine maintenance endeavours to ensure risk of collision from vessel system failure is reduced.	No additional costs, is industry best practice.	Adopted – No additional costs.
MEFF-CM-44	Santos Refuelling and Chemical Transfer Standard (SO-91-IQ-00098)	Minimises risk of pollution to ALARP during hydrocarbon transfers/ vessel refuelling.	Personnel costs associated with ensuring procedures are in place and implemented during refuelling and chemical transfers.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring procedures are followed and measures implemented outweigh the costs.
MEFF-CM-45	Dynamic positioning system	Ensure vessel is running efficiently and routine maintenance endeavours to ensure risk of collision from vessel system failure is reduced.	No additional costs, is industry best practice.	Adopted – No additional costs.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
MEFF-CM-59	NOPSEMA accepted MEFF Field Safety Case Addendum	Reduces the probability of an unplanned release of the seabed assets during recovery to vessel from their current as installed position, impacting a project vessel and causing a release of marine diesel to marine environment.	Costs associated with developing and implementing the Safety Case Addendum.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh minor costs.
Additional Controls				
N/A	Schedule activities to avoid coinciding with sensitive periods for marine fauna present in the operational area	Potential reduction in risk of a hydrocarbon spill to some sensitive receptors.	Impracticable to schedule activities to avoid all listed marine fauna due to variability in timing of environmentally sensitive periods and the constant or unpredictable presence of some species. Short duration activity (i.e., a few days) that is low risk to marine fauna.	Rejected – Cost is disproportionate to increase in environmental benefit.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Zero fuel bunkering via hose	Removes spill risk from hose operations.	Cost associated with transfer of MDO via drums or containers. Not possible to modify vessels to allow additional fuel storage. Cost associated with vessel transits and risk transfer to Health and Safety issues with additional trips to port instead. Would significantly increase the schedule to include multiple trips.	Rejected – Storage of fuel on vessels would result in unacceptable transfer of environmental risks to occupational health and safety/ operational risks and would not eliminate risk of MDO spills to sea. Costs associated with implementing control is deemed grossly disproportionate to environmental benefit and low risk activity with standard controls in place.
N/A	Require all vessels involved in the activity to be double hulled.	Reduces the likelihood of a loss of hydrocarbon inventory in the highly unlikely event of a vessel collision, minimising potential environmental impact.	Vessels are subject to availability and are required to meet Santos' standards during activities, requirement of a double hull on vessels would limit the number available to Santos. Also, requiring vessels to be refitted to ensure double hulls would be of high cost.	Rejected – Large costs associated with vessel selection and by having an activity schedule determined by vessel availability considered to be grossly disproportionate compared to low risk of a vessel collision and low risk of a large diesel spill.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Dedicated resources (e.g., dedicated spill response facilities on location) in the event of loss of hydrocarbons to allow rapid response	May allow for quicker response to a spill as resources will be within proximity.	Large costs associated with a dedicated resource on location. Modelling shows limited shoreline contact.	Rejected – Large cost associated with dedicated resources on location deemed grossly disproportionate to very low likelihood of occurrence and high natural dispersion of MDO.
N/A	Dedicated standby vessel in field 24 hours during field activities	Reduces potential for collision or interference with other marine users.	Large costs associated with a dedicated standby vessel.	Rejected – Large cost associated with dedicated standby vessel which outweigh any benefits.

9.6.4 Environmental impact assessment

The below environmental impact assessment follows the risk assessment approach detailed in **Section 9.5.5**.

9.6.4.1 Identification of hotspots for consequence assessment

As described in **Section 9.5.5**, all HEVs within the MEVA and EMBA for LOWC are listed in **Table 9-17**. The values and sensitivities associated with these HEVs have been described in **Appendix D**. Further to this, **Table 9-17** filters the HEV to identify the Hot Spots where they meet the criteria (as described in **Section 9.5.5**).

Table 9-17: Identified high environmental value and hot spot receptors for surface release scenario – marine diesel oil

Receptor	HEV ranking	Exposure Threshold		Hot Spot
		Low (EMBA)	Moderate (MEVA)	
Imperieuse Reef Marine Park	3	✓	✓	Y
Clerke Reef Marine Park	3	✓	X	N
Rowley Shoals surrounds	4	✓	x	N
Montebello AMP	4	✓	✓	N
Offshore Ningaloo	4	✓	✓	N
Glomar Shoals	5	✓	✓	N
Southern Islands Coast	5	✓	x	N

No receptors had a contact probability of 5% or above for the medium or high exposure values. However, Imperieuse Reef MP was chosen as a hot spot due to the potential for shoreline accumulation above the moderate exposure value (100 g/m²).

Appendix I provides a simplified summary of the consequence assessment results for each of the Hot Spot areas. The consequence assessment was based on predicted contact and concentration of floating oil, accumulated oil, total submerged oil and dissolved oil. For each Hot Spot area, the consequence to the key values were assessed using the methodology described in **Section 9.5.5**.

Description	
Receptors	Physical environment – water quality, Shallow benthic, intertidal and shoreline habitats Threatened/migratory fauna – plankton, invertebrates, marine mammals, marine reptiles, sharks, rays and fish, birds (seabirds and shorebirds) Protected areas – KEFs and Marine Parks Socio-economic – commercial, recreational and traditional fisheries, recreation and tourism, oil and gas industry)
Consequence	III – Moderate
Potential impact pathways (physical and chemical) of hydrocarbon exposure for receptors are summarised in Table 9-13 and potential impacts to receptors found within the EMBA are described in Table 9-14. <i>Threatened/migratory fauna</i> A surface release of MDO to the marine environment would result in a localised reduction in water quality in the upper surface waters of the water column. As a light hydrocarbon, MDO undergoes rapid spreading and evaporative loss in warm waters, indicating that a surface slick will be temporary. Under moderate winds (5 m/s), 40% of the initial surface slick is predicted to remain as surface oil after 24 hours, decreasing further to around 10% after 48 hours and around 1% after 72 hours (GHD, 2021). The high rate of evaporation means that little MDO will become entrained and few aromatic hydrocarbons are predicted to become dissolved reducing impact to marine fauna. Surface oil, and entrained hydrocarbon in the sea surface layer, could have the physical effect of coating fauna interacting within and under the surface, including plankton, pelagic invertebrates and fishes, marine reptiles, marine mammals and seabirds, and may also affect some species through ingestion of oiled fish (as described in Table 9-14). The diesel EMBA overlaps breeding/foraging BIAs for a number of seabirds, including an important rookery for the red-tailed tropic bird in the Clerke Reef MP. An unplanned release of MDO is not expected to interfere with their breeding activity, but could cause slight secondary effects through ingestion after preening or ingestion of oiled fish (as described in Table 9-13 and Table 9-14). The humpback whale (migration) and pygmy blue whale (distribution, migration and foraging) BIAs, whale shark foraging BIA and Southern Right Whale migration BIAs overlap the EMBA. An unplanned release of MDO is not expected to interfere with their migration activity. There is the potential for behavioural disruption to the local population as individuals traverse the area affected with potential for coating of baleen (in whales) and ingestion of oiled prey (plankton/fish) as described in Table 9-13 and Table 9-14. The EMBA overlaps interesting critical habitat BIAs for a number of turtles. Therefore, turtle behaviour could be disrupted with the potential to threaten turtle populations (as described in Table 9-14), particularly those at significant rookeries on the Montebello Islands. No turtle rookeries are known to occur in the Imperieuse Reef MP. The EMBA also overlaps the Southern Right Whale Breeding BIA near Ningaloo. There is the potential for behavioural disruption to the local population as individuals traverse the area affected with potential for coating of baleen (in whales) and ingestion of oiled prey (plankton/fish) as described in Table 9-13 and Table 9-14. Deteriorating water quality/chemical and terrestrial discharge is identified as a potential threat to turtles in the marine turtle recovery plan, and some bird and shark species (Table 5-10). Habitat modification, degradation and disruption, pollution and/or loss of habitat are also identified as threats to sharks, birds, cetaceans and turtles in conservation management and recovery plans. Given the location of the release, and volume of potential hydrocarbon release there is the potential for modification to or a decrease in the availability of quality habitat (shorelines/subsurface). Shoreline accumulation may present a major disruption to shoreline individuals (as described in Table 9-14). Volumes of accumulated hydrocarbon may result in a reduction in area available for seabirds and/or turtle species. The quality of habitat (shorelines/subsurface) may be reduced for a period, with recovery over the medium term (decades). <i>Physical environment and habitats</i>	

Description
In the event of MDO release, hydrocarbons that reach nearshore environments have the potential to impact benthic coral reefs and mangrove areas which may result in a decrease in ecological values, given toxicity impacts associated with hydrocarbon exposure. The quality of habitat may be reduced for a significant period with recovery over the medium term (two to ten years). As described above, accumulated hydrocarbons on shorelines could impact marine fauna that utilize beaches such as shorebirds in the Imperieuse Reef MP, dependent upon the timing of a spill. Entrained hydrocarbon could also contact sandy beaches at high tide. Such impacts would be most likely to nesting females as they move up and down beaches or to turtle hatchlings as they emerge from nests six to eight weeks following nesting. The quality of habitat available to the turtles will be reduced, with recovery over the medium term. <i>Protected areas</i> The EMBA intersects several Marine Parks, AMPs, Commonwealth Heritage Areas and marine management areas (Section 5.2). Combined, these areas support all the habitats and faunal groups described above. Impacts to the habitat/fauna receptors described above therefore have an impact on the values of these reserves which could have flow-on effects to tourism revenue of coastal communities that provide access to these marine reserves. <i>Socio-economic receptors</i> There is the potential for hydrocarbons to temporarily disrupt fishing activities if the surface or entrained hydrocarbon moves through fishing areas. However, the high rate of evaporation means little MDO will become entrained and few aromatic hydrocarbons are predicted to become dissolved. It is possible there could be accumulation of oil in fish tissues to the extent that could result in hydrocarbon tainting of fish flesh. Connell and Miller (1981) compiled a summary of studies listing the exposure value concentrations at which tainting occurred for hydrocarbons. The results contained in their review indicate tainting of fish occurs when fish are exposed to ambient concentrations of 4 to 300 ppm (4000 to 300,000 ppb) of hydrocarbons in the water, for durations of 24 hours or more, with response to phenols and naphthenic acids being the strongest. Given the volume of oil that could potentially be released, it is possible impacts could be detected to fisheries on a stock level although it is more likely that natural variation in fish abundance would be on a greater scale than any impacts attributable to a hydrocarbon spill. This would most likely be the case for fisheries species that utilise shallower waters around the Glomar Shoals and could occur through direct impacts to fish or to fish habitats (e.g., seagrass, coral reef, mangrove habitats). A number of oil and gas operators operate within the EMBA with existing projects and equipment in place as well as continuing drilling and exploration programs. An unplanned hydrocarbon release has the potential to disrupt these activities, with associated economic impact, albeit on a temporary basis. Tourism could also be affected by a spill, either from reduced water quality/shoreline oiling preventing recreational activities or reducing aesthetic appeal or from impacts to habitats and marine fauna as described in Table 9-13 and Table 9-14.

Description	
Likelihood	B – Unlikely
A worst-case hydrocarbon release resulting from a vessel collision could result in major disruption and long-term effects on the receiving environment. Impacts could decrease local populations and result in loss of critical habitats; however, recovery would be expected within decades. With the proposed control measures in place to prevent releases, any decline in local populations or degradation of habitats is considered unlikely and therefore the activity will be conducted in a manner that is considered acceptable. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country. The likelihood of a hydrocarbon release occurring due to a vessel collision/bunkering is limited, given the set of mitigation and management controls in place. Subsequently the likelihood of a vessel collision releasing hydrocarbons to the environment resulting in a major consequence is considered to be Unlikely (b).	
Residual Risk	The residual risk associated with this hazard is Low .

9.6.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

The use of vessels is integral to activity and therefore vessels and associated risks of unplanned hydrocarbon releases, cannot be completely eliminated.

Offshore refuelling is standard industry practice and oil pollution legislation (*Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983* and MARPOL Annex I) has been developed to safeguard against the risk of a hydrocarbon spill occurring during refuelling. Other hydrocarbon types such as HFO, IFO have specifically not been selected for this activity (only diesel will be used in the operational area) to ensure potential environmental impacts are reduced to ALARP.

The combination of the standard prevention CMs (which reduce the likelihood of the event happening) and the spill response strategies (which may reduce the consequence) together reduce the overall hydrocarbon spill risk.

No additional controls have been identified and given the controls in place detailed above, the assessed residual risk for this impact is Low and cannot be reduced further. It is considered therefore that the impact of the activities conducted is reduced to ALARP.

In terms of spill response activities, Santos will implement oil spill response as specified within the OPEP. A detailed ALARP assessment on the adequacy of arrangements available to support spill response strategies and CMs is presented in the OPEP.

The North-West Marine Parks Network Management Plan states that actions required to respond to oil pollution incidents, including environmental monitoring and remediation, in connection with mining operations authorised under the OPGGS Act may be conducted in all zones of the marine parks identified with the EMBA (DNP, 2018a) without an authorisation issued by the Director, provided the actions are taken in accordance with an EP that has been accepted by NOPSEMA, and the Director is notified in the event of oil pollution within a marine park, or where an oil spill response action must be taken within a marine park, so far as reasonably practicable, prior to response action being taken.

9.6.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the risk ranked between Very Low to Medium?	Yes – residual risk is ranked as Low
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5), which considers principles of ESD. The residual risk for this aspect is Low and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	Yes – management consistent with OPGGS(E)R 2023 including safety case and WOMP. Santos has considered the values and sensitivities of the receiving environment, including, but not limited to conservation values of the identified protection priorities (Section 5.2), relevant species recovery plans, conservation management plans and management actions (Table 5-10).
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environmental Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? (cessation phase activities)	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? (seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities)	Yes – no concerns raised. DNP made a request in relation to a marine pollution event, that impacts, or is likely to impact an AMP and provided expectations on notification requirements (addressed in Table 11-4)
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

Given the control measures in place to prevent a vessel collision and refuelling incidents and the low frequency of significant volume diesel spills that occur in the industry, the likelihood of a loss of containment event during the activity is low. The risks from diesel spills are well understood and the activities will be managed in accordance with relevant legislation and standards. The control measures proposed are consistent with applicable actions described in the relevant recovery plans and approved conservation advice and no stakeholder concerns have been raised regarding this aspect.

With the implementation of industry standard and activity-specific control measures to reduce the chance of a diesel spill event (and minimise impacts), the residual risk is assessed to be Low and ALARP. Control measures will reduce the risk of impact from MDO spill to a level that is acceptable.

9.7 Hydrocarbon spill – loss of well control

9.7.1 Description of event

Event	A loss of well control during decommissioning may occur due to the following reason: + stress cracking to a subsea tree or wellhead from an external impact (refer to Section 9.5.1). In the event of a LOWC, up to 1,350 m³ of light crude oil may be released as a slow leak (around 10.7 m³ per day) to the marine environment over 126 days with the most likely release points at the wellhead or subsea tree near the seabed. Worst-case credible spill scenarios were estimated to cover the possibility of a LOWC from any MEFF well under this EP. The worst-case credible spill scenario was predicted by selecting the most likely hydrocarbon flow parameters from the well to yield the credible maximum release volumes and rates (i.e., environmentally credible worst-case volume and rate) from the most credible (external force) unplanned scenario. Key parameters for input to this 'worst-case' blowout were taken from key Santos well design documents and Well Design Automation System, suitable analogues, latest reservoir models, or Santos' best estimates where information was unavailable. Quantitative hydrocarbon spill modelling was undertaken for the worst-case scenario. The LOWC worst-case discharge volumes that were used for the hydrocarbon spill modelling were based on Santos' Mutineer, Exeter, Fletcher, Finucane Worst Case Discharge Technical File Note. Rev 0, November 2020. Outputs from the modelling were used to inform the environmental impact assessment and to assist with emergency planning. The environmental consequences of a LOWC are highly variable, dependent on the characteristics of the hydrocarbon released, the dynamics of the receiving environment and the proximity of the release point to sensitive environmental receptors. The MEFF decommissioning campaign may also overlap the P&A campaign. In this case the seabed assets will only be dismantled/recovered from drill centres where P&A has already been completed and the MODU/intervention vessel has moved off location to another drill centre. Note that at the completion of P&A activities, a LOWC during decommissioning activities covered in this EP is no longer possible (Section 9.5.1).
Extent	The EMBA for the worst-case hydrocarbon spill from a LOWC was defined in Section 5.1. For information about the extent of potential impact associated with a LOWC, refer to Section 9.7.3.
Duration	The worst-case duration of a LOWC is predicted as 126 days (refer to the OPEP). This is the estimated time required to drill a relief well, including 49-day initial period until the LOWC is detected on the sea surface. Hydrocarbons would persist within the environment for a longer period of time.

9.7.1.1 Stochastic spill modelling – summary of results for moderate exposure thresholds

Accumulated shoreline oil above 100 g/m²

There was no shoreline accumulation above the moderate threshold of 100 g/m² predicted for any receptor.

Surface oil greater than 10 g/m²

No sensitive receptors, including the open ocean, were predicted to be contacted by surface oil above the moderate threshold of 10 g/m².

Entrained oil greater than 100 ppb

The open ocean, within 20 km of the release location was the only receptor predicted to be contacted by entrained hydrocarbons above the moderate threshold of 100 ppb.

Dissolved oil greater than 50 ppb

The open ocean, within 40 km of the release location was the only receptor predicted to be contacted by dissolved hydrocarbons above the moderate threshold of 50 ppb.

Given the results of the stochastic modelling, not additional environmental receptor hotspots have been identified for the LOWC scenario.

9.7.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Hydrocarbon spills will cause a decline in water quality and may cause chemical (e.g., toxic) and physical (e.g., coating of emergent habitats, oiling of wildlife at sea surface) impacts to marine species. The severity of the impact of a hydrocarbon spill depends on the magnitude of the spill (i.e., extent, duration) and sensitivity of the receptor.

The magnitude of potential environmental impact from a light crude oil release depends on multiple factors including hydrocarbon type, release volume and rate, and ocean and weather conditions.

An assessment of the sensitive environmental receptors at risk from a condensate release has been determined based on a literature review and trajectory and fate modelling described above. **Section 5.2** includes a description of biological environment present in the operational and/or EMBA.

Potential receptors: Physical environment (water and sediment quality, shoals and banks, benthic habitats), threatened or migratory fauna (marine mammals, marine reptiles, sharks, fish, rays and birds), protected and significant areas (KEFs), socio-economic receptors (fisheries, tourism, recreation and other third-party operators).

A LOWC release to the marine environment would result in reductions in water quality for at least one model time step (around an hour) at a probability greater than 10% across the 150 individual realisations per scenario over the worst-case spatial extents of:

- + entrained oil (>100 ppb) within 20 km of the release location
- + dissolved oil (>50 ppb) within 40 km of the release location
- + shoreline accumulation (>100 g/m²): no contact
- + Surface oil (>10 g/m²): no contact.

The potential impact pathways (physical and chemical) of hydrocarbon exposure to relevant habitat and marine fauna receptors are summarised in **Table 9-13** and an impact assessment completed for receptors within the EMBA in **Table 9-14**.

9.7.3 Environmental impact assessment

Description	
Receptors	Physical environment (water and sediment quality, benthic habitats) Threatened or migratory fauna (marine mammals, marine reptiles, sharks, rays, fish, and birds) Protected and significant areas (KEFs) Socio-economic receptors (fisheries, tourism and recreation)
Consequence	III – Moderate
<u>Physical environment or habitat</u> In the highly unlikely event of a LOWC, hydrocarbons are unlikely to reach shoreline habitats. Entrained and dissolved hydrocarbons above the moderate threshold will be restricted to within close vicinity to the	

release location within the operational area (20 km and 40 km respectively). Entrained and dissolved hydrocarbons may have the potential to affect water quality, threatened and migratory marine fauna and submerged features such as KEFs and shoals in the vicinity of the operational area.

Threatened or migratory fauna

In the highly unlikely event of a LOWC, the volume of light crude oil released would result in a reduction in water quality with the potential to impact marine fauna. Marine fauna present in the area may be potentially impacted by a spill through exposure to floating oil, entrained oil, or dissolved aromatic hydrocarbons. A description of impacts to marine fauna from exposure to condensate is provided in **Table 9-14**.

Habitat modification, degradation, disruption or loss, deteriorating water quality and marine pollution are identified as potential threats to a number of marine fauna species in relevant recovery plans and conservation advices (**Table 5-10**). With controls in place that align with relevant actions described in various recovery plans, the activity will be conducted in a manner that reduces potential impacts to ALARP and an acceptable level.

Protected areas

The EMBA from the LOWC scenario intersects the Ancient Coastline at 125 m Depth Contour KEF and Glomar Shoals (**Section 5.2.4**). Combined, these areas support all the habitats and faunal groups described above in **Table 9-13** and **Table 9-14**.

Socio-economic receptors

There is the potential for entrained oil to temporarily disrupt fishing activities if the surface or entrained oil moves through fishing areas. Surface oil above 10 g/m² is not expected to impact any commercial fishery. Entrained and dissolved hydrocarbons above 100 ppb and 50 ppb respectively may impact on the WA Mackerel Managed Fishery, which has shown to be active in the southern extremities of the operational area within the last 10 years. In the highly unlikely event of a crude spill, fishing grounds may be temporarily closed, which would have an impact on fishermen through loss of income. Market value/demand for fish may also be impacted due to actual or perceived tainting of catches. The significance of any decrease in market value/demand for fish may be substantial to those few individual fisheries operating in the affected areas, but it is unlikely to cause any significant long-term impact.

Impacts to tourism and recreational fishing are expected to be limited, given the lack of shoreline accumulation and relatively restricted extent of entrained and dissolved hydrocarbons. In the event of a crude oil spill, there is the potential for temporary closure of all marine-based recreational activities (including snorkeling and diving) to the risk to public health and safety.

A number of oil and gas operators operate within the EMBA with existing projects and equipment in place, as well as continuing drilling and exploration programs. A LOWC in the operational area has the potential to disrupt these activities, with associated economic impact, albeit on a temporary basis.

EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country.

On the basis of the above assessment, a LOWC has the potential to impact an array of receptors. Given the extent and the presence of protected areas (including World Heritage) within the EMBA, the worst-case consequence is considered to be Moderate (III).

Likelihood	A – Remote
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In accordance with the Santos Risk Matrix, a worst-case surface release of crude as a result of LOWC has been defined as an 'Remote' event as it 'requires exceptional circumstances and is unlikely even in the long-term'.

The likelihood of a LOWC event occurring is based on industry statistics, Santos' statistics and the standard preventive control measures in place. Wells are designed with essential engineering and safety control measures to prevent a loss of containment occurring. A full-bore blowout scenario is not possible during the decommissioning phase as Santos has no plans to actively re-enter any of the MEFF wells. The worst-case credible scenario of an external force from another operator's MODU breaking mooring and dragging anchors over subsea wells and causing a LOWC through stress cracking of a subsea tree or wellhead has not happened in the Australian industry. For Offshore Operations of North Sea Standard, the

frequency of well blowout for a production well (includes shut in production wells) from external causes was found to be 2.7×10^{-5} per well year. There were no records of well releases caused by external factors in the database. Frequency is based on 8 blowouts in UK, Norway and US Gulf of Mexico between 1980 and 2014 (IOGP 2019).

Management controls in place to control the flow of hydrocarbons include construction design and regular inspection and maintenance. Additional industry-standard and activity-specific control measures to reduce the chance of a loss of containment event have also been implemented including (but not limited to) procedures such as a NOPSEMA-accepted WOMP, safety case, and a spill response plan (OPEP) (refer **Section 9.7.4**). These control measures are considered to reduce the risk of a loss of containment (and minimise impacts) occurring to a level that is acceptable.

In accordance with the Santos Risk Matrix, given the control measures in place, the likelihood of worst-case seabed release of crude as a result of LOWC resulting in a Moderate (IV) consequence is considered to be Remote.

Residual Risk	The residual risk associated with this event is Very Low .
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9.7.4 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

The EPOs relating to this hazard include:

- + No loss of containment of hydrocarbon to the marine environment [MEFF-EPO-07].

The extensive planning, risk assessment of the activity and the engineering and operational control measures in place are considered to result in a very low risk of a hydrocarbon release due to LOWC occurring. The control measures considered for this activity are shown in **Table 9-18**. The EPSs and measurement criteria for the EPOs are described in **Section 11.4**.

Operational controls that would be implemented to guide and effective response after a spill has occurred are provided within relevant sections of the OPEP, together with corresponding EPSs and measurement criteria.

Table 9-18: Control measure evaluation for a loss of well control hydrocarbon spill

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Controls				
MEFF-CM-36	NOPSEMA accepted WOMP for MEFF wells	Includes control measures for well integrity and well control in an accepted WOMP, that reduce the risk of unplanned discharges to the marine environment. The WOMP also includes: + barriers in place to isolate hydrocarbons from the marine environment + inspection, monitoring and testing of barriers over the life of the well + response to increases in well integrity risk + notification and reporting requirements. Effective barriers manage isolation of the reservoir from the environment, acting to eliminate hydrocarbon releases.	Costs associated with personnel time in writing, reviewing and implementing the WOMP and Safety Case.	Adopted – Regulatory requirement must be adopted.
MEFF-CM-46	Navigational charts	Wells gazetted and marked on navigational charts to minimise the risk of collision from third parties.	Negligible costs, standard industry practice.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs to Santos.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
MEFF-CM-02	Santos stakeholder consultation strategy	Relevant stakeholders consulted/ advised of activities prior to commencement of individual inspection/ maintenance campaigns. Minimises the risk of collision from third parties.	Personnel cost and administrative costs associated with preparing material and liaising with stakeholders.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh costs.
MEFF-CM-43	Accepted OPEP	Implements response plans to deal with an unplanned hydrocarbon release quickly and efficiently to reduce impacts to the marine environment.	Administrative costs of preparing documents and large costs of preparing for and implementing response strategies.	Adopted – Regulatory requirement must be adopted.
MEFF-CM-47	Third-party agreements and contracts	Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for relief well drilling and contracts for source control personnel assist in controlling the flow of hydrocarbons as quickly as possible to reduce environmental impacts.	Cost of contracts and MoUs.	Adopted – Benefits considered to outweigh costs.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Additional Controls				
MEFF-CM-48	Implement MEFF Subsea Integrity Management Plan (ME-7000-REP-0071)	May reduce spill detection time from seven weeks (49 days) to two weeks (14 days). May result in some minor reduction of already very low shoreline accumulation (maximum ashore one tonne) and exposure to submerged hydrocarbons.	Minimal cost, plan already exists.	Adopted – Minimal cost, may provide small environmental benefit.
MEFF-CM-52	Designated safe deployment/recovery zones for seabed asset removal activities that commence prior to completion of the P&A campaign at drill centres where wellheads are still present	Eliminates the potential for a dropped object during seabed asset removal activities to impact a wellhead, if seabed asset removal activities commence prior to completion of the P&A campaign.	Minimal cost associated with designating and planning safe deployment/recovery zones.	Adopted – environmental benefit outweighs the minimal cost.
N/A	Additional (fortnightly) ROV monitoring of subsea trees, in addition to risk-based inspection program.	May reduce spill detection time from seven weeks (49 days) to two weeks (14 days). May result in some minor reduction of already very low shoreline accumulation (maximum ashore one tonne) and exposure to submerged hydrocarbons.	Vessel day rate of around \$50,000 to \$70,000 over the remaining period of the EP (around 12 months) = around \$1,000,000.	Rejected – The significant cost of additional surveillance of the subsea trees with ROV is deemed grossly disproportionate to the low risk of an external impact to a subsea tree or wellhead. Additionally, there is little to no environmental benefit, given the predicted very low shoreline accumulation and exposure to submerged hydrocarbons.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Additional (fortnightly) surveillance over the field using aircraft or satellite imagery	May reduce spill detection time from seven weeks (49 days) to two weeks (14 days). May result in some minor reduction of already very low shoreline accumulation (maximum ashore one tonne) and exposure to submerged hydrocarbons.	Aircraft – \$1 million over the remaining period of the EP (around 12 months) (assumed \$26,000 per hour and 1.5 hr flight time). Satellite imagery – \$260,000 (assumes average of \$10,000 for one image each fortnight).	Rejected – The cost of additional surveillance using aircraft and/or satellite imagery is deemed grossly disproportionate to the low risk of an external impact to a subsea tree or wellhead. Furthermore, a surface sheen may be difficult to detect from either aircraft or satellite surveillance, given that surface slicks >10 g/m ² are not expected. Hence there may be no benefit realised.
N/A	Protection and burying of seabed equipment	Reduces the risk of external impact to subsea tree or wellhead and hence the risk of impact to sensitive receptors from a loss of hydrocarbons.	Large cost and seabed disturbance associated with protection and burying. Burying of equipment will impact inspection and maintenance campaigns and future decommissioning activities.	Rejected – Large cost associated with protection and burying is grossly disproportionate compared to the risk. May also cause issues for future inspection, maintenance and decommissioning campaigns.
N/A	Rock dump of seabed equipment	Reduces the risk of external impact to subsea tree or wellhead and hence the risk of impact to sensitive receptors from a loss of hydrocarbons.	Large cost and seabed disturbance associated with rock dumping. Burying of equipment will impact inspection and maintenance campaigns and future decommissioning activities.	Rejected – Large cost associated with rock dumping is grossly disproportionate compared to the risk. May also cause issues for future inspection, maintenance and decommissioning campaigns.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
N/A	Dedicated standby or guard vessel in field 24 hours	Reduces potential for third party external damage to subsea tree or wellhead.	Large costs associated with a dedicated standby/guard vessel. May not be successful in preventing adrift MODU from impacting subsea tree/wellhead.	Rejected – Large cost associated with dedicated standby/guard vessel which outweigh any benefits.
N/A	Source control plan in place for all wells	May allow for quicker response to a loss-of well-control scenario, thereby limiting potential spill extent and volume.	Costs associated with organisational costs and reviewing relief well plans.	Rejected – Santos only has relief well plans in place for wells undergoing intervention activities, and it is part of the intervention planning process. Given the low risk presented by wells and the standards used to manage well integrity, it is not considered an effective control.

9.7.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

The combination of the standard and additional prevention control measures (**Section 9.7.4**) (which reduce the likelihood of the event happening), and the spill response strategies (which may reduce the consequence) together reduce the hydrocarbon spill risk.

Based on the stochastic spill modelling, Santos has determined applicable source control response measures to limit the spill volume from a LOWC event to ALARP. Further detail is provided below.

Source control and detection controls

A number of source control options have been evaluated for the activity (refer to OPEP). Of these source control options, the drilling of a relief well is considered the primary means of controlling the source in the event of an unplanned well release. Spill response and impact assessment for this activity has been based on the relief well taking 126 days (18 weeks) to execute. A breakdown of the key tasks and their timeframe to drill a relief well in 18 weeks have been included in Section 9 of the OPEP.

Supporting controls to allow the relief well schedule to be met include:

- + rig capability register is maintained
- + status of relief well tangible equipment
- + APPEA MoU provides for access to other operators' rigs

contracts and MoUs for third-party-independent well control specialist personnel are in place.

The implementation timeframe of this control is key to its effectiveness. Additional controls were considered to reduce the timeframe for detection; however, all were rejected based on no environmental benefit realised for significant additional cost. A full-bore well blowout is not considered a credible scenario for the cessation of operations phase, and no shoreline accumulation above threshold levels is predicted.

Spill mitigation controls

Santos considers that through the selection of appropriate spill response strategies, development of spill response controls and maintenance of preparedness arrangements and resources to implement these controls, spill risk is mitigated to ALARP. Preparedness spill response controls are outlined in **Table 9-18** while those that would be implemented in the event of a spill are outlined within the OPEP.

9.7.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the risk ranked between Very Low to Medium?	Yes – maximum credible hydrocarbon spill volume (light crude oil from a LOWC) residual risk is ranked as Very Low.
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	Yes – hydrocarbon spill modelling results were used to determine consequence and risk.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5), which considers principles of ESD. The residual risk for this aspect is Very Low and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5.
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	Yes – management consistent with OPGGS(E)R 2023 Regulations, including safety case and WOMP. Santos has considered the values and sensitivities of the receiving environment, including but not limited to conservation values of the identified protection priorities (Section 5) relevant species recovery plans, conservation management plans and management actions. Management is also consistent with the zoning of the Australian marine parks, and their management plans in that risks have been reduced to ALARP, e.g., implementation of spill response activities will limit impacts, thereby conserving the marine park values which includes RAMSAR wetlands and other habitats critical to the diversity and value of the protected areas.
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? (cessation phase activities)	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? (seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities)	Yes – no concerns raised. DNP made a request in relation to a marine pollution event, that impacts, or is likely to impact an AMP and provided expectations on notification requirements (addressed in Table 11-4)
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

The likelihood of a LOWC event during the activity is unlikely when considering industry statistics, Santos' statistics and the preventative controls in place. Wells are designed with essential engineering and safety control measures to prevent a LOWC incident occurring. Additional industry-standard and activity-specific control measures to reduce the chance of the event occurring (and minimise impacts) have also been implemented, including (but not limited to) procedures such as the WOMP, MEFF Integrity Management Plan and a spill response plan (OPEP). In accordance with Santos' risk assessment process, the residual risk is considered to be ALARP. The proposed control measures will reduce the risk of impacts from a LOWC to a level that is considered acceptable.

9.8 Minor hydrocarbon release (surface and subsea)

9.8.1 Description of event

Event	Causes for accident hydrocarbon releases (other than diesel release from a vessel collision or bunkering, and LOWC) include: + hydraulic fluids, lubricant oils and (stored) waste oils + ROV failure (including oil seal, hydraulic system hose and quick disconnect system failures) or loss of contents of ROV mounted bladder (MEG, methanol or hydraulic fluid) + loss of primary containment (drums, tanks, intermediate bulk containers [IBCs], etc) due to handling, storage and dropped objects (e.g., swinging load during lifting activities) + vessel pipework failure or rupture, hydraulic hose failure, inadequate bunding + lifting – dropped objects damaging diesel equipment (hoses, pipes, tanks, etc) + subsea cutting and deburial equipment failure (hydraulic system seals, hoses etc.) The vessels main engines and equipment such as pumps, cranes, winches, power packs and generators require MDO for fuel and a variety of hydraulic fluids and lubricating oils for efficient operation and maintenance of moving parts. These products are present within the equipment and also held in storage containers and tanks on the vessels. Small hydrocarbon leaks could occur from loss of primary containment due to handling, storage and dropped objects (during lifting activities). Volumes are likely to be small and limited to the volume of individual containers (e.g., IBC, 44-gallon drums) stored on the deck of vessels. The credible spill for this scenario is considered to be the loss of an IBC (1 m³) during transfer from a support vessel to a primary vessel. Equipment deployed overboard during activities (e.g., ROV operations, subsea cutting and deburial) can result in unplanned discharges (of hydraulic fluids) directly to the marine environment due to equipment failure, equipment interactions with the vessel thrusters and/or accidental contact with subsea equipment. The largest credible hydrocarbon spill from ROV operations would be an accidental release of around 365 L of hydraulic fluid from the deployed ROV-mounted bladder. Minor accidental loss of other hydrocarbon-based liquids (e.g., used lubricating oils, cooking oil, and hydraulic oil) to the marine environment could also occur via tank pipework failure or rupture, hydraulic hose failure, inadequate bunding and/or storage, insufficient fastening or inadequate handling which could result in impacts to water quality and hence sensitive environmental receptors. Potential discharge fluids from a rupture or leak from a flowline, service line, or umbilical include treated seawater (including corrosion inhibitor) and residual reservoir hydrocarbons (in the flowlines). Records confirm that flushing activities undertaken prior to the departure of the FPSO achieved an OIW concentration of 30 to 40 ppm. At a residual concentration of 40 ppm, the expected maximum volume of hydrocarbon in the subsea production system is estimated to be 84 L. The subsea equipment is not over-pressured. Therefore, any fluids leaked would contain no more than 300 ppm oil inwater. Hence, the volume of residual hydrocarbons released to the marine environment would be low.
Extent	The relative low volumes are expected to rapidly disperse into the marine environment. Below toxic/harmful threshold concentrations are expected to occur at short distances from the hydrocarbon release point. In the event of a worst-case spill, potential impacts beyond the operational area are not expected.
Duration	Potentially toxic/harmful threshold concentrations limited to a very short period immediately following release.

9.8.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Potential receptors: Physical environment (water and sediment quality, benthic habitats), threatened, migratory or local fauna (marine mammals, marine reptiles, sharks and rays, fish and birds), and socio-economic receptors (commercial fishing).

Physical environment

Hydraulic fluids and lubricating fluids behave similarly to MDO when spilt in the marine environment (for information about MDO behaviour in the marine environment refer to **Section 9.5.3**). Hydraulic fluids are medium oils of light to moderate viscosity and have a relatively rapid spreading rate and, like diesel, will dissipate quickly, particularly in high sea states, although lubricating oils are more viscous and so the spreading rate of a spill of these oils would be slightly slower.

Physical environment

Minor volumes of hydrocarbons released to the marine environment may lead to contamination of the water column in the vicinity of the vessels. The potential impacts would most likely be highly localised and restricted to the immediate area surrounding the spill, with rapid dispersal to concentrations below impact thresholds likely to occur in the open ocean.

Due to the small volumes and expected rapid dispersal to concentrations below impact thresholds, impacts to water quality are not expected to cause flow-on effects to sediment quality or benthic habitats. There is no emergent or intertidal habitat that could be impacted by a surface spill and spilled hydrocarbons at minor volumes are unlikely to reach shorelines.

Threatened migratory or local fauna

The minor and short-term changes to water quality that may result are not predicted to impact on marine fauna (e.g., pelagic fish and sharks, marine mammals, marine reptiles and seabirds). As summarised in **Table 5-9**, the BIA for pygmy blue whales (distribution) and whale shark (foraging) overlap the operational area; therefore, these receptors may be present. A number of Recovery Plans and Conservation Advice for threatened and migratory species that may occur within the operational area (**Table 5-10**) identify marine pollution and deteriorating water quality (chemical discharge) as a threat to the species.

Small hydrocarbon spills are unlikely to have an ecological effect on threatened or migratory fauna, given the small volumes that could be released, and the open ocean environment. Physical coating of marine fauna or lethal/sub-lethal toxicity effects from any accidentally released hydrocarbons, is considered unlikely, given the expected low concentrations and short exposure times.

Socio-economic receptors

Given the historically limited commercial fishing effort in the operational area and the fact that the only recently active (in the last ten years) fishery is the Mackerel Managed Fishery which targets pelagic species, impacts to commercial fishing are not expected. The small volumes of hydrocarbons are expected to disperse rapidly and no impacts to commercial fisheries species are expected.

9.8.3 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

The EPOs relating to this event include:

- + No loss of containment of hydrocarbon to the marine environment [MEFF-EPO-07].

The control measures considered for this event are shown in **Table 9-19**, and EPSs and measurement criteria for the EPOs are described in **Section 11.4**.

Table 9-19: Control measure evaluation for minor release of hydrocarbons

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Controls				
MEFF-CM-41	Hazardous chemical management procedures	Reduces the risk of spills and leaks (discharges) to sea by controlling the storage, handling and clean-up.	Personnel cost associated with implementation of procedures and permanent or temporary storage areas.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring procedures are followed and measures implemented outweigh costs.
MEFF-CM-30	General chemical management procedures	Potential impacts to the environment are reduced through following correct procedures for the safe handling and storage of chemicals.	Personnel costs associated with ensuring procedures are in place and implemented during inspections.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring procedures are followed and measures implemented outweigh the costs of personnel time.
MEFF-CM-31	Chemical selection procedure	Reduced toxicity to marine environment through ensuring only environmentally acceptable chemicals discharged to sea.	Potential additional cost and delays of chemical substitution.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring procedures are followed outweighs costs.
MEFF-CM-49	Maritime Dangerous Goods Code	Dangerous goods managed in accordance with International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code to reduce the risk of an environmental incident, such as an accidental release to sea or unintended chemical reaction.	Cost associated with implementation of code/procedure.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring procedures are followed and measures implemented outweigh costs.
MEFF-CM-50	ROV inspection and maintenance procedures	Maintenance and pre-deployment inspection on ROV completed as scheduled to reduce the risk of hydraulic fluid releases to the marine environment.	Additional personnel costs of ensuring procedures in place and followed.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring procedures are followed outweigh costs.

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
MEFF-CM-43	Accepted OPEP	Implements response plan to deal with an unplanned hydrocarbon spills quickly and efficiently in order to reduce impacts to the marine environment.	Personnel and administrative costs associated with preparing documents, ongoing management (spill response exercises) and implementation of OPEP.	Adopted – Regulatory requirement must be adopted.
MEFF-CM-42	Vessel spill response plans (SOPEP/ SMPEP)	Effective management of an accidental spill (discharge to sea) to reduce impact to the environment.	Personnel cost associated with ongoing management (spill response exercises) and implementation of plans.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring response plans in place, are followed and measures implemented and that the vessels are compliant outweighs costs.
MEFF-CM-51	Deck drainage control measures	Reduces the risk of spills and leaks (discharges) to sea through use of scupper plugs or equivalent deck drainage control measures available where chemicals and hydrocarbons are stored and frequently handled.	Additional personnel costs of ensuring procedures in place and followed.	Adopted – Benefits of ensuring procedures are followed outweigh costs.

9.8.4 Environmental impact assessment

Description	
Receptors	Physical environment (water and sediment quality, benthic habitats) Threatened, migratory or local fauna (marine mammals, marine reptiles, sharks, fish, rays and birds) Socio-economic receptors (commercial fishing)
Consequence	I – Negligible
In the event of a minor hydrocarbon spill, the quantities would be limited to around 1 m³ for the loss of the contents of an IBC, or 50 L for ROV, subsea cutting tool or deburial tool hydraulic fluid. The small volumes, dilution and dispersion from natural weathering processes such as ocean currents are such that spills will be limited in area and duration. The number of receptors present at the activity location are expected to be limited to a small number of transient individuals. The susceptibility of marine fauna to hydrocarbons depends on hydrocarbon type and exposure duration; however, given exposures would be limited in extent and duration, exposure to marine fauna from this hazard is considered to be low. The small volumes of worst-case discharges are such that the impacts to receptors will decline rapidly with time and distance at the sea surface. Rapid dilution at depth would also result in the impacts to receptors declining rapidly with time and distance. Deteriorating water quality and marine pollution are identified as potential threats to a number of marine fauna species in relevant recovery plans and conservation advice (Table 5-10) and to MNES (DoE, 2013). With control measures in place, the activity will be conducted in a manner that reduces potential impacts to ALARP and an acceptable level. Toxic impacts are not expected to the benthic community due to the water depths. Near the sea surface, fish are able to detect and avoid contact with surface slicks and as a result, fish mortalities rarely occur in open waters from surface spills (Kennish, 1997; Scholz <i>et al.</i>, 1992). Pelagic fish species are therefore generally not highly susceptible to impacts from hydrocarbon spills. In offshore waters near to the release point, pelagic fish are at risk of exposure to the more toxic aromatic components of the hydrocarbons. Pelagic fish in offshore waters are highly mobile and comprise species such as tunas, sharks and mackerel. Due to their mobility, it is unlikely pelagic fish would be exposed to toxic components for long periods in this spill scenario. The more toxic components would also rapidly evaporate and concentrations would significantly diminish with distance from the spill site, limiting the potential area of impact. The potential minor hydrocarbon releases are not expected to significantly impact the receiving environment with control measures proposed to prevent releases; therefore, the activity will be conducted in a manner that is considered acceptable. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country. Given a small hydrocarbon spill would not result in a decreased population size at a local or regional scale or long-term reduction to water and sediment quality, it is expected a spill of this nature would result in a Negligible (I) consequence.	
Likelihood	D – Occasional
A small hydrocarbon liquid release has reduced likelihood due to a number of controls being in place, which include: + the control measures in place to prevent spills + the procedures in place to clean up a spill. Consequently, the likelihood of releasing minor volumes of hydrocarbons to the environment, is considered Occasional (D).	
Residual Risk	The residual risk associated with this event is Low .

9.8.5 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

Storage and use of hydraulic and lubricating oils/fluids for equipment and machinery, including for ROV, subsea cutting and deburial operations, are required to undertake the activity, so their removal from the activity is not viable. A thorough set of control measures have been proposed to ensure the risks of minor hydrocarbons spills and leaks occurring and subsequent impacts are minimised. The resulting impacts to marine fauna that could potentially result from a spill of this size would be negligible, with potential impacts restricted to a small number of individuals within a localised area. The assessed residual risk for this impact is low and cannot be reduced further. Therefore, it is considered the impact of the activities conducted is ALARP.

9.8.6 Acceptability evaluation

Is the risk ranked between Very Low to Medium?	Yes – maximum minor hydrocarbon spill residual risk is ranked as Low.
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5) which considers principles of ecologically sustainable development. The residual risk for this aspect is Low and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5 .
Are risks and impacts consistent with relevant legislation, international agreements and conventions, guidelines and codes of practice (including species recovery plans, threat abatement plans, conservation advice and Australian Marine Park zoning objectives)?	Yes – management consistent with SOLAS 1974 and <i>Navigation Act 2012</i> , Marine Order 91 (Marine pollution prevention – oil) and with relevant recovery plans and conservation advices for species that may occur in the operational area (Table 5-10).
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? (cessation phase activities)	Yes – no concerns raised.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? (seabed equipment removal and abandonment in situ activities)	Yes – no concerns raised. DNP made a request in relation to a marine pollution event, that impacts, or is likely to impact an AMP and provided expectations on notification requirements (addressed in Table 11-4)
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above.

With the control measures in place to prevent the accidental release of minor volumes of hydrocarbons, and potential social and environmental impacts and risk well understood and considered low, the environmental risk associated with a minor hydrocarbon release is considered acceptable.

9.9 Interaction with other marine users (equipment left in situ)

9.9.1 Description of event

Event	Interaction with other marine users may occur as a result of: + the continued presence of buried seabed assets abandoned in situ. below The physical presence of the seabed equipment abandoned in situ on or above the seabed may interfere with third party activities including: + current and future commercial fishing activities (accidental damage to fishing equipment such as trawl and trap fishing gear) + future petroleum activities + future commercial shipping activities
Extent	Operational area.
Duration	The potential effects may occur until equipment degrades (many decades)

9.9.2 Nature and scale of environmental impacts

Potential receptors: Socio-economic (commercial fishers, shipping traffic and other oil and gas activities).

Commercial fisheries

There is potential for equipment remaining on the seabed to pose a snag risk to commercial fisheries until its removed.

As described in **Section 8.1.2**, none of the Commonwealth fisheries identified in **Section 5.2.6** are likely to be significantly active in the operational area; the Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery is the only fishery with limited activity in the area with only five active vessels since 2005.

There are two State commercial fisheries that overlap the operational area and may be active within the area. The Pilbara Fish Interim Trawl Managed Fishery has a Closed Area (Area 6) that overlaps the operational area. No trap fishing has been recorded in the operational area. The Mackerel Managed Fishery also overlaps the operational area. Low level fishing effort from the Mackerel Managed Fishery was recorded in the southern-most part of the operational area more than ten years ago. The Mackerel Managed Fishery is a line fishery, focusing on pelagic fish species in the upper water column and is not expected to interact with seabed assets abandoned in situ.

All six DTM anchors were confirmed fully buried by the 2021 in field environmental survey (GHD, 2021) at depth of between 6 to 13 m and are therefore expected to remain buried. (**Section 4.7.1**). The buried anchors and mooring chains are not considered to pose a snag risk to any commercial fishing activities. The Closed Area (Area 6), which overlaps the Operational Area, has been closed since current management arrangements for the fishery came into effect in 1998 (Gaughan and Santoro, 2021).

Santos has consulted with fishing industry bodies, WAFIC and individual fishing licence holders within the Pilbara Fish Interim Trawl Managed Fishery on the ongoing physical presence of decommissioned seabed equipment (**Appendix F**). The ongoing physical presence of the anchors and buried mooring chains abandoned in situ will not preclude commercial trawling activities from occurring in Area 6, should that area open to trawl fishing in the future.

Over the last three decades the Pilbara Trawl Managed Fishery has had a substantial reduction in the number of boats operating and also the amount of fishing hours allocated following the implementation of the Pilbara Trawl Managed Fishery Management Plan 1997. This reduction in vessel numbers and fishing time has resulted in a reduction in exploratory fishing. Hence operators are more likely to stick to known trawling areas. Buried infrastructure does not pose a credible risk of interaction with trawl fishing gear.

Commercial shipping

The far-north corner of the eastern-most boundary of the operational area marginally overlaps the Dampier Shipping Fairway (**Figure 5-21**) (overlap of 0.764 km²). Impacts on shipping movements are therefore expected to be minimal. The ongoing physical presence of seabed assets abandoned in situ below the seabed will not interfere with commercial shipping.

Petroleum industry

The presence of the equipment on the seabed could potentially interfere with future petroleum activities (e.g. interfere with drill rig placement). However, due to the estimated 6- 13m burial depth of the six anchors and the very small footprint of anchor chain as cut at the seabed, () any such interference would be insignificant.

Given the distance offshore, the depths at the site and the absence of reefs, it is unlikely any recreational fishing occurs in the area. There are no tourism related activities expected to occur in the area, given the distance from nearest shore.

9.9.3 Environmental performance outcomes and control measures

Environmental performance outcomes (EPOs) relating to this event include:

- + Reduce impacts on other marine users through the provision of information to relevant stakeholders such that they are able to plan for their activities and avoid unexpected interference [MEFF-EPO-01].

The control measures (CM) considered for this activity are shown in **Table 9-20**, with environmental performance standards (EPSs) and measurement criteria for the EPOs described in **Section 11.4**.

Table 9-20: Control measures evaluation for interaction with other marine users

CM reference	Control measure	Environmental benefit	Potential cost / issues	Evaluation
Standard Control Measures				
MEFF-CM-14	Notify AHO of locations for equipment abandoned in situ for marking on navigational charts	Ensures other marine users are aware of the presence of equipment abandoned in situ.	Negligible, given is standard industry practice.	Adopted - Benefits considered to outweigh negligible costs.
Additional Control Measures				
MEFF-CM-37	Sea dumping permit	Ensure compliance with legislation that assesses environmental risks and impacts associated with permanent abandonment of equipment at sea.	Minimal additional costs, this is a regulatory requirement.	Adopted – Legal requirement.

9.9.4 Environmental impact assessment

Description	
Receptors	Socio-economic receptors (commercial fishing, commercial shipping, petroleum industry)
Consequence	I – Negligible
Threatened, migratory or local fauna	Not applicable – related to socio-economic receptors only.
Physical environment or habitat	
Threatened ecological communities	
Protected areas	
Socio-economic receptors	The continued presence of seabed equipment in situ is not expected to significantly impact other marine users or fishery resources and is unlikely to result in changes in distribution and abundance of fish species outside the operational area. As the mooring anchors and chains are buried 6-13 m below the seabed, risk of interaction with trawled fisheries is not credible. During the preparation of Revision 4A, Santos consulted with WAFIC and invited feedback from individual fishing licence holders within the Pilbara Fish Interim Trawl Managed Fishery regards the ongoing physical presence of decommissioned seabed equipment (Appendix F). No response was received from licence holders and WAFICs queries related to contamination aspects which are addressed in Sections 8.7.6 and 8.8.6. Impacts to commercial shipping expected to be negligible. The ongoing physical presence of seabed assets abandoned in situ is not expected to interfere with commercial shipping, given water depths are in excess of 130m and in situ items would only protrude approximately 3 m above the seabed. Impacts to future petroleum industry are expected to be negligible, due to the small footprint of the anchor chain cut at seabed and the 6m- 13m burial depth of the anchors, , any such interference would be insignificant. EP stakeholder consultation did not raise any concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural features including sea country.
Likelihood	B – Unlikely
With controls in place ensuring the presence of the equipment is known and marked on nautical charts, the likelihood of unplanned interaction with other marine users resulting in a negligible consequence is considered to be b-Unlikely	
Residual Risk	The residual risk associated with this event is Very Low

9.9.5 Acceptability evaluation

Is the consequence ranked as I (Negligible) or II (Minor)?	Yes – maximum consequence from interaction with or impact on other marine users is I (Negligible).
Is further information required in the consequence assessment?	No – potential impacts and risks are well understood through the information available.
Are risks and impacts consistent with the principles of ESD?	Yes – activity evaluated in accordance with Santos' Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Procedure (EA-91-IG-00004_5), which considers principles of ESD. The residual impact for this aspect is Very Low and therefore does not affect the outcomes of the principles of ecologically sustainable development as per Table 7-5. However, Santos acknowledges that the seabed equipment abandoned in situ will be present for approximately 90 to 250 years before it fully degrades. Therefore, Santos has completed the following assessment against the principle of inter-generational equity—that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations: + The risk assessment demonstrates that the degradation of abandoned seabed equipment will not adversely impact the health, diversity and productivity of the environment for the benefit of future generations. Any impacts are expected to be negligible and acceptable for both the short-term and the long-term.
Are risks and impacts consistent with Santos' Environmental, Health and Safety Policy?	Yes – aligns with Santos' Environmental, Health and Safety Policy.
Are risks and impacts consistent with stakeholder expectations? (seabed equipment removal activities)	Yes – no concerns raised about this aspect.
Are performance standards such that the impact or risk is considered to be ALARP?	Yes – see ALARP above

The abandonment of select seabed equipment in buried mooring chain and buried anchors, is not expected to significantly affect other marine users, including commercial fishing operations or shipping traffic, given the following:

- + Seabed assets are buried 6-13 m below the seabed
- + seabed assets abandoned in situ will be marked on navigational charts
- + outcomes of stakeholder engagement did not identify any concerns by relevant stakeholders.

Therefore, the potential impacts on marine users is considered ALARP and acceptable.

9.9.6 Demonstration of as low as reasonably practicable

Leaving infrastructure in situ will not preclude trawl fishers from operating in the Closed Area (Area 6) of the Pilbara Fish Interim Trawl Managed Fishery should that area become open to trawl fishing in the future. As the mooring anchors and chains are buried 6-13 m below the seabed, risk of

interaction with trawled fisheries is not credible. No objections or concerns were raised by relevant stakeholders regarding the activity in terms of this aspect.

Stakeholders have been informed of the proposed decommissioning activity and asked for feedback. Santos will notify the Australian Hydrographic Service AHS with the locations of seabed assets abandoned in situ upon completion of the field decommissioning to minimise the risk of interference with other marine users.

An additional control of engaging with DCCEEW regarding the application of the Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981 for the permanent abandonment of equipment left in situ and complying with requirements under the Act has been adopted.

With the controls adopted, the assessed residual consequence for this impact is negligible. Three additional control measures were considered with two rejected, since the associated cost / effort was grossly disproportionate to any benefit as detailed above. Therefore, impact is ALARP.

10. Surrender of Title

Santos intends to surrender production licences WA-26-L, WA-27-L and WA-54-L at the completion of activities described in this EP. An application to surrender titles will be made to NOPTA and the Joint Authority. NOPSEMA provides advice to the Joint Authority when an application to surrender is made. NOPSEMA's advice includes confirmation that the titleholder has satisfied relevant environmental management requirements in particular s270 of the OPGGS Act. NOPSEMA's Section 270 Consent to surrender title – NOSPEMA advice (2022) identifies a number of criteria that NOPSEMA consider when advising the Joint Authority on applications to surrender titles.

As this EP is intended to be the final EP for the MEFF development the relevant requirements in Section 270 of the OPGGS Act are set out in **Table 10-1**. Santos will implement decommissioning surveys as outlined in **Section 10.3** at the conclusion of all infrastructure removal activities. The results of these decommissioning surveys will be used to assess whether the requirements of Section 270(3) (e) and Section 270 (3) (f) have been met.

Table 10-1: OPGGS Act Section 270 consent to relinquish title- requirements

Item	Source	Requirement	Action/Outcome
2	OPGGS Act Section 270	(3) The Joint Authority may consent to the surrender sought by the application only if the registered holder of the permit, lease or licence: (a) has paid all fees and amounts payable by the holder under: (i) this Act; (ii) the Royalty Act; (iii) section 10E of the Regulatory Levies Act; - or has made arrangements that are satisfactory to the Titles Administrator for the payment of those fees and amounts; and	Santos will comply with requirements of act in order to surrender title.
3		(b) has complied with the conditions to which the permit, lease or licence is subject and with the provisions of: (i) this Chapter; and (ii) Chapter 4; and (iia) Chapter 5A; and (iii) Chapter 6; and (iv) Part 7.1; and (v) the regulations; and	Santos will comply with requirements of act in order to surrender title.

Item	Source	Requirement	Action/Outcome
4		(c) to the satisfaction of NOPSEMA, removed or caused to be removed from the surrender area (defined by subsection (7)) all property brought into the surrender area by any person engaged or concerned in the operations authorised by the permit, lease or licence; or (i) made arrangements that are satisfactory to NOPSEMA in relation to that property; and	Santos proposes to remove the majority of property from WA-26-L, WA-27-L and WA-54 as outlined in Section . Santos is seeking acceptance of an EP to abandon in-situ, buried mooring chains and buried anchors in accordance with NOPSEMA's Section 572 Policy Maintenance and Removal of Property (2022)
5		(d) has, to the satisfaction of NOPSEMA, plugged or closed off all wells made in the surrender area by any person engaged or concerned in the operations authorised by the permit lease or licence; and	Santos proposes to plug and abandon all well within the operational area. This is described in the <i>Mutineer-Exeter Plug and Abandonment Environment Plan 9885-236-EMP-0002</i>
6		(e) has provided, to the satisfaction of NOPSEMA, for the conservation and protection of the natural resources in the surrender area; The natural resources referred to in this Part consist of the <i>"mineral and other non-living resources of the seabed and subsoil, together with living organisms belonging to sedentary species, that is to say, organisms which, at the harvestable stage, either are immobile on or under the seabed or are unable to move except in constant physical contact with the seabed or the subsoil."</i>	Santos has undertaken all previous activities within operational area under accepted EPs which contain management measure to reduce impacts to the natural resources of the area. On this basis, no impacts to the conservation and protection of natural resources are expected. Santos proposes to undertake Decommissioning Surveys as outlined in Section 10.3 and Section 4.10. The Decommissioning Surveys will ultimately inform Santos' assessment that the titles continue to provide for the conservation and protection of natural resources, and are acceptable, in the surrender area.

Item	Source	Requirement	Action/Outcome
7		(f) has, to the satisfaction of NOPSEMA, made good any damage to the seabed or subsoil in the surrender area caused by any person engaged or concerned in the operations authorised by the permit, lease or licence;	<i>Santos considers making good any damage to the seabed or subsoil as being achieved by</i> - <i>removal of infrastructure above the seabed and only leaving the buried anchors and anchor chains in situ (Refer Section 1.3)</i> - <i>and the application of natural remediation over time</i> - <i>as per this EP when accepted.</i> Santos proposes to undertake Decommissioning Surveys as outlined in Section to confirm compliance with Section 270 (f). demonstrates that the requirements of how Section 270 3(e) and 270 3(f) will be met. The removal of infrastructure along with the infrastructure proposed for abandonment insitu does not prevent future activities in WA-26-L, WA-27-L and WA-54 such as: + trawl fishing + re release as petroleum exploration and production titles + offshore construction.

10.1 Current and proposed end state of the MEFF field

The infrastructure currently on the seabed of the MEFF field scheduled for removal as part of the SAR campaign is described in **Section 4.6**. It is proposed to leave the buried mooring chains and anchors in situ as outlined in **Section 4.7**. The six DTM mooring anchors were confirmed as fully buried with no seabed disturbance visible at the anchor locations (March 2021),

Anchors are expected to be buried between 6 to 13 m below the seabed and therefore, will remain buried as they are below the regional scour depth (estimated to be 50 mm). Approximately 130 m of each mooring chain remains unburied (sitting on the seabed) which will be removed.

Wells will be plugged and abandoned prior to commencement of SAR activities.

10.2 Condition of environment at the time of abandonment

Santos has monitored the condition of the environment throughout the life of the MEFF field using information from desktop sources such as relevant literature, applicable management plans and conservation or recovery advice, information from stakeholder consultation and the results of environmental monitoring surveys.

Section 5 details the current condition of environmental values in and around the MEFF field, including water quality, sediment quality, benthic habitats, fauna presence (including protected species and applicable any management plans, conservation or recovery advice), protected areas, and demersal fish assemblages. The condition of these environmental values is considered in the assessment of impacts and risks in **Section 8** and **Section 9**.

The historical and current activities of other users of the sea, include commercial fishing and maritime transport. The description of the environment in **Section 5** and stakeholder consultation in **Section 6** detail these activities, which are considered in the assessment of impacts and risks in **Section 8** and **Section 9**.

Sediment quality sampling completed in 2014 (GHD, 2014) to validate the operations phase produced water model predictions, found no significant differences in sediment quality between sites in the vicinity of the FPSO and reference sites in the title area. Furthermore, there were no exceedances of National Assessment Guidelines for Dredging (NAGD, 2009) trigger values. Therefore, impacts to sediment quality from FPSO operations in the MEFF field were not identified during this survey.

The most recent assessment involved a visual survey and sediment sampling in March 2021 (GHD, 2021), which observed that contaminants were generally below recognised thresholds, with the exception of mercury, antimony and lead at the Exeter facility and total recoverable hydrocarbons at the Mutineer facility. Concentrations of these contaminants exceeded the default guideline values outlined in the Australian and New Zealand guidelines for Fresh and Marine Water Quality (DAWE, 2022), but not the 'upper' guideline values at which observable toxic effects may be expected. The survey demonstrated a strong relationship between proximity (closeness) to a well and increased concentrations of metals.

The six DTM mooring anchors were confirmed as fully buried with no seabed disturbance visible at the anchor locations (March 2021).

Anchors are expected to be buried between 6 to 13 m below the seabed and therefore, will remain buried as they are below the regional scour depth (estimated to be 50 mm). Approximately 130 m of each mooring chain remains unburied (sitting on the seabed) which will be removed.

Wells will be plugged and abandoned prior to commencement of SAR activities.

10.3 Decommissioning surveys

Santos will undertake a work program as part of decommissioning activities to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of S. 270 of the OPGGS Act.

The decommissioning environmental survey program will consist of two components:

1. A decommissioning "as -left" survey to confirm the seabed around former sites of removed infrastructure and /or the sites of any equipment decommissioning insitu is clear of potential hazards to other users of the sea and that petroleum activities including decommissioning, have not resulted in unacceptable damage to the seabed or subsoil in the area.
2. Decommissioning environmental monitoring to confirm that petroleum activities undertaken in the title area have not resulted in unacceptable chemical contamination above relevant sediment quality thresholds and background levels.

10.3.1 As-left survey

Following the decommissioning activity, Santos will undertake a final seabed survey primarily using an ROV referred to as an "as left survey" (**Section 4.9**).

The As left survey will be undertaken during recovery operations, or, after removal of the subsea equipment above the seabed, using an ROV to confirm that only mooring components (chains and anchors) which are buried will be left in- situ. The survey will:

- verify that all equipment above the seabed has been removed as described in **Section 4.6** and seabed around former sites of infrastructure is clear of hazards
- ROV footage will be undertaken commensurate with the nature and scale of the removal activities. E.g.
 - approximately 30m around recovered infrastructure (e.g. gravity bases)
 - approximately 5m either side of the recovery path of subsea umbilical risers and flowlines (SURF), exposed mooring chain and the rigid pipeline
- Visually identify and confirm the extent of any seabed disturbance around the former sites of seabed equipment as a result of removal activities
- confirm the position and depth of the buried mooring components (anchors and chains) left in situ, as described in **Section 4.7** at the time of abandonment using best endeavours via a magnetometer or similar tool.
- ROV footage will also be undertaken at historical activity locations across the MEFF titles including at the historical location of the FPSO and at 500 m around historical well construction sites.

10.3.2 Decommissioning Environmental monitoring

In addition to the “as-left survey”, Santos intends to undertake a decommissioning environmental monitoring program to ensure that the:

- decommissioning activities do not affect the natural resources within the titles beyond what is described and approved within the Mutineer-Exeter Cessation of Production and Decommissioning EP;
- environmental performance outcomes; and
- standards set out in the EP are being met and satisfy the requirements of s270 of the OPGGS Act.

An environmental monitoring will be undertaken through a decommissioning sediment sampling survey program (the Program).

The Program will be developed by suitably qualified and experience personnel, using a recognised study design informed by and addressing any identified data gaps or data quality shortcomings from previous sediment sampling surveys in the title area.

The Program will be designed to support identification of potential impacts to natural resources from all oil and gas activities in the title area. The program will include a desktop review of the history of the operating asset's property installed in the title area, including locations of equipment removal during decommissioning and any remaining equipment decommissioned in situ. In addition, there will be a desktop review of existing environmental data related to asset operations within the title area including any discharges of drill fluids and cuttings, produced formation water and cooling water which may have affected sediment characteristics and, or quality.

The Program will also:

- evaluate historical sediment sampling data from the title area such as the GHD (2014 and 2021) surveys to identify the presence of any contaminants of concern
- be designed to obtain sufficiently robust data to support identification of impacts to natural resources in the surrender area.

The sediment sampling program will consider:

- the physico-chemical analyses will include but not be limited to, parameters such as sediment characteristics; organotins, polychlorinated biphenyls and radionuclides; hydrocarbons; metals; and the consideration of other analytes such as PFAS/PFOS if considered relevant.
- the oxidation state of the sediment will also be analysed as well as any other parameters deemed appropriate by the study team. The survey may also include a visual assessment of benthic faunal characteristics on infrastructure in the title area.
- sampling as appropriate to determine adverse impacts to infauna
- where equipment has either been removed or left in situ during decommissioning
- previous survey results and sampling locations (from GHD 2014 and 2021 surveys)
- the sampling of suitable number and suitably located reference sites across titles.

The analysis of sediment samples will take place at a NATA accredited laboratory.

The reporting of the decommissioning sediment sampling survey will compare results for end state condition with previous survey results, and against acceptable levels of contaminants of concern based on relevant guidelines and standards, and background levels of contaminants.

In addition, Santos will review the results against consultation outcomes, Santos policies, relevant guidelines and standards and the principles of ESD. If necessary, Santos will develop a management plan to address any unacceptable risks and/or impacts identified by the decommissioning sediment sampling survey.

A detailed environmental monitoring plan will be designed and internally approved by Santos prior to the commencement of monitoring and will follow the monitoring approach outlined below.

Santos recognises that no comparable sediment data was collected before the disturbance on title (pre-construction phase consisting of historical exploration activities, e.g., exploration drilling, geophysical surveys) that would be used to identify the severity of impact or monitor whether changes to seabed from activities have occurred. As such, Santos recognises that it may be required to increase the number of reference sites used within the sediment sampling to compensate for that. Further, field surveys to date have been limited to sites in close proximity to production equipment and therefore, not all potentially historical petroleum activity impacts to the seabed across the titles have been monitored. As such, Santos propose to apply the “change over space” monitoring study design for the proposed sediment monitoring program (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018).

The study design will include sampling sites located along vectors radiating out from potential point sources of potential contamination. This approach will provide a better understanding of contaminant gradients with distance from any discharges to the seabed (e.g., drill cuttings disposal, discharges of PFW), and is similar to that adopted in other studies of potential drill cuttings and PFW impact (Apache Energy Ltd, 2013; Advisian, 2022; BMT, 2022. Sampling will be done at selected sites within the MEFF field which is where the majority of development, operational and decommissioning related discharges within the field have occurred, and therefore where contamination of the seabed (though not expected) would be considered more likely to occur. By sampling a sub-set of sites exposed to high discharges, there will be confidence that there have been no/lower impacts at other sites. Sampling will also be undertaken at suitable reference sites that are 5 km from any wells and away from potential historical petroleum disturbance (i.e., outside the predicted mixing PFW zone, away from the facility footprint), exposed to similar hydrodynamics and at similar water depths. As an example, sites may include:

- + at the historical location for the FPSO
- + at one well within each title
- + around removed equipment
- + at three reference sites away from the facility footprint.

Sampling vectors will nominally be to the northwest, northeast, southwest and southeast. The northeast and southeast vectors were based on predicted tidal current directions and PFW plume modelling (APASA, 2014), and the areas that settling particulates from the FPSO waste streams had the greatest likelihood of impacting on the benthos. Sites should be sampled at increasing distances from the sampling sites e.g. (20, 50, 100, 200, and 400 m) similar to other studies (Apache Energy Ltd, 2013; Bakke et al., 2013; Junttila et al., 2018).

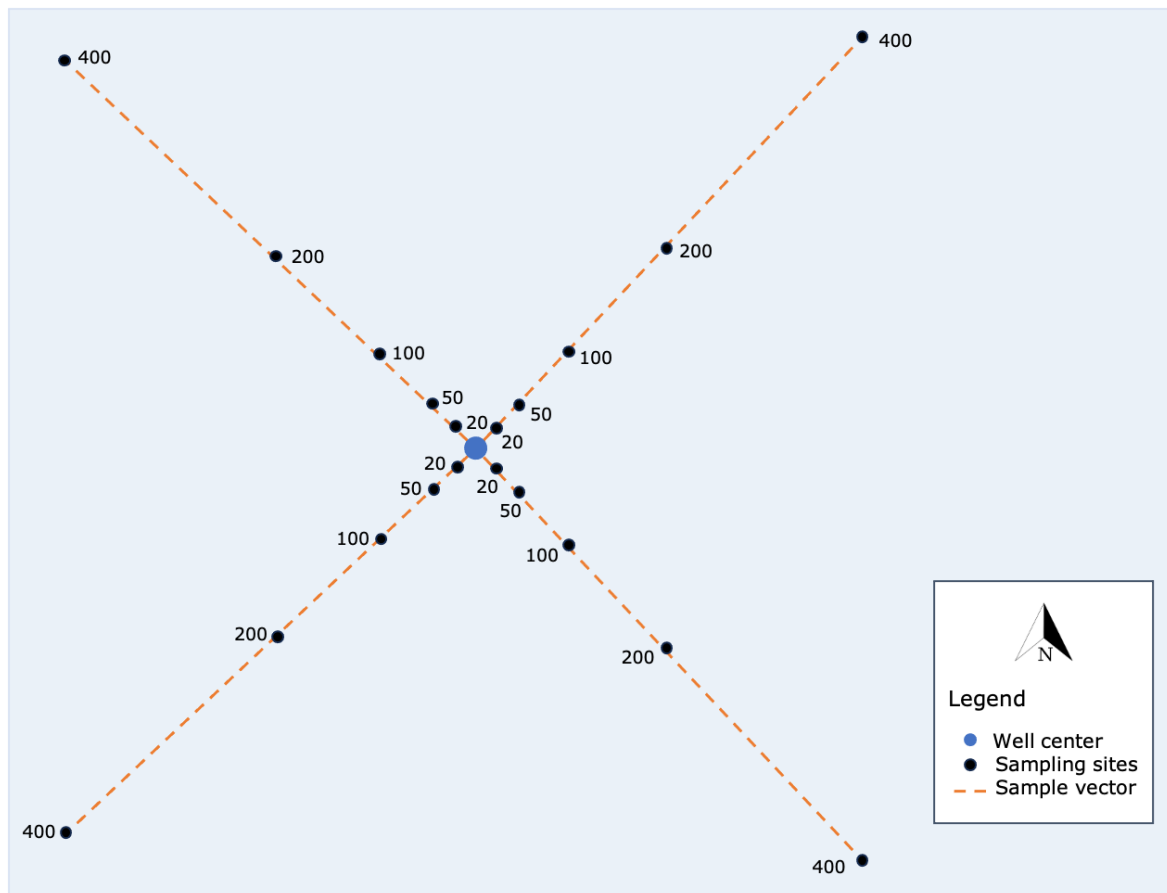


Figure 10-1: Sediment sampling design example

Sampling will be undertaken via methods such as, box corer, surface deployed grab or ROV mounted corer if close to infrastructure. Survey grade positioning should be used to accurately position the vessel and the sampling equipment on the seabed to improve safety, efficiency in the field and cost-effectiveness. Environmental Protection Authority (2016) recommends three to five sediment samples be collected per site for comparison against sediment quality guidelines. It is therefore proposed that three samples per site ($n=3$) will be sufficient for comparing average values with guideline values. In addition, samples will be collected for QA/QC purposes (10% triplicate samples for intra-laboratory analysis and 5% split samples for inter-laboratory analysis). A sediment field blank and transport blank sample will also be collected at two sites to assess contamination potential of sediment samples during the sampling process and transportation.

Sediment samples will be analysed for the parameters that are expected to be found accounting for discharges identified in this EP, and parameters typical of historical sampling programs in other fields (**Table 10-**). The list of analytes may be expanded during detailed program design. Where elevated values are detected, it is recommended that the sample is split into depth layers (e.g., top 2 cm, 2-10 cm and 10-30 cm layers) for analysis to understand if contamination may be historical drill cuttings or settlement from PFW. If the surface layer has elevated levels of toxicants, then it could be inferred

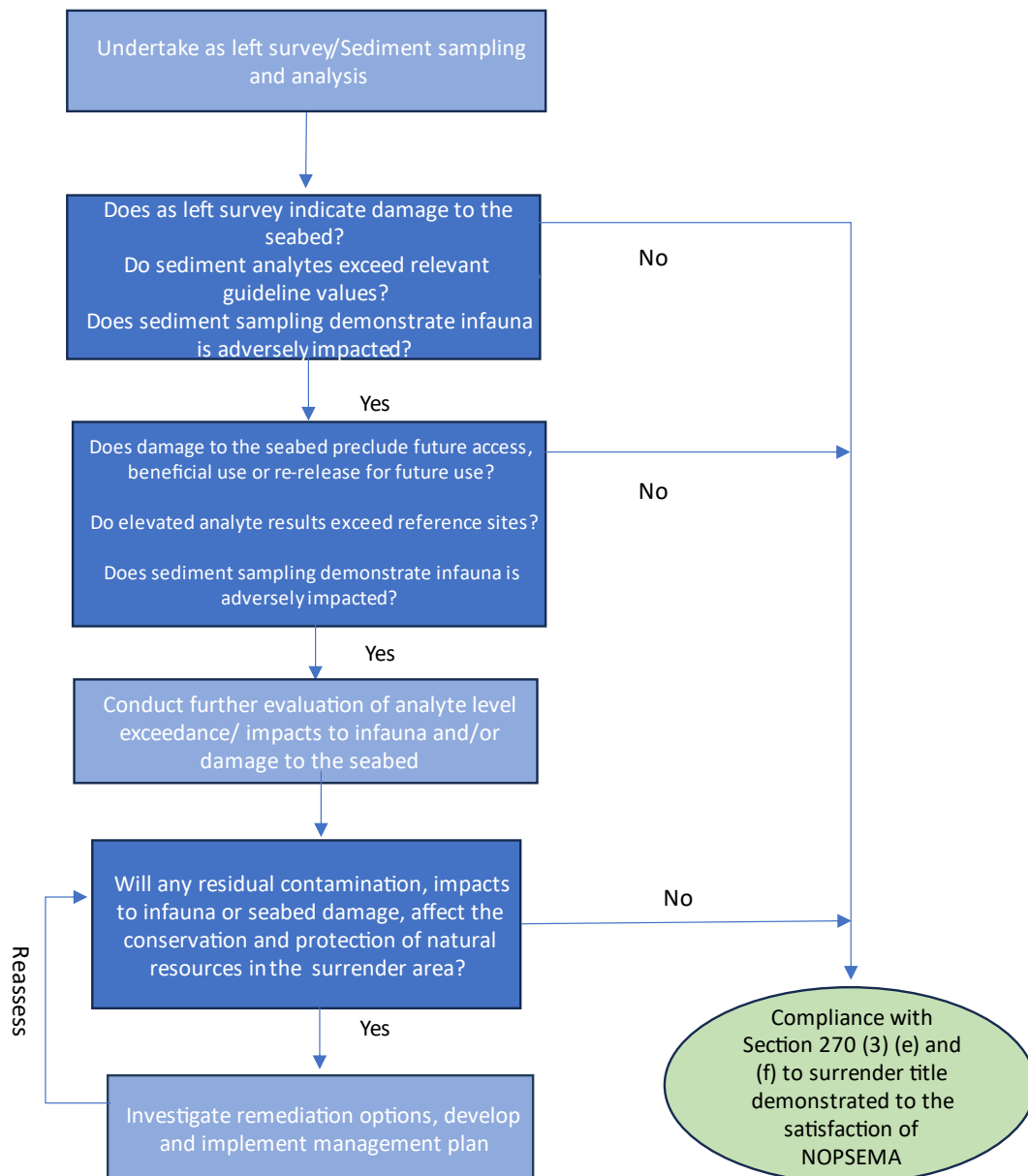
that the contamination is more likely due to recent activities such as the degradation of abandoned in situ subsea infrastructure.

Table 10-: Sediment analytes and thresholds

Analyte	Threshold (ANZG, 2018)	Description
TRHs	N/A	TRHs, TPHs and PAHs are considered a proxy to understand if any interaction with the seabed occurred during historic PFW discharges. Residual hydrocarbons may be present within the flowlines. Residual hydrocarbons are displaced in the water column during equipment deconstruction and recovery operations. Discharge assessment indicated negligible impact. Sampling will be used to verify impact predictions.
TPHs	280 mg/kg	
Total polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH)	10,000 µg/kg	
Metals/metalloids	Various (mg/kg)	A suite of heavy and trace metals (Ag, Al, As, Ba, Cd, Co, Cr, Cu, Fe, Hg, Mn, Mo, Ni, Pb, Sb, V, Zn) are elements found in drilling fluids, PFW discharges and subsea infrastructure. Sampling and testing these metals will verify concentrations of these parameters relative to guideline values.
Total organic carbon (TOC)	N/A	An increase in organic content favours partitioning of both metals and organics to sediment particles. Any hydrocarbons detected in sediments needs to be normalised to the TOC content.
Particle size distribution (PSD)	N/A	The contaminant binding capacity of sediments is stronger with fine sediments than large grain size (Okoro et al., 2013; Buyang et al., 2019) and PSD results will aid in interpretation of results.

Samples will be preserved and handled according to the requirements of the Australian and New Zealand Standards (AS/NZS 5667.1:1998), requirements of the analytical laboratories (including holding times and meeting laboratory limit of reporting), and any sampling methodology and procedures developed. Sediment samples will be analysed using standard laboratory methods at a National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accredited laboratory. Sediment concentrations will be compared to ANZG (2018) DGVs, and upper guideline values (GV-High) if available.

If the samples collected exceed guideline values and reference sites, Santos will undertake further evaluation to confirm the conservation and protection of natural resources in the area. The environmental monitoring program adaptive management measures is described in Figure 10-2: E.



This flowchart covers Natural Resources which are defined as “mineral and other non-living resources of the seabed and subsoil together with living organisms belonging to sedentary species that is to say, organisms which, at the harvestable stage, either are immobile on or under the seabed or are unable to move except in constant physical contact with the seabed or the subsoil.” (NOSPEMA 2022)

Figure 10-2: Environmental monitoring program adaptive management measures

Marine biota most at risk of seabed contamination resulting from petroleum activities such as PFW discharges and drill cuttings, are benthic invertebrates and sediment infauna (Junttila et al., 2018). This is because the bioavailability and toxicity of contaminants is influenced by sediment PSD, and organic content. Infauna data exist for some nearby areas and could be used for comparison (Heyward et al., 2001; SERPENT, 2015). All sediment samples collected will also be analysed for infauna composition and abundance. Benthic infauna samples will be sieved through a 1 mm mesh sieve and preserved using 70% isopropyl alcohol. These methods correspond to similar sampling methods in the NWS to allow comparability of data. Laboratory processing of samples for benthic

macrofauna should include sample sorting and species identification to the lowest reliable taxonomic level (to species level wherever possible, otherwise to genus or family level) and enumeration.

The species composition results will be analysed to determine;

- + if there is any significant change in infauna composition compared to reference sites across the MEFF title area; and
- + if infauna composition results correlate to sampling results at the same site.

Species composition results will determine if any potential contamination is having a significant impact on the infauna composition and ultimately the ability of the title to protect and conserve the natural resources of the area.

Information on biological indicators and habitats at each site will be collected using an ROV with a high-quality camera system. Benthic video transects will be collected in four directions radiating out from the well aligned with, and across, prevailing currents (same vectors as the sediment sampling design). Benthic video transects should commence as close as practicable to the well. The camera system should have an ultra-short baseline (USBL) positioning system to rectify the actual position on the seabed. This design will enable a comparison with reference areas and other studies in the region confirming that benthic habitat is typical of the NWS. Opportunistic video footage of nearby seabed may also be collected to provide contextual information to support the environmental monitoring program.

Santos will commence post-decommissioning environmental monitoring within the lifetime of this EP. The survey can be undertaken at any time of year. However, it is advised to avoid cyclone season (December to March) to reduce the risk of vessel downtime. A monitoring report containing the monitoring program design, method, results, conclusions and additional work required will be developed.

10.4 Environmental performance outcome and environmental performance standards

The proposed environment performance outcome required to be met in order meet the requirements of s270 is:

- + MEFF – EPO – 10 Decommissioning Surveys implemented as outlined in Section 10.3 will demonstrate that there are no unacceptable impacts to the natural resources, and provides for the protection and conservation of natural resources and any damage to the seabed or subsoil will be made good on the three title areas (surrender area).

The proposed environmental performance standards are:

- Post Decommissioning Environmental monitoring will be undertaken and has met the requirements as outlined in Section 10.3, within the lifetime of this EP in accordance with a Santos approved environmental monitoring program (MEFF-EPS-18)
- Any damage to the seabed will have been remediated through the removal of above seabed infrastructure and the application of natural remediation over time.

11. Implementation strategy

OPGGS(E)R 2023 Requirements
Regulation 22(1) Implementation strategy for environment plan
The environment plan must contain an implementation strategy for the activity.
Regulation 22(16)
The implementation strategy must comply with the Act, this instrument, any other regulations made under the Act, and any other environmental legislation applying to the activity.

The specific measures and arrangements that will be implemented in the event of an oil pollution emergency are detailed within the OPEP.

Stakeholder engagement is assessed separately for the requirements of the activities. Ongoing stakeholder management strategies are discussed in **Section 6**.

11.1 Environmental management system

OPGGS(E)R 2023 Requirements
Regulation 22(2)
The implementation strategy must contain a description of the environmental management system for the activity, including specific measures to be used to ensure that, for the duration of the activity: (a) the environmental impacts and risks of the activity continue to be identified and reduced to a level that is as low as reasonably practicable; and (b) control measures detailed in the environment plan are effective in reducing the environmental impacts and risks of the activity to as low as reasonably practicable and an acceptable level; and (c) environmental performance outcomes and standards set out in the environment plan are being met.

The Santos management system exists to support its moral, professional and legal obligations to undertake work in a manner that does not cause harm to people or the environment. The management system is a framework of policies, standards, processes, procedures, tools and control measures that, when used together by a properly resourced and competent organisation, ensure:

- + a common HSE approach is followed across the organisation
 - + HSE is proactively managed and maintained
 - + the mandatory requirements of HSE management are implemented and are auditable
- HSE management performance is measured and corrective actions are taken
- + opportunities for improvement are recognised and implemented
- workforce commitments are understood and demonstrated.

This implementation strategy is designed to meet the requirements of the EP to require that:

environmental impacts and risks continue to be identified for the duration of the activity and reduced to ALARP

- + control measures are effective in reducing environmental impacts and risks to ALARP and acceptable levels
 - + environmental performance outcomes and standards set out in this EP are met
- stakeholder consultation is maintained throughout the activity as appropriate.

11.2 Environment, health and safety policy

Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy (**Appendix A**) clearly sets out Santos' strategic environmental objectives and the commitment of the management team to continuous environmental performance improvement. This EP has been prepared in accordance with the fundamentals of this policy. By accepting employment with Santos, each employee and contractor is made aware during the recruitment process that he or she is responsible for the application of this policy.

11.3 Hazard identification, risk and impact assessment and controls

Hazards and associated environmental risks and impacts for the proposed activities have been systematically identified and assessed in this EP (refer to **Sections 8** and **9**). The control measures and environmental performance standards that will be implemented to manage the identified risks and impacts, and the environmental performance outcomes that will be achieved, are detailed below.

To ensure environmental risks and impacts remain acceptable and ALARP during the activity and for the duration of this EP, hazards will continue to be identified, assessed and controlled as described in **Section 11.11.3** and **Section 11.13**.

Any new, or proposed amendment to a control measure, EPSs or EPOs will be managed in accordance with the Environment Management of Change Procedure (EA-91-IQ-10001) (**Section 11.11.3**).

Oil spill response control measures and environmental performance standards and outcomes are listed in the OPEP.

11.4 Environmental performance outcomes

To ensure environmental risks and impacts will be of an acceptable level, environmental performance outcomes have been defined and are listed in **Table 11-1** for planned activities and unplanned events. Those relating to oil spill response are listed in the OPEP. These outcomes will be achieved by implementing the identified control measures to the defined environmental performance standards.

11.4.1 Control measures and performance standards

The control measures (CM) that will be used to manage identified environmental impacts and risks and the associated statements of performance required of the control measure (i.e., EPSs) are listed in **Table 11-2**. Measurement criteria (MC) outlining how compliance with the control measure and environmental performance standard could be evidenced are also listed.

All control measures and environmental performance standard and associated measurement criteria relating to preparedness and response operations are contained within the MEFF Decommissioning OPEP (9885-650-PLN-0002).

Table 11-1: Environmental performance outcomes

Reference	Environmental Performance Outcomes
MEFF-EPO-01	Reduce impacts on other marine users through the provision of information to relevant stakeholders such that they are able to plan for their activities and avoid unexpected interference
MEFF-EPO-02	Seabed disturbance is limited to planned activities and defined locations within the operational area
MEFF-EPO-03	Reduce impacts to marine fauna from lighting on vessels through limiting lighting to that required by safety and navigational lighting requirements
MEFF-EPO-04	No injury or mortality to <i>EPBC Act 1999 and WA Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> listed fauna during activities
MEFF-EPO-05	No unplanned objects, emissions or discharges to sea or air
MEFF-EPO-06	No introduction of marine pest species
MEFF-EPO-07	No loss of containment of hydrocarbon to the marine environment
MEFF-EPO-08	No unplanned discharges to sea, air or land as a result of the transport and disposal of recovered seabed assets.
MEFF-EPO-09	Waste disposed to landfill will be minimised in accordance with the waste management hierarchy
MEFF-EPO-10	Decommissioning Surveys implemented as outlined in Section 10.3 will demonstrate that there are no unacceptable impacts to the natural resources and provides for the protection and conservation of natural resources and any damage to the seabed or subsoil will be made good on the three title areas (surrender area).

Table 11-2: Control measures and environmental performance standards for the proposed activity (Environment Plan)

Control Measure	CM Reference	Environmental Performance Standard	EPS Reference No.	Measurement Criteria	EPO Reference No.
Maritime Notices	MEFF-CM-01	Information provided to either AMSA, Department of Defence, AHO and/or nearest port authority on primary vessel(s) arrival and departure so the maritime industry is aware of petroleum activities.	MEFF-CM-01-EPS-01	Transmittal records demonstrate notification of activity prior to the activity commencing	MEFF-EPO-01 MEFF-EPO-07
Santos' stakeholder consultation strategy	MEFF-CM-02	Santos will notify all relevant stakeholders listed, or as revised, Table 10-8 of relevant activity details prior to commencement, including activity timing, vessel movements, proposed cessation date and vessel details.	MEFF-CM-02-EPS-01	Santos' correspondence to relevant stakeholders	MEFF-EPO-01 MEFF-EPO-07
		If any primary vessel departs and returns from the operational area, relevant maritime notices will be updated.	MEFF-CM-02-EPS-02	Santos' correspondence to relevant stakeholders	
		All correspondence with external stakeholders is recorded.	MEFF-CM-02-EPS-03	Saved consultation records	
		Santos' Consultation Coordinator is contactable before, during and after completion of the planned activity to ensure stakeholder feedback is evaluated and considered during the operational activity phases.	MEFF-CM-02-EPS-04	Consultation Coordinator contact details provided to relevant persons in all correspondence	
		Santos will not restrict commercial fishing access to the operational area, and is committed to concurrent operations where safety of either vessel is not compromised.	MEFF-CM-02-EPS-05	Incident records show nil incidents of complaints of restrictions to commercial fishing access to the operational area, and show nil incidents of vessel safety being compromised by concurrent operations	
No fishing from project vessels	MEFF-CM-03	Personnel are prohibited from recreational fishing activities on vessels.	MEFF-CM-03-EPS-01	Induction records confirm no fishing prohibition is communicated to all personnel	MEFF-EPO-01
Petroleum safety zone established (gazetted) around MEFF DTM and manifold locations	MEFF-CM-04	A 500 m PSZ is defined around the MEFF DTM and manifold locations.	MEFF-CM-04-EPS-01	Notice to Mariners placed with AHO outlining PSZ and timeframes of the activity	MEFF-EPO-01 MEFF-EPO-07
Safety exclusion zone established around primary vessels during seabed asset removal activities to reduce potential for collision or interference with other marine user activities	MEFF-CM-05	A 500 m safety exclusion zone is established around the primary vessels during the activity.	MEFF-CM-05-EPS-01	Notice to Mariners placed with AHO outlining safety exclusion zone and timeframes of the activity	MEFF-EPO-01 MEFF-EPO-07
Lighting will be used as required for safe work conditions and navigational purposes only	MEFF-CM-06	Vessel navigation lighting and equipment is compliant with COLREGS / Marine Orders 30: Prevention of Collisions, and with Marine Orders 21: Safety of Navigation and Emergency Procedures.	MEFF-CM-06-EPS-01	Offshore Vessel Inspection Database (OVID) or equivalent confirms vessel certification compliance with applicable regulations	MEFF-EPO-01 MEFF-EPO-03 MEFF-EPO-07
Seafarer certification	MEFF-CM-07	Vessel crew are trained and competent, in accordance with Flag State regulations, to navigate vessels and reduce interaction with other marine users.	MEFF-CM-07-EPS-01	Training matrix	MEFF-EPO-01 MEFF-EPO-07
Identification system	MEFF-CM-08	Primary vessels have an Automatic Identification System to aid in their detection at sea.	MEFF-CM-08-EPS-01	Completed inspection report or statement of conformance supplied by primary vessel contractors	MEFF-EPO-01
Constant bridge watch	MEFF-CM-09	Competent crew shall maintain constant bridge-watch.	MEFF-CM-09-EPS-01	Bridge log or equivalent	MEFF-EPO-01 MEFF-EPO-04
Primary vessel personnel inductions	MEFF-CM-10	Induction materials reinforce to the Vessel Master the importance of marine communications in the event of any potential interactions with active commercial fishers.	MEFF-CM-10-EPS-01	Induction records	MEFF-EPO-01

Control Measure	CM Reference	Environmental Performance Standard	EPS Reference No.	Measurement Criteria	EPO Reference No.
Recovery procedure	MEFF-CM-12	A recovery procedure will be developed, reviewed and issued for use prior to mobilisation to the field. Reviews will be performed to ensure that risks have been managed in accordance with ALARP principles prior to issuing procedures for use. Recovery of seabed assets will occur in accordance with the recovery procedure.	MEFF-CM-12.EPS-01	Records of the constructability review and HAZID are available. Records confirm seabed assets recovered in accordance with procedure.	MEFF-EPO-01 MEFF-EPO-04 MEFF-EPO-05
As left survey	MEFF-CM-13	As left survey will be undertaken during recovery operations, or, after removal of the subsea equipment above the seabed, using an ROV to confirm that only mooring components (chains and anchors) which are buried will be left in- situ. The survey will: - verify that all equipment above the seabed has been removed as described in Section 4.6 and seabed around former sites of infrastructure is clear of hazards - ROV footage will be undertaken commensurate with the nature and scale of the removal activities. E.g. - approximately 30m around recovered infrastructure (e.g. gravity bases) - approximately 5m either side of the recovery path of subsea umbilical risers and flowlines (SURF), exposed mooring chain and the rigid pipeline - Visually identify and confirm the extent of any seabed disturbance around the former sites of seabed equipment as a result of removal activities - confirm the position and depth of the buried mooring components (anchors and chains) left in situ, as described in Section 4.7 at the time of abandonment using best endeavours via a magnetometer or similar tool.	MEFF-CM-13-EPS-01	Completed survey reports with associated videos and / or photos	MEFF-EPO-02 MEFF-EPO-05
Notify AHO of locations for equipment abandoned in situ so they can be marked on navigational charts	MEFF-CM-14	Notify AHO of locations for equipment abandoned in situ so they can be marked on navigational charts.	MEFF-CM-14-EPS-01	Records demonstrate that AHO has been notified for equipment abandoned in situ.	MEFF-EPO-01
Relinquish petroleum safety zone (PSZ)	MEFF-CM-15	Relinquish PSZ after completion of seabed asset removal activities.	MEFF-CM-15-EPS-01	Records demonstrate that PSZ has been relinquished.	MEFF-EPO-01
1 km distance between the centre of the vessel safety exclusion zone around the decommissioning vessel and the centre of the PSZ around the Mobile Offshore	MEFF-CM-16	1 km distance between the centre of the vessel safety exclusion zone around the decommissioning vessel and the centre of the PSZ around the Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit (MODU) (used for P&A activities)	MEFF-CM-16-EPS-01	Records demonstrate that Records demonstrate that vessel safety exclusion zone and PSZ around MODU was in place.	MEFF-EPO-01
Wet storage positioning	MEFF-CM-17	Any equipment that has been temporarily wet stored during decommissioning is surveyed to record its position (and limited to within 50m of existing infrastructure), and the site is surveyed to confirm removal at end of decommissioning.	MEFF-CM-17-EPS-01	Record of wet-stored equipment position	MEFF-EPO-02

Control Measure	CM Reference	Environmental Performance Standard	EPS Reference No.	Measurement Criteria	EPO Reference No.
Post decommissioning environmental monitoring will be undertaken in accordance with a Santos approved decommissioning sediment sampling survey program.	MEFF-CM-18	Post Decommissioning Environmental monitoring will be undertaken and has met the requirements as outlined if Section 10.3, within the lifetime of this EP in accordance with a Santos approved environmental monitoring program Any damage to the seabed will have been remediated through the removal of above seabed infrastructure and the application of natural remediation over time.	MEFF-CM-18-EPS-01	Environmental monitoring report Surrender of title report to NOPSEMA as outlined in Section 11.11.1	MEFF-EPO-10
ROV assessment of substrate at sediment sampling locations	MEFF-CM-19	No benthic habitats e.g. non coral benthic invertebrates or hard substrate communities or infrastructure left in situ will be impacted as a result of environmental sediment sampling.	MEFF-CM-19-EPS-01	Completed survey reports with associated videos and / or photos	MEFF-EPO-10
Controlled landout of baskets on seabed (limit set down speeds).	MEFF-CM -20	Basket landout on seabed is controlled to minimise seabed penetration	MEFF -CM-20-EPS-01	Removal Procedures details requirements for controlled landout	MEFF-EPO-02
Procedures for interacting with marine fauna	MEFF-CM-21	Vessels comply with Santos' Protected Marine Fauna Interaction and Sighting Procedure (EA-91-11-00003), which ensures compliance with Part 8 of the EPBC Regulations 2000, which includes controls for minimising the risk of collision with marine fauna.	MEFF-CM-21-EPS-01	Conformance checked on receipt of marine fauna sighting datasheets Completed vessel statement of conformance	MEFF-EPO-04
		Any vessel strikes with cetaceans will be reported in the National Ship Strike Database.	MEFF-CM-21-EPS-02	Conformance checked on Santos' receipt of incident report	MEFF-EPO-04
		Helicopter contractor procedures comply with Santos' Protected Marine Fauna Interaction and Sighting Procedure (EA-91-11-00003), which ensures compliance with Part 8 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000, which includes controls for minimising interaction with marine fauna.	MEFF-CM-21-EPS-03	Helicopter contractor procedures align with Santos' Protected Marine Fauna Interaction and Sighting Procedure (EA-91-11-00003)	MEFF-EPO-04
Vessel Planned Maintenance System to maintain vessel DP, engines and machinery	MEFF-CM-22	Documented maintenance program is in place for equipment on vessels that provides a status on the maintenance of equipment.	MEFF-CM-22-EPS-01	Vessel daily/weekly records	MEFF-EPO-04
				OVID or equivalent	MEFF-EPO-05
				CMMS records	MEFF-EPO-07
Marine assurance	MEFF-CM-23	Vessels selected and on-boarded in accordance with the Offshore Marine Assurance Procedure (SO-91-ZH-10001) to ensure contracted vessels are operated, maintained and manned in accordance with industry standards (for example, Marine Orders) and regulatory requirements (this EP) and the relevant Santos procedures mentioned in this EP.	MEFF-CM-23-EPS-01	Completed documentation in accordance with procedure	MEFF-EPO-04 MEFF-EPO-05 MEFF-EPO-07
Waste incineration	MEFF-CM-24	Waste incineration managed in accordance with MARPOL Annex VI.	MEFF-CM-24-EPS-01	Waste records verified by Santos Offshore Representative	MEFF-EPO-05
				OVID report	
				Incineration records	
				Marine assurance inspections	
Fuel oil quality	MEFF-CM-25	MARPOL-compliant fuel oil will be used during the activity.	MEFF-CM-25-EPS-01	Fuel bunkering records and / or relevant purchase records	MEFF-EPO-05 MEFF-EPO-07

Control Measure	CM Reference	Environmental Performance Standard	EPS Reference No.	Measurement Criteria	EPO Reference No.
International air pollution prevention certification	MEFF-CM-26	Pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI primary vessels and support vessel(s) will maintain a current International Air Pollution Prevention (IAPP) Certificate as relevant to vessel class which certifies that measures to prevent ODS emissions, and reduce nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides and incineration emissions during the activity are in place.	MEFF-CM-26-EPS-01	OVID or equivalent confirms current international air pollution prevention (IAPP) certificate	MEFF-EPO-05
Ozone-depleting substance handling procedures	MEFF-CM-27	ODS managed in accordance with MARPOL Annex VI to reduce the risk of an accidental release of ODS to air.	MEFF-CM-27-EPS-01	OVID or equivalent confirms completed ODS record book or recording system	MEFF-EPO-05
Waste (garbage) management procedure	MEFF-CM-28	Waste management procedure implemented to reduce the risk of unplanned release of waste to sea. The procedure includes standards for: + bin types + lids and covers + waste segregation + bin storage.	MEFF-CM-28-EPS-01	Completed Santos Offshore Representative inspection checklist	MEFF-EPO-05
				Marine assurance inspections	
			MEFF-CM-28-EPS-02	Completed garbage disposal record book or recording system verified by Santos Offshore Representative	MEFF-EPO-05
		No waste (garbage) discharged to sea, unless the waste is food waste disposed in accordance with MARPOL Annex V.		Marine assurance inspections	
		Pursuant to MARPOL Annex V, placards displayed to notify personnel of waste disposal restrictions.	MEFF-CM-28-EPS-03	Completed Santos Offshore Representative inspection checklist	MEFF-EPO-05
				Marine assurance inspections	
Deck cleaning product selection	MEFF-CM-29	Deck cleaning products planned to be released to sea meet the criteria for not being harmful to the marine environment according to MARPOL Annex V.	MEFF-CM-29-EPS-01	SDS and product supplier supplementary data as required	MEFF-EPO-05
General chemical management procedures	MEFF-CM-30	Safety datasheet (SDS) available for all chemicals to aid in the process of hazard identification and chemical management.	MEFF-CM-30-EPS-01	Contractor's routine inspection of the chemical storage / SDSs verified by onsite inspection by either Santos Offshore Representative or Marine Assurance Inspection	MEFF-EPO-05 MEFF-EPO-07
		Chemicals managed in accordance with SDS in relation to safe handling and storage, spill-response and emergency procedures, and disposal considerations.	MEFF-CM-30-EPS-02	Contractor's chemical management procedures verified by onsite inspection – by either Santos Offshore Representative or Marine Assurance Inspection	
Chemical selection procedure	MEFF-CM-31	Products with potential to be released to the sea meet the criteria for not being harmful to the marine environment according to MARPOL Annex V; or Gold/Silver/D or E rated through OCNS; or have a completed Santos ecotoxicological risk assessment so only environmentally acceptable products are used. The selection criteria for chemical preference through the risk assessment process as outlined Santos Operations Chemical Selection, Evaluation and Approval Procedure (EA-91-II-10001) is low aquatic toxicity (e.g., EC50/LC50 > 100 mg/L), low bioaccumulation potential (e.g., Log Pow <3) and readily biodegradable (e.g., >60 in 28 days OECD 306).	MEFF-CM-31-EPS-01	Completed Santos risk assessments show chemicals selected are acceptable as per Santos Operations Chemical Selection, Evaluation and Approval Procedure (EA-91-II-10001)	MEFF-EPO-05 MEFF-EPO-07

Control Measure	CM Reference	Environmental Performance Standard	EPS Reference No.	Measurement Criteria	EPO Reference No.
Sewage treatment system	MEFF-CM-32	Pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, vessel(s) have a current International Sewage Pollution Prevention (ISPP) Certificate which certifies that required measures to reduce impacts from sewage disposal are in place (as applicable to vessel class).	MEFF-CM-32-EPS-01	OVID or equivalent confirms current International Sewage Pollution Prevention (ISPP) Certificate	MEFF-EPO-05
		Sewage discharged in accordance with MARPOL Annex IV.	MEFF-CM-32-EPS-02	Completed Santos Offshore Representative inspection checklist	
				Sewage discharge records	
		Preventive maintenance on sewage treatment equipment is completed as scheduled.	MEFF-CM-32-EPS-03	OVID or equivalent confirms current International Sewage Pollution Prevention Certificate	
Oily water treatment system	MEFF-CM-33	Oily mixtures (bilge water) only discharged to sea in accordance with MARPOL Annex I.	MEFF-CM-33-EPS-01	Completed Santos Offshore Representative inspection checklist	MEFF-EPO-05
				Oil record book or log where available	
		Preventative maintenance on oil filtering equipment completed as scheduled.	MEFF-CM-33-EPS-02	Maintenance records or evidence of maintenance in operational reports where available	
		Pursuant to MARPOL Annex I, vessel(s) will have an International Oil Pollution Prevention (IOPP) Certificate which certifies that required measures to reduce impacts of planned oil discharges are in place.	MEFF-CM-33-EPS-03	OVID or equivalent confirms current International Oil Pollution Prevention (IOPP) Certificate	
Recycling/onshore disposal of decommissioned assets in accordance with relevant legislative requirements	MEFF-CM-34	Decommissioned assets are disposed of or recycled using suitably qualified contractors at appropriately licenced waste facilities, in accordance with relevant legislation of the receiving jurisdiction.	MEFF-CM-34-EPS-01	Transport and disposal / recycling contracts and waste receipts.	MEFF-EPO-09
		The performance of waste disposal contractors against the waste hierarchy (Section 4.7.7) will be considered in the evaluation of tenders and agreed performance indicators will be included in the final contract.	MEFF-CM-34-EPS-02	Tender evaluation records and final waste disposal contracts.	
		Waste monitoring and reporting will be recorded in accordance with Santos procedure SMS-EXA-OS01-PD02-PD01 Waste Monitoring and Reporting standard, to enable accurate and consistent reporting and waste performance management, specifically: + Waste stream description + Total waste weight and/or volume collected + Unit of measurements (e.g. tonnes and/or cubic meters) + Recovery or disposal method + Hazardous/non-hazard waste classification	MEFF-CM-34-EPS-03	Waste disposal records and/or waste contractor audit reports.	
		Undertake engagement with waste contractors to identify the potential waste disposal pathways for recovered seabed assets.	MEFF-CM-34-EPS-04	Records confirm engagement with waste contractors.	
NORMS and HAZMAT Management Plan)	MEFF-CM-35	The NORMS and HAZMAT Management Plan will include: + Requirement for a Radiation/ HAZMAT inspector to be on-board the vessel to inspect recovered	MEFF-CM-35-EPS-01	Records confirm testing was conducted and that infrastructure was quarantined/isolated if required.	MEFF-EPO-05 MEFF-EPO-08
				Records show that all radioactive/NORMs and mercury identified equipment is stored, transported	MEFF-EPO-05 MEFF-EPO-08

Control Measure	CM Reference	Environmental Performance Standard	EPS Reference No.	Measurement Criteria	EPO Reference No.
		equipment that has been in contact with production fluids for NORM and mercury + Details of the NORM and HAZMAT testing regime including testing frequency + Occupational health and safety exposure thresholds + Requirement that if NORM or HAZMAT are identified in testing, the effected equipment will be stored in a dedicated area on the vessel and segregated from other equipment, personnel and work areas. + Requirement that contaminated equipment will be labelled clearly and correctly + Requirement that contaminated equipment remains segregated and is stored securely until disposed at a licensed facility. + Details for temporary storage and final disposal of NORMs and HAZMAT including NORMs register and record keeping. + Details for contaminated waste transport management in accordance with the ARPANSA Code for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material (2019)		and disposed in accordance with the NORMS and HAZMAT Management Plan	MEFF-EPO-09
NOPSEMA accepted WOMP for MEFF wells	MEFF-CM-36	A NOPSEMA-accepted WOMP in place that includes control measures for well integrity to reduce the risk of an unplanned release of hydrocarbons.	MEFF-CM-36-EPS-01	NOPSEMA-accepted WOMP	MEFF-EPO-07
			MEFF-CM-36-EPS-02	Incident records confirm no breach of containment	
Sea dumping permit	MEFF-CM-37	Santos engages with DCCEEW regarding the application of the Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981 and will comply with requirements under the Act.	MEFF-CM-37-EPS-01	Records demonstrate DCCEEW has been engaged on the application of the Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981 relevant to the decommissioning of the MEFF Field.	MEFF-EPO-02 MEFF-EPO-05
			MEFF-CM-37-EPS-02	Application for a sea dumping permit, if required.	
Dropped object prevention procedures	MEFF-CM-38	Vessel Safety Case includes control measures for dropped objects that reduce the risk of objects entering the marine environment, specifically: + lifting equipment certification and inspection + lifting crew competencies + lift procedures + preventative maintenance on cranes.	MEFF-CM-38-EPS-01	NOPSEMA-accepted Safety Case Completed Santos Offshore Representative inspection checklist Details contained in incident documents	MEFF-EPO-05
		Lifting operations managed in accordance with vessel work instructions or procedures.	MEFF-CM-38-EPS-02	Vessel work instructions or procedures	
		Objects dropped overboard are recovered (if possible) to mitigate the environmental consequences from objects remaining in the marine environment, unless the environmental consequences are negligible, or safety risks are disproportionate to the environmental consequences.	MEFF-CM-38-EPS-03	Fate of dropped objects detailed in incident documents	

Control Measure	CM Reference	Environmental Performance Standard	EPS Reference No.	Measurement Criteria	EPO Reference No.
Implementation of the management controls in the Santos IMSMP	MEFF-CM-39	Vessels are managed to low risk in accordance with the Santos IMSMP (EA-00-RI-10172) prior to movement or transit into or within the invasive marine species management zone, which requires: assessment of applicable vessels using the IMSMP risk assessment the management of immersible equipment to low risk.	MEFF-CM-39-EPS-01	Completed risk assessment demonstrating equipment and vessels are 'low risk'	MEFF-EPO-06
		Pursuant to the Biosecurity Act 2015 and Australian Ballast Water Management Requirements 2017, primary and support vessels carrying ballast water and engaged in international voyages shall manage ballast water so marine pest species are not introduced.	MEFF-CM-39-EPS-02	Records show ballast water management is implemented Completed ballast water record book or log is verified by Santos Offshore Representative	
		Vessels receive entry clearance from DAFF (Seaports) as necessary (or as applicable to their location and movements).	MEFF-CM-39-EPS-03	Records show a complete Questionnaire for Biosecurity Exemptions for Biosecurity Control Determination issued to Seaports at least one month in advance where practicable. Records show an accepted pre-arrival report (PAR).	
Anti-foulant system	MEFF-CM-40	Vessel anti-foulant system maintained in compliance with International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships, where applicable.	MEFF-CM-40-EPS-01	OVID or equivalent confirms current International Anti-Fouling System Certificate	MEFF-EPO-06
Hazardous chemical management procedures	MEFF-CM-41	For hazardous chemicals including hydrocarbons, the following standards apply to reduce the risk of an accidental release to sea: Storage containers closed when the product is not being used. Storage containers managed in a manner that provides for secondary containment in the event of a spill or leak. Storage containers labelled with the technical product name as per the SDS. Spills and leaks to deck, excluding storage bunds and drip trays, immediately cleaned up. Storage bunds and drip trays do not contain free flowing volumes of liquid. Spill response equipment readily available.	MEFF-CM-41-EPS-01	Contractor's routine inspection of the chemical storage/ SDSs verified by onsite inspection – by either Santos Offshore Representative or Marine Assurance Inspection	MEFF-EPO-05 MEFF-EPO-07
				Contractor's chemical management procedures. Verified by onsite inspection – by either Santos Offshore Representative or Marine Assurance Inspection	
Vessel spill response plans (SOPEP/SMPEP)	MEFF-CM-42	Vessels have current and implemented a SOPEP, or SMPEP, pursuant to MARPOL Annex I.	MEFF-CM-42-EPS-01	Approved SOPEP or SMPEP	MEFF-EPO-05 MEFF-EPO-07
		SOPEP or SMPEP spill response exercises conducted not less often than every three months to ensure personnel are prepared.	MEFF-CM-42-EPS-02	Spill exercise records or evidence of a spill exercise in an operational report	
Accepted OPEP	MEFF-CM-43	In the event of a hydrocarbon spill to sea, the Santos OPEP requirements are implemented to mitigate environmental impacts.	MEFF-CM-43-EPS-01	Incident report	MEFF-EPO-07
	MEFF-CM-44		MEFF-CM-44-EPS-01	Completed bunkering checklist	MEFF-EPO-07

Control Measure	CM Reference	Environmental Performance Standard	EPS Reference No.	Measurement Criteria	EPO Reference No.
Santos Refuelling and Chemical Transfer Standard (SO-91-IQ-00098)		Bunkering activities follow the requirements of the Santos Refuelling and Chemical Transfer Standard (SO-91-IQ-00098) which includes key requirements to prevent spills to the environment such as: + when bunkering activities can occur + roles and responsibilities + dry-break couplings and breakaway couplings used + bunkering activity communication requirements + bunker hose undergoes hydrostatic leak testing.		Spill details contained in incident documentation	
Dynamic positioning system	MEFF-CM-45	For vessels equipped with Dynamic Positioning (DP) equipment design, redundancy, equipment maintenance and operation in accordance with the IMCA Guideline for the Design and Operation of Dynamically Positioned Vessels.	MEFF-CM-45-EPS-01	Records of annual DP trials	MEFF-EPO-07
		DP trials to ensure correct operation.	MEFF-CM-46-EPS-02	Record of field entry DP trials	
Navigational charts	MEFF-CM-46	Wells gazetted and marked on navigational charts to minimise the risk of collision from third parties.	MEFF-CM-46-EPS-01	Wells and DTM location currently marked on navigational charts	MEFF-EPO-07
Third-party agreements and contracts	MEFF-CM-47	APPEA Mutual Aid MoU for relief well drilling. Contracts/MoUs for source control personnel.	MEFF-CM-47-EPS-01	Documentation of MoUs, AMOSC/Oil Spill Response Limited and Wild Well Control contracts and third-party agreements	MEFF-EPO-07
Implement MEFF Subsea Integrity Management Plan (ME-7000-REP-0071)	MEFF-CM-48	MEFF subsea systems integrity is maintained and demonstrated in compliance with the MEFF Subsea Integrity Management Plan (ME-7000-REP-0071), including: risk-based inspection program triggered inspections in response to natural events such as cyclones or reported third-party interference or damage.	MEFF-CM-48-EPS-01	Integrity inspection reports	MEFF-EPO-07
Maritime Dangerous Goods Code	MEFF-CM-49	Dangerous goods managed in accordance with International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code to reduce the risk of an environmental incident, such as an accidental release to sea or unintended chemical reaction.	MEFF-CM-49-EPS-01	Completed Multimodal Dangerous Goods Form for transfers	MEFF-EPO-07
				Completed Santos Offshore Representative inspection checklist	
ROV inspection and maintenance procedures	MEFF-CM-50	Preventative maintenance on ROV completed as scheduled to reduce the risk of hydraulic fluid releases to sea.	MEFF-CM-50-EPS-01	Maintenance records or evidence of maintenance in operational reports	MEFF-EPO-07
		ROV pre-deployment inspection completed to reduce the risk of hydraulic fluid releases to sea.	MEFF-CM-50-EPS-02	ROV pre-dive checklists	
Deck drainage control measures	MEFF-CM-51	Scupper plugs or equivalent deck drainage control measures available where hydrocarbons are stored and frequently handled.	MEFF-CM-51-EPS-01	Completed Santos Offshore Representative inspection checklist	MEFF-EPO-07
				Marine assurance inspection	
Designated safe deployment / recovery zones for seabed asset removal activities that commence prior to completion of the P&A campaign at drill centres where wellheads are still present	MEFF-CM-52	Seabed asset removal activities to be undertaken prior to P&A completion will only occur within the safe deployment zone to avoid potential impacts to well equipment. No lifts for SAR activities will occur outside the safe deployment zone.	MEFF-CM-52-EPS-01	Records demonstrate seabed asset removal activities, if carried out prior to P&A activities, only occur in safe deployment zone.	MEFF-EPO-07

Control Measure	CM Reference	Environmental Performance Standard	EPS Reference No.	Measurement Criteria	EPO Reference No.
Post decommissioning environmental monitoring adaptive management measures	MEFF-CM-53	Any damage to the seabed which precludes future unrestricted access, beneficial uses or re-release for future use will be made good in accordance with the adaptive management measures outlined in Figure 10-2 .	MEFF-CM-53-EPS-01	Environmental monitoring report Surrender of title report to NOPSEMA as outlined in Section .	MEFF-EPO-10
Soil bearing capacities to be checked for baskets (either designed or hired).	MEFF-CM-54	Soil bearing capacity checked for baskets to minimise penetration into seabed	MEFF-CM-54-EPS-01	Soil bearing capacity calculations performed for baskets	MEFF-EPO-02
Waste Management Plan (contractor) (Onshore)	MEFF-CM-55	The plan includes: + Requirement for a Radiation/ HAZMAT inspector to inspect recovered equipment that has been in contact with production fluids for NORM and Mercury when handed over, prior to transportation. + Details on the applicable waste legislation and standards. + Details on required licenses for the quayside/ laydown area for receipt of contaminated materials. + Details on handling, storage and disposal of waste. + Details on decontamination process (if this is performed quayside prior to transport). + Details on material and waste tracking.	MEFF-CM-55-EPS-01	Records show contractor waste management plan reviewed and approved by Santos	MEFF-EPO-05
Waste Transportation Plan (contractor) The plan includes:	MEFF-CM-56	The plan includes: + Details on the requirements for transport of waste (including packaging). + Details on applicable waste legislation and standards. + Process for receipt of materials and waste prior to transport.	MEFF-CM-56-EPS-01	Records show contractor Waste Transportation Plan reviewed and approved by Santos	MEFF-EPO-05
Waste Management Plan (SURF Disposal Facility) (contractor).	MEFF-CM-57	The plan includes: + Requirement for a Radiation/ HAZMAT inspector to inspect recovered equipment when handed over + Consideration of waste management hierarchy. + Details on storage of waste. + Details on applicable waste legislation and standards. + Process for receipt of materials and waste from transport provider. + Details on the required licenses for Subsea umbilicals, risers and flowlines (SURF) disposal facility + Details on material and waste tracking. + Requirement for issue of disposal certification at licensed end disposal facility.	MEFF-CM-57-EPS-01	Records show contractor Waste Management Plan (SURF Disposal Facility) reviewed and approved by Santos	MEFF-EPO-05
Waste Management Contractor evaluation/ selection audit to confirm compliance with State and Commonwealth legislation.	MEFF -CM-58	Waste management evaluation/ selection audit undertaken prior to waste management contractor engagement	MEFF-CM-58-EPS-01	Records show waste management evaluation/selection audit undertaken	MEFF-EPO-05

Control Measure	CM Reference	Environmental Performance Standard	EPS Reference No.	Measurement Criteria	EPO Reference No.
NOSPEMA accepted MEFF Field Safety Case Addendum	MEFF-CM-59	A NOPSEMA-accepted Safety Case Addendum in place that includes control measures to reduce the probability of an unplanned release of the seabed assets during recovery to vessel from their current as installed position.	MEFF-CM-59-EPS-01	NOSPEMA accepted MEFF Field Safety Case Addendum	MEFF-EPO-05

11.5 Roles and responsibilities

OPGGS(E)R 2023 Requirements
Regulation 22(3)
The implementation strategy must establish a clear chain of command, setting out the roles and responsibilities of employees and contractors in relation to the implementation, management and review of the environment plan, including during emergencies or potential emergencies.

While the Santos Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has the overall accountability for the implementation of the Santos Management System and Santos Environment Health and Safety Policy, the MEFF Project sits under the remit of the Executive Vice President of WA, Northern Australia, Timor Leste Business Unit. The Santos General Manager – Projects and Decommissioning is accountable for ensuring implementation, management and review of this EP.

Key roles and environmental responsibilities for the decommissioning activity are detailed in **Table 11-3** and will be communicated to these positions before the activity commences and when any changes are made to these positions.

Table 11-3: Chain of command, key leadership and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
During all activities	
Production Manager, Oil Assets	+ Ensure compliance with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy. + Ensure relevant Santos Management System Standards and procedures are implemented as necessary. + Ensure adequate resources are in place to meet the requirements within the EP. + Ensure overall compliance with the EP with advice and guidance from the Santos Environmental Coordinator. + Ensure incidents and non-conformances are managed as per Section 11.10 and Section 11.13.3 respectively. + Review information received from external sources regarding lessons learnt and non-conformances, relevant to the survey, with the project team to identify if there are actions relevant to the survey. If actions are relevant implement as per Section 11.13.
Senior Manager – Environment Approvals	+ Ensure incident preparedness and response arrangements meet Santos and regulatory requirements. + Ensure adequate resources are in place to meet the compliance requirements within the OPEP. + Have overall responsibility for approving the OPEP. + Notify NOPSEMA of a change in titleholder, a change in the titleholder's nominated liaison person or a change in the contact details for (as per Section 1.6).

Role	Responsibilities
Senior Stakeholder Adviser/Relevant Persons Coordinator	+ Responsible for implementation of steps described in Section 11.14 + relating to post acceptance consultation throughout the duration of the Activity + Maintains a Relevant Persons contact and information database + Maintains a Relevant Persons Notification Log specific to the EP + Maintains records of all Relevant Persons correspondence specific to the EP + Ensures relevant stakeholders are identified throughout the life of the EP + Prior to commencement of the activity and on advice of HSE Team Lead, provides a notification to all relevant stakeholders listed, or as revised, in Table 11-4. The notification will include information on activity timing, vessel movements and vessel details. + On advice of MEFF Asset Manager, provide cessation notifications to relevant stakeholders identified in Table 11-4 + Is available before, during and after the activity to ensure opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback are available. + Prepares and distributes quarterly consultation updates to relevant stakeholders.
During IMMR campaigns	
Santos Offshore Representative or Company Site Representative	+ Be responsible for day-to-day monitoring of operations. + Interface with the MEFF Asset Manager) and assist the contractor in performing field campaigns in a safe and environmentally acceptable manner in accordance with this EP. + Ensure all personnel are given a full briefing on environmental sensitivities of the permit area and environmental management procedures and commitments detailed in this EP. + Ensure Santos Environment, Health and Safety Policy is applied in areas of responsibility. + Maintain clear communication between Santos and contractors on environmental issues. + Notify MEFF Asset Manager immediately of any changes in operations which could impact negatively on environmental performance. + Ensure incident investigations are conducted as required. + Participate in the investigation of any environmental incidents. + Be responsible for the offshore management of contractor activities and ensuring compliance with the relevant commitments (including record keeping) made in this EP. + Be offshore focal point for communications between Santos and contractor personnel. + Immediately report any incidents to the Vessel Master and the MEFF Asset Manager.

Role	Responsibilities
Santos Environmental Coordinator (Compliance)	+ Ensure site environmental audits are carried out as required to ensure compliance. + Ensure environmental monitoring is conducted in accordance with the Santos Management System and this EP. + Liaise with the MEFF Asset Manager and Offshore Field Representative to ensure compliance with all aspects of this EP. + Perform environmental education and inductions for operational personnel. + Ensure incident investigations are conducted as per Santos Management System. + Ensure EP compliance report that covers environmental performance of the activity in this EP is prepared and submitted to NOPSEMA.
All personnel	+ Adhere to this EP. + Follow good housekeeping procedures and work practices. + Report HSE incidents, hazards or non-conformance to the Vessel Master in a timely manner. + Report sightings of marine fauna and pollution.
During cessation of operations phase (but outside of when field campaigns are occurring)	
Santos Environmental Coordinator (Compliance)	+ Ensure environmental monitoring is conducted in accordance with the Santos Management System and this EP. + Ensure incident investigations are conducted as per Santos Management System. + Ensure EP compliance report that covers environmental performance of the activity in this EP is prepared and submitted to NOPSEMA.
During decommissioning activities / campaigns (seabed asset removal)	
Project Manager	+ Ensure compliance with Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy. + Ensure relevant Santos Management System Standards and procedures are implemented as necessary. + Ensure adequate resources are in place to meet the requirements within the EP and OPEP. + Ensure adequate emergency response capability is in place. + Ensure overall compliance with the EP and OPEP with advice and guidance from the Santos Environmental Coordinator / HSE Manager as necessary. + Interface with the MEFF Asset Manager and assist the contractor in performing field campaigns in a safe and environmentally acceptable manner in accordance with this EP. + Ensure incidents and non-conformances are managed as per Section 11.10 and Section 11.13.3 respectively. + Review information received from external sources regarding lessons learnt and non-conformances, relevant to the survey, with the project team to identify if there are actions relevant to the survey. If actions are relevant implement as per Section 11.13.

Role	Responsibilities
Santos Offshore Representative or Company Site Representative	+ Be responsible for day-to-day monitoring of operations. + Ensure all personnel are given a full briefing on environmental sensitivities of the permit area and environmental management procedures and commitments detailed in this EP. + Ensure Santos Environment, Health and Safety Policy is applied in areas of responsibility. + Maintain clear communication between Santos and contractors on environmental issues. + Notify Santos Project Manager (Onshore) immediately of any changes in operations which could impact negatively on environmental performance. + Ensure incident investigations are conducted as required. + Participate in the investigation of any environmental incidents. + Be responsible for the offshore management of contractor activities and ensuring compliance with the relevant commitments (including record keeping) made in this EP. + Be offshore focal point for communications between Santos and contractor personnel. + Immediately report any incidents to the Vessel Master and the Santos Project Manager (Onshore).
Santos Environmental Coordinator (Compliance)	+ Ensure site audits are performed as required to ensure compliance. + Ensure environmental monitoring is conducted in accordance with the Santos Management System and this EP. + Liaise with the Santos Project Manager (Onshore) and Offshore Company Site Representative to ensure compliance with all aspects of this EP. + Perform environmental education and inductions for operational personnel. + Ensure environment, health and safety incident investigations are conducted as per Santos Management System. + Ensure EP compliance report that covers environmental performance of the activity in this EP is prepared and submitted to NOPSEMA.
Senior Oil Spill Response Advisor	Has overall responsibility for: + providing upfront and ongoing guidance, framework, and direction on preparation of this OPEP + developing and maintaining arrangements and contracts for incident response support from third parties + developing and defining objectives, strategies and tactical plans for response preparedness defined in this OPEP and Incident Response Plan + undertaking assurance activities on arrangements outlined within the OPEP.

Effective implementation of this EP will require collaboration and cooperation among Santos and its contractors. At the time of writing this EP (Revision 8), Contracts have not been awarded.

Contract management will be per SMS-PRC-OS01-PD02 Contract Management Procedure and SMS-HSS-OS08-PD01 HSE Contractor Management Procedure. For each contract a Santos Contract Representative and Santos Contract Sponsor will be appointed.

Prior to implementation, the project decisions are assured / approved in accordance with the SMS-PRM-OS01-PS01 Project Delivery Process.

11.6 Workforce training and competency

OPGGS(E)R 2023 Requirements
Regulation 22(4)
The implementation strategy must include measures to ensure each employee or contractor working on, or in connection with, the activity is aware of his or her responsibilities in relation to the environment plan, including during emergencies or potential emergencies, and has the appropriate competencies and training.

This section describes the mechanisms that will be in place so each employee and contractor is aware of his or her responsibilities in relation to the EP and has appropriate training and competencies.

11.6.1 Activity inductions

All offshore personnel will complete an induction that will include a component addressing their EP responsibilities. Induction attendance records for all personnel will be maintained. Inductions will include information about:

Santos' Environment, Health and Safety Policy

- + regulatory regime (NOPSEMA regulations)
- + EPBC Act Policy Statement 2.1 and how it applies to the activity
- + operating environment (e.g. nearby protected marine areas, sensitive environmental periods) interaction with other marine users (e.g. topic to reinforce the importance of marine communications regarding any potential interactions with active commercial fishing)
- + activities with highest risk (e.g. invasive marine species and hydrocarbon releases)
- + EP commitments (e.g. **Section 11.4.1**)
- + incident reporting and notifications
- + regulatory compliance reporting
- + management of change process for changes to EP activities
- + oil pollution emergency response (e.g. OPEP requirements).

11.6.2 Training and competency

All offshore personnel will complete relevant training and hold qualifications and certificates for their role. Santos and its contractors are individually responsible for ensuring their personnel are qualified and trained. The systems, procedures and responsible persons will vary and will be managed through the use of online databases, staff on-boarding process and training departments etc.

Personnel qualifications and training records will be sampled before and / or during an activity. Such checks will be performed during the contracting process, facility acceptance testing, inductions, crew change and operational inspections and audits.

11.6.3 Workforce involvement and stakeholder communications

Daily operational meetings will be held offshore at which HSE will be a standing agenda item. It is a requirement that supervisors attend daily operational meetings and all personnel attend daily toolbox or pre-shift meetings.

Toolbox meetings will be regularly held offshore to plan jobs and discuss work tasks, including HSE risks and controls.

HSE performance will be monitored and reported during the activity, and performance metrics (such as the number of environmental incidents) will be regularly communicated to the workforce. Workforce involvement and environmental awareness will also be promoted by encouraging offshore personnel to report marine fauna sightings and marine pollution (e.g. oil on water, dropped objects etc).

11.7 Environment Plan reporting

To meet Section 270(3)(e) and 270(3)(f) of the OPGGS Act, Santos will undertake an ROV “as-left survey” (**Section 10.3.1**) and final environmental surveys (**Section 10.3.2**). Data from these surveys and other operational data collected over the life of the MEFF Development will be analysed to inform what, if anything, needs to be done to provide for the conservation and protection of natural resources in the licence areas, and make good any damage to the seabed or subsoil in the licence area caused by any person engaged or concerned with the operations.

Santos will provide a report to NOPSEMA within 12 months following completion of final decommissioning activities with their demonstration for how Santos has provided for the conservation and protection of the natural resources and made good any damage to the seabed or subsoil in the licence areas relevant to the MEFF field development (see reporting requirements outlined in).

11.8 Asset management

Santos’ management system defines business expectations and requirements for the management of assets to ensure the strategic and economic value is optimised through the asset life cycle, while preventing harm to people and the environment.

As part of the asset life cycle management requirements, Santos assets are required to have a decommissioning strategy and plan. The MEFF Decommissioning Project will be managed in accordance with Santos’s Decommissioning Management Procedure (SMS-DEV-OS02-PD01) and Project Delivery Process (SMS-PRM-OS01-PS01). The Project Delivery Process (PDP) ensures Santos delivers repeatable, predictable and successful project outcomes. It is a structured, decision-driven process to identify and realise maximum value from business opportunities including robust and cost-effective decommissioning plans and decisions.

Any equipment recovered from the field during the decommissioning phase will be taken to shore for recycling, reuse or disposal in accordance with applicable legislation. Santos will record the final disposal of the various waste streams in accordance with the Waste Monitoring and Reporting procedure (SMS-EXA-OS01-PD02-PD01).

The decommissioning options presented in this EP include proposed seabed assets to be abandoned in situ. Santos are required to obtain a Sea Dumping Permit for such assets in accordance with the requirements of the Sea Dumping Act 1981 administered by DCCEEW.

11.9 Emergency preparedness and response

OPGGS(E)R 2023 Requirements
Regulation 22(8)
The implementation strategy must contain an oil pollution emergency plan and provide for updating the plan.

Vessels are required to have and implement incident response plans, such as an emergency response plan (ERP), Shipboard Marine Pollution Emergency Plan (SMPEP) or Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (SOPEP). Regular incident response drills and exercises (e.g. as defined in emergency response plan, SMPEP or SOPEP) will be carried out on support vessels to refresh the crew in using equipment and implementing incident response procedures.

Santos will implement the MEFF Decommissioning OPEP (9885-650-PLN-0002) in the event of a hydrocarbon spill. The OPEP details how Santos will prepare and respond to a spill event and meets the requirement of Regulation 22(8).

11.10 Incident reporting, investigation and follow-up

OPGGS(E)R 2023 Requirements
Regulation 22(7)
The implementation strategy must state when the titleholder will report to NOPSEMA in relation to the titleholder's environmental performance for the activity. The interval between reports must not be more than 12 months. Note: Section 51 requires a titleholder to report on environmental performance at the times or intervals set out in the environment plan.
Regulation 22(6)
The implementation strategy must provide for sufficient monitoring of, and maintaining a quantitative record of, emissions and discharges (whether occurring during normal operations or otherwise), such that the record can be used to assess whether the environmental performance outcomes and standards in the environment plan are being met.

All personnel will be informed through inductions and daily operational meetings of their duty to report HSE incidents and hazards. Reported HSE incidents and hazards will be shared during daily operational meetings, and HSE incidents and hazards will be documented in the incident management systems as appropriate. HSE incidents will be investigated in accordance with the Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedure (QE-91-IF-00002).

Environmental recordable and reportable incidents will be reported to NOPSEMA and to other regulators as required in accordance with **Table 11-4**. The incident reporting requirements will be provided to all crew on board the facilities and support vessels during the induction with special attention to the reporting time frames to provide for accurate and timely reporting.

For the purposes of this activity, in accordance with OPGGS(E)R 2023:

- + a recordable incident, for an activity, means a breach of an EPO or EPS, that is not also a reportable incident
- + a reportable incident, for an activity, means an incident that has caused, or has the potential to cause, moderate to significant environmental damage.

For the purposes of this EP, a reportable incident is an incident that is assessed to have an environmental consequence of moderate or higher in accordance with the Santos environmental impact and risk assessment process outlined in **Section 7**. Of the planned and unplanned events assessed within this EP, the events identified to have a potential consequence level of Moderate or higher are:

- + introduction of invasive marine species (Moderate)
- + hydrocarbon release (marine diesel oil) (Moderate)
- + hydrocarbon release from LOWC (Moderate).

11.11 Reporting and notifications

OPGGS(E)R 2023 Requirements
Regulation 22(7)
The implementation strategy must state when the titleholder will report to NOPSEMA in relation to the titleholder's environmental performance for the activity. The interval between reports must not be more than 12 months. Note: Section 51 requires a titleholder to report on environmental performance at the times or intervals set out in the environment plan.
Regulation 22(6)
The implementation strategy must provide for sufficient monitoring of, and maintaining a quantitative record of, emissions and discharges (whether occurring during normal operations or otherwise), such that the record can be used to assess whether the environmental performance outcomes and standards in the environment plan are being met.

11.11.1 Notifications and compliance reporting

Regulatory, other notifications and compliance reporting requirements are summarised in **Table 11-4**.

Table 11-4: Activity notification and reporting requirements

Requirement	Required information	Timing	Type	Recipient
Before the Activity				
<u>AFMA</u> As requested during additional consultation.	Activity timing, location, description and vessel contact details.	At least four weeks before the activity commences where practicable.	Written	AFMA: petroleum@afma.gov.au
<u>AHO Notification</u> Standing arrangement with AHO.	Activity timing, location, description and vessel contact details.	At least four weeks before the activity commences where practicable.	Written	AHO: datacentre@hydro.gov.au
<u>Care for Hedland</u> As requested during additional consultation.	Activity timing, location, description and vessel contact details.	At least four weeks before the activity commences where practicable.	Written	Care for Hedland: coordinator@careforhedland.org.au
<u>DAFF</u> As requested during additional consultation.	Activity timing, location, description and vessel contact details.	At least four weeks before the activity commences where practicable.	Written	DAFF: Petroleum&Fisheries@agriculture.gov.au
<u>Department of Defence</u> Standing arrangement with DoD.	Activity timing, location, description and vessel contact details. Confirm restricted air space status.	At least five weeks before the activity commences where practicable.	Written	DoD: offshore.petroleum@defence.gov.au
<u>DPIRD</u> As requested during additional consultation.	Activity timing, location, description and vessel contact details.	At least four weeks before the activity commences where practicable.	Written	DPIRD: Environment@dpird.wa.gov.au
<u>Recfishwest</u> As requested during additional consultation.	Activity timing, location, description and vessel contact details.	At least four weeks before the activity commences where practicable.	Written	Contact details as provided by Recfishwest

Requirement	Required information	Timing	Type	Recipient
<u>Shire of Ashburton</u> As requested during additional consultation.	Activity timing, location, description and vessel contact details.	At least four weeks before the activity commences where practicable.	Written	Contact details as provided by Shire of Ashburton
<u>WAFIC</u> As requested during additional consultation.	Activity timing, location, description and vessel contact details.	At least four weeks before the activity commences where practicable.	Written	WAFIC: oilandgas@wafic.org.au
<u>Western Rock Lobster</u> As requested during additional consultation.	Activity timing, location, description and vessel contact details.	At least four weeks before the activity commences where practicable.	Written	Contact details as provided by Western Rock Lobster
<u>OPGGS(E) Regulation 54 & 55 – Notifications</u> NOPSEMA must be notified that the activity is to commence.	Complete NOPSEMA's Regulation 54 Start or End of Activity Notification form prior to each campaign.	At least ten days before the campaign activity commences.	Written	NOPSEMA
<u>DEMIRS</u> Standing arrangement with DMIRS.	Activity timing, location, description and vessel contact details.	At least ten days before the activity commences where practicable.	Written	DMIRS
<u>AMSA JRCC</u> Standing arrangement with AMSA JRCC.	Activity timing, location, description and vessel contact details.	24 to 48 hours before the activity commences.	Written	AMSA's JRCC: rccaus@amsa.gov.au
During the Activity				
<u>OPGGS(E) Regulation 50 – Recordable Incidents</u> NOPSEMA must be notified of a breach of an EPO or EPS, in the environment plan that applies to the activity that is not a reportable incident.	Complete NOPSEMA's Recordable Environmental Incident Monthly Report form.	As soon as practicable after the end of the calendar month, and in any case, not later than 15 days after the end of the calendar month.	Written	NOPSEMA

Requirement	Required information	Timing	Type	Recipient
<u>OPGGS(E) Regulation 24(c), 47 & 48 – Reportable Incident</u> NOPSEMA must be notified of any reportable incidents. For the purposes of Regulation 24(c), a reportable incident is defined as: + an incident relating to the activity that has caused, or has the potential to cause, moderate to significant environmental damage.	The oral notification must contain: + all material facts and circumstances concerning the reportable incident known or by reasonable search or enquiry could be found out + any action taken to avoid or mitigate any adverse environmental impacts of the reportable incident + the corrective action that has been taken, or is proposed to be taken, to stop, control or remedy the reportable incident.	As soon as practicable, and in any case not later than two hours after the first occurrence of a reportable incident, <u>or</u> if the incident was not detected at the time of the first occurrence, at the time of becoming aware of the reportable incident.	Oral	NOPSEMA
	A written record of the oral notification must be submitted. The written record is not required to include anything that was not included in the oral notification.	As soon as practicable after the oral notification.	Written	NOPSEMA National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator

Requirement	Required information	Timing	Type	Recipient
	A written report must contain: + all material facts and circumstances concerning the reportable incident known or by reasonable search or enquiry could be found out + any action taken to avoid or mitigate any adverse environmental impacts of the reportable incident + the corrective action that has been taken, or is proposed to be taken, to stop, control or remedy the reportable incident + the action that has been taken, or is proposed to be taken, to prevent a similar incident occurring in the future. Consider reporting using NOPSEMA's Report of an Accident, Dangerous Occurrence or Environmental Incident form.	Must be submitted as soon as practicable, and in any case not later than three days after the first occurrence of the reportable incident unless NOPSEMA specifies otherwise. Same report to be submitted to NOPTA within seven days after giving the written report to NOPSEMA.	Written	NOPSEMA National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator
<u>OPGGS(E) Regulation 51 – Environmental Performance</u> NOPSEMA must be notified of the environmental performance at the intervals provided for in the EP.	Report must contain sufficient information to determine whether or not environmental performance outcomes and standards in the EP have been met.	A detailed environmental performance report will be submitted within three months of submission of Regulation 29(2).	Written	NOPSEMA

Requirement	Required information	Timing	Type	Recipient
<u>AMSA Reporting</u> Under the MoU between Santos and AMSA and as requested by AMSA during consultation.	Any changes to the intended operations.	As soon as practicable.	Written	AMSA's JRCC: rccaus@amsa.gov.au
	Titleholder agrees to notify AMSA of any marine pollution incident ^[1] .	Within two hours of incident.	Oral	AMSA
	POLREP and SITREP available online (refer to OPEP).	POLREP as requested by AMSA following verbal notification. SITREP as requested by AMSA within 24 hours of request.	Written	AMSA
<u>AHO Notification</u> As requested during consultation.	Any changes to the intended operations.	As soon as practicable.	Written	AHO: datacentre@hydro.gov.au
Santos' commitment to include activity in Quarterly Consultation Update until activity ends.	The Quarterly Consultation Update will include the activity. This consultation will cease once the activity has ended.	Quarterly.	Written	The Quarterly Consultation Update is circulated to a broad group of Santos' stakeholders, including many of the stakeholders identified in Section 6.2 .
<u>Care for Hedland</u> As requested during consultation.	In the event of an emergency that may impact on the City's functions, interests or activities	As soon as practicable.	Written	Care for Hedland coordinator@careforhedland.org.au

^[1] For clarity and consistency across Santos regulatory reporting requirements Santos will meet the requirement of reporting marine oil pollution by reporting oil spills assessed to have an environmental consequence of moderate or higher in accordance with Santos environmental impact and risk assessment process outlined in **Section 7**.

Requirement	Required information	Timing	Type	Recipient
<u>Director of National Parks Reporting</u> Notification of the event of oil pollution within a marine park or where an oil spill response action must be taken within a marine park; or if any changes to intended operations (requested through consultation).	The DNP should be made aware of oil / gas pollution incidences which occur within a marine park or are likely to impact on a marine park as soon as possible. Notification should be provided to the 24-hour Marine Compliance Duty Officer on 0419 293 465. The notification should include: + titleholder details + time and location of the incident (including name of marine park likely to be affected) + proposed response arrangements as per the OPEP (such as dispersant, containment) + confirmation of providing access to relevant monitoring and evaluation reports when available + contact details for the response coordinator. Note that the DNP may request daily or weekly Situation Reports, depending on the scale and severity of the pollution incident.	So far as reasonably practicable prior to response action being written.	Oral and written	Director of National Parks

Requirement	Required information	Timing	Type	Recipient
	Notify if details regarding the activity change and result in an overlap with or new impact to a marine park.	As soon as practicable.	Written	DNP: marineparks@awe.gov.au
<u>DPIRD Reporting</u> If marine pests or disease are suspected this must be reported to DPIRD.	Notification of any suspected marine pests or diseases including any organism listed in the Western Australian Prevention List for Introduced Marine Pests and any other non-endemic organism that demonstrates invasive characteristics.	Within 24 hours.	Oral	DPIRD FishWatch
<u>DCCEEW Reporting</u> Any harm or mortality to EPBC Act listed threatened marine fauna. Marine Fauna Sighting Data.	Notification of any harm or mortality to an EPBC listed species of marine fauna whether attributable to the activity or not.	Within seven days to EPBC.permits@environment.gov.au .	Written	DCCEEW
	Marine fauna sighting data recorded in the marine fauna sighting database.	As soon as practicable, in any case no later than three months of the end of the activity.	Written	DCCEEW
<u>Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Reporting</u> Any harm or mortality to fauna listed as threatened under the <i>WA Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> .	Notification of any harm or mortality to fauna listed as a threatened species under the <i>WA Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> as a result of Santos' activities.	A fauna report will be submitted to DBCA within seven days to fauna@dbca.wa.gov.au .	Written	DBCA

Requirement	Required information	Timing	Type	Recipient
<u>Australian Marine Mammal Centre Reporting</u> Any ship strike incident with cetaceans will also be reported to the National Ship Strike database.	Ship strike report provided to the Australian Marine Mammal Centre: https://data.marinemammals.gov.au/report/shipstrike .	As soon as practicable.	Written	DCCEEW
<u>Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Reporting</u> Notification of the event of a hydrocarbon release.	Notification of actual or impending spillage.	As soon as practicable.	Oral or Written	DBCA Pilbara regional office
<u>Department of Transport Reporting</u> All actual or impending MOP incidents that are in, or may impact, State waters resulting from an offshore petroleum activity.	Notification of actual or impending spillage, release or escape of oil or an oily mixture that is capable of causing loss of life, injury to a person or damage to the health of a person, property or the environment.	Within two hours.	Oral	DoT
	WA DoT POLREP and SITREP available online (refer OPEP).	As requested by DoT after verbal notification.	Written	DoT
DWER	Notification of a spill event.	As soon as practicable.	Oral or Written	DWER
<u>Shire of Ashburton</u> As requested during consultation.	In the event of an emergency that may impact on the City's functions, interests or activities	As soon as practicable.	Written	Shire of Ashburton soa@ashburton.wa.gov.au emergency.management@ashburton.wa.gov.au

Requirement	Required information	Timing	Type	Recipient
End of Activity				
<u>OPGGS(E) Regulation 54 – Notifications</u> NOPSEMA must be notified that the activity is completed.	Complete NOPSEMA's Regulation 54 Start or End of Activity Notification form for both notifications.	Within ten days after cessation of each activity campaign.	Written	NOPSEMA
AHO AMSA JRCC AFMA Care for Hedland DAFF DCCEEW DEMIRS Department of Defence DPIRD Recfishwest Shire of Ashburton WAFIC Western Rock Lobster	Activity cessation notification.	Within ten days after cessation of each campaign.	Written	AHO: datacentre@hydro.gov.au AHS: webmaster@hydro.gov.au AMSA's JRCC: rccaus@amsa.gov.au AFMA: petroleum@afma.gov.au Care for Hedland: coordinator@careforhedland.org.au DAFF: Petroleum&Fisheries@agriculture.gov.au DCCEEW: Petroleum&Fisheries@agriculture.gov.au DEMIRS: petroleum.environment@demirs.wa.gov.au

Requirement	Required information	Timing	Type	Recipient
				Department of Defence: offshore.petroleum@defence.gov.au DPIRD: Environment@dpird.wa.gov.au Recfishwest Shire of Ashburton WAFIC Western Rock Lobster
<u>AHO</u> Notification of abandoned equipment in situ	Provide location coordinates and description of equipment abandoned in situ so they can be marked on navigational charts	On completion of the decommissioning campaign	Written	AHO: datacentre@hydro.gov.au
<u>AHO</u> Notification of relinquishment of PSZ	Provide coordinates and description of the PSZ to be relinquished.	On completion of the decommissioning campaign	Written	AHO: datacentre@hydro.gov.au
<u>Commercial Fishers Notification</u> As requested during consultation.	Activity Cessation Notification provided to relevant commercial fishing stakeholders, as agreed with WAFIC or relevant industry body.	Within ten days after cessation of each campaign.	Written	WAFIC oilandgas@wafic.org.au

Requirement	Required information	Timing	Type	Recipient
<u>OPGGS(E) Regulation 22(7) & 51 – Environmental Performance</u> NOPSEMA must be notified of the environmental performance of the activity.	Report must contain sufficient information to determine whether or not environmental performance outcomes and standards in the EP have been met.	An environmental performance report will be submitted within three months of completion of each campaign.	Written	NOPSEMA
<u>OPGGS(E) Regulation 46</u> EP ends when titleholder notifies completion and the Regulator accepts the notification. NOPSEMA must be notified that the activity has ended and all EP obligations have been completed.	Notification advising NOPSEMA of end of all activities to which the EP relates and that all obligations have been completed.	Within 12 months of the final Regulation 29 (2) notification.	Written	NOPSEMA
<u>OPGGS(E) Regulation 26C and Section 270 Consent to surrender title NOPSEMA Advice</u> Report must be issued to NOPSEMA detailing outcome of activities (Section 4) including decommissioning monitoring outlined in Section 10.3 .	The report (s) will: Demonstrate that all conditions and obligation included in the accepted permissioning documents have been met. Provide evidence that assumptions, performance standards and measurement criteria have been met where applied to conditions or obligations. Provide detail of any criteria that has not been met and any changes to the conditions or obligations approved in the accepted permissioning document. Describe any variations from the accepted	During the lifetime of this EP	Written	NOPSEMA

Requirement	Required information	Timing	Type	Recipient
	decommissioning operations and work plan. Confirm control measures applied to manage the impacts and risks with an accepted deviation have been effective. Describe any impacts or consequences observed as a result of decommissioning operation and works.			

11.11.2 Monitoring and recording emissions and discharges

OPGGS(E)R 2023 Requirements
Regulation 34(e)
Includes an appropriate implementation strategy and monitoring, recording and reporting arrangements.
Regulation 22(6)
The implementation strategy must provide for sufficient monitoring of, and maintaining a quantitative record of, emissions and discharges (whether occurring during normal operations or otherwise), such that the record can be used to assess whether the environmental performance outcomes and standards in the environment plan are being met.

Vessel-based discharges to the marine environment, associated with this activity will be recorded and controlled in accordance with requirements under relevant marine orders.

Santos and support vessel contractors will maintain records so emissions and discharges can be determined or estimated. Such records will be maintained for a period of five years. Contractors are required to make these records available upon request. Santos records discharges or emissions (where practicable), to the environment as described in **Table 11-5**.

Table 11-5: Monitoring methods for emissions and discharges

Discharge/emission	Parameter	Quantitative Record	Recording frequency
Chemicals (discharged to marine environment)	Volume	Chemical Risk Assessment Volumes used will be estimated based on known inventories	For every chemical used with a fate to the marine environment
Oily water	Volume and location	Oil Record Book or equivalent report	For every discharge
Garbage (including food scraps)	Volume and location	Garbage Record Book	For every discharge
Sewage	Volume and location	Sewage Record Book	For every discharge
Ballast water	Volume and location	Ballast water record book or log	For every discharge
Unplanned discharge of solid objects	Volume	Incident report	For every discharge
Unplanned discharge of hazardous liquids	Volume	Incident report	For every discharge
Unplanned hydrocarbon release	Volume	Incident report	For every discharge

11.11.3 Recovered seabed asset waste monitoring

All recovered seabed asset waste transported from offshore will be properly recorded. Waste records will typically include the following information:

- + manifest identification number

- + quantity (m3/kg)
- + waste description
- + waste container(s) number and description
- + date of shipment
- + destination description (e.g., recycling, landfill, etc.)
- + transporter data and waste acceptance declaration
- + receiver data and waste acceptance declaration
- + dangerous goods class and United Nations number for environmentally hazardous waste / NORM
- + special handling instructions
- + any other information required by the waste contractor.

11.12 Document management

11.12.1 Information management and document control

This EP and OPEP, as well as approved management of change documents, are controlled documents and current versions will be available on Santos' intranet. Santos' contractors are also required to maintain current versions of these documents.

Environmental performance outcomes and standards will be measured based on the measurement criteria listed in **Table 11-2**. Such records will be maintained for a period of five years. Contractors are required to make these records available upon request.

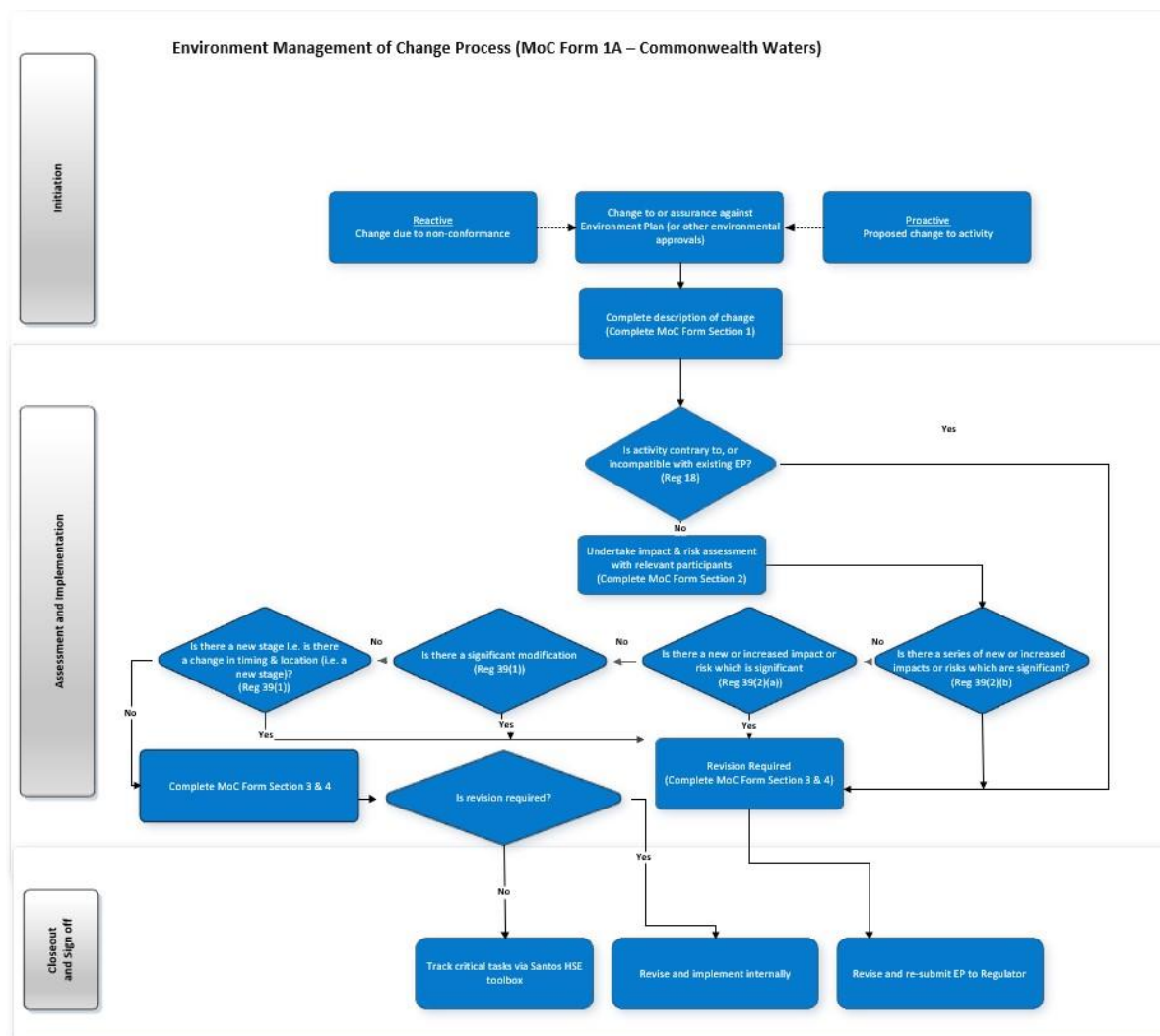
11.12.2 Management of change

The management of change (MoC) process provides a systematic approach to initiate, assess, document, approve, communicate and implement changes to EPs and OPEPs.

The MoC process considers Regulations 7, 8 and 17 of the OPGGS(E)R 2023 and determines if a proposed change can proceed and the manner in which it can proceed. The MoC procedure will determine whether a revision of the EP is required and whether that revision is to be submitted to NOPSEMA. For a change to proceed, the associated environmental impacts and risks must be demonstrated to be acceptable and ALARP. Additional stakeholder consultation may be required, depending on the nature and scale of the change. Additional information about the MoC process is provided in Figure 11-1.

The MoC procedure also allows for the assessment of new information that may become available after EP acceptance, such as new management plans for AMPs, new recovery plans or conservation advice for species, and changes to the EPBC Protected Matters Search results. If a review identifies new information, this is treated as a "Change that has an impact on EP", and the MoC process is followed accordingly.

Accepted MoCs become part of the in-force EP or OPEP, are tracked on a register and are made available on Santos' intranet. Where appropriate, the EP compliance register will be updated so CM or EPS changes are communicated to the workforce and implemented. Any MoC will be distributed to the relevant management personnel identified in **Table 11-3** and the most relevant management position will ensure the MoC is communicated and implemented, which may include crew meetings, briefings or communications as appropriate for the change.



Notes: The regulation requirements in this chart are summarised. For exact wording, refer to the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2023. Regulation 39(3) in relation to a change in titleholder and a new activity resulting in a change of the levy category as per Regulation 38 a revised or new EP is required to be submitted to the Regulator.

Figure 11-1: Environment management of change process

11.12.3 Reviews

This EP has assessed impacts and risk across the operational area, during any time of the year, for planned and unplanned events, given the nature of the 24/7 operations.

It is recognised that over the validity of this EP changes may occur, such as:

- + legislation
- businesses conditions, activities, systems, processes and people
- + industry practices
- + science and technology
- + societal and stakeholder expectations.

To ensure Santos maintains up-to-date knowledge of the industry, legislation and conservation advice, the following tasks are undertaken:

Maintain membership of APPEA (Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association), which provides a mechanism for communicating potential changes in legislation, industry practice and other issues that may affect EP implementation to relevant personnel in Santos.

- + Undertake annual spill response exercises to check spill response arrangements and capability are adequate.

Identify stakeholders prior to the activity commencing under this EP via the mechanisms outlined in **Section 6**.

Review the Values and Sensitivities within the EMBA which includes completing a new EPBC Protected Matters Search, reviewing **Appendix D** against relevant legislation to capture and review any relevant updates and incorporate as required, and reviewing any recently known published relevant scientific papers.

- + Subscribe to various regulator updates.
- + Have regular liaison meetings with Regulators.

Through maintenance of up-to-date knowledge, these changes are identified. If the changes have an impact on the activity or risks described and assessed in this EP, the EP will be reviewed and any changes required documented in accordance with Santos' MoC procedure (**Section 11.12.2**).

11.13 Audits and reviews

OPGGS(E)R 2023 Requirements
Regulation 22(5)
The implementation strategy must provide for sufficient monitoring, recording, audit, management of nonconformance and review of the titleholder's environmental performance and the implementation strategy to ensure the environmental performance outcomes and standards in the environment plan are being met.

11.13.1 Audits

Santos' audit plans and schedules are reviewed and updated at the beginning of each calendar year and cover all Santos facilities and activities. Santos' audit schedule may be amended to accommodate operational priorities, activity risk, personnel availability or high audit demand during certain periods (for example, regulatory audits, contractor audits). Santos will determine if a vessel audit is required following contract award and vessel confirmation.

Audits will be undertaken in a manner consistent with Santos' Assurance Operating Standard (SMS-LRG-OS03

Audit scope typically includes a selection of CMs and EPSs and EPOs. However, audits may also include other parts of the EP.

Audit findings may include opportunities for improvement and non-conformances. Audit non-conformances are managed as described in **Section 11.13**.

11.13.2 Inspections

During an activity, HSE inspections (desktop or vessel based) will be conducted at least once during the activity to identify or review hazards, incidents and EP non-conformances. These inspections will also check compliance against all the EPOs and EPSs of this EP (**Table 11-1** and **Table 11-2**) and inform end of activity reporting (**Table 11-4**). Any in-field opportunities for improvement or corrective actions will be discussed during the inspection with the Vessel Master.

11.13.3 Non-conformance management

EP non-conformances will be addressed and resolved by a systematic corrective action process as outlined in Santos' Assurance Operating Standard (SMS-LRG-OS03) Non-conformances arising from audits and inspections will be entered into Santos' incident and action tracking management system (i.e. HSE Toolbox). Once entered, corrective actions, time frames and responsible persons (including action owners and event validators) will be assigned. Corrective action 'close out' will be monitored using a management escalation process.

11.13.4 Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement may result in a review of the EP, with changes applied in accordance with **Section 11.12.2**. For this EP, continuous improvement will be driven by:

improvements identified from the review of business-level HSE key performance indicators

- + actions arising from Santos and departmental HSE improvement plans
- + corrective actions and feedback from HSE audits and inspections, incident investigations and after-action reviews

opportunities for improvement and changes identified during pre-activity reviews and MoC documents

- + actions taken to address concerns and issues raised during the ongoing stakeholder management process (**Section 6**).

Identified continuous improvement opportunities will be assessed in accordance with the MoC process to ensure any potential changes to this EP, or OPEP, are managed in accordance with the OPGGS(E)R 2023 and in a controlled manner.

11.14 Post acceptance consultation implementation strategy

11.14.1 Post-acceptance consultation implementation strategy – First Nations people and groups and local governments, communities and industry

Santos is committed to appropriate post acceptance consultation implementation for this Activity with relevant government authorities and other relevant interested persons and organisations.

Post acceptance consultation activities for this EP will be principally supported by Santos' regional engagement program for its existing operational footprint in the Carnarvon Basin, with a focus on First Nations people and groups and local governments, communities and industry with interests in the lands and waters of the adjacent Pilbara region.

11.14.1.1 First Nations people and groups

Santos will undertake consultation over the life of the activity with First Nations representative organisations, such as Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs) and Native Title Representative Bodies.

These engagements will be undertaken principally through Santos' existing regional engagement program, which has a focus on engaging those organisations with closest proximity to Santos' existing, proposed and planned activities in the Carnarvon Basin.

Having regard to Santos' experience consulting with First Nations groups, and feedback from First Nations relevant persons, Santos considers that consultation through representative bodies provides an appropriate mechanism for ongoing consultation with First Nations relevant interested persons.

Representative bodies provide for regular, culturally appropriate engagement, including processes for dissemination of information to First Nations Elders, cultural leaders and communities in a manner that is readily accessible and culturally appropriate.

Santos is currently in discussion with four Pilbara PBCs on the establishment of consultation frameworks that will provide for effective and regular engagement on proposed, planned, existing and completed activities. These PBCs are listed below, which have coastal interests from North West Cape to Dampier.

- + Nganhurra Thanardi Garrbu Aboriginal Corporation
- + Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation
- + Wirrawandi Aboriginal Corporation
- + Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation.

Santos has also identified Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation as a key organisation for engagement as part of the regional engagement program. Santos plans to grow this regional engagement network to include PBCs in the eastern Pilbara and western Kimberley to support future activities in the Bedout Basin (north of Port Hedland), given the proximity of proposed activities to these regions.

Engagement of all First Nations organisations will include consideration of culturally appropriate management measures for inclusion within EPs, where First Nations people believe that there may be impacts or risks, or have concerns with regards to:

- + Traditional lands and waters
- + Sea country interests
- + Totemic species
- + Other cultural values or sensitivities of importance.

11.14.1.2 Local governments, communities and industry

Similarly, Santos will use its existing regional engagement program, to support consultation over the life of the activity in regional communities proximate to Santos' existing, proposed and planned activities.

Representative groups identified by Santos for engagement include:

- + Local government – Shire of Exmouth, Shire of Ashburton and City of Karratha
- + Local industry – Exmouth Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Onslow Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Karratha and Districts Chamber of Commerce and Industry

- + Community Groups – Exmouth Community Liaison Group, Shire of Ashburton Onslow Community Information Sessions.

This regional approach is complementary to Santos existing and ongoing engagement of representative groups for other offshore marine user groups, including commercial fishing organisations.

11.14.2 Post-acceptance consultation implementation strategy – approach

Formal acceptance of the EP will be communicated via the NOPSEMA website. Santos will also provide access to the EP via the NOPSEMA website and will provide details on the Santos website on how to provide ongoing feedback in relation to the decommissioning Activity.

Activity notifications and reports will be made in accordance with Table 11-4. The notifications and reports are based on legislative requirements, standing arrangements with particular Relevant Persons, Relevant Persons' requests for notification made during Regulation 25 consultation, or as otherwise deemed appropriate by Santos.

Following Activity commencement, Santos will provide quarterly updates on the Activity. The updates will be posted on Santos' website, with notifications to registered / subscribed interested parties.

Santos will apply the regional engagement model described in Section 11.14.1.2 to consider the preference of relevant government authorities and other relevant interested persons and organisations when determining the frequency and method of additional updates.

Santos will continue to accept, assess and respond to post acceptance consultation feedback during the life of the Activity. Records of any post acceptance consultation will be maintained in an appropriate Santos consultation database.

If, during the course of post acceptance consultation, Santos receives information demonstrating a new or increased environmental impact or risk that is not provided for in this EP, as in force at the time, Santos will apply its Management of Change process outlined in Section 11.12.2.

Santos will maintain a database of relevant authorities, and other relevant interested persons and organisations for this Activity. This includes updating its database in light of post acceptance consultation, including identification of new Relevant Persons.

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Appendix A: Santos Environment, Health and Safety Policy

Environment, Health & Safety



Policy

Our Commitment

Santos is committed to being the safest gas company wherever we have a presence and preventing harm to people and the environment

Our Actions

We will:

1. Integrate environment, health and safety management requirements into the way we work
2. Comply with all relevant environmental, health and safety laws and continuously improve our management systems
3. Include environmental, health and safety considerations in business planning, decision making and asset management processes
4. Identify, control and monitor risks that have the potential for harm to people and the environment, so far as is reasonably practicable
5. Report, investigate and learn from our incidents
6. Consult and communicate with, and promote the participation of all workers to maintain a strong environment, health and safety culture
7. Empower our people, regardless of position, to "Stop the Job" when they feel it necessary to prevent harm to themselves, others or the environment
8. Work proactively and collaboratively with our stakeholders and the communities in which we operate
9. Set, measure, review and monitor objectives and targets to demonstrate proactive processes are in place to reduce the risk of harm to people and the environment
10. Report publicly on our environmental, health and safety performance

Governance

The Environment Health Safety and Sustainability Committee is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed at appropriate intervals and revised when necessary to keep it current.

Kevin Gallagher

Managing Director & CEO

Status: APPROVED

Document Owner:	David Banks, Chief Operating Officer		
Approved by:	The Board	Version:	3

15 August 2022

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Appendix B: Legislative Framework

Australian Legislation

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984</i>	This Act provides for the preservation and protection from injury or desecration areas and objects that are of significance to Aboriginal people, under which the Minister may make a declaration to protect such areas and objects. The Act also requires the discovery of Aboriginal remains to be reported to the Minister.	Yes	Commonwealth – Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	There are no known sites of Aboriginal Heritage Significance within the operational area, but there are within the EMBA. This Act would only apply to the activity if there was a discovery of Aboriginal remains, which is not considered likely to occur, given the offshore location of the activity.	Section 5.2.4 – Protected / significant areas
Australian Ballast Water Requirements, Version 7	Australian Ballast Water Management Requirements outline the mandatory ballast water management requirements to reduce the risk of introducing harmful aquatic organisms into Australia's marine environment through ballast water from international vessels. These requirements are enforceable under the Biosecurity Act 2015.	Yes	Commonwealth – Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	Potential internationally sourced vessel operating in Australian Waters which could have the potential for introduction of Invasive Marine Species and potential ballast water exchange.	Section 9.2 – Introduction of invasive marine species
<i>Australian Heritage Council Act 2003</i>	This Act identifies areas of heritage value listed on the Register of the National Estate and sets up the Australian Heritage Council and its functions.	Yes	Australian Heritage Council	There are a number of national heritage places found on the National Heritage List, within the EMBA, as identified by the Act.	Section 5.2.4 – Protected/significant areas

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
<i>Australian Maritime Safety Authority Act 1990 (AMSA Act)</i>	This Act specifies that AMSA's role includes protection of the marine environment from pollution from ships and other environmental damage caused by shipping. AMSA is responsible for administering the Marine Order in Commonwealth waters. This Act facilitates international cooperation and mutual assistance in preparing and responding to a major oil spill incident and encourages countries to develop and maintain an adequate capability to deal with oil pollution emergencies. Requirements are given effect through AMSA. AMSA is the lead agency for responding to oil spills in the marine environment and is responsible for the Australian National Plan for Maritime Environmental Emergencies.	Yes	AMSA	This Act applies to the use of any vessel associated with operations, and is relevant to the activity regarding the unplanned pollution from ships.	Section 9.6 – Hydrocarbon spill – marine diesel oil
<i>Aquatic Resources Management Act 2016</i>	This Act will be the primary legislation used to manage fishing, aquaculture, pearling and aquatic resources in Western Australia. The Act was scheduled for commencement on 1 January 2019; however, this has been deferred while an amendment to the Act is progressed.	Yes	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development	Vessel movements have the potential to introduce IMS. This Act was considered during development of the Santos IMS Management Zone and IMS Management Plan (EA-00-RI-10172).	Section 9.2 – Introduction of invasive marine species

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
Marine Orders	Marine Orders (MO) are subordinate rules made pursuant to the Navigation Act 2012 and Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983 affecting the maritime industry. They are a means of implementing Australia's international maritime obligations by giving effect to international conventions in Australian law.	Yes	AMSA	Vessel movements, safety, discharges and emissions	Sections 8 and 9 – Planned and unplanned events
<i>Maritime Powers Act 2013</i>	Protects the heritage values of shipwrecks and relics for shipwrecks over 75 years. It is an offence to interfere with a shipwreck covered by this Act. Available historic shipwreck locations covered by international conventions enacted by this legislation have been identified and assessed (as applicable) within this EP.	No	The Department of Immigration and Border Protection	This Act applies to the shipwrecks (over 75 years old) within the EMBA. There is no planned interaction or interference with shipwrecks, and any unplanned impacts is only expected to affect the surface waters.	N/A

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
<i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> Biosecurity Regulations 2016 Biosecurity Amendment (Biofouling Management) Regulations 2021	This Act provides the Commonwealth with powers to take measures of quarantine, and implement related programs as are necessary, to prevent the introduction of any plant, animal, organism or matter that could contain anything that could threaten Australia's native flora and fauna or natural environment. The Commonwealth's powers include powers of entry, seizure, detention and disposal. This Act includes mandatory controls on the use of seawater as ballast in ships and the declaration of sea vessels voyaging out of and into Commonwealth waters. The Regulations stipulate that all information regarding the voyage of the vessel and the ballast water is declared correctly to the quarantine officers. The amended regulations require operators of all vessels to provide information on biofouling management practices prior to arriving in Australia. This includes pre-arrival reporting and verification and demonstration of proactive biofouling management.	Yes	Commonwealth – Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	This Act applies to all internationally sources vessels operating in Australian Waters which could have the potential for the introduction of IMS and potential ballast water exchange.	Section 9.2 – Introduction of IMS
<i>Corporations Act 2001</i>	This Act is the principal legislation regulating matters of Australian companies, such as the formation and operation of companies, duties of officers, takeovers and fundraising.	Yes	Commonwealth – Australian Securities and Investments Commission	The titleholder has provided ACN details within the meaning of the Act.	Section 1.6

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> EPBC Amendment Regulations 2006	NOPSEMA is the sole assessor for offshore petroleum activities in Commonwealth water (as of 28 February 2014). Under the new arrangements, environmental protection will be met through NOPSEMA's decision-making processes. This Act is the Australian Government's key piece of environmental legislation. The Act focuses on protecting MNES. AMP Management Plans were also developed under this Act.	Yes	Commonwealth – Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	This Act applies to all aspects of the activity that have the potential to impact MNES. Appropriate environmental approvals will be sought from NOPSEMA for all operations (this EP) which outlines compliance with the relevant regulations and plans under the Act. Where activities have existing approvals under the Act, these will continue to apply.	Section 8.4 – Noise emissions Section 8.3 – Light emissions Section 8.6 – Operational discharges Section 8.7 – Planned chemical and hydrocarbon discharges Sections 9.6, 9.7 and 9.8 – Hydrocarbon release Section 9.3 – Marine fauna interaction
<i>Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018</i> Draft Underwater Cultural Heritage guidelines 2023	This Act replaces the Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976, and extends protection to other wrecks such as submerged aircraft and human remains. It also increases penalties applicable to damaged sites. The Act came into effect on 1 July 2019. These guidelines outline the requirements of the UWH Act so proponents can plan for and implement the necessary risk assessment and management strategies to protect UCH from any direct or indirect impacts and to manage any residual impacts to acceptable levels. Any adverse impact	Yes	Commonwealth – Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	No planned interaction or interference to shipwrecks. Potential impact could be due to a hydrocarbon spill but the credible spill is to surface, and therefore shipwrecks are highly unlikely to be impacted. Numerous shipwrecks identified within EMBA.	Sections 9.6, 9.7 and 9.8 – Hydrocarbon release

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
	to protected UCH is unacceptable, unless these impacts are mitigated and managed in accordance with the UCH Act, the UNESCO 2001 Convention and the Annex Rules. Activities of any kind that have the potential to impact protected UCH must comply with the requirements of the UCH Act and, if applicable, any relevant state or the Northern Territory legislation. To satisfy their obligations under the UCH Act, proponents must be able to demonstrate: + that they are aware of the relevant UCH legislation; + that their actions will be compliant with the legislation; and + that they will implement appropriate and effective risk mitigation strategies to prevent or reduce the likelihood or severity of accidental impacts to protected UCH.				

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
<i>National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007</i>	Introduces a single national reporting framework for the reporting and dissemination of information about greenhouse gas emissions, greenhouse gas projects and energy use and production of corporations.	Yes	Commonwealth – Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water Climate Change Authority	This Act applies to the atmospheric emissions through combustion engine use to operate the vessels associated with the activity. Implementation of the Act will reduce the impact of GHG emissions associated with vessel use for the installation and commissioning activity, through compliance with MARPOL Annex VI (Marine Order Part 97: Marine Pollution Prevention – Air Pollution), and require the use of low sulphur fuel.	Section 8.5 – Atmospheric emissions
<i>Maritime Legislation Amendment (Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships) Act 2007</i>	This Act implements the requirements of MARPOL 73/78 Annex VI for shipping in Commonwealth waters.	Yes	Commonwealth – Department of Equipment and Regional Development	Implementation of this Act reduces the impact of GHG emissions associated with vessel use for the installation and commissioning activity, through compliance with MARPOL Annex VI (Marine Order Part 97: Marine Pollution Prevention – Air Pollution), and require the use of low sulphur fuel.	Section 8.5 – Atmospheric emissions

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
<i>Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012</i>	This Act is a single regulatory framework for the certification, construction, equipment, design and operation of domestic commercial vessels inside Australia's exclusive economic zone.	Yes	Commonwealth – Australian Maritime Safety Authority	All vessel movements associated with the activity will be governed by AMSA marine safety regulations under the Act.	Section 8.1 – Interaction with other marine users Section 9.6 – Hydrocarbon spill – marine diesel oil
<i>Navigation Act 2012</i>	An Act regulating navigation and shipping including SOLAS. A number of Marine Orders enacted under this Act apply directly to offshore petroleum exploration and production activities: + Marine Order 21: Safety and Emergency Arrangements + Marine Order 27: Safety of Navigation and Radio Equipment + Marine Order 30: Prevention of collisions + Marine Order 58: Safe Management of Vessels + Marine Order 70: Seafarer Certification.	Yes	AMSA (operational) Department of Equipment and Regional Development Minister for Equipment and Regional Development	All vessel movements associated with the activity will be governed by marine safety regulations and Marine Orders under the Act.	Section 8.1 – Interaction with other marine users Section 9.6 – Hydrocarbon spill – marine diesel oil
<i>Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006</i> Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2023	Petroleum exploration and development activities in Australia's offshore areas are subject to the environmental requirements specified in the OPGGS Act and associated Regulations. The OPGGS Act contains a broad requirement for titleholders to operate in accordance with 'good oil-field practice'. Specific environmental provisions relating to work practices essentially	Yes	NOPSEMA	The activity involves cessation of production and decommissioning activities, which are petroleum activities regulated by NOPSEMA under this Act.	Section 8.1 – Risk Assessments for Planned Events Section 9 – Risk Assessments for Unplanned Events

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
	require operators to control and prevent the escape of wastes and petroleum. The Act also requires that activities are carried out in a manner that does not unduly interfere with other rights or interests, including the conservation of the resources of the sea and sea-bed, such as fishing or shipping. In some cases, where there are particular environmental sensitivities or multiple use issues it may be necessary to apply special conditions to an exploration permit area. The holder of a petroleum title must maintain adequate insurance against expenses or liabilities arising from activities in the title, including expenses relating to clean-up or other remedying of the effects of the escape of petroleum. The OPGGS Environment Regulations provide an objective based regime for the management of environmental performance for Australian offshore petroleum exploration and production activities in areas of Commonwealth jurisdiction. Key objectives of the Environment Regulations include to: + ensure operations are performed in a way that is consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development				

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
	+ adopt best practice to achieve agreed environment protection standards in industry operations + encourage industry to continuously improve its environmental performance.				
Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989	Regulates the manufacture, importation and use of ODSs (typically used in fire-fighting equipment and refrigerants). Applicable to the handling of any ODS.	Yes	Commonwealth – Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	The activity does not include import, export or manufacture activities of ODS. This Act applies where ODS is found on vessel refrigeration systems; however, this is a rare occurrence.	Section 8.5 – Atmospheric emissions

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
Protection of the Sea (Powers of Intervention) Act 1981 Protection of the Sea (Powers of Intervention) Regulations 1983	The Act authorises the Commonwealth to take measures for the purpose of protecting the sea from pollution by oil and other noxious substances discharged from ships and provides legal immunity for persons acting under an AMSA direction.	Yes	Commonwealth – Department of Equipment and Regional Development	This Act applies to vessel discharges and movements associated with the activity. The Act is relevant to the extent that Santos will comply with MARPOL through the following relevant Marine Orders relating to marine pollution prevention have been put in place to give effect to relevant regulations of Annexes I, II, III, IV, V and VI of MARPOL 73/78: + Marine Order 91: Marine Pollution Prevention – Oil + Marine Order 93: Marine Pollution Prevention – Noxious Liquid Substances + Marine Order 94: Marine Pollution Prevention – Packaged Harmful Substances + Marine Order 95: Marine Pollution Prevention – Garbage + Marine Order 96: Marine Pollution Prevention – Sewage.	Section 8.1 – Interaction with other marine users Section 8.6 – Planned operational discharges Section 9.4 to 9.8 – Unplanned hydrocarbon and non-hydrocarbon/chemical spills Section 9.2 – Introduction of IMS

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
<i>Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983</i> Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) (Orders) Regulations 1994	This Act relates to the protection of the sea from pollution by oil and other harmful substances discharged from ships. This Act disallows any harmful discharge of sewage, oil and noxious substances into the sea and sets the requirements for a shipboard waste management plan. The following Marine Orders relating to marine pollution prevention have been put in place to give effect to relevant regulations of Annexes I, II, III, IV, V and VI of MARPOL 73/78: + Marine Order 91: Marine Pollution Prevention – Oil + Marine Order 93: Marine Pollution Prevention – Noxious Liquid Substances + Marine Order 94: Marine Pollution Prevention – Packaged Harmful Substances + Marine Order 95: Marine Pollution Prevention – Garbage + Marine Order 96: Marine Pollution Prevention – Sewage + Marine Order 97: Marine Pollution Prevention – Air Pollution.	Yes	Commonwealth – Department of Equipment and Regional Development	This Act applies to vessel discharges and movements associated with the activity. The Act is relevant to the extent that Santos will comply with MARPOL through the following relevant Marine Orders relating to marine pollution prevention have been put in place to give effect to relevant regulations of Annexes I, II, III, IV, V and VI of MARPOL 73/78: + Marine Order 91: Marine Pollution Prevention – Oil + Marine Order 93: Marine Pollution Prevention – Noxious Liquid Substances + Marine Order 94: Marine Pollution Prevention – Packaged Harmful Substances + Marine Order 95: Marine Pollution Prevention – Garbage + Marine Order 96: Marine Pollution Prevention – Sewage.	Section 8.6 – Planned operational discharges Section 9.4 to 9.8 – Unplanned hydrocarbon and non-hydrocarbon/chemical spills Section 9.2 – Introduction of IMS

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
<i>Protection of the Sea (Civil Liability of Bunker Oil Pollution Damage) Act 2008</i>	This Act implements the requirements for the International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage.	Yes	AMSA	This Act applies to diesel refuelling which may be undertaken at sea as part of the activity. Compliance with the Act reduces the risk of bunker oil pollution.	Section 9.6 – Hydrocarbon spill – marine diesel oil
<i>Protection of the Sea (Harmful Antifouling Systems) Act 2006</i>	This Act relates to the protection of the sea from the effects of harmful anti-fouling systems. It prohibits the use of harmful organotins in anti-fouling paints used on ships. This is enacted by Marine Order 98 (Marine Pollution – Anti-fouling Systems) 2013.	Yes	Commonwealth, Department of Equipment and Regional Development and AMSA	This Act applies to vessel movements in Australian Waters associated with the activity. Vessels are required to have biofouling systems in place to prevent introduction of IMS/harmful impact on Australian biodiversity. This is enacted by Marine Order 98 (Marine Pollution – Anti-fouling Systems) 2013.	Section 9.2 – Introduction of IMS
<i>Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981</i>	The Sea Dumping Act 1981 requires sea dumping permits to be required for particular activities and gives effect to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention) and associated Protocol.	No	Commonwealth – Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water	Applicable to abandonment in situ of proposed seabed equipment as part of decommissioning activities.	N/A

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
State Legislation					
<i>Fish Resources Management Act 1994</i> Fish Resources Management Regulations 1995	This Act establishes a framework for management of fishery resources and is the nominated lead agency responsible for implementing Western Australian marine biosecurity management requirements through implementation of the Fish Resources Management Act 1994 (FRMA 1994) and associated regulations.	Yes	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development	Introduction of invasive marine species.	Section 9.2 – Introduction of invasive marine species
<i>Dangerous Goods Safety Act 2004</i>	Act relating to the safe storage, handling and transport of dangerous goods and for related purposes.	Yes	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety	Relevant to the onshore transportation and disposal of seabed assets from the MEFF Field if they are landed and disposed of in Western Australia.	Section 4.6.7 – Disposal
Dangerous Goods Safety (Goods in Ports) Regulations 2007	'Goods in Ports' Regulations give legal status to the provisions of Australian Standard AS 3846 The handling and transport of dangerous cargoes in port areas. Requires classification of Dangerous Goods loads based on the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG) rather than ADG Code. Additional requirements are for safety management and emergency plans	Yes	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety	Relevant to the onshore transportation and disposal of seabed assets from the MEFF Field if they are landed and disposed of in Western Australia.	Section 4.6.7 – Disposal

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
Dangerous Goods Safety (Storage and Handling of Non Explosives) Regulations 2007	Regulations adopt NOHSC Standard for the Storage and Handling of Workplace Dangerous Goods. Western Australia has retained a licensing system for dangerous goods. In relation to dangerous goods, 'handling' includes manufacture, process, pack, use, sell, supply, carry and disposal of dangerous goods. References to the Australian Dangerous Goods Code (the ADG Code) in the regulations relate to the 7th edition of the ADG Code.	Yes	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety	Relevant to the onshore transportation and disposal of seabed assets from the MEFF Field if they are landed and disposed of in Western Australia.	Section 4.6.7 – Disposal
<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> Environmental Protection (Controlled Waste) Regulations 2004	Act contains measures for preventing or minimising pollution, which includes a general prohibition against pollution. Applicable areas include discharge of operational waste (sewage, galley waste) and oily water from vessels, gaseous emissions from diesel engines and ballast water exchange and discharge and controlled waste. The Act also regulates industrial emissions and discharges through a licensing process. The Environmental Protection (Controlled Waste) Regulations 2004 provide for the licensing of carriers, drivers, and vehicles involved in transporting controlled waste on roads in Western Australia.	Yes	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation	Relevant to the onshore transportation and disposal of seabed assets from the MEFF Field if they are landed and disposed of in Western Australia.	Section 4.6.7 – Disposal

Commonwealth legislation	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Administering authority	Relevant aspects of the activity	EP section
<i>Shipping and Pilotage Act 1967</i>	Act relating to shipping and pilotage in and about the ports, fishing boat harbours and mooring control areas of the State.	Yes	Department of Transport	Relevant to the onshore transportation and disposal of seabed assets from the MEFF Field if they are landed and disposed of in Western Australia.	Section 4.6.7 – Disposal
Navigable Waters Regulations 1958	Prescribes further matters on navigational safety in WA waters, use of jetties, obstruction and wrecks, berthing and mooring of vessels	Yes	Department of Transport	Relevant to the onshore transportation and disposal of seabed assets from the MEFF Field if they are landed and disposed of in Western Australia.	Section 4.6.7 – Disposal

International Agreements and Conventions

International agreements and conventions	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Relevant aspects	EP section
1996 Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972	Implemented in <i>WA Marine (Sea Dumping) Act</i> and <i>Environmental Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981</i> .	Yes	Sewage, grey water, and putrescible wastes generated from support vessels. Deck drainage/deck wash-down, cooling, brine, ballast and bilge water from support vessels. Hydraulic fluid released by valve operation on seabed equipment. Various discharges from planned maintenance activities.	Section 8.6 – Operational discharges
Agreement Between the Government of Australia and the Government of Japan for the Protection of Migratory Birds in Danger of Extinction and Their Environment 1974 (commonly referred to as the Japan Australia Migratory Bird Agreement or JAMBA)	This agreement recognises the special international concern for the protection of migratory birds and birds in danger of extinction that migrate between Australia and Japan. Implemented in EPBC Act.	Yes	Only relevant in so far as the credible spill scenario may result in impact to migratory seabirds foraging in area.	Section 9.6 to 9.8 – Unplanned hydrocarbon spills
Agreement Between the Government of Australia and the Government of the People's Republic of China for the Protection of Migratory Birds and Their Environment 1986 (commonly referred to as the China Australia Migratory Bird Agreement or CAMBA)	This agreement recognises the special international concern for the protection of migratory birds and birds in danger of extinction that migrate between Australia and China. Implemented in EPBC Act.	Yes	Only relevant in so far as the credible spill scenario may result in impact to migratory seabirds foraging in area.	Section 9.6 to 9.8 – Unplanned hydrocarbon spills

International agreements and conventions	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Relevant aspects	EP section
Convention for the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal 1989 (Basel Convention)	This convention deals with the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes, particularly by sea. Implemented in <i>Hazardous Waste (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1989</i> .	Yes	Onshore disposal/recycling of the seabed assets may occur outside Australia.	Section 6.6 – Operational discharges
United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity 1992	An international treaty to sustain life on earth.	Yes	Relevant only insofar as the activity may interact with MNES (threatened and migratory species) protected under the EPBC Act.	Section 8.4 – Noise emissions Section 8.3 – Light emissions Section 8.2 – Seabed and benthic habitat disturbance Section 6.6 – Operational discharges Section 9.3 – Interaction with marine fauna Section 9.4 to 9.8 – Unplanned releases
Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation 1990 (OPRC 90)	This convention comprises national arrangements for responding to oil pollution incidents from ships, offshore oil facilities, sea ports and oil handling. The convention recognises that in the event of pollution incident, prompt and effective action is essential.	Yes	In the event worse-case credible spill scenarios may enact a national arrangement for response.	Section 9.6 to 9.8 – Unplanned hydrocarbon spills Section 8.9 – Spill response operations

International agreements and conventions	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Relevant aspects	EP section
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals 1979 (Bonn Convention)	The Bonn Convention aims to improve the status of all threatened migratory species through national action and international agreements between range states of particular groups of species.	Yes	Only relevant in so far as the credible spill scenario may result in impact to MNES protected migratory species.	Section 9.6 to 9.8 – Unplanned hydrocarbon spills Section 8.9 – Spill response operations
International Convention for the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage (Fund 92)	This convention ensures compensation is provided for damage caused by oil pollution.	No	Relevant to oil tankers, not supply or support vessels.	N/A
International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973/1978 (MARPOL 73/78)	This Convention and Protocol (together known as MARPOL 73/78) build on earlier conventions in the same area. MARPOL is concerned with operational discharges of pollutants from ships. It contains six Annexes, dealing respectively with oil, noxious liquid substances, harmful packaged substances, sewage, garbage and air pollution. Detailed rules are laid out as to the extent to which (if at all) such substances can be released in different sea areas. The legislation giving effect to MARPOL in Australia is the <i>Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983</i> , the <i>Navigation Act 2012</i> and several Parts of Marine Orders made under this legislation.	Yes	Already dealt with through the <i>Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983</i> – refer to legislation table.	N/A

International agreements and conventions	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Relevant aspects	EP section
International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 1974	This convention is generally regarded as the most important of all international treaties concerning the safety of merchant ships Implemented in the <i>Air Navigation Act 1920</i> .	Yes	Only relevant in so far as SOLAS relates to safety aspects of the activity, such as navigation aids which reduce potential for vessel collision and hydrocarbon release to the environment.	Section 8.1 – Interaction with other marine users
International Convention on Civil Liability for oil pollution damage (1969)	This convention provides a mechanism for ensuring the payment of compensation for oil pollution damage.	No	Relevant to oil tankers.	N/A
International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (Ballast Water Convention) 2004	The IMO has been addressing the problem of invasive marine species in ship's ballast water since the 1980s. Ballast water and sediments guidelines were adopted in 1991 and the ballast water convention was adopted in 2004. Recent accession by Finland has triggered the final entry into force of these international requirements. As a result, the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships Ballast Water and Sediment will enter into force on 8th September 2017 (IMO Briefing 22 2016). It aims to prevent the spread of harmful aquatic organisms from one region to another, by establishing standards and procedures for the management and control of ships' ballast water and sediments. Ballast Water Management systems must be	Yes	Potential internationally sourced vessel operating in Australian Waters which could have the potential for introduction of IMS and potential ballast water exchange.	Section 9.2 – Introduction of invasive marine species

International agreements and conventions	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Relevant aspects	EP section
	approved by the Administration in accordance with this IMO Guidelines.			
<i>Minamata Convention on Mercury 2021</i>	The Minamata Convention on Mercury is an international treaty that seeks to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. The Convention covers all aspects of the life cycle of mercury, controlling and reducing mercury across a range of products, processes and industries.	No	Mercury contamination of the seabed equipment is not considered credible and hence, releases of mercury during disconnection, recovery and disposal or as abandoned in situ equipment degrades are not considered credible.	Section 3.4 – Contaminants (non hydrocarbon)

International agreements and conventions	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Relevant aspects	EP section
United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (1982)	Part XII of the convention sets up a general legal framework for marine environment protection. The convention imposes obligations on State Parties to prevent, reduce and control marine pollution from the various major pollution sources, including pollution from land, from the atmosphere, from vessels and from dumping (Articles 207 to 212). Subsequent articles provide a regime for the enforcement of national marine pollution laws in the many different situations that can arise. Australia signed the agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention in 1982, and UNCLOS in 1994.	Yes	Only relevant to the extent that Santos will comply with MARPOL through the following relevant Marine Orders relating to marine pollution prevention have been put in place to give effect to relevant regulations of Annexes I, II, III, IV, V and VI of MARPOL 73/78: + Marine Order 91: Marine Pollution Prevention – Oil + Marine Order 93: Marine Pollution Prevention – Noxious Liquid Substances + Marine Order 94: Marine Pollution Prevention – Packaged Harmful Substances + Marine Order 95: Marine Pollution Prevention – Garbage + Marine Order 96: Marine Pollution Prevention – Sewage + Marine Order 97: Marine Pollution Prevention – Air Pollution.	Section 8.6 – Operational discharges Section 9.4 to 9.8 – Unplanned releases Section 9.2 – Introduction of invasive marine species
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)	The objective of the convention is to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous interference with the climate system. Australia ratified the convention in December 1992 and it came into force on 21 December 1993.	Yes	Only relevant to the extent that to reduce impact of GHG emissions associated with vessel use, Santos will comply with MARPOL Annex VI (Marine Orders Part 97: Marine Pollution Prevention – Air Pollution) and require the use of low sulphur fuel. The support vessels will use diesel, which is a low sulphur fuel.	Section 8.5 – Atmospheric emissions

International agreements and conventions	Summary	Relevant to activity?	Relevant aspects	EP section
Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972 (known as the London Protocol)	The London Convention contributes to the international control and prevention of marine pollution by prohibiting the dumping of certain hazardous materials.	Yes	Onshore disposal/recycling of the recovered seabed assets and abandonment in situ, mooring chains and buried anchors.	Section 4.6 – Removal of seabed equipment Section 4.7 – Abandonment in situ of seabed equipment Section 8.6 - Operational discharges Section 8.8 – Degradation of abandoned seabed equipment

Appendix C: Breakdown of Materials in Recovered Seabed Assets

Table C-1: Breakdown of total material from production flexible risers

Description	Volume (t)
Carcass (Stainless Steel)	47.8
Pressure Sheath (Polyvinylidene Fluoride (PVDF))	16.2
Armour Wire Layers (Carbon Steel)	186.6
Anti-Wear Tape (Polyamide PA 11)	3.5
High Strength Tape (Fibreglass)	1.1
Fabrication Tape (Fabric)	0.7
External Sheath (Polypropylene (PP))	10.0

Table C-2: Breakdown of total material from production flexible flowlines

Description	Volume (t)
Carcass (Duplex Stainless Steel)	1717.1
Pressure Sheath - 10.2" and 9" LT (PVDF)	213.5
Pressure Sheath - 9" HT (Crosslinked Polyethylene (XLPE))	50.9
Armour Layers (Carbon Steel)	3683.4
Fabrication Tape (Ester)	15.4
High Strength Tape - 10.2" (Ester)	64.7
High Strength Tape - 9" LT (Ester)	20.6
High Strength Tape - 9" HT (Ester)	43.6
External Sheath (Polyethylene (PE))	216.3

Table C-3: Breakdown of total material from well service flexible risers

Description	Volume (t)
Carcass (Stainless Steel)	6.8
Pressure Sheath and Tape Layers (PA 11)	2.5
Armour Layers (Carbon Steel)	71.0
Tape Layers (Polypropylene (PP))	0.1
Tape Layers (Fabric)	0.4
External Sheath (Rubber Modified Polypropylene)	1.7

Table C-4: Breakdown of total material from well service flexible flowlines

Description	Volume (t)
Carcass (Duplex Stainless Steel)	177.6
Pressure Sheath (PA 11)	24.5
Armour Wire Layers (Carbon Steel)	343.6
Anti-Wear Tape (PA-11)	4.3
Fabric Tape (Ester)	2.4
High Strength Tape (Ester)	22.3
External Sheath (PE)	26.2

Table C-5: Breakdown of material from power umbilicals

Description	Volume (t)
Wear Jacket, Outer Sheaths and Armour Bedding - All Dynamic Riser Sections (Nylon 11)	9.8
Outer Sheath and Armour Bedding - Infield Power Umbilicals(PP)	38.4
Outer Sheath - All Power Umbilical Static Riser Sections (PE)	32.0
Armour Wire Coating and Armour Bedding - ME Power Umbilicals - Static Riser Sections (PE)	35.1
Strength Members - Infield Power Umbilicals (PE)	22.5
Armour Wire Layers - All Power Umbilicals (Carbon Steel)	1292.5
Armour Bedding - Infield Power Umbilicals (Bitumenised Hessian Tape)	11.2
Bundle Filler - All Power Umbilical Riser Sections (Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC))	34.1
Bundle Outer Sheath- All Power Umbilical Riser Sections (Low Density Polyethylene (LDPE))	41.8
Core Outer Sheath - All Power Umbilicals (PE)	29.4
Metallic Screen and Conductor Cable - All Power Umbilicals (Copper)	312.0
Bedding Tape, Insulation Screen, Quad Insulation , Conductor Screen - All Umbilicals (XLPE)	47.8
Filler - All Infield Power Umbilicals (PP)	0.8
Filler - All Power Umbilical Risers (PE)	22.5
Armour Wire Filler - All Power Umbilical Risers (Steel)	90.8
Armour Wire Filler - All Power Umbilical Risers (High Density Polyethylene (HDPE))	8.3

Table C-6: Breakdown of material from EHUs

Description	Volume (t)
Wear Jackets, Outer Sheaths and Armour Bedding - EHU Dynamic Riser Sections (Nylon 11)	5.0
Outer Sheaths and Armour Bedding - Static EHU Sections (PE)	65.5
Armour Wires - All EHUs (Carbon Steel)	1104.3
Power Cables and Quad Screens - All EHUs (Copper)	33.2
Cable Insulation - All EHUs (XLPE)	7.2
Core Filler for all EHUs and Bundle Filler for EHU Risers (PVC)	21.8
Core Inner Jackets, Core Outer Sheaths and Bundle Outer Sheaths - All EHUs (PE)	28.7
Hydraulic Hose Liner and Cover - All EHUs (Nylon 11)	27.5
Hydraulic Hose Reinforcement - All EHUs (Braided Aramid)	28.6
Mutineer EHU Riser Fillers and Fletcher Finucane EHU Polyrope Filler (PE)	8.4
Fillers - Fletcher Finucane EHUs and Exeter EHU Riser (PP)	22.9

Table 6-7: Breakdown of material from flying leads

Description	Volume (t)
Outer Cover - 4-Way, 7-Way and 12-Way EFLs (Nitrile Synthetic Rubber)	0.1
Outer Cover - 3-Way EFLs (Styrene Butadiene Rubber)	1.2
Outer Sheath - HFLs (PU)	<0.05
Reinforcement Layer 1 - 4-Way, 7-Way and 12-Way EFLs (Polyester)	<0.05
Reinforcement - HFLs + 4-Way, 7-Way and 12-Way EFLs (Aramid Fibre)	0.7
Reinforcement - 3-Way EFLs (Yarn Braid)	0.9
Inner Sheaths - 4-Way, 7-Way and 12-Way EFLs (Styrene Butadiene Rubber)	0.1
Inner Sheaths - 3-Way EFLs (Nitrile Synthetic Rubber)	0.9
Inner Sheaths - HFLs (PP)	0.8
EFL Conductor Cables and Quad Screen (Copper)	1.7
EFL Quad Insulation and Bedding Tape (XLPE)	0.4
Conductor Bedding Sheath and Conductor Outer Sheath (PU)	<0.05
Braid Sheath (Kevlar)	0.2
HFL Hose Liner and Cover (Nylon 11)	28.1
HFL Reinforcement (Braided Aramid)	35.8
EFL and HFL Internal Fillers (PP)	0.7

Table C-8: Breakdown of material from rigid flowlines and spools

Description	Volume (t)
Production Spool Rigid Pipe (Duplex Stainless Steel)	36.2
Well Service Spools Rigid Pipe (Carbon Steel)	11.2
Mutineer Exeter Production Flowline Rigid Pipe (Carbon Steel)	1679.4
Mutineer Exeter Well Service Flowlines Rigid Pipe (Carbon Steel)	120.9
Mutineer Exeter Production Flowlines Internal Cladding (Austenitic Stainless Steel)	267.8
Mutineer Exeter Well Service Flowlines External Coating (Three Layer Polyethylene (3LPE))	3.1
Fletcher Finucane Well Spool External Coating (HDPE)	0.3
Rigid Production Flowlines External Coating (Four Layer Polypropylene (4LPP))	237.3
Rigid Production Flowlines Field Joint Coating (PU)	0.2
Mutineer Exeter Well Service Spools External Coating (High Build High Solid Epoxy)	<0.05
Exeter Production Spool External Coating (Ethylene Propylene Diene Monomer (EPDM))	<0.05
Mutineer Production Spool External Coating (PP)	0.9
Fletcher Finucane Production Spool Insulation Coating (C-THERM FPR 250)	3.1

Table C-9: Breakdown of material from subsea structures

Description	Volume (t)
Fletcher Manifold	
Piping, Tubing and Valves (Stainless Steel, Inconel)	8.4
Structural Members and Foundations (Carbon Steel)	13.6
Finucane Manifold	
Piping, Tubing and Valves (Stainless Steel, Inconel)	11.3
Structural Members and Foundations (Carbon Steel)	21.0
Mutineer Manifold	
Piping, Tubing and Valves (Stainless Steel, Inconel)	22.2
Structural Members and Foundations (Carbon Steel)	112.0
Exeter Manifold	
Piping, Tubing and Valves (Stainless Steel, Inconel)	14.6
Structural Members and Foundations (Carbon Steel)	100.7
Fletcher Finucane PLEM	
Piping, Tubing and Valves (Stainless Steel, Inconel)	8.4
Structural Members and Foundations (Carbon Steel)	22.6
Mutineer PLEM	
Piping, Tubing and Valves (Stainless Steel, Inconel)	6.7
Structural Members and Foundations (Carbon Steel)	18.1
Exeter PLEM	
Piping, Tubing and Valves (Stainless Steel, Inconel)	6.7
Structural Members and Foundations (Carbon Steel)	18.1
MWAs¹	
Tethers (Carbon Steel)	53.0
DTM¹	
Mooring Lines / Chains (Carbon Steel)	4012.6
PUDUs	
Piping and Valves (Stainless Steel, Inconel)	2.4
Structural Members and Foundations (Carbon Steel)	13.6
UTAs	
Piping and Valves (Stainless Steel, Inconel)	4.0
Structural Members and Foundations (Carbon Steel)	22.8
Gravity Bases	
Gravity Bases (two at 229.6t each)	459.2
Ballast Modules (two per gravity base at 104.5t per pair, and four in total)	209

¹ MWAs and DTM recovered during Q1 2023 under accepted Revision 4 of this EP. Therefore, material composition of these assets excluded from Table C-9.

Appendix D: Values and Sensitivities of the Marine and Coastal Environment

Values and Sensitivities of the Marine and Coastal Environment

PROJECT / FACILITY	All
REVIEW INTERVAL (MONTHS)	12 Months
SAFETY CRITICAL DOCUMENT	NO

Rev	Owner	Reviewer/s Managerial/Technical/Site	Approver
	Senior Environmental Approvals Adviser	Senior Environmental Approvals Adviser	Team Leader- Regulatory Approvals
10			

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Rev	Rev Date	Author / Editor	Amendment
A	13/05/2014	Oceanica	Technical review
B	13/05/2014	Oceanica	Editorial review
0	30/07/2014	EG/GG	Final
1	30/12/2014	GG	Updated
2	28/07/2016	Jacobs	Updated
3	28/11/2017	Jacobs	Updated
3.1	11/12/2018	Jacobs	Issued for technical review
4	17/12/2018	Jacobs	Issued for use
4.1	09/01/2019	Jacobs	Issued for technical review
5	14/02/2019	Santos	Issued for use
5.1	15/01/2020	CDM Smith	Issued for technical review
6	19/03/2020	CDM Smith	Issued for use
6A	15/11/2020	Astron	Issued Technical review
7	30/11/2020	Astron	Issued for use
7A	25/02/2021	Advisian	Issued for Technical review
8	31/03/2021	Advisian	Issued for use
8A	02/07/2021	Advisian	Issued for technical review
9	09/07/2021	Advisian	Issued for use
9A	5/10/2022	Advisian	Draft for review
9B	14/11/2022	Advisian	Annual update. Issued for use. Will be issued as Rev 10 once additional information to support stakeholder consultation requirements is included.
10	25/01/2023	Santos	Issued for use

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Appendices

- Appendix A: PMST Reports**
- Appendix B: Review Register**

1. Introduction

Santos Energy Limited (Santos) is the titleholder of multiple petroleum titles for exploration, development, operational and title decommissioning activities located in marine waters off north-western Western Australia. With the exception of Bayu-Undan, this document describes the combined existing environment that may be affected (EMBA) by these petroleum activities and includes details of the relevant values and sensitivities of that environment as required by the Commonwealth *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2009* and State Western Australian *Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Resources (Environment) Regulations 2012*, *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) (Environment) Regulations 2012* and *Petroleum Pipelines (Environment) Regulations 2012*.

Worst-case hydrocarbon spills, particularly during drilling activities, generally have the largest EMBA of all the environmental impacts and risks managed by Santos. Santos routinely commissions hydrocarbon spill modelling studies to assist in assessing the environmental risk of a hydrocarbon spill. The low hydrocarbon exposure values as defined in NOPSEMA's '*Environmental Bulletin – Oil Spill Modelling*' (April 2019), are used as a predictive tool to set the outer boundaries of the EMBA for a given hydrocarbon spill.

To create the EMBA which defines the spatial extent of the values and sensitivities described herein, all of Santos' available hydrocarbon spill modelling results were merged to create a combined EMBA. The combined EMBA represents the largest possible spatial extent that could be contacted by combining the worst-case spill event modelled for Santos activities to date.

The combined EMBA encompasses the full range of environmental receptors that might be contacted by surface and subsurface hydrocarbons in the highly unlikely event of any worst case oil spill from Santos's activities.

The combined EMBA does not represent the worst case loss of well control event of any one activity.

This document is informed by searches of:

- + the protected matters search tool (PMST) published by the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEE). PMST searches were undertaken in September 2022 and are provided in **Appendix A**;
- + published scientific literature and studies, and
- + other State and Territory protected species databases where applicable.

Descriptions of all marine and coastal fauna within the EMBA that may credibly be impacted by Santos' activities are provided, with a focus on protected species that are threatened and migratory. The PMST is performed annually and any changes from this updated search are detailed in a change register (**Appendix B**). This document is then reviewed annually and updated accordingly.

The PMST searches were made using the combined EMBA. The combined EMBA includes the same spatial data used to produce the figures in Santos' environment plans (EPs), ensuring that the combined EMBA encompasses the full range of environmental receptors that might be contacted by surface and subsurface hydrocarbons at the low exposure level in the highly unlikely event of a worst case oil spill.

Limitations on the PMST required the combined EMBA be subset into a series of small grids. Each grid cell derived from the combined EMBA was then used to perform a PMST search. The results from these PMST searches were then collated and presented in Appendix A.

Figures provided throughout this document are zoomed to the relevant data represented to allow detail to be shown at a readable scale.

1.1 Geographical Extent

The combined EMBA, includes the coastal waters and shoreline habitats of Western Australia (WA) and part of the Northern Territory (NT), encompassing the south of WA to the most northern coastlines of the NT in the north (**Appendix A**). This area largely approximates the Commonwealth North-West Marine Region (NWMR), the South-West Marine Region (SWMR) and the North Marine Region (NMR). Based on the Integrated Marine and Coastal Regionalisation of Australia (IMCRA) Version 4.0, there are 18 provincial-scale bioregions that occur within the combined EMBA. These bioregions are based on fish, benthic habitat and oceanographic data (IMCRA v. 4.0). Where relevant, the physical, biological and social environments within the combined EMBA are discussed with reference to the IMCRA Provincial Bioregions. The provinces of most relevance (**Figure 1-1**) are:

North-west Marine Region

- + Northwest Shelf Transition;
- + Timor Province;
- + Northwest Transition;
- + Northwest Province;
- + Northwest Shelf Province;
- + Central Western Transition;
- + Central Western Shelf Transition; and
- + Central Western Shelf Province.

South-west Marine Region

- + Central Western Province;
- + Southwest Shelf Transition;
- + Southwest Transition;
- + Southwest Shelf Province;
- + Southern Province; and
- + Great Australian Bight Shelf Transition.

North Marine Region

- + Northwest Shelf Transition (as above);
- + Timor Transition; and
- + Northern Shelf Province.

Other IMCRA 4.0 bioregions of interest include: Christmas Island Province and Cocos (Keeling) Island Province.

The international waters of south west Indonesia and Timor-Leste (in part) are also included in the combined EMBA and described where relevant throughout this document.

2. Physical Environment

2.1 Geomorphology

2.1.1 Formation History

Approximately 550–160 million years ago, northern and western parts of Australia formed part of the northern margin of Gondwana. About 300 million years ago, crustal stretching, rifting and breakup initiated development of an extensive basin that became the site for deposition of sediments (Baker *et al.* 2008 in Department of the Environment, Heritage, Water and the Arts (DEWHA) 2008a). Approximately 135 million years ago the continent broke up resulting in the separation of greater India and Australia. Ocean spreading associated with the continental break-up resulted in the creation of the Argo and Cuvier abyssal plains. Subsidence of the rifted margin resulted in the formation of the Exmouth and Scott plateaux and the Rowley Terrace. The narrow shelf south of North West Cape was formed approximately 130 million years ago as a result of the separation of India and seafloor spreading (Baker *et al.* 2008 in DEWHA 2008a).

The South-west region has been relatively stable throughout its recent geological past. This has shaped a continental shelf that has high wave exposure and is punctuated with coastal features such as island groups and fringing coastal reefs providing sheltered habitats for marine communities (2008a).

2.1.2 Present Day Geological Features

The EMBA consists of five major landform features: continental shelf, continental slope, continental rise, Exmouth plateau and abyssal plain. The majority of the area consists of either continental shelf or continental slope (DEWHA 2008a).

Limited surveys have shown that the continental slope in the combined EMBA comprises diverse geological features such as canyons, plateaux, terraces, ridges, reefs, banks and shoals (DEWHA (2008) (**Figure 2-1** and **Figure 2-2**). These features are significant in that over half of the total area of banks and shoals across Australia's entire marine jurisdiction occurs in the Commonwealth waters from the South Australian border to the Northern Territory border, as well as 39% of terraces and 56% of deeps, holes and valleys (DEWHA 2008a).

An important characteristic of the combined EMBA is the significant narrowing of the continental shelf around North West Cape from the broad continental shelf in the north (**Figure 2-3**). For example, in the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf (at the NT boundary), the continental shelf is around 400 km wide, whereas at North West Cape the shelf is only 7 km wide – the narrowest of anywhere on the Australian continental margin (DEWHA 2008a). Shelf width affects oceanography with flow on effects to productivity and ecosystem functioning.

The continental shelf north of Cape Leveque is characterised by a rimmed ramp where the waters over the outer margins of the shelf (approximately 50 to 100 m waters depth) are shallower than the middle portions (up to 150 m water depth). The rim at its outer edge is the site of a number of coral reefs including Ashmore, Cartier, Scott and Seringapatam (DEWHA 2008a).

The Indonesian archipelago lies between the Pacific and Indian oceans, and bridges the continents of Asia and Australia. The archipelago is divided into several shallow shelves and deep-sea basins.

Several geomorphic formations within the combined EMBA have been associated with Key Ecological Features (DEWHA 2008a) and these are discussed in **Section 10**.

2.1.3 Southwest Transition

The Southwest Transition is an offshore deep-water bioregion with a submerged continental fragment as its dominant seafloor feature – the Naturaliste Plateau. The Plateau extends across an area of 90,000 km² of which only 29,825 km² is within Commonwealth waters. It is located west of Cape Leeuwin and Cape Naturaliste in water depths ranging from 2,000–5,000 m. It is relatively flat with a slight northward dip, and has steep southern and western sides and a more gently sloping northern side. The Plateau is separated from the Australian continent by the Naturaliste Trough and two offshore terraces on the continental slope (average depth 780 m). Submarine canyons incise the northern parts of the slope and parts of the Naturaliste Plateau.

2.1.4 Southwest Shelf Province

The Southwest Shelf Province consists of an area of narrow continental shelf from Rottnest to Point Dempster. For the purposes of this document (EMBA), the northern and western limits of the bioregion are the main focus because it is this portion that falls within the combined EMBA, which are an extension of the seafloor described in the Southwest Shelf Transition (below). It includes features such as limestone ridges, depressions defining an inshore lagoon and a relatively smooth inner shelf plain that meets the South Bank Ridge on the outer shelf, and islands providing important habitat, such as Rottnest Island. The shelf progressively broadens to form the relatively sheltered waters of Geographe Bay before narrowing once again at Cape Mentelle. Within this region lies the Albany canyon system, which contains Bremer Canyon on the south-west coast of Australia. Together with the adjacent shelf break, these canyon systems have been labelled as a ‘key ecological feature’ in the South-west Marine Region (DoNP 2017) due to high productivity and aggregations of cetaceans, including humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*), and killer whales (Jones *et al.*, 2019). In particular, Bremer Canyon is known to support periodic sub-surface upwelling, which increases nutrients and sustains higher phytoplankton abundance and primary productivity (Baumgartner 1997). This in turn supports higher abundances of zooplankton, fish, seabirds and cetaceans (Moors-Murphy 2014).

2.1.5 Southwest Shelf Transition

This bioregion consists of a narrow continental shelf, ranging from approximately 40-80 km wide that is noted for its physical complexity. It includes a series of nearshore ridges and depressions that form inshore lagoons, a smooth inner shelf plain, a series of offshore ridges and a steep, narrow outer shelf. The near-shore ridges are formed by eroded limestone reefs and pinnacles that stand 10-20 m above the seafloor. The edge of the inner shelf plain is marked by a series of broken offshore ridges that extend north to the northern limits of the bioregion, where they emerge to support the tropical carbonate reef growth of the Houtman Abrolhos Islands (DEWHA, 2008b).

2.1.6 Southern Province

The Southern Province is the largest bioregion within Australia’s waters stretching from the shelf break south of Kangaroo Island to the southern edge of the Naturaliste Plateau. The bioregion includes the deepest ocean areas within the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone (approximately 5,900 m maximum water depth) and consists of a long continental slope incised by numerous well-developed submarine canyons. Several key ecological features are present within the combined EMBA and include the Albany Canyons Group, the Ceduna and Eyre Terraces (covering approximately 147,150 km²) and the Diamantina Fracture Zone.

2.1.6.1 Great Australian Bight

The Great Australian Bight Shelf Transition is characterised by the largest seafloor feature of the Region – an extensive flat continental shelf covering 177,130 km². The centre of the shelf reaches widths of 260 km

narrowing to 80 km at its margins. Geomorphology, sedimentology and hydrodynamics interact to create ideal conditions for carbonate organisms such as molluscs and bryozoans to flourish without being smothered or buried. As a result, carbonate sediments derived from invertebrate skeletons and shells make up over 80 per cent of shelf sediments, making the Bight part of the world's largest modern cool-water carbonate bioregion that extends along Australia's southern margin. Within the wave abrasion zone (0-120 m) sediments are typically rippled and coarse grained, forming a 'shaved shelf' where carbonate accumulation is less than the amount of active erosion and therefore there is a net loss of sediment from the shelf (DEWHA, 2008b).

2.1.7 Central Western Province

This bioregion is characterised by a narrow continental slope that is heavily incised by many submarine canyons as far north as Kalbarri. The Perth Canyon, located at the southern margin of the bioregion, is an order of magnitude larger than any other canyon in the Region (**Figure 2-2** and **Figure 2-3**). The Perth Canyon, formed by erosive processes associated with the ancient Swan River, cuts into the continental shelf at approximately the 150 m depth contour, north-east of Rottnest Island. Other relatively large canyons, such as the Murchison Canyon, occur in the bioregion but little is known about them as they have not yet been studied (DEWHA, 2008b).

The bioregion contains the most extensive area (52,185 km²) of continental rise on the Australian margin. The continental rise is located on the edge of the Perth Abyssal Plain (103,911 km²). There is a large terrace known as the Carnarvon Terrace on the continental slope, extending north from the Houtman Abrolhos Islands at an average of 780 m water depth (DEWHA 2008b).

2.1.8 Central Western Shelf Province

This bioregion is located on the Dirk Hartog Shelf and is generally very flat. It varies in width from less than 20 km in the north to around 125 km in the vicinity of Shark Bay. A small area of reef and tidal sandwaves or sandbanks occur at the entrance to Shark Bay and within its vicinity. Other topographic features of the bioregion include a deep hole and associated area of banks and shoals offshore of Kalbarri. The banks and shoals in this bioregion are of note because they occur at latitudes significantly south of banks and shoals elsewhere in the North-west Marine Region (DEWHA, 2008a).

2.1.9 Central Western Transition

The Central Western Transition is characterised by large areas of continental slope, with sediments dominated by muds and sands that decrease in grain size with increasing depth. The slope is incised by numerous topographic features such as terraces (i.e. the Carnarvon Terrace), canyons (i.e. Cloates Canyon and Carnarvon Canyon) and rises. A large part of the bioregion consists of the Cuvier Abyssal Plain. The Wallaby Saddle is another important feature of this bioregion and it is the most extensive area of this type of topographic feature in the North-west Marine Region (DEWHA, 2008a).

2.1.10 Central Western Shelf Transition

The Central Western Shelf Transition is located entirely on the continental shelf and is comprised mainly of sandy sediments. The close proximity of the coast to the shelf break is a significant feature of this bioregion and is an important factor in determining its biodiversity (DEWHA, 2008a).

Ningaloo Reef is the most significant geomorphic feature in the bioregion. It extends south of North West Cape along the Cape Range Peninsula, and stretches for over 260 km. It is the only example in the world of an extensive fringing coral reef on the west coast of a continent (DEWHA, 2008a).

2.1.11 Northwest Province

The bioregion occurs entirely on the continental slope and is comprised of muddy sediments. It is distinguished by a number of topographic features, such as the Exmouth Plateau, terraces and canyons (including the Swan and Cape Range canyons), as well as deep holes and valleys on the inner slope. The Montebello Trough occurs on the eastern side of the Exmouth Plateau and represents more than 90 per cent of the area of troughs in the North-west Marine Region. Significantly, this bioregion contains the steepest shelf break of the North-west Marine Region, along the Cape Range Peninsula near Ningaloo Reef (DEWHA, 2008a).

2.1.12 Northwest Transition

The majority (52 per cent) of the Northwest Transition bioregion occurs on the continental slope, with smaller areas in the north-west of the bioregion located on the Argo Abyssal Plain and continental rise. The sediments of the slope are dominated by sands, whereas the sediments of the abyssal plain/deep ocean floor are dominated by muds. More than 60 per cent of the Argo Abyssal Plain occurs within this bioregion and much of the Northwest transition occurs in water over 4,000 m deep (DEWHA, 2008a).

Other topographic features within the bioregion include areas of rise, ridges, canyons and apron/fans. The bioregion also has reefs such as Mermaid, Clerke and Imperieuse reefs, which are collectively known as the Rowley Shoals (DEWHA, 2008a).

2.1.12.1 Northwest Shelf Province

The Northwest Shelf Province is located almost entirely on the continental shelf, except for a small area to the north of Cape Leveque that extends onto the continental slope. This bioregion includes more than 60% of the continental shelf in the North-west Marine Region (DEWHA, 2008a). The shelf gradually slopes from the coast to the shelf break, but displays a number of seafloor features such as banks/shoals and holes/valleys. These are thought to be morphologically distinct from other features of these types found elsewhere in the North-west Marine Region, and have a different sedimentology (DEWHA, 2008a). For example, the Glomar Shoals occur approximately 30–40 km offshore of Dampier in water depths of between 26–70 m and are distinguished by highly fractured molluscan debris, coralline rubble and coarse carbonate sand. The province also includes the Leveque Rise, a large plateau, and one of only two shelf plateaux within the North-west Marine Region (DEWHA, 2008a).

2.1.12.2 Northwest Shelf Transition

The Northwest Shelf Transition is predominantly located on the continental shelf with a small portion extending onto the continental slope causing waters in the area to be relatively shallow, only up to 330 m. It also consists of geomorphic features that are unique to the Northwest Shelf Transition and not found elsewhere in the North-west Marine Region (DEWHA, 2008a). An example of this is that 90% of the Region's carbonate banks are located within the Northwest Shelf Transition (DEWHA, 2008a).

The Bonaparte Depression lies within the Northwest Shelf Transition, which is a 45 000 km² geomorphic basin that is the only occurrence of its type in the North-west Marine Region (DEWHA, 2008a). The Bonaparte Depression is a relatively flat feature with a higher content of mud and gravel than what is found elsewhere in the Northwest Shelf Transition and it has a number of pinnacles of which form the key ecological feature 'pinnacles of the Bonaparte Basin' (see **Section 10.1.23**).

2.1.12.3 Timor Province

The Timor Province is located on the continental slope. The notable topographical features include the Scott Plateau, the Ashmore Terrace and part of the Rowley Terrace and Argo Abyssal Plain (DEWHA, 2008a). Of

these, the Scott Plateau is particularly significant with water depths of up to 3,000 m and being fringed by spurs and valleys (DEWHA, 2008a). The Scott Plateau is also separated from Rowley Terrace by canyons that are up to 50 million years old (DEWHA, 2008a).

The Timor Province encompasses almost half of the reefs in the North-west Marine Region, including Scott Reef, Seringapatam Reef and Ashmore Reef which are all within the combined EMBA (DEWHA 2008a).

2.1.12.4 Timor Transition

The Timor Transition is predominantly shelf terrace and slope, which extend into waters that are 200-300 m deep. The deepest point (300 m) is the Arafura Depression. The Timor Transition is also dominated by a series of canyons that represent a drowned river system from the Pleistocene era (DEWHA, 2008c). The canyons are approximately 80-100 m deep and up to 20 km wide (DEWHA, 2008c).

2.1.12.5 Northern Shelf Province

The Northern Shelf Province consists of large areas of relatively featureless sandy and muddy sediments (DWEHA, 2008c). A significant feature of the Northern Shelf Province is the Gulf of Carpentaria, which is outside the combined EMBA, the majority of the reefs in the Northern Shelf Province are also outside the combined EMBA and form a broken margin around the Gulf of Carpentaria. However, within the combined EMBA is the Arafura Shelf which is characterised by continental shelf, canyons, terraces, the Arafura Sill and the Arafura Depression (DEWHA, 2008c).

2.1.12.6 Christmas Island Province

This bioregion contains the 4th largest abyssal plain/deep ocean floor area and smallest area of slope of all the National Benthic Marine Bioregionalisation (NBMB) bioregions (DEH, 2005a). Due to the similar geomorphology and location adjacent to Indonesia in the tropical Indian Ocean, the fauna contained in this bioregion is probably similar or related to the fauna associated with the Cocos (Keeling) Island bioregion.

2.1.12.7 Cocos (Keeling) Island Province

This bioregion contains the largest abyssal plain/deep ocean floor area of all the NBMB bioregions and is the deepest NBMB bioregion on average due to the relatively large areas of abyssal plain/deep ocean floor (DEH, 2005b). Due to the similar geomorphology and location adjacent to Indonesia in the tropical Indian Ocean, the fauna contained in this bioregion is probably similar or related to the fauna associated with the Christmas Island bioregion. The Cocos basin comprises dominantly flat abyssal plain occurring at water depths around 5,500 km.

2.1.13 Sediments

Terrestrial environments are not a major source of sediment in the area and terrigenous sediments tend to be confined to the inner shelf (generally less than 100 m water depth), particularly in areas adjacent to rivers. Sediments in the area generally become finer with increasing water depth, ranging from sand and gravels on the shelf to mud on the slope and abyssal plain. Joseph Bonaparte Gulf is an exception to this pattern, as sediments with high mud content extend across the inner and mid shelf within the Gulf, graduating to sands and gravels in the Bonaparte Depression.

The distribution and resuspension of sediments on the inner shelf is strongly influenced by the strength of tides across the continental shelf as well as episodic events such as cyclones. Further offshore, on the mid to outer shelf and on the slope itself, sediment movement is primarily influenced by ocean currents and internal tides. Internal tides describe the tidal movement across a slope of water stratified by marked differences in

density. Internal tides cause resuspension and net down-slope deposition of sediments on the North West Shelf (DEWHA 2008a).

Surveys conducted over the North West Shelf indicate that similar sediments occur extensively over this geographic region, but with spatial variation in the grain size and origin of the surface sediments.

The ecology of the southwest is also greatly influenced by the lack of river discharge into the Region. The few significant rivers adjacent to the Region flow intermittently and their overall discharge is low. The low discharge of rivers and the generally low rate of biological productivity also results in low turbidity (suspended sediments), making the waters of the Region relatively clear (McLoughlin & Young 1985). Surface sediments in the area are predominantly composed of skeletal remains of marine fauna, with lenses of weathered sands (McLoughlin & Young 1985).

Several geomorphic formations have been associated with Key Ecological Features (DEWHA 2008a) and these are discussed in **Section 10**.

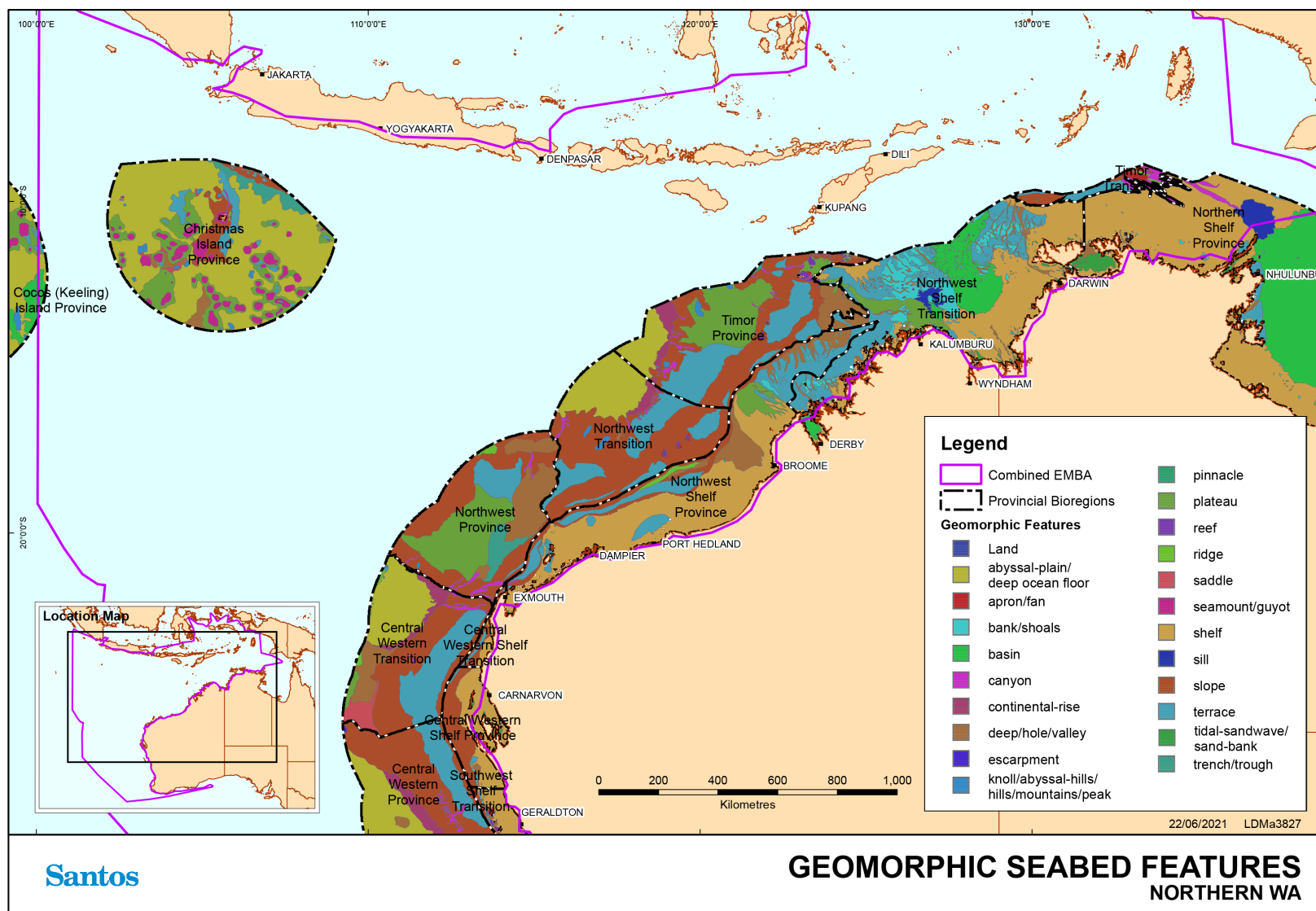


Figure 2-1: Geomorphic/seafloor features of Northern WA

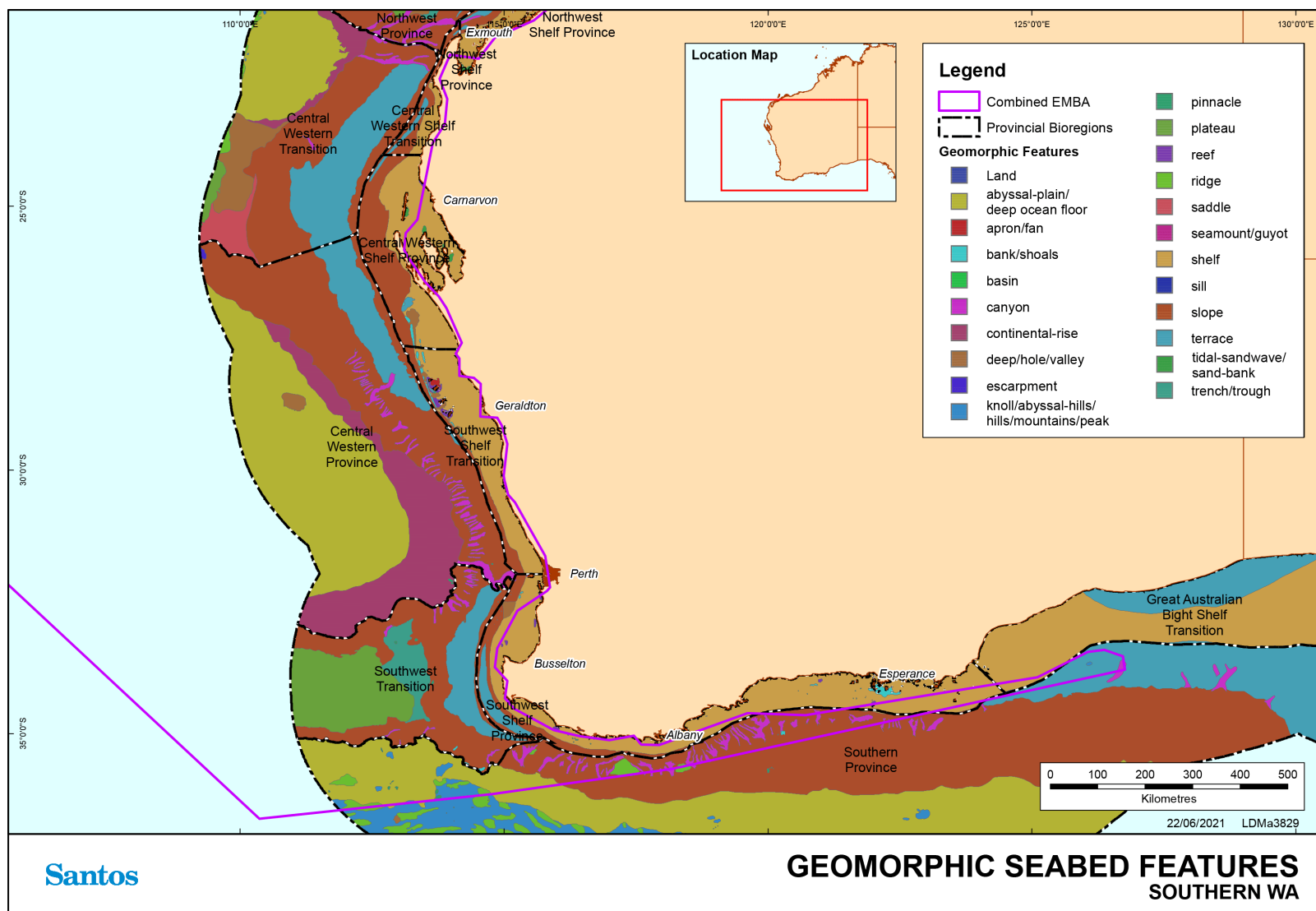


Figure 2-2: Geomorphic/seafloor features of Southern WA

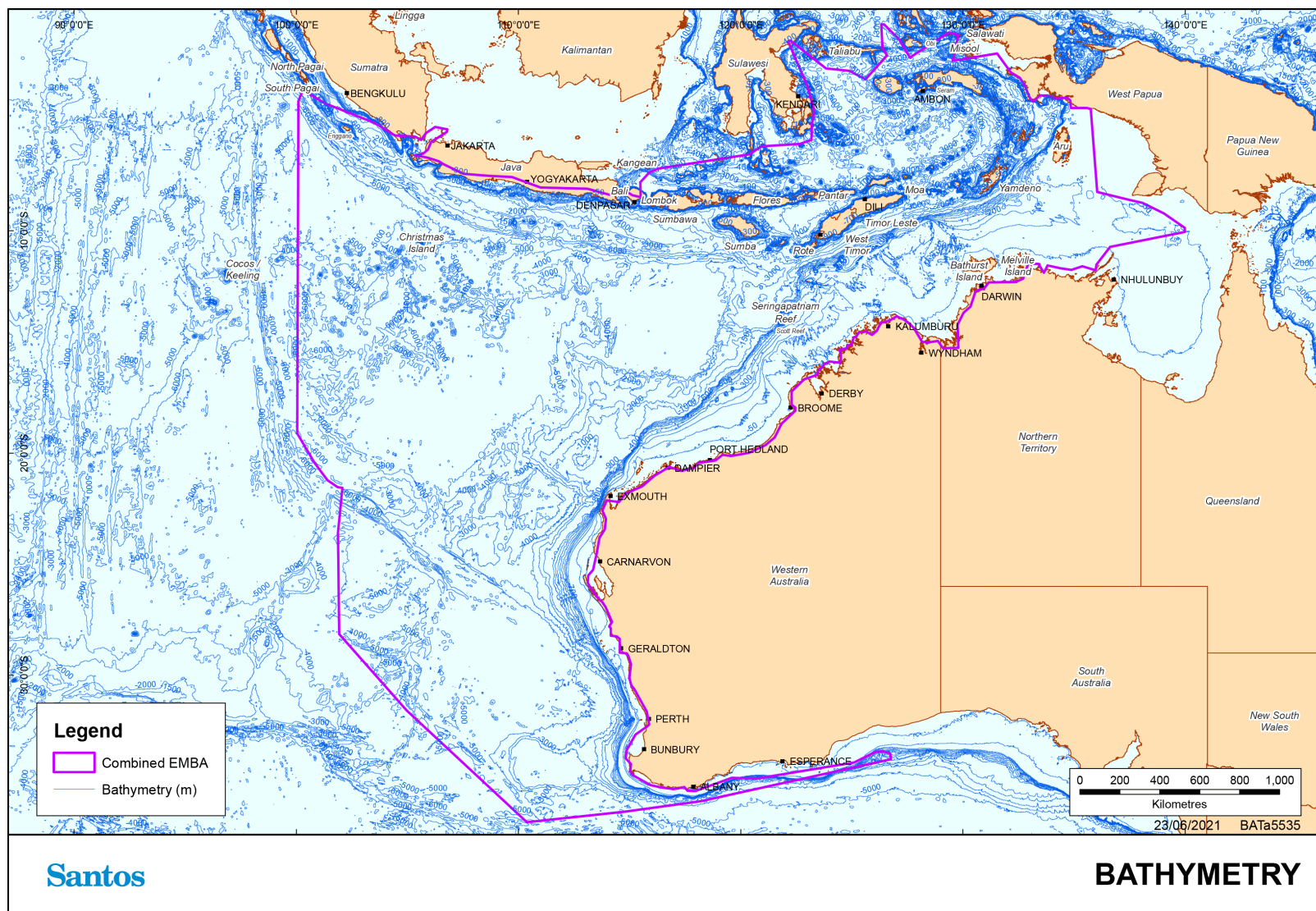


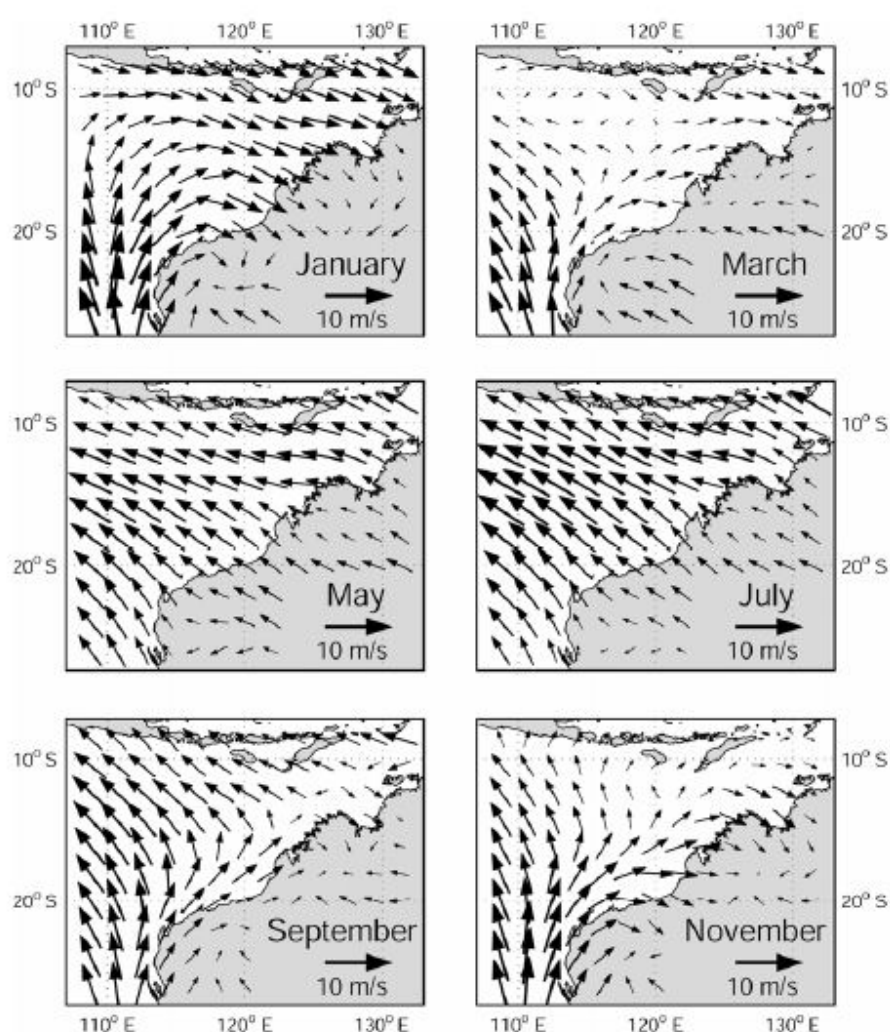
Figure 2-3: Bathymetry of the combined EMBA

2.2 Climate

Waters in northern Western Australia predominantly lie in the arid tropics, experiencing high summer temperatures and periodic tropical cyclones in summer. Rainfall in the region is low, although intense rainfall may occur during the passage of summer tropical cyclones and thunderstorms (Condie *et al.* 2006). Mean air temperatures range from a minimum of 11°C in winter to a maximum of 36°C in summer (Condie *et al.* 2006). Due to the arid climate, daytime visibility in the area is generally greater than 5 nautical miles (SSE 1991).

The summer and winter seasons fall into the periods September–March and May–July, respectively. Winters are characterised by clear skies, fine weather, predominantly strong east to southeast winds and infrequent rain (calculated from NCEP-NCAR dataset measured from 1982 to 1999; Condie *et al.* 2006; **Figure 2-4**).

Summer winds are more variable, with strong south-westerlies dominating. Transitional wind periods, during which either pattern may predominate, can be experienced in April–May and September of each year.



Calculated from NCEP-NCAR dataset measured from 1982 to 1999. Source: Condie *et al.* (2006)

Figure 2-4: Seasonally averaged winds at 10 m above mean sea level

Tropical cyclones generate the most significant storm conditions in the area (SSE 1993). These clockwise-spiralling storms have generated wind speeds 50–120 knots (SSE 1991). Tropical cyclones develop in the

eastern Indian Ocean, and the Timor and Arafura Seas during the summer months. Three to four cyclones per year are typical, with the official cyclone season being November through to April (Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) 2013). In Indonesia, the main variable in climate is not temperature or pressure, but rainfall, which varies greatly by month and place, ranging from 997 millimetres (mm) to 4,927 mm.

Waters in the southwest and southern Western Australia experience a Mediterranean style climate that is characterised by cool, wet winters and hot, dry summers. In winter, wind patterns are characterised by a prevailing westerly wind stream. This enables winter cold fronts and strong westerly winds to regularly penetrate the south-west, with cold fronts crossing the coast every week or so. Apart from the passage of storms, typically lasting one day or less, the weather is otherwise mild in winter with winds variable and relatively weak. In summer, cold fronts rarely penetrate into the south of the state with any strength and hot easterly winds prevail.

The Bonaparte Basin and Timor Sea region in the north has a tropical climate. These areas experience a distinct 'wet' season with summer monsoonal conditions from October to March and a distinct 'dry' season with cooler and drier conditions from April to September. The wet season usually comprises south-westerly winds capable of generating thunderstorm activity, high rainfall and cyclones. The dry season usually comprises dry and warm conditions with little rainfall (Fugro, 2015).

2.3 Oceanography

Major drivers of marine ecosystems include ocean currents, tides, waves, temperature and salinity. The dominant offshore sea surface current is the Leeuwin Current (**Figure 2-5**), which carries warm tropical water south along the edge of Western Australia's continental shelf, reaching its peak strength in winter and becoming weaker and more variable in summer (Condie *et al.* 2006). The current is typically located seaward of the shelf break (200 m isobath) and is a narrow, surface current, extending to a depth of 150 m (BHPB 2005, Woodside 2005) and a width of 50–100 km (DEWHA 2008a). The formation of meanders and eddies are also a feature of the Leeuwin Current and a number of eddies occur south of Shark Bay (DEWHA 2008a). The strength of the Leeuwin Current is influenced by seasonal variability in the pressure gradient (DEWHA 2008a). The Holloway Current is the prevailing seasonal current, travelling south-west along the north West Australian coast in winter and north-east in summer (Brewer *et al.* 2007). It is a relatively narrow boundary current that flows along the north-west shelf at between 100 m and 200 m depth, flowing towards the north-east in summer and the south-west in winter (Fugro, 2015).

The Indonesian Throughflow is the other important current influencing the upper 200 m of the outer North West Shelf (Woodside 2005). This current brings warm and relatively fresh water to the region from the western Pacific via the Indonesian Archipelago (**Figure 2-5**). Modelling undertaken by Woodside and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Marine and Atmospheric Research indicates that significant east–west flows occur across the North West Shelf to the north of the North West Cape, possibly linking water masses in the area (Woodside 2005, Condie *et al.* 2006).

Currents in the coastal zone and over the inner to mid-shelf are largely driven by tides and winds, whereas offshore, over the continental shelf, slope and rise are influenced by large scale regional circulation (DEWHA 2008a). Large-scale currents of the Timor and Arafura seas in the north are dominated by the Indonesian Throughflow. Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands territories are located in the eastern Indian Ocean, in the path of the South Equatorial Current that carries the Indonesian Throughflow waters into the Indian Ocean.

The nearshore Ningaloo Current flows northwards opposite to the Leeuwin Current, along the outside of the Ningaloo Reef and across the inner shelf from September to mid-April (BHPB 2005, Woodside 2005). The

nearshore Capes Current, which is to the south of the Ningaloo Current, is a seasonal current that appears strongest between Cape Leeuwin and Cape Naturaliste, in the southwest of Western Australia (Pearce and Pattiaratchi 1999). Strong northwards winds between November and March slow the Leeuwin Current and increase the strength of the Capes Current. Localised upwelling is also known to occur in the area (Pearce and Pattiaratchi 1999).

Tides increase in amplitude from south to north, corresponding with the increasing width of the shelf (Holloway 1983). Tides in the area are generally semi-diurnal (i.e. two high tides and two low tides per day) with a spring/neap cycle. The northern area experiences some of the largest tides in the world. In the Kimberley, the daily tidal range is up to 10 m during spring tides and less than 3 m during some neap tides. Mid-shelf tidal currents are predicted to have average speeds of approximately 0.25 knots during neap tides and up to 0.5 knots during spring tides (NSR 1995, WNI 1995).

The wave climate in the northwest is composed of locally-generated wind waves (seas) and swells that are propagated from distant areas (WNI 1995). In summer the seas typically approach from the west and southwest, while in winter the seas typically approach from the south and east. Mean sea wave heights are typically less than 1 m and peak heights of less than 2 m are experienced in all months of the year (WNI 1995). Cyclones and tropical storms can greatly increase wave heights by up to 8 m in the outer Timor Sea during the cyclone season (Przeslawski et al. 2011).

Indonesian waters, especially the eastern part of the archipelago, play an important role in the global water mass transport system, in which warm water at the surface conveys heat to the deeper cold water in what is known as the great ocean conveyor belt (refer **Figure 2-5**). The eastern archipelago is the only place in the Pacific Ocean that connects with the Indian Ocean at lower latitudes. The water mass transport from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean through various channels in Indonesia is called Arindo (Arus Lintas Indonesia), also known as the Indonesian Throughflow (ADB 2014). Surface currents in Indonesian waters are more strongly influenced by circulation from the Pacific Ocean than from the Indian Ocean. The currents are also greatly influenced by the winds of the prevailing monsoon.

Average swell heights are low, around 0.4–0.6 m in all months. The greatest exposure to swells is from the west (SSE 1993). Tropical cyclones have generated significant swell heights of up to 5 m in this area, although the predicted frequency of swells exceeding 2 m is less than 5% (WNI 1996). In the open ocean, sustained winds result in wind-forced currents of approximately 3% of the wind speed (Holloway & Nye 1985).

Tides in the South West Capes area are mixed (i.e. diurnal and semi-diurnal) and generally less than one metre, with a typical daily range of about 0.7 m during spring tides and about 0.5 m during neap tides. Tides of this magnitude produce weak currents compared to wind and wave driven flows (Hill & Ryan 2002 cited in Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) 2013).

Waters on the continental shelf are usually thermally-stratified, with a marked change in water density at approximately 20 m (SSE 1993). Surface temperatures vary annually, being warmest in March (32°C) and coolest in August (19°C). Vertical gradients are related to the seasonality of sea surface temperatures, and are greatest during the warm-water season (SSE 1991). Near-bottom water temperature on the North West Shelf is approximately 23°C, with no discernible seasonal variation.

Salinity is relatively uniform at 34–35 ppt throughout the water column and across the North West Shelf. Due to the low rainfall there is little freshwater run-off from the adjacent mainland (Blaber *et al.* 1985).

Pronounced shifts in water column characteristics can occur following the passage of tropical cyclones (McKinnon *et al.* 2003). Changes in water temperature and salinity characteristics can result from changes in

local heating and evaporation following the southward movement of warmer water due to southward-moving cyclones, and can have flow-on effects to primary and secondary productivity (McKinnon *et al.* 2003).

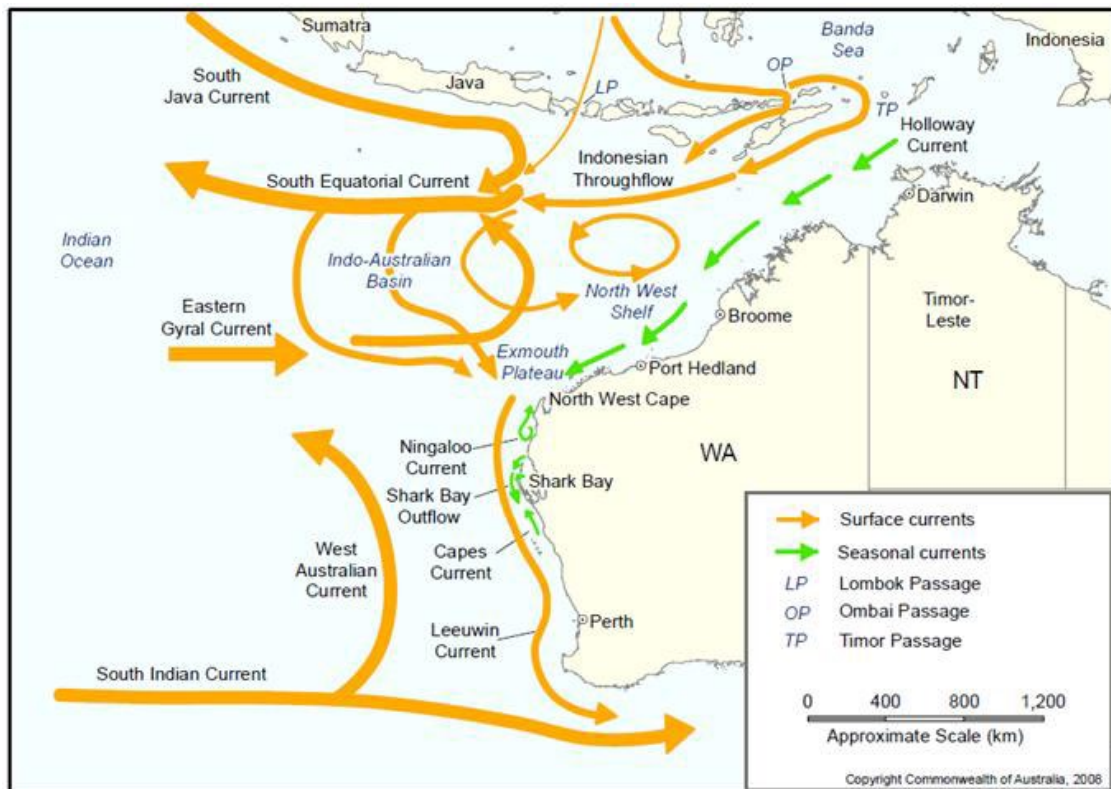


Figure 2-5: Surface currents in the Northern Territory and Western Australia

Source: DEWHA (2008b)

3. Benthic and Pelagic Habitats

Benthic habitats are defined as those subtidal habitats lying below the lowest astronomical tide (LAT). The benthic habitats within waters in the combined EMBA lie at depths ranging from LAT down to more than 6,000 m at Argo and Cuvier abyssal plains (DEWHA 2008a, 2008b, 2008c).

Benthic habitats are partially driven by light availability. Primary producers (photosynthetic corals, seagrasses and macroalgae) are limited to the photic zone, whereas benthic invertebrates including filter feeding communities may be found in deeper waters. The depth of the photic zone varies spatially and temporally and is predominantly dependent on the volumes of suspended material in the water column. The photic zone in the offshore Pilbara is approximately 70 m whereas in oceanic waters in the northwest and coastal waters of the southwest the photic zone may extend to 120 m (DEWHA 2008b). The photic zone in the offshore north extends to 100 m (DEWHA 2008c).

The following section broadly categorises benthic habitats as four biological communities; coral, seagrasses, macroalgae and non-coral benthic invertebrates. These communities are discussed in terms of the 18 IMCRA v. 4.0 bioregions. Some broad scale benthic habitat mapping exists for the Northwest and Central Western Shelf Provinces and this is shown in **Figure 3-1**.

3.1 Coral Reefs

Corals are both primary producers and filter feeders and thus play a role in the provision of food to marine fauna and in nutrient recycling to support ecosystem functioning (Conservation and Land Management (CALM) & Marine Parks and Reserves Authority (MPRA) 2005a).

Corals create settlement substrate and shelter for marine flora and fauna. Studies have shown that declines in the abundance, or even marked changes in species composition of corals, has a marked impact on the biodiversity and productivity of coral reef habitats (Pratchett *et al.* 2008). As part of the reef building process, scleractinian corals are also important for protection of coastlines through accumulation and cementation of sediments and dissipation of wave energy (CALM & MPRA 2005a).

The waters in the combined EMBA contain extensive coral communities. Coral reefs in the area fall into two general groups: the fringing reefs around coastal islands and the mainland shore; and large platform reefs, banks and shelf-edge atolls offshore (Woodside 2011). The distribution of corals in area is governed by the availability of hard substrate for attachment and light availability.

Coral reefs are dynamic environments that regularly undergo cycles of disturbance and recovery. Depending on how frequent and severe the disturbances are, recovery can take a few years or more than a decade. Disturbances can include bleaching, cyclones and disease outbreaks (Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) 2011).

Corals in the northwest and central provinces have experienced bleaching events and subsequent recovery. Bleaching is the process where symbiotic algae are expelled from the coral tissue, often leading to the death of the colony. Causes of bleaching include high temperatures (Ningaloo; 2011 and Scott Reef; 1998 and 2016) (information available at AIMS.gov.au), anoxic conditions (Bill's Bay; 2008) or smothering (Waples & Hollander 2008, Gilmour *et al.* 2013). Coral susceptibility to bleaching and their ability to recover is an important consideration in the context of potential anthropogenic impacts.

Three bioregions (Northwest Province, Central Western Province and Central Western Transition) lie in deep waters below the photic zone. Two bioregions (Southwest Transition and Southern Province) occur in waters that are too cold to support tropical coral reefs species. Photosynthetic corals are not present in either of these locations and hence these bioregions are not discussed further. The EMBA overlaps the deeper waters

of the Cocos (Keeling) Island Province, (not those close to shore) which are greater than 4000m deep and therefore photosynthetic corals are not present.

3.1.1 Southwest Shelf Transition

The coral reefs of the Houtman Abrolhos Islands are the most southern extensive coral community along the west coast. Smaller localised pockets do occur as far south as Rottnest Island and even extend to Cape Naturaliste in the Southwest Shelf Province. The reefs around the Abrolhos Islands comprise 211 known species of corals and all but two of the coral species are tropical (Department of Fisheries (DoF) 2012). The greatest diversity and density of corals is found on the reef slopes, shallow reef perimeters and lagoon patch reefs in the more sheltered northern and eastern sides of each of the three limestone platforms that support the island groups (DoF 2012).

3.1.2 Southwest Shelf Province

The Southwest Shelf Province is a nearshore bioregion that extends from Rottnest Island to Point Dempster, approximately 185 km east of Esperance. Adjacent to Commonwealth waters, the extensive area of granite reef (35 203 km² of reef habitat) and seagrass habitat of the Recherche Archipelago is noted for its high diversity of warm temperate species including 263 known species of fish, 347 known species of molluscs, 300 known species of sponges, and 242 known species of macro-algae (DEWHA, 2008a).

3.1.3 Great Australian Bight Shelf Transition

Few species of scleractinian and soft coral (Orders Scleractinia, Teleostei and Alcyonacea) occur in southern Australia. Three reef-building species occur in shallow waters and >50 species of non-reef-building (ahermatypic) species occur in waters up to 900 m deep. The distribution patterns of corals in the GAB are largely unknown (McLeay et.al, 2003).

3.1.4 Central Western Shelf Province

The Central Western Shelf Province occurs on the continental shelf between Coral Bay and Busselton and is generally flat with depths ranging from 0–100 m. The province includes Shark Bay and Bernier, Dorre and Dirk Hartog Islands.

Studies at Shark Bay recorded 80 species of coral (Marsh 1990). The study determined that salinity and seasonal temperature gradients restrict the distribution of corals to areas that have normal salinity in the western half of the Bay, a few species occur in the metahaline waters but none in the hyper saline areas (Marsh 1990). The eastern shores of Bernier, Dorre and Dirk Hartog Islands provide the most favourable habitats for coral growth due to shelter, and water with relatively small salinity and temperature fluctuations. Some sections of these islands support prolific coral growth (up to 100% cover) both in the sheltered leeward and exposed areas. This bioregion is a transitional zone between the predominantly tropical flora and fauna of the north and temperate flora and fauna further south (CALM & NPNCA 1996).

3.1.5 Central Western Shelf Transition

A significant proportion of this bioregion is covered by the Ningaloo Reef. The Ningaloo Reef is unique in that it is the largest fringing reef in Australia and is the only large reef found on the western side of a continent in the southern hemisphere.

A 300 km section of the coast, from Red Bluff to North West Cape and extending to Bundegi in Exmouth Gulf, is included in the Ningaloo Marine Park. Ningaloo Reef supports variable lagoonal, intertidal and subtidal coral communities along its length. Ningaloo Reef is characterised by a high diversity of hard corals with at least 217 species representing 54 genera of hermatypic (reef building) corals recorded to date (Veron &

Marsh 1988). The most diverse coral communities are found in the shallow relatively clear water, high energy environment of the fringing barrier reef and low energy lagoonal areas to the west of North West Cape (CALM & MPRA 2005a).

Coral diversity reduces with increasing depth, and corals are uncommon at depths greater than 40 m (Waples & Hollander 2008). At depths between 20 and 30 m hard corals have been found to be more dominant in the northern areas of the Ningaloo Marine Park, whereas in southern areas other sessile invertebrates such as sponges, are more prevalent (Waples & Hollander 2008).

3.1.6 Northwest Transition

This bioregion lies mostly over the continental slope and the abyssal plain in deep waters that preclude photosynthetic coral growth (DEWHA 2008a). However, in contrast with the surrounding area, the Rowley Shoals are three distinct reef systems (Mermaid, Clerke and Imperieuse Reefs) approximately 30–40 km apart that rise vertically to the surface from depths of between 500 and 700 m. The marine reef fauna of the Rowley Shoals is considered to be exceptionally rich and diverse, including species typical of the oceanic coral reef communities of the Indo-West Pacific. As many of these species are not found in the inshore tropical waters of northern Australia, such populations are of regional significance (DEWHA 2008a).

A 1993 survey at Mermaid Reef recorded 214 species of scleractinian corals (Done *et al.* 1994) which is comparable to a more recent survey recording 211 species, including 22 new distribution records (McKinney 2009). The Rowley Shoals system has maintained high coral cover and has not been impacted by mass bleaching, despite neighbouring bleaching events reported at Scott reef during 1998 and 2016 (Gilmour *et al.*, 2021). Since 1997, mean coral cover has increased through periods of impact and recovery from cyclones, reaching the highest (71%) on record in 2017 (Gilmour *et al.* 2019). The survey found that coral assemblages of the Rowley Shoals are broadly comparable to those found on the reefs of the outer Great Barrier Reef and in the Coral Sea. While the coral fauna is similar to Scott Reef, it differs considerably from that of north-western Australia (Veron 1986). Veron (1986) notes that the clear water of the Rowley Shoals allows coral communities to exist over a great range of depths, while the strong wave action on the outer coral slopes and the wide tidal range result in distinct patterns of zonation.

Recent genetic studies have also shown distinct genetic differences between offshore reef systems, the inshore macrotidal Kimberley region and Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area reefs (Adam *et al.* 2022, Gilmour *et al.* 2016, Underwood 2009, Underwood *et al.* 2020). This is likely a result of their isolation, with negligible supply of larva from other reefs (Adam *et al.* 2022, Thomas *et al.* 2017). These studies highlight the importance of local recruitment in offshore reef systems in order to maintain healthy coral populations, which may reduce their capacity to adapt to rapid environmental change.

3.1.7 Northwest Shelf Province

This province contains numerous small coastal islands in addition to larger archipelago and offshore island groups. Many of these features are surrounded by shallow waters with small barrier and fringing reefs that support coral communities. Key areas recognised for coral communities in this bioregion are discussed below.

The Dampier Archipelago supports coral reefs in shallow waters near islands and submerged pinnacles. The most significant coral reefs have formed along the seaward slopes of Delambre Island, Hamersley Shoal, Sailfish Reef, Kendrew Island and north-west Enderby Island (CALM & MPRA 2005). Field trips in the Dampier Archipelago between 1972 and 1998 recorded 229 species of corals from 57 genera (Griffith 2004). Surveys of the Dampier Port and inner Mermaid Sound recorded approximately 120 coral species from 43 genera (Blakeway & Radford 2005) with coral reefs dominated by acroporids and pocilloporids. The greatest coral cover (up to 70%) was recorded in the eastern half of the archipelago (Wells *et al.* 2003).

The Montebello, Lowendal and Barrow Islands include 315 islands associated with extensive coral reefs, the most significant of which occur in the sheltered waters on the eastern side of the islands. Examples of these significant reefs include Dugong Reef, Batman Reef and reefs along the Lowendal Shelf (DEC & MPRA 2007a). Dominant corals include acroporids and poritids, with greater than 70% cover recorded for some areas (Chevron 2010). Subtidal coral reef communities around the islands are highly diverse, with at least 150 species of hard corals recorded from fringing and patch coral reef areas (DEC & MPRA 2007a).

Coral distribution near the mainland is restricted by lack of light due to natural turbidity. Corals may exist as sparse coral colonies in some locations, rather than extensive coral communities. Within Exmouth Gulf, coral communities are less common but are present on fringing reefs surrounding islands, as solitary corals distributed across areas of hard substrate, or on larger isolated patch reefs.

An epibenthic dredge survey of nearshore areas north of Broome identified 14 species of hard corals from six families (Keesing *et al.* 2011). Limited coral surveys conducted at Broome (15 species) and the Lacepede Islands (ten species) (Veron & Marsh 1988) suggest the species diversity in this locality may be low. However, low species diversity observed during the dredge survey may reflect the limited sampling frequency, limited depth range (11–23 m) or inadequate sampling in habitats considered favourable for the proliferation of hard corals (hard substrate). In contrast, other surveys of nearshore locations in the region have recorded much higher levels of species diversity. Veron and Marsh (1988) stated that 102 species of hard corals have been recorded from the Kimberley coast and nearshore reefs and Cairns (1998) recorded 87 species of azooxanthellate hard coral species from north-western Australian waters.

3.1.8 Northwest Shelf Transition

Coral communities of the Northwest Shelf Transition have historically not been well studied. However, based on the scale of reef development and the diversity of coral species recorded through limited surveys, it is highly likely that further surveys will demonstrate that the Kimberley contains a coral reef province of global significance (Masini *et al.* 2009).

Coral reefs in the province include fringing reefs around coastal islands and some mainland shores. Development of coral communities in inshore areas is limited due to persistent high turbidity. Known examples of coral reefs in the bioregion are given below, however further mapping is required.

Benthic habitat surveys at Adele and Long Islands in 2009 and 2010 revealed extensive development of hard and soft coral communities (Richards *et al.* 2013). Scleractinian coral communities at Adele Island were diverse, supporting 176 species in intertidal and subtidal areas up to 14 m depth. At Long Island approximately 200 species of scleractinian corals were recorded in intertidal and subtidal areas. These surveys also identified two significant and unique habitats; a zone of mixed corallith and rhodolith habitat at Adele Island and an Organ Pipe Coral habitat zone with unusually high benthic cover at Long Island (Richards *et al.* 2013).

Studies by DBCA and the LNG industry indicate that fringing and emergent coral reefs are well developed in the Heyward island group, around islands in the Bonaparte Archipelago, and off mainland shores of Cape Voltaire and Cape Bougainville. Surveys by INPEX of Maret, Bethier and Montalivet islands, which were largely restricted to the intertidal zone, have recorded 280 species of coral from at least 55 genera, making the Kimberley Bioregion the most coral-diverse area in WA (INPEX 2008).

Montgomery Reef has been identified as a key feature in the area. Montgomery Reef is a huge, submerged rock platform covering approximately 400 km². Corals occur in the subtidal area around Montgomery Reef, and in the many rock pools on the platform where there is shaded from the sun by algae or rock ledges

(DEWHA 2008a). A survey of benthic habitats at Montgomery Reef was conducted in 2009 by AIMS but a literature search found no published results from this survey (AIMS 2014).

Browse Island is surrounded by a minor fringing coral reef. Assemblages at Browse Island are characteristic of coral platform reefs throughout the Indo-West Pacific region, particularly Cartier Island. Coral diversity was greatest on the reef faces and shallow lagoons, but these areas were of very limited extent (URS 2010a).

Hard corals have been recorded at Echuca Shoals, but the community was low in both species richness and abundance (URS 2010a). The presence of occasional large outcrops suggests that larger coral structures have occurred previously and may still occur elsewhere on the shoal (RPS Environmental 2008).

3.1.9 Timor Province

Although water depths in this province are generally deep (200 m to almost 6,000 m) there are several reefs and islands that are regarded as biodiversity hotspots (DEWHA 2008a).

Ashmore Reef, Cartier Island, Hibernia, Scott and Seringapatam Reefs are areas of enhanced local biological productivity, within an area of relatively unproductive waters. Ashmore Reef National Nature Reserve supports one of the greatest number of coral species of any reef off the West Australian coast, with 255 species of reef-building corals in 56 genera (Veron 1993). Taxonomic revisions and additional surveys have resulted in a net increase in species numbers to 275 (Griffith 1997, Ceccarelli *et al.* 2011). Species are typical of the Indo-Pacific region and none are unique or considered endemic. However, 41 species (15% of the total hard coral species at the site) are listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List (IUCN 2019). In 1998, hard coral covered an area of around 717 ha at Ashmore Reef. The majority of hard corals occur in the deep lagoon (265 ha) and shallow reef top (315 ha) with small areas in the shallow lagoons, and reef edge/slope habitats (Skewes *et al.* 1999a). The soft, non-reef building corals are less well studied at Ashmore Reef than the hard corals (Hale & Butcher 2013). In 1986, 39 soft coral taxa were recorded within the Ashmore Reef, including the vulnerable blue coral (*Heliopora coerulea*) which was moderately common on the reef flats (Marsh 1993). In 1998, the total cover of soft coral at Ashmore Reef was 323 ha and *Sarcophyton* spp. was the dominant taxa covering around 19 ha in total (Skewes *et al.* 1999b, Hale & Butcher 2013).

The species composition of all the hard coral reefs in the bioregion is very similar and reflects strong links with Indo-West Pacific fauna, largely as a result of the dispersal of coral spawn via regional currents. The reefs and islands in this bioregion are thought to be important biological stepping-stones between centres of biodiversity in the Indo-Pacific and reef ecosystems further south (DEWHA 2008a).

Seringapatam Reef is a regionally important scleractinian coral reef as it has a high biodiversity, which is comparable to Ningaloo Reef. Results from the Western Australian Museum (WAM) survey in 2006 noted 159 species of scleractinian corals with a hard coral cover of approximately 16% (WAM 2009). The dominant benthic habitats of the reef were observed to include hard and soft corals (Heyward *et al.* 2013 cited in ConocoPhillips 2018).

Scott Reef consists of two reefs, North Scott Reef and South Scott Reef, which are separated by a deep (400–700 m) channel. North Scott Reef is an annular reef which encloses a lagoon that is connected to the ocean. South Scott Reef is a crescent-shaped reef which forms an arc and partially encloses another lagoon. Light penetration at Scott reef is high due to low turbidity. Light penetration depths to the deeper part of South Reef Lagoon are in excess of 50m with corals able to survive at depths of up to 70 m (Woodside Energy Limited *et al.* 2010). Studies at Scott reef have identified over 300 scleractinian coral species in the shallow water habitats alone, from almost 60 genera and 14 different families (Gilmour *et al.* 2013). The Scott reef system has experienced two mass bleaching events in 1998 and 2016, with the latter showing > 90% decreases in cover of branching corals (*Porites*, *Acropora*, *Millepora*, *Isopora* and *Pocilloporidae*) (Gilmour

et al., 2021). Regular monitoring following the 1998 mass bleaching event showed increasing cover of branching corals 5 years post bleaching event, with most coral groups recovering approximately 12 years later (Gilmour *et al.*, 2021).

Hibernia Reef consists of an approximately oval-shaped reef, with large areas of the reef becoming exposed at low tide. Hibernia Reef is also characterised by a deep central lagoon and drying sand flats.

There are a number of shoals and banks in the NMR and NWMR. Relatively few studies have been undertaken of these features with the majority of the understanding derived from the Big Bank Shoals study (Heyward *et al.* 1997), PTTEP surveys initiated in response to the Montara incident (Heyward *et al.* 2010; Heyward *et al.* 2011) and ConocoPhillips baseline surveys undertaken to support the Barossa Area Development (Heyward *et al.* 2017). The PTTEP surveys completed at Ashmore, Cartier and Seringapatam Reefs were undertaken during a coral bleaching disturbance likely to be attributed to regional thermal stress indicated by both *in situ* and satellite-based data for the region. The condition of the reefs communities was consistent with previous surveys within the area and did not indicate any disturbance from the Montara incident (Heyward *et al.* 2010; Heyward *et al.* 2012).

In general, the submerged features are characterised by abrupt bathymetry, rising steeply from the surrounding outer continental shelf at depths of 100 m–200 m. The shoals and banks tend to flatten at depths of 40-50 m, with horizontal plateau areas of several square kilometres generally present at 20-30 m depths (Heyward *et al.* 2010). The shoals and banks support a diverse and varied range of benthic communities, including algae, reef-building soft corals, hard corals and filter-feeders (Heyward *et al.* 1997, Heyward *et al.* 2012). The plateau areas were dominated by benthic primary producer habitat, with interspersed areas of sand and rubble patches (Heyward *et al.* 2012).

3.1.10 Timor Transition

Due to the deep, offshore nature of the Timor Transition (up to 300 m with no coastal areas), there are no corals expected within this area (DEWHA 2008c). However, there is evidence of relic reef next to drainage channels of the outer slope of the Timor Transition. This is thought to be associated with local upwellings of cooler nutrient rich water from the Timor Sea (DEWHA 2008c).

3.1.11 Northern Shelf Province

The Northern Shelf Province contains submerged patch or barrier reefs in areas with approximately 30-50 m depth of water, these mainly occur around the margin of the Gulf of Carpentaria (which lies outside the combined EMBA) (DEWHA 2008c). The majority of the province is relatively featureless with sandy and muddy sediments and this is expected to be the case for the portion of the combined EMBA that overlaps the Northern Shelf Province.

3.1.12 Christmas Island Province

The subsurface marine habitat immediately surrounding Christmas Island consists of a relatively narrow and shallow coral reef shelf about 20 to 100 metres wide in approximately six to 20 metres of water depth. There are caves in some of the island's rocky sea cliffs that adjoin the coral reef shelves. Coral reef shelves also contain areas of sand and rubble.

The shallow coral reef shelves drop off steeply to the island's mid and deep-water marine habitats which include outer reef seaward slopes, vertical walls and oceanic waters. The marine boundary of the Christmas Island National Park extends 50 metres seaward from the low water mark, which means that the park has no true deep-water habitats, but some outer reef slopes and vertical walls fall within the park's waters (DNP, 2012).

3.1.13 International Waters

Important areas outside of the IMCRA bioregions include:

Indonesia (west)

Indonesia has an estimated 75,000 km² coral reef ecosystem distributed throughout the archipelago (Tomascik et al. 1997 cited in Hutumo & Moosa 2005). Fringing reefs are the most common reef types with scleractinian corals as being the most dominant and important group. 452 species of hermatypic scleractinian coral were collected from Indonesian waters by Tomascik et al. (1997 cited in Hutumo & Moosa 2005), a study presented by Suharsono (2004 cited in Hutumo & Moosa 2005), indicated that 590 species of scleractinian corals exist in Indonesian waters. *Acropora*, *Montipora* and *Porites* are the most important reef building corals in Indonesia.

The Lesser Sunda Ecoregion encompasses the chain of islands and surrounding waters from Bali, Indonesia to Timor-Leste. This region contains suitable habitat for corals on shallow water substrates formed by limestone and lava flows and is thought to contain more than 500 species of scleractinian reef-building corals (DeVantier *et al.* 2008). Coral species composition is influenced by regional and local scale seasonal upwellings that typically occur from April to May each year on the southern side of the islands. The ecoregion is considered important for coral endemism, particularly the areas of Bali-Lombok, Komodo, and East Flores. Fringing coral reefs tend to be less developed on the southern, more exposed shorelines (Wilson *et al.* 2011).

The world heritage sites of Siberut and Ujung Kulon are also recognised for their extensive coral ecosystems, as well as marine national parks in the waters and islands surrounding Indonesia, such as Laut Sawu, Teluk Cenderawasih, Bunaken, Kapulauan Wakatobi, Togian Islands, Karimunjawa, the islands of Kepulauan Seribu, the table reefs of Taka Bonerate and the Savu Sea National Marine Conservation Area (refer to **Section 9.8**).

Majority of these sites form parts of the marine area known as the Coral Triangle, named for its staggering number of corals and associated marine life, situated in the waters of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste and Solomon Islands (ADB, 2014).

Timor-Leste

See **Section 3.1.8** for a description of habitat typical of shoals and banks in the Timor Sea.

3.2 Seagrasses

Seagrasses are biologically important for four reasons:

1. As sources of primary production;
2. As habitat for juvenile and adult fauna such as invertebrates and fish;
3. As a food resource; and
4. For their ability to attenuate water movement and trap sediment (Masini *et al.* 2009).

Twenty-five species of seagrass have been recorded in WA, the highest diversity in the world, and over 30 species of seagrasses have been recorded as occurring within Australian waters (Masini *et al.* 2009). Waters extending from Busselton to the NT border support predominantly tropical species although temperate species are also found, particularly between Busselton and Exmouth (Walker 1987). One species, *Cymodocea angustata*, is endemic to WA (Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPAW) 2013). Other seagrass meadows of note include those around Tiwi Islands which provide significant habitat to a number of species. Seagrass habitats also occur within shallower waters near islands and have potential to occur closer to the Indonesian and Timor-Leste coastlines.

The main seagrasses of the region are small, ephemeral species that grow on soft sediments and have a seed bank in the surficial sediments that allows them to recover quickly from disturbance (Walker 1989). Small, ephemeral species of seagrass tend to form mixed associations with macroalgae (CALM & MPRA 2005, DEC & MPRA 2007a, BHPBIO 2011) and usually covers less than 5% of the substrate (BHPBIO 2011, van Keulen & Langdon 2011).

Areas occupied by seagrass vary markedly both seasonally and interannually and it is not clear why some areas of suitable substrate will support seagrass in one year but not the next. It appears that recruitment to what may otherwise be suitable substrate is haphazard, lending weight to the descriptions of these seagrass communities as ephemeral (CALM & MPRA 2005, DEC & MPRA 2007a).

Four bioregions (Northwest Province, Central Western Province, Central Western Transition and Timor Transition) lie entirely in deep waters below the photic zone. Two bioregions (Southwest Transition and Southern Province) occur in waters that are too cold to support seagrasses. The EMBA overlaps the deeper waters of the Cocos (Keeling) Island Province, (not those close to shore) which are greater than 4000m deep and therefore seagrasses are not present.

Seagrasses are not present hence these bioregions are not discussed further.

3.2.1 Southwest Shelf Province

Geographe Bay is a large relatively sheltered area with that supports extensive beds of tropical and temperate seagrass that have a high diversity of species and endemism (DEWHA 2008a). They are thought to account for about 80% of benthic primary production in the area. These seagrass beds provide important nursery habitat for many shelf species that use the shallow seagrass habitat as nursery grounds for several years before moving out over the shelf to their adult feeding grounds along the shelf break.

The Geographe Bay seagrass meadows are among the most extensive temperate seagrass communities on the west coast (MPRSWG 1994 cited in DEC 2013), and include 10 species from five genera (*Amphibolis*, *Posidonia*, *Halophila*, *Heterozostera* and *Thalassodendron*). Geographe Bay is dominated by stands of the narrowleaf tape-weed (*Posidonia sinuosa*) that covers approximately 70% of Geographe Bay. It has smaller areas of *Posidonia angustifolia*, *Amphibolis griffithii*, *A. antarctica* and minor species, which have irregular distributions both spatially and temporally (Lord 1995 cited in DEC 2013). *Thalassodendron pachyrhizum*, *Posidonia* spp. and *Amphibolis* spp. are also found in depths of between 27 and 45 m (Walker *et al.* 1994 cited in DEC 2013).

3.2.2 Southwest Shelf Transition

Species diversity of seagrasses in this bioregion is the highest in the world, with 14 species occurring (DEWHA 2008a). In total, 10 seagrass species have been recorded at the Abrolhos ranging from small, delicate species to larger, more robust types that grow in large meadows (DoF 2012). Small paddle-weeds grow in protected lagoon areas or deep waters between the islands, such as Goss Passage and the larger species may be found growing on reef as well as in sandy areas (DoF 2012). *Thalassodendron pachyrhizum*, which is encountered growing on the exposed reef crest area, has been recorded at a number of the island groups. There are also two species of wire-weed (*Amphibolis* species), endemic to southern Australia, found at the Abrolhos (DoF 2012). The most abundant seagrass is *Amphibolis antarctica*, while *Amphibolis griffithii* appears to be restricted to bays such as Turtle Bay in the Wallabi Group.

The larger ribbon-weeds (*Posidonia* species) grow in sheltered bays and lagoons where the sand cover is deeper and more stable (e.g. Turtle Bay, the Gap, East Wallabi Island, the lagoon on the west side of West Wallabi Islands and around North Island) (DoF 2012).

Nine species of seagrass are found in the Perth region, including at Rottnest Island where *Amphibolis* thrives in clear waters overlying limestone rock (Amalfi 2006). Seagrasses are a major component of the ecosystem on the Rottnest Shelf, thriving in waters ranging in depth from intertidal to 45m (Amalfi 2006). All of the seagrass species identified with the exception of *Syringodium isoetifolium* and *H. ovalis* are endemic to temperate areas of southern Australia (Amalfi 2006). At Rocky Bay, on the north side of the island where it is protected from big swells and strong south to south-westerly winds, a mix of dense seagrass meadow consisting of *Amphibolis* and *Posidonia* thrive. The meadows around Rottnest Island serve as nurseries for juveniles of many fish species and are home to species such as the cobbler and long-headed flathead (Amalfi 2006).

3.2.3 Great Australian Bight Shelf Transition

The Australian coastline has the highest number of seagrass species of any continent. There are approximately 30 species of seagrasses in Australia belonging to 11 genera. Approximately one third (18 species) of all species known worldwide are endemic in Australia. Of these, 16 species are restricted to temperate waters.

Southern temperate waters have two endemic genera, *Heterozostera* and *Amphibolis*. Many endemic species belong to the genera *Posidonia*. The distribution and abundance of seagrasses is a function of topography and environment. A distinction exists between subtropical and warm temperate types. In southern Australia, species with warm water affinities (*Posidonia*, *Amphibolis*) decline in number from west to east as water temperatures decrease.

In South Australia, seagrasses cover approximately 9620 km² and represent one of the largest seagrass ecosystems in the world. Seagrass distribution in the GAB is patchy and limited by exposure to swell. Most seagrass is found in sheltered bays or in the lee of reefs and islands in the eastern GAB. These areas contain nearly 10% of the seagrass meadows found in South Australia. *Posidonia* species dominate, especially *P. angustifolia*, *P. coriacea* at the base of cliffs and *P. australis* and *P. angustifolia* in the sheltered lee of fringing reefs. *Amphibolis antarctica* and *Heterozostera tasmanica* are present but less common in sheltered bays of the region (McLeay et al., 2003).

3.2.4 Central Western Shelf Province

Shark Bay contains the largest reported seagrass meadows in the world (approximately 4,000 km²), as well as some of the most species-rich seagrass assemblages (Walker *et al.* 1989). Twelve species of seagrass are found in the Bay with the dominant species being *Amphibolis antarctica*. Seagrass is a fundamental component of biological processes in Shark Bay; it has modified the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of the Bay and provides food, habitat and nursery grounds for many species (CALM & National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority (NPNCA) 1996).

An inshore survey of benthic habitats near Busselton recorded dense coverage of *Amphibolis* spp. on limestone pavement. *Halophila* spp., *Heterozostera* spp. and *Syringodium isoetifolium* were recorded on sandy substrates (DoF 2007).

3.2.5 Central Western Shelf Transition

Nine species of seagrasses have been found throughout Ningaloo Reef (van Keulen & Langdon 2011). Some delineation of temperate and tropical species exists; however, several species were found throughout the Ningaloo Reef. *Halophila ovalis* was the most commonly found seagrass at Ningaloo and was generally found growing in sandy patches between coral bombores. *Amphibolis antarctica* is a large meadow forming species that has been found growing in large clumps in Bateman Bay, north of Coral Bay (van Keulen & Langdon 2011).

3.2.6 Northwest Transition

The Rowley Shoals provide the only suitable shallow substrate for seagrasses in this predominantly deep bioregion. Sparse seagrass is found within subtidal coral reef communities of the Rowley Shoals but is not a major habitat type. Two species of seagrass, *Thalassia hemprichii* and *Halophila ovalis*, have been recorded at Mermaid Reef (Huisman *et al.* 2009). Earlier studies at Mermaid and Imperieuse Reef recorded the above two species and a third species; *Thalassodendron ciliatum* (Walker & Prince 1987).

3.2.7 Northwest Shelf Province

In the Northwest Shelf Province, seagrasses are present but sparsely distributed to depths of approximately 30 m (LEC & Astron 1993, URS 2009, CALM 2005a). The abundance and distribution of tropical (and subtropical) seagrass species can vary greatly due to seasonal changes in water quality (turbidity, light penetration) and conditions (wave action, temperature), with biomass tending to peak in summer (Lanyon & March 1995).

Studies between Quondong and Coulomb Points north of Broome identified seagrass communities of *Halophila* spp. patchily distributed across large areas, from the lower intertidal and out to a depth of approximately 20 m (DEC 2008, Fry *et al.* 2008). Similarly, *Halophila decipiens* was the only seagrass collected from epibenthic dredge studies at five localities near Broome from Gourdon Bay to Packer Island (Keesing *et al.* 2011).

Roebuck Bay is located south of Broome and includes large areas of intertidal mudflats. Extensive seagrass meadows occur in the northern regions of Roebuck Bay and are dominated by *Halophila ovalis* and *Halodule uninervis*. *Halophila minor* and *Halodule pinifolia* have also been reported at this location (Prince 1986, Walker & Prince 1987, Seagrass-Watch 2019).

In the Dampier Archipelago seagrass occurs in the larger bays and sheltered flats of the area (CALM & MPRA 2005). Six species of seagrass, including three *Halophila* species, have been recorded on the subtidal soft sediment habitats (CALM & MPRA 2005). Seagrasses do not form extensive meadows within the proposed reserves, but rather form interspersed seagrass/macroalgal beds. The largest areas of seagrass are found between Keast and Legendre islands, and between West Intercourse Island and Cape Preston (CALM & MPRA 2005).

Surveys near Onslow found that *Halophila* spp. were the most widespread of the seagrasses in that region. Seagrasses were found to be generally sparsely distributed (<10% cover), occurring in small patches within larger areas of suitable substrate. Small areas of higher (>50%) seagrass cover occurred in shallow clear water areas but were not common (URS 2009, URS 2010b, Chevron 2010).

Similarly, in the Montebello/Barrow Islands Marine Conservation Reserves, seagrasses appear not to form extensive meadows but are sparsely interspersed between macroalgae. Seven seagrass species have been recorded in the Reserves (DEC & MPRA 2007a) with *Halophila* spp. the most common seagrass species on shallow soft substrates and sand veneers. Distributions of these species extend from the intertidal zone to approximately 15m water depth (DEC & MPRA 2007a). Surveys to the northwest and southeast of Barrow Island from 2002 to 2004 did not identify any significant seagrass meadows but confirmed the presence of sparse coverage of *Halophila* and *Halodule* spp. in shallow areas east of Barrow Island (RPS BBG 2005).

A significant meadow of large seagrasses at Mary Anne Reef east of Onslow was identified almost 30 years ago and its presence today is unconfirmed. The meadow was several hundred hectares of *Cymodocea angustata* at 30–50% cover, occurring primarily at a depth of 2–3 m (Walker & Prince 1987).

3.2.8 Northwest Shelf Transition

Extensive and diverse intertidal seagrass meadows are known from islands in the southern Kimberley, particularly in the Sunday Island One Arm Point area (Walker 1995, Walker & Prince 1987). Ten species of seagrasses have been recorded at One Arm Point, with the majority of meadows low to moderate in abundance and dominated by *Thalassia hemprichii* with *Halophila ovalis*, *Halodule uninervis* and *Enhalus acoroides* (Seagrass-Watch 2019).

While some seagrasses have been collected from intertidal sites in the central and north Kimberley (Walker *et al.* 1996, Walker 1997), these areas were not found to be species rich and did not support extensive seagrass meadows like those found in the southern Kimberley.

Subtidal seagrass meadows in the Northwest Shelf Transition are not well mapped, although dugongs are known to feed on seagrass communities in coastal waters of the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf (DEWHA 2008a).

3.2.9 Timor Province

Seagrass has been reported on the reef flats of offshore reefs of this bioregion (Whiting 1999, Hale & Butcher 2013). Five species of seagrass were reported at Ashmore Reef with *Thalassia hemprichii* being the dominant species (Pike & Leach 1997, Skewes *et al.* 1999b, Brown & Skewes 2005). The total area of seagrass at Ashmore Reef in 1999 was estimated to be 470 ha (Skewes *et al.* 1999b). However, much of this was very sparse cover and there were only 220 ha of seagrass with a greater than 10% cover (Brown & Skewes 2005). Seagrass grew in a sparse, patchy distribution across the sand flats, but had a higher coverage on the reef flat area, where it extended to within 100 m of the reef crest. The area of greatest cover and diversity was in the west and south-west areas of the reef on the inner reef flat (Brown & Skewes 2005). These seagrass meadows support a small but significant population of dugongs estimated at around 100 individuals comprising all age classes from calves to adults (Hale & Butcher 2005).

Similarly, Scott Reef supports five species of seagrass (URS 2006), with *Thalassia hemprichii* most abundant (Skewes *et al.* 1999a, URS 2006). The area of seagrass at Scott Reef is significantly less than that recorded for Ashmore Reef (approximately 100 ha) (Woodside 2011). The highly energetic environment and significant tidal exposure of Scott Reef restricts the area of habitats potentially suitable for seagrass establishment to a small proportion of the total area, resulting in low abundance (Skewes *et al.* 1999a, URS 2006).

Seringapatam Reef was found to have a seagrass cover of 2 ha out of 5,519 ha (0.04%) composed of *Thalassia hemprichii* and *Halophila ovalis* in approximately equal quantities (Skewes *et al.* 1999a). This finding contrasts with a more recent survey where only one species of seagrass (*Halophila decipiens*) was recorded at Seringapatam (Huisman *et al.* 2009).

Skewes *et al.* (1999a) did not observe any seagrass communities at Hibernia Reef.

3.2.10 Northern Shelf Province

Coastlines adjacent to the Northern Shelf Province contain seagrasses providing habitat to a number of marine species, particularly juvenile tiger prawns, which make up approximately 50% of the total prawn catch in the province. However, majority of these seagrass habitats exist within the Gulf of Carpentaria, which lies outside the combined EMBA.

3.2.11 Christmas Island Province

The subsurface marine habitat immediately surrounding Christmas Island consists of a relatively narrow and shallow coral reef shelf about 20 to 100 metres wide in approximately six to 20 metres of water depth. The sandy areas and some lagoons are also known to support seagrass habitat (DNP 2012).

3.2.12 International Waters

Important areas outside of the IMCRA bioregions include:

Indonesia (west)

Within Indonesian waters, the lower intertidal and upper subtidal zones are considered important areas for the growth of seagrass (Hutumo and Moosa 2005). Pioneering vegetation in the intertidal zone is dominated by *Halophila ovalis* and *Halodule pinifolia* while *Thalassodendron ciliatum* dominate the lower subtidal zones. Wide areas of the Indonesian coastal waters are covered by dense beds of seagrass.

Seagrass habitats are widely distributed across the Lesser Sunda Ecoregion. Preliminary data from the United Nations Environment Program's (UNEP) World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) has identified the following areas as potential areas of importance for seagrass, many of which are outside the combined EMBA (DeVantier *et al.* 2008):

- + North-west Bali;
- + South-west and west Lombok;
- + North-east Sumbawa;
- + Komodo Islands;
- + Savu; and
- + South coast of Timor-Leste.

The Kepulauan Seribu National Park, Laut Sawu Marine National Park, Bunaken National Park, Karimunjawa Marine National Park and Savu Sea National Marine Conservation Area are also known for their rich diversity of seagrasses (refer to **Section 9.8**).

3.3 Macroalgae

Macroalgae are important contributors to primary production and nutrient cycling in the region, providing food and habitat for vertebrate and invertebrate fauna. Macroalgae are also recognised for their role in spatial subsidies; the movement of nutrients or energy between neighbouring habitats. Spatial subsidies involving macroalgae include the movement of wrack from macroalgal beds to bare substrates and shorelines (Orr 2004).

Macroalgae are primarily associated with hard substrates. They occur in moderate to high cover on exposed hard substrates, but typically have lower cover on hard substrates that are covered with a veneer of sediment (SKM 2009, BHPBIO 2011). Macroalgae exhibit very high seasonal and interannual variation in biomass (Heyward *et al.* 2006) and distribution, abundance and biodiversity (Rio Tinto 2009, BHPBIO 2011). The distribution of hard substrates therefore indicates areas that may support macroalgal communities, although abundance and diversity may fluctuate annually.

Macroalgae are susceptible to disturbance from factors such as sedimentation, scouring and turbidity but the marked seasonality in biomass, abundance, diversity and distribution suggests macroalgae are likely to be resilient to acute, short-term disturbance acting at local scales. Macroalgae may be more susceptible to impacts acting over longer time scales (years) and at certain times of the year, where recruitment at a regional scale could be affected. Indirect impacts affecting the numbers, distribution and community structure of herbivorous fish can also be expected to have impacts (either positive or negative) on macroalgal habitats (Vergès *et al.* 2011).

Three bioregions (Northwest Province, Central Western Province and Central Western Transition) lie entirely in deep waters below the photic zone. Two bioregions (Southwest Transition and Southern Province) occur in colder waters. The EMBA overlaps the deeper waters of the Cocos (Keeling) Island Province, (not those close to shore) which are greater than 4000m deep and therefore macroalgae are not present.

Macroalgae are not present hence these bioregions are not discussed.

3.3.1 Southwest Shelf Province

Species diversity of macroalgae is very high. The south coast of the bioregion is characterised by a relatively higher diversity of temperate macro-algal species compared with the Southwest Shelf Transition. These colonise the exposed rocky shorelines and rocky reefs (DEWHA 2008a).

3.3.2 Southwest Shelf Transition

The Houtman Abrolhos have known species of benthic algae with macroalgae communities considered important in supporting a diversity of marine life.

More than 340 species of macroalgae (including 54 species of green algae, 71 species of brown algae, and 222 species of red algae) have been recorded from rock platforms around Rottnest Island (Amalfi 2006).

3.3.3 Great Australian Bight Shelf Transition

Seaweed diversity and endemism in temperate waters of Australia is among the highest in the world, perhaps due to the length of the southerly-facing rocky coastline and the long period of geological isolation. The number of species found in southern Australia is 50-80% greater than other temperate regions of the world. A small number of tropical species and isolated species from tropical genera also occur in the GAB.

Oceanic waters of South Australia support one of the world's most diverse seaweed assemblages, with >1200 species recorded. Many species of macroalgae found in South Australian waters extend into the cool temperate waters of Victoria and Tasmania and warmer waters of Western Australia. However, South Australia has the highest concentration of species. The waters of the GAB are clear and allow chlorophyllus plants to live at depths of up to 70 m.

Among the green algae (Chlorophyta), few microscopic forms have been studied; however, a few southern Australian species are recognised in the genera *Ulva* (2) and *Bryopsis* (6). Coenocytic green algae are well represented, including *Codium* (15 species) and *Caulerpa* (19 species). Brown algae (*Phaeophyta*) and red algae (*Rhodophyta*) are particularly diverse. Approximately 43% of the genera (658) and 20% of the species (~4000) of red algae that occur worldwide are found in southern Australia. Over 75% of red algae, 57% of brown algae, and 30% of green algae are endemic to southern Australia (Womersley 1990). Womersley (1984, 1987, 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2003) documents the macroalgae of southern Australia. (McLeay et al., 2003).

3.3.4 Central Western Shelf Province

Although seagrasses are the most visually dominant organisms found in Shark Bay (Walker *et al.* 1989) macroalgae are also a significant component within the system, with 161 taxa of benthic macroalgae reported from the location (Kendrick *et al.* 1990). The seagrass meadows host a large number of epiphytic algal species (Harlin *et al.* 1985, Kendrick *et al.* 1990), which numerically dominate the algal flora of the area. Eighty algal species were epiphytic on the seagrass *Amphibolis antarctica*, and of these, over half have been reported both as epiphytes and benthic algae. Benthic macroalgae can be found growing on occasional subtidal rock (limestone–sandstone) platforms and extensive sand flats that occur throughout Shark Bay, and as drift within seagrass meadows (Kendrick *et al.* 1990).

The benthic algae of Shark Bay are not predominantly temperate as is the case with the seagrasses (Walker *et al.* 1989) and seagrass epiphytes (Kendrick *et al.* 1990). The majority of taxa are either of tropical or cosmopolitan distribution. Their local distribution within Shark Bay is correlated with salinity, with benthic algal species richness lower in areas of high salinity (Kendrick *et al.* 1990).

Limestone platforms occur along the bioregion's coastline and high energy environments are likely to be dominated by large brown algae including *Ecklonia radiata* and *Sargassum* spp. with articulated coralline algae making up the understorey. More diverse algae assemblages may be observed in sheltered locations such as potholes and ledges (DoF 2007).

3.3.5 Central Western Shelf Transition

Macroalgal beds along the Ningaloo coastline are generally found on the shallow limestone lagoonal platforms and occupy about 2,200 ha of the Ningaloo Marine Park and Muiron Islands Marine Management Area (CALM & MPRA 2005a). Macroalgal communities within the area have been broadly described (Bancroft & Davidson 2000). The dominant genera are the brown algae *Sargassum*, *Padina*, *Dictyota* and *Hydroclathrus* spp. (McCook *et al.* 1995).

3.3.6 Northwest Transition

Although macroalgae is present at the Rowley Shoals, it is not recognised as a key habitat component in the Mermaid Reef Marine National Nature Reserve Plan of Management (EA 2000) or the Rowley Shoals Marine Park Management Plan (DEC & MPRA 2007b).

There is nothing to suggest that the algal flora of the Rowley Shoals is unique within the Indo-Pacific (Huisman *et al.* 2009). A study of macroalgae at 16 locations at Mermaid Reef recorded over 100 species (Huisman *et al.* 2009). The algal flora recorded at the Rowley Shoals represents a small portion of the highly diverse Indo-Pacific flora. The majority of species that were recorded at Mermaid Reef had been previously recorded from mainland north-western Australia or from Indonesia (Huisman *et al.* 2009).

3.3.7 Northwest Shelf Province

Macroalgae are diverse and widespread throughout the Northwest Shelf Province. They are restricted to depths where sufficient light penetrates to the substrate and therefore tend to be most common in shallow subtidal waters down to approximately 20 m depth.

In the nearshore regions of the Pilbara, macroalgae are often a dominant component of the mosaic of benthic organisms found on hard substrates in shallow water. In these shallow waters, regular disturbance to reef habitats from seasonal changes in sedimentation/ erosion patterns and the less frequent impacts of cyclones and storms through sedimentation and scouring may substantially alter the distribution and composition of the benthic communities associated with reefs, including macroalgal habitats (BHPBIO 2011).

Macroalgae dominate shallow (<10 m) submerged limestone reefs and also grow on stable rubble and boulder surfaces in the Dampier Archipelago (CALM & MPRA 2005). Huisman and Borowitzka (2003) reported approximately 200 species of macroalgae from the Dampier Archipelago. Low relief limestone reefs that are dominated by macroalgae, account for 17% (approximately 35,460 ha) of the marine habitats within the proposed Marine Management Area (CALM 2005a).

Epibenthic dredge surveys along the coastline north of Broome identified 43 species of algae from 22 families (Keesing *et al.* 2011). The lower species diversity collected by this study is attributed to the method of collection and limited depth range (11–23 m) (Keesing *et al.* 2011).

Macroalgae occur around the numerous small offshore islands within this bioregion (including Thevenard Island, Airlie Island and Serrurier Island) associated with limestone pavement and protected areas of soft

sediments. Dominant species are consistent with those described for the Dampier Archipelago (Woodside 2011).

In the shallow offshore waters of the Pilbara region, macroalgae are the dominant benthic habitat on hard substrates in both the Montebello and Barrow Islands Marine Parks and are the main primary producers (DEC & MPRA 2007a, Chevron 2010). Shallow water habitats outside these marine parks are also likely to support substantial areas of macroalgal habitat wherever conditions are suitable.

Macroalgae occupy approximately 40% of the benthic habitat area in the Montebello/ Lowendal/ Barrow Island region (CALM 2005b). At least 132 macroalgal taxa occur around Barrow Island, with most thought to be widely distributed in the tropical Indo-Pacific region (Chevron 2005).

Macroalgae monitoring around the Lowendal and Montebello Islands since 1996 (The Ecology Lab 1997, IRCE 2002 2003 2004 2006 2007, URS 2009) has found macroalgal cover and biomass to be naturally spatially and temporally variable. *Sargassum* spp. represented 70% of the macroalgal assemblage in 2009, compared to 96% in 2002 (URS 2009). *Sargassum* spp. cover as a percentage of total macroalgae cover was significantly lower in 2009 than in previous years, primarily due to an increase in filamentous algae at a number of sites (URS 2009).

3.3.8 Northwest Shelf Transition

There is a lack of information regarding the marine benthic flora of north-west Western Australia and no comprehensive marine flora list exists for the region (Huisman 2004). However, about 70 algae species were collected during a survey of intertidal reefs on the central Kimberley coast in 1997 (Walker 1997).

Tropical macroalgae species are typically associated with areas of hard substrate and various types of macroalgae occur on rock platforms intermingled with coral and sponge. Abundance and biomass typically exhibit strong seasonal trends (Heyward *et al.* 2006).

The diversity and abundance of algae in the Kimberley is probably linked to the region's extreme tidal exposure and highly turbid waters, reducing light penetration and resulting in deposition of fine sediments (Walker 1997). However, the role of algae appears crucial to the growth of reefs in the highly turbid waters of the Kimberley coast and islands (Brooke 1997). *Sargassum* spp. and coralline algae may be dominant (DPAW 2013).

It is also considered that in offshore parts of the Northwest Shelf Transition, there are high levels of primary production, including macroalgae. This is due to light penetration through relatively clear, shallow waters (DEWHA, 2008a). In particular, carbonate banks and reefs in the Northwest Shelf Transition are considered to support macroalgae, therefore macroalgae would be expected to be present within the Carbonate Bank and Terrace System of the Van Diemen Rise key ecological feature, located within the Northwest Shelf Transition.

3.3.9 Timor Province

Macroalgae at Ashmore Reef are estimated to cover over 2,000 ha, mostly on the reef slope and crest areas (Hale & Butcher 2013). The algal community is dominated by turf and coralline algae, with fleshy macroalgae comprising typically less than 10% of total algal cover (Skewes *et al.* 1999b).

Surveys at Scott and Seringapatam Reefs recorded over 100 species of marine algae (Huisman *et al.* 2009). The marine algal community was similar between reefs and also similar to the Rowley Shoals. Algae found at these offshore atolls forms a small subset of the Indo-Pacific algal flora, with virtually all of the species identified thus far having been previously collected from north-western Australia or from localities further

north. Although further research is necessary, at present there is nothing to suggest that the macroalgae communities of these offshore atolls are unique within the Indo-Pacific (Huisman *et al.* 2009).

3.3.10 Timor Transition

There is a lack of published information regarding macroalgae within the Timor Transition. However, the presence of the Shelf Break and Slope of the Arafura Shelf key ecological feature indicates that macroalgae may be present in association with this seabed feature. Upwelling associated with the topography of the shelf break lifts nutrient rich deep ocean water onto the edge of the shelf and into the euphotic zone, leading to enhanced biological productivity (DSEWPAC, 2012).

3.3.11 Northern Shelf Province

Macroalgae is sparse in the Northern Shelf Province (DEWHA, 2008c). However, around reef areas, there have been observations of phytoplankton blooms, thought to occur at localised micro-upwellings of nutrients potentially driven by wind and tidal eddies (DEWHA, 2008c).

3.3.12 Christmas Island Province

Coral reefs are 'turfed' with fine hair-like algae which are grazed by many animals. Some red algae form hard pink crusts which cement sand and dead coral together (DNP, 2012).

3.3.13 International Waters

No information on macroalgae in international waters has been identified other than for Timor-Leste waters.

See **Section 3.1.8** for a description of habitat typical of shoals and banks in the Timor Sea.

3.4 Non-Coral Benthic Invertebrates

The offshore marine environment from Busselton to the Northern Territory is overwhelmingly dominated by soft sediment seabeds; sandy and muddy substrates, occasionally interspersed with hard substrates covered with sand veneers, and rarely, exposed hard substrate. In shallow waters, non-coral benthic invertebrates may form part of the mosaic of benthic organisms found on hard substrates, alongside macrophytes and coral colonies. As light reduces with water depth, non-coral benthic invertebrates are the dominant community, albeit at low densities.

Non coral benthic invertebrates feed by filtering small particles from seawater, typically by passing the water over a specialised filtering structure. Examples of filter feeders are sponges, soft and whip corals and sea squirts.

3.4.1 Southwest Transition

There is little available information on benthic biological communities of this bioregion however deep sea crabs, such as the champagne crab and crystal crab are known to inhabit the seafloor of the slope (DEWHA 2008b).

3.4.2 Southwest Shelf Province

East of Albany, the dominant lobster species changes from the western rock lobster to the southern rock lobster. In this bioregion there is a notable increase in the ratio of benthic fish to crustaceans. Crustaceans appear to be less important in structuring shallow benthic communities here than in bioregions to the north and to the south-east of the Murray River mouth, around the Bonney Upwelling and Tasmania (DEWHA 2008b).

3.4.3 Southwest Shelf Transition

The inner shelf of the bioregion, extending between 0-50 m deep, includes distinct ridges of limestone reef with extensive beds of macro-algae (principally *Ecklonia* spp.). These inshore lagoons are inhabited by a diverse range of coralline algae, sponges, molluscs and crustaceans. On the outer shelf and shelf break filter feeding sponges and bryozoans dominate the hard bottom. The reefs around the Houtman Abrolhos islands support 492 known species of molluscs, 110 known species of sponges, 172 known species of echinoderms and 234 known species of benthic algae (DEWHA 2008b). Western rock lobster, the dominant large benthic invertebrate in this bioregion, is considered to be an important part of the food web of the inner shelf.

3.4.4 Southern Province

There is little information available on the benthic biological communities within the bioregion, however it is described as a unique region of deep-sea habitats that includes the Diamantina Fracture Zone Key Ecological Feature. The Diamantina Fracture Zone is described as structurally complex deep water environment of seamounts and numerous closely spaced troughs and ridges, which represents a unique region of deep-sea habitats including 26 endemic species of demersal fish (DSEWPaC 2012b).

3.4.5 Great Australian Bight Shelf Transition

The invertebrate fauna of the GAB also displays a high degree of endemism (85-95%, Shepherd 1991). South Australia's benthic invertebrate assemblages also include tropical species. Fossils of benthic foraminiferans, nektonic nautiloids and planktonic protists suggest that tropical species have been transported into South Australia by the Leeuwin Current since the Eocene.

Early research in the GAB included an expedition on Australia's first fisheries research vessel, the Southern Endeavour that reported the presence of hydroids, molluscs and sponges. Many of South Australia's invertebrate species are included in the South Australian Handbook Series Marine Invertebrates of Southern Australia. Part I, includes the Porifera, Cnidaria, Platyhelminths, Annelida, Sipuncula, Echiura, Bryozoa and Echinodermata (Shepherd and Thomas 1982); Part II deals solely with the Mollusca (Shepherd and Thomas 1989); and Part III includes the Nemertea, Entoprocta, Phoronida, Brachiopoda, Hemichordata, Pycnogonids and Tunicates (Shepherd and Davies 1997). The most notable group not covered by these books is the Crustacea. Edgar (2000) describes 1200 species of invertebrates, fish, algae and sea grasses that occur in the intertidal zone to 30 m depth between Sydney and Perth (McLeay et al., 2003).

3.4.6 Central Western Province

The understanding of marine life in this bioregion is mostly confined to the demersal fish on the continental slope. The exception to this is the Perth Canyon which, although poorly understood, is known to have unique seafloor features with ecological properties of regional significance.

3.4.7 Central Western Shelf Province

The Central Western Shelf Province occurs on the continental shelf in water depths from 0 to 100 m. Biological communities of the shelf are likely to include a sparse invertebrate assemblage of sea cucumbers, urchins, crabs and polychaetes on sand substrates. Hard substrates are likely to contain sessile invertebrates such as sponges and gorgonians. The biological communities of this bioregion share many similarities with the adjoining temperate region (DEWHA 2008a).

Stromatolites occur in Shark Bay. Although they are a microbial colony (prokaryote), and not an invertebrate (eukaryote), they are described here as a unique benthic biological community. Stromatolites are rock-like structures built by cyanobacteria. Shark Bay's stromatolites are 2,000 to 3,000 years old and are similar to life forms found on Earth up to 3.5 billion years ago. Until about 500 million years ago, stromatolites were

the only macroscopic evidence of life on the planet; hence they provide a unique insight into early life forms and evolution. The stromatolites are located in the hypersaline environment of Hamelin Pool and are one of the reasons for the area's World Heritage Listing (DPAW 2009).

3.4.8 Central Western Transition

The Central Western Transition extends from the shelf break to the continental slope with some parts of the bioregion occurring on the abyssal plain. Water depths range from 80 m to almost 6,000 m. Sediments are dominated by muds and sands that decrease in grain size with increasing depth. The present level of understanding of the marine environment in this bioregion is generally poor. The harder substrate of the slope in waters of 200–2,000 m deep is likely to support populations of epibenthic fauna including bryozoans and sponges. These support larger infauna and benthic animals such as crabs, cephalopods, echinoderms and other filter feeding epibenthic organisms. In the deeper waters of the abyss, the benthic communities are likely to be sparse (DEWHA 2008a).

3.4.9 Central Western Shelf Transition

The Central Western Shelf Transition is located entirely on the continental shelf and is comprised mainly of sandy sediments in depths between 0 and 80 m (DEWHA 2008a).

Some sponge species and filter-feeding communities found in deeper waters offshore from the Ningaloo Reef appear to be significantly different to those of the Dampier Archipelago and Abrolhos Islands, indicating that the Commonwealth waters have some areas of potentially high and unique sponge biodiversity (Rees *et al.* 2004).

3.4.10 Northwest Province

The Northwest Province is located entirely on the continental slope in water depths of predominantly between 1,000–3,000 m and is comprised of muddy sediments. Despite the present poor knowledge of the benthic communities on the Exmouth Plateau, information on sediments in the bioregion indicates that benthic communities 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.

3.4.11 Northwest Transition

The Northwest Transition is located from the shelf break (200 m water depth) over the continental slope to depths of more than 1,000 m at the Argo Abyssal Plain. Benthic habitat mapping surveys and epibenthic sampling conducted by CSIRO at the continental slope (approximately 400 m water depth) showed that all survey sites predominantly comprised soft, muddy sediment, which was often riffled. Gravel, boulders and small outcrops were occasionally recorded. Epifaunal abundance was similar all sites, with epifauna limited to sparsely distributed isolated individuals. Epifauna included isolated scattered sessile crinoids, anemones, glass sponges and seapens. Occasional non-sessile fauna included urchins, prawns and other decapods, holothurians and sea stars. Modelling indicated a 1 km long beam trawl across the continental shelf (approximately 400 m water depth) would be expected to yield sparse (<20 individuals) and low diversity (<10 species) of epibenthic fauna (≥ 1 cm body size) (Williams *et al.* 2010). Deeper on the continental slope at approximately 700 m and approximately 1,000 m, habitats were similar to those observed at 400 m (Williams *et al.* 2010).

Although soft sediment habitat may appear monotonous and featureless, there is likely to be some marked differences in terms of ecological functioning and faunal composition between shelf and deep-sea areas, with the 200 m isobath widely believed to represent a key boundary (Wilson 2013, Brewer *et al.* 2007, Gage &

Tyler 1992). Beyond the 200 m isobath, deep-sea benthic communities rely exclusively on the settling of organic detritus from the overlying water column as a food source. The spatial and temporal distribution of benthic fauna depends on factors such as sediment characteristics, depth and season (Wilson 2013).

Due to contrasting depths, the Rowley Shoals supports a diverse marine invertebrate community including a number of endemic species. Invertebrate species (excluding corals) at the Rowley Shoals include sponges, cnidarians (jellyfish, anemones), worms, bryozoans (sea mosses), crustaceans (crabs, lobsters, etc.), molluscs (cuttlefish, baler shells, giant clams, etc.), echinoderms (starfish, sea urchins) and sea squirts (DEC & MPRA 2007b).

3.4.12 Northwest Shelf Province

This bioregion is located primarily on the continental shelf in water depths from 0 to 200 m (DEWHA 2008a). The sandy substrates on the shelf within this bioregion are thought to support low density benthic communities of bryozoans, molluscs and echinoids (DEWHA 2008a). Sponge communities are also sparsely distributed on the shelf, but are found only in areas of hard substrate. The region between Dampier and Port Hedland has been described as a hotspot for sponge biodiversity (Hooper & Ekins 2004).

Epibenthic dredge surveys in nearshore areas around Broome covered 1,350 m² of seabed in depths between 11 and 23 m. The survey recorded 357 taxa comprising 52 sponges, 30 ascidians, 10 hydroids, 52 cnidarians (not including scleractinian corals), 69 crustaceans, 73 molluscs and 71 echinoderms. The most important species on soft bottom habitats in terms of biomass was the heart urchin (*Breynia desorii*), whilst sponges were the dominant fauna by biomass on hard bottom habitats. The biomass of other filter feeders, especially ascidians, soft corals, gorgonians was also high, indicating the importance of these groups in characterising hard bottom habitats.

In 2007, CSIRO conducted extensive benthic habitat mapping surveys and epibenthic fauna (living on the surface and ≥1 cm body size) sampling in deep waters (100–1,000 m) spanning thirteen sites between Barrow Island and Ashmore Reef running along the continental shelf and across the continental slope of the North West Shelf (Williams *et al.* 2010). At the continental shelf margin (approximately 100 m water depth) Williams *et al.* (2010) reported that similar benthic habitats occurred at each survey site across the breadth of the North West Shelf. Benthic habitats at this depth comprised a mix of riffled muddy sand (sometimes as a veneer over rocky subcrops) together with gravel to pebble-sized rubble, cobbles, boulders and some rock outcrops. Typical epifauna found at these depths included scattered isolated hydroids, sea fans and soft corals and often small sponges. Other fauna observed at some of the sites included scattered isolated sea whips, crinoids, sea pens, urchins and anemones. Epibenthic fauna along the continental shelf margin were quantified as sparse and low diversity (Williams *et al.* 2010). Modelling indicated that a trawl sample of 1 km length would generally be expected to yield approximately 80 individuals represented by 15 species (Williams *et al.* 2010) in 100 m depth waters.

At the shelf edge (approximately 200 m water depth), two sites were surveyed. Both sites were similar to the continental shelf margin, except the northern site mainly comprised coarse material. Epifauna observed at the northern site was similar at 200 m as at 100 m. At the southern site, epifauna included sparse and scattered individual soft corals, anemones, glass sponges and stalked crinoids (Williams *et al.* 2010). Modelling indicated epibenthic fauna were sparse and had low diversity, numbering approximately 20–40 individuals in a 1 km long trawl sample represented by approximately 5–10 species (Williams *et al.* 2010).

Baseline studies undertaken in nearshore areas of the Pilbara (SKM 2009, Rio Tinto 2009, BHPBIO 2011) and offshore areas around Barrow Island (Chevron 2010) have shown that filter feeder communities are a dominant component of benthic habitats in depths >10 m where reduced light appears to inhibit extensive development of hard corals and macroalgae. The pavement habitats between Barrow Island and the

mainland are covered by a sediment veneer that appears to periodically move, exposing areas of pavement reef. Sessile benthic organisms that require hard substrates for attachment, such as gorgonians, are frequently seen emerging through a shallow veneer of sand. This type of substrate (sediment veneer) with sparse filter feeder communities is common throughout this area (SKM 2009, Rio Tinto 2009, BHPBIO 2011).

3.4.13 Northwest Shelf Transition

The Northwest Shelf Transition is located on the continental shelf with a small area extending onto the continental slope, with water depths ranging from 0–330 m. Nearshore areas may support significant filter feeding communities but these have not yet been described (Masini *et al.* 2009).

Pipeline route surveys north of the Kimberley in water depths from 10–250 m recorded a seabed largely devoid of hard substrate, with only sparse epibenthic fauna noted on the predominantly sandy substrate. Occasional epibenthic fauna (featherstars, gorgonians, bryozoans, sea urchins, hydroids and sponges) were recorded in areas where rocky substrate or outcrops were present (URS 2010a).

In contrast, benthic surveys at Echuca Shoals identified broad areas of hard substrate with substantial epibenthic fauna. The shallow shoal areas were dominated by a flat ‘reef’ platform with crinoids, sea whips, soft corals and low densities of hard corals. With increasing depth (25–80 m) soft corals and sponges became increasingly dominant. At greater depths (80–100 m) the density of epibenthic fauna decreased substantially with sea whips and sea fans became dominant (URS 2010a).

3.4.14 Timor Province

The Timor Province is located on the continental slope and abyssal plain and water depths range from 200 m to almost 6,000 m. Benthic studies in this bioregion are scarce, however data from the North West Slope Trawl Fishery suggests that muddy sediments in the Timor Province support significant populations of crustaceans (Brewer *et al.* 2007). Additionally, research into the demersal fish communities of the continental slope has identified the Timor Province as an important bioregion. This is due to the presence of a number of endemic fish species, and two distinct demersal community types associated with the upper slope (water depths of 225–500 m) and mid-slope (water depths of 750–1,000 m) (Last *et al.* 2005). The current understanding of the relationship between demersal fish communities and benthic environments on the continental slope is rudimentary (DEWHA 2008a).

Over 130 species of sponges have been recorded at the Ashmore Reef National Nature Reserve (Russell & Hanley 1993).

Studies of Seringapatam Reef have observed the dominant benthic habitats to include filter feeders, such as sponges, gorgonians, hydroids and seapens (Heyward *et al.* 2013 cited in ConocoPhillips 2018).

3.4.15 Timor Transition

Carbonate banks and reefs of the Timor Transition have been found to support non-coral communities and benthic invertebrate communities associated with hard substrates (DEWHA, 2008c). Of particular note is the Shelf Break and Slope of the Arafura Shelf key ecological feature which is located within the Timor Transition. This key ecological feature has been recognised for the invertebrates that it hosts, which are thought to be the basis for the offshore food webs in the area (DEWHA, 2008c). Furthermore, the Tributary Canyons of the Arafura Depression key ecological feature is also in the Timor Transition and surveys of this key ecological feature identified around 245 macroscopic species of invertebrates (Wilson, 2005).

3.4.16 Northern Shelf Province

Studies of taxa within the Northern Shelf Province found 684 taxa of infaunal benthic invertebrates in waters deeper than 20 m. However, the Gulf of Carpentaria Basin contains the most significant non-coral

benthic habitats within the Northern Shelf Province, which is outside the boundary of the combined EMBA (DEWHA, 2008c).

3.4.17 Christmas Island Province

Three major molluscs grow on Christmas Island's reefs: bivalves, gastropods and cephalopods. Echinoderms include sea stars, brittle stars, feather stars, sea urchins and sea cucumbers (DNP, 2012). The deeper waters connecting Christmas Island to the Cocos (Keeling) Island Province are described below (**Section 3.4.18**).

3.4.18 Cocos (Keeling) Island Province

The hard substrates that occur on seamounts within the province are likely to provide surfaces and topographical structure for recruitment and growth of passive, sessile, epi-benthic suspension feeders (Genin *et al.*, 1986) such as deep-sea corals, sponges, crinoids, ascidians and bryozoans. Most of the seamounts within the subregion are relatively deep (>2000 m) and the deeper seamounts (>3000 m) are a unique feature of this subregion. Little is known about the communities that live on the tops and slopes of these seamounts. However, it seems likely that their unique position in the water column, and geographically, will support unique benthic and demersal communities (Brewer *et al.*, 2009).

3.4.19 International Waters

No information on non-coral benthic invertebrates in international waters has been identified other than for Timor-Leste waters.

See **Section 3.1.8** for a description of habitat typical of shoals and banks in the Timor Sea.

3.5 Plankton

Plankton abundance and distribution is patchy, dynamic and strongly linked to localised and seasonal productivity (Evans *et al.* 2016). Fluctuations in abundance and distribution occur both vertically and horizontally in response to tidal cycles, seasonal variation (light, water temperature and chemistry, currents and nutrients) and cyclonic events. As a key indicator for ecosystem health and change, Plankton distribution and abundance has been measured for over a century in Australia (Richardson *et al.* 2015). The compilation of this data has been made publicly available through the Australian Ocean Data Network (Australian Ocean Data Network 2017) and has been used in the Australia State of the Environment 2016 report (Jackson *et al.* 2017) to nationally assess marine ecosystem health. According to their findings, warming ocean temperatures has extended the distribution of tropical phytoplankton species (which have a lower productivity), further south resulting in a decline in primary productivity in oceanic waters north of 35°C, especially the North West Shelf (Evans *et al.* 2016). Trends of primary productivity across Australia are however variable with the South West of Australia experiencing an increase in productivity and northern Australia experiencing no change between 2002-2016 (Evans *et al.* 2016).

Within the combined EMBA, peak primary productivity varies on a local and regional scale. For example, peak phytoplankton biomass in waters surrounding Broome has been observed in May with a high variability recorded in August, whereas recorded phytoplankton biomass in waters surrounding Geographe Bay has been found to peak during winter and is localised close to the coast (Bloundeau-Patissier *et al.* 2011). In general, these peaks are linked to mass coral spawning events, peaks in zooplankton and fish larvae abundance and periodic upwelling. Regional upwelling is most common close to the coast and where surface waters diverge. Despite the suppression of major upwelling along the WA coast by the Leeuwin Current, known key upwelling regions include the Ningaloo region (Hanson & McKinnon 2009) and Cape Mentelle (Pattiaratchi 2007). It is also expected that a high abundance of plankton will occur within areas of localised upwelling in the combined EMBA where the seabed disrupts the current flow.

In waters surrounding Indonesia, seasonal peaks in phytoplankton biomass is linked to monsoon related changes in wind. When the winds reverse direction (offshore vs. onshore), nutrient concentrations decrease/increase because of the suppression/enhancement of upwelling (National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) 2017). Annual variability of phytoplankton productivity in waters surrounding Indonesia is heavily influenced by the El Niño-Southern Oscillation climate pattern (NASA 2017). For example, phytoplankton productivity around Indonesia increases during El Niño events.

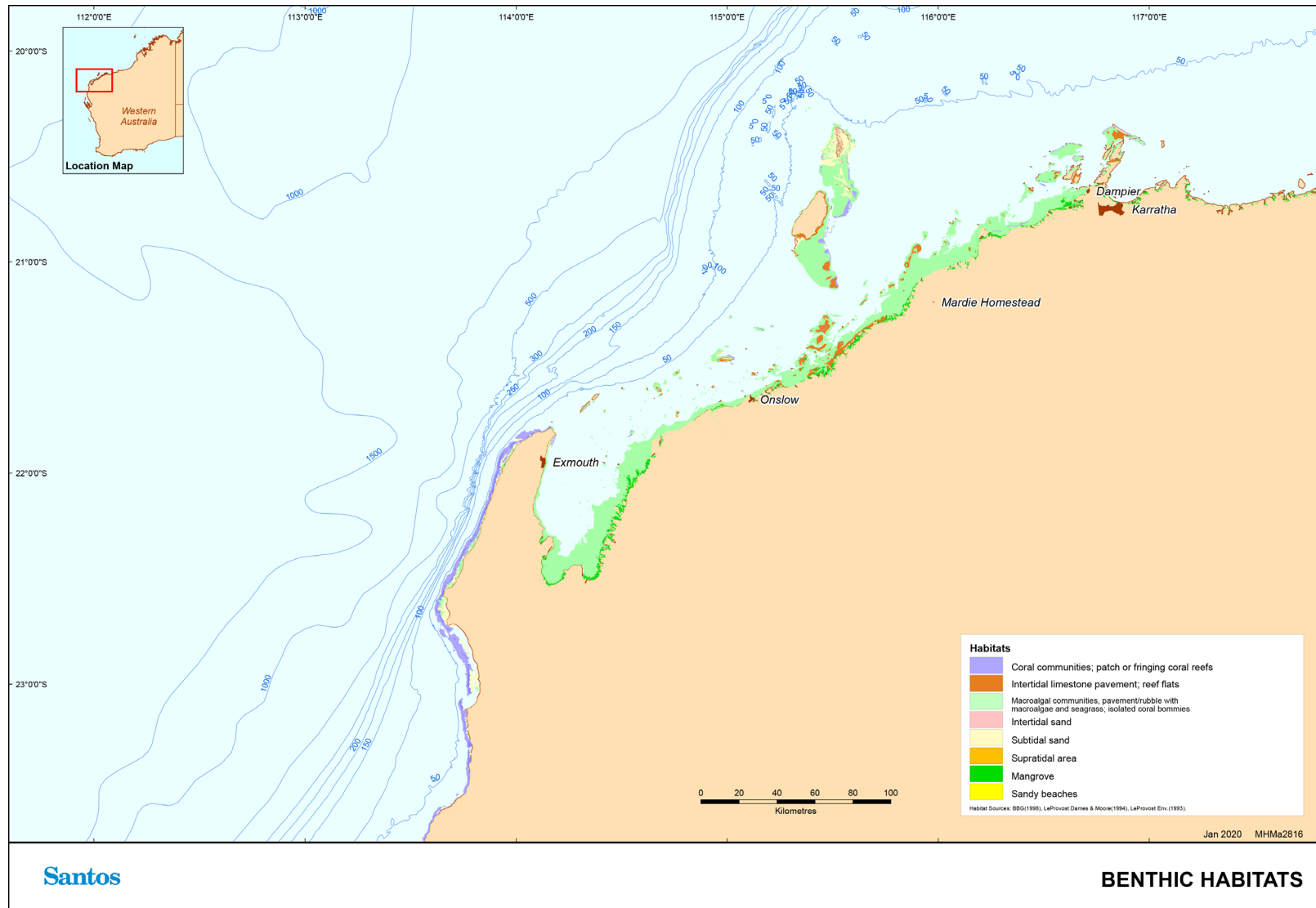


Figure 3-1: Benthic habitats from Coral Bay to Dampier

4. Shoreline Habitats

Shoreline habitats are defined as those habitats that are adjacent to the water along the mainland and of islands that occur above the LAT and most often in the intertidal zone.

The following section broadly categorises shoreline habitats as the following biological communities; mangroves, intertidal mud/sand banks, beaches, and rocky shores. These communities are discussed in **Sections 4.1- 4.5**, in terms of the 18 IMCRA v. 4.0 bioregions where relevant and where information is available.

Figure 3-1 broadly illustrate these habitats within the Northwest Shelf Province and Central Western Shelf Transition. Noting that shoreline habitats of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands are not described as the combined EMBA is restricted to the outermost deep waters of the bioregion.

4.1 Mangroves

Mangroves commonly occur in sheltered coastal areas in tropical and sub-tropical latitudes (Kathiresan and Bingham 2001). Up to eight species of mangroves are found further north in the Central Western Shelf Transition region, but at most locations the dominant mangrove (in terms of area of intertidal zone occupied) is *Avicennia marina*, with the stilt rooted mangrove *Rhizophora stylosa* often occurring as thin zones of dense thickets within the broad zone of *A. marina*. Mangroves are found wherever suitable conditions are present including wave dominated settings of deltas, beach/dune coasts, limestone barrier islands and ria/archipelago shores (Semeniuk 1993). Mangrove plants have evolved to adapt to fluctuating salinity, tidal inundation and fine, anaerobic, hydrogen sulfide rich sediment (Duke *et al.* 1998).

Mangroves are important primary producers and have a number of ecological and economic values. For example, they play a key role in reducing coastal erosion by stabilising sediment with their complex root systems (Kathiresan and Bingham 2001). They are also recognised for their capacity to help protect coastal areas from the damaging effects of erosion during storms and storm surge. Mangroves are also important in the filtration of run-off from the land which helps maintain water clarity for coral reefs which are often found offshore in tropical locations (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 2010). The intricate matrix of fine roots within the soil also binds sediments together.

Mangroves play an important role in connecting the terrestrial and marine environments (Alongi 2009). Numerous studies (e.g. Nagelkerken *et al.* 2000, Alongi 2002, Alongi 2009, Kathiresan and Bingham 2001) have shown mangroves to be highly productive and an important breeding and nursery areas for juvenile fish and crustaceans, including commercially important species (Kenyon *et al.* 2004). They also provide habitat for many juvenile reef fish species.

Mangroves also play an important ecosystem role in nutrient cycling and carbon fixing (NOAA 2010). The trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and the organic matter such as fallen leaves forms nutrient rich sediments creating a peat layer that stores organic carbon (Alongi 2009, Ayukai 1998).

The muddy sediments that occur in mangrove forests are home to a variety of epibenthic, infaunal and meiofaunal invertebrates (Kathiresan and Bingham 2001). Crustaceans known to inhabit the mud in mangrove systems include fiddler crabs, mud crabs, shrimps and barnacles. Within the water channels of the estuary, various finfish are found from the smaller fish such as gobies and mudskippers (which are restricted to life in the mangroves) through to larger fish such as barramundi (*Lates calcarifer*) and the mangrove jack (*Lutjanus argentimaculatus*). Mangroves and their associated invertebrate-rich mudflats are also an

important habitat for migratory shorebirds from the northern hemisphere, as well as some avifauna that are restricted to mangroves as their sole habitat (Garnet and Crowley 2000).

The two key State regulatory documents relevant to the protection and management of mangroves in WA are:

- + EPA (2001) Guidance Statement for Protection of Tropical Arid Zone Mangroves along the Pilbara Coastline. Guidance Statement No. 1; and
- + EPA (2016) Technical Guidance – Protection of Benthic Communities and Habitats.

4.1.1 Great Australian Bight Shelf Transition

Mangrove forests occur at sheltered sites on the South Australian coast and cover an area of approximately 230 km². Mangroves are poorly represented in the Great Australian Bight as they show preference for low energy, muddy shorelines, particularly in the tropics. Of the 69 species in the world only one occurs in the eastern part of the GAB, the grey mangrove, *Avicennia marina*. It forms coastal woodlands up to 5 m tall with the most significant stands in the GAB occurring near Ceduna in the east (McLeay, 2003).

4.1.2 Central Western Shelf Province

Shark Bay (in the Central Western Shelf Province) supports the southern-most area of substantial mangrove habitat in Western Australia (Rule *et al.* 2012). The mangroves of Shark Bay comprise only one species, the white mangrove *Avicennia marina*, and these trees occur around the coastline in widely dispersed and often isolated stands of varying size.

4.1.3 Central Western Shelf Transition

The regional mangroves from Exmouth to Broome (within the Central Western Shelf Transition and southern part of the Northwest Shelf Province) represent Australia's only 'tropical-arid' mangroves. The most significant stand of mangroves in the Central Western Shelf Transition is Mangrove Bay on the western side of the Cape Range Peninsula in the Ningaloo Marine Park. This small area of mangrove (37 ha) represents the largest area of mangrove habitat within the Ningaloo Marine Park and is considered extremely important from a biodiversity conservation perspective (CALM 2005).

4.1.4 Northwest Shelf Province

In the Pilbara region, the coast is a complex of deltas, limestone barrier islands and lagoons, with a variable suite of substrates. As a result, mangroves in this region form relatively diverse fringing stands, albeit often stunted in stature but at times quite extensive in area. The mangroves along the Pilbara coastline are the largest single unit of relatively undisturbed tropical arid zone habitats in the world. The area has nine mangrove taxa and a total of 632 km² mangroves (MangroveWatch 2014). As with most arid zone mangroves, Pilbara mangroves are characterised by open woodlands and shrublands that are of relatively lower productivity than the mangrove communities of the wet tropics because of the extreme water and salinity stresses that affect the intertidal zone in the Pilbara (EPA 2001). Significant stands of mangroves in the Pilbara include:

- + Exmouth Gulf: mangrove assemblages within the Bay of Rest on the western shore of the Gulf and the extensive mangrove system on the eastern shore of the Gulf that extends as a series of tidal flats and creek channels from Giralia Bay to Yanrey Flats (Astron 2014). These areas of mangrove are also designated as 'regionally significant' by the EPA (2001). The importance of these mangroves to the Exmouth Prawn Fishery is discussed in Kangas *et al.* (2006);

- + Mainland coast and nearshore islands: mangrove assemblages at Ashburton River Delta, Coolgra Point, Robe River Delta, Yardie Landing, Yammadery Island and the Mangrove Islands are all designated as 'regionally significant' by the WA EPA (2001) and the EPA will give these mangrove formations the highest degree of protection with respect to geographical distribution, biodiversity, productivity and ecological function; and
- + Montebello, Barrow and Lowendal Islands: mangrove assemblages all lay within designated reserves. The mangrove communities of the Montebello Islands are considered globally unique as they occur in lagoons of offshore islands (DEC 2007). Mangrove stands identified on Varanus Island occur on the west coast in discrete patches within the tidal and supratidal zones, at South Mangrove Beach and a small embayment (Astron 2016). Mangrove stands on Varanus Island have been identified as healthy, with similar stands also identified as present on Bridled Island to the north of Varanus Island (Astron 2016).

The mangroves of the Kimberley are particularly diverse and relatively untouched. They occupy a variety of coastal settings including rocky shores, beaches and tidal flats (Cresswell and Semeniuk 2011). They belong to the Indo-Malaysian group of Old World Mangroves centred in the Indian-Pacific area (Cresswell and Semeniuk 2011). Of the eighteen species of mangrove plants known to Australia all are represented in the Kimberley including *Avicennia marina*, *Aegialitis annulata*, *Aegiceras corniculatum*, *Rhizophora stylosa*, *Ceriops tagal*, *Osbornia octodonta*, *Bruguiera exaristata*, *Camptostemon schultzei*, *Excoecaria agallocha*, *Sonneratia alba*, and *Xylocarpus australasicus* (Pendretti and Paling, 2001; Waples, 2007). Of these, ten occur only in the Kimberley (Waples 2007). *Rhizophora stylosa* and *Avicennia marina* are the most common mangrove species along the WA Coast.

Mangroves line much of the coastal area within the western Kimberley (and within the proposed Horizontal Falls Marine Park area). They are known to line the shore in the upper reaches of Talbot Bay and to fringe many of the islands of the Buccaneer Archipelago. There are large stands in the southern section of Dugong Bay. Kingfisher Islands has been noted to exhibit extensive mangroves where 10 species of mangrove have been recorded (Wilson 2013). Mangroves line the shores of the southern coast of Collier Bay and large tracts are found in Walcott Inlet and Secure Bay (Duke *et al.* 2010). The mangroves on the eastern side of the inlet extend about 30 km inland (Gueho 2007, Pendretti and Paling 2001, Zell 2007). Further along the coast mangroves have been identified lining much of the shores of Doubtful Bay. Mangroves are also known to line the shores of the Sale River and have been identified in George Water. For detailed maps of mangrove distribution refer to Pedretti and Paling (2001).

4.1.5 Northwest Shelf Transition

Mangroves are also a prominent feature of the North Kimberley. Fringing mangroves have developed around the edge of Prince Frederick Harbour and to the east of Cape Voltaire extending along the shores of Walmesly Bay and Port Warrender (Zell 2007). This region is humid and *Xylocarpus granatum* is localised here (Cresswell and Semeniuk 2011). The rocky coastline between Cape Pond and Cape Voltaire does not lend itself to mangrove development; instead coastal woodland grows on the shores above high water mark. Mangroves are interspersed with rocky outcrops and beaches around much of the Admiralty Gulf, Vansittart Bay and Napier Broome Bay (with extensive stands around the Drysdale estuary). Cape Londonderry marks the westerly limit of *Scyphiphora hydrophyllacea* (Duke *et al.* 2010).

Between Cape Londonderry and Cape Dussejour mangrove communities are sparse, and limited to a few small stands in the bays as this part of the coastline is dominated by high relief rocky shores which are exposed to the prevailing easterly winds (Wilson 1994). Extensive mangroves do however line the shores of the islands and rivers in the Cambridge Gulf, where 12 mangrove species have been recorded (Wilson 2013).

The mangroves of the Ord River are notable in terms of their structural complexity and diversity. Fourteen species of mangrove have been recorded in the boundaries (Pedretti and Paling 2001). The mangroves of the Cambridge Gulf are important for saltwater crocodiles and mangrove bird communities. A unique type of flycatcher which is an intermediate between *Microcea flavigater* and *Microeca tormenti* has been identified in the mangroves of the Cambridge Gulf (Johnstone 1984). Additionally, the area is important for maintaining stocks of the commercially exploited species of the Red-Legged Banana Prawns (*Penaeus indicus*) (Kenyon *et al.* 2004).

Further north, mangroves also occur at the Tiwi Islands. Mangrove communities in the Tiwi Islands are predominantly within tidal creeks and are not expected along the shoreline. The Northern Territory mainland coastline, however, has a number of estuaries and rivers that drain into the surrounding hinterland during the wet season, this includes Darwin Harbour that contains approximately 260 km² of mangroves (INPEX, 2010).

4.1.6 Timor Province

Details on habitats in the Timor Province is provided in **Section 12.3.12**.

4.1.7 Northern Shelf Province

Coastlines within the Northern Shelf Province are described as being dominated by mangroves, which provide significant habitat for commercial and non-commercial fish species. In particular, banana prawns tend to favour mangrove areas with the highest catch of banana prawns being recorded in areas with the highest concentration of mangroves (DEWHA, 2008).

4.1.8 Christmas Island Province

There are no coastal mangroves, but a stand of normally estuarine *Bruguiera gymnorhiza* and *B. sexangula* occurs at Hosnie's Spring (registered as a Ramsar Wetlands site of international importance) about 50 metres above sea level. Two other mangrove species occur on the east coast. *Heritiera littoralis* occurs on the inland terrace above Greta Beach (outside the park) and further south towards Dolly Beach, as well as a discrete stand on the terrace above Dean's Point. *Cynometra ramiflora* occurs in two small stands south of Ross Hill (DNP, 2012).

4.1.9 International Waters

Subawa's south coast in Indonesia is thought to contain the most significant stand of mangroves in the Lesser Sunda Ecoregion (DeVantier 2008). Other significant stands have been mapped at the following locations (DeVantier 2008):

- + North-west and south east Bali;
- + North coast of Nusa Lembongan;
- + North-east and east Sumba;
- + South-west, north-west, north and east Flores and Maumere;
- + Komodo Island, and nearby islands; and
- + South west, south, central and north Timor-Leste.

Several Indonesian National Parks, including Laut Sawu Marine National Park, Karimunjawa National Park, Kepulauan Seribu National Park, Teluk Cenderawasih National Park, Kepulauan Wakatobi National Park, Meru Betiri National Park, Togian Islands National Park, Bali Barat National Park, Savu Sea National Marine

Conservation Area and the World Heritage sites of Komodo National Park, Siberut and Ujung Kulon contain mangrove forest (refer to **Section 9.8**).

4.2 Intertidal Mud/Sand Flats

Intertidal mudflats form when fine sediment carried by rivers and the ocean is deposited in a low energy environment. Tidal mudflats are highly productive components of shelf ecosystems responsible for recycling organic matter and nutrients through microbial activity. This microbial activity helps stabilise organic fluxes by reducing seasonal variation in primary productivity which ensures a more constant food supply (Robertson 1988). Intertidal sand and mudflats support a wide range of benthic infauna and epifauna which graze on microscopic algae and microbenthos, such as bivalves, molluscs, polychaete worms and crustaceans (Zell 2007).

The high abundance of invertebrates found in intertidal sand and mudflats provides an important food source for finfish and shellfish which swim over the area at high tide. Mudflats have also been shown to be significant nursery areas for flatfish. During low tide, these intertidal areas are also important foraging areas for indigenous and migratory shorebirds. Mudflats also play a vital role in protecting shorelines from erosion (Wade and Hickey 2008).

4.2.1 Central Western Shelf Province

Shark Bay in the Central Western Shelf Province has a protected intertidal ecological community 'Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh', as listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). It is the northerly limit for this community and there is a transition zone for many saltmarsh species (CALM 1996). The EPBC 'Listed Advice' (DSEWPaC 2013a) reports that sediments associated with these communities generally consist of poorly-sorted anoxic sandy silts and clays, and may have salinity levels that are much higher than seawater due to evaporation. The drainage characteristics of coastal soils, along with tidal patterns and elevation, can strongly influence the distribution of flora and fauna within the Coastal Saltmarsh ecological community (DSEWPaC 2013a).

4.2.2 Northwest Shelf Province

Within Northwest Shelf Province both Roebuck Bay and Eighty Mile beach are areas with significant intertidal mudflats that are used by birds in spring and summer including species listed as threatened under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) or EPBC Act, or listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN 2019). Intertidal mudflats are also an important feature of the Kimberley coast forming in many bays and inlets of the region (Waples 2007). The sediments that dominate these flats are generally of terrigenous origin (Wilson 2013).

The mudflats of the Kimberley coast have been shown to be important for migratory birds of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, which is estimated to support more than five million migratory shorebirds (Barter 2002, Bennelongia Pty Ltd 2010, Wade and Hickey 2008). The migratory birds visit the mudflats of the Kimberley coast to feed on benthic organisms prior to embarking on a 10,000–15,000 km migration to their breeding grounds in the Arctic (Wade and Hickey 2008).

4.2.3 Northwest Shelf Transition

Extensive mud flats are located in Collier Bay, where the highest tidal range in Australia is found. (Wilson 2013, Zell 2007). A study by (Duke *et al.* 2010, Masini *et al.* 2009) also identified fringing mudflats around Walcott Inlet, and Doubtful Bay. The tidal mudflats of Walcott Inlet are up to 5 km wide and support a rich intertidal invertebrate community (Gibson and Wellbelove 2010). These invertebrate communities in turn also support large numbers of waterbirds (Wilson 1994).

Extensive intertidal mudflats occur in Prince Frederick Harbour and are generally backed by mangroves. The mudskipper is known to feed on these mudflats at low tide. Intertidal flats are also a feature of the estuary of the Mitchell River. The mudflats of Port Warrender are known to support 20 shorebird species and tern species and it is likely the other mudflats in the region also support high numbers of birds. The ecological significance of the wetlands of the Mitchell River has been recognised in *A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia*. Mud and sand flats are also known to surround much of Deep Bay and Napier Broome Bay.

Intertidal sand and mudflats are a common feature of the East Kimberley. Large sand bars are present on the river mouths of the King George River, Berkeley River and Lyne River and intertidal mudflats are extensive along the edges of the Cambridge Gulf. The estuary is wide and very shallow in some sections, and the silt and clay is continually picked up and redeposited by strong tidal currents (Robson *et al.* 2008). The tidal flats of the Ord River in the Cambridge Gulf have been listed as a wetland of international importance for the conservation of waterbirds under the Ramsar convention. The area supports a variety of fauna including shorebirds and mudskippers. Tidal mudflats are also extensive along the coast between the Cambridge Gulf and the WA-NT Border.

Further north, the Tiwi islands have also been identified as containing tidal flats, whilst the extent of these are not well documented they are thought to be closely related to the mangrove habitats at the Tiwi Islands (ConocoPhillips, 2020).

4.2.4 Timor Province

Details on habitats in the Timor Province is provided in **Section 12.3.12**.

4.2.5 Northern Shelf Province

The subtidal and intertidal communities in Darwin Harbour and around the NT coastline, within the Northern Shelf Province are characterised as including a variety of shoreline habitats, including intertidal mud flats (URS 2010). The Tiwi Islands are also partially located within the Northern Shelf Province and are identified as supporting a number of shoreline habitats including sand and mud flats.

4.2.6 International Waters

Although no specific areas of intertidal mud or sand flats have been identified for international waters, the southern coasts of the islands that make up the Lesser Sunda Ecoregion of Indonesia and Timor-Leste do contain numerous estuarine habitats. These estuaries are likely to contain intertidal and tidal sand and mud flats that support a range of benthic invertebrate species that in turn attract other species such as birds and fish. Such estuaries in the Lesser Sunda Ecoregion are typically mangrove lined. Within the Lesser Sunda Ecoregion, the following areas are recognised as containing estuarine habitat (Wilson et al. 2011):

- + Lombok;
- + Sumba;
- + Central south and central north coasts of Sumbawa;
- + North-east coast of Flores; and
- + South-west coast of Timor-Leste.

The Irebere Estuary, located on the south-eastern coast, Tilomar located on the southern coast and Nino Konis Santana located on the eastern coast of Timor-Leste has been recognised as an Important Bird Area (Birdlife International 2018).

Several National Parks in the Ecoregion also contain estuarine habitats (likely to include intertidal sand and mud flats), including Karimunjawa National Park (refer to **Section 9.8**).

4.3 Intertidal Platforms

Intertidal platforms are areas of hard bedrock and/or limestone with or without a sediment veneer of varying thickness. These platforms can vary from low to high relief and provide a habitat for a diverse range of intertidal organisms (Morton and Britton in Jones 2004, SKM 2009, 2011, Hanley and Morrison 2012) and some species of shore birds (Garnet and Crowley 2000). They are common within each of the coastal bioregions within the combined EMBA.

4.3.1 Southwest Shelf Province and Southwest Shelf Transition

Intertidal platforms within the Northwest and Southwest bioregions support a mosaic of fauna and flora that typically exhibits strong variability in percent cover, community composition, abundance and diversity both between and within reefs at varying spatial and temporal scales (SKM 2009, 2011). Reef platforms typically exhibit zonation of fauna and flora from upper to lower levels on the intertidal zone, with increasing diversity, abundance and biomass lower in the intertidal (Morton and Britton in Jones 2004, SKM 2009, 2010, 2011, Hanley and Morrison 2012).

On the south coast of the Southwest Shelf Province, the coastal geomorphology changes from the predominant limestone reefs to eroded Precambrian rocks. Intertidal platforms are also common along the Southwest Shelf Transition. Shark Bay in the Central Western Shelf Province has a high diversity of intertidal marine habitats as a result of the diversity of benthic substrate, salinity and the broad geographical features which influence depth, water movement and turbidity (CALM 1996, DSEWPaC 2013b). This includes extensive, limestone platforms (as well as sand flats, mud flats, salt marsh and mangroves and beaches (CALM 1996).

4.3.2 Great Australian Bight Transition

The coastline is subject to moderate to high wave energy and high swells (2-4 m). This region features limestone cliffs interspersed by rocky headlands, narrow intertidal rock platforms, reefs and beaches backed by dune barriers.

The Eyre Region is subject to moderate to high wave energy and features a rocky coast with numerous headlands, sheltered bays, cliffs, shore platforms, beaches backed by dune barriers, offshore islands, seamounts and lagoon deposits in sheltered areas (McLeay, 2003).

4.3.3 Central Western Shelf Province and Transition

Limestone pavements extend out from the beach into subtidal zones, e.g. along the Ningaloo Coast and North West Cape; and higher relief platforms (>0.5 m off high water mark) are also present at a number of headlands along the North West Cape.

4.3.4 Northwest Shelf Province and Northwest Shelf Transition

Large tidal regimes are likely to be the defining environmental factor influencing the distribution of intertidal flora and fauna in the Northwest Shelf Province and Northwest Shelf Transition. The intertidal area of the Kimberley has an extreme tidal range (hypertidal) which creates unique environmental conditions and habitats not seen elsewhere in the world. As a remote area many of the habitats are untouched and they are recognised as having significant conservation value (DPaW 2013). DPaW (2013) reports that as a result of the monsoonal influxes of freshwater and land-derived nutrients distinctive tropical marine ecosystems have occurred.

4.3.5 Christmas Island Province

Rocky shore platforms occur at many locations around the island, more extensively on the western coastline between North West Point and Egeria Point. There are also tidal rock pools which are maintained by wave splash and tidal surge (DNP, 2012).

4.3.6 International Waters

While no significant areas of intertidal platforms have been identified in international waters, the high energy southern coastlines of the islands of the Lesser Sunda Ecoregion of Indonesia (and also including Timor-Leste) are likely to have areas of exposed pavements consisting of limestone and remnant lava flows (Wilson *et al.* 2011).

4.4 Sandy Beaches

Sandy beaches are those areas within the intertidal zone where unconsolidated sediment has been deposited (and eroded) by wave and tidal action. Sandy beaches can vary from low to high energy zones; the energy experienced influences the beach profile due to varying rates of erosion and accretion. Sandy beaches are found across the combined EMBA and vary in length, width and gradient. They are interspersed among areas of hard substrate (e.g. sandstone) that form intertidal platforms and rocky outcrops. There is a wide range of variation in sediment type, composition, and grain size along the combined EMBA.

Sandy beaches provide habitat to a variety of burrowing invertebrates and subsequently provide foraging grounds for shorebirds (Garnet and Crowley 2000). The number of species and densities of benthic macroinvertebrates that occur in the sand are typically inversely correlated with sediment grain-size and exposure to wave action, and positively correlated with sedimentary organic content and the amount of detached and attached macrophytes (Wildsmith *et al.* 2005). However, the distributions of these faunas among habitats will also reflect differences in the suite of environmental variables that characterize those habitats (Wildsmith *et al.* 2005).

Sandy habitats are important for both resident and migratory seabirds and shorebirds (refer **Section 8**). While sand flats and beaches generally support fewer species and numbers of birds than mudflats of similar size; some species such as the beach thick knee (*Esacus giganteus*) a crab eater, are commonly associated with sandy beaches (Garnet and Crowley 2000). Sandy beaches can also provide an important habitat for turtle nesting and breeding (see marine turtles **Section 6.1**).

4.4.1 Southwest Shelf Province

The hooded plover (*Thinornis rubricollis*) is a shorebird found on several beaches within the South West capes. Hooded plovers live on sandy surf beaches and prefer beaches backed by dunes rather than cliffs (DEC 2013). In addition to this, beaches in the South West province provide a variety of socio-economic values including tourism, commercial and recreational fishing, and support other recreational activities.

4.4.2 Southwest Shelf Transition

Sandy beaches throughout the Abrolhos host breeding populations of the Australian sea lion. The Abrolhos represent the northernmost breeding population of Australian sea lions. The current population at the Abrolhos is estimated to be approximately 90 individuals (DoF 2012).

In addition to this, beaches in the South West province provide a variety of socio-economic values including tourism, commercial and recreational fishing, and support of other recreational activities.

4.4.3 Central Western Shelf Province

Sandy beaches are found along the coastline at Shark bay within the marine park which is further described in **Section 12.3.2**.

4.4.4 Northwest Shelf Province

Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park is one of the Australia's largest uninterrupted sandy beaches (stretching 220 km) and is an important feeding grounds for small wading birds that migrate to the area each summer, travelling from countries thousands of kilometres away (DEC 2012a). It is also a listed Ramsar wetland (see **Section 9** on Protected Areas).

4.4.5 Northwest Shelf Transition

Sand habitat within the Camden Marine Park is mainly associated with shorelines and inlets on both mainland and island shores. Some beach deposits on islands in the Kimberley are composed of skeletal carbonate sand, while they may also consist of sediments from inland areas carried to the sea by rivers and gullies (DPaW 2013). The sediment coarseness of the sand may vary, and may also be littered with dead shell, rock and/or coral material. Sea cucumbers that ingest sand and filter out microscopic food are often common in this habitat (DPaW 2013).

Significant sandy beaches occur on the Tiwi Islands, specifically the west coast of Bathurst Island and the north coast of Melville Island. These beaches are important areas for marine turtles with nesting dominated by flatback and olive ridley turtles (peak nesting in March to May) (Chatto and Baker, 2008).

Generally, in this region, sand habitat is adjacent to either dense mangrove stands or rocky cliffs (DPaW 2013). Beaches can be highly influenced by tide and weather conditions. Those that overlie rock are likely to shift and be ephemeral in nature.

4.4.6 Timor Province

Details on habitats in the Timor Province is provided in **Section 12.3.12**.

4.4.7 Christmas Island Province

These are formed of sand and of coral and shell rubble, often with limestone outcrops. Dolly and West White Beaches are the two largest beaches in the island, while Dolly and Greta Beaches hold sufficient sand to provide habitat for hermit and ghost crabs and to enable green turtles to dig nests (DNP, 2012).

4.4.8 International Waters

The southern coastlines of the islands of the Lesser Sunda Ecoregion of Indonesia and Timor-Leste are known to contain sandy beaches consisting of soft black sand, formed by volcanic activity. Within this region, a number of National Parks are considered important sites for turtle nesting beaches, including the Meru Betiri National Park (refer to **Section 9.8**).

The World Heritage site of Ujung Kulon is also a known site of sandy beaches, as well as the marine national parks of Kepulauan Seribu and Taka Bonerate which are also known as important turtle nesting sites (See **Section 9.8**).

4.5 Rocky Shorelines

Rocky shorelines are found across the combined EMBA and are often indicative of high energy areas (wave action) where sand deposition is limited or restricted (perhaps seasonally or during a cyclone). They are formed from limestone pavement extending out from the beach into subtidal zones, for example along the

Ningaloo Coast and North West Cape; higher relief platforms (>0.5 m off high water mark) are also present at a number of headlands along the North West Cape. This habitat is also widespread heading south towards Perth.

Rocky shores can include pebble/ cobble, boulders, and rocky limestone cliffs (often at the landward edge of reef platforms). Rocky outcrops typically consist of hard bedrock, but some of the coastline has characteristic limestone karsted cliffs with an undercut notch. Rocky shorelines can vary from habitats where there is bedrock protruding from soft sediments to cliff like structures that form headlands. Rocky shorelines are an important foraging area for seabirds and habitat for invertebrates found in the intertidal splash zone (Morton and Britton cited in Jones 2004). For example, oyster catchers and ruddy turnstones feed along beaches and rocky shorelines (see seabirds in **Section 8.2.2**).

4.5.1 International Waters

The Lesser Sunda Ecoregion contains numerous rocky shores, particularly on the exposed southern coastlines of the islands that make up the ecoregion. Areas of rocky shores include the following (DeVantier 2008):

- + The Bukit Peninsula and Nusa Penida areas of Bali;
- + South Lombok;
- + South-east Sumbawa;
- + Nusa Tenggara;
- + Sumba; and
- + Timor-Leste, including Roti Island, Fatu and Atapupu.

The World Heritage site of Ujung Kulon is also known for its coastline of rocky outcrops, among other ecosystems (see **Section 9.8**).

4.6 International Shorelines

The EMBA extends to the Indonesian, West-Timor and Timor-Leste coastline. The coastlines of these countries support a range of habitats and communities, including sand and gravel beaches, rocky shores and cliffs, intertidal mudflats, mangroves, seagrass and coral reefs (Tomascik et al. 1997; Asian Development Bank 2014). The coastal waters provide habitat for a number of protected species, including humphead wrasses, marine turtles, giant clams, some mollusc species, crustaceans, cetaceans (dolphins and whales) and dugongs, and commercially important species of fish, shrimps, and shellfish (Asian Development Bank, 2014). Nearshore waters also support significant capture fisheries (commercial and subsistence) that contribute to the nation's economy and employment (Asian Development Bank 2014).

5. Fish and Sharks

Fish distributions in the combined EMBA are discussed with respect to the IMCRA Provincial Bioregions which were defined using CSIRO's 1996 regionalisation of demersal fish on the continental shelf to the shelf break, and their 2005 regionalisation of demersal fish on the continental slope to approximately 1,200 m depth (DEH 2006). The EPBC species listed as threatened and migratory found in the combined EMBA, according to the Protected Matters search (**Appendix A**), are shown in **Table 5-1** along with their WA and NT conservation listings (as applicable) and discussed in **Section 5.2** below.

The following WA conservation codes apply to WA conservation significant fauna:

- + Threatened species (listed under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (WA) (BC Act)):
 - Critically endangered
 - Endangered
 - Vulnerable
- + Specially protected species (listed under BC Act):
 - Migratory
 - Species of special conservation interest (conservation dependant fauna)
 - Other specially protected species
- + Priority species (non-statutory state based administrative process):
 - Priority 1, 2 and 3: poorly-known species – possible threatened species that do not meet survey criteria or are otherwise data deficient. Ranked in order of priority. In urgent need of further survey.
 - Priority 4: species that are adequately known, are either: rare but not threatened; meet criteria for near threatened; or delisted as threatened species within last five years for reasons other than taxonomy. Requiring regular monitoring.

The following NT conservation codes apply to NT conservation significant fauna:

- + Threatened wildlife (listed under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976 (TPWC Act))
 - Extinct in the wild
 - Critically endangered
 - Endangered
 - Vulnerable
- + Protected wildlife (listed under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976)
 - Wildlife in a Territory park, reserve, sanctuary, wilderness zone or area of essential habitat
 - Any vertebrate that is indigenous to Australia

A detailed account of commercial and recreational fisheries that operate in the region is provided in in the Commercial Fisheries **Section 14.7** and detailed in *The State of the Fisheries Report 2018/2019* (Gaughan *et al.*, 2020).

Table 5-1: EPBC listed fish and shark species in the combined EMBA

Species	Conservation Status				Likelihood of occurrence in EMBA	BIA in EMBA
	EPBC Act 1999	BC Act 2016 ¹	Other WA Conservation Code	TPWC Act 1976		
Cape range cave gudgeon, Blind gudgeon (<i>Milyeringa veritas</i>)	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	-	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area.	None - No BIA defined
Balstons pygmy perch (<i>Nannatherina balstoni</i>)	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	-	-	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area.	None - No BIA defined
Blind cave eel (<i>Ophisternon candidum</i>)	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	-	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area.	None - No BIA defined
Blackstriped dwarf galaxias, Black-stripe minnow (<i>Galaxiella nigrostriata</i>)	Endangered	Endangered	-	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area.	None - No BIA defined
Grey nurse shark (<i>Carcharias taurus</i>)	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	-	Listed nationally	Species or species habitat known to occur within area.	None - BIA not found in EMBA
White shark, Great white shark (<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>)	Vulnerable & Migratory	Vulnerable	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur within area.	Yes – Refer to Table 5-3
Whale shark (<i>Rhincodon typus</i>)	Vulnerable & Migratory	Migratory	-	Listed nationally	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur within area.	Yes – Refer to Table 5-3
Northern river shark, New guinea river shark (<i>Glyphis garricki</i>)	Endangered	-	Priority 1	Endangered	Breeding likely to occur within the area.	None - BIA not found in EMBA
Speartooth shark (<i>Glyphis glyphis</i>)	Critically Endangered	-	-	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area.	None - BIA not found in EMBA
Dwarf sawfish, Queensland sawfish (<i>Pristis clavata</i>)	Vulnerable & Migratory	Migratory	Priority 1	Vulnerable	Breeding known to occur within area.	Yes – Refer to Table 5-3

¹ The Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2018 has been transitioned under regulations 170, 171 and 172 of the Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018 to be the lists of threatened, extinct and specially protected species under Part 2 of the BC Act.

Species	Conservation Status				Likelihood of occurrence in EMBA	BIA in EMBA
	EPBC Act 1999	BC Act 2016 ¹	Other WA Conservation Code	TPWC Act 1976		
Freshwater sawfish, Largetooth sawfish, River sawfish, Leichhardt's sawfish, Northern sawfish (<i>Pristis pristis</i>)	Vulnerable & Migratory	Migratory	Priority 3	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area.	Yes – Refer to Table 5-3
Narrow sawfish, Knifetooth sawfish (<i>Anoxypristis cuspidate</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	-	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area.	None - No BIA defined
Green sawfish, Dindagubba, Narrowsnout sawfish (<i>Pristis zijsron</i>)	Vulnerable & Migratory	Vulnerable	-	Vulnerable	Breeding known to occur within area.	Yes – Refer to Table 5-3
Oceanic whitetip shark (<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>)	Migratory	-	-	-	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area.	None - BIA not found in EMBA
Shortfin mako, Mako shark (<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	-	-	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area .	None - No BIA defined
Longfin mako (<i>Isurus paucus</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	-	-	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area.	None - No BIA defined
Reef manta ray, Coastal manta ray (<i>Manta alfredi</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	-	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area.	None - No BIA defined
Giant manta ray (<i>Manta birostris</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	-	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area.	None - No BIA defined
Porbeagle, Mackerel shark (<i>Lamna nasus</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	-	-	Species or species habitat may occur within area.	None - No BIA defined
Orange Roughy, Deep-sea Perch, Red Roughy (<i>Hoplostethus atlanticus</i>)	Conservation Dependent	-	-	-	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Blue Warehou (<i>Seriola lalandi</i>)	Conservation Dependent	-	-	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Scalloped Hammerhead (<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>)	Conservation Dependent	-	-	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined

Species	Conservation Status				Likelihood of occurrence in EMBA	BIA in EMBA
	EPBC Act 1999	BC Act 2016 ¹	Other WA Conservation Code	TPWC Act 1976		
School Shark, Eastern School Shark, Snapper Shark, Tope, Soupfin Shark (<i>Galeorhinus galeus</i>)	Conservation Dependent	-	-	-	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Southern Bluefin Tuna (<i>Thunnus maccoyii</i>)	Conservation Dependent	-	-	-	Breeding known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Southern Dogfish, Endeavour Dogfish, Little Gulper Shark (<i>Centrophorus zeehaani</i>)	Conservation Dependent	-	-	-	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	None - No BIA defined

5.1 Regional Surveys

Within the combined EMBA a number of important geographical areas for fish exist, including Ningaloo Marine Park, Montebello/Barrow Island Marine Park, Abrolhos Marine Park and the Rowley Shoals.

5.1.1 Southwest Shelf Province

At least 150 species have been identified within the capes region as being reef-associated (Hutchins 1994 cited in DEC 2013). Of these, 77% are warm temperate species, 18% are subtropical species and 5% are tropical (DEC 2013).

The most abundant finfish species across the region identified during surveys were the Maori wrasse (*Opthalmolepis lineolatus*), red banded wrasse (*Pseudolabrus biserialis*), McCulloch scalyfin (*Parma mccullochi*), and western king wrasse (*Coris auricularis*). The yellow headed hula fish (*Trachinops noarlungae*), black headed puller (*Chromis klunzingeri*), rough bullseye and common bullseye (*Pempheris multiradiata* and *P. klunzingeri*) were also common at Eagle Bay and Geographe Bay (Westera *et al.* 2007 cited in DEC 2013).

5.1.2 Southwest Shelf Transition

A total of 389 finfish species have been recorded at the Abrolhos (DoF 2012). The Abrolhos and their surrounding coral and limestone reef systems consist of a combination of abundant temperate macroalgae with coral reefs, supporting substantial populations of large species such as baldchin groper and coral trout. Some of the species occurring in the Abrolhos are dependent on larvae carried southward by the Leeuwin Current from areas further north, such as Shark Bay or Ningaloo Reef. Similarly, populations of some of the species occurring at Rottnest Island are dependent on larvae generated from breeding populations at the Abrolhos (DoF 2012).

More than 20 species of sharks have been identified at the Abrolhos (DoF 2012). These sharks include:

- + Port Jackson sharks (*Heterodontus portusjacksoni*);
- + Tiger shark (*Galeocerdo cuvier*);
- + Whaler sharks (*Carcharhinus brachyurus*); and
- + Wobbegongs (*Orectolobus maculatus*).

Abrolhos waters are considered to be an important food source for sharks, due to the resident fish populations. Various species of rays have been recorded at the Abrolhos. These include the manta ray and the white spotted eagle ray (DoF 2012).

5.1.3 Southern Province

The demersal fish assemblages inhabiting the shelf break and slope resemble those found on the Southeast Marine Region's continental slope more than those of the Central Western Province. The canyons south of Kangaroo Island and adjacent shelf break appear to be important areas for biological productivity and for spawning and aggregation for a range of marine species, particularly during winter. The Albany Group of submarine canyons south of Albany and Esperance are also considered important for biological productivity that attracts feeding aggregations (DEWHA 2008b).

Scientists have described 463 species of fish on the slope of this bioregion, of which 26 are endemic. Only one extensive study of slope fish communities, undertaken during the late 1980s, has been conducted in this bioregion. There is a lower proportion of bottom-feeding demersal fish in this bioregion compared with the west coast, which appears to relate to greater availability of food such as meso-pelagic fish like myctophids (lantern fish) in the water column. Commercial fish landings taken from the shelf break and down the upper and mid-slope include orange roughy, blue grenadier, Bight redfish, school shark, gummy shark, angel shark, gemfish, deep water flatheads, leatherjackets, latchets, stingrays and stingarees (DEWHA 2008b).

Fisheries scientists and some fishers speculate that species such as blue grenadier and western gemfish may have spawning aggregations amongst the submarine canyons and other prominent geological features rising from the seafloor on the slope adjacent to Esperance and Hopetoun. The Diamantina Fracture Zone represents a unique but virtually unknown region of deep-sea habitat and experts speculate it is highly likely that marine communities in this area comprise unique species with high biodiversity. The physical complexity of numerous troughs and ridges and complex water circulation that occurs in this area support these assertions. A number of KEFs are defined which support enhanced productivity and aggregations of marine life (Section 10) (DEWHA 2008b).

5.1.4 Great Australian Bight Shelf Transition

Of the 600 species of fish occurring in southern Australia, 370 are recorded from South Australian waters (Scott et al. 1980). Species restricted to South Australia that occur in the GAB include the coastal stingaree (*Urolophus orarius*) and the crested threefin (*Norfolkia cristata*).

In South Australia, 77 species of fish are utilised commercially. The main fishes targeted by commercial fishers in the GAB are southern bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*), sardine (*Sardinops sagax*), school shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*), gummy shark (*Mustelus antarcticus*), bronzewhale shark (*Carcharhinus brachyurus*), snapper (*Pagrus auratus*), King George whiting (*Sillaginodes punctata*) and deepwater species such as deepwater flathead (*Neoplatycephalus conatus*), bight redfish (*Centroberyx gerrardi*), deep sea trevalla (*Hyperoglyphe antarctica*) and orange roughy (*Hoplostethus atlanticus*). Surveys conducted by the CSIRO in the GAB between 1965 and 1989 collected information on species composition, sizes, and distribution patterns of fishes. Surveys were conducted by trolling (1979, 1981) and demersal (1978-81), pelagic (1979) and mid-water trawling (1978, 1980-81). CSIRO also have data from Russian surveys conducted in the GAB in 1965-1974.

Recreational fishers in the GAB target Australian salmon (*Arripis truttacea*), mulloway (*Argyrosomus japonicus*), snapper (*Pagrus auratus*), King George whiting (*Sillaginodes punctata*), Australian herring (*Arripis georgiana*) and yellowtail kingfish (*Seriola lalandi*) (McLeay et al., 2003; DEWHA, 2008b).

5.1.5 Central Western Shelf Province

The Central Western Shelf Province is located near Shark Bay and is the northern limit of a transition region between temperate and tropical marine fauna. Of the 323 fish species recorded from Shark Bay, 83% are tropical species with 11% warm temperate and 6% cool temperate species (CALM 1996).

5.1.6 Central Western Shelf Transition

Ningaloo is the largest fringing coral reef in Australia, forming a discontinuous barrier that encloses a lagoon that provides habitat for many fish species. Gaps that regularly intercept the main reef line provide channels for water exchange with deeper, cooler waters (CALM 2005). Ningaloo Reef is a well known biodiversity hotspot, supported by the direct link between the reef and the ancient reef systems found closer to the equator by the Leeuwin Current (Kemps 2010). Approximately 500 species of fish have been reported to inhabit the reef (Kemps 2010). The Piercam project from inception in 2005 to 2013, identified 165 fish species from 50 families at the Point Murat Navy Pier alone, located within the Ningaloo Marine Park (Whisson & Hoschke 2013).

Seasonal aggregations of whale sharks occur at Ningaloo each year (CALM 2005). There is limited data available on species diversity and distribution of sharks in the Ningaloo area as chondrichthyan biodiversity for the area has not been specifically recorded. Despite this, it is possible that the Ningaloo Reef Marine Park contains the largest and most diverse collection of sharks on the Australian coastline (Stevens *et al.* 2009). It was estimated in 2009 by Last and Stevens (cited in Stevens *et al.* 2009), that there are likely to be 118 species of chondrichthyan fishes occurring in the park. Of these species, 59 are shark species predicted to be found at depths of less than 200 m (Stevens *et al.* 2009).

The lagoon at Ningaloo Reef appears to provide a juvenile habitat and nursery area for shark species such as the grey nurse shark (*C. taurus*), black-tipped reef shark (*Carcharhinus melanopterus*) and other reef sharks (Carcharhinidae) (Stevens *et al.* 2009). A study conducted on the distribution and abundance of elasmobranchs in the Ningaloo Marine Park, in 2009, tracked the movements of six key shark species. Species such as *Galeocerdo cuvier* (tiger shark) and *Sphyrna mokarran* (great hammerhead) were found to remain for brief time periods in the park, in contrast to other species found to re-visit the Ningaloo area (Stevens *et al.* 2009). Several species of sharks within Ningaloo have been identified as key indicator species for the health of the system (Stevens *et al.* 2009).

Barrow Island includes Biggada Reef, an ecologically significant fringing reef, and the Montebello Islands comprise over 100 islands, the majority of which are rocky outcrops; providing fish habitat (DEC 2007a). Within the Barrow/Montebello region, at least 380 fish species have been recorded (de Lestang & Jankowski 2017). Most species exhibit wide distributions, with local species composition closely resembling that of the Dampier Archipelago. Coral habitats support the most diverse fish community in this region, comprising, among others, many species of damselfish (Pomacentridae), parrotfish (Scaridae), snappers (Lutjanidae) and groupers (Serranidae) (de Lestang & Jankowski 2017). The region's macroalgal habitats are considered important nursery areas for a diverse range of fish species, such as emperor (Lethrinidae), threadfin bream (Nemipteridae), tuskfish (Labridae) and trevally (Carangidae) (de Lestang & Jankowski 2017).

Ramsar wetlands within the area (e.g. Eighty Mile Beach and Ashmore Reef National Nature Reserve) can also provide important habitat for fish (see **Section 9.1.3**).

5.1.7 Central Western Transition

The biological communities of the Central Western Transition are thought to be distinctive owing to the proximity of deep oceans areas to the continental slope and shelf, resulting in close interaction between pelagic species of the Cuvier Abyssal Plain and those of the slope and shelf (DEWHA 2008a).

The present level of understanding of the marine environment in this bioregion is generally poor. The diversity of fish and cephalopod species changes with depth, generally decreasing species numbers with increasing depth. The demersal slope fish bioregionalisation identified some endemism in communities in this bioregion (Last *et al.* 2005), however, it is lower than other areas of the North-west Marine Region (DEWHA 2008a).

Benthic-pelagic fish, such as deep-water snappers (e.g. *Paracaesio* spp. and *Eletis* spp.), hatchetfish (*Argyroteleus* spp.), dragonfish (*Melacosteus* spp.), viperfish (*Chauliodus* spp.) and a number of eels species migrate between the benthic and pelagic systems, forming an important link between these systems (DEWHA 2008a).

Transient fish species through the Central Western Transition bioregion include southern bluefin tuna (migrating to and from spawning grounds), broadbill swordfish (*Xiphius gladius*), bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*), yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) and striped marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*). Pelagic sharks also range across the bioregion following schools of pelagic fish (DEWHA 2008a).

5.1.8 Central Western Province

The Perth Canyon appears to be an important ecological feature attracting krill and fish aggregations that in turn attract larger species such as predatory fish and pygmy blue whales (DSEWPaC 2012). Demersal slope fish assemblages in this bioregion are characterised by high species diversity. Scientists have described 480 species of demersal fish that inhabit the slope of this bioregion and 31 of these are considered endemic to the bioregion. Demersal fish on the slope in this bioregion in particular have high species diversity compared with other more intensively sampled oceanic regions of the world. Below 400 m water depth demersal fish communities are characterised by a diverse assemblage where relatively small, benthic species (grenadiers, dogfish and cucumber fish) dominate.

5.1.9 Northwest Transition

The Northwest Transition bioregion may support sparse populations of benthic-pelagic fish and cephalopods in low densities. Pelagic fish species likely to be present include grenadiers and hatchetfish (*Argyroteleus* spp.) as well as transient populations of highly mobile pelagic fish. Adult and juvenile southern bluefin tuna are thought to migrate through this bioregion on their way to and from spawning grounds in the north-eastern Indian Ocean (DEWHA 2008a).

The slope habitat of this bioregion is associated with important populations of demersal fish species and supports the second richest demersal fish assemblage nationally (Last *et al.* 2005). Over 508 fish species have been identified on the slope in this area and 64 of these species are endemic. The high diversity and endemism of the demersal fish fauna indicates important interactions between physical processes and trophic structures in this bioregion. For more information on the slope habitat for fish and sharks, refer to **Section 10.1.19**.

The Rowley Shoals within the Northwest Transition comprise three oceanic reef systems approximately 30–40 km apart, namely Mermaid Reef, Clerke Reef and Imperieuse Reef. The Shoals are thought to provide a source of invertebrate and fish recruits for reefs further south and as such are regionally significant (DEC 2007b).

5.1.10 Northwest Shelf Province and Northwest Province

The demersal zone of the North West Shelf (which includes the Northwest Province and Northwest Shelf Province) hosts a diverse assemblage of fish of tropical Indo-west Pacific affinity, with up to 1,400 species known to occur, with a great proportion of these occurring in shallow coastal waters (Allen *et al.* 1988). Last

et al. (2005) and Fox and Beckley (2005) described the North-west Province as being characterised by a high level of endemism and species diversity. Certain areas of increased biological activity (e.g. Glomar Shoals) attract demersal fish species such as Rankin cod, red emperor, crimson snapper and spangled emperor that are exploited by commercial trawl and trap fisheries (Sainsbury *et al.* 1992, Fletcher and Santoro 2013).

The shallow waters (<30 m) of the Dampier Archipelago, in the Northwest Shelf Province, support a characteristic and rich fish fauna of 650 species from a variety of habitats including coral and rocky reefs, mangroves, sand and silty bottoms and sponge gardens (Hutchins 2003 & 2004). The majority of these species are found over hard substrate, but significant numbers are also found from soft bottom and mangrove areas. The outer islands of the Archipelago are inhabited predominantly by coral reef fishes whereas inner areas close to the mainland are occupied by mangrove and silty-bottom dwellers. The inter-island passages have a relatively rich soft bottom fauna. EPBC Act protected fish species within the Dampier Archipelago include the dwarf sawfish (*Pristis clavata*), freshwater sawfish (*Pristis pristis*) and narrow sawfish (*Anoxypristis cuspidate*).

The fish fauna of the archipelago is less diverse than the islands of the West Pilbara to the south, but are closely related to the fauna at the offshore Montebello Islands (Hutchins 2004). The fish fauna of Barrow/ Lowendal/ Montebello Islands are widespread throughout the Indo-west Pacific region.

Within the southern portion of the Northwest and Northwest Shelf Province, small pelagic fish (e.g. lantern fishes) comprise a third of the total fish biomass (Bulman 2006) and inhabit a range of marine environments, including inshore and continental shelf waters. These small pelagic fish play an important ecological role, not only for this particular area but for the entire NWMP. They feed on pelagic phytoplankton and zooplankton and provide a food source for a wide variety of predators such as marine mammals, sharks, large pelagic fish and seabirds, thus providing a vital link between many of the region's trophic systems (Mackie *et al.* 2007).

Pelagic fish in the Northwest and Northwest Shelf Province include tuna, mackerel, herring, pilchard and sardine, and game fish such as marlin and sailfish (BBG 1994, Brewer *et al.* 2007), some of which are targeted by both commercial and recreational fishers. In particular, adult and juvenile southern bluefin tuna are thought to migrate through the North West Shelf on their way to and from spawning grounds in the north-eastern Indian Ocean. However, the timing of these migrations and the use of regional currents to assist their migration is still unclear. The oceanic waters of the North West Shelf are also believed to provide important spawning and nursery grounds for a number of large pelagic fish species. **Table 5-2** provides a summary of the key fish species and likely timing of their spawning in the region (DoF correspondence).

5.1.11 Northwest Shelf Transition

Creek systems, mangroves and rivers, and ocean beaches within this region provide habitat for a variety of species including barramundi, tropical emperors, mangrove jack, trevallies, sooty grunter, threadfin and cods (Fletcher and Santoro 2013). The offshore atolls and the continental shelf waters in the Northwest Shelf Transition are also geographically important for fish species. They support species of recreational and commercial interest, including saddle-tail snapper and red emperor, cods, coral and coronation trout, sharks, trevally, tuskfish, tunas, mackerels and billfish (Gaughan *et al.* 2019).

The Rowley Shoals within the Northwest Shelf Transition comprise three oceanic reef systems approximately 30–40 km apart, namely Mermaid Reef, Clerke Reef and Imperieuse Reef. The Shoals are thought to provide a source of invertebrate and fish recruits for reefs further south and as such are regionally significant (DEC 2007b). See **Section 11** on State Marine Parks and Nature Reserves for further details on important geographical areas for fish.

Table 5-2: Spawning and aggregation times of key commercially caught fish species within the North West Shelf

Species		Month											
Species Common Name	Species Latin Name	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Blacktip shark	<i>Carcharhinus tilstoni</i> and <i>C. limbatus</i>												
Goldband snapper	<i>Pristipomoides multidens</i>												
Rankin cod	<i>Epinephelus multinotatus</i>												
Red emperor	<i>Lutjanus sebae</i>												
Sandbar shark	<i>Carcharhinus plumbeus</i>												
Spanish mackerel	<i>Scomberomorus commerson</i>												
Pink snapper	<i>Pagrus auratus</i>												
Baldchin groper	<i>Choerodon rubescens</i>												
Crystal (snow) crab	<i>Chaceon spp.</i>												
King George whiting	<i>Sillaginodes punctate</i>												
Spangled emperor	<i>Lethrinus nebulosus</i>												
Pearl oyster	<i>Pinctada maxima</i>												
Blue-spotted emperor	<i>Charaxes cithaeron</i>												
Dusky whaler	<i>Carcharhinus obscurus</i>	May occur throughout the year											
Whiskery shark	<i>Furgaleus macki</i>												
Gummy shark	<i>Mustelus antarcticus</i>	Peak pupping periods unknown											
Fish	other species	Timing of spawning activity varies between species											

5.1.12 Timor Province

The diversity of demersal fish assemblages on the continental slope in the Timor Province (as well as the Northwest Transition and the Northwest Province) is high compared to elsewhere along the Australian continental slope (DSEWPac 2012). Elements of the Timor Province are not well known, due to limited survey data in the northern limits of the region. The province is geographically extensive and includes 418 fish species, 64 of which are endemic to the region (Last *et al.* 2009). Key indicator species include *Bembrops nelsoni*, *Bythaelurus* sp., *Halicmetus* sp., *Malthopsis* spp, *Neobythites australiensis*, *Nobythites bimaculatus*, *Neobythites macrops*, *Neobythites soelae*, *Parapterygotrigla* sp., *Physiculus roseus* (Last *et al.* 2005).

Scott and Seringapatam Reefs are regionally important for the diversity of their fauna, including 558 fish species (Department of the Environment (DoE) 2014). Scott Reef has enormous habitat diversity and is considered a hot spot for fish, with five endemic species (DoE 2014). Scott Reef has biogeographic significance due to the presence of species which are at or close to the limits of their geographic ranges, including fish known previously only from Indonesian waters such as cardinalfish, azure damselfish (*Chrysoptera hemicyanea*), comb-tooth blenny (*Escnius schroederi*) and several Gobiids (DoE 2014).

The diversity of fish at Ashmore Reef is also higher than other comparable reefs in the bioregion with over 760 species recorded (Russell *et al.* 2005, Kospartov *et al.* 2006). The majority of fish species are shallow water, benthic taxa that typically inhabit depths down to 100 m and are widely distributed throughout the

Indo-West Pacific (Russell *et al.* 2005). The most species rich groups are gobies (Gobiidae), damselfishes (Pomacentridae), wrasses (Labridae), cardinal fishes (Apogonidae), moray eels (Muraenidae), butterflyfishes (Chaetodontidae), and rockcods and groupers (Serranidae) (Allen 1989, Russell *et al.* 2005).

5.1.13 Timor Transition

Records show that the Timor Transition hosts at least 284 demersal fish species (DEWHA, 2008c). The Timor Transition is also known to have a number of pelagic species that are prominent in the open water environment, including some which also have pelagic larval stages in the area (DEWHA, 2008c). The North Marine Bioregional Plan Profile specifically describes pelagic species found within the trough of the Timor Transition including snaggle-teeth fish, hatchet fish and lantern fish (DEWHA, 2008c). The soft-edge/slope of the Timor Transition is also known to support whale sharks and threadfin fish species, with the canyons and channels having distance genetic stocks of red snapper (DEWHA, 2008c).

5.1.14 Northern Shelf Province

Records of the fish species in the Northern Shelf Province show that the majority of available information shows an abundance of fish species in the Gulf of Carpentaria, which is outside the combined EMBA. However, other fish species, including sharks and sawfish are known to occur within the estuarine waters and coastal waters of the Northern Shelf Province (DEWHA, 2008c).

Within the combined EMBA, the Arafura Shelf supports a number of submerged reefs that are used for breeding and aggregation of a number of fish species including mackerel, mangrove jack and snapper (DEWHA, 2008c). Sea snakes and shark species have also been observed in the reef areas (DEWHA, 2008c). Furthermore, the Canyons of the Arafura Depression key ecological feature, which is also within the combined EMBA, is specifically identified as attracting aggregations of predatory fish, whale sharks and sawfish (DEWHA, 2008c).

5.1.15 Christmas Island Province

The Christmas Island Province is in deep, offshore waters (2,200 m – 6,000 m depth range). The island's predominantly intact fringing reefs and adjacent waters support a number of marine and coastal ecosystems and species, including over 600 fish species, with most being typical of the Indian Ocean region. These waters provide habitat for pelagic finfish species including tuna (*Thunnus* sp.) and wahoo (*Acanthocybium solandri*), and some demersal species such as ruby snapper (*Etelis carbunculus*). The island has more than 50 reef fish species that are not found anywhere else in Australia (although some species may also occur at the neighbouring Cocos Islands) (DNP, 2014).

5.1.16 Cocos (Keeling) Islands Province

The bulk of fish species are widespread or Indo-west Pacific in origin, which points to the significance of the Indonesian Throughflow current in delivering larval recruits to the island. About two thirds of fish species are shared with Christmas Island. A range of pipefish (syngnathidae) have been sighted in with eight identified at the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. This list is biased towards the shallow habitats where data has been collected by divers. There are likely to be more species occurring in these territories than recorded (e.g. in deeper water, on seamounts, slopes etc) (Brewer *et al.* 2009). The province has an intermediate level of primary productivity due to the distance from upwelling events such as those associated with the Java coast. However, the shallower seamounts would be likely to have some significant upwelling or associated with them, which in turn will produce increased productivity and populations of pelagic fish such as bigeye (*Thunnus obesus*) and yellowfin tuna (*T. albacares*).

5.2 Fish Species

Four species of fish listed as Threatened under the EPBC Act (**Table 5-1**) were identified in the Protected Matters search (**Appendix A**):

- + Balston's pygmy perch (*Nannatherina balstoni*);
- + Black-stripe minnow (*Galaxiella nigrostriata*);
- + Blind gudgeon (*Milyeringa veritas*); and
- + Blind cave eel (*Ophisternon candidum*).

In addition the Barrow cave gudgeon (*Milyeringa justitia*) has been identified as relevant threatened species under the BC Act. This species is not listed under the EPBC Act.

5.2.1 Blind Gudgeon, Balston's Pygmy Perch and Blind Cave Eel

Both the blind gudgeon (*Milyeringa veritas*) and blind cave eel (*Ophisternon candidum*) are known to occur on the Cape Range Peninsula (in the Central Western Shelf Transition) (Humphreys and Feinberg 1995), and a related species of the genus *Milyeringa*, the Barrow cave gudgeon (*Milyeringa justitia*) has also been noted at Barrow Island (Humphreys 1999). The Barrow cave gudgeon is listed as Vulnerable under the WA BC Act. They have been recorded in waters ranging from fresh to seawater at depths of up to 33 m in caves and 50 m in wells and bores. Both species are restricted to either caves or groundwater (Humphreys and Blyth 1994) and are the only two vertebrate animals known from Australia for this (DoE 2014a).

The Balston's pygmy perch distribution ranges from Moore River (75 km north of Perth) at the northern extent to Two Peoples Bay near Albany. This freshwater species is typically associated with shallow waters near riparian vegetation and is considered to have low salinity tolerance, making it unlikely to occur in estuarine conditions (DoEE, 2016).

5.2.2 Syngnathids

The EPBC Protected Matters search also identified 72 'listed marine species of fish which are largely from the family Syngnathidae (**Appendix A**). Syngnathids are a group of bony fishes that include seahorses, pipefishes, pipehorses and sea dragons, although taxonomic uncertainty still surrounds a number of these (DEWHA 2012a). Knowledge about the distribution, abundance and ecology of syngnathids is limited, although no species is currently listed as threatened or migratory.

5.3 Sharks, Rays and Sawfishes

The diversity of marine environments in the waters within the NWMR has led to a rich fauna of cartilaginous fish (sharks and rays). Of the approximately 500 shark species found worldwide, 19% (94) are found in the region (DEWHA 2008a). The EPBC Act Protected Matters search (**Appendix A**) identified five species of shark and three species of sawfishes listed as threatened within the search area between southwest WA and northern NT (**Table 5-1**), including:

- + Grey nurse shark (*Carcharias taurus*);
- + Great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*);
- + Northern river shark (*Glyphis garricki*);
- + Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*);
- + Speartooth shark (*Glyphis glyphis*);

- + Dwarf sawfish (*Pristis clavata*);
- + Freshwater sawfish (*Pristis pristis*); and
- + Green sawfish (*Pristis zijsron*).

In addition, the oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*), the narrow sawfish (*Anoxypristis cuspidate*), two species of ray, the reef manta ray (*Manta alfredi*) and giant manta ray (*Manta birostris*), the porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*) and the longfin (*Isurus paucus*) and shortfin (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) mako sharks are listed as migratory within the search area (Table 5-1).

The Biologically Important Areas (BIAs) for relevant species detailed above are illustrated in Figure 5-1, Figure 5-2 and Figure 5-3.

5.3.1 Grey Nurse Shark

The grey nurse shark (*Carcharias taurus*) is listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act and the BC Act, and may be found within the combined EMBA. In Australia, the grey nurse shark is now restricted to two populations, one on the east coast from southern Queensland to southern NSW and the other is predominantly found around the southwest coast of WA, but has been recorded on the North West Shelf (DEWHA 2012b, Pogonoski *et al.* 2002). It is believed that the east and west coast populations do not interact, and ongoing research will probably confirm that the populations are genetically different (Last and Stevens 2009).

While it is thought that grey nurse sharks have a high degree of site fidelity, some studies (McCauley 2004) suggest that grey nurse sharks move between different habitats and localities, exhibiting some migratory characteristics. In certain areas grey nurse sharks are vulnerable to localised pressure due to high endemism. The status of the west coast population is poorly understood although they are reported to remain widely distributed along the WA coast and are still regularly encountered, albeit with low and indeterminate frequency (Chidlow *et al.* 2006).

Grey nurse sharks are often observed hovering motionless just above the seabed, in or near deep sandy-bottomed gutters or rocky caves, and in the vicinity of inshore rocky reefs and islands (Pollard *et al.* 1996). The species has been recorded at varying depths but is generally found between 15–40 m (Otway & Parker 2000). Grey nurse sharks have also been recorded in the surf zone, around coral reefs, and to depths of around 200 m on the continental shelf (Pollard *et al.* 1996). Grey nurse sharks feed primarily on a variety of teleost and elasmobranch fishes and some cephalopods (Gelsleichter *et al.* 1999, Smale 2005).

No grey nurse shark BIAs were identified in the combined EMBA.

5.3.2 Great White Shark

The great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) is listed as vulnerable and migratory under the EPBC Act and is listed as vulnerable under the BC Act. In Australia, great white sharks have been recorded from central Queensland around the south coast to northwest WA but may occur further north on both coasts (Last and Stevens 2009). There are no known aggregation sites for white sharks in the North-west marine region, but the species has been recorded in North West Shelf waters during humpback migrations (DEWHA 2012b). They are widely but not evenly distributed in Australian waters and are considered uncommon to rare compared to most other large sharks (CITES 2004).

Study into great white shark populations is difficult (Cailliet 1996) given the uncertainty about their movements, emigration, immigration and difficulty in estimating the rates of natural or fishing mortality.

Great white sharks can be found from close inshore around rocky reefs, surf beaches and shallow coastal bays to outer continental shelf and slope areas (Pogonoski *et al.* 2002). They also make open ocean excursions

and can cross ocean basins (for instance from South Africa to the western coast of Australia and from the eastern coast of Australia to New Zealand). Great white sharks are often found in regions with high prey density, such as pinniped colonies (DEWHA 2009). The relevant great white shark BIAs in the combined EMBA are detailed in **Table 5-3** and is shown on **Figure 5-1** (DoEE 2019b).

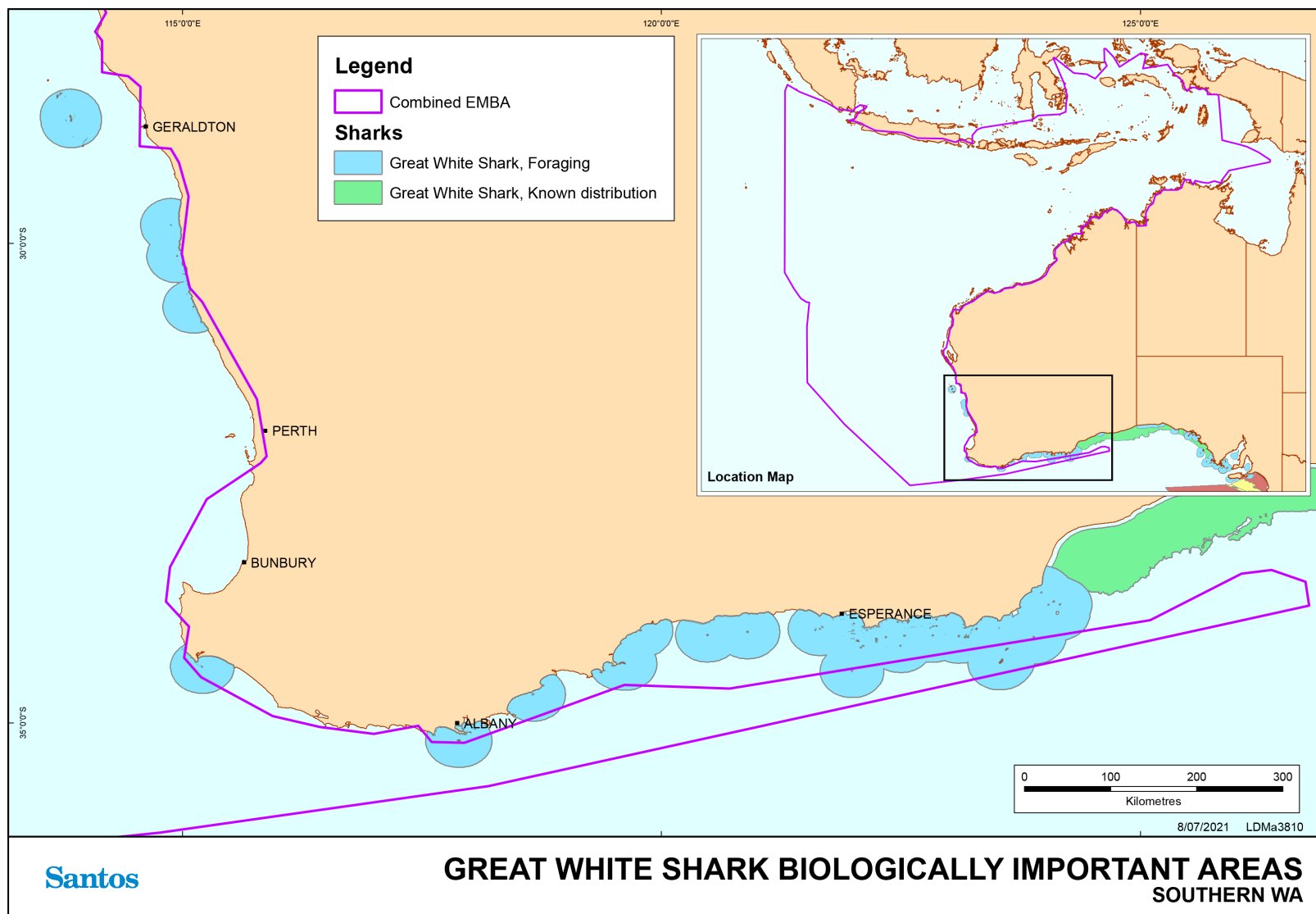


Figure 5-1: Biologically important area – great white shark

5.3.3 Northern River Shark

The northern river shark (*Glyphis garricki*) is listed as endangered under the EPBC Act and is one of the rarest species of shark in the world. Adults only recorded in marine habitats, whereas neonates, juveniles and subadults recorded in freshwater, estuarine and marine environments. It is also listed as a Priority 1 conservation species in WA and as Endangered under the NT *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976*.

The associated recovery plan (Sawfish and River Sharks Multispecies Recovery Plan, Commonwealth of Australia 2015) identifies adults and juveniles are being known in WA marine waters north of Derby. Popping and juvenile sharks are identified as known to occur in Cambridge Gulf and pupping is also identified as likely to occur in King Sound. Under the associated recovery plan all areas where aggregations of individuals have been recorded displaying biologically important behaviours such as breeding, foraging, resting or migrating are considered critical to the survival of the species unless population data suggests otherwise.

5.3.4 Whale Shark

The whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) is listed as vulnerable and migratory under the EPBC Act and is also listed as a specially protected species under the BC Act as a species of special conservation interest (conservation dependent fauna). The species is also classified as vulnerable on the World Conservation Union's Red List of Threatened Species (Norman 2005) and are protected under the WA *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*, NT *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976* and WA *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*.

The whale shark is the largest of all fish (>18 m; Borrell *et al.* 2011; Chen *et al.* 1997, Compagno 2001) and is a migratory species with worldwide geographical ranges between 30° N and 35° S (Last and Stevens 2009). Whale sharks are mostly epipelagic, whereby they spend a large amount of time in the top 200 m of the ocean (Tyminski *et al.* 2015), with a significant portion being spent at surface (<20 m) (Rowat & Brooks, 2012). This leads to an increased potential risk of vessel collision, which has been demonstrated from tracking data of 348 individuals (across all areas of distribution) showing a 92% horizontal and nearly 50% vertical space overlap with persistent large vessel (>300 gross tons) traffic (Womersley *et al.* 2022). There is a general lack of knowledge on many aspects of whale shark biology, however, the species is known to have a slow rate to sexual maturity, with field based studies from the Maldives estimating male sexual maturity to be approximately 25 years (Perry *et al.* 2018), with females potentially maturing even later (Pierce *et al.* 2021). This 'slow' life-history strategy places whale sharks at increased vulnerability to anthropogenic impacts (Pierce *et al.* 2021).

The species is oceanic but often forms aggregations in coastal waters at sites throughout the tropics. Typically, these aggregations are seasonal and often coincide with specific productivity events that are a focus of feeding for the animals. For example, whale sharks aggregate to feed on dense swarms of copepods in Baja California (Clark and Nelson 1997), fish spawn off Belize (Heyman *et al.* 2001) and red crab larvae at Christmas Island (Meekan *et al.* 2009). However, recent studies analysing fatty acids within whale shark tissue, suggest the species may also feed on benthic food sources, such as floating macroalgae (Meekan *et al.*, 2022; Courturier *et al.*, 2013; Marcus *et al.*, 2016).

One of the best-known aggregation sites for whale sharks occurs along the central and NW coast of Western Australia from March to July and is focused at Ningaloo Reef, within the Exmouth region. The small size and general absence of female whale sharks from Ningaloo Reef suggests that the region may be important for feeding rather than breeding (Norman and Stevens 2007). The timing of this

aggregation coincides with a pulse in seasonal productivity that results in large abundances of tropical krill on which these filter feeding sharks feed (Meekan *et al.* 2006, Jarman and Wilson 2004). At Ningaloo Reef, whale sharks are often found swimming close to the reef front, within a few kilometres of the shore and in water of less than 50 m deep. A tourist industry based on snorkelling with the sharks in this area has developed over the last 15 years and is now estimated to be worth over \$4 million annually to the local economy of the Ningaloo region.

Estimates of the size of the population participating in the Ningaloo aggregation are between 300 and 500 individuals (Meekan *et al.* 2006), but research indicates that the Ningaloo population of whale sharks is declining (Bradshaw *et al.* 2007).

Whale sharks are known to be highly migratory with migrations of 13,000 km being recorded (Eckert and Stewart 2001). Research on the migration patterns of whale sharks in the western Indian Ocean, and isolated and infrequent observations of individuals, indicate that a small number of the Western Australian population migrate through the North West Shelf. Wilson *et al.* (2006) tagged 19 whale sharks in 2003 and 2004, with long term movements patterns successfully recorded from six individuals. All travelled northeast into the Indian Ocean after departing Ningaloo Reef, with one tracked to Ashmore Reef and another to Scott Reef. Whale sharks are occasionally observed from Santos' offshore oil and gas facilities on the North West Shelf (Harriet Alpha and Stag platforms). In general, migration along the northern WA coastline broadly follows the 200 m isobath and typically occurs between July and November (DoE 2015). Whale sharks are well known to occur in the Christmas Island territory. There is evidence that the Christmas Island territory is on the migration route for many individuals, but they are rarely sighted within the Cocos (Keeling) Islands territory.

A common method for monitoring individual whale sharks is the use of variations in spot patterns, which has recently been tested to be 100% successful based on 154 photographic and genetic markers (Meenakshisundaram, 2021).

A biologically important area for whale sharks is located in northern WA, offshore of the Pilbara and Kimberley coastline, and broadly follows the 200 m isobath. The relevant whale shark BIAs in the combined EMBA are detailed in **Table 5-3** and is shown on **Figure 5-2**.

DBCA has a wildlife management program to manage whale shark interactions in reserves - *Whale shark management with particular reference to Ningaloo Marine Park, Wildlife Management Program no. 57 (2013)*.

5.3.5 Speartooth Shark

The speartooth shark (*Glyphis glyphis*) is a medium sized shark found in tidal rivers and estuaries within the Northern Territory and Queensland (DAWE, n.d). It is listed as critically endangered under the EPBC Act and Vulnerable under the NT *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976*.

There are three distinct geographical locations where the speartooth shark is known to occur with only one of these areas within the combined EMBA, the Van Diemen Gulf.

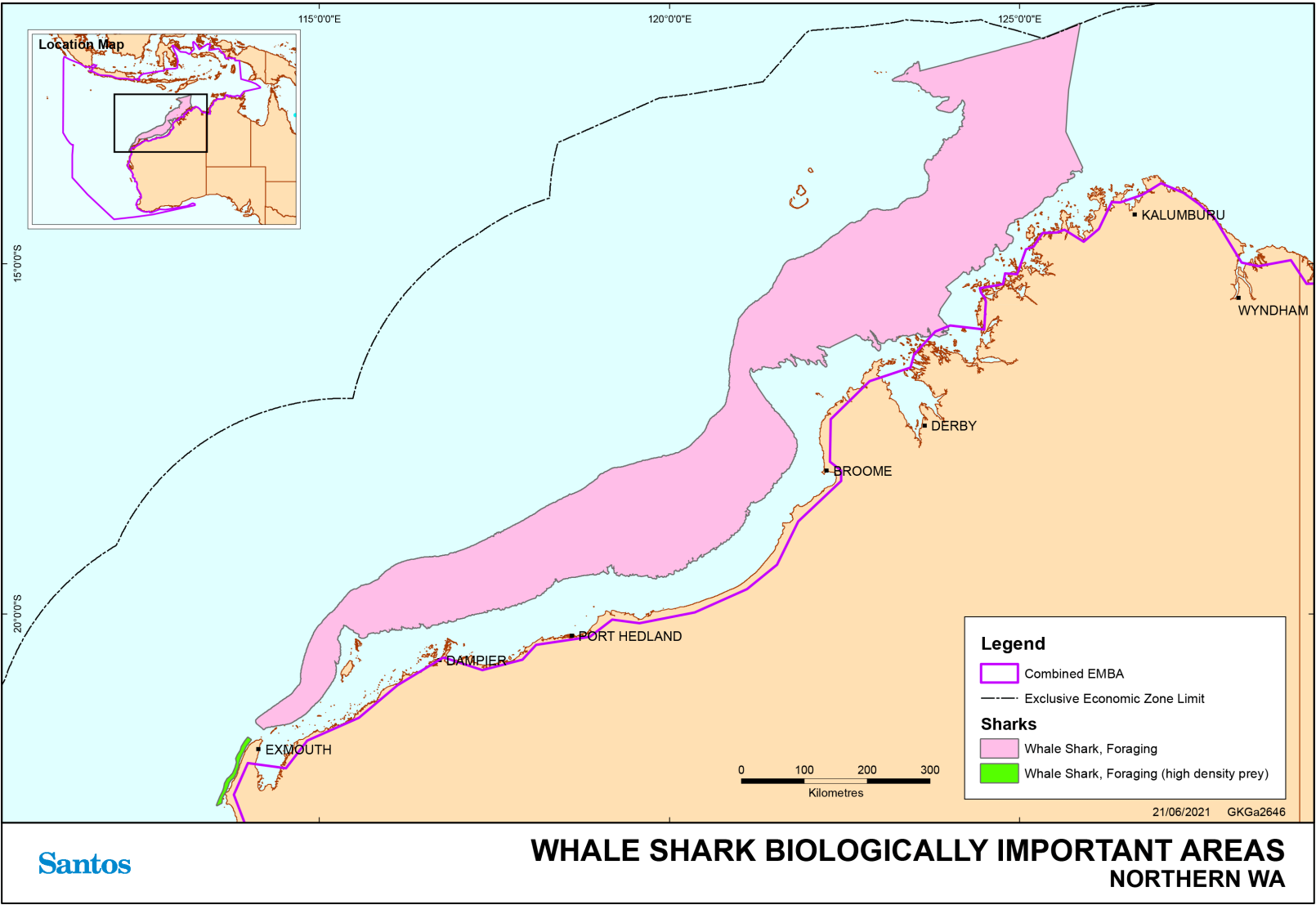


Figure 5-2: Biologically important area – whale shark

5.3.6 Dwarf Sawfish

The dwarf sawfish (*Pristis clavata*) is listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act and thought to be restricted to Australia (DoE 2014b). It is also listed as a Priority 1 conservation species in WA and as Vulnerable in the NT. The Australian distribution of the dwarf sawfish is considered to extend across northern Australia and along the Kimberley and Pilbara coasts (Last and Stevens 2009, Stevens *et al.* 2005). However, the majority of records of dwarf sawfish in WA and the NT have come from shallow estuarine waters of the Kimberley region which are believed to be nursery (pupping) areas, with immature juveniles remaining in these areas up until three years of age (Thorburn *et al.* 2004). Adults are known to seasonally migrate back into inshore waters (Peverell 2007); although it is unclear how far offshore the adults travel as captures in offshore surveys are very uncommon. The species' range is restricted to brackish and salt water (Thorburn *et al.* 2007).

The recovery plan identifies pupping as known to occur in the King Sound, the Cambridge Gulf and 80 Mile Beach, with pupping likely to occur identified at a number of locations along the Pilbara and Kimberly Plan (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015). Under the associated recovery plan all areas where aggregations of individuals have been recorded displaying biologically important behaviours such as breeding, foraging, resting or migrating are considered critical to the survival of the species unless population data suggests otherwise.

The relevant sawfish BIAs in the combined EMBA are detailed in **Table 5-3** and are shown on **Figure 5-3**.

5.3.7 Freshwater and Green Sawfish

The freshwater sawfish (*Pristis pristis*) (also previously listed as the Largetooth sawfish) and green sawfish (*Pristis zijsron*) are listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act. The freshwater sawfish is listed as a Priority 3 conservation species in WA, while the green sawfish is listed as Vulnerable under the BC Act and both species are listed as Vulnerable in the NT under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976*.

The freshwater species are wider-ranging than the dwarf sawfish and are also found in the Indo-west Pacific (DoE 2014c, DoE 2014d). Important areas for sawfishes include King Sound, and the Fitzroy, Durack, Robinson and Ord rivers for the freshwater sawfish; and Cape Keraudren for the green sawfish (Stevens *et al.* 2008, Thorburn *et al.* 2007, 2008).

Sawfishes generally inhabit inshore coastal, estuarine and riverine environments. The freshwater sawfish has been recorded in north-west Australia from rivers (including isolated water holes), estuaries and marine environments (Stevens *et al.* 2005). Newborns and juveniles primarily occur in the freshwater reaches of rivers and in estuaries, while most adult freshwater sawfish have been recorded in marine and estuarine environments (Peverell 2005, Thorburn *et al.* 2007). It is believed that mature freshwater sawfish enter less saline waters during the wet season to give birth (Peverell 2005) and freshwater river reaches play an important role as nursery areas (DoE 2014c).

The green sawfish has predominantly been recorded in inshore coastal areas, including estuaries and river mouths with a soft substrate, although there have been records of sawfish offshore in depths up to 70 m (Stevens *et al.* 2005). This species does not occupy freshwater habitats (DoE 2014d).

Short-term tracking has shown that green sawfish appear to have limited movements that are tidally influenced, and they are likely to occupy a restricted range of only a few square kilometres within the coastal fringe, with a strong association with mangroves and adjacent mudflats (Stevens *et al.* 2008).

Sawfishes feed close to the benthos on a variety of teleost fishes and benthic invertebrates, including cephalopods, crustaceans and molluscs (Compagno & Last 1999, Last & Stevens 2009, Pogonoski *et al.* 2002, Thorburn *et al.* 2007, 2008).

Baseline surveys undertaken for Chevron's Wheatstone project identified green sawfish habitat and nursery area for juveniles within the north-eastern lagoon of the Ashburton Delta and in Hooley Creek near Onslow. Distribution of sawfish in these creeks is spatially and seasonally variable due to changing tidal and environmental conditions. However, they typically return to inshore waters to breed and pup during the wet season (i.e. January) (Chevron 2011).

The relevant sawfish BIAs in the combined EMBA are detailed in **Table 5-3** and are shown on **Figure 5-3**.

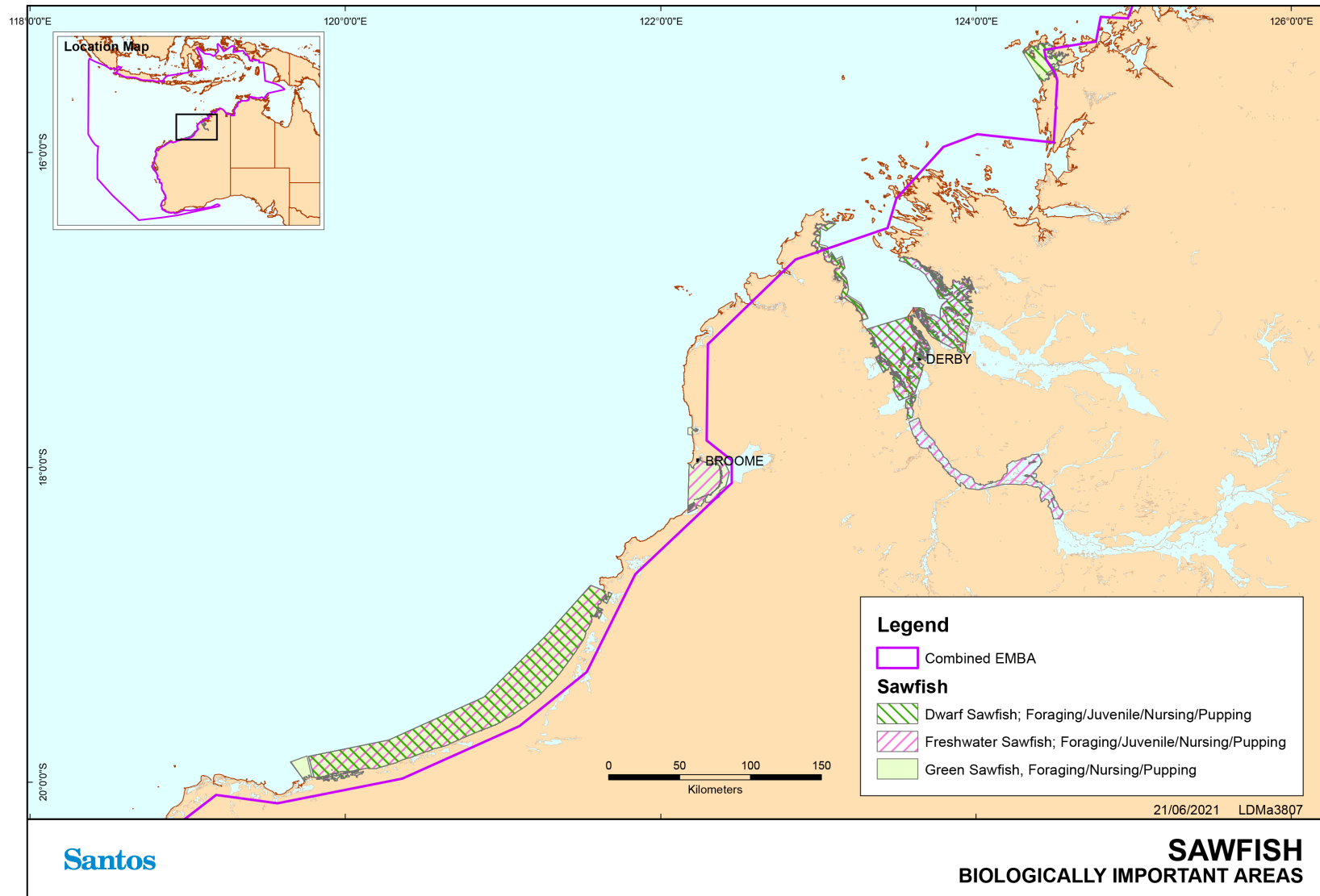


Figure 5-3: Biologically important areas – sawfish

5.3.8 Narrow Sawfish

The narrow sawfish (*Anoxypristis cuspidata*) is listed as migratory under the EPBC Act. It is a marine or marginal (brackish water) species found from inshore waters to a depth of 40 m (Compagno *et al.* 2006). Though details of its ecology are not precisely known, it probably spends most of its time on or near the bottom in shallow coastal waters and estuaries. A study showed the narrow sawfish to be the most abundant amongst the sawfish sampled in the Gulf of Carpentaria (Peverell, 2005) which holds some consistency with the offshore distribution of the species as shown by a study of Northern Prawn Fishery by-catch. Peverell (2005) also used catch data of offshore surface net fisheries to conclude that narrow sawfish also inhabit the mid-water column and can thus be described as a benthopelagic animal. The narrow sawfish is known to form aggregations of mature females during the months of October to November. Its Australian distribution is unclear though it is most common in the Gulf of Carpentaria with southward ranges extending to Broad Sound in Queensland and the Pilbara Coast (circa 116°E), Western Australia (Last & Stevens 2009).

5.3.9 Giant Manta Ray / Reef Manta Ray

The giant manta ray appears to be a seasonal visitor to coastal or offshore sites. Giant manta rays are often seen aggregating in large numbers to feed, mate, or clean. Sightings of these giant rays are often seasonal or sporadic but in a few locations their presence is a more common occurrence. This species is not regularly encountered in large numbers and, unlike some other rays do not often appear in large schools (>30 individuals) when feeding. Overall, they are encountered with far less frequency than the smaller manta species, despite having a larger distribution across the globe (IUCN 2019).

The giant manta ray (*Mobula birostris*) occurs in tropical, sub-tropical and temperate waters of the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans. They are commonly sighted along productive coastlines with regular upwelling, oceanic island groups and particularly offshore pinnacles and seamounts. The giant manta ray is commonly encountered on shallow reefs while being cleaned or is sighted feeding at the surface inshore and offshore. It is also occasionally observed in sandy bottom areas and seagrass beds (IUCN 2019).

The reef manta ray (*Mobula birostris*) has a circumtropical and sub-tropical distribution, existing in the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Within this broad range, however, actual populations appear to be sparsely distributed and highly fragmented. This is likely due to the specific resource and habitat needs of this species.

Overall population size is unknown, but subpopulations appear, in most cases, to be small (about 100–2,000 individuals). A proportion of the individuals in some populations undertake significant coastal migrations (IUCN 2019). Since the species is migratory it is possible that individuals may be encountered in the operational area, however, given that they generally do not aggregate in large groups, high numbers are not expected to be encountered during the activities.

5.3.10 Oceanic Whitetip Shark

The oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*) is listed as migratory under the EPBC Act. The oceanic whitetip shark is widespread throughout tropical and subtropical waters of the world (30° N to 35° S) (IUCN 2020). They are an oceanic and pelagic species that regularly occurs in waters of 18 to 28°C, usually >20°C (IUCN 2020). Within Australian waters, they are found from Cape Leeuwin (Western Australia) through parts of the Northern Territory, down the east coast of Queensland and New South Wales to Sydney (Last and Stevens 2009). They are usually found in surface waters, though can reach depths of >180 m (Castro *et al.* 1999). They have occasionally been recorded inshore but

are more typically found offshore or around oceanic islands and areas with narrow continental shelves (Fourmanoir 1961, Last and Stevens 1994).

5.3.11 Shortfin Mako and Longfin Mako Sharks

The shortfin mako and longfin mako sharks are listed as migratory under the EPBC Act. The longfin mako is widely distributed but rarely encountered oceanic shark that ranges from Geraldton around the north coast to at least Port Stephens in New South Wales (DSEWPaC 2012). The shortfin mako is an oceanic and pelagic species, although they are occasionally seen inshore. They are found throughout temperate seas but are rarely found in waters colder than 16°C.

5.3.12 Porbeagle (Mackerel Shark)

The porbeagle (mackerel shark) (*Lamna nasus*) is listed as migratory under the EPBC Act. The porbeagle is wide-ranging, typically occurring in oceanic waters off the continental shelf, although they occasionally enter coastal waters (Francis *et al.* 2002 cited in DoE 2014e). The porbeagle is known to undertake seasonal migrations, although the timing and details of these migratory movements are not well understood (Saunders *et al.* 2011 cited in DoE 2014e).

5.4 Biologically Important Areas / Critical Habitat – Fish

BIAs are spatially defined areas where aggregations of individuals of a species are known to display biologically important behaviour such as breeding, foraging, resting or migration. BIAs are identified by DAWE, however, they have no legal status, but are designed to assist decision making under the EPBC Act. They are not designed to identify protected areas, but may inform such processes. **Table 5-3** below provides an overview of BIAs in the combined EMBA for fish.

The DAWE may make recovery plans for threatened fauna listed under the EPBC Act. The EPBC Act requires that ‘habitat critical to the survival of the listed threatened species’ is identified in recovery plans, and summary of relevant recovery plans is listed in **Section 13.2**. BIAs may overlap these sites, but may be identified for other purposes. DAWE state that the criteria used to identify ‘habitat critical to the survival of the species’ are more complex than those used to identify BIA. Specifically, the Sawfish and River Sharks Multispecies Recovery Plan (DoEE 2015) cites that “*all areas where aggregations of individuals have been recorded displaying biologically important behaviour such as breeding, foraging, resting or migrating, are considered critical to the survival of the species unless population survey data suggests otherwise*”.

In addition, both the EPBC Act and WA BC Act and associated regulations (2018) provide for the listing of critical habitat - habitat ‘critical to the survival of the threatened species’. To date no critical habitat in WA has been listed under either Act. No provision is made under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976 for listing critical habitat.

Table 5-3: Biologically important areas – fish

Species	Scientific name	Aggregation area and use	Specific geographic locations for species
Great white shark	<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>	Foraging – associated with pinniped colonies in the mid-west and south west and waters off Bremer Bay	Waters off pinniped colonies throughout the South-west Marine Region Waters off Bremer Bay
Whale shark	<i>Rhincodon typus</i>	Foraging (high density prey) – Ningaloo Reef Foraging – Wider Ningaloo Region	Ningaloo Marine Park and adjacent Commonwealth waters Northward from Ningaloo along 200 m isobath
Dwarf sawfish	<i>Pristis clavata</i>	Foraging – Eighty Mile Beach, King Sound, Camden Sound Nursing - Eighty Mile Beach, King Sound, Fitzroy River and May Robinson River Pupping – Eighty Mile Beach, King Sound, Fitzroy River and May Robinson River Juvenile – King Sound, Fitzroy River and May Robinson River	Eighty Mile Beach Camden Sound - eastern shore Fitzroy River Mouth, May and Robinson River - tidal tributaries King Sound (inshore waters)
Freshwater sawfish	<i>Pristis pristis</i>	Nursing – King Sound Foraging – King Sound, Roebuck Bay, Eighty Mile Beach Pupping – Roebuck Bay, Eighty Mile Beach Juvenile – Roebuck Bay	Eighty Mile Beach King Sound - tidal tributaries Roebuck Bay
Green sawfish	<i>Pristis zijsron</i>	Pupping – Cape Keraudren, Eighty Mile Beach, Roebuck Bay, Willie Creek, Cape Leveque Foraging - Cape Keraudren, Roebuck Bay, Cape Leveque, Camden Sound Nursing - Cape Keraudren, Eighty Mile Beach, Ashburton River and Hooley Creek near Onslow	Eighty Mile Beach Camden Sound Cape Keraudren Cape Leveque Roebuck Bay Willie Creek Ashburton River Hooley Creek

6. Marine Reptiles

Thirty-four species of listed marine reptiles under the Commonwealth EPBC Act are known to occur in Australian waters in the combined EMBA, according to the Protected Matters search (**Appendix A**). An examination of the species profile and threats database (DoEE 2019) showed that some listed reptile species are not expected to occur in significant numbers in the marine and coastal environments in the combined EMBA due to their terrestrial distributions. Hence, these species are not discussed further.

Of the remaining reptile species identified in the Protected Matters search (**Appendix A**), eight are listed as threatened and seven are listed as migratory. These species are show in **Table 6-1** along with their WA and NT conservation listings (as applicable)². BIAs within the combined EMBA area discussed in **Table 6-3**.

Table 6-1: EPBC listed marine reptile species in the combined EMBA

Species	Conservation Status				Likelihood of occurrence in EMBA	BIA in EMBA
	EPBC Act 1999	BC Act 2016	Other WA Conservation Code	TPWC Act 1976		
Green turtle (<i>Chelonia mydas</i>)	Vulnerable Migratory	Vulnerable	-	-	Breeding known to occur within area	Yes – refer to Table 6-3
Flatback turtle (<i>Natator depressus</i>)	Vulnerable Migratory	Vulnerable	-	-	Breeding known to occur within area	Yes – refer to Table 6-3
Hawksbill turtle (<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>)	Vulnerable Migratory	Vulnerable	-	Vulnerable	Breeding known to occur within area	Yes – refer to Table 6-3
Loggerhead turtle (<i>Caretta caretta</i>)	Endangered Migratory	Endangered	-	Vulnerable	Breeding known to occur within area	Yes – refer to Table 6-3
Olive ridley turtle (<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>)	Endangered Migratory	Endangered	-	-	Breeding known to occur within area	Yes – refer to Table 6-3
Leatherback turtle (<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>)	Endangered Migratory	Vulnerable	-	Critically Endangered	Foraging feeding or related behaviour known to occur within area	Yes – refer to Table 6-3

² An overview of WA fauna conservation codes is provided in **Section 5** (fish and sharks).

Species	Conservation Status				Likelihood of occurrence in EMBA	BIA in EMBA
	EPBC Act 1999	BC Act 2016	Other WA Conservation Code	TPWC Act 1976		
Short-nosed seasnake (<i>Aipysurus apraefrontalis</i>)	Critically Endangered	Critically Endangered	-	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Leaf-scaled seasnake (<i>Aipysurus foliosquama</i>)	Critically Endangered	Critically Endangered	-	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Salt-water crocodile (<i>Crocodylus porosus</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	-	-	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	None - No BIA defined

6.1 Marine Turtles

Six species of marine turtle occur in, use the waters, and nest on sandy beaches, in and around the combined EMBA. These are the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), flatback turtle (*Natator depressus*), hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) and leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) (**Table 6-1**).

These six species are listed on the EPBC Act List of Threatened Species as either 'endangered' or 'vulnerable' and all six species are also listed as 'migratory'. They are also listed as threatened species under the BC Act and the hawksbill turtle, loggerhead turtle and leatherback turtle are also protected under the NT *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976*.

A summary of the different habitat types used during the various life stages of marine turtle species identified in the combined EMBA is given in **Table 6-2**.

Table 6-2: Summary of habitat types for the life stages of the six marine turtle species in the combined EMBA (DSEWPaC, 2012b)

Life Stage		Green turtle	Flatback turtle	Hawksbill turtle	Loggerhead turtle	Olive ridley turtle	Leatherback turtle
Post-hatchling		Open ocean pelagic habitats (poorly studied for Australian populations)	Coastal waters (poorly studied for Australian populations)	Open ocean pelagic habitats (poorly studied for Australian populations)	Pelagic (poorly studied for Australian populations)	Pelagic (poorly studied for Australian populations)	Pelagic (no data for Australian populations)
Adult	Mating	Offshore from nesting beaches.	Currently unknown for North West Shelf region.	Offshore from nesting beaches.	Little is known for North West Shelf region but expected to occur either en-route or adjacent to nesting beaches.	Not recorded within North West Shelf region.	Not recorded within North West Shelf region.
	Nesting	Typically, high energy, steeply sloped beaches with deep sand and deep water approach.	Typically, low-energy beaches that are narrow with a low to moderate slope. Beach approach obstructed by broad intertidal mud or limestone platforms.	Typically beaches close to nearshore coral reefs and sediment comprised of coarse sand and coral rubble.	Poorly studied for North West Shelf region by generally prefer high energy, relatively narrow, steeply sloped, coarse-grained beaches.	Not recorded within North West Shelf region.	Not recorded within North West Shelf region.
	Internesting	Shallow coastal waters within several kms of nesting beach. Inter-nesting buffers of 20 km identified around all nesting habitats.	Shallow nearshore waters within 5-60 km of nesting beach. Inter-nesting buffers of 40-60 km identified around all nesting habitats.	Shallow coastal waters within several kilometres of nesting beach. Inter-nesting buffers of 20 km identified around all nesting habitats.	Shallow coastal waters within several kilometres of nesting beach. Inter-nesting buffers of 20 km identified around all nesting habitats.	Not recorded within North West Shelf region. Inter-nesting buffers of 20 km identified around all nesting habitats.	Not recorded within North West Shelf region.
	Foraging	Neritic habitats associated with seagrass and algae, and mangrove habitats.	Turbid, shallow inshore waters, subtidal, soft-bottomed habitats of the continental shelf.	Subtidal and intertidal coral and rocky reef habitats of the continental shelf.	Subtidal and intertidal coral and rocky reefs, seagrass and deeper soft-bottomed habitats of the continental shelf.	Many feed within continental shelf waters, however it is not known if others are pelagic, as with the east Pacific population.	Mostly pelagic but will forage close to shore and over continental shelf in temperate waters.

6.1.1 Loggerhead Turtle

The loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) has a worldwide distribution, living and breeding in subtropical to tropical locations (Limpus 2008b). Breeding aggregations in Australia occur on both the east coast (Queensland and NSW) and the west. The annual nesting population in Western Australia is thought to be 3,000 females annually (Baldwin *et al.* 2003), and this is considered to support the third largest population in the world (Limpus 2008b). Loggerhead turtles have one genetic breeding stock within Western Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a).

The WA distribution of sandy beach nesting areas extends from Shark Bay to the southern area of the North West Shelf, with occasional late summer nesting crawls recorded as far north as Barrow and Varanus Islands and the Lowendal and Rosemary Islands (DSEWPaC 2012d). Major nesting locations include the Muiron Islands, the Ningaloo Coast south to Carnarvon and the islands around Shark Bay, which includes Dirk Hartog Island, one of the principal nesting and internesting sites in WA (Limpus 2008). The Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (2017) identifies the Muiron Islands (as a principal rookery), and all waters within a 20 km radius as habitat critical to the survival of loggerhead turtles (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a).

Estimates of up to 5,000 female loggerhead turtles have been predicted within the Ningaloo Marine Park and Muiron Islands Marine Management Area (Waayers 2010). Earlier surveys found higher proportions of nesting loggerheads in the southern areas of the reserves (CALM 2005a). Aerial surveys conducted in 2000 and 2001 in the Exmouth region recorded only 12 sightings in Commonwealth waters and these turtles were most likely loggerheads (BHP 2005). In a survey commissioned by Santos around the islands in the Exmouth Region, loggerhead turtles were recorded nesting on Flat Island north of the Exmouth Gulf which was the first time they had been recorded in that location (Astron 2014). Loggerhead nesting and breeding occurs from November to March, with a peak in late December/early January (Limpus 2008b).

Foraging areas are widespread for loggerhead turtle populations and migrations from nesting to feeding grounds can stretch thousands of kilometres, including feeding grounds as far north as the Java Sea of Indonesia for the WA population (Limpus 2008b). Loggerhead turtles have also been sighted in the Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands. Shark Bay has been identified as an important foraging habitat for loggerhead turtles (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a). Loggerhead turtles are carnivorous and feed primarily on benthic invertebrates from depths of up to approximately 50 m to near shore tidal areas including areas of rocky and coral reef, muddy bays, sand flats, estuaries and seagrass meadows (Limpus 2008b).

Figure 6-1 illustrates the BIAs and habitat critical (draft) for loggerhead turtles (as defined in the Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a).

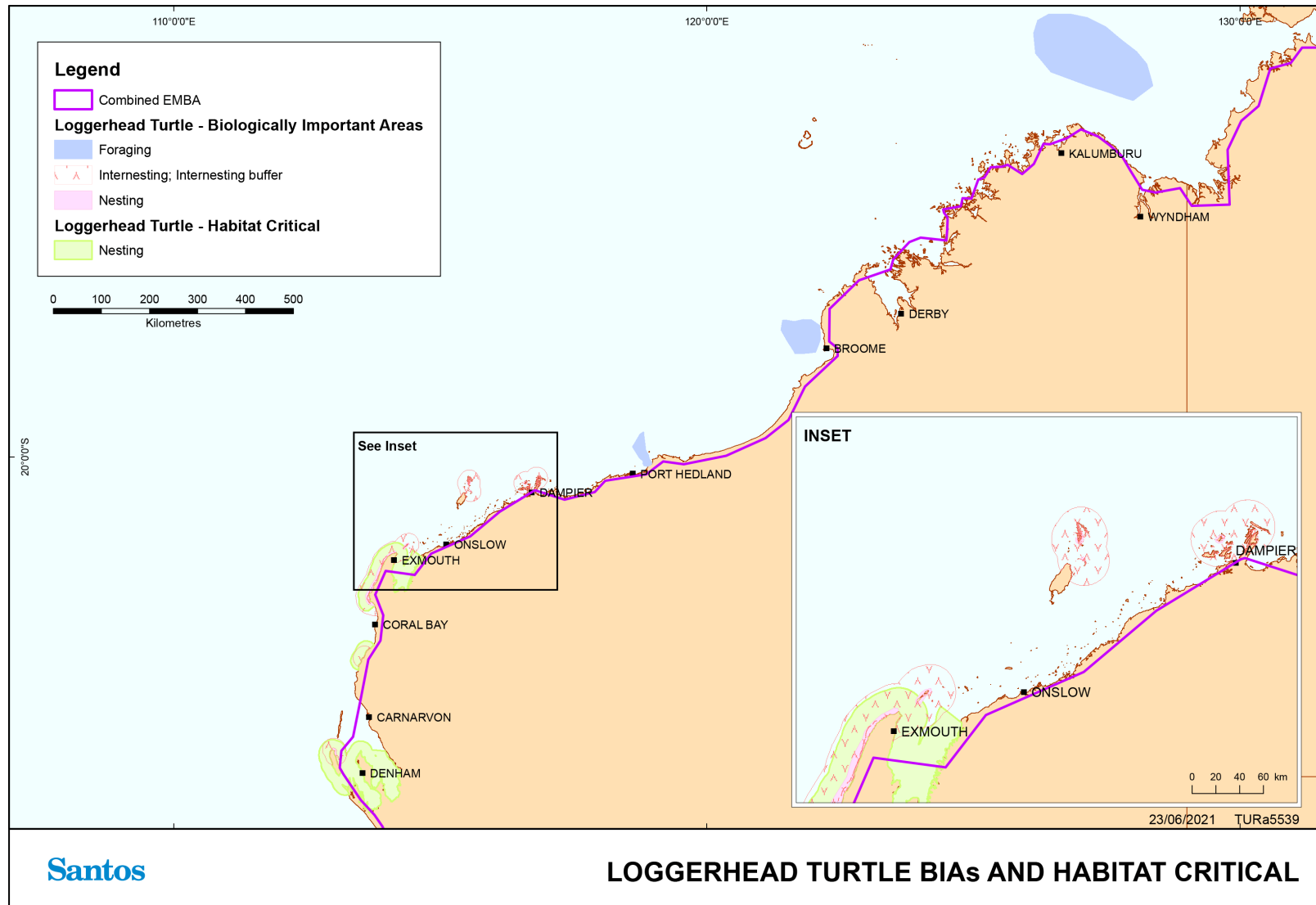


Figure 6-1: Biologically Important Areas and Habitat Critical – Loggerhead Turtle

6.1.2 Green Turtle

Australian population of green turtles is estimated to be approximately 70,000 and is divided into seven genetically distinct breeding aggregations. The species is widespread and abundant in WA and NT waters with an estimated 20,000 individuals occurring, arguably the largest population in the Indian Ocean (Limpus 2008a). There are three distinct breeding stocks in WA waters which include: the North west Shelf stock, the Scott-Browse stock and the Ashmore Stock (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a).

The North west Shelf population is one of the largest in the world and the most significant rookery is the western side of Barrow Island (Prince 1994, Limpus 2008a). Other principal rookeries include the Lacepede Islands, Montebello Islands, Dampier Archipelago, Browse Island and North West Cape (Prince 1994, Limpus 2008a, DSEWPaC 2012b). See **Table 6-3** for a complete list.

Surveys by Waayers (2010) within the Ningaloo Marine Park and Muiron Islands Marine Management Area estimated up to 7,500 female green turtles used these areas. In 2014, Santos commissioned a survey of the islands in the Exmouth Region which found that North and South Muiron Islands were significant nesting sites for green turtles with over 100 green turtles nesting overnight on one beach at North Muiron Island (Astron 2014). The green turtle is also known to breed in large numbers in the dunes above the extensive beaches found on Serrurier Island, with counts indicating the island supports the second largest rookery in the Pilbara (Oliver 1990).

Lower density green turtle nesting has also been recorded on Jurabi coast, Thevenard Island, Lowendal Islands and in Exmouth Gulf (Limpus 2008a). Only low numbers of green turtles have been observed nesting on Varanus Island, as well as Airlie Island (Pendoley Environmental 2011). From monitoring undertaken in 2016/17 by Santos on Varanus Island; three green turtles were observed to nest over a four week tagging effort (Astron 2017).

Green turtles have also been recorded nesting in the Bonaparte or Van Diemen Gulf bioregions and some nesting has been recorded on the west coast of Bathurst Island in the Tiwi Islands and Melville Island. BIAs for Green turtles occur on the north coast of the Tiwi Islands and an internesting buffer has been defined 20 km from the Tiwi Islands with internesting expected between October and April (DoEE, 2017).

Green turtle nesting abundance and timing fluctuates significantly from year to year depending on environmental variables, locality and food availability (Pendoley Environmental 2011). Nesting of green turtles has been recorded from August to March on Serrurier Island (Woodside 2002), from December to March along coast adjacent to Ningaloo (CALM 2005a) and from October to February on Varanus Island (Pendoley Environmental 2011). On Barrow Island, mating aggregations may commence from October with peak nesting from December to January, with hatchlings emerging through summer and early autumn. However, nesting on Barrow Island has been recorded all year round (Chevron 2005 and 2008, Pendoley 2005). Nesting on the Scott Reef-Sandy Islet and Browse Island has been observed all year round with peaks between December and January (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a).

In northern and eastern Australia, fluctuations in green nesting numbers have been linked the Southern Oscillation Index (Limpus & Nicholls, 1994, Limpus & Nicholls, 1988) and sea surface temperatures (Solow et al., 2002). In the NT nesting sites occur mostly from the western end of Melville Island to near the border with Queensland (Northern Territory Government, n.d). There are also four nationally significant nesting sites in the NT being the Cobourg Peninsula, the mainland from Gove to the northern edge of Blue Mud Bay, the southeast of Groote Eylandt and the northern beaches of islands in the Sir Edward Pellew group (Northern Territory Government, n.d). The Cobourg Peninsula genetic stock of Green turtles is the closest to those found within the combined EMBA on the Tiwi Islands. The nesting period for these are between October and April with the peak nesting period occurring between December and January.

Green turtles nest on both Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands, though in low densities on Christmas Island. Up to 100 green turtles nest per year on Cocos (Keeling) Islands, mainly on the north atoll. Green turtles nesting on both Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands are likely to be unique genetic stocks. They also use shallow reef habitats on both islands to forage (Brewer et al, 2009).

The re-nesting period for female green turtles is approximately five years (Hamann *et al.* 2002).

Green turtles spend the first five to ten years of their life drifting on ocean currents, before moving to reside in shallower benthic habitats, including tropical coral and rocky reefs and seagrass beds. Green turtles have been known to migrate more than 2,600 km between feeding and breeding grounds (Limpus 2008a).

Green turtles are omnivores, mainly feeding in shallow benthic habitats on seagrass and/ or algae, but are also known to feed on sponges, jellyfish and mangroves (Limpus 2008a). Green turtles are unlikely to forage or dwell within deeper offshore waters due to the water depths; however, they may occasionally migrate through it.

Figure 6-2 illustrates the BIAs and habitat critical (draft) for green turtles (as defined in the Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a).

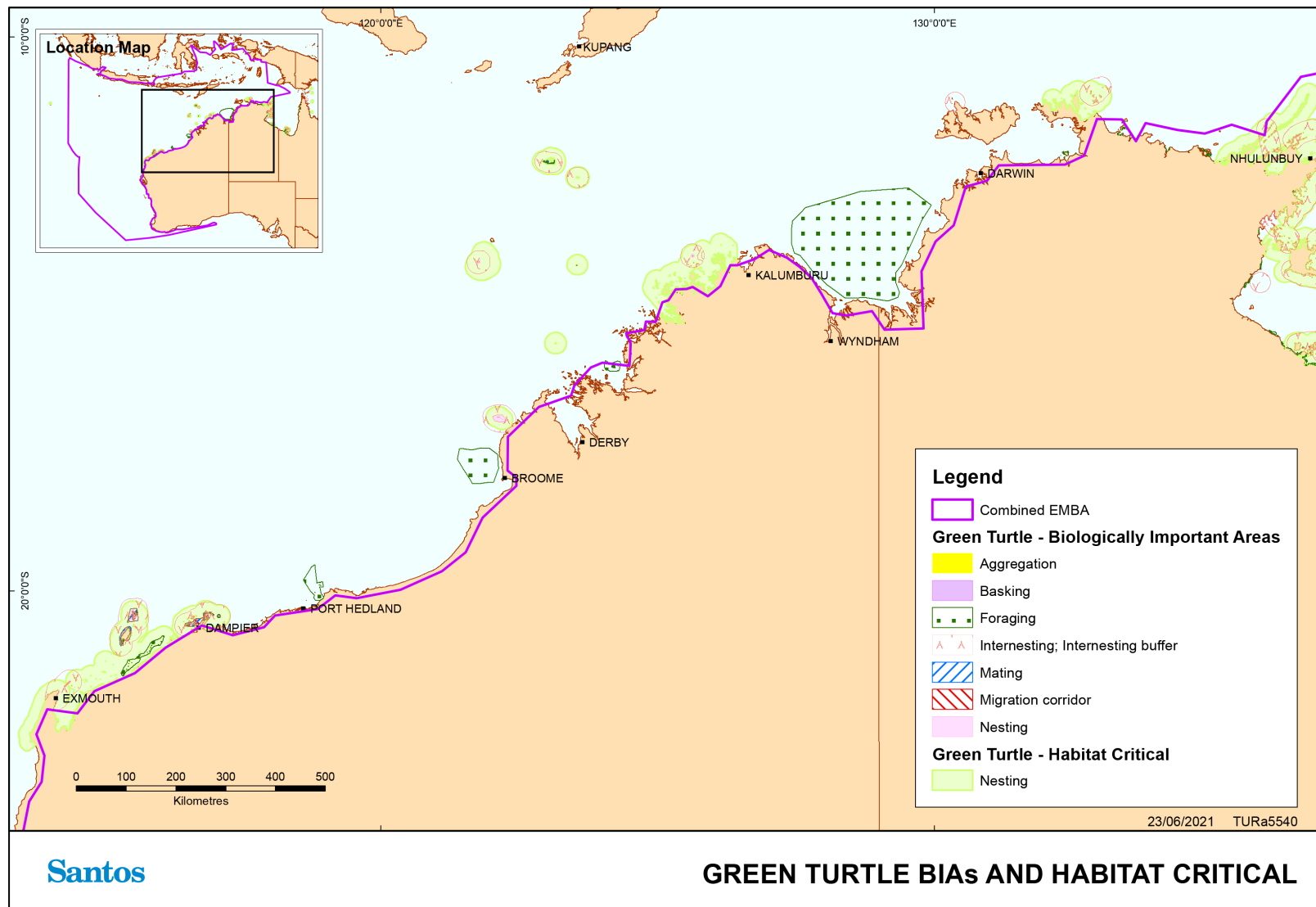


Figure 6-2: Biologically Important Areas and Habitat Critical – Green Turtle

6.1.3 Hawksbill Turtle

Hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) have a global distribution throughout tropical and sub-tropical marine waters. The Western Australian stock is concentrated on the North West Shelf (Dampier Archipelago) (Limpus 2009a), and is considered to be one of the largest hawksbill populations remaining in the world. The estimated number of nesting hawksbill turtles in WA waters is between 2,000 and 4,500 individuals (Morris 2004). There is a second major population of Hawksbill turtles in Australia, which is genetically isolated from the North West Shelf population located along the Northern Territory coast and north-eastern Queensland (Northern Territory Government, n.d).

In WA, their nesting range is relatively small and extends from the Muiron Islands to the Dampier Archipelago, a distance of approximately 400 km. The most significant breeding areas, that support hundreds of nesting females annually, are around sandy beaches within the Dampier Archipelago, Montebello Islands, Lowendal Islands and Barrow Island (Pendoley 2005, Limpus, 2009a).

The largest known nesting area for the North West Shelf population is the sandy shoreline of Rosemary Island, within the Dampier Archipelago, particularly on the north-western side of the Island. It is believed that the Rosemary Island rookery may support up to 1,000 nesting females annually (Limpus 2009). Low density nesting is also known from Barrow Island, Airlie Island, Muiron Islands and North West Cape/ Ningaloo coast (Cape Range) (Limpus 2009a). Nesting hawksbills have also been found on NE Regnard Island and SW Regnard Island, confirming the Regnard Islands as hawksbill rookeries (Pendoley Environmental 2009).

The hawksbill turtle nesting population within the Exmouth region is also considered important as the populations in Western Australia represent the largest remaining population in the Indian Ocean (CALM 2005). The best estimate of numbers within the Ningaloo Marine Park and Muiron Islands Marine Management Area is between 20–700 individuals (Waayers 2010).

A snapshot survey of Varanus Island and the Lowendal Islands conducted for Santos during October 2012 found the five most frequented beaches by hawksbills, based on the track counts, were Beacon Island ($n=43$), Parakeelya ($n=41$), Kaia ($n=40$), Rose ($n=30$) and Pipeline ($n=28$). Results of the October 2012 three-day track census program showed that Beacon Island also hosted the highest daily number of overnight emergences by hawksbills and is therefore an important nesting beach for hawksbill turtles (Pendoley Environmental 2013).

On Varanus Island, hawksbill turtle nesting activity is predominantly distributed on the island's east coast, including Pipeline, Harriet, and Andersons beaches (Pendoley Environmental 2019). Individual hawksbill turtles appear to show a strong fidelity to these beaches, often returning to the same beach to nest within the season (Pendoley Environmental 2019). Between 1986 and 2019, a total of 571 individual hawksbill turtles were tagged on Varanus Island. Recent baseline data was collected at the Montebello and Dampier AMPs by Keesing, 2019 showing that only one hawksbill turtle was identified during the survey at the Dampier AMP only. No marine turtle species were identified during the survey at Montebello AMP.

In the NT, nesting occurs on islands rather than on mainland beaches. In particular, NT nesting sites are concentrated around north-eastern Arnhem land and Groote Eylandt (Northern Territory Government, n.d). Within the combined EMBA, nesting is known to occur at Ashmore Reef. Although Scott Reef has been described as a nesting beach for hawksbill turtles, this is based on the tagging and recapture of a single hawksbill at this location (Guinea, 2009). Small numbers of Hawksbill turtles also nest on Cocos (Keeling) Islands (mainly the north island). However, thousands of individuals forage in

the shallow reef environments feeding on encrusting algae and sessile invertebrates (Brewer et al , 2009).

Nesting is reported to occur between October and February in WA (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a). Hawksbill turtles have been observed breeding on the North West Shelf between July and March with peak nesting activity around the Lowendal Islands between October and December (Limpus 2009a). In the NT nesting is reported to occur from July – December (Chatto, 1997, 1998).

Female hawksbills skip annual breeding opportunities (Kendall & Bjorkland 2001), presumably due to high energy demands of breeding (Chaloupka & Prince 2012).

Individuals may migrate up to 2,400 km between their nesting and foraging grounds (DSWEPaC 2012a), however a recent tagging study showed that turtles migrating from WA rookeries remain on the continental shelf (< 200 m depth) and within Australian waters during their inter-nesting, migrating and foraging phases (Fossette *et al.* 2021). Satellite tracking of nesting turtles on Varanus Island (32 km) and Rosemary Island has shown adult turtles to feed between 50 and 450 km from their nesting beaches (DSWEPaC 2012a).

Adults tend to forage in tropical tidal and sub-tidal coral and rocky reef habitat where they feed on an omnivorous diet of sponges, algae, jelly fish and cephalopods (DSWEPaC 2012a). Hawksbill turtles are unlikely to spend significant time within offshore waters as it is too deep to act as a feeding ground. However, it is likely they may migrate through those areas.

In order to better quantify and map the important areas used by Hawksbill turtles, AIMS was engaged in 2020 to lead the North West Shoals to Shores Research Program. During this program, AIMS combined available existing satellite tracking data for 20 adult turtle with data from newly deployed satellite tags on 20 adults in the Lowendal Islands and Dampier Archipelago (AIMS, 2021). Results showed that critical habitat designated by the Australian Government for inter-nesting largely protects the nesting areas calculated (AIMS, 2021), however the existing foraging BIAs do not include the majority of foraging areas calculated (AIMS, 2021). While approximately 23% of the hawksbill turtles foraging distribution occurred within MPAs, the existing BIAs are largely underestimating the important foraging areas for the turtles (AIMS, 2021). This supports the results of a joint study conducted by Fossette *et al.* (Fossette *et al.*, 2021), which found only 10% of foraging areas utilised by 42 nesting turtles (between 2000 and 2017) were encompassed by the designated foraging BIA. Fossette *et al* (2021) found that the highest overlap of individual turtles occurred within the Migratory BIA corridor.

Figure 6-3 illustrates the BIAs and habitat critical (draft) for hawksbill and olive ridley turtles (as defined in the Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a).

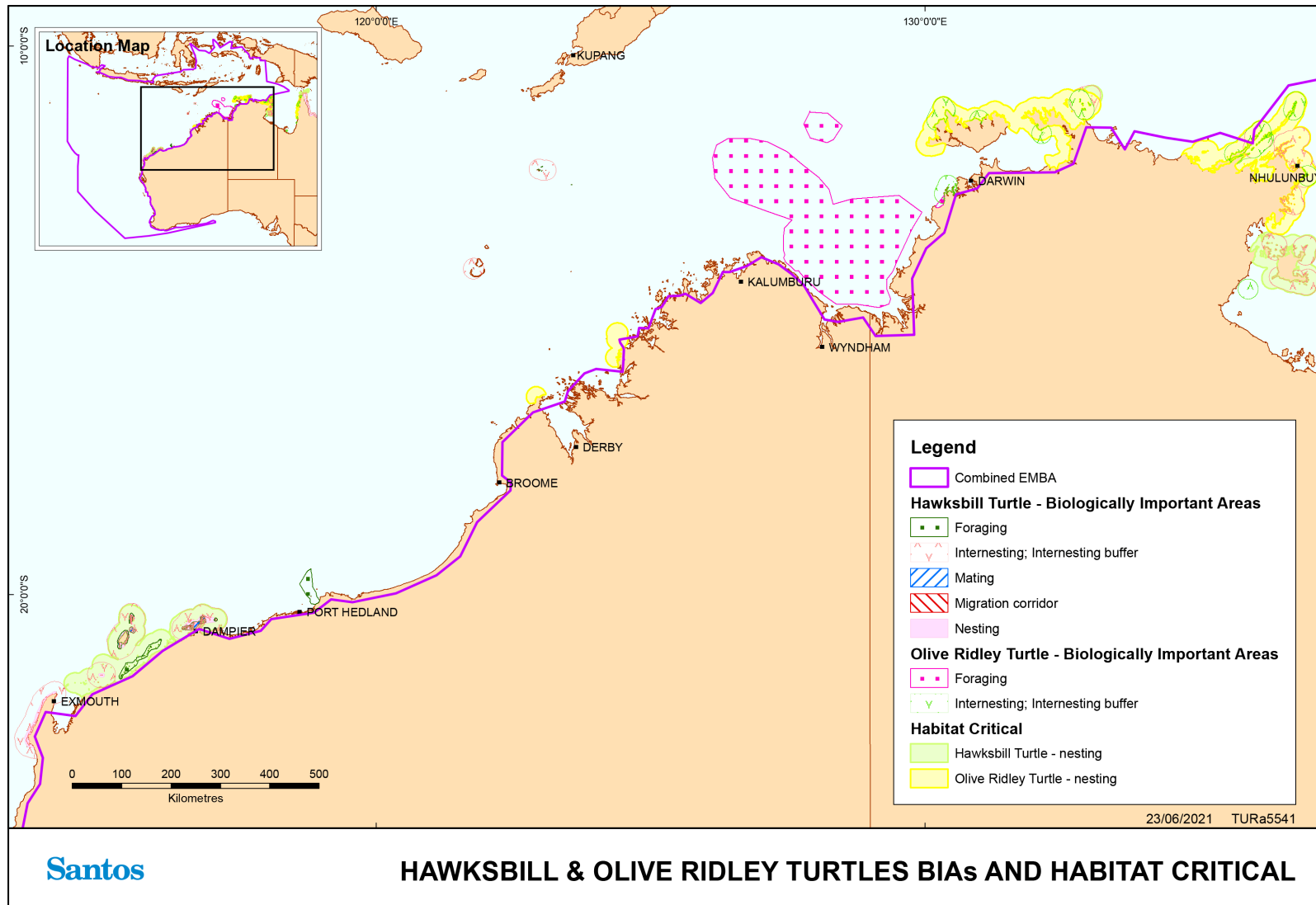


Figure 6-3: Biologically Important Areas and Habitat Critical – Hawksbill and Olive Ridley Turtle

6.1.4 Flatback Turtle

The flatback turtle (*Natator depressus*) has an Australasian distribution, with all recorded nesting beaches occurring within tropical to sub-tropical Australian waters. One third of the total breeding for the species occurs in Western Australia (WA) (Limpus, 2007). The management of the flatback turtle in Australia is broken up into five stocks currently described around Australia; eastern Queensland, Arafura Sea, Cape Domett, South-west Kimberley and Pilbara stocks (Commonwealth of Australia 2017). The Pilbara stock nests throughout the North West Shelf and is characterised by summer nesting (October to March), and the northern stock at Cape Domett breeds mainly in winter (July to September) (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a). The South-west Kimberley stock is also characterised by summer nesting. Populations in western NT are thought to nest all year round with nesting density reaching its peak in July. Populations in northern Australia also nest all year round, with nesting density reaching its peak between June and August (Limpus, 2007).

The southern WA nesting population of flatback turtles occurs from Exmouth to the Lacepede Islands off the Kimberley coast (DSEWPac 2012c). On the North West Shelf, significant rookeries are centred on Barrow Island especially the east coast beaches (DSEWPac 2012b). NT populations are typically found in the Gulf of Carpentaria, western Torres Strait, Wellesley Islands Group and Sand Islet.

Montebello Islands, Thevenard Island, Varanus Island, the Lowendal Islands, King Sound and Dampier Archipelago are also significant rookeries (Pendoley 2005, Limpus 2007, Pendoley Environmental 2011). Nesting is also widespread along the mainland beaches from Mundabullangana on the Pilbara coast north, including Cemetery Beach near Port Hedland, Eighty Mile Beach and to Broome (Limpus 2007, DSEWPac 2012b).

Long term monitoring of flatback turtles nesting in the Port Hedland area, specifically at Cemetery Beach and Pretty Pool Beach, was undertaken between 2004 and 2014. Monitoring results indicated the main nesting season of flatback turtles in the area was between mid-October and January, which is consistent with other rookeries in the Pilbara region including Barrow Island, Mundabullangana, Karratha and Onslow (Waayers and Stubbs 2016). The onset of the nesting season appears to be relatively consistent each year and is thought to be associated with the southern movement of warmer sea surface temperatures along the northern WA coast.

There have been occasional records of nesting by flatback turtles on the Jurabi Coast and Muiron Islands (CALM 2005). During turtle surveys for Santos, WA flatback turtle nesting was recorded on Bessieres Islands (Astron 2014), Serrurier, Flat, Table and Round Island in previous surveys (Pendoley Environmental 2009). Flatback turtle tracks have been seen on Forty Mile beach and evidence of flatback nesting was recorded on the same beach the next day (Pendoley Environmental 2009). Previously the status of the flatback population(s) was undetermined and although not well quantified, it was estimated to be many thousands of females (Limpus 2007). However, Pendoley *et al.* (2014) reported both Barrow Island and Mundabullangana flatback turtles as substantial reproductive populations with 4,000 and 3,500 turtles tagged at each location between 2006/2006 and 2010/2011. Cemetery beach at Port Hedland had approximately 350 turtles were tagged over two seasons of monitoring (2009/2010 and 2011/12).

Satellite tracking of adult (female) flatback turtles shows they use a variety of inshore and offshore marine areas off the east and west coasts of Barrow Island. Females inter-nest close to their nesting beaches, typically in 0–10 m of water (Chevron 2008). However, flatback turtles also travel approximately 70 km and inter-nest in shallow nearshore water off the adjacent mainland coast,

before returning to Barrow Island to lay another clutch of eggs. The average inter-nesting period is 13–16 days.

From long-term tagging studies on Varanus Island and Pendoley's observations, it appears that the nesting season for flatback turtles peaks in December and January with subsequent peak hatchling emergence in February and March. Flatbacks have been observed to nest on Varanus Island between November and February (Chevron 2008, Pendoley Environmental 2011 & 2013). Population monitoring of flatback turtles on Varanus Island, calculated from 16 seasons, indicates a mean population estimate of 226 (+/- 97). Modelled flatback turtle populations have shown a slight decline from 2008/09 to 2016/17, which is considered to be part of fluctuations in the natural cycle (Astron 2017). Flatback turtles tend to nest on all beaches on Varanus Island (Astron 2017). Flatback hatching and emergence success is noted as higher compared to that reported for other Western Australian rookeries (Pendoley et al. 2014; cited Astron 2017).

Unlike other sea turtles, the flatback turtle lacks a wide oceanic dispersal phase and adults tend to be found in soft sediment habitats within the continental shelf of northern Australia (DSEWPaC 2012b). Despite having geographically large foraging ranges (>1500 km), genetic differentiation suggests strong natal homing for both males and females (Turner Tomaszewicz *et al*, 2022). Little information is known on the diets of flatback turtles (DSEWPaC 2012b), however, they are believed to forage on primarily soft-bodied invertebrates (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a). Flatback turtles also differ from other species of sea turtles in maturing at a larger size and a likely younger age (<20 years) in comparison to other sea turtle species, indicating they may have a more rapid growth rate in their juvenile (similar to the leatherback turtle, a species with their own family) (Turner Tomaszewicz *et al*, 2022). This information from Turner Tomaszewicz *et al*, 2022 may provide valuable insight for ongoing population assessments and future recovery plans (Turner Tomaszewicz et al, 2022).

Figure 6-4 illustrates the BIAs and habitat critical (draft) for flatback turtles (as defined in the Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a).

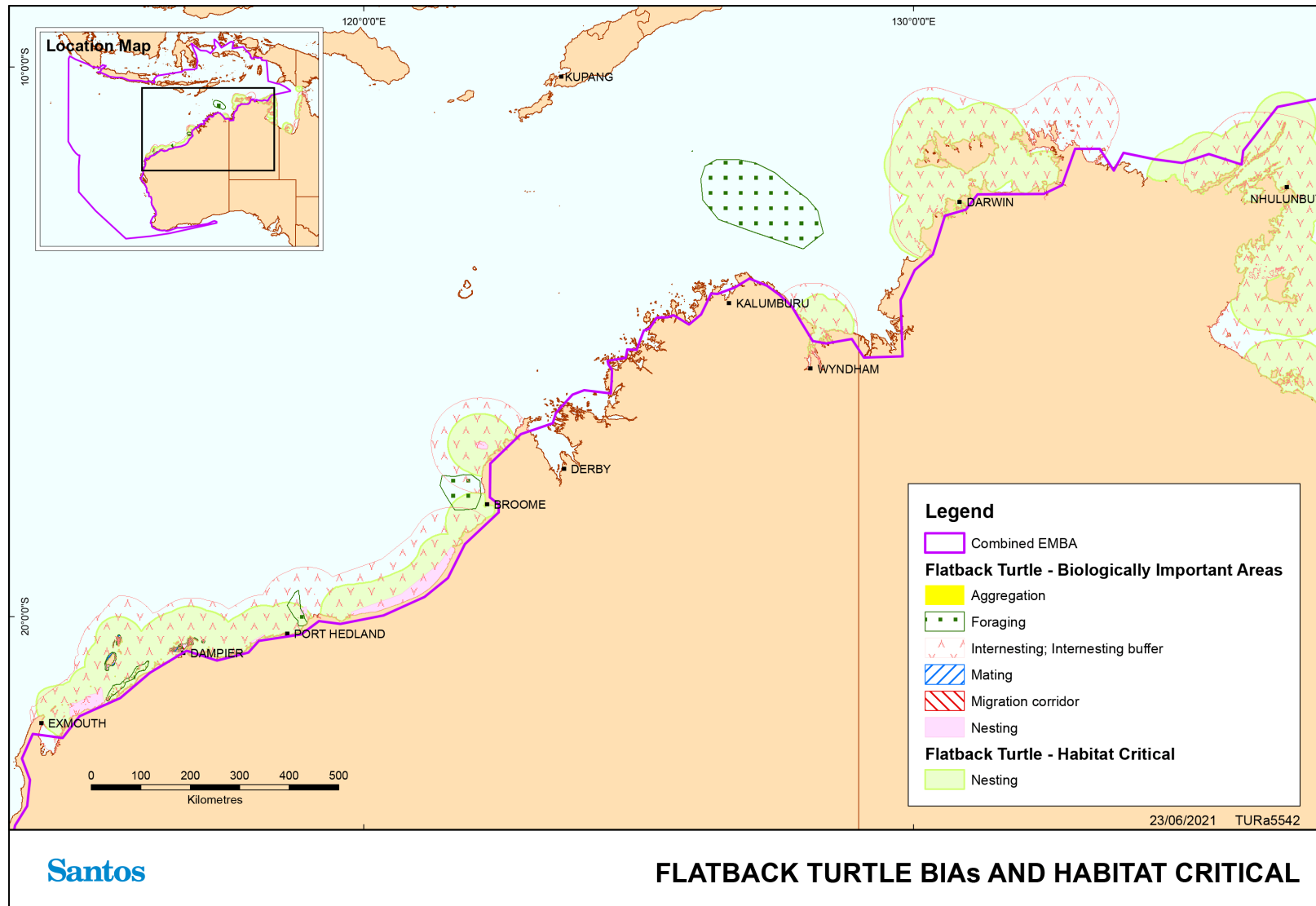


Figure 6-4: Biologically Important Areas and Habitat Critical – Flatback Turtle

6.1.5 Leatherback Turtle

The leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) has the widest distribution of any marine turtle, and can be found from tropical to temperate waters throughout the world (Márquez 1990). There are no major leatherback turtle centres of nesting activity that have been recorded in Australia, although scattered isolated nesting (one to three nests per annum) occurs in southern Queensland and the Northern Territory (Limpus and McLachlin 1994).

There have been several records of leatherback turtles off the coast of WA and NT, but no confirmed nesting sites (Limpus 2009c). Turtle observations have mainly occurred south of the North West Shelf area and in open waters (>200 m deep) (Limpus 2009c). Due to the lack of nesting sites around Australian coastal waters, it is presumed that leatherback turtles observed in Australian waters are migrating from neighbouring countries to utilise feeding grounds in Australia (Limpus 2009c).

The leatherback turtle will feed at all levels of the water column and is carnivorous feeding mainly on pelagic, soft-bodied marine organisms such as jellyfish, which occur in greatest concentrations in areas of upwelling or convergence (DSEWPaC 2012d). The leatherback turtle is a highly pelagic species with adults only going ashore to breed.

No leatherback turtle BIAs or habitat critical (draft) are found within the combined EMBA.

6.1.6 Olive Ridley Turtles

Olive ridley turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) are the least common turtle species encountered with critical nesting habitat occurring near Vulcan Island, Darcy Island, Prior Point and Llanggi and Cape Leveque (Commonwealth of Australia 2017). They are also known to nest on Tiwi Islands, specifically on the west coast of Bathurst Island and the north coast of Melville Island. The turtles found nesting on the Tiwi Islands is the NT genetic stock whereby the long-term trends of this genetic stock are currently unknown (Commonwealth of Australia 2017). However, the number of females nesting on the Tiwi Islands are considered significant at the genetic stock, national and international level. Nesting of the NT genetic stock can occur year-round with a peak between April and June, and hatchling emergence peaking between June and August (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017).

Internesting habitat, critical to the survival of the olive ridley turtle, encompasses nearshore waters along the north, west and east coasts of the Tiwi Islands. Satellite tracking on a small sample of internesting olive ridley turtles in the region recorded that the individuals remained close to shore (waters depths typically less than 55 m deep) and within 37 km of the nesting beach during the internesting interval (Whiting et al. 2007, Whiting et al. 2005).

The species is known to forage within the shallow benthic habitats of northern WA, the NT and Timor Sea (Limpus 2009), however, it displays unusual behaviour patterns compared to other sea turtles, in being capable of deeper (up to 140 m), benthic and exceptionally long (>2 hour) dives (McMahon *et al.*, 2007). This trait, combined with their long-distance movement patterns (Polovina *et al.*, 2004) is thought to be indicative of less specialist foraging (McMahon *et al.*, 2007). Olive Ridley turtles forage as far south as the Dampier Archipelago-Montebello Islands and have also been sighted in the Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands in the north of the combined EMBA, and is thought to feed primarily on gastropods and small crabs within the benthic, soft-bottomed communities of the continental shelf (Limpus 2009). Their extensive movements and variability in migration patterns suggest this species may be susceptible to a wide range of human activities (McMahon *et al.*, 2007).

BIAs for this endangered species are known to occur in the vicinity of Joseph Bonaparte Depression (DSEWPaC 2012b, Commonwealth of Australia 2017a). See **Figure 6-3** for identified olive ridley turtle BIAs

and critical habitats (draft) within the combined EMBA (as defined in the Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a).

6.2 Seasnakes

Storr *et al.* (1986) estimate nine genera and 22 species of sea snakes occur in WA waters, with 25 listed marine seasnake species being recorded in the search area of WA and NT waters (**Appendix A**). Little is known of the distribution of individual species, population sizes or aspects of their ecology. Seasnakes are essentially tropical in distribution, and habitats reflect influences of factors such as water depth, nature of seabed, turbidity and season (Heatwole and Cogger 1993). Seasnakes are widespread throughout waters of the North West Shelf in offshore and nearshore habitats. They can be highly mobile and cover large distances or they may be restricted to relatively shallow waters and some species must return to land to eat and rest. In the north-west region of Western Australia, no BIAs have been designated for seasnakes. However, both Ashmore Reef and Cartier Island are characterised for both a high density and high diversity of seasnakes (DSEWPac 2012b). The limited evidence available suggests that there are no sea snakes in at least the coastal waters of Cocos (Keeling) Islands, and few sea snake sightings in the waters of the Christmas Island territory (Brewer *et al.*, 2009).

Two species of seasnakes listed as threatened under the EPBC Act were identified in the Protected Matters search within the combined EMBA (**Appendix A**):

- + Short-nosed seasnake (*Aipysurus apraefrontalis*); and
- + Leaf-scaled seasnake (*Aipysurus foliosquama*).

6.2.1 Short-nosed Seasnake

The short-nosed seasnake (*Aipysurus apraefrontalis*) is listed as critically endangered under the EPBC Act and the BC Act. It is a fully aquatic, small snake and is endemic to WA. It has been recorded from Exmouth Gulf, WA to the reefs of the Sahul Shelf, in the eastern Indian Ocean. This species is believed to show strong site fidelity to shallow coral reef habitats in less than 10 m of water, with most specimens having been collected from Ashmore and Hibernia reefs (Minton & Heatwole 1975, Guinea and Whiting 2005).

The species prefers the reef flats or shallow waters along the outer reef edge in water depths to 10 m (McCosker 1975, Cogger 2000). The species has been observed during daylight hours, resting beneath small coral overhangs or coral heads in 1–2 m of water (McCosker 1975). Guinea and Whiting (2005) reported that very few short-nosed seasnakes moved even as far as 50 m away from the reef flat and are therefore unlikely to be expected in high numbers in offshore, deeper waters.

6.2.2 Leaf-scaled Seasnake

The leaf-scaled seasnake (*Aipysurus foliosquama*) is listed as critically endangered under the EPBC Act and the BC Act. It occurs in shallow water (less than 10 m in depth), in the protected parts of the reef flat, adjacent to living coral and on coral substrates (DoE 2014). The species is found only on the reefs of the Sahul Shelf in WA, especially on Ashmore and Hibernia Reefs (Minton and Heatwole 1975). The leaf-scaled seasnake forages by searching in fish burrows on the reef flat (DoE 2014).

6.3 Crocodiles

The salt-water crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) is a migratory species under the EPBC Act and is also listed as a specially protected species (other specially protected fauna) under the BC Act. In WA, the species is found in most major river systems of the Kimberley, including the Ord, Patrick, Forrest, Durack, King, Pentecost,

Prince Regent, Lawley, Mitchell, Hunter, Roe and Glenelg Rivers. The largest populations occur in the rivers draining into the Cambridge Gulf and the Prince Regent River and Roe River systems. There have also been isolated records in rivers of the Pilbara region, around Derby near Broome and as far south as Carnarvon on the mid-west coast (DEC 2009a).

In the NT salt-water crocodile has been found in the Mary, Adelaide, Daly, Moyle, Victoria, Finniss, Wildman, West Alligator, East Alligator, South Alligator, Liverpool, Blyth, Glyde, Habgood, Baralminar, Goromuru, Cator and Peter John Rivers with a total 79 individuals per km identified in these river systems (Fukuda, 2007).

6.4 Biologically Important Areas/Habitat Critical – Marine Reptiles

Table 6-3 provides an overview of BIAs in the combined EMBA for marine reptiles, as identified by the DAWE (Commonwealth) and critical habitats identified in associated recovery plans. The DAWE may make recovery plans for threatened fauna listed under the EPBC Act. The EPBC Act requires that ‘habitat critical to the survival of the listed threatened species’ is identified in recovery plans, relevant recovery plans are listed in **Section 13.2**³.

In addition, both the EPBC Act and WA BC Act and associated regulations (2018) provide for the listing of habitat critical - habitat ‘critical to the survival of the threatened species. To date no habitat critical in WA has been listed under either Act. No provision is made under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976 for listing critical habitat.

³ Further background information on BIA and identification of critical habitat in recovery plans is provided in **Section 5.4**.

Table 6-3: Biologically important areas/critical habitats and geographic locations - reptiles

Species	Scientific name	Aggregation area and use	BIAs within EMBA	Habitat Critical within EMBA
Loggerhead turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	Nesting, migration, foraging and internesting – Islands and coastline of the Kimberley region and islands of the North West Shelf, Ningaloo coast and Jurabi coast	Cohen Island De Grey River to Bedout Island Dirk Hartog Island Gnarloo Bay James Price Point Lowendal Island Montebello Island Muiron Island Ningaloo Coast and Jurabi coast Rosemary Island Western Joseph Bonaparte Depression	Exmouth and Ningaloo coast Gnaraloo Bay and beaches Shark bay, all coastal and island beaches out the to the northern tip of Dirk Hartog Island
Green turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	Nesting, migration foraging, aggregation, mating, basking and internesting – Offshore islands in the Browse Basin, North West Shelf and Kimberley/Pilbara coastlines Mating/nesting – Dampier Archipelago Basking – Middle Island	Ashmore Reef Barrow Island Browse Island Cartier Island Cassini Island Coral reef habitat west of the Montebello group. Extends the entire length of Montebellos Dampier Archipelago (islands to the west of the Burrup Peninsula) De Grey River area to Bedout Island Delambre Island Dixon Island Greens - inshore tidal and shallow subtidal areas around Barrow Island Hawksbills - shallow water coral reef and artificial reef (pipeline) habitat James Price Point Joseph Bonaparte Gulf Lacepede Island Legendre Island, Huay Island Middle Is. West Coast Barrow Island West Coast and North Coast Montebello Island - Hermite Island, NW Island, Trimouille Island Montebello Islands	Mainland east of Mary island to mainland adjacent to Murrara Island including all offshore islands Ashmore Reef and Cartier Reef Browse Island Scott Reef Adele Island Lacepede Island Dampier Archipelago Barrow Island Montebello Islands Serrier Island and Thevenard Island Exmouth Gulf and Ningaloo Coast

Species	Scientific name	Aggregation area and use	BIAs within EMBA	Habitat Critical within EMBA
			Montgomery Reef North and South Muiron Island North Turtle Island North West Cape Scott Reef Scott Reef - Sandy Islet Seringapatam Reef String of islands between Cape Preston and Onslow, inshore of Barrow Is North-west of Melville Island	
Hawksbill turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	Nesting, migration, mating, foraging and internesting – Offshore islands in the Browse Basin, North West Shelf and Kimberley/Pilbara coastlines Mating/ nesting/ internesting – Lowendal group, Montebello Islands	Ah Chong and South East Island Ashmore Reef Barrow Island Cartier Island Dampier Archipelago (islands to the west of the Burrup Peninsula) De Grey River area to Bedout Island Delambre Island Delambre Island (and other Dampier Archipelago Islands) Dixon Island Greens - inshore tidal and shallow subtidal areas around Barrow Island Hawksbills - shallow water coral reef and artificial reef (pipeline) habitat Lowendal Island Group Montebello Island - Hermite Island, NW Island, Trimouille Island Montebello Island, Trimouille and NW islands Ningaloo coast and Jurabi coast Rosemary Island Scott Reef String of islands between Cape Preston and Onslow, inshore of Barrow Island Thevenard Island Varanus Island	Cape Preston to mouth of Exmouth Gulf (including Montebello Islands and Lowendal Islands) Dampier Archipelago (including Delambre Island and Rosemary Island) New Year Island 20 km internesting buffer

Species	Scientific name	Aggregation area and use	BIAs within EMBA	Habitat Critical within EMBA
Flatback turtle	<i>Natator depressus</i>	Nesting, migration, mating, aggregation, foraging, internesting – Islands of the North West Shelf and the Pilbara/Kimberley coastlines Mating, nesting – Barrow Island	Eighty Mile beach Barrow Island Cape Domett Cape Thouin/ Mundabullangana/ Cowrie Beach Coral reef habitat west of the Montebello group. Extends the entire length of Montebellos Dampier Archipelago (islands to the west of the Burrup Peninsula) De Grey River area to Bedout Island Delambre Island Dixon Island Holothuria Zone (Northern Kimberley, Holothuria Banks) Intercourse Island James Price Point Lacepede Island Legendre Island, Huay Is Montebello Island - Hermite Island, NW Island, Trimouille Island North Turtle Island Port Hedland, Cemetery Beach Port Hedland, Paradise Beach Port Hedland, Pretty Pool String of islands between Cape Preston and Onslow, inshore of Barrow Is The main nesting beach at Cape Domett is a 1.9-km-long north-west-facing sandy beach on the east of the Cambridge Gulf, East Kimberley, Western Australia (14 48.10S, 128 24.50E), located approximately 80 km north-north-east of the nearest town, Wyndham. Thevenard Island - South coast West of Cape Lambert	Cape Domett and Lacrosse Island Lacepede Islands Eighty Mile beach Cemetery beach Eco Beach Mundabullangana Beach Dampier Archipelago Barrow Island, Montebello Island, coastal islands from Cape Preston to Locker Island Soldier Point to Pirlangimpi including Seafull Island 60 km internesting buffer Brace point to One Tree Point, including all offshore islands 60 km internesting buffer Waigait Beach to south of Point Blaze, including all offshore islands 60 km internesting buffer.

Species	Scientific name	Aggregation area and use	BIAs within EMBA	Habitat Critical within EMBA
			Western Joseph Bonaparte Depression Melville Island, Cobourg Peninsula	
Leatherback turtle	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	None within EMBA	None within EMBA	All sandy beaches from Coburg Peninsula to Cape Arnhem including Danger Point and Elcho Island 20 km internesting buffer
Olive ridley turtle	<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>	Foraging, migration – Joseph Bonaparte Gulf – Kimberley region	Western Joseph Bonaparte Depression Northern Joseph Bonaparte Gulf	Cape Leveque Prior Point and Llanggi Darcy Island Vulcan Island Soldier Point to Pirlangimpi including Seafull Island 20 km internesting buffer Brace Point to One Tree Point, including all offshore islands 20 km internesting buffer Croker Island, Coburg Peninsula, west of Murganella to the West Alligator River 20 km internesting buffer

7. Marine Mammals

Forty-four species of listed marine mammals are known to occur in Australian waters in the combined EMBA, according to the Protected Matters search (**Appendix A**). An examination of the species profile and threats database (DAWE 2020a) showed that some listed mammal species are not expected to occur in significant numbers in the marine and coastal environments in the combined EMBA due to their terrestrial distributions. Hence, these species are not discussed further.

Of the remaining listed species, five are listed as threatened and migratory, one is listed as threatened and ten are listed as migratory under the Commonwealth EPBC Act (BIAs for marine mammals are discussed in **Table 7-3**). These species are shown in **Table 7-1** along with their conservation listing under the WA BC Act and *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976* (as applicable).

The section below gives further details on marine mammal species listed as threatened and migratory and a summary is presented in **Table 7-2**. Identified BIAs are presented in **Table 7-3**.

In addition, the New Zealand fur-seal (*Arctocephalus forsteri*), has been identified as a species of relevance to the combined EMBA. The New Zealand fur seal is listed as a protected species under WA BC Act (other specially protected), but not listed as threatened under the EPBC Act.

Table 7-1: Marine mammals listed as threatened or migratory under the EPBC Act

Species	Conservation Status				Likelihood of occurrence in EMBA	BIA in EMBA
	EPBC Act 1999 (Cwth)	BC Act 2016 (WA)	Other WA Conservation Code	TPWC Act 1976		
Sei whale (<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>)	Vulnerable Migratory	Endangered	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Blue whale (<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>)	Endangered Migratory	Endangered	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur within area Migration route known to occur within area	Yes – Refer to Table 7-3
Fin whale (<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>)	Vulnerable Migratory	Endangered	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Southern right whale (<i>Eubalaena australis</i>)	Endangered Migratory	Vulnerable	-	-	Breeding known to occur within area	Yes – Refer to Table 7-3
Humpback whale (<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>)	Migratory	Special conservation interest and Migratory	-	-	Breeding known to occur within area	Yes – Refer to Table 7-3
Sperm whale (<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>)	Migratory	Vulnerable	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur within area	Yes – Refer to Table 7-3
Antarctic minke whale (<i>Balaenoptera bonaerensis</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	-	-	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Bryde's whale (<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	-	-	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	None - No BIA defined

Species	Conservation Status				Likelihood of occurrence in EMBA	BIA in EMBA
	EPBC Act 1999 (Cwth)	BC Act 2016 (WA)	Other WA Conservation Code	TPWC Act 1976		
Pygmy right whale (<i>Caperea marginate</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Killer whale (<i>Orcinus orca</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	-	-	Species or species habitat may occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Australian Humpback Dolphin (<i>Sousa sahalensis</i>)	Migratory (as <i>Sousa chinensis</i>)	Migratory	-	-	Breeding known to occur within area	Yes – Refer to Table 7-3
Spotted bottlenose dolphin (Arafura/ Timor Sea Populations) (<i>Tursiops aduncus</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	-	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	Yes – Refer to Table 7-3
Irrawaddy dolphin (Australian snubfin dolphin) (<i>Orcaella heinsohni</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	P4	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	Yes – Refer to Table 7-3
Dusky dolphin (<i>Lagenorhynchus obscurus</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	-	-	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Australian sea lion (<i>Neophoca cinerea</i>)	Endangered	Vulnerable	-	-	Breeding known to occur within area	Yes – Refer to Table 7-3
Dugong (<i>Dugong dugon</i>)	Migratory	Migratory	-	-	Breeding known to occur within area	Yes – Refer to Table 7-3

7.1 Threatened and Migratory Species

7.1.1 Sei Whale

Sei whales have a worldwide, oceanic distribution and migrate between low-latitude tropical and subtropical regions during the winter and temperate and subpolar latitudes in summer (Leaper *et al.* 2008). Sei whales tend to be found further offshore than other species of large whales (Bannister *et al.* 1996).

Sei whales move between Australian waters and Antarctic feeding areas; however, they are only infrequently recorded in Australian waters (Bannister *et al.* 1996) and their movements and distribution in Australian waters is not well known (DAWE 2020a). There are no known mating or calving areas in Australian waters (Parker 1978 in DAWE 2020a). The National Conservation Values Atlas currently record no BIAs for this species (DAWE 2020b). Surveys of the Bonney Upwelling (outside of the combined EMBA) between 2000 and 2003 recorded sightings of sei whales feeding during summer and autumn, indicating that this is potentially an important feeding ground (DAWE 2020b).

7.1.2 Blue Whale

Two sub-species of blue whale are recorded in Australian waters: the southern (or true) blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus intermedia*) and the pygmy blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus breviceauda*). Southern blue whales are believed to occur in waters south of 60°S and pygmy blue whales occur in waters north of 55°S (i.e. not in the Antarctic) (DEWHA 2008a). By this definition all blue whales in waters from Busselton to the NT are assumed to be pygmy blue whales and are discussed below.

Pygmy blue whale populations are distinguishable only acoustically as they do not display morphological differences (Leroy *et al.* 2021). Prior to 2020 there were believed to be three populations of the pygmy blue whale (*B. m. breviceauda*), however, evidence for a fourth pygmy blue whale acoustic population were found by Cerchio, S. *et al.* (2020), and a fifth was identified by Leroy *et al.* (2021).

Pygmy blue whales have a southern hemisphere distribution, migrating from tropical water breeding grounds in winter to temperate and polar water feeding grounds in summer (Bannister *et al.* 1996, Double *et al.* 2014), such as the Perth Canyon and adjacent waters (Rennie *et al.*, 2009) and the Great Southern Australian Coastal Upwelling System (Möller *et al.*, 2020). The WA migration path takes pygmy blue whales down the WA coast to coastal upwelling areas along southern Australia (Gill 2002) and south at least as far as the Antarctic convergence zone (Gedamke *et al.* 2007).

Tagging surveys have shown pygmy blue whales migrating northward relatively near to the Australian coastline (100 km) until reaching North West Cape after which they travelled offshore (240 km) to Indonesia (Double *et al.*, 2014). Passive acoustic data documented pygmy blue whales migrating along the Western Australian shelf break (Woodside 2012). Tagging data collected by Gales *et al.* (2010) has provided the first definitive link between the blue whales that feed off the Perth Canyon and those that occur around Indonesia. This movement is concordant with the proposed 'Tasmania to Indonesia' population described by Branch *et al.* (2007).

The northern migration passes the Perth Canyon from January to May and north bound animals have been detected off Exmouth and the Montebello Islands between April and August (Double *et al.*

2012a, McCauley & Jenner 2010). A noise monitoring study conducted in 2014-15 recorded pygmy blue whales moving in a northward direction in August 2014 and between late-May to early July 2015 (JASCO Applied Sciences, 2016; McPherson, Craig et al., 2015). During the southern migration, pygmy blue whales pass south of the Montebello Islands and Exmouth from October to the end of January, peaking in late November to early December (Double *et al.* 2012b). No detections of the species were made during the period of their southward migration during the noise monitoring study.

Generally, they appear to travel as individuals or in small groups based on acoustic data. For example, analysis of pygmy blue whale calls from noise loggers deployed around Scott Reef (2006 to 2009) for the Woodside Browse project showed that 78% of the calls were from lone whales, 18% were from two whales and 4% were from three or more whales (McCauley 2011; Woodside 2014).

Pygmy blue whales appear to feed regularly along their migration route (i.e. at least once per week or more frequently) and are likely to have multiple food caches along their migratory route (e.g. Rowley Shoals and Ningaloo Reef) (ConocoPhillips 2018).

Recognised feeding areas of significance to this species, located within the combined EMBA include Ningaloo Reef and the Perth Canyon (DoE 2015a). The Ningaloo Reef area has the capacity to offer feeding opportunities to pygmy blue whales through unique biophysical conditions able to support large biomasses of marine species (Double *et al.* 2014).

Surface lunge feeding of pygmy blue whales has been observed at North West Cape and Ningaloo Reef in June (C. Jenner & M-N Jenner, unpublished data, 2001 in Double *et al.* 2014). Outside of the recognised feeding areas, possible foraging areas for pygmy blue whales include the greater region around the Perth Canyon, off Exmouth and Scott Reef in WA (DoE 2015a). These steep gradient features tend to stimulate upwelling and, therefore increased productivity (seasonally variable) (ConocoPhillips 2018). Hence, they provide a favourable foraging area.

Breeding areas have not yet been identified; however, it is likely that pygmy blue whales calve in tropical areas of high localised production such as deep offshore waters of the Banda and Molucca Seas in Indonesia (Double *et al.* 2014, DAWE 2020a). There are no known breeding areas of significance to blue whales in waters from Busselton to the NT.

The BIAs for blue whale and pygmy blue whale are detailed in **Table 7-3** and depicted in **Figure 7-2** and **Figure 7-1**. However; a recent study by Thums *et al* (2022) used a combination of passive acoustic monitoring of the Northwest Australian coast (46 instruments from 2006 to 2019) and satellite telemetry data (22 tag deployments from 2009 to 2021) quantified the spatial extent of pygmy blue whale high use areas for foraging and migration and compared these areas to the BIAs. Thums *et al* (2022) designated three important foraging (and/or resting/breeding) areas, including; The Perth Canyon and vicinity, the shelf edge off Geraldton and; the shelf edge from Ningaloo Reef to the Rowley Shoals (not continuous). The study found that the Foraging BIA off the south-west of Western Australia encompassed 83% of the most important areas in that region, however; the 'Annual High Use Foraging' BIA within that BIA only encompassed 7% of the most important area. The most significant overlaps were seen with the Migration BIAs, whereby the most important migration area had an 82% overlap with the part of the Migration BIA that occurs in Australia. The Australian Government may now have to consider this quantitative assessment of important areas in future reviews of the BIAs (Thums *et al* 2022).

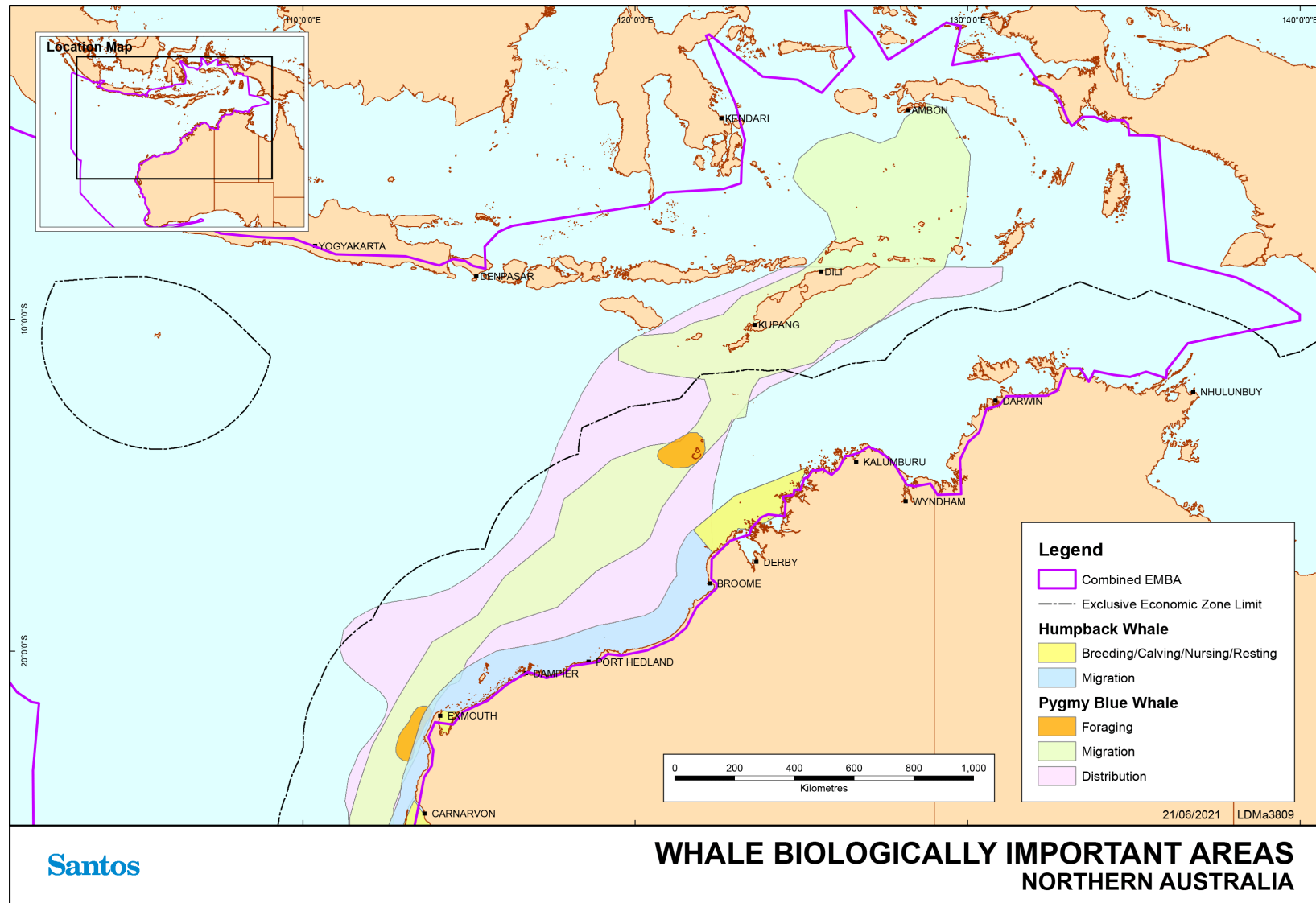


Figure 7-1: Biologically important areas – whales – Northern WA

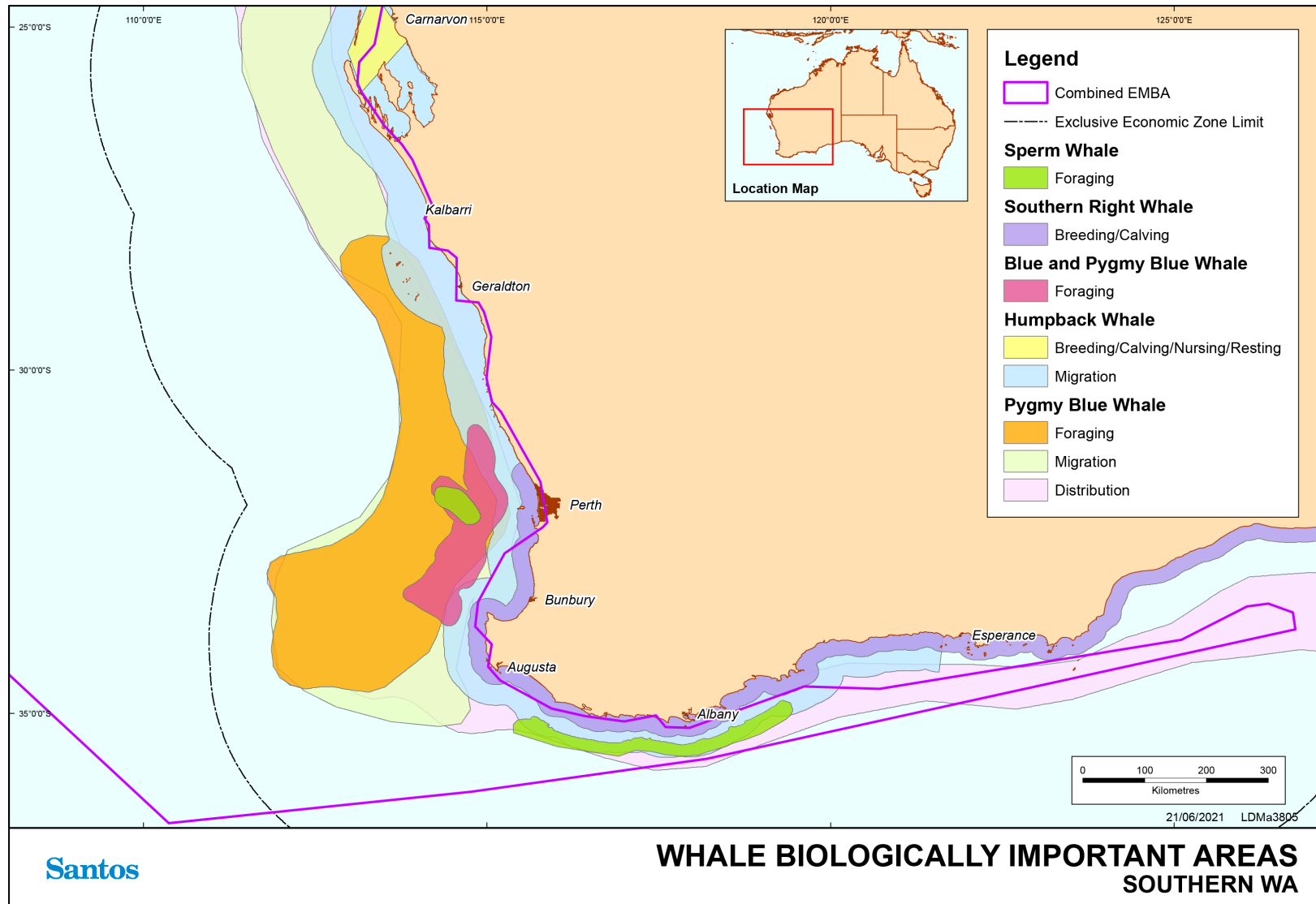


Figure 7-2: Biologically important areas – whales – Southern WA

7.1.3 Fin Whale

Fin whales have a worldwide distribution generally in deeper waters, with oceanic migrations between warm water breeding grounds and cold water feeding grounds.

The fin whale distribution in Australia is not clear due to the sparsity of sightings. Information is known primarily from stranding events and whaling records. According to the Species Profile and Threats database (DAWE 2020a); fin whales are thought to be present from Exmouth, along the southern coastline, to southern Queensland.

Migration paths are uncertain but are not thought to follow Australian coastlines (Bannister *et al.* 1996). There is insufficient data to prescribe migration times for fin whales. During summer and autumn this species has been recorded acoustically at the Rottnest Trench.

There are no known mating or calving areas in Australian waters (DoEE 2019a) and no BIAs for the fin whale are currently identified by the National Conservation Values Atlas (DAWE 2020b).

7.1.4 Southern Right Whale

The southern right whale is present in the southern hemisphere between approximately 30° and 60°S. The species feeds in the Southern Ocean in summer, moving close to shore in winter.

In Australian waters, southern right whales range from Perth, along the southern coastline, to Sydney. Sightings have been recorded as far north as Exmouth although these are rare (Bannister *et al.* 1996).

BIAs including calving and aggregation areas are recorded for this species along the southern coastline of Australia (DAWE 2020b). Details on the BIA for southern right whale are provided in **Table 7-3** and depicted in **Figure 7-2** and **Figure 7-1**.

7.1.5 Humpback Whale

Humpback whales have a worldwide distribution, migrating along coastal waters from polar feeding grounds to subtropical breeding grounds. Geographic populations are distinct and at least six southern hemisphere populations are thought to exist based on Antarctic feeding distribution and the location of breeding grounds on either side of each continent (Bannister *et al.* 1996). The largest known population of humpback whales breeds along the coast of Western Australia (Branch, 2011, Salgado Kent *et al.*, 2012, IWC, 2014) and has a recognised resting ground in the Exmouth Gulf (Ivine & Kent 2018). The population of humpback whales migrating along the WA coastline was recently estimated to be greater than 33,000 whales and likely increasing at exceptionally high growth rates between 10–12% (Hedley *et al.* 2011, Salgado Kent *et al.* 2012).

Humpback whale populations have increased since being placed on the threatened species list for exploitation from whaling, resulting in a higher abundance of species off our Western Australian coastline. Effective from 26/02/2022, Humpback whales are no longer classed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act, however; they remain a Matter of National Environmental Significance as a listed Migratory Species and Cetacean under EPBC Act Division 3, where it is an offence to kill, injure, take, trade, keep, move or interfere with a cetacean. Humpback whales have been able to thrive and increase in numbers despite the heavy oil and gas exploration. A study presented by Bejder *et al.* (2016) has prompted a review of the species being down listed under Commonwealth legislation and regulations, as they are not eligible for listing as a threatened species under all statutory criteria. The west coast Australian humpback whale population migrates from Southern Polar Ocean ‘summer’ feeding grounds to their northern tropical ‘winter’ calving/ breeding grounds in coastal waters of the

Kimberley. The northern migration tends to follow deeper waters of the continental shelf, whilst the southward migration concentrates whales closer to the mainland (Jenner *et al.* 2001; Irvine *et al.*, 2018). Recent satellite tagging of southbound humpback whales indicate that whales generally migrated close to the coastline, within a few tens of kilometres of shore and in a corridor frequently less than 100 km (Double *et al.* 2010). Aerial surveys and noise logger recordings undertaken for Chevron's Wheatstone Project indicated that the main distribution of humpback whales was sighted at an average distance of 50 km from the mainland during the northern migration and 35 km during the southbound migration (RPS 2010a). Woodside have conducted aerial surveys that have confirmed that the reported distribution of migrating humpback whales off the North West Cape is consistent with baseline surveys first conducted in 2000 to 2001 (RPS, 2010 in Woodside 2020).

The precise timing of the migration varies between years by up to six weeks, influenced by water temperature, sea ice distribution, predation risk, prey abundance and the location of feeding grounds (DEWR 2007).

Peak northward migration across the North West Shelf is identified as from late July to early August, and peak southward migration from late August to early September (DoEE 2015c). Data collected between 1995 and 1997 by the Centre for Whale Research indicates that the period for peak northern migration into the calving grounds in the Kimberley is mid to late July. The peak for southern migration is in the first half of September (Jenner *et al.* 2001). Actual timing of annual migration may vary by as much as three weeks from year to year due to food availability in the Antarctic (DMP 2003).

Satellite tagging data collected for migrating northbound humpback whales identified a consistent narrow inshore distribution, unlike the southward migration. There was little evidence that the whales tended to venture further from shore and into deeper water at any point on their northward migration. Whales were seen with calves off the North West Cape outside the 'calving grounds; of Lacepede Islands to Camden Sound. This indicates some potential for this area being used as a 'calving site' as well as a migratory corridor. Consequently, the region from the Lacepede Islands to Camden Sound should not be seen as the exclusive 'calving ground' for this population (Double *et al.* 2012b).

Details on the BIA for humpback whales are provided in **Table 7-3** and depicted in **Figure 7-2** and **Figure 7-1**.

7.1.6 Sperm Whale

Sperm whales typically occur in WA along the southern coastline between Cape Leeuwin and Esperance (Bannister *et al.* 1996). Sperm whales are distributed worldwide in deep waters (greater than 400 m) off continental shelves and sometimes near shelf edges, averaging 20 to 30 nautical miles offshore (Hooker *et al.* 1999, Pirotta *et al.*, 2011). The sperm whale is known to migrate northwards in winter and southwards in summer, however, detailed information on the distribution of sperm whales is not available for the timing of migrations. Sperm whales have been recorded in deep water off the North West Cape on the west coast of Western Australia (RPS 2010b) and appear to occasionally venture into shallower waters in other areas (RPS 2010b). Details on the BIA for sperm whales are provided in **Table 7-3** and are shown in **Figure 7-2** and **Figure 7-1**.

7.1.7 Antarctic Minke Whale

The Antarctic minke whale is distributed throughout the Southern Hemisphere from 55°S to the Antarctic ice edge during the austral summer and has been recorded in all Australian States (Bannister *et al.* 1996; Perrin & Brownell 2002). Detailed information on timing and location of migrations and

breeding grounds on the west coast of Australia is largely unknown. However, it is believed that the Antarctic minke whale migrates up the WA coast to approximately 20°S during Australian winter to feed and possibly breed (Bannister *et al.* 1996).

7.1.8 Bryde's Whale

The Bryde's whale is found all year round in tropic and temperate waters (Kato 2002). Two forms are recognised: inshore and offshore Bryde's whales. It appears that the inshore form is restricted to the 200 m depth isobar whilst the offshore form is found in deeper waters of 500-1,000 m (DoEE 2019c). Both forms are expected to be found in zones of upwelling where they feed on shrimp like crustaceans (Bannister *et al.* 1996). Little is known about the population abundance of Bryde's whale, the location of exact breeding and calving grounds and large-scale migration patterns (DoEE 2019c). It is however, suggested that the offshore form migrates seasonally, heading towards warmer tropical waters during the winter.

7.1.9 Pygmy Right Whale

The pygmy right whale is considered the most elusive baleen whale and as a result very little is known about the whale's distribution in Australian waters. Records of the pygmy right whale in Australian waters are distributed between 32°S and 47°S and are restricted in the west by the Leeuwin current (Kemper 2002). It is possible that the pygmy right whale will be encountered in the southern extent of the combined EMBA, particularly in coastal areas of upwelling (Kemper 2002).

7.1.10 Killer Whale

The killer whale has a widespread global distribution and has been recorded in waters of all Australian states/territories (Bannister *et al.* 1996). Whilst more commonly found in cold, deeper waters, killer whales have been observed along the continental slope, shelf and shallower coastal areas. Killer whales are known to make seasonal movements and are most likely to follow the migratory routes of their prey, however, little is known about these movements (DoEE, 2019). They are more likely to be observed around seal colonies, with a significant seal colony within the combined EMBA being located in WA at the Abrolhos Islands.

7.1.11 Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphin

The Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin is typically found in water less than 20 m deep but has been recorded in waters up to 40 m deep. This species is generally found in association with river mouths, mangroves, tidal channels and inshore reefs (DoEE 2016a). This species of dolphin is known to have resident groups that forage, feed, breed and calve in the state waters of Roebuck Bay, Dampier Peninsula, King Sound north, Talbot Bay, Anjo Peninsula, Vansittart Bay, Napier Broome Bay and Deception Bay (DoEE 2016a).

The Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin BIA in the combined EMBA is detailed in **Table 7-3** and shown on **Figure 7-3**.

7.1.12 Spotted Bottlenose Dolphin (Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin)

The spotted bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus*) (Arafura/ Timor Sea populations) is generally considered to be a warm water subspecies of the spotted bottlenose dolphin, occurring in shallow (often <10 m deep) inshore waters (Bannister *et al.*, 1996; Hale *et al.*, 2000). The known distribution of the spotted bottlenose dolphin extends from Shark Bay north to the western edge of the Gulf of

Carpentaria in Australia (DoEE 2016b). The spotted bottlenose dolphin BIA in the combined EMBA is detailed in **Table 7-3** and shown on **Figure 7-3**.

7.1.13 Irrawaddy Dolphin (Australian Snubfin Dolphin)

The Irrawaddy dolphin, also known as the snubfin dolphin (*Orcaella heinsohni*) is known to occur within the waters off northern Australia, extending north from Broome in Western Australia to the Brisbane River in Queensland (DoEE 2016c). Surveys have indicated that the species is typically found in protected shallow nearshore waters, generally less than 20 m deep, adjacent to river and creek mouths close to seagrass beds (DoEE 2016c). The snubfin dolphin was not recorded during any of the aerial surveys undertaken along the Dampier Peninsula coastline in the vicinity of James Price Point but were observed in Roebuck Bay from vessels on several occasions (RPS, 2010b). Based on the extensive survey effort and amenable conditions within the James Price Point coastal area during the survey, it is concluded that this species is seldom found outside of shallow and sheltered bays and inlets (DSD 2010). The Irrawaddy dolphin BIA in the combined EMBA is detailed in **Table 7-3** and shown on **Figure 7-3**.

7.1.14 Dusky Dolphin

The dusky dolphin's distribution is strongly linked to colder waters. In Australia, the dusky dolphin has been sighted in southern Australia from WA to Tasmania. It is presumed to be primarily an inshore species but has been known to move further offshore, possibly due to its desire for colder waters (Gill *et al.* 2000). Dusky dolphins are expected to be limited in their distribution along the WA coastline due to the presence of the southward-flowing warm water of the Leeuwin Current.

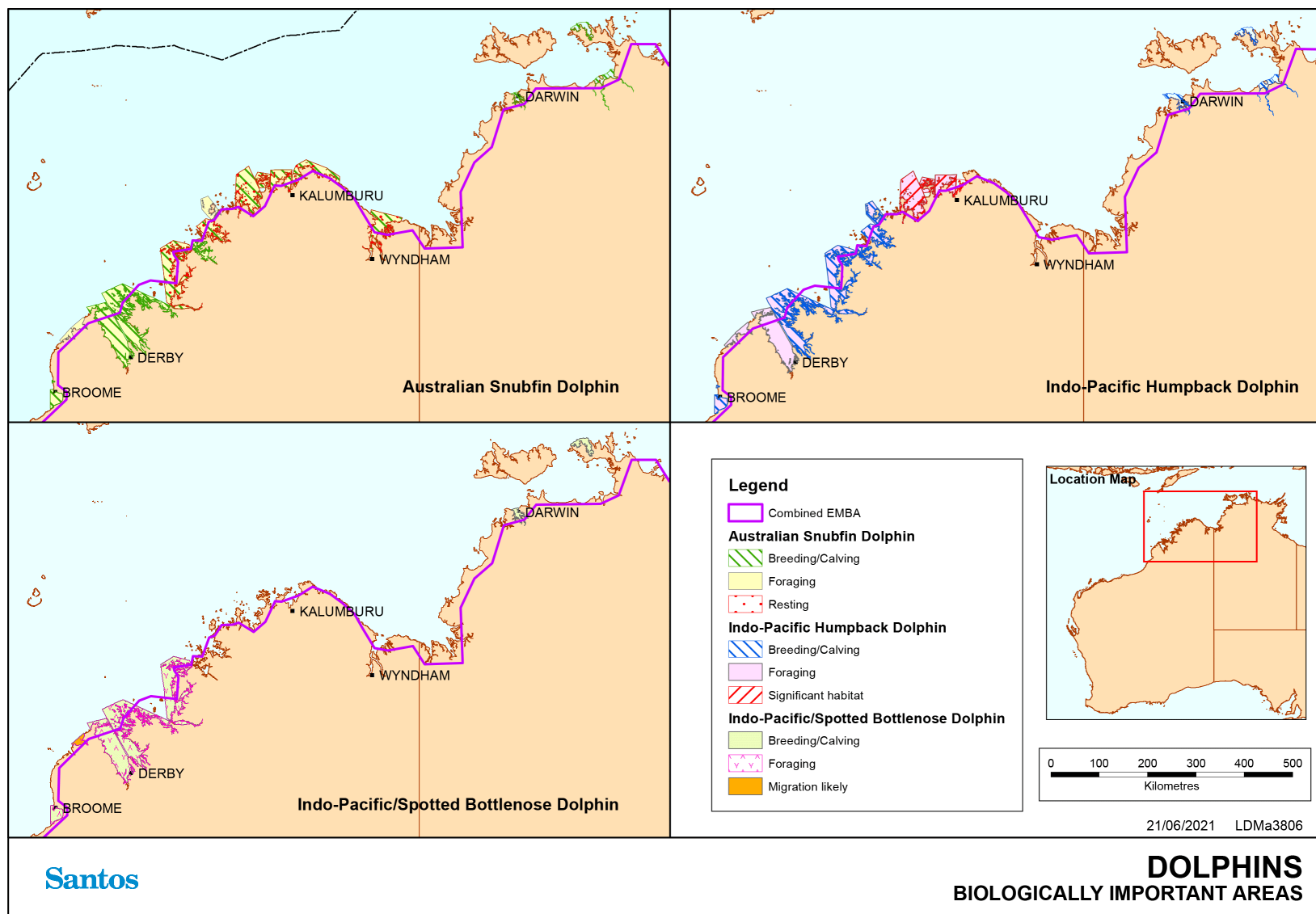


Figure 7-3: Biologically important areas – dolphins

7.1.15 Australian Sea Lion

The Australian sea lion is endemic to Australia. Breeding colonies are found only in South Australian and Western Australian waters. There are currently 76 known Australian sea lion pupping locations along the coast and offshore islands between the Houtman Abrolhos Islands in Western Australia to the Pages Islands in South Australia (DSEWPaC 2013c). The species has also been recorded at Shark Bay (DoE 2014a).

BIAs for foraging, haul-out and breeding sites identified by the National Conservation Values Atlas are located south of the waters from Busselton to the NT (DAWE 2020b). Male Australian sea lions have been recorded foraging in areas up to 60 km away from their birth colonies, with potentially larger dispersal ranges up to 180 km (Hamer *et al.* 2011). However, female Australian sea lions have restricted home ranges, with high rates of natal site fidelity and limited gene flow with other regions (Campbell 2005). The Australian sea lion BIA in the combined EMBA is outlined in **Table 7-3** and is depicted in **Figure 7-4**.

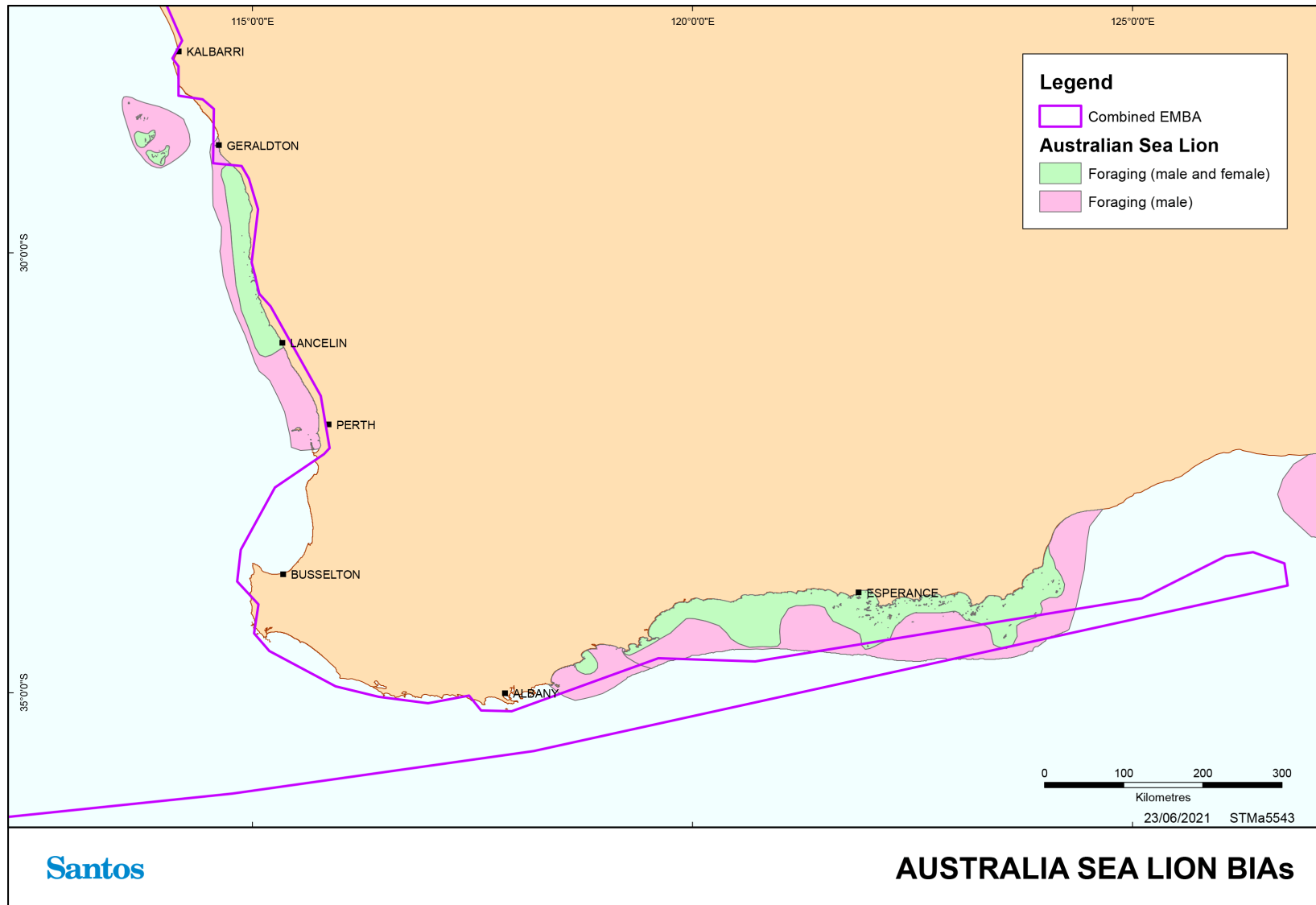


Figure 7-4: Biologically important areas – Australian sea lion

7.1.16 Dugongs

Dugongs (*Dugong dugon*) are large herbivorous marine mammals (up to 3 m) that feed off seagrass and generally inhabit coastal areas. Key populations along the WA coast are principally located at: Shark Bay (the largest resident population in Australia), Ningaloo Marine Park and Exmouth Gulf, the Pilbara coast and offshore areas including Montebello/ Barrow/ Lowendal Islands, and further north at Eighty Mile Beach and off the Kimberley Coast, particularly Roebuck Bay and Dampier Peninsula (Marsh *et al.* 2002; DSEWPaC 2012). Populations are also present at Ashmore Reef, and the north coast of the Tiwi Islands is recognised as a key site for the conservation of dugongs. A well-known major dugong aggregation of approximately 4,400 individuals occurs in waters seaward (within approximately 50 km) of the Tiwi Islands and ranks in the top eight of dugong populations in the world.

Dugong distribution and movement is based on the abundance, size and species of seagrass meadow. Dugongs can migrate hundreds of kilometres between seagrass habitats. Dugongs have been tracked moving long distances of up to 300 km between the Australia mainland and the Tiwi Islands (Whiting *et al.*, 2009). Satellite-tracking data from dugongs tagged as part of the INPEX Ichthys Project baseline surveys observed that dugongs around the Vernon Islands, south of Melville Island, spent time in Darwin Harbour and around the Tiwi Islands (INPEX, 2010). Routine sightings occur in various locations along the NT coastline, including within Darwin Harbour, to the south of Melville Island.

Dugongs in the NT coastal waters have been observed foraging in intertidal rocky reef flats supporting sponges and algae as seagrass habitat is thought to be rare in the north marine region bioregion (INPEX, 2010; Whiting *et al.*, 2009). However, seagrass communities are known to exist along the north coast of the Tiwi Islands.

The dugong BIAs in the combined EMBA are detailed in **Table 7-3** and shown in **Figure 7-5**.

7.1.17 New Zealand fur-seal

The New Zealand fur-seal (also known as the long-nosed fur seal) (*Arctocephalus forsteri*) is a specially protected species (other specially protected) under the BC Act. The New Zealand fur seal is found in Ngari Capes Marine Park (two colonies) and along other parts of Australia's southern coast.⁴

⁴ Identified as a relevant species through review of *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* listed species for marine species without an EBPC Act listing.

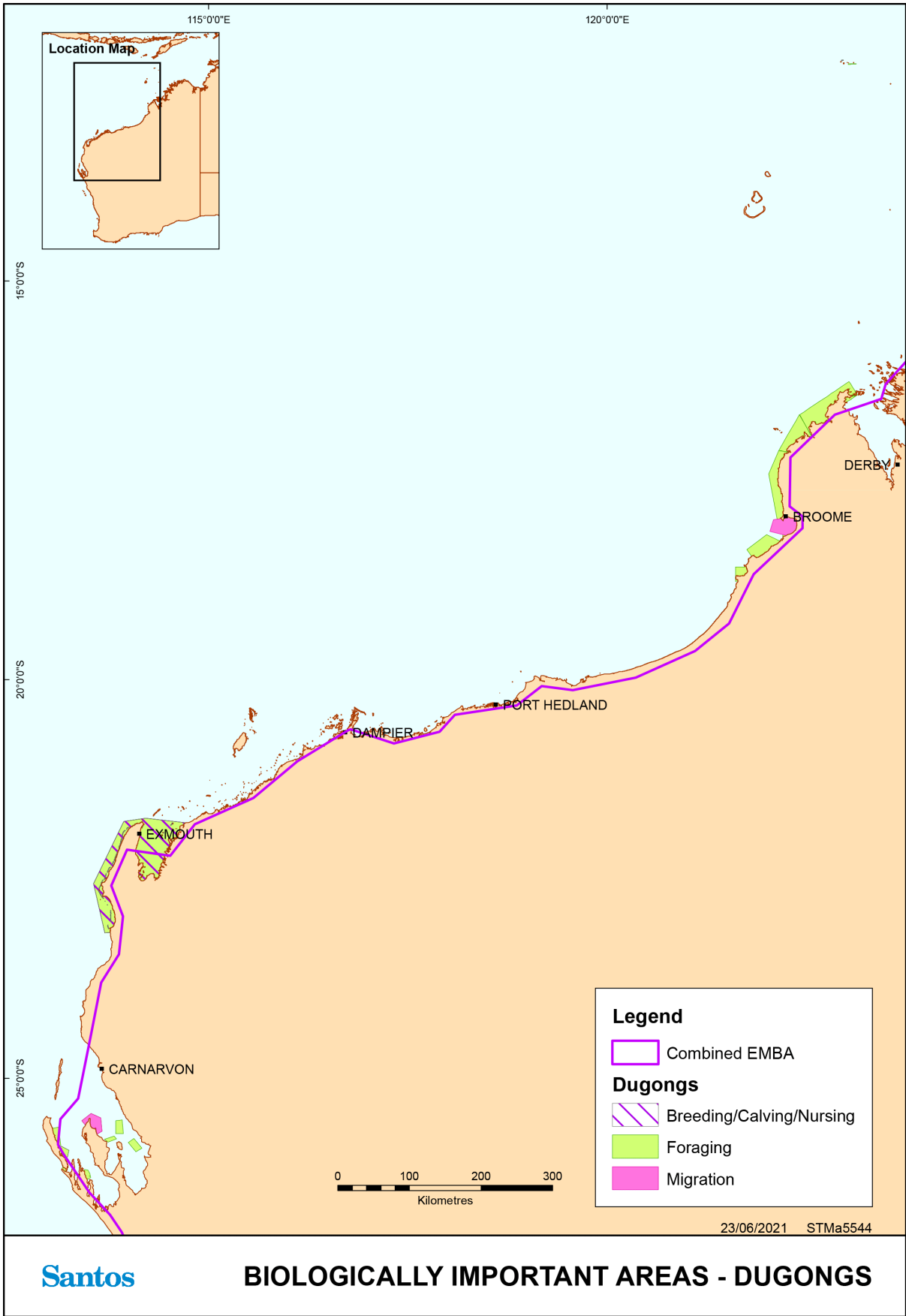


Figure 7-5: Biologically important areas – dugongs

Table 7-2: Summary of information for marine mammals listed as threatened under the EPBC Act

Aspect	Sei whale	Blue and pygmy blue whales	Fin whale	Southern right whale	Humpback whale	Australian sea lion
Species expected in area	Unknown	Yes	Unknown	Unlikely, southern distribution	Yes	Unlikely, southern distribution
Migration depth (m)	Unknown, prefers offshore waters	500-1,000	Unknown	n/a	Up to 100	n/a
Migration seasonality	Unknown	Apr to Aug (north), Oct to Jan (south)	Unknown	n/a	Jun to Nov	n/a

7.2 Biologically Important Areas / Critical Habitat – Marine Mammals

Table 7-3 below provides an overview of BIAs in the combined EMBA for marine mammals

The DAWE may also make recovery plans for threatened fauna listed under the EPBC Act. The EPBC Act requires that ‘habitat critical to the survival of the listed threatened species’ is identified in recovery plans, relevant recovery plans are listed in **Section 13.2**⁵.

In addition, both the EPBC Act and WA BC Act and associated regulations (2018) provide for the listing of critical habitat - habitat ‘critical to the survival of the threatened species’. To date no critical habitat in WA has been listed under either Act. No provision is made under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976 for listing critical habitat.

Table 7-3: Biologically important areas – marine mammals

Species	Scientific name	Aggregation area and use	BIAs within EMBA
Blue and pygmy blue whales	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>	Migration – along the continental shelf edge off the WA coastline, extending offshore near Scott Reef and into Indonesian waters Foraging – along Ningaloo reef, around Scott Reef, around the Perth canyon Distribution – along the WA coastline towards and beyond Indonesia.	Blue and pygmy blue whale - Head of the Perth Canyon Outer continental shelf from Cape Naturaliste to south of Jurien Bay Outer Perth Canyon Head of the Perth Canyon Pygmy blue whale - Augusta to Derby. Tend to pass along the shelf edge at depths of 500 m to 1000 m; appear close to coast in the Exmouth-Montebello Islands area on southern migration. From Mandurah to south of Cape Naturaliste, seaward to the 50 m depth contour Indonesia- Banda Sea Ningaloo Perth canyon Scott Reef

⁵ Further background information on BIA and identification of critical habitat in recovery plans is provided in **Section 5.4**.

Species	Scientific name	Aggregation area and use	BIAs within EMBA
Southern right whale	<i>Eubalaena australis</i>	Breeding/calving – along the south west and southern coastline of WA/SA	Bunbury area, WA Camac Island/Fremantle, WA Coast Cape Naturaliste to Cape Leeuwin Coast Perth region to Cape Naturaliste Geographe Bay, WA Perth to Kangaroo Island
Humpback whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	Breeding/calving/nursing/resting – Kimberley/Coastal North Lacepede Island, Campden Sound, Exmouth Gulf, Shark Bay Migration - northern migration deeper waters of the continental shelf, southward migration – along the WA mainland	Cape Leeuwin to Houtman Abrolhos Cape Naturaliste Cape Naturaliste to Cape Leeuwin Exmouth Gulf Flinders Bay Geographe Bay Houtman Abrolhos Islands Kimberley/Coastal North Lacepede Island, Camden Sound North of Houtman Abrolhos Shark Bay The migration corridor extends from the coast to out to approximately 100 km offshore in the Kimberley region extending south to North West Cape. From North West Cape to south of shark Bay the migration corridor is reduced to approximately 50 km. West coast - Lancelin to Kalbarri West coast- Bunbury to Lancelin including Rottnest Island
Sperm whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>	Foraging - west end of Perth Canyon and Albany Canyons	Western end of Perth canyon Albany Canyons - Immediately south of the continental shelf edge extending over the continental slope
Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin	<i>Sousa chinensis</i>	Breeding, calving, foraging – Kimberley coastal waters and islands Significant habitat – unknown behavior – Admiralty Gulf & Parry Harbour and Bougainville Peninsula Significant habitat - Vansittart Bay, Anjo Peninsula	Admiralty Gulf & Parry Harbour Bougainville Peninsula Camden Sound Area - Walcott Inlet, Doubtful Bay, Deception Bay, Augustus Island (Kuri Bay) Carnot & Beagle bay King Sound North and Yampi Sound and Talbot Bay Fjord area near Horizontal Falls King Sound Southern Sector Maret and Biggee Island Pender bay Port Nelson, York Sound, Prince Frederick Harbour Prince Regent River Roebuck Bay Vansittart Bay, Anjo Peninsula Willie Creek

Species	Scientific name	Aggregation area and use	BIAs within EMBA
Indo-Pacific/spotted bottlenose dolphin	<i>Tursiops aduncus</i>	Breeding, calving, foraging – Kimberley coastal waters and islands Migration – Pender Bay	Camden Sound Area - Walcott Inlet, Doubtful Bay, Deception Bay, Augustus Island (Kuri Bay) King Sound North and Yampi Sound and Talbot Bay Fjord area near Horizontal Falls King Sound Southern Sector Pender bay Roebuck Bay
Irrawaddy dolphin (Australian snubfin dolphin)	<i>Orcella heinsohni</i>	Breeding, calving, foraging, resting– Kimberley coastal waters and islands	Admiralty Gulf and Parry Harbour Bougainville Peninsula Camden Sound Area - Walcott Inlet, Doubtful Bay, Deception Bay, Augustus Island (Kuri Bay) Cape Londonderry and King George River Carnot and Beagle bay King Sound North and Yampi Sound and Talbot Bay Fjord area near Horizontal Falls King Sound Southern Sector Maret and Biggee Island Ord River Pender bay Port Nelson, York Sound, Prince Frederick Harbour Prince Regent River Roebuck Bay Vansittart Bay, Anjo Peninsula Willie Creek
Australian sea lion	<i>Neophoca cinerea</i>	Foraging – male and female – Houtman Abrolhos Island, mid-west coast (more restricted spatial extent than males) Foraging – males Houtman Abrolhos Island, mid-west coast down to Perth Breeding – Buller Island, North Fisherman Island, Beagle Island, Abrolhos Island Haul Out Sites – North Cervantes Island, Sandland Island, Abrolhos Island	Houtman Abrolhos Islands Mid-west coast, includes Beagle Island, Fisherman Island, Jurien Bay, Cervantes and Buller Colonies From Recherche Archipelago to Doubtful Islands – Key colonies, Kimberly island, Glenny and Wickham Island. Haul-Off rock
Dugong	<i>Dugong dugon</i>	Foraging –Dampier Peninsula, Roebuck Bay, Shark Bay, Exmouth and Ningaloo coastline Migration – Roebuck Bay and North East Peron Peninsula, Shark Bay Breeding/calving/nursing – Exmouth and the Ningaloo coastline	Ashmore Reef - Far West Ashmore Reef - South (located on sea reef side only, not interior) Between Peron Peninsula and Faure Island, Shark Bay Dirk Hartog Island, Shark Bay East of Faure Island, Shark Bay Exmouth Gulf Kimberley coast, Dampier Peninsula

Species	Scientific name	Aggregation area and use	BIAs within EMBA
			Middle Island, Kimberley coast North East Peron Peninsula, Shark Bay North of Faure Island, Shark Bay Pilbara and Kimberley coast near Dampier Peninsula Pilbara and Kimberley coast near James Price Point Roebuck Bay, Broome South Passage, Shark Bay Useless Loop, Shark Bay

8. Birds

Marine waters and coastal habitats in the combined EMBA contain key habitats that are important to birds, including offshore islands, sandy beaches, tidal flats, mangroves and coastal and pelagic waters. These habitats support a variety of birds which utilise the area in different ways and at different times of the year (DSEWPac 2012a). Birds can be broadly grouped according to their preferred foraging habitat as coastal/terrestrial birds, seabirds and shorebirds.

Coastal or terrestrial species inhabit the offshore islands and coastal areas of the mainland throughout the year. These species are either primarily terrestrial, or they may forage in coastal waters. Resident coastal and terrestrial species include osprey (*Pandion cristatus*), white-bellied sea eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*), silver gull (*Larus novaehollandiae*) and eastern reef egret (*Egretta sacra*) (DEWHA 2008a).

Seabirds include those species whose primary habitat and food source is derived from pelagic waters. These species spend the majority of their lives at sea, ranging over large distances to forage over the open ocean. Seabirds present in the area include terns, noddies, petrels, shearwaters, tropicbirds, frigatebirds boobies and albatrosses (DEWHA 2008a).

Shorebirds, including waders, inhabit the intertidal zone and adjacent areas. Some shorebird species, including oystercatchers are resident (Surman & Nicholson 2013). Other shorebirds are migratory and include species that utilise the East Asian–Australasian Flyway, a migratory pathway for millions of migratory shorebirds that travel from Northern Hemisphere breeding grounds to Southern Hemisphere resting and foraging areas. Shorebirds that regularly migrate through the area include the Scolopacidae (curlews, sandpipers etc.) and Charadriidae (plovers and lapwings) families.

Surveys in the area by Santos and other agencies have built a picture of diverse avifauna. A summary of research is discussed below, followed by information on threatened and migratory birds. Wetlands of international importance are discussed in **Section 9.1.3**.

8.1 Regional Surveys

8.1.1 Abrolhos Islands

The Abrolhos Islands are one of the most significant seabird nesting areas in the eastern Indian Ocean with over two million birds breeding on the islands and small rocky atolls in the Abrolhos (DoF 2012). The mixture of species is unique, as subtropical and tropical species, and littoral and oceanic foragers, share the breeding islands. A total of 95 bird species have been recorded as residents or visitors to the Abrolhos Islands. Of these 35 species are known to breed at the Abrolhos (DoF, 2012):

- + Common noddy (rookery – Pelsaert Island): The Abrolhos supports 80% of the Australian breeding population of the common noddy (*Anous stolidus*) with up to 250,000 common noddies breed at Pelsaert Island. These birds lay their eggs in spring, but the actual month can vary, depending on their food supply and the weather conditions existing in offshore waters (DoF 2012);
- + Caspian tern (rookeries – Leo Island, West Wallabi Island and Pelsaert Island): Unlike other more social terns, Caspian terns (*Hydroprogne caspia*) are usually solitary nesters. There are less than 150 of these breeding at the Abrolhos, across 22 islands (DoF 2012);
- + Wedge-tailed shearwaters (rookeries): The Abrolhos are the most important breeding sites in Australia for the wedge tailed shearwater (*Ardenna pacifica*), with between 500,000 and 1,000,000 of these birds breeding there every year, predominantly on West Wallabi Island. The wedge-tailed shearwater breeding colonies at the Abrolhos are the largest in Australia (DoF 2012);

- + Bridled tern (rookeries – Gun Island, Leo Island, Pelsaert Island, Little North Island, Fisherman Islands, Beagle Islands and Penguin Island): Bridled terns (*Onychoprion anaethetus*) breed on 90 islands throughout the Abrolhos. These birds fly north for the winter, through Indonesia to waters around the Philippines. There are approximately 4,000 bridled terns who return to the Abrolhos around October every year to lay their eggs. Bridled terns nest on more islands in the Abrolhos than any other bird species (DoF, 2012);
- + Osprey (nesting area – Pelseart Island): Up to 100 eastern ospreys (*Pandion cristatus*) nest at a number of sites throughout all three island groups at the Abrolhos, including nesting platforms made from converted rock lobster pots and stacked fishing equipment on jetties (DoF 2012);
- + White-bellied sea eagle (nesting area – West Wallabi Island): At the Abrolhos, there are up to 50 breeding white-bellied sea eagles (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*), spread across all three island groups (DoF 2012);
- + Australian lesser noddy (feeding area and rookeries Morley Island, Wooded Island and Pelseart Island): In Australia the Australian lesser noddy is only known to breed in this area and is known to forage between the islands and the continental shelf edge; and
- + Other areas rookeries identified for both the wedge-tailed shearwater and bridled tern within the south west area include Lancelin Island, Rottnest Island and Safety Bay.

8.1.2 North West Cape

Avifauna surveys of the North West Cape have recorded 144 bird species, one third of which are seabirds and shorebirds (resident and migratory) (May *et al.* 1983). Approximately 33 species of seabirds and shorebirds are found in the Ningaloo Marine Park with the main breeding areas at Mangrove Bay, Mangrove Point, Point Maud, the Mildura wreck site and Fraser Island (CALM & MPRA 2005a).

8.1.3 Muiron Islands and Exmouth Gulf Islands

Muiron Islands and Exmouth Gulf Islands are generally lacking in published bird observations data. Early indications from surveys commissioned by Santos in 2013/14 indicate that South and North Muiron Islands are regionally significant in terms of wedge-tailed shearwater (*Ardenna pacifica*) nesting, whilst Bessiers and Fly islands are also significant (Surman pers comm. 2013). Nine coastal/terrestrial species and 21 shorebirds were identified on the Muiron and Exmouth Gulf Islands during the first of these surveys and seven bird species were recorded nesting (Surman 2013).

8.1.4 Dampier Archipelago/Cape Preston Region

The Dampier Archipelago/Cape Preston region is a nesting area for at least 16 species of seabirds. Many of the islands and rocks in the area are known breeding grounds for birds, including wedge-tailed shearwaters (*Ardenna pacifica*), Caspian terns (*Sterna caspia*), bridled terns (*Onychoprion anaethetus*) and roseate terns (*Sterna dougallii*). Small islands and islets such as Goodwyn Island, Keast Island and Nelson Rocks provide important undisturbed nesting and refuge sites, and Keast Island provides one of the few nesting sites for pelicans in WA (CALM & MPRA 2005).

8.1.5 Barrow Island Group

Barrow Island and surrounding islands have a diverse avifauna comprising at least 119 species (Chevron 2010), including 11 resident land birds, eight resident seabirds, 17 seabirds, 22 species of migratory waders, six resident shorebirds and 43 irregular visitors (Surman 2003). The avifauna of Barrow Island is thus poor in terms of land birds and waterfowl compared to mainland areas of the Pilbara, but rich in migratory waders

and seabirds. Compared to other nearby offshore islands, Barrow Island has substantially more migratory waders but fewer breeding seabirds (Surman 2003).

8.1.6 Lowendal Island Group and Airlie and Serrurier Islands

The Lowendal Island Group has a diverse avifauna comprising 89 recorded species (Dinara Pty Ltd. 1991, Burbidge *et al.* 2000). Six species of resident land birds and six species of raptors have been recorded at the Lowendal Islands (Surman & Nicholson 2012). Up to fourteen seabird species have been observed at any one time during annual surveys of the Lowendal Islands between 2004 and 2012. Surveys at the Montebello Islands have recorded 70 bird species. This includes 12 species of seabirds and 14 species of migratory shorebirds (Burbidge *et al.* 2000).

Wedge-tailed shearwaters have been identified to nest on Varanus, Airlie, Serrurier and Bridled Islands (Astron 2017a). Breeding participation on the islands appears to be largely influenced by pre-breeding oceanographic conditions (Astron 2017a). Monitoring in 2016/17 was undertaken by Santos and demonstrated the colony sizes for wedge-tailed shearwaters to be within or above previously reported ranges (Astron 2017a). This is informed though monitoring that has been undertaken under the Integrated Shearwater Monitoring Program (ISMP), established in 1994.

In 2016/17, areas of potential wedge-tailed shearwater nesting habitat were recorded on Varanus Island (5.53 ha) and Airlie Island (12.47 ha) and surrounding islands of Bridled (2.94 ha), Serrurier (130.89 ha), Abutilon (2.02 ha) and Parakeelya (1.66 ha) (Astron 2017a). The number of wedge-tailed shearwater breeding pairs was also estimated for each of Varanus (1,492 +/- 702), Airlie (600 +/- 124), Bridled (1,039 +/- 342), Serrurier (23,240 +/- 4,341), Abutilon (317 +/- 210) and Parakeelya (172 +/- 138) islands (Astron 2017a).

Other seabird species utilising Abutilon, Beacon, Bridled and Parakeelya islands for nesting include bridled terns, silver gulls, crested terns and lesser crested terns. Monitoring for these seabirds in 2016/17 was also completed by Santos, with monitoring results concluded to support previous trends for all species. Bridled terns mainly utilise Abutilon, Bridled and Parakeelya islands for breeding, with smaller numbers noted on Beacon and Varanus Islands. The bridled terns have not been recorded on Airlie Island and only in very small numbers on Varanus Island (Astron 2017b).

Silver gull numbers appear to be growing across the region (2010/2011). However, reasons for this are unknown but considered possibly to be due to greater prey availability or immigration from the mainland (Astron 2017b). Silver gulls have been found to utilise Bridled, Parakeelya, Abutilon and Beacon islands longer term for breeding. Silver gulls have not been identified to nest on Varanus island and were only recorded nesting on Airlie island for the first time in 2016/17 since monitoring commencement in 2004/05 (Astron 2017b).

The crested tern and lesser crested tern are noted as nomadic breeders that appear to use a consistent subset of islands for breeding. In 2016/17, Beacon Island was the favourable nesting site for the crested tern and lesser crested tern (Astron 2017b). Surveys in the vicinity of Port Hedland (Bennelongia 2011) recorded 23 species of migratory shorebird between 2002 and 2011. Terrestrial/coastal and seabird species were not targeted. A total of 4,248 migratory shorebirds of 18 species were observed during the field survey in April 2011.

8.2 Threatened Species

A Protected Matters search of the combined EMBA identified 33 bird species (**Appendix A**) listed as threatened under the EPBC Act.

An examination of the Species Profile and Threats database (DAWE 2020a) and The Action Plan for Australian Birds (Garnet 2011) showed that some listed bird species are not expected to occur in significant numbers in the marine and coastal environments in the combined EMBA due to their terrestrial or southern distributions. Hence, these species are not discussed further.

EPBC Act threatened species expected to occur in the area are listed in **Table 8-1** along with their WA and NT conservation status (as applicable), and discussed below. There are an additional 51 migratory species listed under the EPBC Act, with these detailed in **Section 8.3 (Table 8-3)**. BIAs for birds are detailed in **Table 8-7** and depicted in **Figure 8-1** and **Figure 8-2**.

Table 8-1: Birds listed as threatened under the EPBC Act

Species	Conservation Status				Likelihood of occurrence in EMBA	BIAs in EMBA
	EPBC Act 1999	BC Act 2016	Other WA Conservation Code	TPWC Act 1976		
Shorebirds						
Red knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>)	Endangered, Migratory	Endangered	-	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Christmas Island Goshawk (<i>Accipiter fasciatus natalis</i>)	Endangered	Endangered	-	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Curlew sandpiper (<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>)	Critically endangered, Migratory	Critically endangered	-	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Great knot (<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>)	Critically endangered, Migratory	Critically endangered	-	Vulnerable	Roosting known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Greater sand plover (<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>)	Vulnerable, Migratory	Vulnerable	-	Vulnerable	Roosting known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Lesser sand plover (<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>)	Endangered, Migratory	Endangered	-	Vulnerable	Roosting known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Western Alaskan bar-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica baueri</i>)	Vulnerable, Migratory ⁶	Vulnerable, Specially protected (migratory) ⁷	-	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Northern Siberian bar-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica menzbieri</i>)	Critically endangered, Migratory ⁷	Critically endangered, Specially protected (migratory) ⁷	-	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Eastern curlew	Critically endangered,	Critically endangered	-	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to	None - No BIA defined

⁶ Listed as migratory at species level

Species	Conservation Status				Likelihood of occurrence in EMBA	BIAs in EMBA
	EPBC Act 1999	BC Act 2016	Other WA Conservation Code	TPWC Act 1976		
<i>(Numenius madagascariensis)</i>	Migratory				occur within area	
Australasian bittern (<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>)	Endangered	Endangered	-	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Australian painted snipe (<i>Rostratula australis</i>)	Endangered	Endangered	-	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Seabirds						
Australian lesser noddy (<i>Anous tenuirostris melanops</i>)	Vulnerable	Endangered	-	-	Breeding known to occur within area	Yes – refer to Table 8-7
Fairy prion (southern) (<i>Pachyptila tutur subantarctica</i>)	Vulnerable	-	-	-	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Southern royal albatross (<i>Diomedea epomophora</i>)	Vulnerable, Migratory	Vulnerable	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Northern royal albatross (<i>Diomedea sanfordi</i>)	Endangered, Migratory	Endangered	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Amsterdam albatross (<i>Diomedea amsterdamensis</i>)	Endangered, Migratory	Critically endangered	-	-	Species or species habitat may occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Antipodean albatross (<i>Diomedea antipodensis</i>)	Vulnerable Migratory	-	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Sooty Albatross (<i>Phoebastria fusca</i>)	Vulnerable, Migratory	Endangered	-	-	Species or species habitat	None - No BIA defined

Species	Conservation Status				Likelihood of occurrence in EMBA	BIAs in EMBA
	EPBC Act 1999	BC Act 2016	Other WA Conservation Code	TPWC Act 1976		
					may occur within area	
Tristan albatross (<i>Diomedea dabbenea</i>)	Endangered, Migratory	Critically endangered	-	-	Species or species habitat may occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Wandering albatross (<i>Diomedea exulans</i>)	Vulnerable, Migratory	Vulnerable	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area	None - BIA not found in EMBA
Christmas island frigatebird (<i>Fregata andrewsi</i>)	Endangered, Migratory	Specially protected (migratory)	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Southern giant petrel (<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>)	Endangered, Migratory	Specially protected (migratory)	-	-	Species or species habitat may occur within area	None - BIA not found in EMBA
Northern giant petrel (<i>Macronectes halli</i>)	Vulnerable, Migratory	Specially protected (migratory)	-	-	Species or species habitat may occur within area	None - BIA not found in EMBA
Abbott's booby (<i>Papasula abbotti</i>)	Endangered	-	-	-	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Soft-plumaged petrel (<i>Pterodroma mollis</i>)	Vulnerable	-	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur within area (high numbers)	Yes – refer to Table 8-7
Blue petrel (<i>Halobaena caerulea</i>)	Vulnerable	-	-	-	Species or species habitat may occur within area	None - No BIA defined
Australian fairy tern (<i>Sternula nereis nereis</i>)	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	-	-	Breeding known to occur within area. Foraging	Yes – refer to Table 8-7

Species	Conservation Status				Likelihood of occurrence in EMBA	BIAs in EMBA
	EPBC Act 1999	BC Act 2016	Other WA Conservation Code	TPWC Act 1976		
					(in high numbers)	
Indian yellow-nosed albatross (<i>Thalassarche carteri</i>)	Vulnerable, Migratory	Endangered	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour may occur within area	Yes – refer to Table 8-7
Shy albatross (<i>Thalassarche cauta</i>)	Endangered, Migratory	Vulnerable	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area	None - BIA not found in EMBA
White-capped albatross (<i>Thalassarche steadi</i>)	Vulnerable, Migratory	Vulnerable	-	-	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area	None - BIA not found in EMBA
Black-browed albatross (<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>)	Vulnerable, Migratory	Endangered	-	-	Species or species habitat may occur within area	None - BIA not found in EMBA
Campbell albatross (<i>Thalassarche impavida</i>)	Vulnerable, Migratory	Vulnerable	-	-	Species or species habitat may occur within area	None - BIA not found in EMBA
Christmas Island white-tailed tropicbird (<i>Phaethon lepturus fulvus</i>)	Endangered	-	-	-	Species or species habitat may occur within area	None - No BIA defined

8.2.1 Shorebirds

Red Knot (New Siberian Islands and north-eastern Siberia)

The red knot is a migratory shorebird, and the species includes five subspecies, including two found in Australia, *Calidris canutus piersmai* and *Calidris canutus rogersi*. The red knot breeds in Siberia and spends the non-breeding season in Australia and New Zealand. During the non-breeding season, the species spends the majority of its time on tidal mudflats or sandflats where they feed on intertidal invertebrates, especially shellfish (Garnet *et al.* 2011).

Curlew Sandpiper

This species is a migratory shorebird that breeds in north Siberia and spends the non-breeding season from western Africa to Australia (Bamford *et al.* 2008). The curlew sandpiper occurs around coastal Australia and

preferred habitats include coastal brackish lagoons, tidal mud and sand flats, estuaries, saltmarshes and less often inland. Their diet is mainly comprised of polychaete worms, molluscs and crustaceans (Higgins & Davies 1996 in Garnet *et al.* 2011).

Great Knot

The great knot is a migratory shorebird with a global distribution, breeding in north-east Siberia and spending the non-breeding season along coasts from Arabia to Australia. Non-breeding birds migrate to inlets, bays, harbours, estuaries and lagoons with large intertidal mud and sand flats where they feed on bivalves, gastropods, crustaceans and other invertebrates (Higgins & Davies 1996 in Garnet *et al.* 2011).

Greater Sand Plover and Lesser Sand Plover

The greater sand plover and lesser sand plover are congeners that breed in China, Mongolia and Russia. The greater sand plover spends the non-breeding season along coasts from Japan through southeast Asia to Australasia, while the lesser sand plover spends the non-breeding season along coasts from Taiwan to Australasia (Banford *et al.* 2008). Non-breeding birds occur along all Australian coasts, especially in the north for the greater sand plover and in the east for the lesser sand plover (DAWE 2020a).

Non-breeding birds forage on beaches, salt-marshes, coastal bays and estuaries, and feed on marine invertebrates including molluscs, worms, crustaceans and insects (Marchant & Higgins 1993 in Garnet *et al.* 2011).

Bar-tailed Godwit (Western Alaskan and Northern Siberian Subspecies)

Two subspecies of the bar-tailed godwit exist, as determined by their breeding locations in Siberia and Alaska (Bamford *et al.* 2008). Non-breeding birds migrate to the coasts of Australia. The western Alaskan subspecies occurs especially on the north and east coasts of Australia whilst the northern Siberian subspecies occurs especially along the coasts of north Western Australia (DAWE 2020a).

Non-breeding birds are found on muddy coastlines, estuaries, inlets, mangrove-fringed lagoons and sheltered bays, feeding on annelids, bivalves and crustaceans (Higgins and Davies 1996 in Garnet *et al.* 2011).

Eastern Curlew

The eastern curlew is a migratory shorebird that breeds in Siberia, Kamchatka and Mongolia and migrates to coastal East Asia and Australia. The South Korean Yellow Sea is an important staging post for this species. Non-breeding birds occur around coastal Australia, are more common in the north and have disappeared or become much rarer at many sites along the south coast (Garnet 2011).

Non-breeding birds are present at estuaries, mangroves, saltmarshes and intertidal flats, particularly those with extensive seagrass (Zosteraceae), where they feed on marine invertebrates, especially crabs and small molluscs (Higgins & Davies 1996 in Garnet 2011).

Australian Painted Snipe

The Australian painted snipe has been recorded at wetlands in all states of Australia (DoE 2014g). The Australian painted snipe generally inhabits shallow terrestrial freshwater (occasionally brackish) wetlands, including temporary and permanent lakes, swamps and claypans. They also use inundated or waterlogged grassland or saltmarsh, dams, rice crops, sewage farms and bore drains. Typical sites include those with rank emergent tussocks of grass, sedges, rushes or reeds, or samphire; often with scattered clumps of lignum *Muehlenbeckia* or canegrass or sometimes tea-tree (*Melaleuca*). The Australian painted snipe sometimes utilises areas that are lined with trees, or that have some scattered fallen or washed-up timber (DoE 2014g).

Australasian Bittern

The Australasian bittern is found in coastal and sub-coastal areas of south-eastern and south-western mainland Australia and the eastern marshes of Tasmania (Birdlife Australia 2017). The Australasian Bittern occurs mainly in freshwater wetlands and, rarely, in estuaries or tidal wetlands (Marchant & Higgins 1990). It favours wetlands with tall dense vegetation, where it forages in still, shallow water up to 0.3 m deep, often at the edges of pools or waterways, or from platforms or mats of vegetation over deep water. It favours permanent and seasonal freshwater habitats, particularly those dominated by sedges, rushes and reeds (e.g. *Phragmites*, *Cyperus*, *Eleocharis*, *Juncus*, *Typha*, *Baumea*, *Bolboschoenus*) or cutting grass (*Gahnia*) growing over a muddy or peaty substrate (Marchant & Higgins 1990). The diet of the Australasian Bittern includes aquatic animals such as small fish, frogs, freshwater crayfish, spiders, insects and small reptiles at night. Breeding occurs during summer from October to January.

All remaining natural habitat (including constructed wetlands) is considered critical habitat for this species. This species is known to occur on the western coastal plain between Lancelin and Busselton and the southern coastal region from Augusta to east of Albany within the combined EMBA (Table 8-7).

8.2.2 Seabirds

Australian Lesser Noddy

This species is usually found only around its breeding islands in the Houtman Abrolhos Islands in Western Australia (Storr *et al.* 1986). The Australian lesser noddy occupies coral-limestone islands that are densely fringed with white mangrove *Avicennia marina*, and it occasionally occurs on shingle or sandy beaches (Higgins & Davies 1996 in DAWE 2020a). This species is thought to be sedentary or resident, staying near to its breeding islands in the non-breeding season. It may leave nesting islands for short periods during the non-breeding season, and probably forages widely (Higgins & Davies 1996 in DAWE 2020a).

Breeding apparently occurs only on Morley, Wooded and Pelsaert Islands at the Houtman Abrolhos Islands (Higgins and Davies 1996 in DoE 2014b). Mangrove stands support approximately 68,000 breeding pairs spread over the three islands (Surman & Nicholson 2006). Breeding may also occur on Ashmore Reef (Stokes & Hinchey 1990). The breeding season extends from mid-August to early April (Higgins & Davies 1996 in DoE 2014b).

The National Conservation Values Atlas identifies BIAs for this species in the area of the Houtman Abrolhos islands (Table 8-7). The Species Group Report Card – Seabirds (DSEWPaC 2012b) states that the entire Australian population of this species breeds in the South-west Marine Region, south of Busselton.

Albatrosses

A Protected Matters search of the waters in the combined EMBA (Appendix A) identified several albatross species that may occur in the area, comprising of the southern royal albatross, northern royal albatross, Amsterdam albatross, Antipodean albatross, Tristan albatross, sooty albatross, wandering albatross, Indian yellow-nosed albatross, shy albatross, white-capped albatross, black-browed albatross and Campbell albatross. All these species predominantly occur in subantarctic to subtropical waters and breed on islands in the southern oceans (DAWE 2020a).

The National Conservation Values Atlas (DAWE 2020b) and the National Recovery Plan for Threatened Albatrosses and Giant Petrels 2011-2016 (DSEWPaC 2011) do not identify any BIAs for these species in the area from Busselton to the NT border. However, a BIA for the Indian yellow-nosed albatross is identified for foraging north to Shark bay and extending east into Bass Strait.

Christmas Island Frigatebird

The Christmas Island frigatebird is a very large seabird. Breeding colonies of the Christmas Island frigatebird is currently confined to Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean (Birdlife International 2019) but forages and roosts widely in south-east Asia and Indian Ocean. No breeding colonies have ever been found away from Christmas Island. The Christmas Island Frigatebird predominantly nests in forests on shore terraces that are protected from prevailing south-east trade winds (TSSC 2020a). All forest containing nesting and roosting sites, including currently known nesting and roosting colonies and any other smaller groups of nests and roosts on Christmas Island is considered critical habitat (TSSC 2020a).

Christmas Island Goshawk

The Christmas Island Goshawk is considered to be the rarest endemic bird on Christmas Island, where it occurs in all habitats from primary and marginal rainforests to suitable areas of secondary regrowth vegetation. The total population size is thought to be very small, perhaps as few as 100 adults, and is probably limited by the availability of suitable rainforest habitat.

Crazy Ants pose an unknown but potentially critical threat to the survival of this bird. The National recovery plan for the Christmas Island Goshawk (*Accipiter fasciatus natalis*) aims to downgrade the Christmas Island Goshawk from Endangered to Conservation Dependent, primarily through successful implementation of the Invasive Ants on Christmas Island Action Plan and protection of habitat critical to the survival of the species from clearance. An assessment of goshawk population dynamics is the most essential requirement of this recovery plan, and community awareness and participation in the conservation of this endemic raptor are also important actions.

Southern Giant Petrel

The southern giant petrel is a highly migratory bird with a large natural range. This species occurs from Antarctic to subtropical waters and breeds on the Antarctic continent, peninsular and islands and on subantarctic islands and South America. Breeding occurs annually between August and March (DAWE 2020a).

The National Conservation Values Atlas (DAWE 2020b) and the National Recovery Plan for Threatened Albatrosses and Giant Petrels 2011-2016 (DSEWPac 2011) do not identify any BIAs for this species in the area from Busselton to the NT border.

Northern Giant Petrel

The northern giant petrel occupies the Antarctic Polar Front. In summer, it occurs predominantly in sub-Antarctic to Antarctic waters, usually between 40 and 64°. The northern giant-petrel breeds on sub-Antarctic islands. Its breeding range extends into the Antarctic zone at South Georgia. It nests in coastal areas where vegetation or broken terrain offers shelter, on sea-facing slopes, headlands, in the lee of banks, under or against vegetation clumps, below cliffs or overhanging rocks, or in hollows. On Campbell Island, it nests on the edge of the coastal plateau. Tussock-grass is widespread at many breeding sites. Its nests are built in secluded, coastal sites, sheltered by heavy vegetation. On Antipodes Island, it nests under *Senecio antipoda* (DoE 2014d).

The National Conservation Values Atlas (DAWE 2020b) does not identify any BIAs for this species in the area spanning SW WA to the NT border.

Soft-Plumaged Petrel

The soft-plumaged petrel is generally found over temperate and subantarctic waters in the South Atlantic, Southern Indian and western South Pacific Oceans. The species breeds colonially on islands in the southern oceans. Breeding occurs from August to May (Marchant & Higgins 1990 in DAWE 2020a).

A BIA for this species is identified for foraging in seas north to 21°30'S off WA.

Blue Petrel

The blue petrel is a marine species of the Sub Antarctic and Antarctic seas. In summer, it occurs mainly over waters of -2 to 2° C in surface temperature, but it also ranges south to the edge of the pack-ice and north to approximately 30° south, or further north over cool currents (DoE 2014e). In the Antarctic, it generally avoids the pack-ice, and only occasionally approaches the edge of the ice. Given the location of the combined EMBA, this species is unlikely to occur.

The National Conservation Values Atlas (DAWE 2020b) does not identify any BIAs for this species in the area spanning SW WA to the NT border.

Abbott's Booby

Currently, Abbott's booby is only known to breed on Christmas Island and to forage in the waters surrounding the island and south-east Asia (TSSC 2020b). Within Christmas Island, most nests are found in the tall plateau forest on the central and western areas of the island, and in the upper terrace forest of the northern coast.

The National Conservation Values Atlas (DoEE 2019b) does not identify any BIAs for this species in the area spanning SW WA to the NT border. Critical habitat is considered all known nesting trees and all forest vegetation within a 200m radius of known nesting trees on Christmas Island (TSSC 2020).

Australian Fairy Tern

The Australian fairy tern is distributed in a large geographic range between Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia. Three subspecies have been identified, one of which is found in Australia. The Australian fairy tern occurs along the coasts of Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and WA; occurring as far north as the Dampier Archipelago (DAWE 2020a). The subspecies has been found in embayments of a variety of habitats including offshore, estuarine or lacustrine islands, wetlands and mainland coastline (Higgins & Davies 1996 in DoE 2014b, Lindsey 1986).

Australian fairy terns nest on sheltered sandy beaches, spits and banks above the high tide line and below vegetation. The Australian fairy tern breeds from August to February depending on the location of the breeding colony (Higgins & Davies 1996 in DAWE 2020a). They generally nest in small colonies of up to 100 birds, although larger colonies of more than 1400 pairs have been reported in Western Australia (Hill *et al.* 1988).

The National Conservation Values Atlas (DAWE 2020b) identifies the vicinity of the lower north-west coast (north to Dampier Archipelago) and west coast (south to Peel inlet) as BIAs for foraging. Biologically important breeding areas were also identified scattered along the coast between Shark Bay and the Pilbara (Table 8-7).

Christmas Island White-tailed Tropicbird

The Christmas Island white-tailed tropicbird is endemic to Christmas Island and leaves the island to forage in the warm waters of the Indian Ocean (Garnett 2011). The white-tailed tropicbird roosts at sea; only incubating or brooding adults remain on nests on the island at night (Stokes 1988).

The National Conservation Values Atlas (DAWE 2020b) does not identify any BIAs for this species within the combined EMBA.

Fairy Prion (southern)

The fairy prion is distributed off the cold-water coasts of Antarctica and southern Australia and New Zealand. The southern subspecies is known to breed on Macquarie Island, Langdon Point, Davis Point and Bishop and

Clerk islands (Garnett & Crowley 2000). It is estimated that the population of the fairy piron (southern) is a little over 50 pairs (Brothers 1984).

The National Conservation Values Atlas (DAWE 2020b) does not identify any BIAs for this species within the combined EMBA.

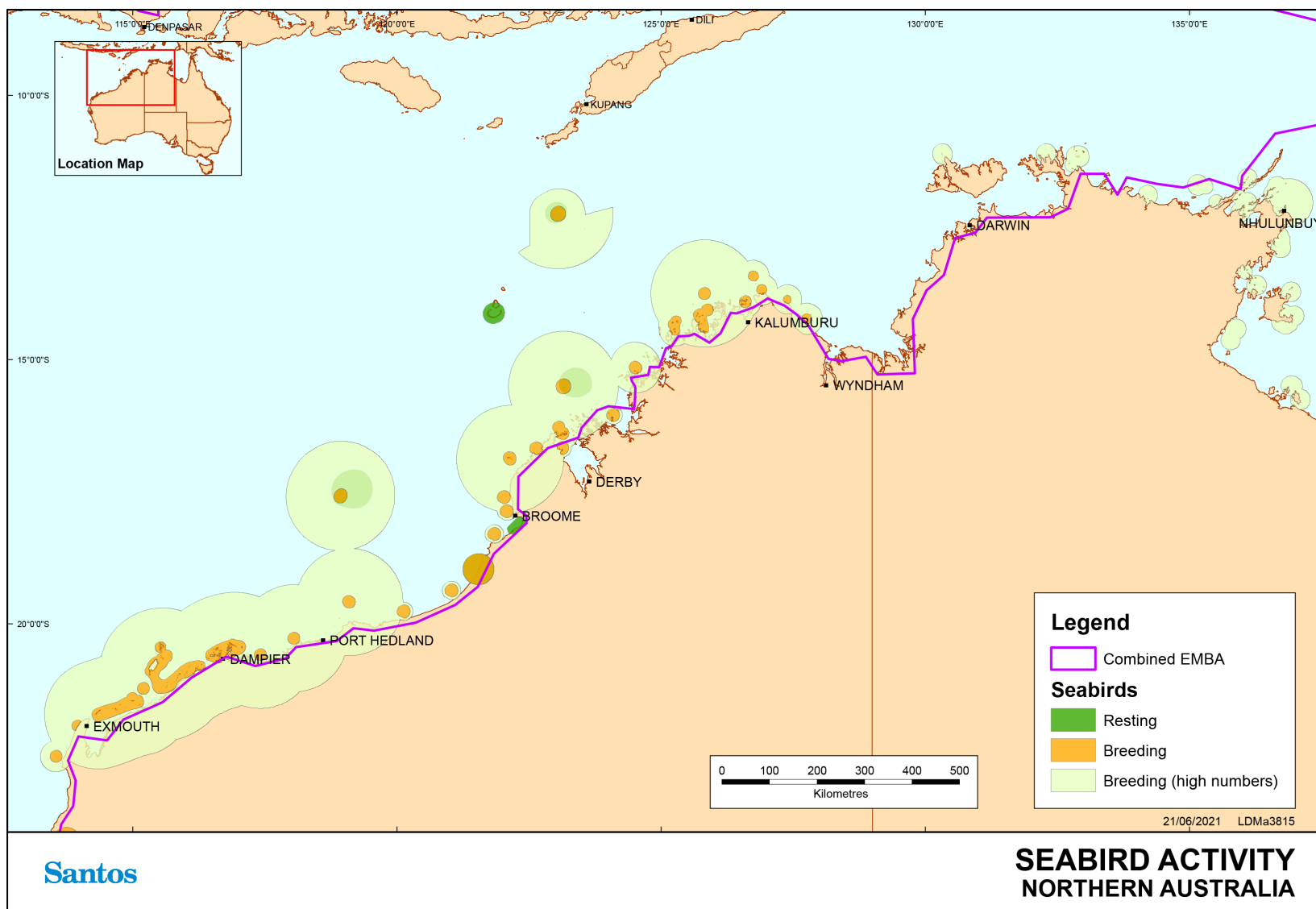


Figure 8-1: Biologically important areas – birds – Northern WA

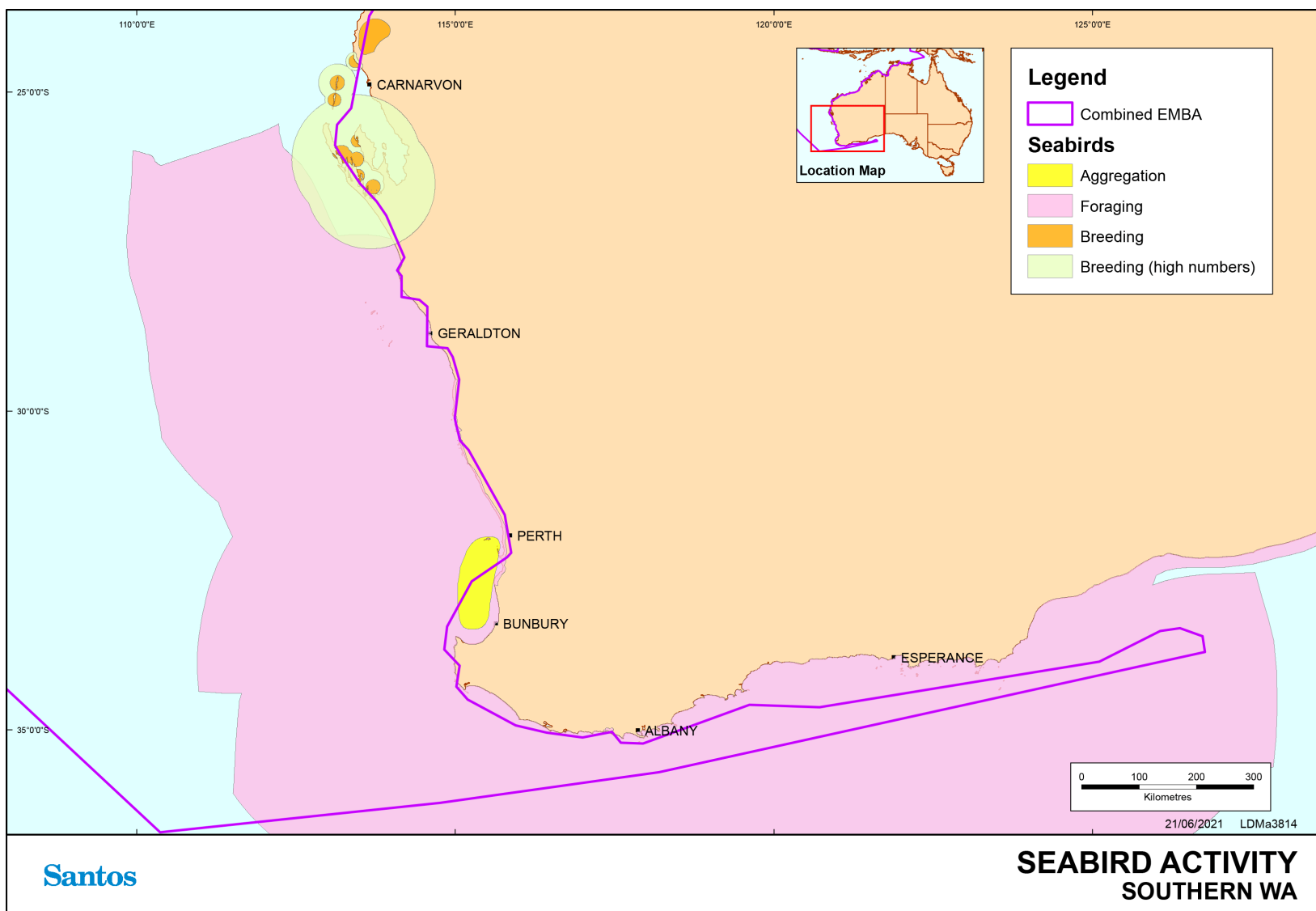


Figure 8-2: Biologically important areas – birds – Southern WA

Table 8-2: Summary of information for birds listed as threatened under the EPBC Act that may be in the combined EMBA

Species	Species Expected in EMBA	Breeding in the Area /Seasonality	Foraging
Shorebirds			
Red knot	Yes	No	Intertidal invertebrates
Curlew sandpiper	Yes	No	Polychaete worms, molluscs and crustaceans taken from shorelines
Great knot	Yes	No	Bivalves, gastropods, crustaceans and other invertebrates taken from shorelines
Greater sand plover/lesser sand plover	Yes	No	Marine invertebrates taken from shorelines
Bar-tailed godwit	Yes	No	Annelids, bivalves and crustaceans taken from shorelines
Eastern curlew	Yes	No	Marine invertebrates associated with seagrass
Australasian bittern	Yes	No	Other small animals, insects, snails and spiders
Australian painted snipe	Yes	No	Seeds and small invertebrates
Western Alaskan bar-tailed godwit	Yes	No	Worms, molluscs, crustaceans, insects
Northern Siberian bar-tailed godwit	Yes	No	Worms, molluscs, crustaceans, insects and some plant material
Seabirds			
Australian lesser noddy	May forage from Kalbarri to Shark Bay	No	Small fish taken from marine and coastal waters (DoE 2014b)
Amsterdam albatross	Low densities	No	Cephalopods, fish and crustaceans taken from marine and coastal waters.
Antipodean albatross	Low densities	No	Cephalopods, fish and crustaceans taken from marine and coastal waters.
Black-browed albatross	Low densities	No	Cephalopods, fish and crustaceans taken from marine and coastal waters.
Campbell albatross	Low densities	No	Cephalopods, fish, salps, jellyfish and crustaceans taken from marine and coastal waters.
Indian yellow-nosed albatross	Low densities	No	Cephalopods, and fish taken from marine and coastal waters.
Northern royal albatross	Low densities	No	Cephalopods, fish, salps and crustaceans taken from marine and coastal waters.
Shy albatross	Low densities	No	Cephalopods, fish and crustaceans taken from marine and coastal waters.
Sooty Albatross	Low densities	No	Cephalopods, fish, crustaceans, siphonophores and penguin carrion taken from marine waters.

Species	Species Expected in EMBA	Breeding in the Area /Seasonality	Foraging
Southern royal albatross	Low densities	No	Cephalopods, and fish taken from marine and coastal waters.
Tristan albatross	Low densities	No	Cephalopods, fish and crustaceans taken from marine waters.
Wandering albatross	Low densities	No	Cephalopods, fish and crustaceans taken from marine and coastal waters.
White-capped albatross	Low densities	No	Cephalopods and fish taken from marine and coastal waters.
Southern & Northern giant petrel	Low densities	No	Scavenges penguin, seal and whale carcasses. Hunts live birds, penguin chicks' cephalopods and krill. Marine and coastal waters (DoE 2014b)
Soft-plumaged petrel	Low densities	No	Cephalopods, fish and crustaceans taken from marine and coastal waters (DoE 2014b)
Australian fairy tern	Yes	Yes Aug to Feb	Bait fish taken from coastal waters
Fairy prion (southern)	Very low densities	No	Small pelagic crustaceans, small fish and squid
Christmas Island frigatebird	Low densities	No	Planktonic crustaceans, fish and squid
Abbott's booby	Low densities	No	Fish and squid
Blue petrel	Low densities	No	Crustaceans, small fish and squid
Christmas Island white-tailed tropicbird	Very low densities	No	Squid and flying fish

8.3 Migratory Species

The EPBC PMST search identified an additional 78 species listed as migratory under the EPBC Act that may occur within the combined EMBA. These species are listed in **Table 8-3**. All of these species are also listed as migratory under the BC Act, with the exception of the flesh-footed shearwater, which is listed as vulnerable under the BC Act. Those species that are listed as both migratory and threatened under either the EPBC Act and/or BC Act are outlined in **Table 8-1** and are not repeated within **Table 8-3**.

Table 8-3: Summary of migratory birds that may occur within the combined EMBA

Species	Common Name	Likelihood of occurrence in EMBA
<i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i>	Asian dowitcher	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	Bar-tailed godwit	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Black-tailed godwit	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>	Bridled tern	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	Broad-billed sandpiper	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Sula leucogaster</i>	Brown booby	Breeding known to occur within area

Species	Common Name	Likelihood of occurrence in EMBA
<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	Caspian tern	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Common greenshank	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
<i>Anous stolidus</i>	Common noddy	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Common redshank	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common sandpiper	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	Crested tern	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Charadrius bicinctus</i>	Double-banded plover	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Ardenna carneipes</i>	Flesh-footed shearwater	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Apus pacificus</i>	Fork-tailed swift	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	Greater crested tern	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Fregata minor</i>	Greater frigatebird	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Grey plover	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Tringa brevipes</i>	Grey-tailed tattler	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Fregata ariel</i>	Lesser frigatebird	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Numenius minutus</i>	Little curlew	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	Little greenshank	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	Little tern	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Calidris subminuta</i>	Long-toed stint	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
<i>Sula dactylatra</i>	Masked booby	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	Marsh sandpiper	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Charadrius veredus</i>	Oriental plover	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>	Oriental pratincole	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Osprey	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	Pacific golden plover	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	Pectoral sandpiper	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
<i>Gallinago stenura</i>	Pin-tailed snipe	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Sula sula</i>	Red-footed booby	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	Red-necked phalarope	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	Red-necked stint	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Phaethon rubricauda</i>	Red-tailed tropicbird	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	Roseate tern	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Ruddy turnstone	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	Ruff (reeve)	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Calidris alba</i>	Sanderling	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	Sharp-tailed sandpiper	Roosting known to occur within area

Species	Common Name	Likelihood of occurrence in EMBA
<i>Erythrotriorchis radiatus</i>	Short-tailed shearwater	Species or species habitat may occur within area
<i>Ardenna grisea</i>	Sooty shearwater	Species or species habitat may occur within area
<i>Calonectris leucomelas</i>	Streaked shearwater	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
<i>Gallinago magala</i>	Swinhoe's snipe	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	Terek sandpiper	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Wandering Tattler	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Ardenna pacifica</i>	Wedge-tailed shearwater	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Whimbrel	Roosting known to occur within area
<i>Phaethon lepturus</i>	White-tailed tropicbird	Breeding known to occur within area
<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Wood sandpiper	Roosting known to occur within area

Australia is signatory to three international treaties with China, Japan and the Republic of Korea to safeguard migratory bird species, predominantly shorebirds. To facilitate observance of the three agreements, 36 species of migratory shorebirds have been listed as specially protected under both the Commonwealth EPBC Act and the WA BC Act.

Eleven internationally recognised areas that can support shorebird migrations are protected as wetlands of international importance. These wetlands are discussed further in **Section 9.1.3**.

The EPBC Act Policy Statement 3.21 sets out criteria for determining the significance of sites to migratory shorebirds based on the number of migratory species and the proportion of a species population that is supported by the site (Commonwealth of Australia 2017b). Site significance can be difficult to assess, particularly for ephemeral inland wetlands. These areas may be used rarely, depending weather conditions, but still provide important habitat for migratory shorebird species.

Migratory shorebirds require a particular conservation approach due to their migration patterns that take them across international boundaries (Bamford *et al.* 2008). These species and their habitats are sensitive to threats due to their high site fidelity, tendency to aggregate, high energy demands and the need for habitat networks containing both roosting and foraging sites (Commonwealth of Australia 2017b). Migratory shorebirds are known to use networks of connected sites (also known as site complexes). They move within these networks depending on the time of day, availability of resources and environmental conditions at the site (Commonwealth of Australia 2017b).

The types of habitat used by migratory shorebirds in Australia vary across the species identified in the PMST search. Migratory shorebirds use both coastal and inland habitats that most commonly include:

- + Coastal habitats: coastal wetlands, estuaries, mudflats, rocky inlets, reefs and sandy beaches, sometimes supporting mangroves; and
- + Inland habitats: inland wetlands, floodplains and grassland areas, often with ephemeral water sources (Commonwealth of Australia 2017b).

Feeding guilds provide an explanation for much of the shorebird distribution pattern in the north Western Australia. For example, Rogers (1999) classified shorebirds (and others) in Roebuck Bay as belonging to seven guilds on the basis of prey choice and foraging method. In order of abundance, these are summarised in **Table 8-4**.

Table 8-4: Feeding guilds based on prey choice and foraging method (Rogers 1999) adapted from DEC (2003) and Bennelongia (2008)

Feeding habitat	Feeding guild	Species
Sea edge	Tactile hunters of macrobenthos	Great knot, red knot, bar-tailed godwit, black-tailed godwit, Asian dowitcher
Along sandy sea edges or near tidal creeks	Tactile hunters of microbenthos	Curlew sandpiper, red-necked stint, broad-billed sandpiper, marsh sandpiper, sharp-tailed sandpiper
Reefs or mangrove fringes	Visual hunters of slow surface-dwelling prey	Common sandpiper, sooty oystercatcher, pied oystercatcher, silver gull, ruddy turnstone
Sandier western parts of Roebuck Bay, often near-shore	Visual hunters of small fast prey	Grey plover, red-capped plover, greater sand plover, lesser sand plover, grey-tailed tattler, terek sandpiper
Soft mudflats in north-east Roebuck Bay	Visual hunters of fast large prey	Eastern curlew, whimbrel, greenshank, striated heron and black-necked stork
Soft mudflats in north-east Roebuck Bay	Kleptoparasites	Gull-billed tern (robs large crabs from whimbrels)
Creek-lines in eastern Roebuck Bay	Pelagic hunters of nekton (animals of the pelagic zone) and neuston (animals that live on the surface film)	Black-winged stilt, red-necked avocet, reef egret, little egret, great white egret, white-faced heron, royal spoonbill

The Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (DoE 2015) provides a framework to guide the conservation of migratory shorebirds and their habitat in Australia and, in recognition of their migratory habits, outlines national activities to support their appreciation and conservation throughout the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

The following migratory shorebird species are subject to the Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds 2015 (DoE 2015).

Table 8-5: Birds subject to the Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds 2015

Migratory species	DoEE SPRAT information on distribution within the area of interest
Asian dowitcher	The Asian dowitcher is a regular visitor to the north-west between Port Hedland and Broome. Elsewhere they are sporadic and rare. In the NT, the Asian dowitcher is found in Darwin and Arnhem Land. In WA, the species has been recorded at Albany, Lake McLarty, Lake McLeod, north-east Pilbara and the south-west Kimberley division. It has also been recorded at the Port Hedland Saltworks, Roebuck Bay, Ashmore Reed and Eighty Mile Beach. The Australian population is approximately 500 (Bamford <i>et al.</i> 2008).
Bar-tailed godwit	The bar-tailed godwit has been recorded in the coastal areas of all Australian states. In WA, it is widespread around the coast, from Eyre to Derby, with a few scattered records elsewhere in the Kimberley. In the NT populations have been recorded from Darwin and Melville Island. Sites of international importance from WA and the NT include; + Eighty Mile Beach, WA (110,290 individuals); + Roebuck Bay, WA (65,000 individuals); + Milngimbi coast, NT (7,000 individuals); and + Elcho Island, NT (5,000 individuals).

Migratory species	DoEE SPRAT information on distribution within the area of interest
Black-tailed godwit	The black-tailed godwit is found in all states and territories of Australia; however, it prefers coastal regions and the largest populations are found on the north coast between Darwin and Weipa. The population that inhabits Roebuck Bay is approximately 7,374 (>1% of the species total population).
Broad-billed sandpiper	In WA, few records occur in the south-west, but the broad-billed sandpiper may be regular in small numbers at scattered locations, from Warden Lake Nature Reserve and Coramup Creek to Guraga Lake Nature Reserve and Hurstview Lake. Individuals mostly occur on the coasts of the Pilbara and Kimberley between Onslow and Broome but are also recorded north to the mouth of Lawley River, and inland at Lake Daley.
Common greenshank	The common greenshank occurs around most of the coast from Cape Arid in the south to Carnarvon in the north-west. In the Kimberley region, it is recorded in the south-west and the north-east, with isolated records from the Bonaparte Archipelago. WA has three sites of international importance for the common greenshank which include: + Eighty Mile Beach (2,240 individuals); + Wilson Inlet (568 individuals); and + Roebuck Bay (560 individuals). The NT does not have any sites of international importance.
Common redshank	In Western Australia (WA), the species is vagrant to the south-west with records at Peel Inlet, Coodanup, the Gascoyne region, Coral Bay and Carnarvon.
Common sandpiper	WA distribution includes: + Roebuck Bay; and + Nuytsland Nature Reserve. NT distribution includes: + Kakadu National Park; and + Darwin area.
Double-banded plover	The double-banded plover can be found in both coastal and inland areas. There are no nationally significant sites within WA.
Fork-tailed swift	In WA, there are sparsely scattered records of the fork-tailed swift along the south coast, ranging from near the Eyre Bird Observatory and west to Denmark. They are widespread in coastal and subcoastal areas between Augusta and Carnarvon, including some on nearshore and offshore islands. They are scattered along the coast from south-west Pilbara to the north and east Kimberley region, near Wyndham. There are sparsely scattered inland records, especially in the Wheatbelt, from Lake Annean and Wittenoom. They are found in the north and north-west Gascoyne Region, north through much of the Pilbara Region, and the south and east Kimberley (Higgins 1999). In the NT scattered records exist around some offshore islands, mostly south to Victoria River Downs.
Great knot	The great knot has been recorded around the entirety of the Australian coast, with a few scattered records inland. The greatest numbers are found in northern Australia; where the species is common on the coasts of the Pilbara and Kimberley, from the Dampier Archipelago to the Northern Territory border. Important sites for great knot in Western Australia include: + Eighty Mile Beach (169,044 individuals); and + Roebuck Bay (22,600 individuals).
Greater sand plover	In Australia, the greater sand plover occurs in coastal areas in all states, though the greatest numbers occur in northern Australia, especially the north-west. In northern Australia, the species is especially widespread between North West Cape and Roebuck Bay in Western Australia and are sparsely scattered records from the largely inaccessible area between Roebuck Bay and Darwin.

Migratory species	DoEE SPRAT information on distribution within the area of interest
	Internationally important sites within Western Australia include: + Eighty Mile Beach (64,548 individuals); + Roebuck Bay (26,900 individuals); and + Ashmore Reef (1,196 individuals).
Grey plover	In Australia, the grey plover has been recorded in all states, where it is found along the coasts and are recorded frequently between Albany and the northern Kimberley coast. Internationally important sites include: + Eighty Mile Beach (1,650 individuals); + Roebuck Bay (1,300 individuals); + Peel Inlet (600 individuals); and + Nuytsland Nature Reserve (409 individuals).
Grey-tailed tattler	A recent review of the species indicated an estimated 90% of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway population (approximately 45 000 individuals) spend the non-breeding season in Australia (Bamford et al. 2008). There are a few scattered records for the species along the south coast near the Eyre Bird Observatory, Point Malcolm, Rossiter Bay, Shark Lake Nature Reserve and surrounding swampland. It is found in the south-west between Augusta and Cervantes. The grey-tailed tattler is widespread from Houtman Abrolhos and the mainland adjacent to the Kimberley Division. It has also been recorded inland at Lake Argyle and on islands off the coast.
Lesser sand plover	Within Australia, the lesser sand-plover is widespread in coastal regions and has been recorded in all states. It mainly occurs in northern and eastern Australia, in south-eastern parts of the Gulf of Carpentaria, western Cape York Peninsula and islands in Torres Strait, and along the entire east coast, though it occasionally also occurs inland. In Western Australia, the following are important sites: + Eighty Mile Beach (1,575 individuals); + Roebuck Bay (1,057 individuals); + Broome (745 individuals); and + Port Hedland Saltworks (668 individuals).
Little greenshank	The marsh sandpiper is found on coastal and inland wetlands throughout Australia found mainly on the coast in Western Australia. National sites of importance within Western Australia include: + Port Hedland Saltworks (500 individuals); + Peel inlet (276 individuals); and + Eighty Mile Beach (140 individuals).
Long-toed stint	In Western Australia, the species is found mainly along the coast, with a few scattered inland records. On the south coast the Long-toed Stint is found from Esperance to Albany and inland to Lake Cassencarry and Dumbleyung. On the south-west coast the species is known from the Vasse River estuary, Guraga Lake and the Namming Nature Reserve. The species has occasionally been recorded in the Gascoyne Region, around Lake Wooleen, Meeberrie Station and McNeill Claypan. It is widespread around the Pilbara region and the Kimberley Division between Karratha and Wyndham-Kununurra. Inland records include Lake Brown, Hannan Lake, Lake Biolet, Newman Sewage Farm and Lake Gregory.
Oriental plover	Internationally important marine sites: + Eighty Mile Beach, WA (approximately 57 619 individuals); and + Roebuck Bay, WA (Approximately 8 750 individuals).

Migratory species	DoEE SPRAT information on distribution within the area of interest
Oriental pratincole	Internationally important site: + Eighty Mile Beach, WA (2.88 million birds). The species occurs at numerous and widespread sites in northern Australia, especially near the Pilbara and Kimberley coasts of northern WA, and throughout the entire coastline of the NT.
Pacific golden plover	In Western Australia, the species is seldom recorded along the southern or south-western coasts but is more widespread along the Pilbara and Kimberley coasts between North-West Cape.
Pectoral sandpiper	In Australasia, the pectoral sandpiper prefers shallow fresh to saline wetlands. The species is found at coastal lagoons, estuaries, bays, swamps, lakes, inundated grasslands, saltmarshes, river pools, creeks, floodplains and artificial wetlands. The species is usually found in coastal or near coastal habitat but occasionally found further inland. It prefers wetlands that have open fringing mudflats and low, emergent or fringing vegetation, such as grass or samphire.
Red knot	The red knot large numbers are regularly recorded in north-west Australia, with 80 Mile Beach and Roebuck Bay being particular strongholds. The Australian population during the non-breeding period is estimated to be 135 000 (Hansen et al. 2016).
Red-necked phalarope	The red-necked phalarope is a regular at the Port Hedland Saltworks and Rottnest Island, Western Australia. The species is also found at the ICI Saltworks in South Australia.
Red-necked stint	The red-necked stint has been recorded in all coastal regions and found inland in all states when conditions are suitable. The red-necked stint probably travels in flocks and has been observed to feed in dense flocks. The Australian population was estimated at 353,000. Internationally important sites include: + Eighty Mile Beach (60,000 individuals); + Port Hedland Salt Works (23,000 individuals); + Roebuck Bay (19,800 individuals); + Wilson Inlet (15,252 individuals) + Alfred Cove Nature Reserve (10,000 individuals); + Lake Macleod (8,312 individuals); and + Peel Inlet (8,063 individuals).
Ruddy turnstone	The ruddy turnstone is widespread within Australia during its non-breeding period of the year. Australian sites of international importance include: + Eighty Mile Beach (3,480 individuals); + Ashmore Reef (2,230 individuals); + Roebuck Bay (2,060 individuals); + Barrow Island (1,733 individuals); and + Lacepede Islands (1,050 individuals).
Ruff (reeve)	In Western Australia, the species has been recorded at the lower King River and it is mostly found in the south-west region of the state. It has been sighted at the Vasse River estuary, north to Namming Lake and Lake McLarty. It has been periodically recorded at Port Hedland, Kununurra and the Argyle Diamond Mine. There are unconfirmed reports at Curlewis Camp, Millstream Chichester, Broome and Roebuck Bay.
Sanderling	They occur on most of the coast from Eyre to Derby, and also around Wyndham. They are more often recorded on the south and southwest coasts, north to around southern Shark Bay, with more sparsely scattered records further north in Gascoyne and Pilbara Regions and the Kimberley Division. Important sites include: + Eighty Mile Beach (2,230 individuals);

Migratory species	DoEE SPRAT information on distribution within the area of interest
	+ Ashmore Reef (1,132 individuals); and + Roebuck Bay (1,510 individuals).
Sharp-tailed sandpiper	They are widespread from Cape Arid to Carnarvon, around coastal and subcoastal plains of Pilbara Region to south-west and east Kimberley Division (Higgins & Davies 1996). Internationally important sites include: + Eighty Mile Beach (25 000 individuals); and + Port Hedland Saltworks (20 000 individuals). + Lake Gregory (10 000 individuals). + Peel-Harvey system (4 030 individuals).
Streaked shearwater	Exmouth Gulf to the north.
Swinhoe's snipe	No conclusive records exist for this species in Australia so the number of individuals that appear in Western Australia are unknown. In WA the species has been recorded in parts of the Pilbara, the Kimberley, Mount Goldsworthy, Mount Blaize. It has also been found in the north west-regions around the Mitchell Plateau
Terek sandpiper	In Western Australia (WA), the terek sandpiper is rarely seen on the south coast: occasionally around Eyre and several records around Albany. On Swan River plain, it has been recorded between Bunbury and the mouth of the Moore River. The species is widespread in the Pilbara region and Kimberley Division, from Dampier to Wyndham, with occasional records around Shark Bay. Internationally important sites include: + Eighty Mile Beach (8,000 individuals); and + Roebuck Bay (1,840 individuals).
Whimbrel	It is common and widespread from Carnarvon to the north-east Kimberley Division, Western Australia. It is occasionally seen on the south coast of Western Australia and has occasionally been recorded in south-west Western Australia and further north to Shark Bay. Internationally important sites include: + Roebuck Bay (1,020 individuals).
Wood sandpiper	The wood sandpiper has its largest numbers recorded in north-west Australia, with all areas of national importance located in Western-Australia: + Parry Floodplain (Wyndham) (355 individuals) + Camballin (185 individuals) + Lake Argyle (90 individuals) + Shark Bay area, (80 individuals) + Vasse-Wonnerup estuary (61 individuals) + Lake McLarty (64 individuals) + Kogolup Lakes (60 Individuals)

Shorebird migration patterns are seasonal and vary according to species (DSEWPac 2012). Generally, shorebirds migrate to northern Australia in August to November. Many birds remain in northern Australia but others disperse southwards (Bennelongia 2011). Migratory shorebird numbers on northern beaches peak in November then again in March as the majority of birds begin their return to the northern hemisphere between March and May. Most migratory shorebirds do not breed in Australia and juvenile birds may spend several years in Australia before reaching maturity and returning north to breed (DEWHA 2009).

The Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Seabirds (DoE 2020) seeks to facilitate a nationally coordinated effort to protect and conserve EPBC Act listed seabirds and provides an over-arching framework for their research and management, while encouraging an effort to address threats to seabirds and their habitats.

The following seabird species are subject to the Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds 2020 (DoE 2020).

Table 8-6: Birds subject to the Wildlife Conservation Plan for Seabirds 2020

Migratory species	DoEE SPRAT information on distribution within the area of interest
Red-tailed Tropicbird	The Australian population is poorly known owing to the numerous breeding sites and protracted and asynchronous breeding season making an accurate census difficult. The largest population breeds on Christmas Island (>2,000 pairs) with additional key breeding locations on Cocos (Keeling) Group, islands of Ashmore Reef Marine Park, Lord Howe Island, Norfolk Island, Coral Sea Marine Park and two known islands and cays in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.
White-tailed Tropicbird	In Australia, the White-tailed Tropicbird (Indian Ocean) breeds in the Cocos-Keeling Islands, at Ashmore Reef and Rowley Shoals off the northern coast of Western Australia. Over the past few years, birds have been sighted with increased frequency on West Island and Home Island (also in the main atoll) in the Cocos-Keeling Islands. The White-tailed Tropicbird (Indian Ocean) ranges widely over the oceans surrounding its breeding locations (Marchant & Higgins 1990). The breeding population of the White-tailed Tropicbird (Indian Ocean) in Australia is estimated at 120 birds.
Broad-billed Prion	The species has an extremely large range extending from the Southern Ocean to the South Atlantic Ocean. Adults are thought to remain in waters adjacent to breeding colonies, however, young birds seem to occur farther north to Australia and South Africa. The global population has been estimated to exceed 15 million individuals (Brooke 2004). The population is suspected to be decreasing owing to predation from invasive species.
Fairy Prion	Two subspecies breed in Australia, turtur and subantarctica. The subspecies subantarctica has previously been detected breeding on two rock stacks off Macquarie Island in 1979 and Bishop and Clerk Island in 1993.
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	The Wedge-tailed Shearwater breeds on the east and west coasts of Australia and on off-shore islands. The species is common in the Indian Ocean, the Coral Sea and the Tasman Sea (Lindsey 1986). In Western Australia breeding occurs on islands off the west coast of WA including the Cocos-Keeling Island. At WA breeding sites there are at least one million breeding pairs.
Flesh-footed Shearwater	The Flesh-footed Shearwater is a locally common visitor to waters of the continental shelf and continental slope off south-western Western Australia to south-eastern Queensland and around Lord Howe Island. Pairs breed on 41 islands off the coast of south-western Western Australia and Lord Howe Island in south-western Western Australia. Flesh-footed Shearwaters have been recorded as vagrants at Norfolk Island and are possibly regular visitors to Norfolk from breeding colonies on Lord Howe Island and around New Zealand (Moore 1985).
Sooty Shearwater	In Australia, there are known colonies on 17 islands, all of which contain fewer than 1,000 pairs, however; Population estimates and trends are unknown.
Short-tailed Shearwater	This species breeds on Tasmanian offshore islands and off the coast of southern Australia, with the bulk of the population in the south-east. National trends are unknown, however the species is monitored at some locations in Tasmania, Victoria and NSW.
Streaked Shearwater	The Streaked shearwater undergoes trans-equatorial migration traveling south during winter, to the coasts of Vietnam, New Guinea, the Philippines, Australia, southern India and Sri Lanka.

Migratory species	DoEE SPRAT information on distribution within the area of interest
	The global population has been estimated to number 3 million individuals.
Lesser Frigatebird	It has been suggested that the frigatebird roost at Weipa and survey data suggests Ashmore Reef Marine Park comprises significant numbers and is believed to account for $\geq 1\%$ of the global population.
Great Frigatebird	Important populations in Western Australian seas include those at North Keeling Island, the islands of Ashmore Reef Marine Park and Adele Island.
Masked Booby	In Australia, the Masked Booby ranges from the Dampier Archipelago in Western Australia (WA), along the entire north coast and east coast to Brisbane. Individuals regularly occur on islands off Australia, including Lord Howe, Norfolk, Kermadec and the Cocos-Keeling Islands. The total Australian Masked Booby population is estimated to be between 3750–4270 breeding pairs.
Red-footed Booby	This Red-footed Booby is found in tropical islands in most oceans, excluding the eastern Atlantic. It winters at sea in the same area, ranging north of the Tropic of Cancer and south of the Tropic of Capricorn. This species is largely pelagic occurring farther from land than other booby species. The most important breeding population in Australia occurs in Pulu Keeling National Park in the Indian Ocean, which regularly supports more than 30,000 pairs.
Brown Booby	In Australia, the Brown Booby is found from Bedout Island in Western Australia, around the coast of the Northern Territory to the Bunker Group of islands in Queensland with occasional reports further south in New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria. The species is reported further south to Tweed Heads, NSW, and to near Onslow, Western Australia and may be becoming more common in these areas. Within Australian seas, including Christmas and Cocos-Keeling Islands in the eastern Indian Ocean, the total breeding population was 59 940–73 900 pairs in a 1996–97 survey. The global population estimate for the species is 200 000.
Common Noddy	In Australia, the Common Noddy occurs mainly in ocean off the Queensland coast, but the species also occurs off the north-west and central Western Australia coast. The species is also rarely encountered off the coast of the Northern Territory, where only one breeding location with about 100-130 birds is known. In 1996, the total Australian population of the Common Noddy was estimated to be between 174 480 and 214 130 breeding pairs.
Bridled Tern	In Western Australia, Bridled Terns are breeding at Cape Leeuwin (extending round the southern coast to Seal Rocks) north to Shark Bay and in Pilbara region and Kimberley Division. At sea, distribution extends from Cape Leeuwin north to Dirk Hartog Island, with isolated mainland coastal records at Point Maud and Ningaloo, and from Barrow Island to the Dampier Archipelago, and at sea off the Kimberley coast from waters west of the Dampier Peninsula to Ashmore Reef and Joseph Bonaparte Gulf. The total population in Western Australia is estimated to be at least 30 000–40 000 pairs and apparently increasing.
Little Tern	The Australian breeding population can be divided into two major subpopulations (northern and eastern) with the northern subpopulation that breeds across northern Australia, from about Broome in north-western Western Australia through coastal Northern Territory to the Gulf of Carpentaria and eastern Cape York Peninsula.
Caspian Tern	Within Western Australia, the Caspian tern is widespread in coastal regions, from the Great Australian Bight to the Dampier Peninsula. There are sparse records on the coasts east of King Sound and in eastern regions.

Migratory species	DoEE SPRAT information on distribution within the area of interest
	Breeding occurs from the Recherche Archipelago to Dirk Hartog Island and Faure Island in Shark Bay, and also in the Pilbara region from around Point Cloates to North Turtle Island, and more rarely, in the Kimberley.
Roseate Tern	The total global population of the Caspian Tern is estimated to be 240 000–420 000 birds in 2010.
Osprey	The breeding range of the Eastern Osprey around the northern coast of Australia (including many offshore islands) extends from Albany in Western Australia to Lake Macquarie in NSW; with a second isolated breeding population on the coast of South Australia. The species is most abundant in northern Australia, where high population densities occur in remote areas. A population on Barrow Island was estimated at 20 pairs in 1978.

Like many birds, seabirds often migrate after the breeding season. Of these, the migration taken by the Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) is the farthest of any bird, crossing the equator in order to spend the Austral summer in Antarctica (Egevang et al. 2010; Fijim et al. 2013). Other species also undertake trans-equatorial trips, both from the north to the south, and from south to north (DoE 2020).

Other species migrate shorter distances away from the breeding sites, their distribution at sea determined by the availability of food. If oceanic conditions are unsuitable, seabirds will immigrate to more productive areas, sometimes permanently if the bird is young (Oro et al. 2004). After fledging, juvenile birds often disperse further than adults, and to different areas, so are commonly sighted far from a species' normal range. Some species, such as some of the storm petrels, diving petrels and cormorants, rarely disperse at all, staying near their breeding colonies year-round (DoE 2020).

8.4 Biologically Important Areas / Critical Habitat– Birds

Table 8-7 below provides an overview of BIAs in the combined EMBA for birds. The DAWE may make recovery plans for threatened fauna listed under the EPBC Act. The EPBC Act requires that 'habitat critical to the survival of the listed threatened species' is identified in recovery plans, relevant recovery plans are listed in **Section 13.2**⁷.

In addition, both the EPBC Act and WA BC Act and associated regulations (2018) provide for the listing of critical habitat - habitat 'critical to the survival of the threatened species'. No provision is made under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976 for listing critical habitat.

Table 8-7: Critical habitat/ biologically important areas - birds

Species	Scientific name	Aggregation area and use	Specific geographic locations for species
Australian fairy tern	<i>Sternula nereis</i>	Foraging – Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne coasts and islands	Found in the vicinity of lower north-west coast (north to Dampier Archipelago), west coast (south to Peel Inlet) and south coast (from Flinders Bay east to Israelite Bay), including islands (as far offshore as Trimouille Island and Houtman Abrolhos). Pilbara and Gascoyne coasts and islands
Australian lesser noddy	<i>Anous tenuirostris melanops</i>	Foraging - Houtman Abrolhos Islands	Houtman Abrolhos Islands

⁷ Further background information on BIA and identification of critical habitat in recovery plans is provided in Section 5.4.

Species	Scientific name	Aggregation area and use	Specific geographic locations for species
Bridled tern	<i>Onychoprion anaethetus</i>	Foraging - West coast of Western Australia and around to Recherche Archipelago	West coast of WA and around to Recherche Archipelago including offshore waters
Brown Booby	<i>Sula leucogaster</i>	Breeding, foraging - Kimberley and northern Pilbara coasts and islands also Ashmore Reef.	Kimberley and northern Pilbara coasts and islands also Ashmore Reef.
Caspian tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>	Foraging - mainly islands (as far offshore as Adele, Bedout, Trimouille and the Houtman Abrolhos)	In WA found on most coasts, mainly islands (as far offshore as Adele, Bedout, Trimouille and the Houtman Abrolhos) and at Lake Argyle, Lake Gregory and Lake MacLeod; accidental elsewhere in the interior.
Common noddy	<i>Anous stolidus</i>	Foraging	Around Houtman Abrolhos Around Lancelin Island
Flesh footed shearwater	<i>Ardenna carneipes</i>	Foraging, aggregation (pre-migration) - Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne coasts and islands including Ashmore Reef	Foraging from Cape Naturaliste to Eyre, 1-150 km offshore. Pre-departure zone in some years from Rottnest Island to Bunbury.
Greater crested tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	Breeding (high numbers)	Melville Island
Greater frigatebird	<i>Fregata minor</i>	Breeding, foraging - Kimberley and Ashmore Reef	Kimberley and Ashmore Reef
Great-winged petrel	<i>Pterodroma macroptera</i>	Foraging - Offshore south of Shark Bay	Offshore south of Shark Bay, extending around south-west corner of WA and east past Kangaroo Island
Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche carteri</i>	Foraging - south-west marine region, north to Shark Bay and extending east into Bass Strait	Throughout offshore waters of south-west marine region, north to Shark Bay and extending east into Bass Strait
Lesser crested tern	<i>Sterna bengalensis</i>	Breeding, foraging - Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne coasts and islands including Ashmore Reef	Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne coasts and islands including Ashmore Reef
Lesser frigatebird	<i>Fregata ariel</i>	Breeding, foraging – Kimberley and Pilbara coasts and islands also Ashmore Reef.	Kimberley and Pilbara coasts and islands also Ashmore Reef.
Little penguin	<i>Eudyptula minor</i>	Foraging - Perth to Bunbury	Perth to Bunbury
Little shearwater	<i>Puffinus assimilis</i>	Foraging - From Kalbarri to Eucla	From Kalbarri to Eucla including offshore waters
Little tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	Breeding, foraging, resting - Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne coasts and islands including Ashmore Reef Resting - Roebuck Bay	Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne coasts and islands including Ashmore Reef Roebuck Bay Ramsar site
Pacific gull	<i>Larus pacificus</i>	Foraging –west coast and islands	West coast and islands from Point Quobba (24°30'S) south to Wedge Island (formerly south to Warnbro Sound and at Cape Naturaliste); casual further north (Point Cloates and Lake MacLeod).

Species	Scientific name	Aggregation area and use	Specific geographic locations for species
Red-footed Booby	<i>Sula sula</i>	Breeding, foraging - northwest Kimberley and Ashmore reef	Northwest Kimberley and Ashmore reef
Roseate tern	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>	Breeding, foraging – Islands and coastline in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne regions Resting – Eighty Mile Beach	Eighty Mile Beach (northern end) Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne coasts and islands including Ashmore Reef Low Rocks and Stern Island in Admiralty Gulf North-east and North-west Twin Islets near the mouth of King sound North-western and west coasts and islands from Sir Graham Moore Is (13°50'S), south to Mandurah (32°32'S) and as far offshore as Ashmore Reef, Bedout Island and the Houtman Abrolhos.
Soft plumage petrel	<i>Pterodroma mollis</i>	Foraging - seas north to 21°30'S	In WA found in seas north to 21°30'S.
Sooty tern	<i>Sterna fuscata</i>	Foraging – Timor Sea	Timor Sea S to 14°30', off northwest coast from Lacepede I SW to 117°E including Abrolhos, Fisherman & Lancelin Is, accidental on lower west coast to Hamelin Bay. Breeding visitor (late Aug - early May) Abrolhos & Lancelin Is; casual winter (Nov - Apr) to Fisherman
Wedge-tailed shearwater	<i>Ardenna pacifica</i>	Breeding, foraging – west coast from Ashmore Reef to Carnac I. Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne coasts, Ashmore reef	Breeding (in hundreds of thousands) off west coast from Ashmore Reef (12°15'S) to Carnac Island (32°07'S), and ranging in western seas between 12°00'S and 33°20'S. Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne coasts and islands including Ashmore Reef
White-faced storm petrel	<i>Pelagodroma marina</i>	Foraging (in high numbers) - Offshore areas of the south-west marine region and into the adjacent south-east marine region and the north-west marine region to north of Shark Bay	Offshore areas of the south-west marine region and into the adjacent south-east marine region and the north-west marine region to north of Shark Bay
White-tailed tropic bird	<i>Phaethon lepturus</i>	Breeding, foraging - Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne coasts and islands including Ashmore Reef	Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne coasts and islands including Ashmore Reef

9. Protected Areas

A number of areas in the combined EMBA are protected under state and federal legislation. Protected areas include World Heritage Areas, Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar), Wetlands of National Importance, National and Commonwealth Heritage Places, and terrestrial conservation reserves (National Parks, Nature Reserves and Conservation Parks) that bound marine waters. These areas are listed in **Table 9-1**, and shown in **Figure 9-2**, **Figure 9-3**, **Figure 9-4** and **Figure 9-4** and discussed below. Other protected areas include Key Ecological Features (discussed in **Section 10**) and State and Commonwealth Marine Parks/Reserves (discussed in **Section 11** and **Section 12**). A Protected Matters search of the combined EMBA (**Appendix A**) identified several protected areas which were deemed to be irrelevant to Santos' petroleum activities due to their terrestrial location (e.g. Forrestdale and Thomsons Lakes – Ramsar wetland).

The Register of the National Estate (RNE) provides a listing of more than 13,000 natural, historic and indigenous sites of significance. However, in 2012 all references to the RNE were removed from the EPBC Act and the *Australian Heritage Council Act 2003*. The RNE is now maintained on a non-statutory basis as a publicly available archive and educational resource. The RNE places are not discussed further here but are listed in **Appendix A**.

Table 9-1: Summary of protected areas in waters within the combined EMBA

Area type	Title
World Heritage Area	Shark Bay
	The Ningaloo Coast
	Kakadu National Park
Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar)	Eighty Mile Beach
	Roebuck Bay
	Ashmore Reef National Nature Reserve
	Becher Point wetlands
	Peel-Yalgorup System
	Vasse-Wonnerup System
	Hosnies Spring
	Cobourg Peninsula
	Kakadu National Park
	Ord River Floodplain
	The Dales
Wetlands of National Importance	Ashmore Reef
	Mermaid Reef
	Vasse-Wonnerup Wetland System
	"The Dales", Christmas Island
	Adelaide River Floodplain System
	Eighty Mile Beach System
	Exmouth Gulf East
	Hosnies Spring, Christmas Island

Area type	Title
	Kakadu National Park
	Mary Floodplain System
	Hutt Lagoon System
	Lake Macleod
	Lake Thetis
	Learmonth Air Weapons Range – Saline Coastal Flats
	Leslie (Port Hedland) Saltfields System
	Prince Regent River System
	Roebuck Bay
	Rottneest Island Lakes
	Shark Bay East
	Cape Leeuwin System
	Doggerup Creek System
	Cape Range Subterranean Waterways
	Cobourg Peninsula System
	Daly-Reynolds Floodplain-Estuary System
	Finniss Floodplain and Fog Bay Systems
	Moyle Floodplain and Hyland Bay System
	Murgenella-Cooper Floodplain System
	Ord Estuary System
	Port Darwin
	Shoal Bay - Micket Creek
	Yalgorup System
National Heritage Place	HMAS Sydney II and HSK Kormoran Shipwreck Sites (Historic)
	Batavia Shipwreck Site and Survivor Camps Area 1629- Houtman Abrolhos (Historic)
	Dirk Hartog Landing Site 1616 - Cape Inscription Area (Historic)
	Dampier Archipelago (including Burrup Peninsula) (Indigenous)
	Kakadu National Park (Natural)
	The West Kimberley (Natural)
	The Ningaloo Coast (Natural)
	Shark Bay (Natural)
	Fitzgerald River National Park (Natural)
	Lesueur National Park (Natural)
Commonwealth Heritage Place	Scott Reef and Surrounds – Commonwealth Area
	Ningaloo Marine Area - Commonwealth Waters
	Mermaid Reef - Rowley Shoals

Area type	Title
	Ashmore Reef National Nature Reserve
	Garden Island
	Christmas Island Natural Areas
	Yampi Defence Area
	Learnmonth Air Weapons Range Facility
	Bradshaw Defence Area
	Lancelin Defence Training Area
Threatened Ecological Communities	Monsoon Vine Thickets on the Ridge on the Coastal Sand Dunes of Dampier Peninsula
	Roebuck Bay mudflats
	Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh
	Trombolite (microbialite) Community of a Coastal Brackish Lake (Lake Clifton)
Terrestrial Conservation Reserves e.g. national parks, nature reserves, and conservation parks.	Numerous bounding marine waters – refer to Section 9.6 .

9.1 World Heritage Areas

There are two World Heritage Areas located in marine waters of WA, both of which occur in the waters from the South Australian border to the NT border: the Ningaloo Coast and Shark Bay (DEC 2012). One WHA is within the combined EMBA adjacent to NT, although most of the area is terrestrial: Kakadu National Park.

9.1.1 Shark Bay

Shark Bay was included on the World Heritage List in 1991 and is one of the few properties inscribed for all four outstanding natural universal values:

- + An outstanding example representing the major stages in the earth's evolutionary history;
- + An outstanding example representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes;
- + An example of superlative natural phenomena; and
- + Containing important and significant habitats for in situ conservation of biological diversity.

Since 1997, an agreement established the joint management of the Shark Bay WHA by the Australian Commonwealth government and the Western Australian state government, with the operational responsibility by the Western Australian agencies (DEWHA 2008a). This agreement also created a Community Consultative Committee and a Scientific Advisory Committee, both of which provide advice as required. The entire WHA encompasses islands and peninsulas, with an area of approximately 2.2 million hectares (70% of which is marine waters), and includes the following areas (UNESCO 2020):

- + Hamelin Pool Marine Nature Reserve;
- + Francois Peron National Park;
- + Shell Beach Conservation Park;
- + Monkey Mia Reserve;
- + Monkey Mia Conservation Park;

- + Zuytdorp Nature Reserve;
- + Bernier, Dorre and Koks Islands Nature Reserves;
- + Dirk Hartog Island National Park; and
- + Various pastoral leases.

The marine environment of the Shark Bay World Heritage Area is protected as a State Marine Reserve and is discussed further in **Section 11.1.3**.

9.1.2 The Ningaloo Coast

The Ningaloo Coast was included on the World Heritage List in 2011 and was inscribed for outstanding natural universal values as follows:

- + An example of superlative natural phenomena and areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- + outstanding examples representing major stages of Earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features; and
- + the most important and significant natural habitats for in situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

The Ningaloo Coast WHA includes (DEWHA 2010b):

- + Ningaloo Marine Park (Commonwealth waters);
- + Ningaloo Marine Park (Western Australia state waters);
- + Muiron Island Marine Management Area (including the Muiron Islands);
- + Jurabi Coastal Park;
- + Bundegi Coastal Park;
- + Cape Range National Park; and
- + Learmonth Air Weapons Range.

The Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area (including the Muiron Islands) is managed under a plan that is consistent with the World Heritage Convention and Australia's World Heritage management principles. World Heritage Management principles are set out in regulations and cover matters relevant to the preparation of management plans, the environmental assessment of actions that may affect the property and community consultation processes.

The Australian World Heritage management principles are outlined under Schedule 5 of the EPBC regulations (2000). The objective is to ensure that any likely impact of an action on the World Heritage values of the property should be considered. Any action should be consistent with the protection, conservation, presentation or transmission to future generations of the World Heritage values of the property.

The marine environment of the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area is protected as a State Marine Park, a Commonwealth Marine Park, and is discussed further in **Section 11.1.4** and **Section 12.3.4**, respectively.

9.1.3 Kakadu National Park

Kakadu National Park was included on the World Heritage List in 1981 and was inscribed for outstanding natural universal values as follows:

- + An example of superlative natural phenomena and areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- + outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals; and
- + the most important and significant natural habitats for in situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

The Kakadu National Park WHA covers an area of around 1,916,000ha and is the largest national park in Australia. The WHA is managed by the Director of National Parks who performs functions and exercises powers under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the Act) in accordance with the park's management plan and relevant decisions of the Kakadu National Park Board of Management. Approximately 50% of Kakadu National Park is Aboriginal land under the Aboriginal Land rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976.

9.2 Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar)

There are eleven wetlands of international importance (Ramsar wetlands) in waters from the South Australian border to the NT; all were listed in 1990 with the exception of the Cobourg Peninsula which was listed in 1974, Kakadu National Park which was listed in 1980 and further expanded in 1995, Becher Point which was listed in 2001, and The Dales which was listed in 2002. The Ashmore Reef National Nature Reserve (listed in 2002) is also a Commonwealth Marine Park and is discussed further in **Section 12.3.12**.

9.2.1 Eighty Mile Beach

The Eighty Mile Beach Ramsar site comprises a 220 km beach between Port Hedland and Broome with extensive intertidal mudflats and Mandora Salt Marsh, located 40 km east (Hale & Butcher 2009) totalling 175,487 ha. Eighty Mile Beach is characterised by extensive mudflats supporting an abundance of macroinvertebrates which provide food for large numbers of shorebirds.

Eighty Mile Beach is one of the most important sites for migratory shorebirds in the East Asian Australasian Flyway, with 42 migratory shorebird species recorded at this location. It is estimated that 500,000 shorebirds use Eighty Mile Beach as a migration terminus annually (Hale and Butcher 2009), and more than 472,000 migratory waders have been counted on the mudflats during the September to November period. The location of Eighty Mile Beach makes it a primary staging area for many migratory shorebirds on their way to and from Alaska and eastern Siberia (Hale & Butcher 2009). Although many birds move further on their journey, others remain at the site for the non-breeding period.

Eighty-mile Beach supports more than one per cent of the flyway population (or one per cent of the Australian population for resident species) of 21 waterbirds, including 17 migratory species and four Australian residents. It is one of the most important sites in the world for the migration of Great Knot.

Eighty Mile Beach also supports a high diversity and abundance of wetland birds. A total of 97 wetland bird species have been recorded within the beach portion of the Ramsar site (Hale & Butcher 2009). This includes 42 species that are listed under international migratory agreements CAMBA (38), JAMBA (38) and ROKAMBA

(32) as well as an additional 22 Australian species that are listed under the EPBC Act. In addition, there is a single record for Nordmann's Greenshank (*Tringa guttifer*) from the beach, which is listed as endangered under the IUCN Red List (IUCN 2019).

The Mandora Salt Marsh area contains an important and rare group of wetlands (Lake Walyarta and East Lake), including raised peat bogs, a series of small permanent mound springs and the most inland occurrence of mangroves in WA (Hale & Butcher 2009). A small number of tidal creeks dissect the beach, including Salt Creek which is fed partly from groundwater and has permanent surface water. The Mandora Salt Marsh lakes fill predominantly from rainfall and runoff in the wet season then dry back to clay beds. The mound springs likely come from water deep within the Broome sandstone aquifer rising through fractures in the rock, and resulting in permanent mostly freshwater surface water. Flatback turtles (*Natator depressus*), listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act, regularly nest at scattered locations along Eighty Mile Beach.

Eighty Mile Beach is used for beach based recreation, including four-wheel driving, motorcycling, fishing and shell collecting. Mandora Salt Marsh is mainly used for cattle grazing. The site is traditionally part of Karajarri Country in the north, Nyangumarta Country in the south and Ngarla Country in the southern end of Eighty Mile Beach. The site has artefacts such as middens, pinka (large baler shells used to scoop and carry water for drinking), wilura (used for sharpening spear heads), axes, and flakes, and kurtanyanu and jungari (grinding stones). The Ramsar wetland is managed under the Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park Management Plan 2014-2024 (DPAW, 2014).

9.2.2 Roebuck Bay

The Roebuck Bay Ramsar site is located at Roebuck Bay near Broome in northern WA totalling 34,119 ha. Roebuck Bay has a large tidal range which exposes around 160 km² of mudflat, covering most of the Ramsar site (DoE 2014c). Waters more than 6 m deep at low tide are excluded from the site (Bennelongia 2009). The eastern edge of the site is made up of microscale linear tidal creeks (DoE 2014c).

The intertidal mud and sand flats support a high abundance of bottom dwelling invertebrates (between 300—500 benthic invertebrate species), which are a key food source for waterbirds (Bennelongia 2009). The site is one of the most important migration stop-over areas for shorebirds in Australia and globally. For many shorebirds, Roebuck Bay is the first Australian landfall they reach on the East Asian Australasian Flyway. The total numbers of waders using the site each year is estimated at over 300,000 (DoE 2014c). The northern beaches and Bush Point provide important high tide roost sites.

The site receives tidal seawater as well as fresh surface and groundwater, and the balance between the two influences the residual groundwater salinity and the distribution of plants and animals (DoE 2014c). Mangrove swamps line the eastern and southern edges of the site and extend up into the linear tidal creeks (DoE 2014c). They are important nursery areas for marine fishes and crustaceans, particularly prawns.

Extensive seagrass beds occur in the bay, providing an important feeding ground for dugongs and loggerhead and green turtles (Bennelongia 2009). Flatback turtles nest in small numbers, while marine fish (including sawfish) regularly breed in the tidal creeks and mangroves. Dolphins also regularly use the site (DoE 2014c).

The site is used for recreational or tourism activities such as fishing, crabbing, sightseeing and bird watching. Broome Bird Observatory, a small reserve at the northern end of the site, engages in shorebird research and public education.

Roebuck Bay lies in the traditional estate of Indigenous people belonging to both Jukun and Yawuru groups. The site was an important area for seasonal meetings, exchanging gifts, arranging marriages and settling disputes. Numerous shellfish middens, marking former camping places, can still be seen along coastal cliffs and dunes. Indigenous people continue to make extensive use of Roebuck Bay's natural resources for

activities such as gathering shellfish, fishing and hunting. The Ramsar wetland is currently managed under the Preliminary Draft Roebuck Bay Ramsar Site Management Plan (RBWG, 2010).

9.2.3 Ashmore Reef National Nature Reserve

In addition to being listed as a National Nature Reserve, Ashmore Reef has been designated a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance due to the importance of the islands in providing a resting place for migratory shorebirds and supporting large breeding colonies of seabirds (Hale and Butcher, 2013). The reserve provides a staging point for many migratory wading birds from October to November and March to April as part of the migration between Australia and the northern hemisphere (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002). Migratory shorebirds use the reserve's islands and sand cays as feeding and resting areas during their migration.

Ashmore is the largest of the atolls in the Timor Province bioregion. The three islands within the site are also the only vegetated islands in the bioregion. Each of the wetland types present are in near natural condition and the site has the largest seagrass coverage in the bioregion. The reserve supports 64 species of internationally and nationally threatened species. This includes 41 species of hard reef forming coral, eight fish, six reptiles (including endangered and critically endangered sea turtles and seasnakes), five sea cucumbers, two giant clams, one soft coral and the dugong.

Ashmore Reef plays a primary role in the maintenance of biodiversity in reef systems in the region. The Reserve supports 275 species of reef building coral, 13 species of sea cucumbers, and high numbers of mollusc species. There are over 760 fish species, 13 species of sea snake, 99 species of decapod crustacean and 47 species of waterbird listed as migratory under international treaties. It supports breeding of 20 species of waterbirds including the brown booby, lesser frigatebird, crested tern, bridled tern, sooty tern and common noddy. The Ramsar site is also important for feeding for green turtles, hawksbill turtle and loggerhead turtle and critical nesting and inter-nesting habitats for green and hawksbill turtles.

Ashmore Reef regularly supports more than 20,000 waterbirds and has been known to support more than 65,000 waterbirds. The Ramsar site regularly supports more than one per cent of at least six species of waterbird including the sooty tern, bar-tailed godwit, grey-tailed tattler, ruddy turnstone, sanderling and greater sand plover. The Ramsar site is managed under the Ashmore Reef National Nature Reserve and Cartier Island Marine Reserve Management Plan (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002).

9.2.4 Becher Point

The Becher Point Wetlands Ramsar site is a system of about sixty small wetlands located near Rockingham in south-west Western Australia and covers 677 ha. The wetlands are made up of chains of small, linear ovoid or irregular shaped basins arranged in five groups, each roughly parallel to the coast and separated by sand ridges (DoE 2014I). The wetlands are an example of shrub swamps and seasonal marshes that have formed in an extensive sequence of inter-dunal depressions that have arisen from seaward advancement of the coastline over recent millennia.

The wetlands in the site are shallow and fill seasonally. Rainfall in winter and spring recharges the groundwater, which rise up to waterlog the wetland basins. The wetlands then dry out again for summer to autumn. When flooded the wetlands are mainly freshwater (DoE 2014I).

The wetlands support sedgelands, herblands, grasslands, open-shrublands and low open-forests. The sedgelands that occur within the linear wetland depressions of the Ramsar site are a nationally listed threatened ecological community. At least four species of amphibians and 21 species of reptiles have been recorded within the wetlands, as well as the Southern Brown Bandicoot (DoE 2014I). The Ramsar wetland is managed under the Rockingham Lakes Regional Park Management Plan (DEC, 2010c).

9.2.5 Peel-Yalgorup System

The Peel-Yalgorup System located adjacent to the city of Mandurah in Western Australia, is a large and diverse system of shallow estuaries, coastal saline lakes and freshwater marshes. The site includes the Peel Inlet, Harvey Estuary, Lake McLarty, Lake Mealup and ten Yalgorup National Park wetlands and covers an area of 26,530 ha (DoE 2014m). Lake Clifton, which is part of the wetlands is one of the few locations in the world where thrombolites occur in inland, hyposaline waters. Thrombolites are underwater rock-like structures that are formed by the activities of microbial communities.

The Peel-Yalgorup System Ramsar site is the most important area for waterbirds in south-western Australia, supporting in excess of 20,000 waterbirds annually (DoE 2014m). It also supports a wide variety of invertebrates and estuarine and marine fish. The Ramsar site is managed under the Swan Coastal Plain South Management Plan (DPAW, 2016c).

9.2.6 Vasse-Wonnerup System

The Vasse-Wonnerup System Ramsar wetland is situated in the Perth Basin, south-western Western Australia and covers an area of 1,115 ha. It is an extensive, shallow, nutrient-enriched wetland system of highly varied salinities. The site is located on a narrow, flat plain separated from the ocean by a narrow system of low dunes. The system is comprised of two former estuaries – the Vasse and Wonnerup lagoons (DoE 2014n).

The system supports tens of thousands of resident and migrant waterbirds of a wide variety of species. More than 33,000 waterbirds have been counted at the Vasse-Wonnerup System and more than 80 species have been recorded in the System including Red-necked Avocets and Black-winged Stilts, Wood Sandpiper, Sharp tailed Sandpiper, Long-toed Stint, Curlew Sandpiper and Common Greenshank (DoE 2014n). This Ramsar site is also managed under the Swan Coastal Plain South Management Plan (DPAW, 2016c).

9.2.7 Hosnies Spring

The Hosnies Spring Ramsar site is located on Christmas Island and is a small area of shallow freshwater streams and seepages, 20–45 metres above sea-level on the shore terrace of the east coast of the island covering an area of approximately 199 ha. The site includes surrounding terrestrial areas with rainforest grading to coastal scrub and includes an area of shoreline and coral reef (DoEE 2019).

The Hosnies Spring Ramsar site supports a unique wetland of Christmas Island with the mangrove forest present at the site unique within the bioregion and possibly worldwide. The two species of mangroves that make up the stand, which normally grow intertidally, grow to a height of 24–37 m above sea level that have been estimated to have persisted for 120,000 years. Additionally, the site is important to blue crabs which rely on the freshwater provided by the spring and as a likely migratory route for the endemic red crab during breeding migrations (DoEE 2019). The Ramsar site is managed under the Christmas Island National Park Management Plan (DNP, 2002).

9.2.8 The Dales

The Dales Ramsar site is located on Christmas Island and is comprised of a near-pristine system of seven watercourses collectively known as The Dales and covers an area of 585 ha. The Dales includes permanent and perennial streams, permanent springs, and include the majority of surface water on the Island. Most rainfall on Christmas Island filters down through the soil and limestone, and surface runoff only occurs after heavy rain. The Dales contain numerous wetland types including surface and karst features, and inland and coastal wetlands (DoEE 2019a).

The Dales support a number of unique ecological and geomorphic features including anchialine cave communities, surface karst including the unique stepped tufa deposits at Hugh's waterfall, a stand of Tahitian

chestnuts, a large number of endemic terrestrial species and a significant number of seabirds including Abbott's booby, red-footed booby and the brown booby, all of which breed at the site, and provide essential habitat for the Christmas Island frigatebird (DoEE 2019a). This Ramsar site is also managed under the Christmas Island National Park Management Plan (DNP, 2002).

9.2.9 Cobourg Peninsula

Under the Ramsar convention, the Cobourg peninsula site is listed as a Wetland of International Importance. The site is located 163km north-east of Darwin within the Timor Sea Drainage Division. Within 220'700 hectares, the site covers the entire peninsula and several nearby islands including the Sir George Hope Islands, Sandy Island No. I and II, Allaru Island, High Black Rock and Buford Island. Under the Cobourg Peninsula Aboriginal Land, Sanctuary and Marine act 1996, Cobourg peninsula and surrounding waters was declared a Nation Park (Garig Gunak Barlu National Park) BMT WBM (2011).

The Cobourg site is composed of a diverse coastal and inland wetland types. Wetland types present include intertidal forested wetlands and salt flats, seasonal freshwater marshes and permanent freshwater pools. Ramsar topology identifies ten coastal and ten inland types within the site. The site contains unique biodiversity and wildlife including terrestrial, riverine, freshwater, brackish and coastal/marine ecosystems. Identifiable wetland types include intertidal forested wetland and salt flats, seasonal freshwater marshes, and permanent freshwater pools.

Cobourg Peninsula is listed as a Wetland of International importance due to the diversity of coastal and inland wetland types that support population of threatened species, including a number of endangered turtles. The Cobourg site meets five of the current nine nomination criteria of the Ramsar Convention and is therefore recognised as a representative wetland habitat that is at bioregional level, support of populations of threatened species, support for key life-cycle functions such as marine turtle and waterbird breeding, refugia values, and its importance for supporting fish and nursery spawning habitats BMT WBM (2011). The Ramsar site is managed under the Cobourg Marine Park Plan of Management (DNREAS, 2011).

9.2.10 Kakadu National Park

Kakadu National Park Ramsar site is composed of a diversity of coastal and inland wetland types that range from intertidal forested wetlands and mudflats to seasonal freshwater marshes and permanent freshwater pools. Ramsar topology identifies 13 coastal types and 15 inland types throughout Kakadu National Park. Hydrology, fire regimes and notable biological processes, with supporting processes including climate, tidal hydraulics, groundwater, water quality, geology and geomorphology are ecosystem processes present in Kakadu National Park habitats (BMT WBM, 2010).

The site also meets all nine Nomination Criteria of the Convention, recognising the representative wetland habitats of the site at a bioregional level, support of populations of vulnerable wetland species, its characteristics as a centre of endemism and high biodiversity including its diversity of habitats, support for key life-cycle functions such as waterbird breeding and refugia values, its importance for supporting substantial populations of waterbirds and fish diversity and fish nursery and spawning habitats and its support of at least one percent of the national population of several non-avian wetland species (BMT WBM, 2010). The Ramsar site is managed under the Kakadu National Park Management Plan 2016-2026 (DNP, 2016).

9.2.11 Ord River Flood Plains

Site lies within the Victoria-Bonaparte bioregion and contains a wide range of wetland types and includes all inland and marine components. This Ramsar site comprises of Parry Lagoons, Ord Estuary and the False Mouths of the Ord. Parry Lagoons includes both the permanent waterholes, such as Marglu Billabong, as well

as the broader area of the flood plain within the Parry Lagoons Nature Reserve that are subject to periodic inundation. The area from the boundary near Adolphus Island to the Rocks is known as the Ord Estuary. The False Mouths of the Ord is an area of extensive intertidal creeks and flats in the north of the Ramsar site.

The Ord River Floodplain Ramsar site meets seven of the nine Nomination Criteria. The site represents the best example of wetlands associated with the floodplain, and estuary of a tropical river system in the Kimberly Region of Western Australia. Ord River contains extensive and diverse mangrove community containing 14 of the 18 species of mangrove known to occurs in Western Australia (Hale, 2008).

A number of threatened species including Freshwater Sawfish (*Pristis microdon*), the Green Sawfish (*Pristis zijsron*) and the Australian Painted Snipe (*Rostratula australis*), which are listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act are supported in this area. The site also provides one of the two known habitats for the nationally endangered Northern River Shark (*Glypis* sp. C). The Ord River Floodplain Ramsar site provides an important nursery, breeding and feeding ground for at least 50 species of fish and a migratory route for 15 diadromous species.

There is sufficient evidence to suggest the site regularly supports 20,000 birds in the site alone, although it should be acknowledged that there are difficulties associated with surveying the Ord River Floodplain. According to the 4th edition of Waterbird Population Estimates, the site regularly supports 1% of the population of Plumed Whistling Duck and Little Curlew (Hale, 2008). The Ramsar site is managed under the Ord River and Parry Lagoons Nature Reserves Management Plan (DEC, 2012c).

9.3 Wetlands of National Importance

9.3.1 Ashmore Reef

See the Ashmore Reef National Nature Reserve (**Section 9.2.3**) and Ashmore Reef Marine Park (**Section 12.3.12**).

9.3.2 Mermaid Reef

See the Mermaid Reef Marine Park (**Section 12.3.9**).

9.3.3 Vasse-Wonnerup Wetland System

See the Vasse-Wonnerup Wetland System (**Section 9.2.6**).

9.3.4 "The Dales", Christmas Island

See The Dales Ramsar site (**Section 9.2.8**).

9.3.5 Eighty Mile Beach System

See Eighty Mile Beach Ramsar site (**Section 9.2.1**).

9.3.6 Exmouth Gulf East

The Exmouth Gulf East wetlands are located in the eastern section of Exmouth Gulf from Giralda Bay to Urala Creek Locker Point. The wetland comprises of numerous tidal creeks, indentations and islands of dry land, mudflats, saline coastal flats and extensive mangroves (DAWE 2020a).

The site is one of the major population centres for dugongs in WA and its seagrass beds and extensive mangroves provide nursery and feeding areas for marine fishes and crustaceans in the Gulf. In addition, there are at least 29 species of birds which utilise the wetland, including 16 migratory shorebirds and several terns (DAWE 2020a).

9.3.7 Hosnies Spring, Christmas Island

See Hosnie's Spring Ramsar site (**Section 9.2.7**).

9.3.8 Hutt Lagoon System

The Hutt Lagoon System wetlands (3,000 ha) are located within the Geraldton Sandplains and comprises of Hutt Lagoon and the lakes and marshes immediately north-west and south-east of the lagoon, notably Utcha Swamp. The system is a coastal brine lake which runs parallel to the coast (DAWE 2020b).

Hutt Lagoon is a migratory stop-over for migratory waders, however numbers using the area vary greatly between years and are likely to be lower when northern and inland waterbodies are extensively flooded. Breeding shorebirds include the Australasian grebe (*Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*), grey teal (*Anas gibberifrons*) and eurasian coot (*Fulica atra*) at Utcha Swamp (DAWE 2020b).

9.3.9 Lake Macleod

The Lake Macleod wetland (150,000 ha) is located in the Carnarvon bioregion and includes distinct "inner wetlands" (sinkholes, channels, lakes, marshes) in the west and "floodout marshes" at river mouths in the north-east. The wetland also includes a lakebed that is infrequently inundated. The lake lies parallel to the Indian Ocean, north of the Gascoyne River and located 30 km away from Shark Bay East wetland (DAWE 2020c).

The Lake Macleod is a major migration stop-over and drought refuge area for shorebirds; it is one of the most important non-tidal stop-over sites in Australia. It also supports Australia's largest inland community of mangroves and associated fauna. Fifty-eight species have been identified within the wetland with 29 being shorebirds and eight gulls and terns, with seven species found breeding (DAWE 2020c).

9.3.10 Lake Thetis

The Lake Thetis wetland (7 ha) is located in the Swan bioregion and comprises of seasonal marshes that form in interdunal areas to the south of the lake. Lake Thetis is distinguished by the presence of both a variety of benthic microbial communities (mats) and stromatolites. No threatened species or migratory species have been observed to utilise this wetland (DAWE 2020d).

9.3.11 Learmonth Air Weapons Range – Saline Coastal Flats

The Learmonth Air Weapons Range – Saline Coastal Flats wetland (300 ha) represents typical saline coastal flats subject to inundation and ponding. The vegetation typically has a low species richness, but its floristic composition and structure is highly distinctive and supports habitat specific fauna (DAWE 2020e).

Species composition of the wetland has little information however it is likely to possess a relatively diverse community (DAWE 2020e).

9.3.12 Leslie (Port Hedland) Saltfields System

The Leslie (Port Hedland) Saltfields System (13,000 ha) comprises a large saltfield, fringing coastal flats, tidal creeks and mudflats between the saltfields and the Indian Ocean.

The wetland is likely a major migration stop-over area for shorebirds in the East Asia-Australasia Flyway. It is possibly the most important stop-over site in the Flyway for the broad-billed sandpiper (*Limicola falcinellus*) and an important site for oriental plover (*Charadrius veredus*). It is also likely to be the most important site in Australia for Asian dowitcher (*Limnodromus semipalmatus*) and red-necked phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) (DAWE 2020f).

9.3.13 Prince Regent River System

The site comprises of the entire Prince Regent River system and large areas of mangrove on either side of the river mouth in Saint George Basin (14,300 ha). The site is a tropical estuary and river system incised in a plateau and is characterised by mangrove-fringed embayments (DAWE 2020g).

The site comprises of a diverse assemblage of flora and fauna, and includes mangroves, riverine vegetation, waterbirds, frogs, reptiles and fish. The site includes some of the most suitable and extensive breeding habitat for the saltwater crocodile in WA, well developed river banks with thick stands of reed and grasses (DAWE 2020g).

9.3.14 Roebuck Bay

See Roebuck Bay Ramsar site (Section 9.2.2).

9.3.15 Rottnest Island Lakes

The Rottnest Island Lakes wetland site comprises of a cluster of 18 lakes and swamps on the north-east part of Rottnest Island (180 ha). The site is a breeding area for Australian shelduck (*Tadorna tadornoides*) and major breeding area for Australian fairy tern (*Sterna nereis nereis*). The lakes are also a major migration stop-over area for shorebirds in south-western Australia and provide a significant drought refuge area for shorebirds, notably the banded stilt (*Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*) (DAWE 2020h).

9.3.16 Shark Bay East

The Shark Bay East wetland site extends along 250 km of coastline in the east arm of Shark Bay, from the mouth of the Gascoyne River (Carnarvon) south to latitude 26 S. The site comprises tidal wetlands and marine waters that are less than 6 m deep at low tide (up to approximately 10 km from shore). The wetland is a large, shallow marine embayment that support extensive seagrass beds and substantial areas of intertidal mud/sand-flats and mangrove swamp (DAWE 2020i).

The mangroves, algae and seagrasses present at the site are important for both dugongs and green turtles. A total of 69 species have been identified within the wetland including the threatened little tern (*Sterna albifrons*) and 33 shorebirds. A total of six species have been identified to be breeding within the wetland (Australian pelican, great egret, little egret, unidentified cormorants and striated herons). The site is also a stop-over for 24 species of migratory shorebirds (DAWE 2020i).

9.3.17 Cape Leeuwin System

The Cape Leeuwin System site is a small coastal valley, approximately 20 ha in size. Seepage from a series of freshwater springs feed an elongate swamp on the floor of the valley and moistens areas of the limestone and granite coastline to the west (DAWE 2020j). The site has been identified as the habitat for the largest known population of the rare aquatic gastropod mollusc; the Cape Leeuwin freshwater snail (*Austroassiminea lethra* (Sr)) (DAWE 2020j).

9.3.18 Doggerup Creek System

The Doggerup Creek System site (2,500 ha) supports extensive flats subject to inundation in the north and east of its catchment. The site includes lakes (e.g. Doggerup, Samuel and Florence Lakes) and many small unnamed swamps. The site is an example of an 'acid peat flat' with small permanent lakes and river (DAWE 2020k).

The wetland plant communities include 32 species at Doggerup Lake, 19 at Lake Samuel and 35 at Lake Florence. The site is a major habitat for two aestivating inland fishes, *Galaxiella nigrostriata* and

Lepidogalaxias salamandroides, that are endemic to the far south coast of WA. No threatened species have been identified within the site and it is not considered to be an important wetland for migratory shorebirds (DAWE 2020k).

9.3.19 Cape Range Subterranean Waterways

The Cape Range Subterranean Waterways wetland site comprises of the subterranean waterways, sinkholes, general groundwater and artificial wells of the coastal plain and foothills of Cape Range north of a line between Norwegian Bay, at the foot of the peninsula on the west coast, and the Bay of Rest in Exmouth Gulf (DAWE 2020l).

The site is one of the only examples of subterranean karst wetland system (apart from Barrow Island) in arid north-western Australia. Two threatened species have been identified within the wetland and include the blind cave eel and the blind gudgeon (DAWE 2020l).

9.3.20 Yalgorup System

See Peel-Yalgorup System Ramsar site (Section 9.2.5).

9.3.21 Adelaide River Floodplain System

Several swamps, lakes, lagoons and dams are included in the 134,800-hectare site. Four principal plant structural formations are present consisting of mangal low closed-forest (mangroves) mainly in the far north-west but extending along the river to south of the site, scattered chenopod low shrubland (samphire) in the far north, patches of melaleuca open-forest near the floodplain edges and missed closed grassland/sedgeland (seasonal floodplain) over most of the site (Jaensch, 1993).

The site is of particular significance as it contains one of the largest blocks of mangroves associated with the Top End floodplain as well as near-permanent marsh (Fogg Dam and Melacca Swamp), a rare wetland type in the Northern Territory. A rare species of the wetland plant *Goodenia quadrigida* also occurs within the floodplain. Surface inflow from the Adelaide-Margaret River System as well as numerous creeks (e.g. Hollands, Sunday and Buffalo Creeks) and Manton River provides a water supply for the area. The total volume of inflow is moderately high. The area provides a good example of the major floodplain-tidal wetland system typical of the Top End Region with substantial area of each component wetland type (Jaensch, 1993).

Adelaide River Floodplain system is a major breeding area for multiple species such as the Magpie Goose (*Anseranas semipalmata*), Saltwater Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) and herons and allies. It is also a major dry season refuge area for waterbirds and a significant migration stop-over area for shorebirds (Jaensch, 1993).

9.3.22 Kakadu National Park

See Kakadu National Park Ramsar site (Section 9.2.10).

9.3.23 Mary Floodplain System

Included in the 127,600hectare site is the entire floodplain of the Mary River, from near Bark Hit Inn downstream to Van Diemen Gulf (including intertidal mudflats) and including Swim Creek Plain. Three principal plant formations occur within the site. These include melaleuca open-forest (paperbark swamp), scattered chenopod low shrubland (samphire) in the north and centre-north; and the remainder, mixed closed- grassland/sedgeland (seasonal floodplain). Mangroves occur in the far north fringing the coast and at estuary mouths. The site includes some of the largest areas of wooded swamp in the Northern Territory. 21 of the 36 described floodplain flora communities occur in the Mary Floodplain system (Jaensch, 1993).

Water supply mainly occurs from the surface inflow from the Mary-McKinlay River system as well as many creeks. Mudflats, estuaries, and saline coastal flats are tidal. Tidal areas of mudflats and estuaries are inundated twice daily compared to the large parts of coastal flats that may be only periodically inundated. The floodplain water supply is seasonal, with near-permanent water in deeper channels and billabongs, as well as *Eleocharis* swamp. The site is a good example of a major floodplain-tidal wetland system typical of the Top End Region and features a complex network of channels and billabongs (Jaensch, 1993).

Mary Floodplain System provides a major breeding area for the Magpie Goose (*Anseranas semipalmata*) as well as refuge during dry season for waterbirds (geese, ducks and herons) and Saltwater Crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*). At least 75 species recorded within the area, of those 33 species were listed under treaties and 11 species were found breeding. The mudflat and coastal flats support at least several thousand migrant shorebirds at a time (Jaensch, 1993).

9.3.24 Cobourg Peninsula System

See Cobourg Peninsula Ramsar site (Section 9.2.9).

9.3.25 Daly-Reynolds Floodplain-Estuary System

The Daly-Reynolds Floodplain-Estuary System includes the entire floodplain of the Daly River, entire floodplain of the Reynolds River and the tidal mudflats of north-east Anson Bay and is in the Darwin Coastal and Daly Basin biographical regions. Six principal plant formations exist within the 159,300-hectare site. This includes mixed closed-grassland/sedgeland (seasonal floodplain) over most of the site; Melaleuca open-forest (paperbark swamp) in patches throughout, Coolibah/Gutta-percha low woodland over grassland in the far south-east; closed-forest (monsoon vine-thicket) around the Daly River in the far south-east; mangal low closed-forest (mangroves), discontinuously along the Daly River estuary (to 1 km wide); and scattered chenopod low shrubland (samphire) at/near the coast and river mouth. The site provides a good example of a major floodplain-tidal wetlands system as it contains substantial areas of all the principal features of such a system in the Top End Region. It is also one of the largest floodplains in the Northern Territory (Jaensch, 1993).

31 of the 36 described floodplain flora communities occur on the Daly-Reynolds Floodplain. The Daly-Reynolds Floodplain-Estuary System plays an important ecological role by providing a top three breeding ground for Magpie goose (*Anseranas semipalmata*), as well as herons, allies and Saltwater Crocodiles. Additionally the site is a major dry season refuge area for waterbirds and a significant migration stop-over area for shorebirds. The site also contains more than 80 fauna species, 30 of which are listed under treaties. Up to 2100 shorebirds are known to frequent this site as a migratory stop over (Jaensch, 1993).

9.3.26 Finniss Floodplain and Fog Bay Systems

The floodplain and bay systems provide a good example of a beach-fringed, curved bay with intertidal mudflats and intact floodplain with extensive paperbark swamps. Plant structural formations within the area include mixed closed grassland/sedgeland and melaleuca open forests. Small areas of mangal and samphire occur near the estuaries and the south-west part of the bay. Surface inflow from the Finniss River, and several creeks supply the site with water (Jaensch, 1993).

At least 70 species of fauna are recorded in the area, 20 of which are listed under treaties. Finniss Floodplain and Fog Bay Systems are major breeding areas for Magpie goose and Saltwater Crocodile, a significant dry season refuge area for water birds and a major migration stop-over for over 25'000 shorebirds. 24 of the described floodplain flora communities along with the best floating mats in the Northern territory occur within this site (Jaensch, 1993).

9.3.27 Moyle Floodplain and Hyland Bay System

Plant structural formations of the area consist of closed grassland/sedgeland latiform arrangements, some fringing and scattered patches of melaleuca open-forests, and mangal low closed forest (mangroves) along the lower river. Surface inflow to floodplain areas from multiple creeks and Moyle River is the main source of water supply.

The Moyle Floodplain and Hyland Bay System is one of the least distributed examples of a Top End floodplain system associated with a small river a mudflat-fringed bay. The site is a major breeding area for magpie goose, a refuge for waterbirds (whistling duck) in the dry season, migration stop over area for shorebirds and a major breeding area for Saltwater Crocodiles. 27 of the described floodplain flora communities occur at this site. 47 fauna species are known to occur on the floodplain and adjacent coast, 26 of which are listed under treaties (Jaensch, 1993).

9.3.28 Murgarella-Cooper Floodplain System

Murgarella-Cooper Floodplain System includes the entire contiguous floodplains and saline coastal flats, estuaries, and tidal mudflats of Murgarella, Cooper and Salt-Water Creeks within 81,500 hectares. Surface flow from Cooper Creek and several unnamed creeks provide water supply for the area. Plant structural formations that are present include mixed closed grassland/sedgeland over most of the site, scattered chenopod low shrubland and narrow areas of mangal closed-forest (mangroves) along tidal channels and at the coast. The site provides a good example of floodplain-tidal wetland system of the Top End Region, with relatively low volume of freshwater inflow (Jaensch, 1993).

13 of the 36 described floodplain flora communities occur within the site. The site is a major breeding ground for Magpie Goose, cormorants, herons and allies, a major dry season refuge area for waterbirds and a major migration stop-over area for more than 10'000 shorebirds. At least 71 species of fauna are recorded in the area, 26 of which are on treaties (Jaensch, 1993).

9.3.29 Ord Estuary System

See Ord River Flood Plains Ramsar site (**Section 9.2.11**).

9.3.30 Port Darwin

The entire Port Darwin site covers 48,800 hectares. The whole site is tidal with mangal low closed-forest (mangroves) plant structural formations present. The site provides a good example of a shallow branching embayment of the Top End Region, supporting one of the largest discrete areas of mangrove swamp in the Northern Territory (Jaensch, 1993).

36 flora species, 23 of them trees and tall shrubs are present within the mangrove communities. Including Northern territory endemic *Avicennia integra*. The mangrove communities of this site are the most extensive and species rich of any Northern Territory embayment. The site is a major nursery for estuarine and offshore fish and crustaceans in the Beagle Gulf area. 48 fauna species, with 25 listed under treaties existing within this site. Rare species such as Red-necked Phalarope have also been recorded within the site. Furthermore, Woods Inlet is frequented by the uncommon dolphin *Orcaella brevirostris*. At least 72 fish species occur within the site as well as there being an unusual richness in sponges (220 species), soft and hard coral as well as invertebrates (Jaensch, 1993).

9.3.31 Shoal Bay - Micket Creek

Shoal bay is approximately 10km immediately north-east of the City of Darwin and the site includes King Creek and Noogoo swamp within 1,600 hectares. The site contains wetland marshes, mangrove woodlands,

beaches, mudflats, creeks and estuaries and is a good example of a spring fed coastal wetland system. Micket Creek is a tidal estuary flowing into Shoal Bay while King Creek and water from Noogoo Swamp all flow into Shoal Bay. All areas contain remnants of monsoon forest interspersed with open woodland bounded by grassed backsoil plain (Hodgson, 1995).

Within the site there are some notable species. It has a bird habitat of over 200 species and provides a dry season refuge for waterfowl and birds of prey. Migratory birds regularly use the areas of mudflats with more than 15,000 wader species and 25 of them listed on international agreements with Japan and China. The Nationally endangered Littler Tern and two other uncommon species, the Eastern Grass Owl and Peregrin Falcon have been recorded within Shoal Bay – Micker Creek (Hodgson, 1995).

9.4 National Heritage Places

Natural, historic and indigenous places that are of outstanding heritage value to the Australian nation are recorded as National Heritage Places. Eleven National Heritage Places are found in waters from the South Australian border to the NT, with ten of these occurring within the combined EMBA. Kakadu National Park, Shark Bay and The Ningaloo Coast are listed as both World Heritage Areas and National Heritage Places, and are discussed in **Section 9.1**.

9.4.1 HMAS Sydney II and HSK Kormoran Shipwreck Sites

The naval battle fought in 1941 between the Australian warship HMAS Sydney II and the German commerce raider HSK Kormoran off the Western Australian coast during World War II was a defining event in Australia's cultural history. The loss of HMAS Sydney II, along with its entire crew of 645 following the battle with HSK Kormoran, remains Australia's worst naval disaster (DoE 2014d).

The shipwreck sites are comprised of two areas located approximately 290 km west-southwest of Carnarvon. The shipwrecks of the HMAS Sydney II and HSK Kormoran are located on the seabed approximately 22 km apart (DoE 2014d).

9.4.2 Batavia Shipwreck site and Survivor Camps Area 1629 - Houtman Abrolhos

The Batavia was included on the National Heritage List in 2006. This shipwreck is the oldest of the known Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) wrecks on the WA coast and has a unique place in Australian shipwrecks. Because of its relatively undisturbed nature the archaeological investigation of the wreck itself has revealed a range of objects of considerable value to the artefact specialist and historian. The recovered sections of the hull of the Batavia that have been reconstructed in the Western Australian Maritime Museum and provides information on 17th century Dutch ship building techniques, while the remains of the cargo carried by the vessel have provided economic, and social evidence of the operation of the Dutch port at Batavia (now Jakarta) in the early 17th century (DoE 2014d).

9.4.3 The West Kimberley

The West Kimberley was included on the National Heritage List in 2011 and has numerous values which contribute to the significance of the property, including indigenous, historic, aesthetic, cultural and natural heritage values (DoE 2014d). Of these values, the most relevant to the marine environment is Roebuck Bay as a migratory hub for shorebirds. These values are discussed in **Section 9.2.2**. The area is characterised by a diversity of landscapes and biological richness found in its cliffs, headlands, sandy beaches, rivers, waterfalls and islands.

9.4.4 The Ningaloo Coast

See the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area (**Section 9.1.2**).

9.4.5 Shark Bay

See Shark Bay World Heritage Area (**Section 9.1.1**).

9.4.6 Dirk Hartog Landing Site 1616 - Cape Inscription Area

Cape Inscription is the site of the oldest known landings of Europeans on the Western Australian coastline (from Dirk Hartog of the Dutch East India Company's ship the Eendracht in October 1616), and is associated with a series of landings and surveys by notable explorers over a 250-year period (DoEE 2019b). The landing site forms part of the Dirk Hartog Island and is about 1,110 ha located 100 km south west of Carnarvon (DoEE 2019b).

9.4.7 Dampier Archipelago (including Burrup Peninsula)

The Dampier Archipelago (including the Burrup Peninsula) contains one of the densest concentrations of rock engravings in Australia, with some sites containing thousands or tens of thousands of images. At a national level it has an exceptionally diverse and dynamic range of schematised human figures and provides an unusual and outstanding visual record of the Aboriginal responses to the rise of sea levels at the end of the last Ice Age (DoEE 2019c).

The site is about 36,860 ha at Dampier and comprises of nine distinct areas of the Burrup Peninsula Areas and part of the following surrounding islands: West Intercourse Island, West Mid Intercourse Island, Enderby Island, Goodwin Island, West Lewis Island and East Lewis Island, Rosemary Island, Brigadier Island, Miller Rocks, Lady Nora Island and Elphick Nob, Malus Islands, Angel Island, Gidley Island, Cohen Island, Keast Island and Collier Rocks, Tozer Island, Dolphin Island, and Unnamed Island (DoEE 2019c).

9.4.8 Fitzgerald River National Park

The Fitzgerald River National Park contains an exceptional concentration of plant species richness and endemism. At an international level it is recognised as a biodiversity hotspot of south western Australia and at a national level it has an exceptional endemism and diversity for plant species. The diversity is considered high due to a wide range of landforms, geology and soil types that supports a diverse community of shrublands and heath, often dominated by eucalypt mallee species (DoEE 2019d).

The national park is approximately 297,244 ha located between Bremer Bay and Hopetoun in the south west of Western Australia. The park contains extensive marine plain sediments deeply incised by several rivers, creating valleys and tablelands. The park's coastline is diverse, consisting of long beaches, quartzite cliffs, extensive sand drifts and inlets. Along the Hamersley and Fitzgerald River valleys are spongolite cliffs that were formed more than 36 million years ago (Eocene period) and consist of sea sponge fossils (DoEE 2019d).

9.4.9 Lesueur National Park

The Lesueur National Park contains an exceptional concentration of plant species richness and endemism. At an international level it is recognised as a biodiversity hotspot of south western Australia and at a national level it has an exceptional endemism and diversity for plant species. The diversity is considered high due to a wide range of landforms, geology and soil types that supports a diverse community of shrublands and heath (DoEE 2019e).

The national park is approximately 27,235 ha located near the towns of Green Head and Jurien Bay. Coastal areas consist of recent (Holocene) sand deposits and mobile dunes extending inland for approximately two kilometres. The dunes are bordered by a series of mainly saline lakes with some freshwater springs and swamps on the eastern margins. Further inland are older (Quaternary) dune systems that have been

compacted in places to form limestone. The park supports approximately 122 birds, including a diverse range of honeyeaters, fairy wrens and thornbills (DoEE 2019e).

9.4.10 Kakadu National Park

See Kakadu National Park World Heritage Area (**Section 9.1.3**).

9.5 Commonwealth Heritage Places

The Commonwealth Heritage Places List comprises natural, indigenous and historic heritage places which are either entirely within a Commonwealth area, or outside the Australian jurisdiction and owned or leased by the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth Authority. Ten Commonwealth Heritage Places are found in or adjacent to the combined EMBA. Three of these places (Ashmore Reef, Mermaid Reef and the Ningaloo Marine Area – Commonwealth Waters) are found in Marine Parks and are discussed further in **Section 12**. The HMAS Sydney II and HSK Kormoran Shipwreck Sites is listed under both National and Commonwealth Heritage Lists and discussed in **Section 9.4.1**.

9.5.1 Scott Reef and Surrounds – Commonwealth Area

Scott Reef is a large, emergent shelf atoll located on the edge of the broad continental shelf, about 300 km from mainland north-western Australia. The listing comprises the areas of Scott Reef that are within Commonwealth waters to the 50 m BSL bathymetric contour. This includes North Reef, an annular reef, 16.3 km long and 14.4 km wide and parts of the lagoon of South Reef, a crescent shaped reef 17 km across (DoE 2014d).

The place is regionally significant both because of its high representation of species not found in coastal waters off Western Australia and for the unusual nature of its fauna which has affinities with the oceanic reef habitats of the Indo-West Pacific as well as the reefs of the Indonesian region (DoE 2014d).

9.5.2 Mermaid Reef – Rowley Shoals

See the Mermaid Reef Marine Park (**Section 12.3.9**).

9.5.3 Ningaloo Marine Area – Commonwealth Waters

See the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area (**Section 9.1.2**).

9.5.4 Ashmore Reef National Nature Reserve

See the Ashmore Reef Marine Park (**Section 12.3.12**).

9.5.5 Garden Island

Garden Island is located to the south of Perth, 5 km northwest of Rockingham. It was registered in 2004 based on various fauna, geological, European and Aboriginal heritage and vegetation values. It was the original first site occupied by Governors Stirling's Party in 1829, with prior use by Aborigines and the French (being called Ile de Buache by the French in 1801). The island is virtually free from widespread feral animal colonisation, providing important habitat for various species that have reduced on the mainland. The island provides breeding habitat for bridled tern (*Onychoprion anaethetus*), rainbow bee-eaters (*Merops ornatus*) and osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), which nest on the rocks surrounding the island. Important feeding habitat for the Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) is provided by sandy beaches on the west coast of the island.

The island provides nesting habitat on beaches for the breeding migrant fairy tern (*Sterna nereis*), which requires undisturbed nesting periods. The mature relatively undisturbed heath, scrub and low forest communities unburnt since the 1920's in the northern section of the island are especially important as a

reference site for natural history. The least disturbed examples of calcarenite reef structures dune and tamate landscapes in the metropolitan region are present on the western side of the island (DoEE 2016b).

9.5.6 Christmas Island Natural Areas

Christmas Island is located is approximately 1,500 km from Exmouth and is approximately 2,200 ha above Low Water and 3,600 ha below Low Water in the Indian Ocean. The island is an uplifted coral atoll with its characteristic steep series of rainforest-covered terraces and sheer limestone cliffs. It was registered in 2004 based on various fauna, vegetation, geological and cultural heritage values. The evolutionary significance of Christmas Island is demonstrated both by its high level of endemism and by its unique assemblage of plant and animal species. The island hosts seventeen endemic plant species and rich endemic fauna includes three mammal species, ten bird species, five reptile species, one crab species, two insects, three marine fish species and several marine sponge species (DoEE 2019f).

The rainforests of Christmas Island are biogeographically significant; species have evolved from being either shoreline forest or early rainforest succession species to those that fill a tall climax rainforest role. The Island contains unique plant communities of high conservation and scientific interest including a variety of elevated and relict cycad and back-mangrove communities of international significance (DoEE 2019f).

The island is also one of the world's most significant seabird islands, both for the variety and numbers of seabirds, with over 100 species of bird having been recorded, including eight species that breed on the island. The island rainforest provides significant habitat for two endemics the nationally endangered Abbott's booby and the nationally vulnerable Christmas Island frigate bird (DoEE 2019f).

The fringing simple reefs and adjacent waters of Christmas Island support provides habitat for two nationally vulnerable species of turtle, the green and hawksbill which nest on two of the Island's beaches and two nationally vulnerable shark species (DoEE 2019f).

9.5.7 Yampi Defence Area

The Yampi Defence Area is located at the confluence of the Dampierland, Central and Northern Kimberley biogeographic regions and has a diverse range of ecosystems of landforms, soils and vegetation representative of the transition from the sandstone plateaux of the wetter north-west Kimberley, to the broad plains and pindan scrub of the drier south-west Kimberley (DoEE 2019g).

The diversity of landforms in the place and the resultant high concentration of small refugial habitats support a regionally rich vertebrate fauna. The bird fauna is significant as it represents a suite of species which are at or near the southern edge of their range in the semi-humid zone of the Kimberley. The place is also an important zone of overlap between many northern and southern species and sub-species. The vertebrate fauna shows its closest similarity to those recorded from the wetter areas of the west Kimberley that lie further to the north. The place supports several fauna and flora species that are listed as specially protected, threatened or having priority status in Western Australia in addition to four fauna species that are nationally vulnerable and one nationally endangered (DoEE 2019g).

9.5.8 Learmonth Air Weapons Range Facility

The Learmonth Air Weapons Range Facility is located 30 km south west of Learmonth within Cape Range and Adjacent Coastal Plain, which is listed on the Register of the National Estate. As the Learmonth Air Weapons Range Facility is located within Cape Range it is of considerable importance of showing the sea level and landform changes for the past 1.8 million years (DoEE 2019h).

The area is important to a number of cave fauna of Cape Range and is considered of exceptional biogeographical importance. It hosts a high number of endemic aquatic stygofauna with ecosystems found

within this area are considered rare within Western Australia and are considered to be of considerable scientific interest. The area also supports several species of terrestrial fauna that are isolated populations, populations at the extent of their range and a number of fauna and flora species that are endemic to southern WA and restricted to sandy coastal habitats along the western coast (DoEE 2019h).

9.5.9 Lancelin Defence Training Area

The Lancelin Defence Training Area is located approximately 11 k north of Lancelin township situated on the Swan Coastal Plain and consists of three main land systems that include Quindalup and Spearwood Dune Systems (together making up the Coastal Belt), and the Bassendean Dunes (DoEE 2019i).

The area supports a high diversity of vegetation types, flora species, fauna habitat types and a high diversity of terrestrial fauna.

9.5.10 Bradshaw Defence Area

The Bradshaw Defence Area is located in the Northern Territory and is bounded by the Fitzmaurice and Victoria Rivers on the shores of the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf and the Bradshaw Defence field training area.

The complex topography of the Bradshaw area results in a broad range of highly distinct environments and habitats that include lowland woodlands, heaths, grasslands, sandstone escarpments, monsoon rainforest patches and wetlands. Compared to surrounding areas, the vegetation within the Bradshaw area is more diverse and incorporates more than one fifth of the vegetation types that occur in the Top End of the Northern Territory and includes grassland, woodland flora that are restricted on a national level (DAWE, 2002).

The topological complexity that results in a broad range of environments also contributes to the unusually rich vertebrate fauna. The species richness of frogs, reptiles and mammals is considered significant at a national level. Furthermore, it is also worth noting that the Bradshaw area supports many species that have declined elsewhere in Australia (DAWE, 2002).

9.6 Coastal Terrestrial Conservations Reserves – bound by marine waters

Conservation reserves are created under the Land Administration Act 1997, and once reserved and set aside for conservation purposes are regulated under the *Conservation and Land Management Act (CALM) 1984*. Most conservation reserves in WA are vested in (owned) by the WA Conservation and Parks Commission, an independent statutory body established by the CALM Act 1984, and most are managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions – Parks and Wildlife Service. Most conservation areas in the NT are managed under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*.

In WA there are three main types of terrestrial conservation reserves with legislative protection:

- + Nature reserves – established for wildlife and landscape conservation; scientific study; and preservation of features of archaeological, historic or scientific interest;
- + National parks – as above but also to be used for enjoyment by the public. Have national or international significance; and
- + Conservation parks – as above but have local or regional significance.

Nature reserves can have an extra classification applied to them and become ‘A class’ reserves, which generally require an Act of Parliament to alter.

In NT there are a number of types of terrestrial conservation reserves with legislative protection, those present within the combined EMBA include coastal reserves, national parks and conservation parks.

There are numerous terrestrial conservation reserves located adjacent to the coast in the combined EMBA. The oceanward boundary of the reserves varies. In some cases, the reserves extend to the low water mark, i.e. including the inter-tidal zone (particularly applicable to older gazetted reserves and terrestrial reserves not surrounded by a marine reserve). While in other cases, the terrestrial reserves extend to the high-water mark e.g. Lowendal Islands Nature Reserve (particularly applicable to terrestrial reserves adjacent to more recently gazetted marine parks). In other cases, the seaward boundary of the reserves is not defined. Management plans also contain the caveat for further consideration of the most appropriate tenure for intertidal areas and management arrangements.

Further information on coastal terrestrial reserves is provided below in **Section 9.6.1** (national parks) and **Section 9.6.2** (nature reserves and conservations parks).

9.6.1 Coastal National Parks

Protected coastal national parks managed under the CALM Act 1984 in the combined EMBA are listed in **Table 9-2**. The table also includes: any applicable management plan; whether the park includes the inter-tidal area; and the name of any adjacent state marine reserve. All WA National Parks are WA Class A reserves and IUCN Class 2.

Table 9-2: Coastal National Parks – coastal boundary in relation to inter-tidal zone

National Park	IBRA bioregion ⁸	Management plan	Includes inter-tidal zone	Adjacent Marine Management Park (see Section 11)
Reserves of Northern WA (see Figure 9-6)				
Lawley River	Northern Kimberley	-	No ⁹	Kimberley Marine Park
Mitchell River		-		
Prince Regent		-		
Reserves of North-West WA (see Figure 9-7)				
Murujuga	Pilbara	Murujuga National Park management plan 78 (DEC 2013)	Yes ¹⁰	-
Cape Range	Carnarvon	Cape Range National Park Management Plan (DEC 2010a)	No	Ningaloo Marine Park
Reserves of Southern WA – (see Figure 9-8)				
Francois Peron	Carnarvon	Shark Bay Terrestrial Reserves and Proposed Reserve Additions Management Plan (2012)	No	Shark Bay Marine Park and Hamelin Pool Marine Nature Reserve
Dirk Hartog	Yalgoo		Yes – intertidal zone on western side of Dirk Hartog is included (as no marine park on western side of island)	
Houtman Abrolhos Islands	Geraldton Sandplains	-	No - extends to the high water mark only.	Abrolhos Commonwealth Marine Park

⁸ IBRA classifies Australia's landscapes into large geographically distinct bioregions based on common climate, geology, landform, native vegetation and species information (DoEE 2012).

National Park	IBRA bioregion ⁸	Management plan	Includes inter-tidal zone	Adjacent Marine Management Park (see Section 11)
Kalbarri	Geraldton Sandplains	Kalbarri National Park Management Plan (DPAW 2015)	Yes ¹⁰	-
Nambung	Geraldton Sandplains	Nambung National Park Management Plan (1998)	Yes	-
Yalgorup	Swan Coastal Plain	Yalgorup National Park Management Plan (CALM 1995)	Yes ¹⁰	-
Leeuwin - Naturaliste	Warren	Leeuwin-Naturaliste Capes Area Parks and Reserves Management Plan (DPAW 2015)	No	Ngari Capes Marine Park
Torndirrup	Warren	Albany coast draft management plan 2016 (DPaW 2016b)	Yes ¹⁰	
Walpole-Nornalup	Warren	Walpole Wilderness and Adjacent Parks and Reserves Management Plan (DEC 2008) Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Management Plan No 62 (DEC 2009b)	Yes ¹⁰	Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park
Waychinicup	Southern Jarrah Forest and Fitzgerald	Albany coast draft management plan 2016 (DPAW 2016)	Yes ¹⁰	
West Cape Howe	Warren	Albany coast draft management plan 2016 (DPaW 2016)	Yes ¹⁰	
D'Entrecasteaux	Warren	Shannon and D'Entrecasteaux National Parks Management Plan No. 71 (DEC 2012b)	Yes ¹⁰	
Fitzgerald River	Fitzgerald	Fitzgerald River National Park Management Plan 1991 – 2001 No. 15 (CALM 1991)	Yes ¹⁰	
Reserves of the Northern Territory (NT) – (see Figure 9-5)				
Djukbinj National Park	Darwin Coastal and Pine Creek	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Garig Gunak Barlu National Park	Tiwi Cobourg	Cobourg Marine Park Plan of Management (PAWCNT, 2011)	Yes ¹⁰	Cobourg Marine Park

National Park	IBRA bioregion ⁸	Management plan	Includes inter-tidal zone	Adjacent Marine Management Park (see Section 11)
Mary River National Park	Darwin Coastal	Mary River National Park Joint Management Plan March 2015 (PAWCNT, 2015)	Yes ¹⁰	-
Keep River National Park	Victoria Bonaparte	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Charles Darwin National Park	Darwin Coastal	Charles Darwin National Park Plan of Management (NT government, nd)	Yes ¹⁰	-

9.6.2 Coastal Nature Reserves and Conservation Parks

Protected coastal nature reserves and conservation parks managed under the CALM Act 1984 in the combined EMBA are listed in **Table 9-3** and shown in **Figure 9-6**, **Figure 9-7** and **Figure 9-8** for the north, north-west and south of WA respectively. Protected lands in the NT are shown in Figure 9-5 as gazetted under the (NT) Crown Lands Act 1992. The table also includes reserve class; IUCN classification; any applicable management plan; whether the reserve includes the inter-tidal area; and the name of any adjacent state marine reserve (may also describe inter-tidal areas values).

The CALM Act does not require management plans to be in place for conservation reserves at all time, instead they are required to be made as is reasonably practicable regarding resources. This means some conservation reserves do not have a management plan, or do not have a recent management plan.

Table 9-3: Nature Reserves (NR) and Conservation Parks (CP) in EMBA

Reserve name and type	Reserve class	IUCN	Management Plan	Includes inter-tidal zone	Adjacent Marine Park (see Section 11)
Reserves of Northern WA (see Figure 9-6)					
Ord River NR	-	1a	-	No ⁹	North Kimberley Marine Park
Pelican Island NR	-	1a			
Lesueur Island NR	A	1a			
Low Rocks NR	A	1a			
Browse Island NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Scott Reef NR	-	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Adele Island NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Tanner Island NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Lacepede Islands NR		1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-

⁹ Inferred as adjacent marine park boundary is the high water mark and dual tenure cannot exist.

¹⁰ Conservatively inferred as no adjacent Marine Park.

Reserve name and type	Reserve class	IUCN	Management Plan	Includes inter-tidal zone	Adjacent Marine Park (see Section 11)
Coulomb Point NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Yawaru Birragun CP; Yawuru Northern Intertidal Area	- & A	2 & 6	Yawaru Birragun Conservation Park Management Plan (DPaW 2016). <i>Yawuru Intertidal Area management plan is not yet available.</i>	Yes	-
Jinmarnkur CP	C	-	Parks and reserves of the south-west Kimberley and north-west Pilbara Draft Management Plan (DPAW 2016). <i>Covers 80 Mile Beach coastal reserves.</i>	No	Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park
Jinmarnkur Kulja NR	A	-			
Kujungurru Warrarn NR	A	1a			
Kujungurru Warrarn CP	C	-			
Unnamed	A	-			
Jarrkumpungu NR	A	-			
Bedout Island NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
North Turtle Island NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Reserves of North-West WA (see Figure 9-7)					
Unnamed (Dampier Archipelago) NR	A	1a	Dampier Archipelago Management Plan (CALM 1990). <i>Covers 25 of the islands</i>	Yes	-
Swan Island NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	Kimberly Marine Park
Unnamed NR		1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
North Sandy Island NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Montebello Islands CP	A	2	-	Partially ¹¹	Montebello Islands Marine Park
Lowendal Island NR		1a	-	No	Barrow Island Marine Management Area and Marine Park. Lowendal Island NR only partially bounded
Barrow Island NR	A	1a	Barrow Island Group Nature Reserves (DPAW 2015)	Yes	
Boodie, Double and Middle Islands NR	-	1a		Yes	
Great Sandy Island NR	B	1a	-	Yes	Barrow Island Marine Management Area
Weld Island NR	-	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Little Rocky Island NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-

¹¹ Reserve R42197 includes the inter-tidal zone and reserve R42196 does not.

Reserve name and type	Reserve class	IUCN	Management Plan	Includes inter-tidal zone	Adjacent Marine Park (see Section 11)
Airlie Island NR	-	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Thevenard Island Nature	-	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Bessieres Island NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Serrurier Island NR	-	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Round Island NR	-	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Locker Island NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Rocky Island NR	-	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Gnandaroo Island NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Victor Island NR	-	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Y Island NR	-	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Tent Island NR	-	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Burnside and Simpson Island NR	-	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Whalebone Island NR		1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Whitmore, Roberts, Doole Islands & Sandalwood Landing NR	-	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Muiron Islands NR	-	1a	Jarabi and Bundegi Coastal Parks and Muiron Islands (CALM 1999)	No ⁹	Muiron Islands Marine Management Area
OneTree Point NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	
Reserves of Southern WA – (see Figure 9-8)					
Koks Island NR	A	1a	Shark Bay Terrestrial Reserves and Proposed Reserve Additions Management Plan (DPAW 2012)	Yes ¹⁰	-
Bernier and Dorre Islands NR	A	4			
Shell Beach CP	-	3		No	Shark Bay Marine Park
Freycinet, Double Islands etc NR	A	1a			Shark Bay Marine Park
Zuytdorp NR	-	1a		Yes ¹⁰	-
Beekeepers NR	-	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Beagle Islands NR	A	1a	Turquoise Coast Nature Reserve Management Plan (CALM 2004).	Yes	-
Lipfert, Milligan, etc Islands NR	A	1a			-
Fisherman Islands NR	A	1a			Jurien Bay Marine Park: extends from
Sandland Islands NR	A	1a			

Reserve name and type	Reserve class	IUCN	Management Plan	Includes inter-tidal zone	Adjacent Marine Park (see Section 11)
Boullanger, Whitlock, Favourite, Tern and Osprey Islands NR	A	1a	<i>Covers chain of approximately 40 protected islands lying between Lancelin and Dongara.</i>		Greenhead south to Wedge Island
Escape Island NR	A	1a			
Essex Rocks NR	A	1a			
Outer Rocks NR	A	1a			
Ronsard Rocks NR	A	1a			
Cervantes Islands NR	A	1a			
Buller, Whittell and Green Islands NR	A	1a			
Wedge Island NR	A	1a			
Lancelin and Edwards Islands NR	A	1a			-
Southern Beekeepers NR	-	1a	Namburg National Park Management Plan (CALM 1998)	No	-
Wanagarren NR	-	1a		Yes	
Nilgen NR	-	1a		Yes	
Unnamed CP (R 49994) west of Wilbinga	-	2	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Unnamed CR (R 42469) at Woodman Point	-	-	Woodman Park Regional Park Management Plan (DEC 2010b)	No	-
Unnamed CP at Woodman Point (R 49220)	-	2		No	-
Carnac Island NR	A	1a	Carnac Island Nature Reserve Management Plan (CALM 2003)	Yes	-
Penguin Island CP	A	3	Shoalwater Islands Management Plan (CALM 2002)	No	Shoalwater Islands Marine Park
Shoalwater Islands NR	A	1a		Yes	
Port Kennedy Scientific Park	A	1a	Rockingham Lakes Regional Park (DEC 2015)	No	-
Leschenault Peninsula CP	A	2	Leschenault Peninsula Management Plan (CALM 1998)	Yes	-
Sugar Loaf Rock NR	A	1a	Leeuwin-Naturaliste Capes Area Parks and Reserves Management Plan (DPAW 2015)	Yes	Ngari Capes Marine Park
Hamelin Island NR	A	1a		Yes	
Seal Island NR	A	1a		Yes	
St Alouarn Island NR	A	1a		Yes	
Flinders Bay NR	A	1a		Yes	
Quagering NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Doubtful Islands NR	A	1a	-	Yes	Bremer Marine Park
Quarram NR	A	1a	-	Yes	

Reserve name and type	Reserve class	IUCN	Management Plan	Includes inter-tidal zone	Adjacent Marine Park (see Section 11)
Chatham Island NR	A	1a	-	Yes	South-west corner Marine Park
Two Peoples Bay NR	A	4	Albany coast draft management plan 2016 (DPAW 2016b)	Yes ¹⁰	-
Breaksea Island NR	A	1a		Yes ¹⁰	-
Bald Island NR	A	1a		Yes ¹⁰	-
Eclipse Island NR	A	1a		Yes ¹⁰	-
Michaelmas Island NR	A	1a		Yes ¹⁰	-
Glasse Island NR	A	1a	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Arpenteur NR	-	1a	-	No	-
Figure 9-5					
Channel Point Coastal Reserve	-	5	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Casuarina Coastal Reserve	1 and 3	5	Casuarina Coastal Reserve Management Plan (PAWCNT, 2016)	Yes ¹⁰	-
Shoal Bay Coastal Reserve	-	6	-	Yes ¹⁰	-
Tree Point Conservation Area	-	5	-	Yes ¹⁰	-

Further information is provided below in relation to Varanus Island and Airlie Island Nature Reserves. Santos' Varanus Island Processing Hub and Airlie Island (operations ceased) co-exist with the reserves.

Lowendal Islands Nature Reserve - Varanus Island

Varanus Island is part of the Lowendal Islands group, a Nature Reserve (Class C). The Lowendal Islands comprise more than 40 limestone islands, islets and rocky stacks. There is not currently a DBCA Management Plan covering the Lowendal Islands Nature Reserve. Varanus Island is the largest island in the Lowendal Islands and is approximately 2.5 km long and 600m wide at its widest point. Its highest point is approximately 30m above sea level.

Described ecological conservation values of marine relevance include: Wedge-tailed Shearwater nesting (see **Section 8.1.6**); Loggerhead and Hawksbill Turtle nesting (see **Section 6.1.1** and **Section 6.1.3**), Flatback Turtle nesting (Section 6.1.4). The Lowendal Islands are described as particularly important for tern breeding (DEC 2002), further information on terns is provided in **Section 8.2.1**.

Airlie Island Nature Reserve

Airlie Island Nature Reserve is an ungazetted 'C' class nature (Reserve identifier: 40323, Crown Lease 1901/100) located on Airlie Island. Airlie Island is a small sand cay (26 Ha) located 35 km NNE of Onslow. It is part of the Pilbara Inshore Islands chain. A management plan for the nature reserves of the Pilbara Inshore Islands is currently under development (DBCA 2019) i.e. there is not currently a DBCA Management Plan covering Airlie Island Nature Reserve.

Described ecological conservation values of marine relevance include: a wedge-tailed shearwater nesting (see **Section 8.1.6**); silver gull nesting (see **Section 8.1.6**) and low levels of green turtle and hawksbill turtle nesting (see **Section 6.1.2** and **6.1.3**).

9.7 Threatened Ecological Communities

An ecological community is a naturally occurring group of plants, animals and other organisms interacting in a unique habitat. Ecological communities are listed under the EPBC Act as threatened if the community is at risk of extinction.

Similarly, ecological communities can be listed under the WA BC Act as threatened if facing a risk of becoming a collapsed ecological community. To date no ecological communities are listed as threatened under the WA Act, however several ecological communities are currently endorsed by the WA Minister of Environment as Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) through the previous non-statutory process.

TECs of relevance (likely to exist in marine water inter-tidal areas) in the combined EMBA are listed in **Table 9-1** and further described below.

Table 9-4: Relevant TEC in the marine EMBA

Species	Conservation Status		
	EPBC Act 1999 (Cwth)	BC Act 2016 (WA)	Otherwise endorsed by the WA Minister for Environment
Monsoon Vine Thicket on the Ridge on the Coastal Sand Dunes of Dampier	Endangered	-	Vulnerable
Roebuck Bay mudflats	-	-	Vulnerable
Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh	Vulnerable	-	-

9.7.1 Monsoon Vine Thicket on the Ridge on the Coastal Sand Dunes of Dampier

Monsoon vine thicket occurs as semi - deciduous and evergreen vine thicket communities on and behind landward slopes of coastal sand dunes on the Dampier Peninsula in the Kimberley Region. This community is closely associated with coastal dunes elsewhere on the Dampier Peninsula and is listed as Endangered under the EPBC Act (Government of Western Australia 2010; DoEE 2016b). The community is also endorsed by the WA Minister for Environment as a threatened ecological community (non-statutory process).

9.7.2 Roebuck Bay Mudflats

Roebuck Bay mudflats (Kimberley region) have been endorsed by the WA Minister for Environment as a threatened ecological community (non-statutory process). The TEC is not listed under the EPBC Act.

Roebuck Bay mudflats (Kimberley region) are described as a 'species rich faunal community of the intertidal mudflats of Roebuck Bay' in the Kimberley region. Classed as Vulnerable (B). Roebuck Bay is a tropical marine embayment with extensive, biologically diverse, intertidal mudflats.

Roebuck Bay is protected as a designated Ramsar Wetland of International Importance (**Section 9.2.2**) and Marine Park (see **Sections 11.1.17** and **12.3.10**).

9.7.3 Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh

Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh occurs within the subtropical and temperate climatic zones and is present in coastal areas under regular or intermittent tidal influences and occurs over six State

jurisdictions (Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and WA). In WA it occurs from the south coast up to the southern part of Shark Bay. The community is made up of mainly salt tolerant vegetation which include halophytes as well as a number of non-vascular plant species. The community is listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act (DoE 2014k).

9.7.4 Thrombolite (microbialite) Community of a Coastal Brackish Lake (Lake Clifton)

The Lake Clifton thrombolite community is restricted to Lake Clifton, which occurs on the Swan Coastal Plain region of WA. Lake Clifton is situated within the Yalgorup National Park and is the northernmost lake in the Peel-Yalgorup Lakes System, which consists of several hypersaline and brackish lakes (Moore 1990). The Lake Clifton thrombolite community occurs on a relict foredune plain of Holocene age sands. The main known occurrence of the ecological community is a stretch, approximately 15 km long and up to 15 m wide, along the north-eastern shoreline of Lake Clifton. There are other small clusters of thrombolites within the Lake, also at the northern end. The thrombolites cover a total area of approximately four square kilometres (Moore 1990). This structure is the largest known example of a living, non-marine microbialite reef in the southern hemisphere.

The Thrombolite (microbialite) Community of a Coastal Brackish Lake (Lake Clifton) is listed as critically endangered under the EPBC Act because it has a very restricted distribution and recent investigations indicate that *Scytonema*, a key cyanobacterium for thrombolite formation has gone from being a dominant species to no longer being found in Lake Clifton thrombolites.

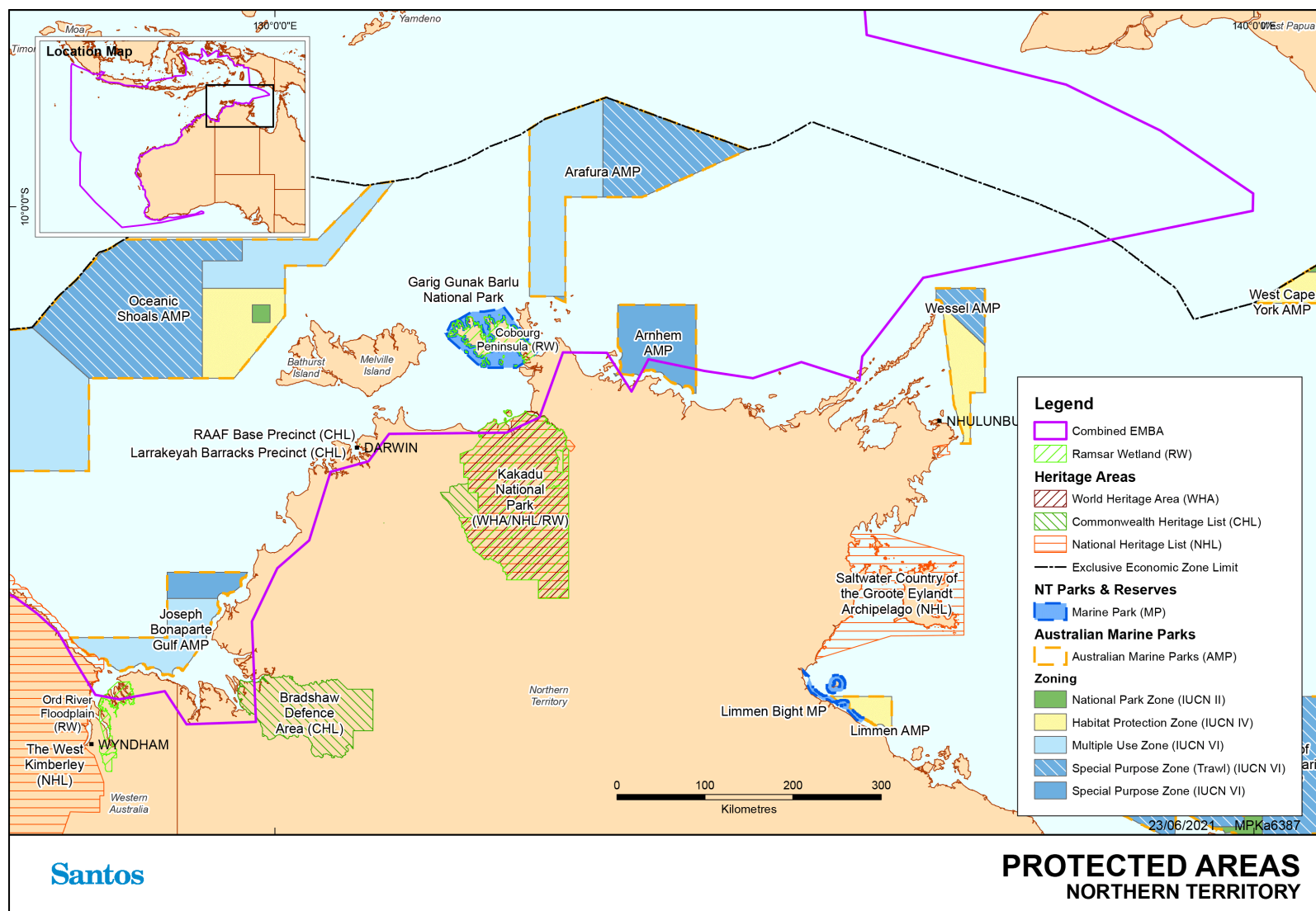


Figure 9-1: Protected areas in NT

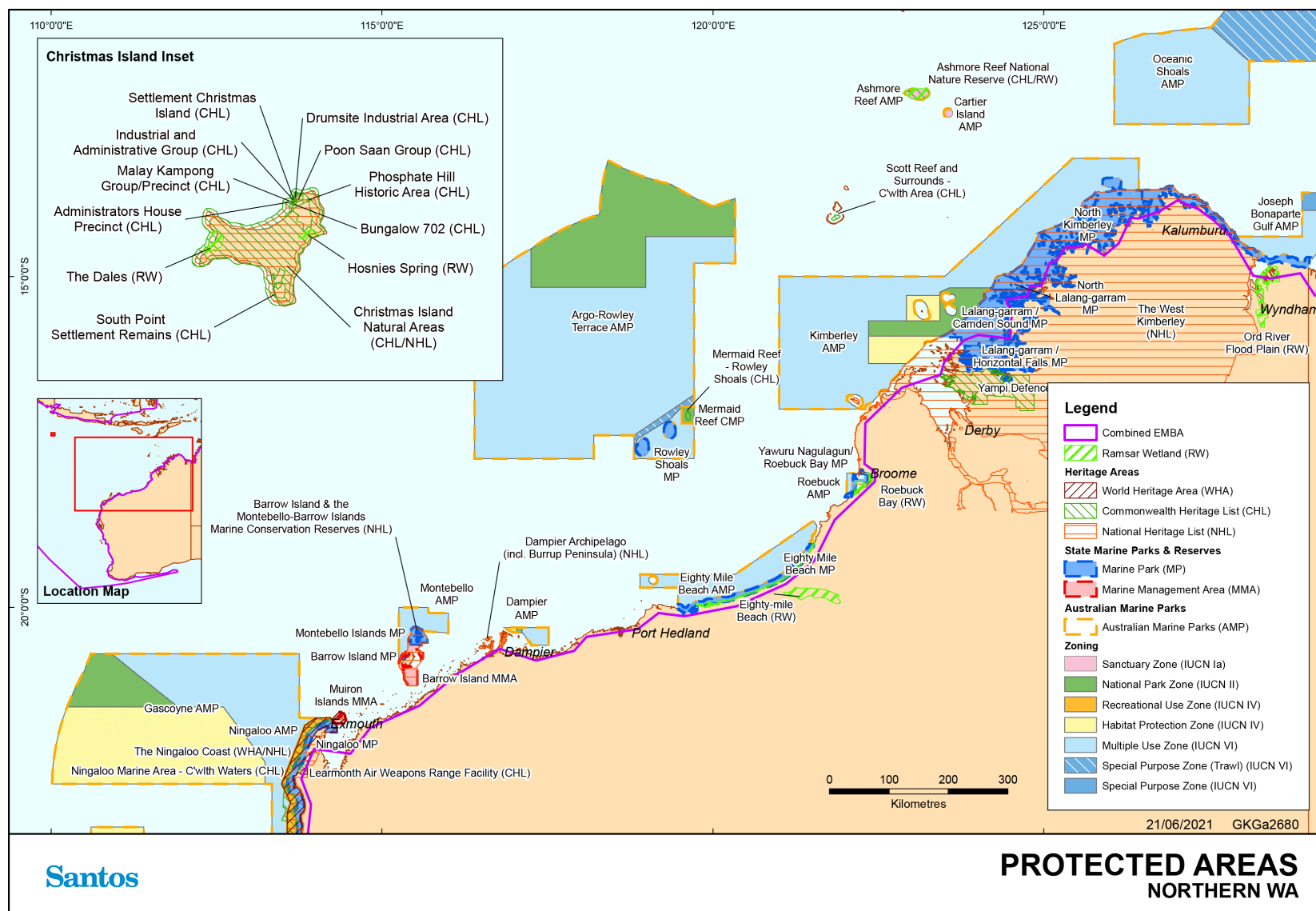


Figure 9-2: Protected areas in Northern WA

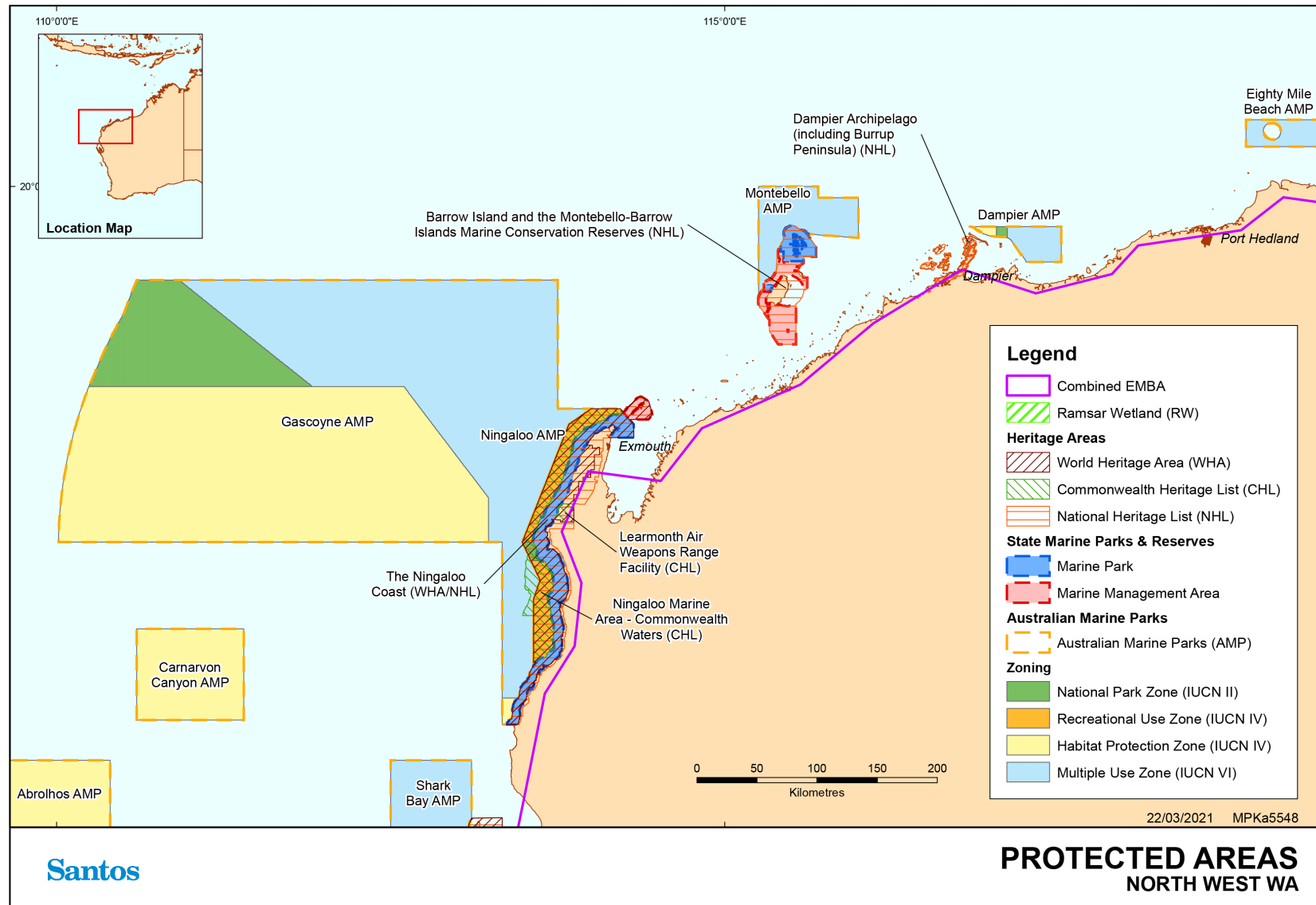


Figure 9-3: Protected areas in North West WA

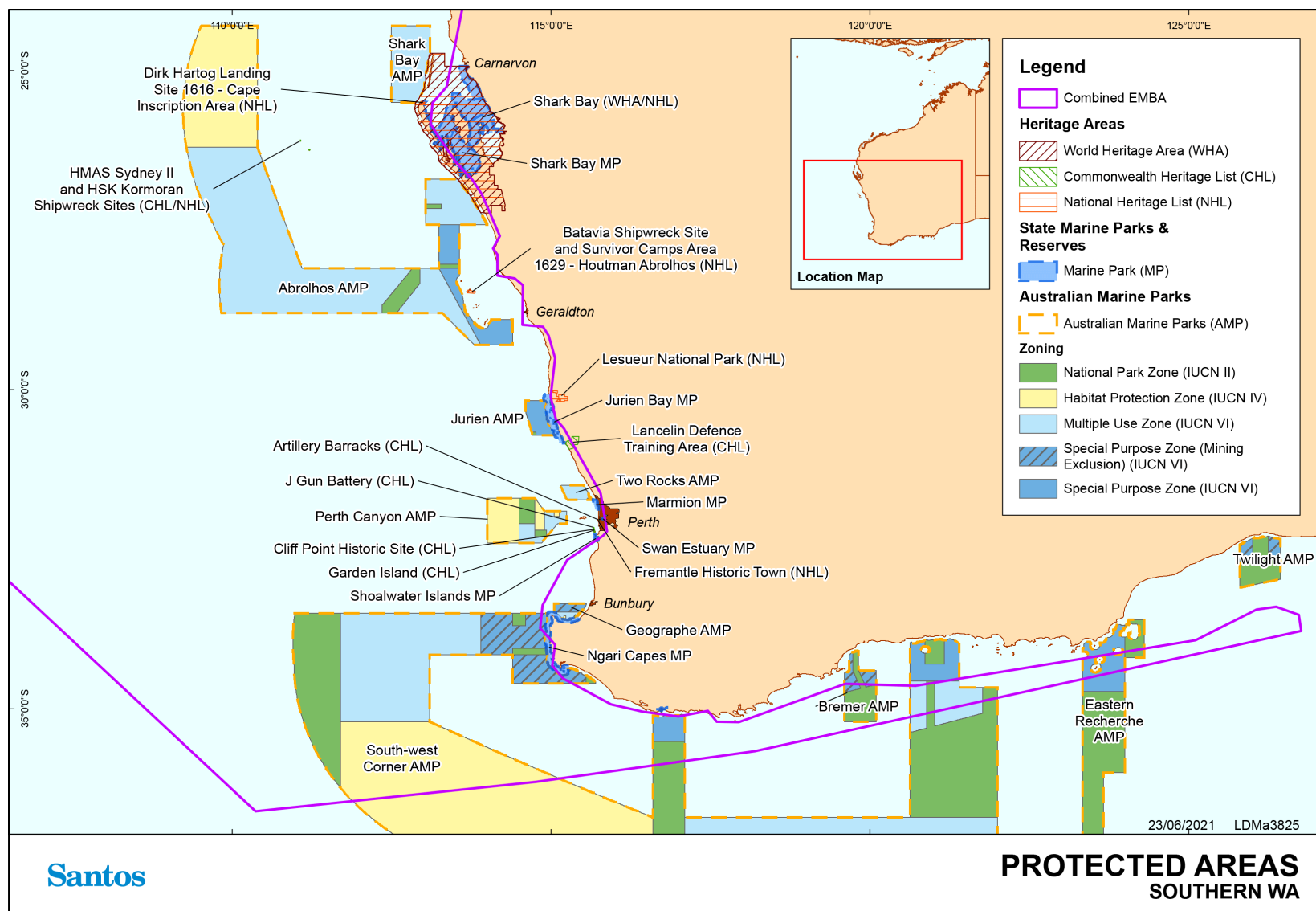


Figure 9-4: Protected areas in Southern WA

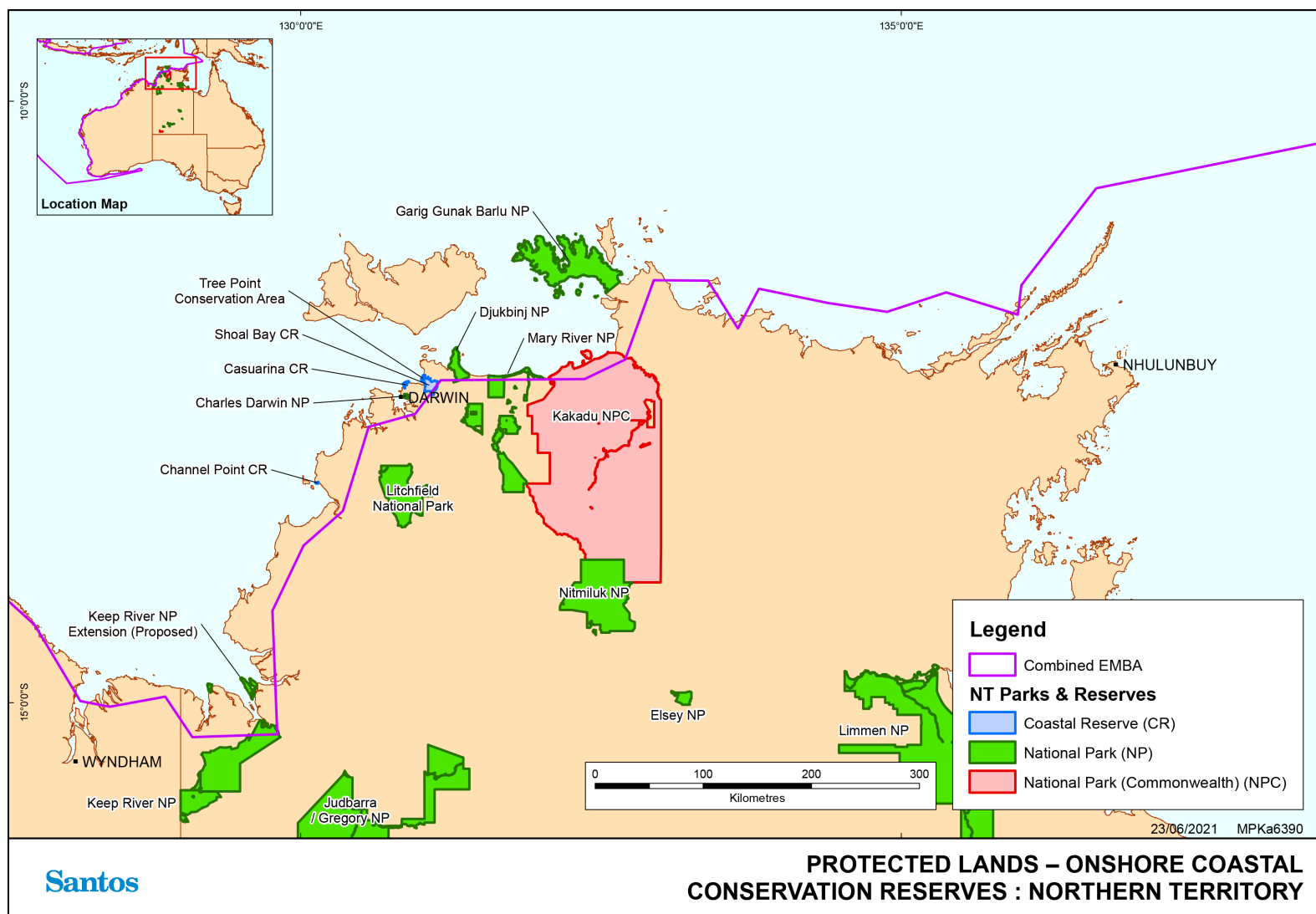


Figure 9-5: Protected Lands (CALM Act 1984) – terrestrial coastal reserves bounding marine waters in NT

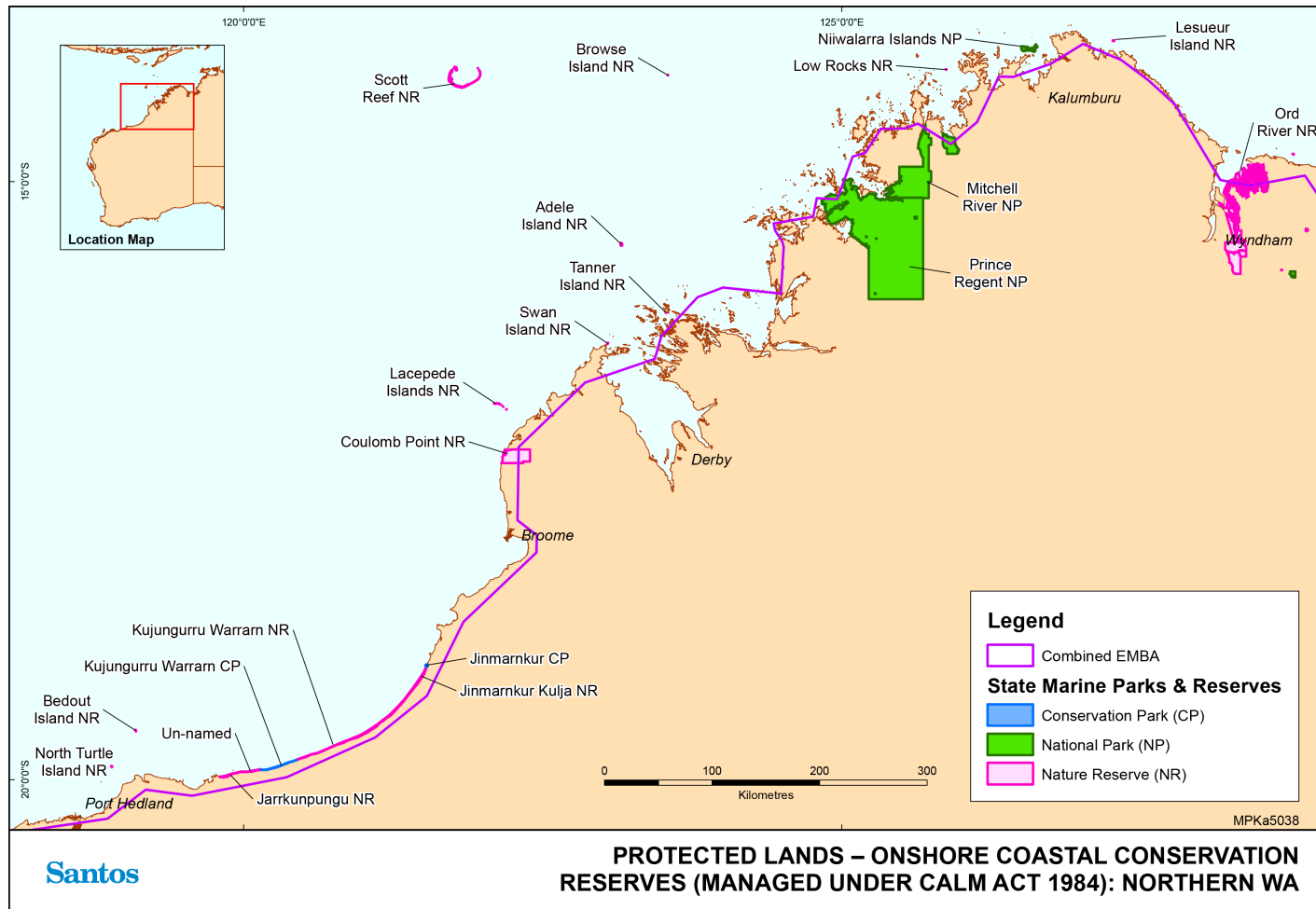


Figure 9-6: Protected Lands (CALM Act 1984) – terrestrial conservation reserves bounding marine waters in northern WA¹²

¹² Yawaru Minyirr Buru Conservation Reserve (adjacent to Roebuck Bay) not shown as exact spatial extent unavailable, however the adjacent inter-tidal waters are managed under adjacent Roebuck Bay Marine Park (described in **Section 11.1.17**).

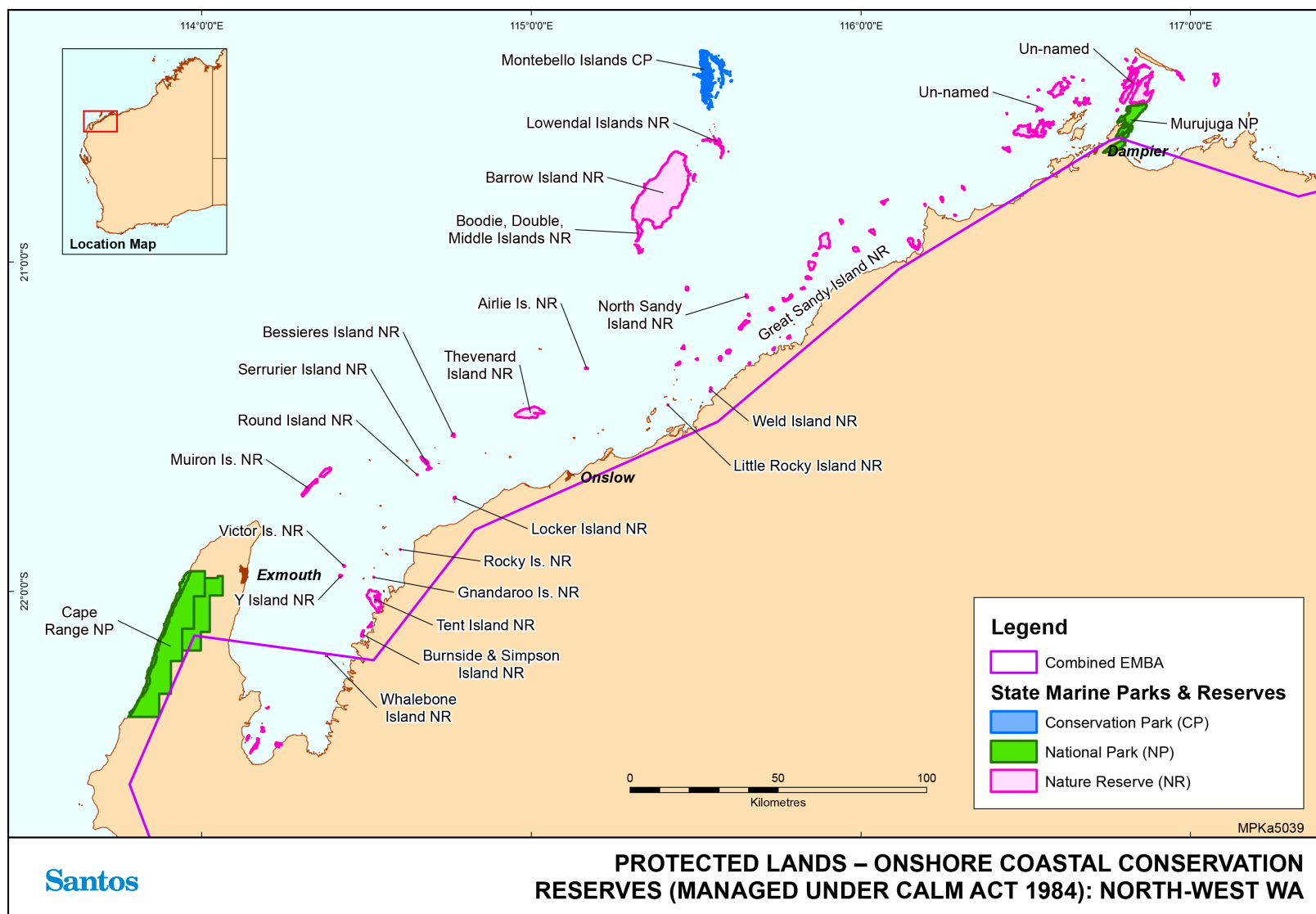


Figure 9-7: Protected Lands (CALM Act 1984) – terrestrial conservation reserves bounding marine waters in North-West WA

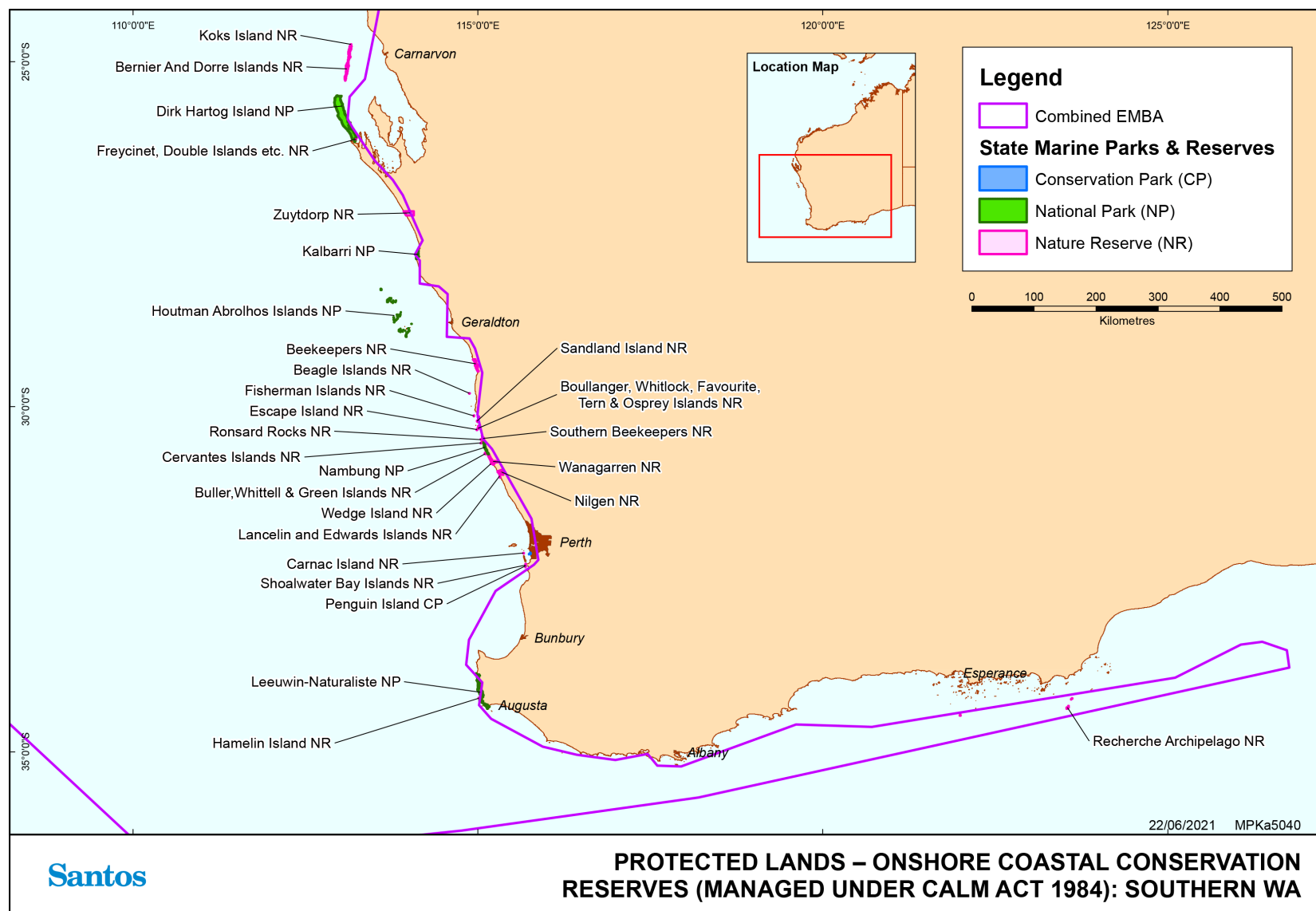


Figure 9-8: Protected Lands (CALM Act 1984) – terrestrial conservation reserves bounding marine waters in Southern WA¹³

9.8 International Protected Areas

There are 54 National Parks in Indonesia, six are World Heritage Sites, nine are part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and five are wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar convention. A total of nine parks are largely marine (ADB 2014). the combined EMBA number of marine national parks, nature reserves and protected areas are overlapped by the combined EMBA. A summary of these is provided below. The waters and islands of these protected areas are frequented by tourists undertaking diving, snorkelling, sailing and other marine nature based tourism with many attractions such as shipwrecks and whale sharks as well as the extensive terrestrial ecosystems. Traditional fishing also occurs throughout the parks where allowed.

9.8.1 World Heritage and Protected Sites

9.8.1.1 Komodo

Komodo National park is located within the lesser Sunda Island between the provinces of East Nusa Tenggara and West Nusa Tenggara. Within the 1733km² site, three larger island (Komodo, Padar and Rincach) and 26 smaller ones are included. The marine fauna and flora are generally the same as that found throughout the Indo Pacific area, though species richness is very high, notable marine mammals include blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*) and sperm whale (*Physeter catodon*) as well as 10 species of dolphin, dugong (*Dugong dugon*) and five species of sea turtles (WHC, 2021). Fringing and patch coral reefs are extensive and most developed on the north-east side of Komodo (Indahnesia, 2011). The property is identified as a global conservation priority area, comprising unparalleled terrestrial and marine ecosystems (WHC, 2021).

The islands have an irregular coastline characterized by bays, beaches and inlets separated by headlands, often with sheer cliffs falling vertically into the surrounding seas.

9.8.1.2 Siberut

Siberut is located about 155km off the coast of West Sumatra across the Mentawaian strait and covers an area of 4050km². Sand beaches, lagoons, mangroves, and coral sea gardens create ecosystems within the site (Indahnesia, 2011).

9.8.1.3 Ujung Kulon

Ujung Kulon covers 1230km² of area. The coastline features various ecosystems such as sandy beaches, lagoons, rocky outcrops, as well as mangrove swamps. The water is an unusually warm 29 to 30 degrees Celsius and is home to multiple species of coral and fish (Indahnesia, 2011). The property includes the Ujung Kulon peninsula and several offshore islands that demonstrate on-going evolutionary processes (WHC, 2021).

9.8.2 Marine National Parks

9.8.2.1 Laut Sawu

The Laut Sawu Marine National Park located within the Lesser Sunda Ecoregion in the Savu Sea and covers a reported 35,211 km² (Protected Planet 2017). It was established in 2009 and has an IUCN Category II status (Protected Planet 2017). The marine park area is a known migration route for several cetacean species, including the blue whale and sperm whale. Other cetacean species such as pygmy killer whales, melon-head whale, short-finned pilot whales and numerous dolphin species (including Risso's dolphin, Fraser's dolphin, common dolphin, bottlenose dolphin and spinner dolphin) are known to frequent the marine park area. Several species of marine turtle, including the green turtle, hawksbill turtle and leatherback turtle have also been recorded in the marine park area.

The marine park area covers a range of habitats and species diversity, including:

- + 532 corals species which include 11 endemic and sub endemic species;
- + 350 reef fish species;
- + fifteen mangrove species are recorded that represented 9 families of mangrove;
- + ten seagrass species;
- + deep-water habitats such as seamounts, deep-water canyons, straits (migratory corridors);
- + large persistent pelagic habitats;
- + main migratory corridors and habitats for 14 whale species, seven dolphin's species, and dugong; and
- + habitats for five sea turtle species (green, leatherback, olive ridley, loggerhead, and flatback) as well as for large marine fauna such as sharks, napoleon, parrotfish and groupers (Savu Sea National Marine Conservation Area undated).

9.8.2.2 Kepulauan Seribu

Kepulauan Seribu, also known as Thousand Islands National Park, consists of a string of 105 islands within a reported area of 1074.89km². It is designated with an IUCN category II status. The closest island lies in Jakarta Bay, only a few kilometres from off mainland Jakarta with islands stretching as far as 45km north into the Java Sea (Indahnesia, 2011). Some islands are uninhabited, others have resorts or are privately owned. The coastlines are dominated by sandy beaches with some of the islands declared as protected historical sites to protect the artifacts and ruins on the islands dating back to the 19th century. Extensive coral reefs surround the islands. A Hawksbill turtle preservation program is in places in the park to protect the species that are found in the waters and nest on sandy beaches there (UNDP Indonesia, 2017). Mangroves are also found in the park, including plantations to increase the mangrove coverage.

9.8.2.3 Teluk Cenderawasih

Teluk Cenderawasih National Park is the largest marine park in Indonesia, with the reported area being 14535 km². It is designated with an IUCN category II status. The National Park is in Cenderawasih Bay, south-east of Bird's Head Peninsula, and includes the Islands of Misowaar, Nusrowi, Roon, Rumberpon and Yoop. The Park protects a rich marine ecosystem where over 150 coral species have been recorded. It is therefore considered to be a potential World Heritage Site (Indahnesia, 2011).

3.8% of the site consists of island tropical forest ecosystems, where some 46 species of plant have been recorded on the islands. 0.9% of the site is specifically mangrove ecosystems. Although only 5.5% of the site consists of coral reef ecosystems, 150 species of coral have been recorded. This coral reef ecosystem forms part of the Coral Triangle region. Within the remaining area of the site, over 200 fish species, various species of molluscs, whale sharks, four species of turtle as well as mammals such as the dugong, blue whale and dolphins inhabit the 89.8% of marine water ecosystems.

9.8.2.4 Taka Bonerate

Taka Bonerate National Park includes the Takabonerate Atoll Islands within a 5307 km² area within the Flores Sea. Taka Bone Rate consists of separate table reefs, enclosing a lagoon filled with massive reefs and is a site of major ecological importance (Indahnesia, 2011). According to the Indonesian Department of Forestry, the site has 261 species of coral, 295 species of coral fish, 244 species of molluscs as well as many other species

such as turtles including green turtles that are known to nest on sandy beaches within the park (UNDP Indonesia, 2017).

9.8.2.5 Bunaken

Bunaken National Park is located in the north of the Sulawesi Islands, located near the centre of the Coral Triangle, it is designated with an IUCN category II status. This site typifies Indonesian tropical water ecosystems, consisting of seagrass plains, coral reefs and coastal ecosystems. 97% of the site is classified as marine habitat with the remaining being terrestrial, including 5 islands (Indahnesia, 2011). 390 species of coral, 90 fish species as well as mollusc, reptile, marine and mammal species have all been recorded.

9.8.2.6 Kapulauan Wakatobi

Kapulauan Wakatobi is located south of Sulawesi Island of Indonesia within a 13900km² area. It is designated with an IUCN category II status. Types of vegetation found in the National Park include mangrove forests, coastal forests, lowland swamp forests, riverbank vegetation, lowland rainforests, mountain rainforests and coral reefs (Indahnesia, 2011). There are 25 groups of coral reefs, including fringing reefs, barrier reefs and atolls. 396 species of coral belonging to 68 genera and 15 families populate the coral reef. Turtles are found nesting on the beaches and in the waters of the marine park.

9.8.2.7 Meru Betiri

Meru Betiri National Park lies within the province of East Java and extends over 580km². Of that area, 8.45 km² is marine (Indahnesia, 2011). The beaches of the park provide nesting grounds for endangered turtle species such as leatherback turtles, hawksbill turtles, green turtles, and olive ridley turtles (ADB 2014). The coastal vegetation is mostly found around Sukamade Bay and Meru Bay. Mangrove vegetation is largely found at the eastern side of the Rajegwesi Bay. The dominant genera are *Rhizophora*, *Avicennia* and *Bruguiera*. At the outlet of the Sukamade River, there is *Nypa fruticans*.

9.8.2.8 Togian Islands

The Togian Islands National Park, otherwise known as Kepulauan Togean, is a largely marine national park and provides habitat and breeding areas for hawksbill and green turtles and dugongs (Indahnesia, 2011). Mangroves forests are found within the marine park and extensive coral reefs.

9.8.3 Marine Nature Reserves and Conservation Areas

9.8.3.1 Karimunjawa

Karimunjawa is a national marine park in the Karimunjawa archipelago, 80km north of Jepara in the Java sea. The national park was formally declared a marine protected area in 2001 and has an IUCN category Ia status.

Karimunjawa has five types of ecosystems; coral reef, seagrass and seaweed, mangrove forest, coastal forest and low land tropical rainforest. The coral reefs of Karimunjawa are composed of fringing and barrier reefs along with several patch reefs. More than 90 species of coral biota is known to make up these ecosystems that creates a habitat for over 242 species of ornamental fish. Protected coral biota such as black coral, hornet helmet, titron trumpet, green shell and organ pipe coral, can be found here.

The 300 hectares of mangrove forests contain 32 species of mangroves and habitat many endemic species such as the dewadaru tree (*Fragraea elliptica*), setgi (*Pemphis acidula*) and kalimsada (*Cordia Subcordata*). Around 40 species of bird habitat this area as well as other terrestrial animals. Several species of turtles are known to use this national park as a breeding ground. Marine species within the area are particularly diverse, and in more abundance than the terrestrial populations.

9.8.3.2 Savu Sea National Marine Conservation Area

Savu Sea National Marine Conservation Area is located between the islands Sumba and Timor encompassing Pulau Roti and Sawu. The park includes coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass and deepwater habitats such as seamounts and deepwater canyons. Savu Sea NMCA is located within the Lesser Sunda seascape which is regarded as a high priority seascape for marine biodiversity conservation (Huffard et al. 2012). The Lesser Sundas is the main corridor between the Indian and Pacific Oceans including for migrating whales and commercially-important pelagic fishes (Huffard et al. 2012). Savu Sea NMCA covers ranges of species diversities and habitats within its region which includes:

- + 532 corals species, 11 endemic and sub endemic species;
- + 350 reef fish species;
- + 15 mangrove species are recorded that represented nine families of mangrove;
- + 10 sea grass species in two families;
- + Deep-water habitats such as seamounts, deep-water canyons, straits (migratory corridors) and large persistent pelagic habitats were covered within Savu Sea NMP boundaries;
- + Main migratory corridors and habitats for 14 whales species, seven dolphins species and one dugong species; and
- + Habitats for five sea turtles species (green, leatherback, olive ridley, loggerhead, and flat back), as well as for large marine fauna such as sharks, napoleon, parrotfish and groupers (Savu Sea Management Plan 2014).

10. Key Ecological Features

10.1 Introduction

Key ecological features (KEFs) are elements of the Commonwealth marine environment that are considered to be of regional importance for either a region's biodiversity or its ecosystem function and integrity. KEFs meet one or more of the following criteria (DSEWPac 2012a):

- + A species, group of species or a community with a regionally important ecological role;
- + A species, group of species or a community that is nationally or regionally important for biodiversity;
- + An area or habitat that is nationally or regionally important for:
 - Enhanced or high biological productivity;
 - Aggregations of marine life; or
 - Biodiversity and/or endemism
- + A unique seafloor feature with ecological properties of regional significance.

Twenty eight key ecological features of the Commonwealth waters in the combined EMBA (covering the NMR, the NWMR and the SWMR) have been identified in the protected matters search (**Figure 10-2, Figure 10-3** and **Figure 10-1**) and are discussed in this section.

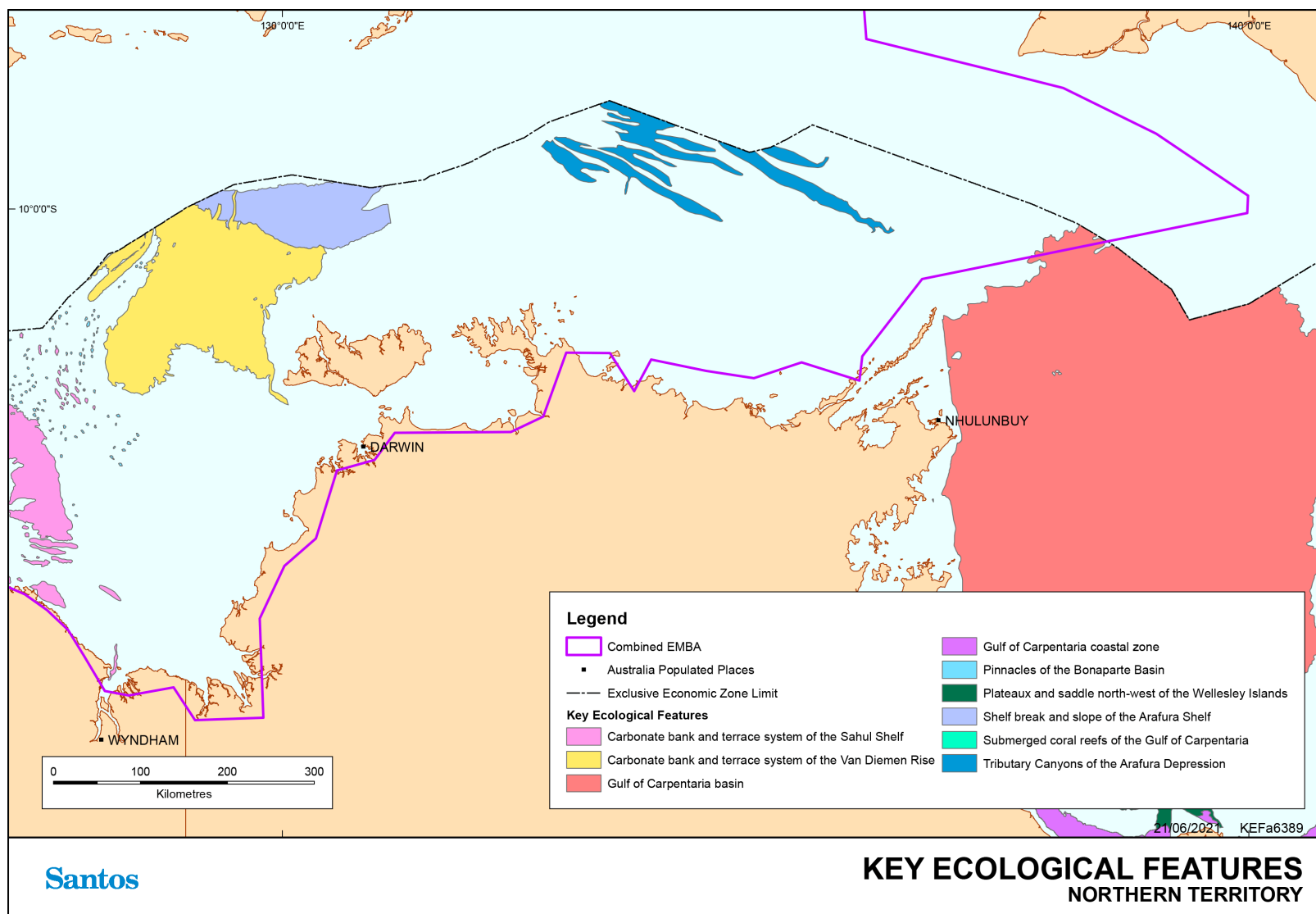


Figure 10-1: Key ecological features of NT

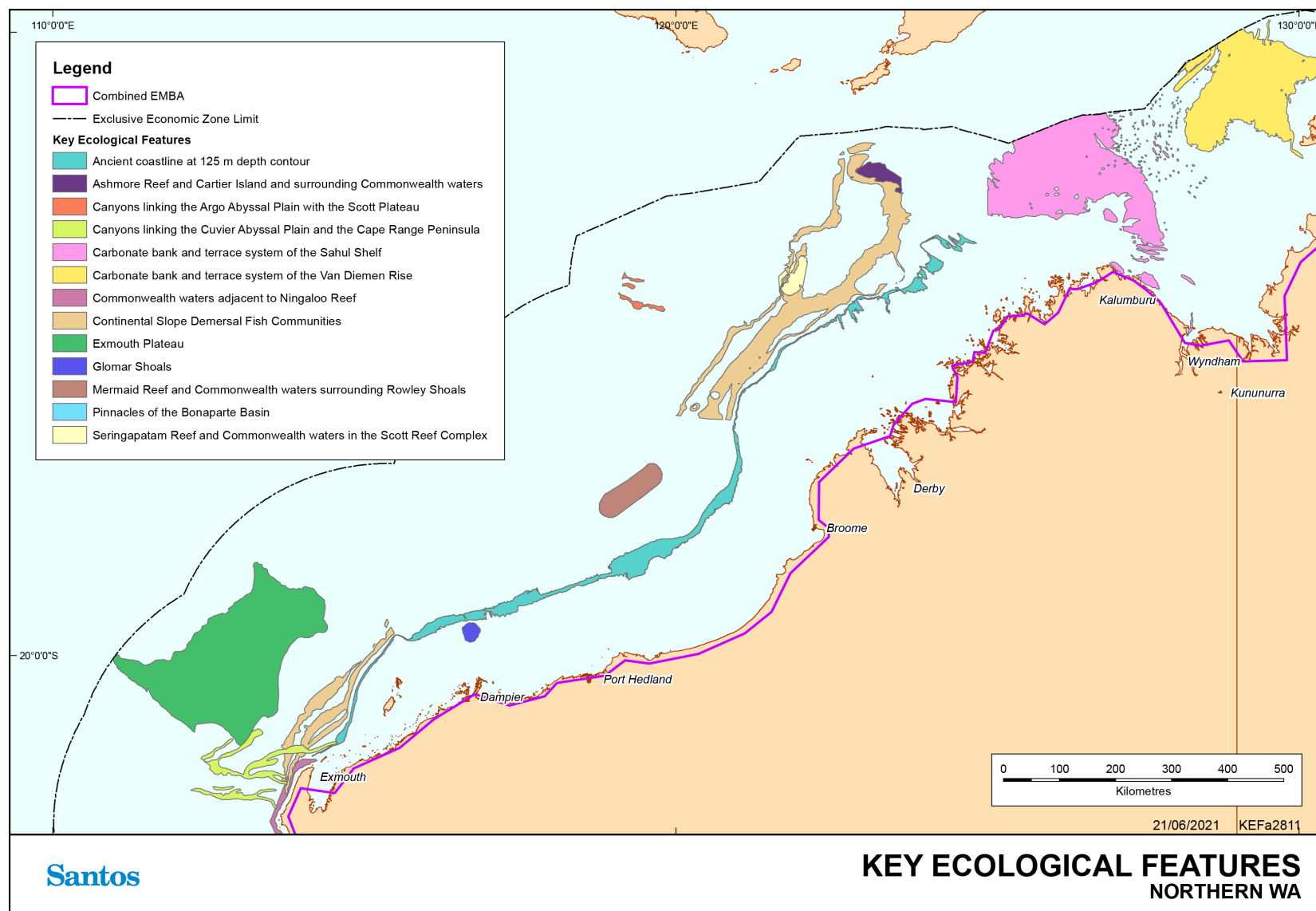


Figure 10-2: Key ecological features of Northern WA

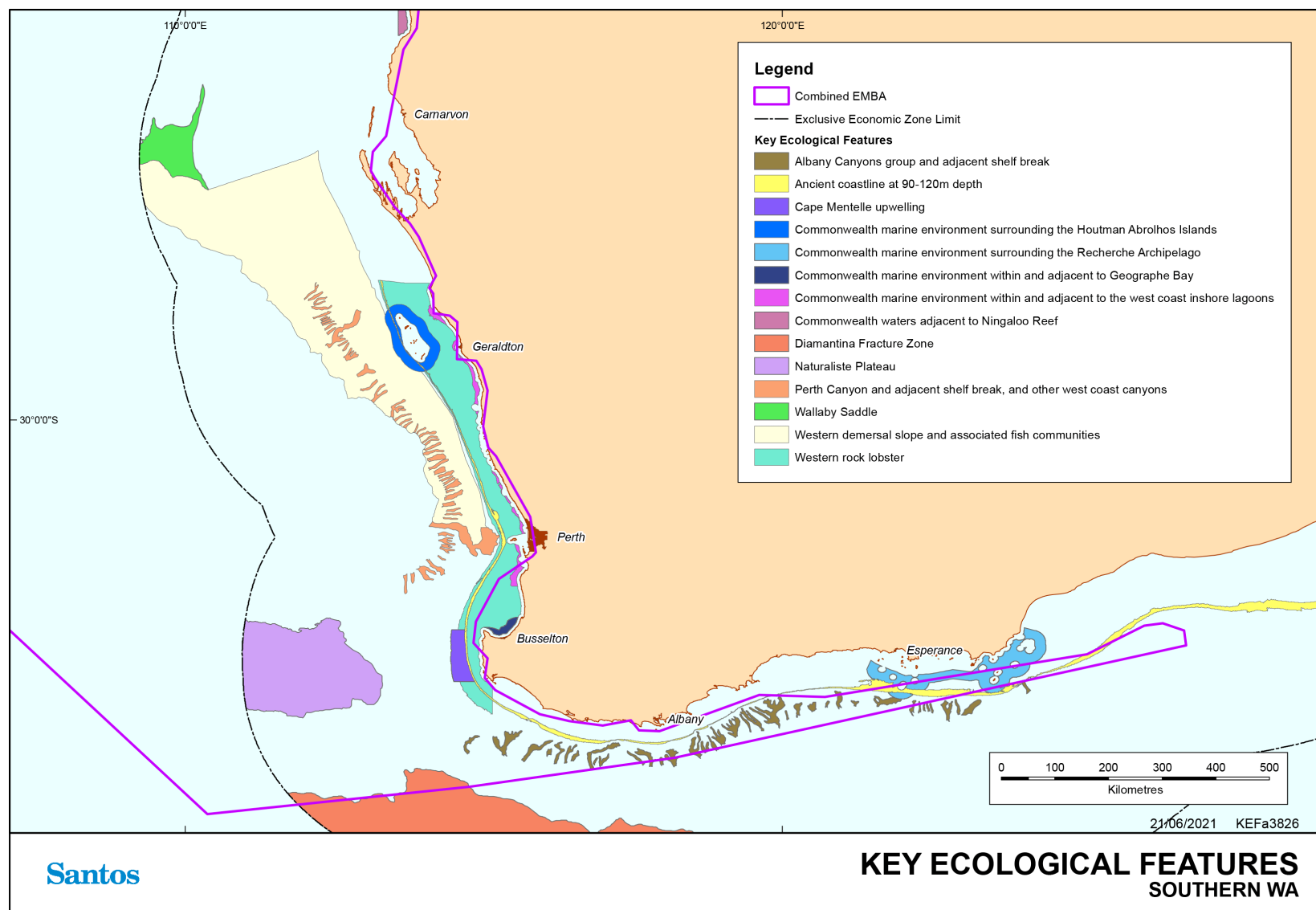


Figure 10-3: Key ecological features of Southern WA

10.1.1 Commonwealth Marine Environment Surrounding the Houtman Abrolhos Islands (and Adjacent Shelf Break)

The Commonwealth marine environment surrounding the Houtman Abrolhos Islands (and adjacent shelf break) is defined as a KEF for its high levels of biodiversity and endemism in benthic and pelagic habitats. The Houtman Abrolhos Islands and surrounding reefs support a unique mix of temperate and tropical species, resulting from the southward transport of species by the Leeuwin Current over thousands of years. The reefs are composed of 184 known species of corals that support about 400 known species of demersal fish, 492 known species of molluscs, 110 known species of sponges, 172 known species of echinoderms and 234 known species of benthic algae (DEWHA 2008b). The Houtman Abrolhos Islands are the largest seabird breeding station in the eastern Indian Ocean (DSEWPaC 2012a). They support more than one million pairs of breeding seabirds. The Houtman Abrolhos Islands and surround waters are also BIAs for Australian sea lions for foraging and breeding (DEWHA 2010b).

10.1.2 Commonwealth Marine environment surrounding the Recherche Archipelago

The Recherche Archipelago is a chain of approximately 105 islands and 1 500 islets extending over 470 km of coastline near Esperance, Western Australia. This area is defined as a KEF as it is a region of high biodiversity. The Recherche Archipelago is the most extensive area of reef in the South-west Marine Region. Its reef and seagrass habitat support a high species diversity of warm temperate species, including 263 known species of fish, 347 known species of molluscs, 300 known species of sponges, and 242 known species of macroalgae. The islands also provide haul-out (resting areas) and breeding sites for Australian sea lions and New Zealand fur seals (DSEWPaC 2012).

10.1.3 Perth Canyon and Adjacent Shelf Break, and other West-Coast Canyons

The Perth Canyon is defined as a KEF for its high biological productivity and aggregations of marine life and unique seafloor features with ecological properties of regional significance. The Perth Canyon is the largest known undersea canyon in Australian waters. In the Perth Canyon, interactions between the Leeuwin Current and the Canyon topography induce clockwise-rotating eddies that transport nutrients upwards in the water column from greater depths (DoEE 2019a). Due to the Canyon's depth and Leeuwin Current's barrier effect, this remains a subsurface upwelling which supports ecological complexity that is typically absent from canyon systems in other areas (Pattiaratchi 2007). This nutrient-rich cold-water habitat attracts feeding aggregations of deep-diving mammals, such as pygmy blue whales and large predatory fish that feed on aggregations of small fish, krill and squid (DSEWPaC 2012a). The Perth Canyon also marks the southern boundary for numerous tropical species groups on the shelf, including sponges, corals, decapods and xanthid crabs (DoEE 2017a).

10.1.4 Commonwealth Marine Environment within and adjacent to the West-Coast Inshore Lagoons

This key ecological feature is composed by a chain of inshore lagoons of limestone reef (as deep as 30 m) extending along the Western Australian coast from south of Mandurah to Kalbarri. The mix of sheltered and exposed seabeds form a complex mosaic of habitats. The lagoons are dominated by seagrass and epiphytic algae (Dambacher et al. 2009). Although macroalgae (principally *Ecklonia* spp.) and seagrass appear to be the primary source of production, scientists suggest that groundwater enrichment may supplement the supply of nutrients to the lagoons. The lagoons are associated with high biodiversity and endemism, containing a mix of tropical, subtropical and temperate flora and fauna.

The inshore lagoons are important areas for the recruitment of the commercially and recreationally important western rock lobster, dhufish, pink snapper, breaksea cod, baldchin and blue groppers, abalone and

many other reef species. The area includes breeding and nursery aggregations for many temperate and tropical marine species (Goldberg & Collings 2006 in McClatchie et al. 2006). Extensive schools of migratory fish visit the area annually, including herring, garfish, tailor and Australian salmon.

10.1.5 Commonwealth Marine Environment within and Adjacent to Geographe Bay

The Commonwealth marine environment within and adjacent to Geographe Bay is defined as a KEF for its high productivity and aggregations of marine life and high levels of biodiversity and endemism. Geographe Bay is known for its extensive beds of tropical and temperate seagrass that account for about 80 % of benthic primary production in the area (DEH 2006). This habitat supports a diversity of species, many of them not found anywhere else (DSEWPaC 2012a). The bay provides important nursery habitat for many species, including juvenile dusky whaler sharks. It is also an important resting area for migrating humpback whales (McCauley *et al.* 2000).

10.1.6 Cape Mentelle Upwelling

The Cape Mentelle upwelling is defined as a KEF for its high productivity and aggregation soft marine life. The Cape Mentelle upwelling draws relatively nutrient-rich water from the base of the Leeuwin Current, up the continental slope and onto the inner continental shelf, where it results in phytoplankton blooms at the surface. The phytoplankton blooms provide the basis for an extended food chain characterised by feeding aggregations of small pelagic fish, larger predatory fish, seabirds, dolphins and sharks (DSEWPaC 2012a). The Cape Mentelle upwelling has a disproportionate influence on the overall-nutrient poor nature of the region's water.

10.1.7 Naturaliste Plateau

The Naturaliste Plateau is defined as a KEF for its unique seafloor feature with ecological properties of regional significance. The Naturaliste Plateau is Australia's deepest temperate marginal plateau and occurs an area where numerous water bodies and currents converge. It is also the only seafloor feature in the region that interacts with the subtropical convergence front (DoEE 2019b). Although there is very little known about the marine life of the plateau, it is speculated that the combination of its structural complexity, mixed water dynamics and relative isolation indicate that it supports deep-water communities with high species diversity and endemism (DEWHA 2008b; DSEWPaC 2012a). The Plateau acts as an underwater 'biogeographical island' on the edge of the abyssal plain, providing habitat for fauna unique to these depths (Richardson *et al.* 2005). The Plateau is also within a deep eddy field that is thought to be associated with high productivity and aggregations of marine life (Pattiaratchi 2007). Proximity to the nearby subtropical convergence front is thought to have a significant influence on the biodiversity of the Plateau (DEWHA 2008b).

10.1.8 Western Demersal Slope and associated Fish Communities

The Western Demersal Slope and associated Fish Communities, also known as the Demersal Slope and associated Fish Communities of the Central Western Province, is defined as a key ecological community for its high levels of biodiversity and endemism. It is located on the edge of the shelf to the limit of the exclusive economic zone from Perth to the northern boundary of the SWMR. The western demersal slope provides important habitat for demersal fish communities, with a high level of diversity and endemism. A diverse assemblage of demersal fish species below a depth of 400 m is dominated by relatively small benthic species such as grenadiers, dogfish and cucumber fish. Unlike other slope fish communities in Australia, many of these species display unique physical adaptations to feed on the sea floor (such as a mouth position adapted to bottom feeding), and many do not appear to migrate vertically in their daily feeding habits (DSEWPaC 2012a, Williams *et al.* 2001). A total of 480 fish species have been described that inhabit the slope of this bioregion with 31 considered to be endemic to the bioregion (DoEE 2019a). Demersal fish communities

within the area have recorded higher diversity when compared to other oceanic regions which have been more intensively sampled. The increased diversity within the area has been attributed to the overlap of ancient and extensive Indo-west Pacific and temperate Australasian fauna (Williams et al. 2001).

10.1.9 Western Rock Lobster

The Western Rock Lobster KEF is defined due to its presumed ecological role on the West Coast Continental Shelf. This species is the dominant large benthic invertebrate in the region. The lobster plays an important trophic role in many of the inshore ecosystems of the South-west Marine Region. Western rock lobsters are an important part of the food web on the inner shelf, particularly as juveniles as they are preyed upon by octopus, cuttlefish, baldchin groper, dhufish, pink snapper, wirrah cod and breaksea cod (DEWHA 2008b, DSEWPaC 2012a). The high biomass of western rock lobsters and their vulnerability to predation suggest that they are an important trophic pathway for a range of inshore species that prey upon juvenile lobsters (DEWHA 2008b).

10.1.10 Wallaby Saddle

The Wallaby Saddle is defined as a KEF for its high productivity and aggregations of marine life. The Wallaby Saddle is an abyssal geomorphic feature located on the upper continental slope at a depth of 4,000–4,700 m (DSEWPaC 2012a). The feature connects the north-west margin of the Wallaby Plateau with the margin of the Carnarvon Terrace (Falkner *et al.* 2009 in DSEWPaC 2012a). The Wallaby Saddle is situated within the Indian Ocean water mass and is thus differentiated from systems to the north that are dominated by transitional fronts or the Indonesian Throughflow (DSEWPaC 2012a). Little is known about the Wallaby Saddle; however, the area is considered one of enhanced productivity and low habitat diversity (Brewer *et al.* 2007). The Wallaby Saddle is associated with historical aggregations of sperm whales (DEWHA 2008c).

10.1.11 Commonwealth Waters Adjacent to Ningaloo Reef

The Commonwealth Waters adjacent to Ningaloo Reef KEF is defined for high productivity and aggregations of marine life. The Ningaloo Reef extends almost 300 km along the Cape Range Peninsula to the Red Bluff and is globally significant as the only extensive coral reef in the world that fringes the west coast of a continent. Commonwealth waters adjacent to the reef are thought to support the rich aggregations of marine species at Ningaloo Reef through upwellings associated with canyons on the adjacent continental slope and interactions between the Ningaloo and Leeuwin currents (Brewer *et al.* 2007, DEWHA 2008d, DSEWPaC 2012a). The narrow continental shelf (10 km at its narrowest) means that the nutrients channelled to the surface via canyons are immediately available to reef species. Terrestrial nutrient input is low, hence this deep-water source is a major source of nutrients for Ningaloo Reef and therefore very important in maintaining this system (DEWHA 2008c).

The reef is known to support an extremely abundant array of marine species including over 200 species of coral and more than 460 species of reef fish, as well as molluscs, crustaceans and other reef plants and animals (DEWHA 2008c). Marine turtles, dugongs and dolphins frequently visit the reef lagoon. The Commonwealth waters around Ningaloo include areas of potentially high and unique sponge biodiversity (DEWHA 2008c). Upwellings on the seaward side support aggregations such as whale sharks and manta rays (these waters are the main known aggregation area for whale sharks in Australian waters). Humpback whales are seasonal visitors to the outer reef edge and seasnakes, sharks, large predatory fish and seabirds also utilise the reef and surrounding waters.

The Ningaloo Marine Park includes this Key Ecological Feature and is discussed in **Section 12.3.4**.

10.1.12 Canyons Linking the Cuvier Abyssal Plain with the Cape Range Peninsula

The Canyons linking the Cuvier Abyssal Plain and the Cape Range Peninsula are defined as a KEF as they are unique seafloor features with ecological properties of regional significance.

Cape Range Peninsula and the Cuvier Abyssal Plain are linked by canyons, the largest of which are the Cape Range Canyon and Cloates Canyon. These two canyons are located along the southerly edge of Exmouth Plateau adjacent to Ningaloo Reef and are unique due to their close proximity to the North West Cape (DSEWPaC 2012a). The Leeuwin Current interacts with the heads of the canyons to produce eddies resulting in delivery of higher nutrient, cool waters from the Antarctic intermediate water mass to the shelf (Brewer *et al.* 2007). Strong internal tides also create upwelling at the canyon heads (Brewer *et al.* 2007). Thus the canyons, the Exmouth Plateau and the Commonwealth waters adjacent to Ningaloo Reef interact to create the conditions for enhanced productivity seen in this region (Sleeman *et al.* 2007 in DSEWPaC 2012a). The canyons are also repositories for particulate matter deposited from the shelf and sides of the canyons and serve as conduits for organic matter between the surface, shelf and abyssal plains (DSEWPaC 2012a).

The soft bottom habitats within the canyons themselves are likely to support important assemblages of epibenthic species. Biological productivity at the head of Cape Range Canyon in particular, is known to support species aggregations, including whale sharks, manta rays, humpback whales, sea snakes, sharks, large predatory fish and seabirds. The canyons are thought to be significant contributors to the biodiversity of the adjacent Ningaloo Reef, as they channel deep water nutrients up to the reef, stimulating primary productivity (DEWHA 2008c).

10.1.13 Exmouth Plateau

The Exmouth Plateau is defined as a KEF as it is a unique seafloor feature with ecological properties of regional significance. The Exmouth Plateau covers an area of 49,310 km² and is located approximately 150 km northwest of Exmouth. The plateau ranges in water depths from 800 to 4,000 m (Heap & Harris 2008 in DSEWPaC 2012a). The plateau's surface is rough and undulating at 800–1,000 m depth. The northern margin is steep and intersected by large canyons (e.g. Montebello and Swan canyons) with relief greater than 50 m. The western margin is moderately steep and smooth and the southern margin is gently sloping and virtually free of canyons (Falkner *et al.* 2009 in DSEWPaC 2012a).

The Exmouth Plateau is a regionally and nationally unique tropical deep sea plateau. It that may serve an important ecological role by acting as a topographic obstacle that modifies the flow of deep waters that generate internal tides, causing upwelling of deeper water nutrients closer to the surface (Brewer *et al.* 2007). Sediments on the plateau suggest that biological communities include scavengers, benthic filter feeders and epifauna. Whaling records from the 19th century suggest that the Exmouth Plateau may have supported large populations of sperm whales (Bannister *et al.* 2007). Fauna in the pelagic waters above the plateau are likely to include small pelagic species and nekton (Brewer *et al.* 2007).

10.1.14 Mermaid Reef and Commonwealth Waters surrounding Rowley Shoals

Mermaid Reef and Commonwealth waters surrounding Rowley Shoals is defined as a KEF for its enhanced productivity and high species richness. The Rowley Shoals are a group of three atoll reefs—Clerke, Imperieuse and Mermaid reefs—located about 300 km north-west of Broome. Mermaid Reef lies 29 km north of Clerke and Imperieuse reefs and is totally submerged at high tide. Mermaid Reef and Commonwealth Waters surrounding Rowley Shoals are regionally important in supporting high species richness, higher productivity and aggregations of marine life associated with the adjoining reefs themselves (Done *et al.* 1994). Rowley shoals contain 214 coral species and approximately 530 species of fishes (Gilmour *et al.* 2007), 264 species

of molluscs and 82 species of echinoderms (Done *et al.* 1994; Gilmour *et al.* 2007). Both coral communities and fish assemblages differ from similar habitats in eastern Australia (Done *et al.* 1994).

Mermaid Reef falls under Commonwealth jurisdiction and forms the Mermaid Reef Commonwealth Marine Park. Clerke and Imperieuse reefs constitute the Rowley Shoals Marine Park, which falls under Western Australian Government jurisdiction (EA 2000). The Rowley Shoals are discussed with the Commonwealth and State Marine Park (**Sections 11.1.9 and 12.3.9**).

10.1.15 Glomar Shoals

The Glomar Shoals are a submerged feature situated at a depth of 33–77 m, approximately 150 km north of Dampier on the Rowley Shelf (Falkner *et al.* 2009 in DSEWPaC 2012a). They consist of a high percentage of marine-derived sediments with high carbonate content and gravels of weathered coralline algae and shells (McLoughlin & Young 1985 in DSEWPaC 2012a). The area's higher concentrations of coarse material compared to surrounding areas are indicative of a high energy environment subject to strong seafloor currents (Falkner *et al.* 2009 in DSEWPaC 2012a).

Biological communities found at the Glomar Shoals have not been comprehensively studied, however the shoals are known to be an important area for a number of commercial and recreational fish species such as rankin cod, brown striped snapper, red emperor, crimson snapper, bream and yellow-spotted triggerfish. Catch rates at the Glomar Shoals are high, indicating that the area is a region of high productivity (Falkner *et al.* 2009, Fletcher & Santoro 2009 in DSEWPaC 2012a). It is unclear if the removal of non-target species due to the commercial fishing over the shoals is having an impact on its value (DSEWPaC 2012a).

The Glomar Shoals are regionally important for their potentially high biological diversity and localised productivity. Biological data specific to the Glomar Shoals is limited, however the fish of the shoals are probably a subset of reef-dependent species and anecdotal evidence suggests they are particularly abundant (DSEWPaC 2012a).

10.1.16 Ancient Coastline at 125 m Depth Contour

The shelf of the North-west Marine Region contains several terraces and steps which reflect changes in sea level that occurred over the last 100,000 years. The most prominent of these features occurs at a depth of 125m as an escarpment along the North West Shelf and Sahul Shelf (DSEWPaC 2012a). Where the ancient submerged coastline provides areas of hard substrate it may contribute to higher biological diversity. Little detailed knowledge is available, but the hard substrate of the escarpment is likely to support sponges, crinoids, molluscs, echinoderms (DSEWPaC 2012a). It is understood that changes in topography at these depths are critical points for the generation of internal waves (Holloway *et al.* 2001 cited in DEWHA 2008c), playing a minor role in aiding localised upwelling or at least regional mixing associated with the seasonal changes in currents and winds. It is also believed that this prominent floor feature could be important as a migratory pathway for cetaceans and pelagic species such as the whale shark and humpback whale, as they move north and south between feeding and breeding grounds (DEWHA 2008c).

Parts of the ancient coastline are thought to provide biologically important habitats in areas otherwise dominated by soft sediments. The topographic complexity of these escarpments may also facilitate vertical mixing of the water column providing a relatively nutrient-rich environment for species present on the escarpment (DSEWPaC 2012a). This enhanced productivity could potentially be attracting baitfish, which in turn provide food for the migratory species. The pressures of potential concern on the biodiversity value of this feature generally include ocean acidification as a result of climate change (DoEE 2019a).

10.1.17 Ancient Coastline at 90-120 m Depth

This coastline is found in the South-west Marine Region and contains several terraces and steps reflecting a gradual increase in sea level across the shelf that occurred during the Holocene. Some of these features create escarpments of distinct elevation, creating topographic complexity through the exposure of rocky substrates. The most prominent of these occurs close to the middle of the continental shelf off the Great Australian Bight at a depth of 90-120 m, which provides a complex habitat for a number of species (DSEWPac 2012c). The area has important conservation value due to its potential for high productivity, biodiversity and aggregations of marine life. Benthic biodiversity and productivity occur where the ancient coastline forms a prominent escarpment of exposed hard substrates, where it is dominated by sponge communities of significant biodiversity and structural complexity (DSEWPac 2012c). These sponge communities have been recorded to contain sponges up to one metre across, which implies that some of the sponges in this region are likely to be many decades old (DSEWPac 2012c). It has been suggested that in certain places, the area may support some demersal fish species, travelling to the upper continental slope from across the continental shelf. The transportation of fine grained sediments off shelf occurs as a physical process down to depths of approximately 120 m, and influence the benthic invertebrate communities of the Great Australian Bight (DSEWPac 2012c). Both species richness and biomass in the area, has been associated as declining with increasing depth and percentage of fines in sediment (Ward *et al.* 2006 cited in DSEWPac 2012c).

10.1.18 Canyons Linking the Argo Abyssal Plain with Scott Plateau

The Scott Plateau connects with the Argo Abyssal Plain via a series of canyons, the largest of which are the Bowers and Oates canyons (DSEWPac 2012a). The canyons are believed to be up to 50 million years old and excavated during the evolution of the region through sediment and water movements (DEWHA 2008d). The canyons cut deeply into the south-west margin of the Scott Plateau and act as conduits for transport of sediments from an approximate depth of 2,000–3,000 m to depths of more than 5,500 m (DSEWPac 2012a). The water masses at these depths are deep Indian Ocean water on the Scott Plateau and Antarctic bottom water on the Argo Abyssal Plain. Both water masses are cold, dense and nutrient-rich (Lyne *et al.* 2006 in DSEWPac 2012a). The high productivity of the region is believed to be led by topographically induced water movements through the canyons and the action of internal waves in these canyons as well as around islands and reefs. The canyons are therefore thought to be linked to small and periodic upwellings that enhance this biological productivity (DEWHA 2008d).

The Canyons linking the Argo Abyssal Plain and Scott Plateau are likely to be important features due to their historical association with sperm whale aggregations (DSEWPac 2012a). Historical records of whaling in the Timor region indicate that the number of sperm whales was high in the region in the past. Though current numbers are unknown, it is possible that they congregate around the canyon heads adjacent to the Scott Plateau, encouraged by the high biological productivity, supporting stocks of their prey (DEWHA 2008d). There is anecdotal evidence that supports the idea that the Scott Plateau itself may be a breeding ground for sperm and beaked whales. It is also likely that important demersal communities occur in the canyons, as they do in the Scott Plateau supported by the localised upwelling, which in turn attract larger predatory fish, sharks and cetaceans (DEWHA 2008d).

10.1.19 Continental Slope Demersal Fish Communities

The Australian Continental Slope provides important habitat for demersal fish communities, characterised by high endemism and species diversity. Specifically, the continental slope between North West Cape and the Montebello Trough is the most diverse slope bioregion in Australia with more than 500 fish species, 76 of which are endemic (Last *et al.* 2005 in DSEWPac 2012).

The Continental Slope consists of two distinct community types, associated with the upper and mid slope, 225 – 500 m and 750 – 1000 m respectively. The Timor Province and Northwest Transition bioregions are the second-richest areas for demersal fish across the entire continental slope (DSEWPac 2012). The bacteria and fauna that is present in the system on the Continental Slope are the basis for the food web for demersal fish and higher order consumers in the system. Further information of this system has been poorly researched, though it has been suggested that it is a detritus-based system, where infauna and epifauna become prey for a range of teleost fish, molluscs and crustaceans (Brewer *et al.* 2007). The higher order consumers supported by this system are likely to be carnivorous fish, deep water sharks, large squid and toothed whales (Brewer *et al.* 2007). The pelagic production is known to be phytoplankton based, with hotspots located around oceanic reefs and islands (Brewer *et al.* 2007).

It is believed that the loss of the benthic habitat along this continental shelf region would likely lead to a decline in the species diversity and endemism that this feature is associated with (DoEE 2019a). The endemism of the region is not supported by large data sets and is scarce. It is consequently not well understood what interactions exist between the physical processes and trophic structures that lead to this high diversity of fish and the suggested presence of endemic species in the region (DoEE 2019a).

10.1.20 Seringapatam Reef and Commonwealth Waters in the Scott Reef Complex

Scott and Seringapatam reefs are part of a series of submerged reef platforms that rise steeply from the sea floor between the 300–700 m contours on the north-west continental slope and lie in the Timor Province (Falkner *et al.* 2009). Scott Reef consists of two separate reef formations, North Reef and South Reef. The total area of the key ecological feature is approximately 2,418 km². As two of the few offshore reefs in the north-west, they provide an important biophysical environment in the region.

Scott and Seringapatam reefs and the waters surrounding them attract aggregations of marine life including humpback whales on their northerly migration, Bryde's whales, pygmy blue whales, Antarctic minke whales, dwarf minke whales, minke whales, dwarf sperm whales and spinner dolphins (Jenner *et al.* 2008; Woodside 2009). Whale sharks and several species of sea snakes have also been recorded in this area (Donovan *et al.* 2008). Green and hawksbill turtles nest during the summer months on Sandy Islet on South Scott Reef. These species also internest and forage in the surrounding waters (Guinea 2006). Scott Reef is a particularly biologically diverse system and includes more than 300 species of reef-building corals, approximately 400 mollusc species, 118 crustacean species, 117 echinoderm species and around 720 fish species (Woodside 2009). Corals and fish at Scott Reef have higher species diversity than the Rowley Shoals (Done *et al.* 1994).

Scott Reef is listed as Commonwealth Heritage Places and is discussed in **Section 9.5.1**.

10.1.21 Ashmore Reef and Cartier Island and Surrounding Commonwealth Waters

Ashmore Reef and Cartier Island are situated on the shallow upper slope of the Sahul Shelf, north of Scott and Seringapatam reefs. Rising from a depth of more than 100 m, the reef platform is at the edge of the North West Shelf and covers an area of 239 km². Ashmore Reef Commonwealth Marine Reserve encloses an area of about 583 km² of seabed (EA 2002). Cartier Island lays about 350 km off Australia's Kimberley coast, 115 km south of the Indonesian island of Roti and 45 km south-east of Ashmore Reef Commonwealth Marine Reserve. Cartier Island Commonwealth Marine Reserve covers 167 km² (EA 2002). Species at Ashmore Reef and Cartier Island include more than 225 reef-building corals, 433 molluscs, 286 crustaceans, 192 echinoderms, and the most diverse variety of fish of any region in Western Australia with 709 species (EA 2002).

Sandy beaches provide important habitat for nesting green and hawksbill turtles throughout the year. Seagrass present at Ashmore Reef provides critical breeding (April–May) and foraging (throughout the year)

habitat for a genetically distinct population of dugong with their range probably extending to other submerged shoals within the area (Brown & Skewes 2005; Whiting 1999). The emergent habitat at Ashmore also provides important nesting sites for seabirds, many of which are migratory. Ashmore's islands are regarded as supporting some of the most important seabird rookeries on the North West Shelf seasonally supporting up to 50,000 seabirds (26 species) and up to 2,000 waders (30 species, representing almost 70% of wader species that regularly migrate to Australia) (Milton 2005). Large colonies of sooty terns, crested terns, bridled terns and common noddies breed on the east and middle islands. Smaller breeding colonies of little egrets, eastern reef egrets, black noddies and possibly lesser noddies also occur. Migratory wading birds include eastern curlews, ruddy turnstones, whimbrels, bar-tailed godwits, common sandpipers, Mongolian plovers, red-necked stints and tattlers, during October–November and March–April as part of the migration between Australia and the Northern Hemisphere (Milton 2005).

10.1.22 Carbonate Bank and Terrace System of the Sahul Shelf

The Carbonate Banks and Terrace System of the Sahul Shelf are located in the western Joseph Bonaparte Gulf and to the north of Cape Bougainville and Cape Londonderry. The banks consist of a hard substrate and flat tops at depths of 150–300 m. Each bank occupies an area generally less than 10 km² and is separated from the next bank by narrow sinuous channels with depths up to 150 m. The origin of the banks is uncertain, though the area contains predictably high levels of productivity, in comparison to the generally low productivity of the region (DSEWPaC 2012).

The banks are foraging areas for loggerhead, olive ridley and flatback turtles and provide habitat for humpback whales, and green and freshwater sawfish (Donovan *et al.* 2008 in DSEWPaC 2012). The hard substrate of the banks is thought to support diverse organisms including sessile benthic invertebrates such as sponges, soft and hard corals, gorgonians, bryozoans, ascidians and associated reef fish and elasmobranchs (Brewer *et al.* 2007). Cetaceans, green and fresh sawfish are also likely to occur in the area, as well as possibly the Australian snubfin dolphin, a migratory species occurring mostly on the northern extent of the Sahul Shelf (DSEWPaC 2012).

According to DSEWPaC (2012) the carbonate banks and terrace system of the Sahul Shelf are regionally important because of their role in enhancing productivity relative to their surrounds. Little is known about the banks, terraces and associated channels but they are believed to be areas of enhanced productivity and biodiversity due to the upwellings of cold nutrient-rich water at the heads of the channels and the availability of hard substrate (Brewer *et al.* 2007).

10.1.23 Pinnacles of the Bonaparte Basin

The limestone Pinnacles of the Bonaparte Basin are located in the mid-outer shelf of the western Joseph Bonaparte Gulf and comprise of 61% of the limestone pinnacles in the Northwest Marine Region and 8% of the total limestone pinnacles found within the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone (Baker *et al.* 2008). The pinnacles range from water depths of 30 to 80 m providing hard substrate in a relatively sparse soft sediment habitat for sessile species. The pinnacles are thought to be remnants of the calcareous shelf and coastal features from previous low sea level stands, and have been recorded to be up to 50 m in height and range from 50 to 100 km long (Baker *et al.* 2008, Heyward *et al.* 1997).

Diverse communities of sessile benthic invertebrates including hard and soft corals, sponges, whips, fans, bryozoans and aggregations of demersal fish species such as snappers, emperors and groupers have been recorded (Brewer *et al.* 2007, Nichol *et al.* 2013). Foraging and general use has been recorded within the pinnacles by marine turtles and the area has also been suggested to be used by freshwater and green sawfish as well as humpback whales (Donovan *et al.* 2008). The pinnacles have been recognised as a sponge

biodiversity hotspot which has recorded greater diversity and communities than that of the surrounding seafloor (NERP MBH 2014).

According to DSEWPaC (2012) the Pinnacles of the Bonaparte Basin are regionally important because of its biodiversity values (unique sea-floor feature with ecological properties of regional significance), which apply to both the benthic and pelagic habitats. The hard substrate of the pinnacles are likely to support a high number of species, although a better understanding of the species richness and diversity associated with these structures is required.

10.1.24 Diamantina Fracture Zone

The Diamantina Fracture Zone is located south of the Naturaliste Plateau covering a range of more than 100,000 km² in water depths greater than 3,000 m. The ridge, troughs and seamounts that form the fracture zone have been recorded to have a relief up to 4,000 m which has resulted in highly variable environmental conditions (Stow 2006, Richardson *et al.* 2005). The Diamantina Fracture Zone encompasses the deepest known points in Australia's exclusive economic zone, reaching depths of more than 6,000 metres.

Limited information is available for the Diamantina Fracture Zone, however it is likely that due to the highly variable environmental conditions within the distinctive community structures and unique habitats have the potential to form. The presence of seamounts and ridges has the potential to increase local primary and secondary productivity, which may in turn promote phytoplankton growth. Increased phytoplankton has been recorded to increase the diversity and abundance of marine life (e.g. whales, dolphins, fish and benthic species) (Rowden *et al.* 2010). The area is expected to sustain similar habitats to that of and around the Tasmanian Seamounts due to similar depths in the South-east Marine Region (Richardson *et al.* 2005).

According to DSEWPaC (2012) the Diamantina Fracture Zone is regionally important because of to enhance productivity and assist with dispersal and migration of species across the region and wider abyssal plain (Wilson & Kaufman 1987, in Richardson *et al.* 2005). While research on the Diamantina Fracture Zone is limited, its size, physical complexity and isolation indicate that it is likely to support deepwater communities characterised by high species diversity and endemism.

10.1.25 Demersal Slope and Associated Fish Communities of the Central Western Province

The demersal slope and associated fish communities of the Central Western Province is located on the edge of the shelf to the limit of the exclusive economic zone from Perth to the northern boundary of the SWMR. The area supports a diverse demersal fish species assemblage of relatively small benthic species (e.g. grenadier, dogfish and cucumber fish) at depths greater than 400 m. Fish species within this area have adapted physically to feed on the seafloor and do not appear to migrate vertically to feed (Williams *et al.* 2001).

According to DSEWPaC (2012), the demersal slope and associated fish communities of the Central Western Province are recognised as a KEF for their high levels of biodiversity and endemism. A total of 480 fish species have been described that inhabit the slope of this bioregion with 31 considered to be endemic to the bioregion. Demersal fish communities within the area have recorded higher diversity when compared to other oceanic regions which have been more intensively sampled. The increased diversity within the area has been attributed to the overlap of ancient and extensive Indo-west Pacific and temperate Australasian fauna (Williams *et al.* 2001).

10.1.26 Albany Canyons Group and Adjacent Shelf Break

The Albany Canyons group and adjacent shelf break is located along a 700 km extent ranging from Cape Leeuwin to the east of Esperance and consists of 32 deep canyons which cut into the continental slope. Sonar surveys have indicated that individual canyons can extend up to 90 km long at water depths of 2,000 m. The canyons can start at the uppermost continental slope and reach the lowermost slope and extend onto the abyssal plain (Exon *et al.* 2005).

Due to close spacing of the numerous canyons, a wide range of depth dependent benthic habitats are connected increasing the habitat heterogeneity along the south western Australian continental margin. Offshore transport increases the sediment load and organic material is received from productive shelf waters. The closely spaced canyons have the potential to allow increased amounts of organic matter to reach the abyssal plain which may increase biodiversity in comparison to other areas within the south west Marine Region. (Richardson *et al.* 2005).

According to DSEWPac (2012), the Albany Canyons group and adjacent shelf break is regionally important and recognised as a key ecological feature for its high productivity, aggregations of marine life, and as a unique seafloor feature with ecological properties of regional significance (Pattiaratchi 2007). Both benthic and demersal habitats within the feature are of conservation value. The canyons are known to be a feeding area for the sperm whale (Bannister *et al.* 1996) and sites of orange roughy aggregations (Caton & McLoughlin 2004).

10.1.27 Carbonate Bank and Terrace System of the Van Diemen Rise

The bank and terrace system of the Van Diemen Rise covers approximately 31,278 km² and forms part of the larger system associated with the Sahul Banks to the north and Londonderry Rise to the east. The feature is characterised by carbonate terrace, banks, channels and valleys, with variability in water depth and substrate composition considered to contribute to the presence of unique ecosystems in the channels. The variability in water depth and substrate composition across the feature may contribute to the presence of unique ecosystems in the channels. The carbonate banks and shoals found within the Van Diemen Rise make up 80% of the banks and shoals, 79% of the channels and valleys, and 63% of the terrace found across the North Marine Region. The carbonate banks and shoals rise from depths of 100 m- 200 m to within 10 m -40 m of the sea surface (Anderson *et al.* 2011).

The feature provides habitat for a high diversity of sponges, soft corals and other sessile filter feeders; epifauna and infauna; and olive ridley turtles, sea snakes and sharks. Rich sponge gardens and octocorals have been identified on the eastern Joseph Bonaparte Gulf along the banks, ridges and some terraces. Plains in deep hole/valleys are characterised by scattered epifauna and infauna that include polychaetes and ascidians. Epibenthic communities such as the sponges found in the channels are likely to support fish and second-order consumers. Pelagic fish such as mackerel, red snapper and a distinct gene pool of gold band snapper are found in the Van Diemen Rise.

10.1.28 Gulf of Carpentaria Basin

The Gulf of Carpentaria basin is defined as a key ecological feature for its regional importance for biodiversity, endemism and aggregations of marine life. These values apply to both the benthic and the pelagic habitats within the feature.

The Gulf of Carpentaria is believed to be one of the few remaining near-pristine marine environments in the world (Wightman *et al.* 2004). Primary productivity in the basin is mainly driven by cyanobacteria that fix nitrogen (Burford *et al.* 2009), but is also strongly influenced by seasonal processes. The soft sediments of

the basin are characterised by moderately abundant and diverse communities of infauna and mobile epifauna dominated by polychaetes, crustaceans, molluscs and echinoderms.

The Gulf of Carpentaria basin also supports assemblages of pelagic fish species including planktivorous and schooling fish, and top predators such as shark, snapper, tuna and mackerel (Smith et al. 2006). The Gulf is also an important migratory route for seabirds, shore birds and marine turtles.

10.1.29 Shelf Break and Slope of the Arafura Shelf

The Shelf Break and Slope of the Arafura Shelf is an important ecological feature that creates a unique seafloor which enhances biological productivity on the edge of the shelf and attracts feeding aggregations of pelagic marine organisms. The productivity of this area has been recognised as nationally and/or regionally important (Last et al. 2005).

Although the ecosystem processes in this area are largely unknown it is thought that the oceanographic processes associated with the Indonesian Throughflow current and monsoonal winds are strong influence (DEWHA, 2007).

The physical characteristics of the Shelf Break and Slope of the Arafura Shelf comprise of continental slope, patch reefs and hard substrate pinnacles (Harris et al. 2005).

Phytoplankton and invertebrates have been sampled at this KEF and the primary production of phytoplankton is thought to be the basis for offshore food webs in the area (DEWHA, 2007). Records show approximately 284 demersal fish species in the area (Last et al. 2005) and other marine species that have been recorded include marine turtles, whale sharks and predatory fish species including sharks (DEWHA, 2008a).

10.1.30 Tributary Canyons of the Arafura Depression

The Tributary Canyons of the Arafura Depression is an important ecological feature characterised by high nutrients from upwellings of deep ocean water, which enhance productivity of the area (DEWHA, 2008a). This is thought to occur as a result of movements of water through the canyons and surface water circulating as a result of monsoonal winds (Wilson, 2005).

Surveys of the area identified around 245 macroscopic species including a variety of invertebrates and six small fish species (Wilson, 2005). The area also contains coral communities and attract aggregations of marine life (DEWHA, 2008a). Larger species found at this key ecological feature include predatory fish, whale sharks, sawfish and marine turtles (mostly olive ridley) (DEWHA, 2008a).

The national and/or regional importance of the Tributary Canyons of the Arafura Depression is associated with its high productivity, high levels of biodiversity and endemism.

11. State Marine Conservation Reserves

11.1 Introduction

Marine parks and reserves have been progressively established in Western Australia since 1987 and the Northern Territory since 1983. The Conservation and Parks Commission (CPC) is the vesting authority for marine parks and reserves under the provisions of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*. Parks and Wildlife, within the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), is responsible for day to day management of the parks.

There are three categories of state marine conservation reserves: marine parks; marine management areas; and marine nature reserves.

Marine parks are created to protect natural features and aesthetic values while allowing recreational and commercial uses that do not compromise conservation values. There are currently 25 marine parks within the combined EMBA (refer **Figure 9-2**, **Figure 9-3**, **Figure 9-4** and **Figure 9-4**).

Marine parks are multiple-use reserves that cater for a wide range of activities. Within marine parks there may be four types of management zones: recreation zones; general use zones; no-take areas known as sanctuary zones; and special purpose zones.

Each marine park has a 'management plan' that contains strategies to protect the high value assets in the park, as well as permitted activities tables. These tables provide explicit regulatory management.

Sanctuary zones are 'no-take' areas created primarily for conservation and scientific research and are designed to protect a particular significant ecosystem or habitat. Low-impact tourism may be permitted, but no recreational or commercial fishing, aquaculture, pearling, petroleum drilling or production is allowed.

Marine management areas provide an integrated management structure over areas that have high conservation value and intensive multiple-use. There are two marine management areas within the combined EMBA (described below).

There is currently only one state marine nature reserve: Hamelin Pool Nature Reserve part of the Shark Bay World Heritage Area (**Section 9.1.1**).

Within the NT component of the combined EMBA, there are no marine based conservation reserves. There were three coastal reserves (Channel Point Coastal Reserve, Casuarina Coastal Reserve and Shoal Bay Coastal Reserve), one conservation area (Tree Point Conservation Area) and two national parks (Djukbinj National Park, Garig Gunak Barlu National Park) identified in the PMST report as being situated adjacent to the combined EMBA. Three more were identified as being present (Mary River National Park, Keep River National Park, Charles Darwin National Park) in the combined EMBA from mapping. However, these are all terrestrial based reserves and have not been discussed in further detail.

11.1.1 Ngari Capes Marine Park

The Ngari Capes Marine Park is gazetted as a Class A Marine Park. The park is located off the southwest coast of Western Australia, approximately 250 km south of Perth, covering approximately 123,790 ha. The seaward boundary of the marine park is congruent with the seaward limit of Western Australian waters (three nautical miles from the territorial baseline). The north-eastern boundary in Geographe Bay is located near the intersection of the Shire of Busselton boundary with the coastline. The Shire of Busselton–Shire of Capel boundary is approximately 30 m north-east of the marine park boundary, while the south-eastern boundary in Flinders Bay is located at 115°17'00" E. The marine park consists of four areas that are representative of the Leeuwin–Naturaliste marine bioregion: Geographe Bay; Cape Naturaliste to Cape Mentelle coast; the

Cape Mentelle to Cape Leeuwin coast; and Flinders Bay. These areas show distinct differences in geomorphology, oceanography, habitats and flora and fauna.

The Ngari Capes Marine Park was identified as one of the most diverse temperate marine environments in Australia. Warm, tropical waters of the Leeuwin Current mix with the cool waters of the Capes Current, resulting in high finfish diversity, including tropical and temperate species (see fish in **Section 5.1.1**) and internationally significant seagrass diversity with seagrasses occurring at depths greater than 40 m (see seagrasses in **Section 3.2**). The marine park also surrounds a number of islands that are important seabird nesting habitat and pinniped haul-outs (places where seals and sea lions leave the water and come onto land), including Hamelin Island, Sugarloaf Rock and the Saint Alouarn Islands which include Flinders Island, Seal Island and Square Rock (DEC 2013). These islands are vested with the Conservation Commission as nature reserve and are managed by DBCA for the purpose of conservation. The marine park is also adjacent to the Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park which extends to the high water mark (DEC 2013).

The Ngari Capes marine park was also created for its high social values. The unique geographical location of this region exposes it to large, uninterrupted ocean swells and results in the South West capes area being recognised as one of the world's premier surfing regions. Many activities occurring in the region are marine based, including commercial and recreational fishing, swimming, surfing, diving, snorkelling, boating, and marine nature-based tourism.

11.1.2 Jurien Bay Marine Park

The Jurien Bay Marine Park is a Class A marine park located on the central west coast of Western Australia about 200 km north of Perth and covers an area of 82,375 ha (CALM 2005b). Its western boundary is the seaward limit of Western Australian coastal waters. Its northern boundary is the northern point of Dynamite Bay at Green Head (30° 4' 7.9" South), and its southern boundary is located just south of Wedge (30° 50' 20" South) and is contiguous with the southern boundary of the Wanagarren Nature Reserve.

Jurien Bay Marine Park is considered to be broadly representative of the Central West Coast limestone reef system, which is a major marine ecosystem within this bioregion. The marine biota of the area consists of an unusual mix of tropical and temperate species as well as many endemic species (Larkum & Hartog, 1989). The Marine Park is dominated by five major marine habitat types: seagrass meadows; bare or sparsely vegetated mobile sand; shoreline and offshore intertidal reef platforms; subtidal limestone reefs; and reef pavement (CALM 2005b). Marine wildlife includes 14 species of cetaceans, a variety of sea and shorebirds which nest on the islands and the Australian sea lion (North Fisherman Island to the north of Jurien Bay is one of the main breeding sites for sea lions in the Central West Coast region and it is believed this breeding population is genetically distinct from the southern coast population – Gales et al. 1992). Commercial fishing for western rock lobster as well commercial wetlining, abalone, shark netting, beach seining for mullet and collecting of specimen shells and aquarium fish are carried out within the marine park.

11.1.3 Shark Bay Marine Park and Hamelin Pool Marine Nature Reserve

The Shark Bay Marine Reserves comprise the Shark Bay Marine Park and the Hamelin Pool Marine Nature Reserve. The Shark Bay Marine Park was gazetted on 30 November 1990 as A Class Marine Park Reserve No. 7 and vested in the National Park and Nature Conservation Authority (NPNCA) under the CALM Act. The marine park encompasses an area of 748,725 ha (CALM 1996).

The Bay is located near the northern limit of a transition region between temperate and tropical marine fauna. Of the 323 fish species recorded from Shark Bay, 83% are tropical species with 11% warm temperate and 6% cool temperate species. Similarly, of the 218 species of bivalves recorded in Shark Bay, 75% have a tropical range and 10% a southern Australian range, with 15% being endemic to the west coast (CALM 1996).

Key features of Shark Bay Marine Park include (CALM 1996, DSEWPaC 2013b):

- + 12 species of seagrass making it one of the most diverse seagrass assemblages in the world;
- + Seagrass that covers over 4,000 km² of the bay. The 1,030 km² Wooramel Seagrass Bank is the largest structure of its type in the world;
- + An estimated population of about 11,000 dugongs, one of the largest populations in the world;
- + Humpback and southern right whales use the bay as a migratory staging post;
- + Bottlenose dolphins occur in the bay, and green turtle and loggerhead turtle nest on the beaches;
- + Large numbers of sharks including whaler, tiger shark and hammerhead are present as well as an abundant population of rays, including the manta ray;
- + Hamelin Pool in Shark Bay contains the most diverse and abundant examples of stromatolite forms in the world, representative of life-forms which lived some 3,500 million years ago; and
- + Shark Bay Marine Park does not cover Bernier and Dorre Islands and only coastal waters inshore of Dirk Hartog Island (east of eastern shoreline).

Shark Bay was included on the World Heritage List in 1991 primarily on the basis of three natural features: vast seagrass beds; dugong population; and stromatolites (microbial colonies that form hard, dome-shaped deposits and are among the oldest forms of life on Earth) (DSEWPaC 2013b; see **Section 9.1**).

There is no zoning within the Hamelin Pool Marine Nature Reserve. This area is a 'look but don't take' area managed solely for the conservation of globally outstanding marine life. Hamelin Pool is one of only two known places in the world with living examples of marine stromatolites (DEC 2010). The shores of Hamelin Pool are also important for the formation of extensive marine algal mats formed by microbial algae. If damaged, the mats and stromatolites can take many hundreds of years to recover (DEC 2010).

11.1.4 Ningaloo Marine Park

The Ningaloo Marine Park was declared in May 1987 under the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975 (Commonwealth). The Ningaloo Coast, incorporating both key marine and terrestrial values was later granted World Heritage Status in June 2011. In November 2012, the Ningaloo Marine Park (Commonwealth Waters) was renamed to be incorporated in the North-west Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network. The park covers an area of 263,343 km², including both State and Commonwealth waters, extending 25 km offshore.

The park protects a large portion of Ningaloo Reef, which stretches over 300 km from North West Cape south to Red Bluff. It is the largest fringing coral reef in Australia, forming a discontinuous barrier that encloses a lagoon that varies in width from 200 m to 7 km. Gaps that regularly intercept the main reef line provide channels for water exchange with deeper, cooler waters (CALM 2005). The Ningaloo Marine Park forms the backbone of the nature-based tourism industry, and recreational activities in the Exmouth region. Seasonal aggregations of whale sharks, manta rays, sea turtles and whales, as well as the annual mass spawning of coral attract large numbers of visitors to Ningaloo each year (CALM 2005).

The reef is composed of partially dissected basement platform of Pleistocene marine or Aeolian sediments or tertiary limestone, covered by a thin layer of living or dead coral or macroalgae. Key features that characterise the Ningaloo Reef include (CALM 2005):

- + Over 217 species of coral (representing 54 genera);

- + Over 600 species of mollusc (clams, oysters, octopus, cuttlefish, snails);
- + Over 460 species of fish;
- + Ninety-seven species of echinoderms (sea stars, sea urchins, sea cucumbers);
- + Habitat for numerous threatened species, including whales, dugong, whale sharks and turtles; and
- + Habitat for over 25 species of migratory wading birds listed in CAMBA and JAMBA.

11.1.5 Muiron Islands Marine Management Area

The Ningaloo Marine Park Management Plan (CALM 2005) created a MMA for the Muiron Islands, immediately adjacent to the northern end of the Park. This is managed as an integrated area together with the Ningaloo Marine Park, but its status as a MMA means that some activities, including oil and gas exploration, are still permitted under a strict environmental assessment process involving DMIRS.

The Muiron Islands, located 15 km northeast of the North West Cape, comprise the North and South Muiron Islands and cover an area of 1,400 ha (AHC 2006). They are low limestone islands (maximum height of 18 m above sea level (ASL)) with some areas of sandy beaches, macroalgae and seagrass beds in the shallow waters (particularly on the eastern sides) and coral reef up to depths of 5m, which surrounds both sides of South Muiron Island and the eastern side of North Muiron Island. The Muiron Islands MMA was WA's first MMA, gazetted in November 2004. It covers an area of 28,616 ha and occurs entirely within state waters (CALM 2005).

11.1.6 Barrow Island Marine Park

The Barrow Island Marine Park covers 4,169 ha, all of which is zoned as sanctuary zone (the Western Barrow Island Sanctuary Zone) (DEC 2007). It includes Biggada Reef, an ecologically significant fringing reef, and Turtle Bay, an important turtle aggregation and breeding area (DEC 2007). Representative areas of seagrass, macroalgal and deep water habitat are also represented within the marine park (DEC 2007). Passive recreational activities (such as snorkelling, diving and boating) are permitted but extractive activities such as fishing and hunting are not.

11.1.7 Barrow Island Marine Management Area

The Barrow Island Marine Management Area (MMA) is the largest reserve within the Montebello/ Barrow Islands marine conservation reserves, covering 114,693 ha (DEC 2007). The MMA includes most of the waters around Barrow Island, the Lowendal Islands and the Barrow Island Marine Park, with the exclusion of the port areas of Barrow Island and Varanus Island.

The MMA is not zoned apart from one specific management zone: the Bandicoot Bay Conservation Area. This conservation area is on the southern coast of Barrow Island and has been created to protect benthic fauna and seabirds. It includes the largest intertidal sand/mudflat community in the reserves, is known to be high in invertebrate diversity and is an important feeding area for migratory birds.

As for the other reserves in the Montebello/Barrow Islands marine conservation reserves, the Barrow Island MMA includes significant breeding and nesting areas for marine turtles and the waters support a diversity of tropical marine fauna, important coral reefs and unique mangrove communities (DEC 2007). Green, hawksbill and flatback turtles regularly use the island's beaches for breeding, and loggerhead turtles are also occasionally sighted.

11.1.8 Montebello Islands Marine Park

Montebello/ Barrow/ Lowendal Islands are part of a shallow submarine ridge, which extends north from the mainland near Onslow. The ridge contains extensive areas of intertidal and shallow subtidal limestone pavement surrounding the numerous, mostly small islands which are found in the region. The seabed is generally less than 5 m deep and consists of sand veneered limestone pavement with patches of fringing coral reef (DEC 2007).

The island chain lies entirely within WA State waters, with the State-Commonwealth boundary extending out to encompass the islands and waters 3 nm west of Barrow Island and north of the Montebello Islands. These islands are protected within as marine conservation reserves: Montebello Islands Marine Park, Barrow Islands Marine Park and Barrow Island Marine Management Area.

The Montebello Islands Marine Park (58,331 ha) consists of two sanctuary zones, two recreation zones, one special purpose zone for benthic protection, eleven special purpose zones for pearling and general use zones.

The Montebello Islands comprise over 100 islands, the majority of which are rocky outcrops; rocky shore accounts for 81% of shoreline habitat (DEC 2007a).

The ecological and conservation values of the Montebello and Barrow Islands Marine Conservation Reserve (MCR) include important habitats including corals reefs and bommies, mangroves, seagrass and macroalgae meadows, rocky shorelines and hard substrate, intertidal sand and mudflat communities. These habitats provide protection, food and habitat for a large diversity of species, including dugongs, turtles, whales, other protected cetaceans and birds as well as sea snakes and fish. The area is considered to have a high biodiversity. The islands also provide feeding and resting areas for migrating shorebirds and seabird nesting areas.

Socio-economic values of the Montebello and Barrow Islands MCR include hydrocarbon exploration and production, pearling, nature-based tourism, commercial and recreational fishing, water sports, European history and maritime heritage and scientific research (DEC 2007)

Special purpose zones for pearling are established for the existing leaseholder to allow pearling to be the priority use of these areas (DEC 2007a). Commercial fishing includes a trap fishery for reef fishes, mainly in water depths of 30–100 m, and wet lining for reef fish and mackerel. Fish trawling also occurs in the waters near to the Montebello Islands. A tourist houseboat operates out of Claret Bay, at the southern end of Hermite Island, during the winter months. The Montebello Islands are becoming more frequently used by recreational boaters for camping, fishing and diving activities.

11.1.9 Rowley Shoals Marine Park

The Rowley Shoals (including the Commonwealth-managed Mermaid Reef Marine National Nature Reserve) are located approximately 300 km west-northwest of Broome, lying between 17°07'S, 119°36'E and 17°35'S, 118°56'E and encompassing approximately 87,674 ha (DEC 2007b).

The Rowley Shoals is ecologically significant in that the reefs form part of a series of important ecological “stepping stones” for a range of reef biota originating in Indonesian/west Pacific waters. Their position off the north-west Australian coast, an area of few offshore reef systems, provides an important upstream source for recruitment to reefs further south (DEC 2007b). Marine wildlife includes 184 species of corals, primarily Indo-West Pacific species, indicating the strong affinity of the Rowley Shoals communities with Indonesia. In terms of other species, at least 264 species of molluscs, 82 species of echinoderms and 389 species of finfish were also identified (DEC 2007b). The faunal assemblages of the Rowley Shoals Marine Park are regionally significant as they contain large numbers of species not found in the more turbid coastal

environments of tropical Western Australia (DEC 2007b). There is a relatively low level of recreational and commercial activity, mostly attributed to the remoteness of the Shoals with access difficult from both Indonesia and mainland Australia (DEC 2007b).

11.1.10 Lalang-garram/Camden Sound Marine Parks

The Lalang-garram/Camden Sound Marine Park was created on 19 June 2012 under Section 13 of the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 (CALM Act). It is a multiple zone marine park that includes; Sanctuary, Special Purpose, and General Use zones (DPaW 2013). The marine park falls within the west Kimberley, which was recently added to the Australian National Heritage List because of its natural, indigenous and historic values to the nation.

The marine park is located about 150 km north of Derby (or 300 km north of Broome) and lies within the traditional country of three Aboriginal native title groups. The Dambimangari people's determination overlies the majority of the marine park. A section of the Wunambal Gaambera people's Uunguu determination includes a small portion of St George Basin, while a small section of the Mayala people's claim (native title not determined at the time of writing of Management Plan) overlies the southwest corner of the marine park (DPaW 2013).

The marine park covers an area of approximately 705,000 ha. It recognises and provides special management arrangements for this area of the Kimberley, which is a principal calving habitat of the humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) population that migrates annually along Western Australia's coast. The marine park also conserves a range of species listed as having special conservation status including marine turtles, snubfin and Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins, dugong, saltwater crocodiles, and several species of sawfish. The park also includes a wide range of marine habitats and associated marine life, such as coral reef communities, rocky shoals, and the extensive mangrove forests and marine life of the St George Basin and Prince Regent River (DPaW 2013).

11.1.11 Marmion Marine Park

Marmion Marine Park was Western Australia's first marine park, declared in 1987 and is a multi-use reserve (CALM 2002). Marmion Marine Park is located offshore from Perth's northern suburbs, between Trigg Island and Burns Beach.

Habitats in the area include intertidal reef platforms, coastal sand beaches, a high limestone reef about 1 km from shore, Little Island and the Three Mile Reef system. Of note are complex assemblages of sea floor communities, including seagrass meadows, algal limestone pavement communities and crevice animal associations (CALM 2002).

The marine park provides an important habitat for marine mammals, such as sea lions, dolphins and whales. The island nature reserves within Marmion Marine Park provide an important habitat for several species of seabirds and haul-out areas for Australian sea lions, especially at Little Island and Burns Rocks (CALM 2002).

11.1.12 Swan Estuary Marine Park

The Swan Estuary Marine Park (A Class marine reserve number 4) was gazetted on 25 May 1990. The Swan Estuary Marine Park and Adjacent Nature Reserves Management Plan 1999-2009 was gazetted 7 April 2000 (CALM 1999).

The Swan Estuary Marine Park encompasses Alfred Cove, 200 ha adjacent to the suburbs of Attadale and Applecross; Pelican Point, a 45 ha area in Crawley; and Milyu, 95 ha adjacent to the Como foreshore (CALM 1999). All three localities are within 20 minutes of the Perth CBD.

These areas encompass mudflats, seagrass beds and intertidal vegetation such as sedges and saltmarsh, which provide many different habitats for a host of animals. The most important of these, due to their international significance, are the migratory wading birds. They come from as far afield as Asia, Mongolia and Siberia. About 33 of these species are protected, including the red-necked stint (CALM 1999).

11.1.13 Shoalwater Islands Marine Park

The Shoalwater Islands Marine Park is located within the Perth metropolitan area, adjacent to the city of Rockingham and was gazetted in 1990 (DEC 2007). There are three sanctuary zones, two special purpose zones and a large general use zone in the park.

The Shoalwater Island region is dominated by beach and rocky shore shoreline habitats. The many jagged edged islands and rocky islets of the marine park provide important roosting and nesting areas for numerous bird species. The marine park has some of the healthiest seagrass meadows in the Perth metropolitan area, consisting of long lived species such as *Posidonia* spp. and *Amphibolis* spp. Seagrass meadows provide an important habitat and nursery area for a large number of marine species such as fish, rock lobsters, worms, shellfish, crustaceans, fish sharks and rays (DEC 2007).

The habitats of the marine park are important for the feeding, resting and breeding of little penguins and other sea and shore birds. Penguin Island which is found within the marine park has the largest breeding colony of little penguin on the west coast of Australia (DEC 2007). The bottlenose dolphin is the most common marine mammal, and Australian sea lions are commonly seen throughout the park.

11.1.14 Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park

The Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park, located between Port Hedland and Broome, was gazetted on 29 January 2013. It covers an area of approximately 200,000 ha stretching for some 220 km from Cape Missiessy to Cape Keraudren, and includes sanctuary, recreation, general use and special purpose zones. The park is managed under the Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park Management Plan 2014-20124 (DPaW, 2014).

The listed ecological values of the Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park include the high sediment and water quality, the juxtaposition of the beach, coastal topography and seabed and the diverse and ecologically important habitats and marine/coastal flora and fauna. The listed habitat values of the marine park are as follows:

- + The intertidal sand and mudflat communities supporting a high abundance and diversity of invertebrate life and providing a valuable food source for shorebirds (including migratory species) and other fauna;
- + The diverse subtidal filter-feeding communities;
- + Macroalgal and seagrass communities providing habitat and feeding opportunities for fish, invertebrates and dugongs;
- + High diversity intertidal and subtidal coral reef communities; and
- + Mangrove communities and adjacent saltmarshes provide nutrients to the surrounding waters and habitat for fish and invertebrates.

The listed marine and coastal fauna values are as follows:

- + A high diversity and abundance of nationally and internationally important shorebirds and waders (including migratory species) are found in the marine park;

- + Flatback turtles are endemic to northern Australia and nest at Eighty Mile Beach;
- + Dugongs and several whale and dolphin species inhabit or migrate through the marine park;
- + A highly diverse marine invertebrate fauna provides an important food source for a variety of animals, including birds, fish and turtles, along with recreational and commercial fishing opportunities;
- + A diversity of fish species provides recreational and commercial fishing opportunities; and
- + A diversity of sharks and rays, including several protected species, are found in the park.

In addition to these natural values, the marine park contains land and sea important to traditional Indigenous owners through identity and place, family networks, spiritual practice and resource gathering. The marine park also has a history of European activity including exploration, pastoralism and commercial fishing (e.g. the pearl oyster fishery). The park contains a historical WWII plane wreck (*Dornier Do-24 X-36*) and shipwrecks (two pearl luggers). The marine park provides tourism opportunity and recreational value through its remoteness, diversity and abundance of habitats and marine fauna and the pristine nature of the marine and coastal environment.

The marine park contains vast intertidal sand and mudflats that extend up to 4 km wide at low tide and provide a rich source of food for many species. Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park is one of the world's most important feeding grounds for small wading birds that migrate to the area each summer, travelling from countries thousands of kilometres away (DPaW 2014) (see **Section 9.2.1**).

11.1.15 Lalang-garram/ Horizontal Falls and North Lalang-garram Marine Parks

The Lalang-garram/ Horizontal Falls and North Lalang-garram Marine Parks were established in 2016 under the State Government's *Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy* and are jointly managed by Dambimangari Traditional Owners and the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW 2016). The marine parks fall within the west Kimberly region, included in the Australian National Heritage List for its nationally significant natural, indigenous and historic values (DoEE 2019c).

The Lalang-garram/ Horizontal Falls Marine Park extends from Talbot Bay (*Ganbadba*) in the west to Walcott Inlet (*Iledda*) and Glenelg River (*Molor Moloyn*) in the east and covers approximately 353,000 ha (DPaW 2016). The marine park protects the internationally recognised Horizontal Falls and is important for the region's tourism. The North Lalang-garram Marine Park lies between the Lalang-garram / Camden Sound and North Kimberley Marine Parks and covers approximately 110,000 ha (DPaW 2016).

The area's large tidal range results in extensive intertidal areas with diverse ecosystems such as fringing coral reefs, mangroves and mudflat communities. Subtidal habitats and communities common to the marine parks include filter feeding communities of sponges and hard and soft corals. These intertidal and subtidal habitats provide critical foraging and nursery areas for dugong, marine turtles, estuarine crocodiles, snubfin and Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins, several species of sawfish and migratory seabirds. The marine parks are also a principal calving habitat for humpback whales (DPaW 2016).

11.1.16 North Kimberley Marine Park

The North Kimberley Marine Park was established in December 2016 as a Class A marine park under the CPC (DPaW 2016a). The marine park comprises four separate management areas including, Uunguu, Balanggarra, Miriung Gajerrong, and Wilinggin. It is a multiple zone marine park that includes: eight sanctuary zones, nine special purpose zones (recreation and conservation), two special use zone (cultural heritage), and general use areas (DPaW 2016a). The marine park is managed in accordance with the provisions of the CALM

Act with joint management between the Department of Parks and Wildlife and Traditional Owners of the area.

The area within the marine park is recognised for its Aboriginal cultural and heritage values, natural values including coral reefs, marine turtle species, dugongs, seagrass and macroalgal communities, mangroves and saltmarshes, finfish, and water and sediment quality, as well as for its social values (i.e. recreation, tourism and community values) and commercial values and resource use (e.g. commercial fishing). The marine park lies within the Indian Ocean and Timor Sea of Western Australia's Kimberley region, covering an area of approximately 1,845,000 hectares (DPaW 2016a). The south-western boundary is approximately 270 km northeast of Derby.

11.1.17 Yawuru Nagulagun/ Roebuck Bay Marine Park

The Yawuru Nagulagun/Roebuck Bay Marine Park was approved by the State Minister for Environment in October 2016 and declared as a Class A reserve over the subtidal and intertidal areas of Roebuck Bay (excluding the Kimberley Ports Authority waters), (DBCA, 2017a). The Marine Park is managed with a joint management framework between Parks and Wildlife and Yawuru Registered Native Title Body Corporation (RNTBC). The intent is to manage the areas from the offshore waters around Roebuck and Broome, collectively referred to as the Yawuru conservation estate, as one ecological system (DPaW 2016b). The development of the joint management plan is in accordance with the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 (Yawuru Organisation 2017) as well as contributes to the State Governments commitment under the Kimberly Science and Conservation Strategy, released in June 2011.

The Yawuru people have lived along the foreshores of Roebuck Bay for thousands of years, the Bay is part of the Yawuru traditional estate (DPaW 2016b). Roebuck Bay is an internationally significant Ramsar wetland, declared in 1990, and an important feeding ground for many species of migratory shorebirds. It hosts possibly the greatest diversity of shorebird species at any site across the globe (DBCA 2017b). The Bay has some of the most productive tropical intertidal flats in the world, and is consequently an important ground for Yawuru fishing, hunting and gathering of sea food. The Bay hosts communities of seagrass and macroalgae, providing food for protected species such as the dugong and flatback turtle. Marine mammals also pass through the waters of the Bay such as the Australian snubfin dolphin and the humpback dolphin, the humpback whale can also be found during annual migration (DPaW 2016b).

11.1.18 Bardi Jawa Gaarra Marine Park

As part of a network of marine protected areas in state waters, DBCA has established the Bardi Jawa Gaarra Marine Park Joint Management Plan 2022 (DBCA, 2022). This plan is intended to guide management of the park for ten years, or until a new plan is developed. The plan was jointly developed, and will be jointly implemented, by DBCA and the Bardi and Jawi traditional owners. The plan is expected to come into effect in 2024, with approximately 204,000 hectares of protected area. The park forms part of a network of marine protected areas in state waters along the Kimberley coast.

The Bardi Jawa Gaarra Marine Park contains important cultural values for the Bardi and Jawi traditional owners, including hunting and fishing, cultural activities and business. The Bardi Jawa Gaarra Marine Park Joint Management Plan 2022 (DBCA, 2022) recognises the importance of these values, and includes relevant key performance indicators:

- + Relationship to country
- + Looking after country
- + Language and traditional knowledge

- + Enjoyment of country and customary activities

These cultural values are dependent on the physical and biological characteristics of the park.

The physical setting for the Bardi Jawa Gaarra Marine Park is in coastal waters, where there is a large tidal range. The climate is tropical, with wet and dry seasons. Most rainfall occurs during the wet season. Water and sediment quality is expected to be high due to a lack of industrial activity within the park. Habitats within the park include (DBCA, 2022):

- + coral and reef communities
- + mangroves, creeks, and saltmarsh communities
- + seagrass and macroalgal communities
- + subtidal filter-feeding communities
- + intertidal sand and mud flat communities and freshwaters soaks

The Bardi Jawa Gaarra Marine Park hosts a range of biological values, including (DBCA, 2022):

- + marine turtles
- + fish, sharks and rays
- + dugongs
- + whales and dolphins
- + estuarine crocodiles
- + seabirds and shorebirds
- + invertebrates

Other activities that occur within the Bardi Jawa Gaarra Marine Park include research, recreational and commercial fishing, pearl aquaculture, and research.

11.1.19 Mayala Marine Park

The Mayala Marine Park is a component of the network of marine protected areas in state waters along the Kimberley coastline, and lies adjacent to the Bardi Jawa Gaarra Marine Park described above. The park is not yet gazetted, nor has a management plan been finalised. The Proposed Mayala Marine Park Indicative Joint Management Plan (DBCA, 2020) was published for public comment in 2020, and the park is expected to be gazetted by 2024. The park will be jointly managed by the Mayala traditional owners and DBCA.

The Mayala Marine Park contains important cultural values for the Mayala traditional owners, including hunting and fishing, cultural activities and sites of cultural and spiritual importance. The *Proposed Mayala Marine Park Indicative Joint Management Plan* (DBCA, 2020) recognises the importance of these values, and proposes the following strategic objectives:

- + Relationship to country
- + Looking after country
- + Language and traditional knowledge
- + Enjoyment of country and customary activities

The Mayala Marine Park contains a range of physical and biological environmental values. The *Proposed Mayala Marine Park Indicative Joint Management Plan* (DBCA, 2020) identifies the same physical and biological environmental values as described above for the Bardi Jawa Gaarra Marine Park (refer to **Section 11.1.18**).

11.1.20 Lalang-gaddam Marine Park

The Lalang-gaddam Marine Park is an amalgamation of the Lalang-garram / Camden Sound, Lalang-garram / Horizontal Fall and the North Lalang-garram Marine Park, and the proposed Maiyalam Marine Park. The *Lalang-gaddam amended Joint Management Plan for the Lalang-garram / Camden Sound, Lalang-garram / Horizontal Falls and North Lalang-garram Marine Parks and Indicative Joint Management Plan for the Proposed Maiyalam Marine Park* (DBCA, 2020) states the amalgamation is intended to:

- + Provide clearer direction for joint management and governance outcomes
- + Aid in communication and engagement with the Dambeemangardee Community and other park users

The amendment to the plan is expected to come into effect in 2024 and is intended to be in effect for 10 years. The strategic objective of the amendment is to protect and conserve the value of the land for the culture and heritage of Dambeemangardee people.

The *Lalang-gaddam amended Joint Management Plan for the Lalang-garram / Camden Sound, Lalang-garram / Horizontal Falls and North Lalang-garram Marine Parks and Indicative Joint Management Plan for the Proposed Maiyalam Marine Park* (DBCA, 2020) states the following key performance indicators:

- + Cultural connection and cultural laws and protocols
- + Looking after country
- + Traditional knowledge and language
- + Customary use

The Lalang-gaddam Marine Park has a range of physical and biological environmental values. The *Lalang-gaddam amended Joint Management Plan for the Lalang-garram / Camden Sound, Lalang-garram / Horizontal Falls and North Lalang-garram Marine Parks and Indicative Joint Management Plan for the Proposed Maiyalam Marine Park* (DBCA, 2020) identifies the same physical and biological environmental values as described above for the Lalang-gaddam Marine Park (refer to **Section 11.1.18**). The plan also recognises tourism, recreational fishing, commercial fishing and aquaculture as important values within the park, which are also identified as sources of risk that require management.

12. Australian Marine Parks

12.1 Introduction

In agreement with the States and NT governments, the Australian Commonwealth government was committed to establish Commonwealth marine parks as a component of the National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas (DoE 2014) (See **Figure 9-2**, **Figure 9-3** and **Figure 9-4**). In November 2012, the Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network was proclaimed with the purpose of protecting the biological diversity and sustainable use of the marine environment (Director of National Parks 2012a). Commonwealth Marine Reserves were renamed as Australian Marine Parks in October 2017. Six marine regions are included in the Australian Marine Parks Network, including the Coral Sea, the South-west, the Temperate East, the South-east, the North and the North-west. The South-east network 10-year Management Plan came into effect on 1 July 2013. The remaining networks 10-year Management Plans were approved and came into effect on 1 July 2018.

The new management plans establish the management and zoning of the designated marine parks. The marine park networks pertinent to the combined EMBA include:

- + The South-West Marine Parks Network;
- + The North-West Marine Parks Network; and
- + The North Marine Parks Network.

The South-West Marine Parks Network comprises 14 marine parks. Seven of these occur in West Australian waters in the combined EMBA, including:

- + Abrolhos Commonwealth Marine Park;
- + Jurien Marine Park;
- + Two Rocks Marine Park;
- + Perth Canyon Marine Park;
- + Geographe Marine Park;
- + South-west Corner Marine Park; and
- + Bremer Marine Park
- + Eastern Recherche Marine Park

The North-West Marine Parks Network comprises 13 marine parks which all occur in West Australian waters pertinent to the combined EMBA:

- + Carnarvon Canyon Marine Park;
- + Shark Bay Marine Park;
- + Gascoyne Marine Park;
- + Ningaloo Marine Park;
- + Montebello Marine Park;
- + Dampier Marine Park;
- + Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park;

- + Argo-Rowley Terrace Marine Park;
- + Mermaid Reef Marine Park;
- + Roebuck Marine Park;
- + Kimberley Marine Park;
- + Ashmore Reef Marine Park; and
- + Cartier Island Marine Park.

The Northern Marine Parks Network comprises eight marine parks. Four of these occur in Western Australian or Northern Territory waters within the combined EMBA:

- + Oceanic Shoals Marine Park;
- + Arafura Marine Park;
- + Arnhem Marine Park; and
- + Joseph Bonaparte Gulf Marine Park.

the combined EMBAThe sizes of these marine parks range from 300—152,000 km², and the water depths within the marine parks vary from approximately 15—1,500 m deep. The EPBC Act requires that each management plan assign an International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) category to each marine park. Additionally, the Act also allows for the management plan to divide a marine park into zones and to assign a category to each zone, which may differ from the overall category of the marine park. Zoning considers the purposes for which the marine parks were declared, the objectives of the relevant management plans, the values of the marine park and requirements of the EPBC Act and EPBC Regulations.

the combined EMBAThe North-West Marine Parks Network includes six different types of zoning:

- + Sanctuary Zone (IUCN Category Ia);
- + National Park Zone (IUCN Category II);
- + Recreational Use Zone (IUCN Category IV);
- + Habitat Protection Zone (IUCN Category IV);
- + Multiple Use Zone (IUCN Category VI); and
- + Special Purpose Zone (Trawl) (VI).

The South-west Marine Parks Network includes six different types of zoning:

- + National Park Zone (IUCN Category II);
- + Habitat Protection Zone (IUCN Category IV);
- + Multiple Use Zone (IUCN Category VI);
- + Special Purpose Zone (Mining Exclusion) (IUCN Category VI);
- + Special Purpose Zone (IUCN Category VI); and
- + Special Purpose Zone (Trawl) (IUCN Category VI).

Five types of zones are represented within the North Marine Parks Network:

- + National Park Zone (IUCN Category II)

- + Habitat protection zone (IUCN Category IV)
- + Multiple use zone (IUCN Category VI)
- + Special Purpose Zone (Trawl) (IUCN Category VI)
- + Special Purpose Zone (IUCN Category VI)

A summary of the South-West, North-West and North Marine Parks Networks is provided in **Table 12-1**.

12.2 South-West Marine Parks Network

The South-West Commonwealth Marine Parks Network is aligned to the South-West Marine Region. The network covers 508,371 km² and includes 14 marine parks (Director of National Parks, 2018a). Broad values of the South-west Australian Marine Parks include:

- + Natural values;
- + Cultural values;
- + Heritage values; and
- + Socio-economic values.

Further detail on each of the relevant marine parks those that fall within the combined EMBA is provided below.

12.2.1 Abrolhos Marine Park

The Abrolhos Marine Park (including zones within the combined EMBA: Marine National Park Zone – IUCN Category II-2,548 km²; Habitat Protection Zone – IUCN Category VI-23,239 km²; Multiple Use Zone – IUCN Category VI-56,545 km²; Special Purpose Zone – IUCN Category VI-5,729 km²) covers an area of approximately 88,060 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks, 2018a):

- + Important foraging areas for the:
 - Threatened Australian lesser noddy;
 - Northernmost breeding colony of the threatened Australian sea lion;
 - Great white sharks; and
 - Migratory common noddy, wedge-tailed shearwater, bridled tern, Caspian tern and roseate tern.
- + Important migration habitat for the protected humpback whale and pygmy blue whales;
- + The second largest canyon on the west coast, the Houtman Canyon;
- + Examples of the northernmost ecosystems of the Central Western Province and South-west Shelf Transition (including the Central West Coast meso-scale bioregion);
- + Examples of the deeper ecosystems of the Abrolhos Islands meso-scale bioregion;
- + Examples of the shallower, southernmost ecosystems of the Central Western Shelf Province provincial bioregion including the Zuytdorp meso-scale bioregion;
- + Examples of the deeper ecosystems of the Central Western Transition provincial bioregion;
- + Examples of diversity of seafloor features including: southern most banks and shoals of the North-west region; deep holes and valleys; slope habitats; terrace and shelf environments; and

- + Seven KEFs.

The Abrolhos Marine Park is adjacent to the Shark Bay World Heritage Property. The marine park does not contain any Commonwealth or National Heritage listings (Director of National Parks 2018a). The marine park contains 11 known shipwrecks listed under the *Underwater Culture Heritage Act 2018*. Commercial tourism, fishing, recreation and mining are important supported socio-economic activities in the park.

12.2.2 Jurien Marine Park

The Jurien Marine Park (including zones within the combined EMBA): Marine National Park Zone -IUCN Category II – 31 km² Special Purpose Zone -IUCN Category VI – 1,820 km²) covers an area of approximately 1,851 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018a):

- + Important foraging areas for the:
 - Threatened soft-plumaged petrel;
 - Threatened Australian sea lion;
 - Threatened white shark; and
 - Migratory roseate tern, bridled tern, wedge-tailed shearwater, and common noddy.
- + Important migration habitat for the protected humpback whale;
- + Examples of the ecosystems of two provincial bioregions: the central part of the South-west Shelf Transition (which includes the Central West Coast meso-scale bioregion) and small parts of the Central Western Province;
- + Three KEFs; and
- + Heritage values represented by the SS Cambewarra and Oleander historic shipwreck.

The Jurien Marine Park does not contain any international, Commonwealth or National Heritage listings (Director of National Parks 2018a). Commercial tourism, fishing, recreation and mining are important supported socio-economic activities in the park.

12.2.3 Two Rocks Marine Park

The Two Rocks Marine Park (including zones within the combined EMBA): Multiple Use Zone - IUCN Category VI – 867 km²; Marine National Park Zone - IUCN Category II – 15 km²) covers an area of approximately 882 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018a):

- + Important foraging areas for the:
 - Threatened soft-plumaged petrel;
 - Threatened Australian sea lion; and
 - Migratory roseate tern, bridled tern, Caspian tern, wedge-tailed shearwater, and common noddy.
- + Important migratory areas for protected humpback whales and pygmy blue whales;
- + Seasonal calving habitat for the threatened southern right whale;
- + Examples of the ecosystem of the southernmost parts of the South-west Shelf Transition (including the Central West Coast meso-scale bioregion); and
- + Three KEFs.

The Two Rocks Marine Park does not contain any international, Commonwealth or National Heritage listings (Director of National Parks 2018a). Commercial tourism, fishing, recreation and scientific research are important supported socio-economic activities in the park.

12.2.4 Perth Canyon Marine Park

Perth Canyon Marine Park (including zones within the combined EMBA): Marine National Park Zone – IUCN Category II – 1,241 km²; Habitat Protection Zone – IUCN Category IV – 4,352 km²; Multiple Use Zone – IUCN Category VI – 1,816 km²) covers an area of approximately 7,409 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018a):

- + Globally important seasonal feeding aggregation for the threatened blue whale;
- + Important foraging areas for the:
 - Threatened soft-plumaged petrel;
 - Migratory sperm whale; and
 - Migratory wedge-tailed shearwater.
- + Important migratory areas for protected humpback whales and blue whales;
- + Seasonal calving habitat for the threatened southern right whale;
- + Examples of the ecosystems of the southernmost parts of the Central Western Province and South-west Shelf Transition (including the Central West Coast meso-scale bioregion), and the northernmost parts of the South-west Transition and Southwest Shelf Province (including the Leeuwin-Naturaliste meso-scale bioregion); and
- + Four KEFs.

The Perth Canyon Marine Park does not contain any international, Commonwealth or National Heritage listings (Director of National Parks 2018a). Commercial tourism, fishing, shipping, recreation and defence training are important supported socio-economic activities in the park.

12.2.5 Geographe Marine Park

Geographe Marine Park (including zones within the combined EMBA): Marine National Park Zone - IUCN Category II – 15 km²; Special Purpose Zone - IUCN VI – 650 km²; Multiple Use Zone - IUCN Category VI – 291 km²; Habitat Protection Zone (IV) 21 km²) covers an area of approximately 977 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018a):

- + Important foraging areas for the:
 - Threatened soft-plumaged petrel; and
 - Migratory wedge-tailed shearwater.
- + Important pre-migration aggregation area for the migratory flesh-footed shearwater;
- + Important migratory habitat for the protected humpback whale and blue whale;
- + Seasonal calving habitat for the threatened southern right whale.
- + Seasonal calving habitat for the threatened southern right whale.
- + Representation of the South-west Shelf Province on the continental shelf as well as the Leeuwin-Naturaliste meso-scale bioregion;

- + Two KEFs; and
- + Representation of the seagrass habitats of the Geographe Bay key ecological feature, which in this location extend the furthest into Commonwealth waters.

The Geographe Marine Park does not contain any international, Commonwealth or National Heritage listings (Director of National Parks 2018a). The marine park contains eight known shipwrecks listed under the *Underwater Culture Heritage Act 2018*. Commercial tourism, fishing and recreation are important supported socio-economic activities in the park.

12.2.6 South-west Corner Marine Park

The South-west Corner Marine Park (including zones within the combined EMBA: Marine National Park Zone - IUCN II – 54,841 km²; Multiple Use Zone - IUCN VI – 106,602 km²; Special Purpose Zone (Mining exclusion) - IUCN VI – 9,550 km², Special Purpose Zone – IUCN VI – 5753 km²; Habitat Protection Zone - IUCN IV – 95,088 km²) covers an area of approximately 271,833 km² within the combined EMBA and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018a):

- + Important migratory area for protected humpback whales and blue whales;
- + Important foraging areas for the:
 - Threatened white shark;
 - Threatened Australian sea lion;
 - Threatened Indian yellow-nosed albatross and soft-plumaged petrel;
 - Sperm whale;
 - Migratory flesh-footed shearwater, short-tailed shearwater and Caspian tern; and
 - Seasonal calving habitat for the threatened southern right whale.
- + Representation of three provincial bioregions (the South-west Transition and Southern Province in the off-shelf area, and the South-west Shelf Province on the continental shelf) and two meso-scale bioregions (southern end of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste meso-scale bioregion and western and central parts of the Western Australia South Coast meso-scale bioregion);
- + Representation of the Donnelly Banks, east of Augusta, characterised by higher productivity and including nursery habitats; and
- + Six KEFs.

The South-west Corner Marine Park does not contain any international, Commonwealth or National Heritage listings (Director of National Parks 2018a). The marine park contains ten known shipwrecks listed under the *Underwater Culture Heritage Act 2018*. Commercial tourism, fishing, shipping and recreation are important supported socio-economic activities in the park.

12.2.7 Bremer Marine Park

The Bremer Marine Park: National Park Zone – IUCN II – 3,172 km²; Special Purpose Zone (Mining exclusion) - IUCN VI – 1,300 km², which covers an area of approximately 4,472 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018a):

- + Contains habitats, species and ecological communities associated with two bioregions: Southern Province and South-west Shelf Province;

- + Two key ecological features (Albany Canyon group and adjacent shelf break and ancient coastline between 90 m and 120 m depth);
- + Important foraging areas for:
- + Threatened white shark;
- + Threatened Australian sea lion;
- + Threatened Indian yellow-nosed albatross, Australian fairy tern and soft-plumaged petrel; and
- + Migratory flesh-footed shearwater, short-tailed shearwater, bridled tern and Caspian tern.
- + Important migratory pathway for humpback whales;
- + Significant calving habitat for the threatened southern right whale; and
- + Important aggregation area for killer whales

The marine park does not contain any international, Commonwealth or National Heritage listings (Director of National Parks 2018a). Commercial tourism, fishing, shipping and recreation are important supported socio-economic activities in the park.

12.2.8 Eastern Recherche Marine Park

The Eastern Recherche Marine Park (Special Use Zone – IUCN Category V) is part of the South-West Marine Park Network. It lies adjacent to the Recherche Archipelago about 135km east of Esperance and includes important foraging areas for:

- + Threatened white shark;
- + Threatened Australian sea lion
- + Pygmy blue whales are distributed across the marine park
- + Southern right whales migrate through the region to important nursery areas in coastal waters.

The marine park does not contain any international, Commonwealth or National heritage listings (Director of National Parks 2018a) but it is adjacent to the Recherche Archipelago which is home to the only breeding population of great-winged petrels in Australia.

12.3 North-West Marine Park Network

The North-West Marine Parks Network is aligned to the North-west Marine Region. The network covers 335,341 km² and includes 13 marine parks (Director of National Parks, 2018b). Broad values of the North-west Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network include:

- + Natural values;
- + Cultural values;
- + Heritage values; and
- + Socio-economic values.

Further detail on each of the relevant marine parks within the combined EMBA is provided below.

12.3.1 Carnarvon Canyon Marine Park

The Carnarvon Canyon Marine Park (Habitat Protection Zone – IUCN Category IV) covers an area of approximately 6,177 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018b):

- + The Carnarvon Canyon a single channel canyon with seabed features that include slope, continental rise and deep holes and valleys;
- + The Carnarvon Canyon ranges in depth from 1500 m to over 5,000 m, thereby providing habitat diversity for benthic and demersal species; and
- + Central Western Transition provincial bioregion ecosystem examples are found here, which are characteristic of the biogeographic faunal transition between tropical and temperate species.

There is limited information about species' use of this Marine Park (Director of National Parks 2018b). The marine park does not contain any international, Commonwealth or National Heritage listings (Director of National Parks 2018b). Commercial fishing, tourism, shipping and mining are important supported socio-economic activities in the marine park.

12.3.2 Shark Bay Marine Park

The Shark Bay Marine Park (Multiple Use Zone – IUCN Category VI) covers an area of approximately 7,443 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018b):

- + Foraging areas adjacent to important breeding areas for several species of migratory seabirds;
- + Part of the migratory pathway of protected humpback whales;
- + Internesting habitat for marine turtles;
- + Waters that are adjacent to the largest nesting area for loggerhead turtles in Australia;
- + Marine park and adjacent coastal areas important for shallow-water snapper;
- + Protection to shelf and slope habitats as well as a terrace feature;
- + Examples of the shallower ecosystems of the Central Western Shelf Province and Central Western Transition provincial bioregions including the Zuytdorp meso-scale bioregion; and
- + Connectivity between the inshore waters of the Shark Bay World Heritage Area and the deeper waters of the area.

Whilst no listed international, Commonwealth or National Heritage places are within the marine park, the park is adjacent to Shark Bay World Heritage Area (Director of National Parks 2018b). Commercial tourism, fishing, mining and recreation are important socio-economic values of the park.

12.3.3 Gascoyne Marine Park

The Gascoyne Marine Park (Multiple Use Zone – IUCN Category VI-33,652 km²; Habitat Protection Zone – IUCN Category IV-38,982 km²; Marine National Park Zone – IUCN Category II-9,132 km²) covers an area of approximately 81,766 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018a):

- + Important foraging areas for: migratory seabirds threatened and migratory hawksbills and flatback turtles; and vulnerable and migratory whale shark;
- + A continuous connectivity corridor from shallow depths around 15 m out to deep offshore waters on the abyssal plain at over 5,000 m in depth;

- + 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;
- + Ecosystems examples from the Central Western Shelf Transition, the Central Western Transition and the Northwest province provincial bioregions as well as the Ningaloo meso-scale bioregion;
- + Four KEFs for the region:
 - Canyons on the slope between the Cuvier Abyssal Plain and the Cape Range Peninsula (enhanced productivity, aggregations of marine life and unique sea-floor feature);
 - Exmouth Plateau (unique sea-floor feature associated with internal wave generation);
 - Continental slope demersal fish communities (high species diversity and endemism – the most diverse slope bioregion in Australia with over 500 species found with over 64 of those species occurring nowhere else); and
 - Commonwealth waters adjacent to Ningaloo Reef.
- + The canyons in this reserve are believed to be associated with the movement of nutrients from deep water over the Cuvier Abyssal Plain onto the slope where mixing with overlying water layers occurs at the canyon heads. These canyon heads, including that of Cloates Canyon, are sites of species aggregation and are thought to play a significant role in maintaining the ecosystems and biodiversity associated with the adjacent Ningaloo Reef; and
- + The reserve therefore provides connectivity between the inshore waters of the existing Ningaloo Commonwealth marine park and the deeper waters of the area.

The park is also adjacent to World Heritage listings associated with the Ningaloo Coast. Commercial tourism, commercial fishing, mining and recreation are important socio-economic values of the park (Director of National Parks 2018b).

12.3.4 Ningaloo Marine Park

Ningaloo Marine Park stretches approximately 300 km along the west coast of the Cape Range Peninsula and is adjacent to the Western Australian Ningaloo Marine Park and Gascoyne Marine Park (Director of National Parks, 2018b). Ningaloo Reef is the longest fringing barrier reef in Australia forming a discontinuous barrier that encloses a lagoon that varies in width from 200 m to 7 km. Gaps that regularly intercept the main reef line provide channels for water exchange with deeper, cooler waters (CALM 2005). It is the only example in the world of extensive fringing coral reef on the west coast of a continent.

The Ningaloo Marine Park (Recreational Use Zone – IUCN Category II) covers an area of approximately 2,435 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018a):

- + Important habitat (foraging areas) for vulnerable and migratory whale sharks;
- + Areas used for foraging by marine turtles adjacent to important interbreeding sites;
- + Part of the migratory pathway of the protected humpback whale;
- + Foraging and migratory pathway for pygmy blue whales;
- + Breeding, calving, foraging and nursing habitat for dugong;

- + Shallow shelf environments which provides protection for shelf and slope habitats, as well as pinnacle and terrace seafloor features;
- + Seafloor habitats and communities of the Central Western Shelf Transition;
- + Three KEFs; and
- + The Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Property, the Ningaloo Coast National Heritage listing and Ningaloo Marine Area Commonwealth Heritage Listing.

Commercial tourism and recreation are important socio-economic values of the marine park (Director of National Parks 2018b).

12.3.5 Montebello Marine Park

The Montebello Marine Park is located offshore of Barrow Island and 80 km west of Dampier extending from the Western Australian state water boundary and is adjacent to the Western Australian Barrow Island and Montebello Islands Marine Parks. The Montebello Marine Park (Multiple Use Zone – IUCN Category VI) covers an area of approximately 3,413 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018b):

- + Foraging areas for migratory seabirds that are adjacent to important breeding areas;
- + Areas used by vulnerable and migratory whale sharks for foraging;
- + Foraging areas marine turtles which are adjacent to important nesting sites;
- + Section of the north and south bound migratory pathway of the humpback whale;
- + Shallow shelf environments with depths ranging from 15–150 m which provides protection for shelf and slope habitats, as well as pinnacle and terrace seafloor features;
- + Seafloor habitats and communities of the Northwest Shelf Province provincial bioregions as well as the Pilbara (offshore) meso-scale bioregion; and
- + One KEF for the region is the ancient Coastline (a unique seafloor feature that provides areas of enhanced biological productivity).

Commercial tourism, commercial fishing, mining and recreation are important socio-economic values for the park.

12.3.6 Dampier Marine Park

The Dampier Marine Park (Marine National Park Zone – IUCN Category I-73 km²; Habitat Protection Zone – IUCN Category IV-104 km²; Multiple Purpose Zone – IUCN Category VI-1,074 km²) covers an area of approximately 1,252 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018b):

- + Foraging areas for migratory seabirds that are adjacent to important breeding grounds;
- + Important foraging areas for marine turtles adjacent to significant nesting sites;
- + Part of the migratory pathway of the protected humpback whale;
- + Protection for offshore shelf habitats and shallow shelf habitats adjacent to the Dampier Archipelago; and
- + Communities and seafloor habitats of the Northwest Shelf Province provincial bioregion as well as the Pilbara (nearshore) and Pilbara (offshore) meso-scale bioregions are included.

Port activities, commercial fishing and recreation are important activities in the marine park (Director of National Parks 2018b). No heritage listings apply to the marine park.

12.3.7 Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park

The Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park (Multiple Use Zone – IUCN Category VI) is adjacent to the Western Australia Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park, 74 km north-east of Port Hedland and covers an area of approximately 10,785 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018b):

- + Breeding, foraging and resting habitat for seabirds (one of the world's most important feeding grounds for migratory shorebirds and waders and is listed under the Ramsar Convention);
- + Internesting and nesting habitat for marine turtles (it supports a significant nesting population of flatback turtles, which are endemic to northern Australia);
- + Foraging, nursing and pupping habitat for sawfish;
- + Migratory pathway for humpback whales;
- + Coastal waters provide critical habitat for several shark and ray species at varying life stages;
- + The Nyangumarta, Karajarri and Ngarla people's sea country extends into Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park. Access to sea country by families is important for cultural traditions, livelihoods and future socio-economic development opportunities; and
- + Three known shipwrecks listed under the *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018*: Lorna Doone (wrecked in 1923), Nellie (wrecked in 1908), and Tifera (wrecked in 1923).

Tourism, commercial fishing, pearling and recreation are important activities in the Marine Park (Director of National Parks 2018b).

12.3.8 Argo-Rowley Terrace Marine Park

The Argo-Rowley Marine Park is located approximately 270 km north-west of Broome, Western Australia, and extends to the limit of Australia's exclusive economic zone. The Marine Park (Multiple Use Zone – IUCN Category VI-108,812 km²; Marine National Park Zone – IUCN Category II-36,050 km²; Special Purpose Zone – IUCN Category VI-1,141 km²) covers an area of approximately 146,003 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018b):

- + Foraging areas that are important for migratory seabirds as well as the endangered loggerhead turtle;
- + Important habitat and foraging for sharks;
- + Migratory pathway for pygmy blue whales (Director of National Parks 2018b);
- + Protection for communities and habitats of the deeper offshore waters (220 m to over 5,000 m) of the region;
- + Seafloor features including aprons and fans, canyons, continental rise, knolls/abyssal hills and the terrace and continental slope;
- + Communities and seafloor habitats of the Northwest Transition and Timor Province provincial bioregions;
- + Connectivity between the existing Mermaid Reef Marine National Nature Reserve and reefs of the Western Australian Rowley Shoals Marine Park and the deeper waters of the region;
- + Two KEFs in the reserve include:

- The canyons linking the Argo Abyssal Plain with the Scott Plateau (unique seafloor feature with enhanced productivity and feeding aggregations of species); and
- Mermaid Reef and the Commonwealth waters surrounding Rowley Shoals (an area of high biodiversity with enhanced productivity and feeding and breeding aggregations).

No heritage listings apply to this marine park (Director of National Parks 2018b). Commercial fishing, mining and recreation are important socio-economic values for the park.

12.3.9 Mermaid Reef Marine Park

The Mermaid Reef Marine Park (Multiple Use Zone – IUCN Category VI) lays approximately 280 km north-west of Broome, Western Australia, adjacent to the Argo–Rowley Terrace Marine Park and approximately 13 km from the Western Australian Rowley Shoals Marine Park. It covers an area of 540 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018b):

- + Mermaid Reef and Commonwealth waters surrounding Rowley Shoals are valued for its high productivity, aggregations of marine life and high species richness;
- + Mermaid Reef, Clerke Reef and Imperieuse Reef are biodiversity hotspot and key topographic feature of the Argo Abyssal Plain;
- + Rowley Shoals present some of the best geological examples of shelf atolls in Australian waters, and are ecologically significant in that they are considered ecological steppingstones for reef species originating in Indonesian/Western Pacific waters, are one of a few offshore reef systems on the north-west shelf, and may also provide an upstream source for recruitment to reefs further south;
- + Breeding habitat for seabirds;
- + Migratory pathway for the pygmy blue whale; and
- + One known shipwreck listed under the *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018*: Lively (wrecked in 1810).

Tourism, recreation, and scientific research are important activities in the Marine Park (Director of National Parks 2018b).

12.3.10 Roebuck Marine Park

The Roebuck Marine Park (Multiple Use Zone – IUCN Category VI) covers an area of approximately 304 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018b):

- + Foraging habitat area for migratory seabirds adjacent to important breeding areas;
- + Foraging area adjacent to important nesting sites for flatback turtles;
- + Parts of the migratory pathway of the protected humpback whale;
- + Habitat adjacent to important foraging, nursing and pupping areas for freshwater, green and dwarf sawfish;
- + Foraging and calving areas for Australian snubfin, Indo-Pacific humpback and Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins;
- + Foraging habitat for dugong;
- + Protection for shallow shelf habitats ranging in depth from 15–70 m;
- + Ecosystems example of the Northwest Shelf Province provincial bioregion and the Canning meso-scale bioregion; and

- + Sea country valued for indigenous cultural identity, health and well-being for the Yawuru people (Director of National Parks 2018b).

No heritage listings apply to the marine park. Commercial tourism, fishing, pearling and recreation are important socio-economic values of the marine park (Director of National Parks 2018b).

12.3.11 Kimberley Marine Park

The Kimberley Marine Park (Multiple Use Zone – IUCN Category VI) is located approximately 100 km north of Broome, Western Australia, and extends from the Western Australian state water boundary north from the Lacepede Islands to the Holothuria Banks offshore from Cape Bougainville. It is adjacent to the Western Australian Lalanggarra / Camden Sound Marine Park and the North Kimberley Marine Park. It covers an area of 74,469 km², and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018b):

- + Northwest Shelf Province;
 - Diverse benthic and pelagic fish communities
 - Ancient coastline thought to be an important seafloor feature
 - Migratory pathway for humpback whales
- + Northwest Shelf Transition;
 - High levels of species diversity
 - Endemism occur among demersal fish communities on the continental slope
- + Timor Province;
 - Reefs and islands of the bioregion are regarded as biodiversity hotspots
 - Endemism in demersal fish communities of the continental slope is high (two distinct communities have been identified on the upper and mid slopes)
 - Ancient coastline at the 125 m depth contour where rocky escarpments are thought to provide biologically important habitats in areas otherwise dominated by soft sediments;
 - Continental slope demersal fish communities characterised by high diversity of demersal fish assemblages;
 - breeding and foraging habitat for seabirds;
 - Internesting and nesting habitat for marine turtles;
 - Breeding, calving and foraging habitat for inshore dolphins;
 - Calving, migratory pathway and nursing habitat for humpback whales;
 - Migratory pathway for pygmy blue whales;
 - Foraging habitat for dugong and whale sharks;
 - The Wunambal Gaambera, Dambimangari, Mayala, Bardi Jawi and the Nyul Nyul people's sea country extends into the Kimberley Marine Park. Access to sea country by families is important for cultural traditions, livelihoods and future socio-economic development opportunities; and
 - More than 40 known shipwrecks listed under the *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018*.

Tourism, commercial fishing, mining, recreation, including fishing, and traditional use are important activities in the Marine Park (Director of National Parks 2018b).

12.3.12 Ashmore Reef Marine Park

The Ashmore Reef Marine Park (Sanctuary Zone – IUCN Category Ia; Recreational Use Zone – IUCN Category II) covers an area of approximately 583 km² (Director of National Parks 2018b). It forms part of the North-west Park Network. As the only oceanic reef in the north-east Indian Ocean with vegetated islands (East, Middle and West Islands), Ashmore is also the largest of three emergent, oceanic reefs in the region (DSEWPac 2012). Both the Ashmore and Cartier Islands fall under the legal memorandum of understanding between Indonesia and Australia, as both areas are located within Australia's external territory (DSEWPac 2012).

Ashmore Reef Marine Park is located on Australia's North West Shelf in the Indian Ocean, about 450 nautical miles (840 km) west of Darwin and 330 nautical miles (610 km) north of Broome. The reserve covers 583 km² and includes two extensive lagoons, shifting sand flats and cays, seagrass meadows, a large reef flat covering an area of 239 km². Within the reserve are three small islands known as East, Middle and West Islands (DoE, 2002).

Ashmore was designated a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance in 2003 due to the importance of its islands providing a resting place for migratory shorebirds and supporting large seabird breeding colonies.

The proclaimed marine park will protect the following conservation values (DoE 2014):

- + Ecosystems, habitats and communities associated with; the North West Shelf; Timor Province; and emergent oceanic reefs;
- + The island and reef habitats:
 - Contains critical nesting and internesting habitat for green turtles (including one of three genetically distinct breeding populations in the North-west Marine Region). Low level nesting activity by loggerhead turtles has also been recorded;
 - Large and significant feeding populations of green, hawksbill and loggerhead turtles occur around the reefs (it is estimated that approximately 11,000 marine turtles feed in the area throughout the year);
 - Supports a small dugong population of less than 50 individuals that breed and feed around the reef. This population is thought to be genetically distinct from other Australian populations;
 - Migratory pathway for pygmy blue whales (Director of National Parks 2018b);
 - Support some of the most important seabird rookeries on the North West Shelf including colonies of bridled terns, common noddies, brown boobies, eastern reef egrets, frigatebirds, tropicbirds, red-footed boobies, roseate terns, crested terns and lesser crested terns;
 - Is an important staging points/feeding areas for many migratory seabirds; and
 - Is internationally significant for its abundance and diversity of sea snakes.
- + Two KEFs:
 - + Ashmore Reef and Cartier Island and surrounding Commonwealth waters; and
 - + Continental slope demersal fish communities (Director of National Parks 2018b);
 - + Cultural and heritage sites, including;
- + Ashmore lagoon as a rest/staging area for traditional Indonesian fishers

- + Indonesian artefacts; and
- + Grave sites.
- + Commonwealth heritage listing – Ashmore Reef

Ashmore Reef and nearby islands and reefs are associated with benthic communities consisting predominantly of sand and coral rubble, with noteworthy hard coral, soft coral, algae and seagrasses (Heyward *et al.* 2012; Skewes *et al.*, 1999a, 1999b). The reefs host similar benthic communities, with areas of relatively high live coral cover, although episodes of coral bleaching have been recorded (Heyward *et al.* 2012). Benthic organisms that depend on photosynthesis such as seagrasses, macroalgae and zooxanthellate corals are typically restricted to shallower waters around the reefs, although in the clear tropical waters may be found at considerable depths. Given the shallowest sampling location is greater than 60 m, and that most sampling locations are greater than 100 m deep, diverse benthic communities driven by primary producers such as seagrasses, algae and zooxanthellate corals are not expected to occur at the sampling locations. Data collected in the vicinity of Ashmore Reef indicates that corals are likely to spawn during March and April (Heyward *et al.* 2010).

Soft sediments are widespread in the region, with sediment infauna communities in the region dominated by polychaetes and crustaceans. These taxa accounted for over 80% of benthic infauna sampled, both in terms of numbers of species and individual organisms (Smith *et al.* 1997).

Commercial tourism, recreation and scientific research are important socio-economic values of the marine park (Director of National Parks 2018b).

12.3.13 Cartier Island Marine Park

The Cartier Island Marine Park (Sanctuary Zone – IUCN Category Ia) is located approximately 45 km south-east of Ashmore Reef Marine Park and 610 km north of Broome, Western Australia. Both Marine Parks are in Australia's External Territory of Ashmore and Cartier Islands and are also within an area subject to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Indonesia and Australia, known as the MoU Box. The Marine Park covers an area of 172 km² and protects the following conservation values (Director of National Parks 2018b):

- + Ashmore Reef and Cartier Island and surrounding Commonwealth waters;
- + Areas of enhanced productivity in an otherwise low-nutrient environment;
- + Regional importance for feeding and breeding aggregations of birds and marine life;
- + Continental slope demersal fish communities;
- + Area of high diversity in demersal fish assemblages;
- + Area of high diversity and abundance of hard and soft corals, gorgonians (sea fans), sponges and a range of encrusting organisms;
- + Breeding and foraging habitat for seabirds;
- + Internesting, nesting and foraging habitat for marine turtles;
- + Foraging habitat for whale sharks;
- + Internationally significant for its abundance and diversity of sea snakes;
- + One known shipwreck listed under the *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018*: the Ann Millicent (wrecked in 1888).

Scientific research is an important activity in the Marine Park (Director of National Parks 2018b).

12.4 North Marine Park Network

The North Marine Parks Network is aligned to the North Marine Region. The network covers 157,480 km² (Director of National Parks 2018c). Broad values of the North Network include:

- + Natural values;
- + Cultural values;
- + Heritage values; and
- + Socio-economic values.

Further detail on the applicable Oceanic Shoals Marine Park is provided below.

12.4.1 Oceanic Shoals Marine Park

The Oceanic Shoals Marine Park (zones within EMBA: Multiple Use Zone - IUCN Category VI- 32,488 km²; Special Purpose Zone – IUCN VI-24,443 km²) and is wholly contained within the combined EMBA.

The marine park protects the following conservation values (DoE 2014):

- + Important resting area for turtles between egg laying (internesting area) for the threatened flatback turtle and olive ridley turtle;
- + Important foraging area for the threatened loggerhead turtle and olive ridley turtle;
- + Examples of the ecosystems of two provincial bioregions: the Northwest Shelf Transition Province (which includes the Bonaparte, Oceanic Shoals, and Tiwi meso-scale bioregions) and the Timor Transition Province;
- + KEFs represented in the park are (Director of National Parks 2018c):
 - Carbonate bank and terrace system of the Van Diemen Rise (unique sea-floor feature);
 - Carbonate banks and terrace system of the Sahul Shelf (unique sea-floor feature);
 - Pinnacles of the Bonaparte Basin (enhanced productivity, unique sea-floor feature); and
 - Shelf break and slope of the Arafura Shelf (unique sea-floor feature).

No heritage listings apply to the marine park. Commercial fishing and mining are important socio-economic values for the park (Director of National Parks 2018c).

A spatial predictive benthic habitat model of the Oceanic Shoals Marine Park has been developed by AIMS, as part of the Australian National Environmental Science Programme, to determine the spatial heterogeneity of the benthic environment and key classes of organisms within the reserve. The benthic habitat model maps the 10 broad classes of benthic organisms; alcyons, gorgonians, soft corals, hard corals, halimeda, macroalgae, seagrass, filterers (e.g. sponges), burrowers (e.g. sea urchins) and no biota detected (Radford and Puotinen 2016).

12.4.2 Arafura Marine Park

The Arafura marine park covers 22,924 km² and is comprised of a Multiple Use Zone and Special Purpose Zone (Trawl). The marine park is wholly contained within the combined EMBA. It is located approximately

256 km from Darwin and extends to the outer edge of the Exclusive Economic Zone and the water depth ranges from 15 m to 500 m (Director of National Parks 2018c).

The Arafura Marine Park has been deemed significant because *“it contains habitats, species and ecological communities associated with the Northern Shelf Province and Timor Transition. It includes one key ecological feature: the tributary canyons of the Arafura Depression (valued as a unique seafloor feature with ecological properties of regional significance). It is near to important wetland systems including the Cobourg Peninsula Ramsar site, and provides important foraging habitat for seabirds”* (Director of National Parks, 2018c)

The Arafura Marine Park has both cultural and natural values.

The marine park protects the following natural values (Director of National Parks, 2018c):

- + Ecosystems representative of the Northern Shelf Province
- + Ecosystems representative of the Timor Transition
- + BIAs for Marine Turtles
- + BIAs for Seabirds
- + Tributary canyons of the Arafura Depression key ecological features.

The sea country of the marine park is part of the responsibility of the Yuwurrumu members of the Mandilarri-lduji, the Mangalara, the Murran, the Gadura-Minaga and the Ngaynjaharr clans. Sea country is valued for Indigenous cultural identity and Indigenous people have been sustainably using and managing their sea country, including the sea country within the Arafura Marine Park for tens of thousands of years (Director of National Parks, 2018c).

12.4.3 Arnhem Marine Park

The Arnhem Marine Park covers an area of 7125 km² and water depth ranges from less than 15 m to 70 m. The marine park is entirely comprised of a Special Purpose Zone (VI) and the majority of the marine park is contained within the combined EMBA. It is located approximately 100 km south-east of Croker Island and 60 km south-east of the Arafura Marine Park. It extends from Northern Territory waters surrounding the Goulburn Islands, to the waters north of Maningrida (Director of National Parks 2018c).

The Arnhem Marine Park has been deemed significant because *“it contains habitats, species and ecological communities associated with the Northern Shelf Province. It includes dynamic habitats due to gently sloping shelf topped with a number of pinnacles, at depths ranging from 5 m to 30 m. It is near to important wetland systems including the Blyth-Cadell Floodplain and Boucaut Bay Nationally Important Wetland and provides important foraging habitat for seabirds”* (Director of National Parks 2018c).

The Arnhem Marine Park has both cultural and natural values.

The marine park protects the following natural values (Director of National Parks, 2018c):

- + Ecosystems representative of the Northern Shelf Province
- + Nutrient-rich coastal water contributing to high biological biodiversity
- + BIAs for Marine Turtles
- + BIAs for Seabirds

The sea country of the marine park is part of the responsibility of the coastal Aboriginal people of West Arnhem land. Sea country is valued for Indigenous cultural identity and Indigenous people have been

sustainably using and managing their sea country, including the sea country within the Arnhem Marine Park for tens of thousands of years (Director of National Parks, 2018c).

No heritage listings apply to the marine park. Commercial fishing, tourism and recreation are important socio-economic values for the park (Director of National Parks 2018c).

12.4.4 Joseph Bonaparte Marine Park

The Joseph Bonaparte Gulf Marine Park is located approximately 15 km west of Wadeye, Northern Territory, and approximately 90 km north of Wyndham, Western Australia, in the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf. It is adjacent to the Western Australian North Kimberley Marine Park. The marine park covers an area of 8597 km² and water depth ranges between less than 15 m and 100 m, and is wholly contained within the combined EMBA. The marine park is comprised of two zones; Special Purpose Zone (VI) and Multiple Use Zone (VI) (Director of National Parks, 2018c).

The Joseph Bonaparte Marine Park has been deemed significant because *“it contains habitats, species and ecological communities associated with the Northwest Shelf Transition bioregion. It includes one key ecological feature: the carbonate bank and terrace system of the Sahul Shelf (valued as a unique seafloor feature with ecological properties of regional significance). The Marine Park contains a number of prominent shallow seafloor features including an emergent reef system, shoals, and sand banks. It is near an important wetland systems including the Ord River floodplain Ramsar site and provides connectivity between the nearshore and sea environments. The Marine Park includes habitats connecting to and complementing the adjacent Western Australian North Kimberley Marine Park”* (Director of National Parks, 2018c).

The Joseph Bonaparte Marine Park has both cultural and natural values.

The marine park protects the following natural values (Director of National Parks, 2018c):

- + Ecosystems representative of the Northwest Shelf Transition
- + BIAs for Marine Turtles
- + BIA for the Australian Snubfin Dolphin
- + KEFs represented in the park are:
 - Carbonate bank and terrace system of the Sahul Shelf (unique sea-floor feature)

The sea country of the marine park is part of the responsibility of the Miriwung, Gajerrong, Doolboong, Wardenybeng and Gija and Balangarra people. Sea country is valued for Indigenous cultural identify and Indigenous people have been sustainably using and managing their sea country, including the sea country within the Arnhem Marine Park for tens of thousands of years (Director of National Parks, 2018c).

No heritage listings apply to the marine park, however the marine park is adjacent to the West Kimberly National Heritage Place. Tourism, commercial fishing, mining and recreation are important socio-economic values for the park (Director of National Parks 2018c).

Table 12-1 Summary of marine network values, pressures, management programs and actions applicable to the combined EMBA

Marine network	Values	Pressures	Management programs and actions
SOUTH WEST	+ Nine bioregions + Key ecological features + EPBC listed species + Biologically important areas + Sea country indigenous values + Historic shipwrecks + Adjacent to Shark Bay World Heritage Area + Shipping and port activities + Commercial fishing + Marine tourism	+ Climate change + Hydrological changes from coastal development and agriculture (increase sediment loads and pollutants) + Illegal/unregulated/unreported fishing + Bycatch of non-target species + Habitat modification from mining + Human presence + Invasive species + Marine pollution	+ Communication, education and awareness programs + Promote suitable tourism experience + Facilitate partnerships between tourism operators and Indigenous operators + Indigenous engagement program + Marine monitoring programs + Park management via assessments / authorisation program for marine park activities + Marine park management and development of suitable infrastructure + Compliance planning and surveillance

Marine network	Values	Pressures	Management programs and actions
NORTH WEST	+ Eight bioregions + Key ecological features + EPBC listed species + Biologically important areas + Sea country indigenous values + Native title determinations + Traditional Indonesian fishers + World Heritage Properties (Ningaloo Coast, Shark Bay) + Ashmore Reef Marine Park and Eighty-Mile Beach Ramsar sites + Shipping and port activities + Commercial fishing, pearling, aquaculture + Marine tourism + Scientific research	+ Climate change + Hydrological changes from coastal development and agriculture (increase sediment loads and pollutants) + Illegal/unregulated/unreported fishing + Bycatch of non-target species + Habitat modification from mining + Human presence + Invasive species + Marine pollution	+ Communication, education and awareness programs + Promote suitable tourism experience + Facilitate partnerships between tourism operators and Indigenous operators + Indigenous engagement program + Marine monitoring programs + Park management via assessments / authorisation program for marine park activities + Marine park management and development of suitable infrastructure + Compliance planning and surveillance
NORTH	+ One bioregion + Key ecological features + EPBC listed species + Biologically important areas + Historic shipwrecks	+ Climate change + Hydrological changes reliance upon the large number of estuaries and waterways that feed into the Gulf of Carpentaria and the waters adjacent to the Northern Territory coastline + Illegal/unregulated/unreported fishing + Bycatch of non-target species + Physical Habitat modification + Marine pollution	+ Communication, education and awareness programs + Promote suitable tourism experience + Facilitate partnerships between tourism operators and Indigenous operators + Indigenous engagement program + Marine monitoring programs + Park management via assessments / authorisation program for marine park activities + Marine park management and development of suitable infrastructure + Compliance planning and surveillance

13. Conservation Management Plans

In order to protect, maintain and enhance recovery of certain threatened species and ecological communities the DAWE may prepare conservation management plans in the form of Conservation Advice or Recovery Plans.

13.1 Conservation Advice

When a native species or ecological community is listed as threatened under the EPBC Act, conservation advice is developed to assist its recovery. Conservation advice provides guidance on immediate recovery and threat abatement activities that can be undertaken to ensure the conservation of a newly listed species or ecological community.

13.2 Recovery Plans

The Australian Government Minister for the Environment may make or adopt and implement recovery plans for threatened fauna, threatened flora (other than conservation dependent species) and threatened ecological communities listed under the Commonwealth EPBC Act. Recovery plans set out the research and management actions necessary to stop the decline of, and support the recovery of, listed threatened species or threatened ecological communities. The aim of a recovery plan is to maximise the long-term survival in the wild of a threatened species or ecological community.

Table 13-1: Summary of EPBC Act recovery plans applicable to the combined EMBA

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
Bird	Australian lesser noddy	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Anous tenuirostris melanops</i> (Australian lesser noddy) (2015)	Habitat modification by pied cormorants (Houtman Abrolhos)
			Catastrophic destruction of habitat by cyclones
	Migratory species within the combined EMBA:	Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (2015)	Habitat loss and degradation
			Pollution and Contaminants
			Invasive species
			Anthropogenic disturbance
			Climate change and variability
			Overharvesting of shorebird prey
			Fisheries bycatch
			Direct mortality (hunting)
	+ Asian dowitcher;		
	+ Bar-tailed godwit;		
	+ Black-tailed godwit;		
	+ Broad-billed sandpiper;		
	+ Common greenshank;		
	+ Common redshank;		
	+ Common sandpiper;		
	+ Curlew Sandpiper;		
	+ Double-banded plover;		
	+ Eastern Curlew;		
	+ Fork-tailed swift;		
	+ Grey plover;		
	+ Grey-tailed tattler;		
	+ Long-toed stint;		
	+ Little greenshank		
	+ Oriental plover;		
	+ Oriental pratincole;		
	+ Pacific golden plover;		
	+ Pectoral sandpiper;		
	+ Red-necked phalarope;		
	+ Red-necked stint;		
	+ Red knot;		
	+ Ruddy turnstone;		
	+ Ruff (reeve);		

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
	+ Sanderling; + Sharp-tailed sandpiper; + Streaked shearwater; + Terek sandpiper; + Whimbrel; and + Wood sandpiper.		
	Migratory and/or marine species within the combined EMBA + Red-tailed Tropicbird; + White-tailed Tropicbird; + Broad-billed Prion; + Fairy Prion; + Wedge-tailed Shearwater; + Flesh-footed Shearwater; + Sooty Shearwater; + Short-tailed Shearwater; + Streaked Shearwater; + Lesser Frigatebird; + Great Frigatebird; + Masked Booby; + Red-footed Booby; + Brown Booby; + Common Noddy; + Bridled Tern; + Little Tern; + Caspian Tern; + Roseate Tern and; + Osprey.	Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Seabirds (2020)	Habitat loss and modification Climate variability and change Geological processes (volcanism, earthquake, tsunami and landslips) Invasive species Native wildlife Fisheries interactions and by-catch Prey depletion Resource extraction Renewable energy (collision/limited foraging) Anthropogenic disturbance Direct mortality (hunting) Transport Drones Pollution and contaminants Aquaculture Disease
	Christmas Island frigatebird		Introduction of a new disease

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
		Conservation Advice for the Christmas Island frigatebird <i>Fregata andrewsi</i> (2020a) Recovery Plan for the Christmas Island Frigatebird (<i>Fregeta andrewsi</i>) (2004)	Disturbance of habitat
			Fisheries – prey depletion
			Illegal killing and hunting in south-east Asia
			Invasive weeds
			Fisheries - bycatch
			Drowning in artificial water bodies
			Heavy metal contamination
			Marine debris - plastics
	Australasian bittern	Conservation Advice for <i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i> (Australasian Bittern) (2019)	habitat loss through water reductions and transition from ponded rice to other farming systems
			habitat degradation through increased salinity, siltation and pollution; grazing by livestock and feral animals and changes in abundance of plant species
			Climate change through changes in water availability; changes in fire regimes and salinisation of coastal wetlands
			Infrastructure through urban development
			Predation by introduced vertebrate pests such as foxes and cats
	Red knot	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Calidris canutus</i> (Red knot) (2016) Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (2015)	Habitat loss and habitat degradation
			Over-exploitation of shellfish
			Pollution/contamination impacts
			Disturbance
			Direct mortality (hunting)
			Diseases
			Extreme weather events
			Climate change impacts

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
	Curlew sandpiper	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Calidris ferruginea</i> (Curlew Sandpiper) (2015)	Ongoing human disturbance
			Habitat loss and degradation from pollution
			Changes to the water regime
			Invasive plants
	Great knot	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Calidris tenuirostris</i> (Great knot) (2016) Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (2015).	Habitat loss and habitat degradation
			Pollution/contaminants
			Disturbance
			Diseases
			Direct mortality (hunting)
			Climate change impacts
	Greater sand plover	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i> (Greater sand plover) (2016) Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (2015)	Habitat loss and habitat degradation
			Pollution/contamination impacts
			Disturbance
			Direct mortality (hunting)
			Diseases
			Climate change impacts
	Lesser sand plover	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Charadrius mongolus</i> (Lesser sand plover) (2016) Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (2015)	Habitat loss and habitat degradation
			Pollution/contamination impacts
			Disturbance
			Direct mortality (hunting)
			Diseases
			Climate change impacts
	Antipodean albatross		Incidental catch resulting from fishing operations

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
		National recovery plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels 2011-2016 (2011)	Competition with fisheries for marine resources
			Dependence on discards
			Marine pollution
			Climate change
			Intentional shooting/killing
			Feral pest species
			Human disturbance at the nest
			Parasites and diseases
			Loss of nesting habitat
			Competition for nest space
	Amsterdam albatross	National recovery plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels 2011-2016 (2011)	Incidental catch resulting from fishing operations
			Competition with fisheries for marine resources
			Dependence on discards
			Marine pollution
			Climate change
			Intentional shooting/killing
			Feral pest species
			Human disturbance at the nest
			Parasites and diseases
			Loss of nesting habitat
			Competition for nest space
	Tristan albatross		Incidental catch resulting from fishing operations
			Competition with fisheries for marine resources

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
		National recovery plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels 2011-2016 (2011)	Dependence on discards
			Marine pollution
			Climate change
			Intentional shooting/killing
			Feral pest species
			Human disturbance at the nest
			Parasites and diseases
			Loss of nesting habitat
			Competition for nest space
	Southern royal albatross	National recovery plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels 2011-2016 (2011)	Incidental catch resulting from fishing operations
			Competition with fisheries for marine resources
			Dependence on discards
			Marine pollution
			Climate change
			Intentional shooting/killing
			Feral pest species
			Human disturbance at the nest
			Parasites and diseases
			Loss of nesting habitat
			Competition for nest space
	Wandering albatross	National recovery plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels 2011-2016 (2011)	Incidental catch resulting from fishing operations
			Competition with fisheries for marine resources
			Dependence on discards

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
			Marine pollution
			Climate change
			Intentional shooting/killing
			Feral pest species
			Human disturbance at the nest
			Parasites and diseases
			Loss of nesting habitat
			Competition for nest space
	Northern royal albatross	National recovery plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels 2011-2016 (2011)	Incidental catch resulting from fishing operations
			Competition with fisheries for marine resources
			Dependence on discards
			Marine pollution
			Climate change
			Intentional shooting/killing
			Feral pest species
			Human disturbance at the nest
			Parasites and diseases
			Loss of nesting habitat
			Competition for nest space
	Blue petrel	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Halobaena caerulea</i> (blue petrel) (2015)	Habitat loss, disturbance and modification
			Predation
	Western Alaskan bar-tailed godwit	Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (2015)	Habitat loss and habitat degradation
			Over-exploitation of shellfish

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
		Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Limosa lapponica baueri</i> (Bar-tailed godwit (western Alaskan)) (2016)	Pollution/contamination impacts
			Disturbance
			Direct mortality (hunting)
			Diseases
			Extreme weather events
			Climate change impacts
	Northern Siberian bar-tailed godwit	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Limosa lapponica menzbieri</i> (Bar-tailed godwit (northern Siberian)) (2016)	Habitat loss and habitat degradation
			Over-exploitation of shellfish
			Pollution/contamination impacts
			Disturbance
			Direct mortality (hunting)
			Diseases
			Extreme weather events
			Climate change impacts
	Southern giant petrel	National recovery plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels 2011-2016 (2011)	Incidental catch resulting from fishing operations
			Competition with fisheries for marine resources
			Dependence on discards
			Marine pollution
			Climate change
			Intentional shooting/killing
			Feral pest species
			Human disturbance at the nest
			Parasites and diseases

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
			Loss of nesting habitat
			Competition for nest space
	Northern giant petrel	National recovery plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels 2011-2016 (2011)	Incidental catch resulting from fishing operations
			Competition with fisheries for marine resources
			Dependence on discards
			Marine pollution
			Climate change
			Intentional shooting/killing
			Feral pest species
			Human disturbance at the nest
			Parasites and diseases
			Loss of nesting habitat
			Competition for nest space
	Eastern curlew	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Numenius madagascariensis</i> (eastern curlew) (2015)	Ongoing human disturbance
			Habitat loss and degradation from pollution
			Changes to the water regime
			Invasive plants
	Fairy prion (southern)	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Pachyptila turtur subantarctica</i> (fairy prion (southern)) (2015)	Competition with blue petrels
			Soil erosion
			Fire
	Abbott's booby	Conservation Advice for the Abbott's booby <i>Papasula abbotti</i> (2020b)	Vegetation clearing – edge effects from previous clearing and new vegetation clearing
			Climate change – severe storm events and prey depletion
			Introduction of a new disease

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
			Invasive weeds
			Yellow crazy ants – habitat modification
			Fisheries – prey depletion
			Marine debris - plastics
	Christmas Island white-tailed tropicbird	Conservation Advice for <i>Phaethon lepturus fulvus</i> white-tailed tropicbird (Christmas Island) (2014)	Introduced predators on Christmas Island
			Crazy ants
	Sooty albatross	National recovery plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels 2011-2016 (2011)	Incidental catch resulting from fishing operations
			Competition with fisheries for marine resources
			Dependence on discards
			Marine pollution
			Climate change
			Intentional shooting/killing
			Feral pest species
			Human disturbance at the nest
			Parasites and diseases
			Loss of nesting habitat
			Competition for nest space
	Soft-plumaged petrel	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Pterodroma mollis</i> (soft-plumaged petrel) (2015)	Accidental introduction of predators (relevant only to Maatsuyker Island, located offshore of Tasmania)
	Australian painted snipe	Commonwealth Conservation Advice on <i>Rostratula australis</i> (Australian painted snipe) (2013)	Loss and degradation of wetlands, through drainage and the diversion of water for agriculture and reservoirs
			Grazing and associated trampling of wetland vegetation/nests, nutrient enrichment and disturbance to substrate by livestock

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
			Climate change
			Predation by feral animals
			Introduction of weeds
	Australian fairy tern	Commonwealth Conservation Advice on <i>Sternula nereis nereis</i> (fairy tern) (2011)	Predation by introduced mammals and native birds
			Disturbance by humans, dogs and vehicles
			Increasing salinity in waters adjacent to Fairy Tern colonies
			Irregular water management
			Weed encroachment
			Oil spills, particularly in Victoria (potential threat)
	Indian yellow-nosed albatross	National recovery plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels 2011-2016 (2011)	Incidental catch resulting from fishing operations
			Competition with fisheries for marine resources
			Dependence on discards
			Marine pollution
			Climate change
			Intentional shooting/killing
			Feral pest species
			Human disturbance at the nest
			Parasites and diseases
			Loss of nesting habitat
			Competition for nest space
	Shy albatross	Conservation Advice <i>Thalassarche cauta</i> Shy Albatross (2020c)	Fisheries bycatch
			Disease
			Competition for nesting habitat

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
		National recovery plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels 2011-2016 (2011)	Marine plastics
			Human disturbance
			Previous harvesting for feathers and eggs
			Climate change
	White-capped albatross	National recovery plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels 2011-2016 (2011)	Incidental catch resulting from fishing operations
			Competition with fisheries for marine resources
			Dependence on discards
			Marine pollution
			Climate change
			Intentional shooting/killing
			Feral pest species
			Human disturbance at the nest
			Parasites and diseases
			Loss of nesting habitat
			Competition for nest space
	Campbell albatross	National recovery plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels 2011-2016 (2011)	Incidental catch resulting from fishing operations
			Competition with fisheries for marine resources
			Dependence on discards
			Marine pollution
			Climate change
			Intentional shooting/killing
			Feral pest species
			Human disturbance at the nest

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
			Parasites and diseases
			Loss of nesting habitat
			Competition for nest space
	Black-browed albatross	National recovery plan for threatened albatrosses and giant petrels 2011-2016 (2011)	Incidental catch resulting from fishing operations
			Competition with fisheries for marine resources
			Dependence on discards
			Marine pollution
			Climate change
			Intentional shooting/killing
			Feral pest species
			Human disturbance at the nest
			Parasites and diseases
			Loss of nesting habitat
			Competition for nest space
	Round Island Petrel	Conservation Advice <i>Pterodroma arminjoniana</i> Round Island Petrel (2015)	Introduced pests and predators
			Cyclones
Mammals	Sei whale	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Balaenoptera borealis</i> (sei whale) (2015)	Climate and oceanographic variability and change
			Anthropogenic noise and acoustic disturbance
			Habitat degradation including pollution (increasing port expansion and coastal development)
			Pollution (persistent toxic pollutants)
			Vessel strike

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
			Prey depletion due to fisheries (potential threat)
			Resumption of commercial whaling (potential threat)
	Blue whale	Blue Whale Conservation Management Plan 2015 - 2025 (2015)	Whaling
			Climate Variability and Change
			Noise Interference
			Habitat Modification
			Vessel Disturbance
			Overharvesting of prey
	Fin whale	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Balaenoptera physalus</i> (fin whale) (2015)	Climate and oceanographic variability and change
			Anthropogenic noise and acoustic disturbance
			Habitat degradation including coastal development, port expansion and aquaculture
			Pollution (persistent toxic pollutants)
			Fisheries catch, entanglement and bycatch
			Vessel strike
			Resource depletion due to fisheries (potential threat)
			Resumption of commercial whaling (potential threat)
	Southern right whale	Conservation Management Plan for the Southern Right Whale 2011 – 2021 (2012)	Entanglement
			Vessel disturbance
			Whaling
			Climate variability and change
			Noise interference
			Habitat modification
			Overharvesting of prey

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
	Australian sea-lion	Recovery Plan for the Australian Sea Lion (<i>Neophoca cinerea</i>) (2013)	Fishery bycatch (primary threat)
			Entanglement in marine debris (primary threat)
			Marine aquaculture
			Habitat degradation
			Human disturbance
			Direct killing (primary threat)
			Disease
			Pollution and oil spills
			Noise
			Competition and prey depletion
			Climate change
Reptiles	Short-nosed seasnake	Approved Conservation Advice on <i>Aipysurus apraefrontalis</i> (Short-nosed seasnake) (2011)	Degradation of reef habitat, primarily as a result of coral bleaching (primary threat)
			Oil and gas exploration
			Incidental catch and death in commercial prawn trawling fisheries
	Leaf-scaled seasnake	Approved Conservation Advice on <i>Aipysurus foliosquama</i> (Leaf-scaled seasnake) (2011)	Degradation of reef habitat, primarily as a result of coral bleaching (primary threat)
			Oil and gas exploration
			Incidental catch and death in commercial prawn trawling fisheries (north-west marine area)
			Unsustainable and illegal fishing practices (currently the most significant threat in the Ashmore region)
	Loggerhead turtle	Recovery plan for marine turtles in Australia 2017 – 2027 (2017) Loggerhead turtle – WA genetic stock	Fisheries bycatch – international (moderate), domestic (high)
			Indigenous take (moderate)
			Terrestrial predation (moderate)

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
			Habitat modification – infrastructure/coastal development (moderate), dredging/trawling (moderate)
			Chemical and terrestrial discharge – acute (high), chronic (low)
			Marine debris – entanglement and ingestion (moderate; unknown)
			Climate change and variability (high)
			International take – outside Australia’s jurisdiction (moderate), within Australia’s jurisdiction (low)
			Light pollution (moderate)
			Vessel disturbance (moderate)
			Noise interference – acute (moderate), chronic (moderate; unknown)
			Recreational activities (low)
			Diseases and pathogens (low; unknown)
			Fisheries bycatch – international (moderate), domestic (high)
			Cumulative impacts of threats
	Green turtle	Recovery plan for marine turtles in Australia 2017 – 2027 (2017) Green turtle – NWS genetic stock (NWS), Scott-Browse genetic stock (ScBr), Ashmore genetic stock (AR)	Fisheries bycatch – international (moderate), domestic (moderate)
			Indigenous take (moderate)
			Terrestrial predation NWS – moderate, AR –high; unknown, ScBr – moderate; unknown)
			Habitat modification – infrastructure/coastal development (NWS – moderate, AR – low, ScBr – high), dredging/trawling (NWS – moderate, AR – low, ScBr – low)
			Chemical and terrestrial discharge – acute (NWS, AR, ScBr –high), chronic (NWS – moderate, AR – high, ScBr – high)
			Marine debris – entanglement (NWS – moderate, AR – very high, ScBr – moderate; unknown) and ingestion (NWS – low; unknown, AR – moderate, ScBr – moderate)
			Climate change and variability (NWS – moderate, AR – very high, ScBr – high)

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
			International take – outside Australia’s jurisdiction (moderate; unknown for NWS and ScBr), within Australia’s jurisdiction (moderate; unknown for NWS and ScBr)
			Light pollution (NWS – high, AR – moderate, ScBr – moderate)
			Vessel disturbance (moderate)
			Noise interference – acute (NWS – moderate; unknown, AR – low, ScBr – moderate), chronic (NWS – moderate; unknown, AR – low, ScBr – moderate; unknown)
			Recreational activities
			Diseases and pathogens (low; unknown for AR and ScBr)
			Cumulative impacts of threats
	Leatherback turtle	Approved Conservation Advice on <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i> (2008)	Incidental capture in commercial fisheries
			Harvest of eggs and meat
			Ingestion of marine debris
			Boat strike
			Predation on eggs by wild dogs, pigs and monitor lizards
			Degradation of foraging areas
			Changes to breeding sites
		Recovery plan for marine turtles in Australia 2017 – 2027 (2017)	Fisheries bycatch – international (high), domestic (high)
			Indigenous take (low)
			Terrestrial predation (moderate; unknown)
			Habitat modification – infrastructure/coastal development (moderate), dredging/trawling (low)
			Chemical and terrestrial discharge – acute (low), chronic (low; unknown)
			Marine debris – entanglement (moderate) and ingestion (high)
			Climate change and variability (high)

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
			International take – outside Australia’s jurisdiction (high), within Australia’s jurisdiction (low)
			Light pollution (low)
			Vessel disturbance (moderate)
			Noise interference – acute (low; unknown), chronic (low; unknown)
			Recreational activities (low)
			Diseases and pathogens (low; unknown)
			Fisheries bycatch – international (high), domestic (high)
			Cumulative impacts of threats
	Hawksbill turtle	Recovery plan for marine turtles in Australia 2017 – 2027 (2017) Hawksbill turtle – WA genetic stock	Fisheries bycatch – international (moderate), domestic (moderate)
			Indigenous take (moderate)
			Terrestrial predation (moderate)
			Habitat modification – infrastructure/coastal development (moderate), dredging/trawling (moderate)
			Chemical and terrestrial discharge – acute (moderate), chronic (moderate)
			Marine debris – entanglement (moderate) and ingestion (low; unknown)
			Climate change and variability (high)
			International take – outside Australia’s jurisdiction (very high), within Australia’s jurisdiction (moderate)
			Light pollution (high)
			Vessel disturbance (moderate)
			Noise interference – acute (moderate), chronic (moderate; unknown)
			Recreational activities (low)
			Diseases and pathogens (low; unknown)

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
			Cumulative impacts of threats
	Olive ridley turtle	Recovery plan for marine turtles in Australia 2017 – 2027 (2017) Olive ridley turtle – Northern Territory genetic stock	Fisheries bycatch – international (moderate), domestic (high)
			Indigenous take (moderate)
			Terrestrial predation (moderate; unknown)
			Habitat modification – infrastructure/coastal development (low), dredging/trawling (low)
			Chemical and terrestrial discharge – acute (high), chronic (moderate)
			Marine debris – entanglement (very high) and ingestion (moderate; unknown)
			Climate change and variability (very high)
			International take – outside Australia’s jurisdiction (moderate), within Australia’s jurisdiction (moderate)
			Light pollution (moderate)
			Vessel disturbance (moderate)
			Noise interference – acute (low), chronic (low; unknown)
			Recreational activities (low)
			Diseases and pathogens (low; unknown)
			Cumulative impacts of threats
	Flatback turtle	Recovery plan for marine turtles in Australia 2017 – 2027 (2017) Flatback turtle – Pilbara coast genetic stock (Pil), South-west Kimberley coast genetic stock (swKim) and Cape Domett (CD)	Fisheries bycatch – international (low), domestic (moderate)
			Indigenous take (moderate)
			Terrestrial predation (moderate)
			Habitat modification – infrastructure/coastal development (Pil – high, swKim – moderate), dredging/trawling (moderate)
			Chemical and terrestrial discharge – acute (high), chronic (moderate)
			Marine debris – entanglement (moderate) and ingestion (low)

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
			Climate change and variability (Pil – high, swKim – moderate)
			International take – outside Australia’s jurisdiction (low), within Australia’s jurisdiction (low)
			Light pollution (Pil – high, swKim – moderate)
			Vessel disturbance (moderate)
			Noise interference – acute (moderate), chronic (moderate; unknown)
			Recreational activities (Pil – low, swKim – moderate)
			Diseases and pathogens (low; unknown)
			Cumulative impacts of threats
Sharks and fish	Grey nurse shark	Recovery Plan for the Grey Nurse Shark (<i>Carcharias taurus</i>) (2014)	Mortality due to incidental capture by commercial and recreational fisheries
			Mortality die to shark control programs
			Ecotourism
			Public aquarium trade
			Pollution and disease
			Ecosystem effects - habitat modification and climate change
	Great white shark	Recovery plan for the White Shark (<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>) (2013)	Mortality related to being caught accidentally (bycatch) or illegally (targeted) by commercial and recreational fisheries, including issues of post release mortality
			Mortality related to shark control activities such as beach meshing or drumlining (east coast population)
			Illegal trade in white shark products
			Ecosystem effects as a result of habitat modification and climate change
			Ecotourism
	Northern river shark	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Glyphis garricki</i> (northern river shark) (2014)	Commercial fishing activities
			Recreational fishing

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
			Indigenous fishing
			Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
			Habitat degradation and modification
			Marine debris
			Collection of animals for display in public aquaria (no known occurrences to date)
		Sawfish and River Sharks Multispecies Recovery Plan (2015)	Fishing activities including: being caught as by-catch in the commercial and recreational sectors; through indigenous fishing; and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
			Habitat degradation and modification
	Dwarf sawfish	Approved Conservation Advice on <i>Pristis clavata</i> (dwarf sawfish) (2009)	Being caught as bycatch in commercial and recreational net fishing
			Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
			Habitat degradation due to increasing human development
		Sawfish and River Sharks Multispecies Recovery Plan (2015)	Fishing activities including: being caught as by-catch in the commercial and recreational sectors; through indigenous fishing; and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
			Habitat degradation and modification
	Freshwater sawfish	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Pristis pristis</i> (largetooth sawfish) (2014)	Commercial fishing activities
			Recreational fishing
			Indigenous fishing
			Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
			Habitat degradation and modification
			Marine debris
			Collection of animals for display in public aquaria
		Sawfish and River Sharks Multispecies Recovery Plan (2015)	Fishing activities including: being caught as by-catch in the commercial and recreational sectors; through indigenous fishing; and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
			Habitat degradation and modification

Taxa	Common name	Recovery Plan / Conservation Advice	Threats
	Green sawfish	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Pristis zijsron</i> (green sawfish) (2008)	Capture as bycatch and byproduct in gillnet and trawl fisheries
			Illegal capture for fins and rostra
			Habitat degradation through coastal development
		Sawfish and River Sharks Multispecies Recovery Plan (2015)	Fishing activities including: being caught as by-catch in the commercial and recreational sectors; through indigenous fishing; and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
			Habitat degradation and modification
	Whale shark	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Rhincodon typus</i> (whale shark) (2015)	Intentional and unintentional mortality from fishing outside of Australian waters
			Boat strike from large vessels
			Habitat disruption from mineral exploration, production and transportation
			Disturbance from domestic tourism operations
			Marine debris
			Climate change
	Blind gudgeon	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Milyeringa veritas</i> (blind gudgeon) (2008)	Habitat degradation and modification associated with sedimentation from mining/construction, canal development, water abstraction, point source pollution from sewage, landfill, dumping and mining; and diffuse pollution from urban development/ petroleum infrastructure
	Blind cave eel	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Ophisternon candidum</i> (blind cave eel) (2008)	Habitat degradation and modification associated with sedimentation from mining/construction, canal development, water abstraction, point source pollution from sewage, landfill, dumping and mining; and diffuse pollution from urban development
	Balston's pygmy perch	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Nannatherina balstoni</i> (Balston's pygmy perch) (2008)	Habitat degradation and modification associated with flow and increased salinisation, siltation and eutrophication that occur through changes to flow regimes (regulation and abstraction), road maintenance, mineral sand exploration and mining, ground water extraction and agricultural and forestry practices in the uppermost catchment
	Black-stripe minnow	Approved Conservation Advice for <i>Galaxiella nigrostriatal</i> (Black-striped minnow) (2018)	Climate change – increased air and water temperatures, decreased rainfall, increased evaporation, lowering groundwater table.
			Invasive species (<i>Gambusia holbrooki</i>), aggressive interactions and competition

14. Social, Economic and Cultural Features

14.1 Industry

In 2018/19, Western Australia's petroleum industry was worth \$38.4 billion per annum. The petroleum sector accounted for 26% of the total value of WA's mineral and petroleum sales in 2018/19, with 20 per cent of all mineral and petroleum sales coming from Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). Currently Western Australia has four operating LNG projects; the North West Shelf, Gorgon, Pluto and Wheatstone. There are also a number of Floating Production and Storage Offtake (FPSO) facilities in the Timor Sea and North West Shelf, as denoted on **Figure 14-1**, **Figure 14-2** and **Figure 14-3**. Offshore development is focussed in the Carnarvon Basin, Browse Basin and on the North West Shelf (DMP 2014). There are also domestic gas plants on Varanus Island in the North West Shelf, Devil Creek Onshore Gas Plant and Macedon Gas Plant in the Pilbara region and an oil facility near Dongara called Cliff Head. There are several exploration and production permits and leases throughout WA and Commonwealth waters in the combined EMBA. Existing petroleum infrastructure, permits and licences are shown in **Figure 14-1**, **Figure 14-2** and **Figure 14-3**.

14.2 Other Infrastructure

The Jasurau submarine communication cable links Australia with Indonesia. The cable was installed as a link from Australia to provide telephone services connection to the world in 1995-1996. Travelling north out of Port Hedland for approximately 210 km the cable then heads north-west toward Jakarta, Indonesia. The cable runs up through Permit Areas WA-435-P and WA437-P. Its capacity and major role was overtaken in 2000 by other subsea cables out of Australia. However, Telstra continues to manage the cable as it remains an emergency backup link out of Australia. The cable includes two submerged repeaters in the wider region.

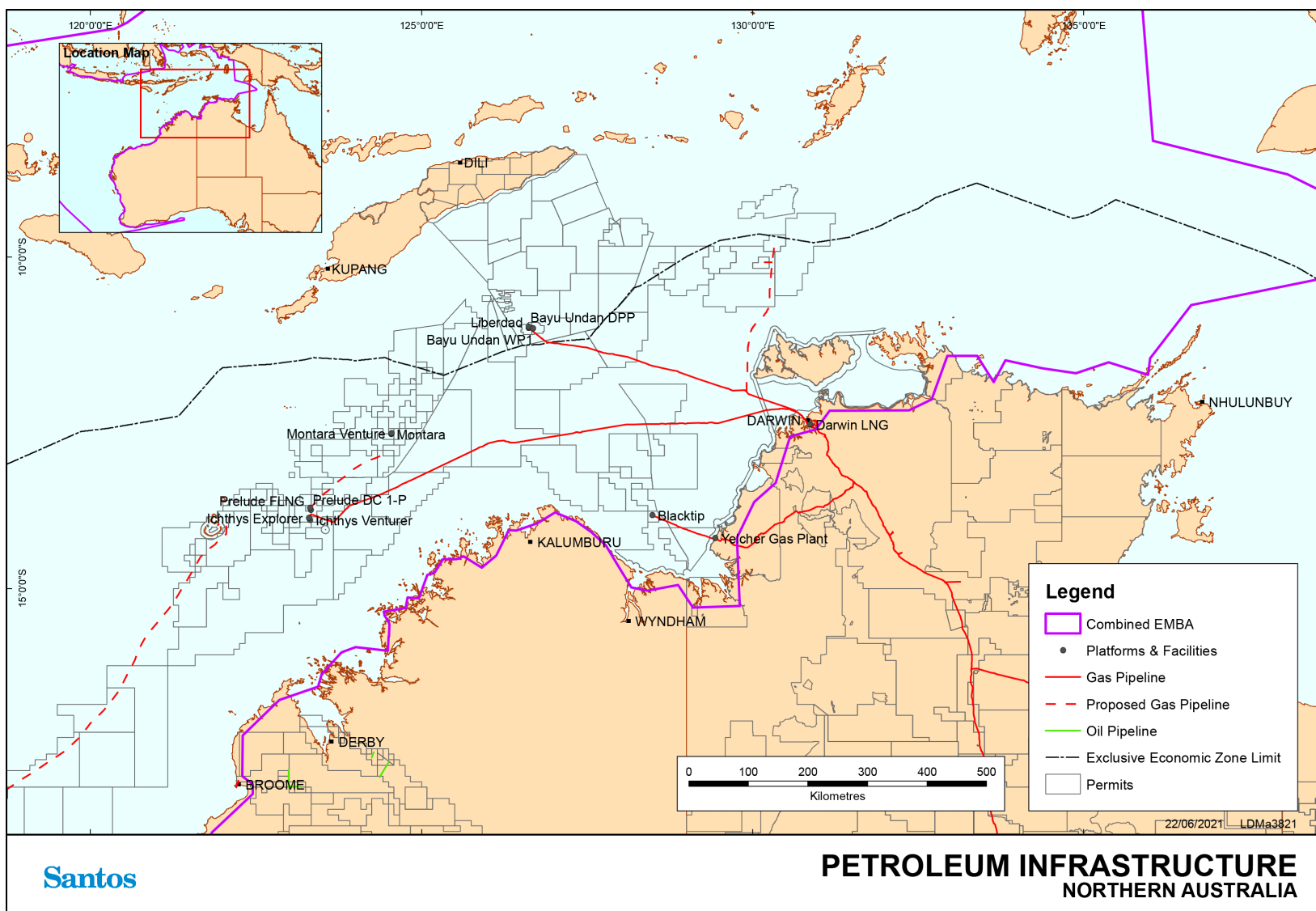


Figure 14-1: Existing petroleum infrastructure, permits and licences – Northern WA

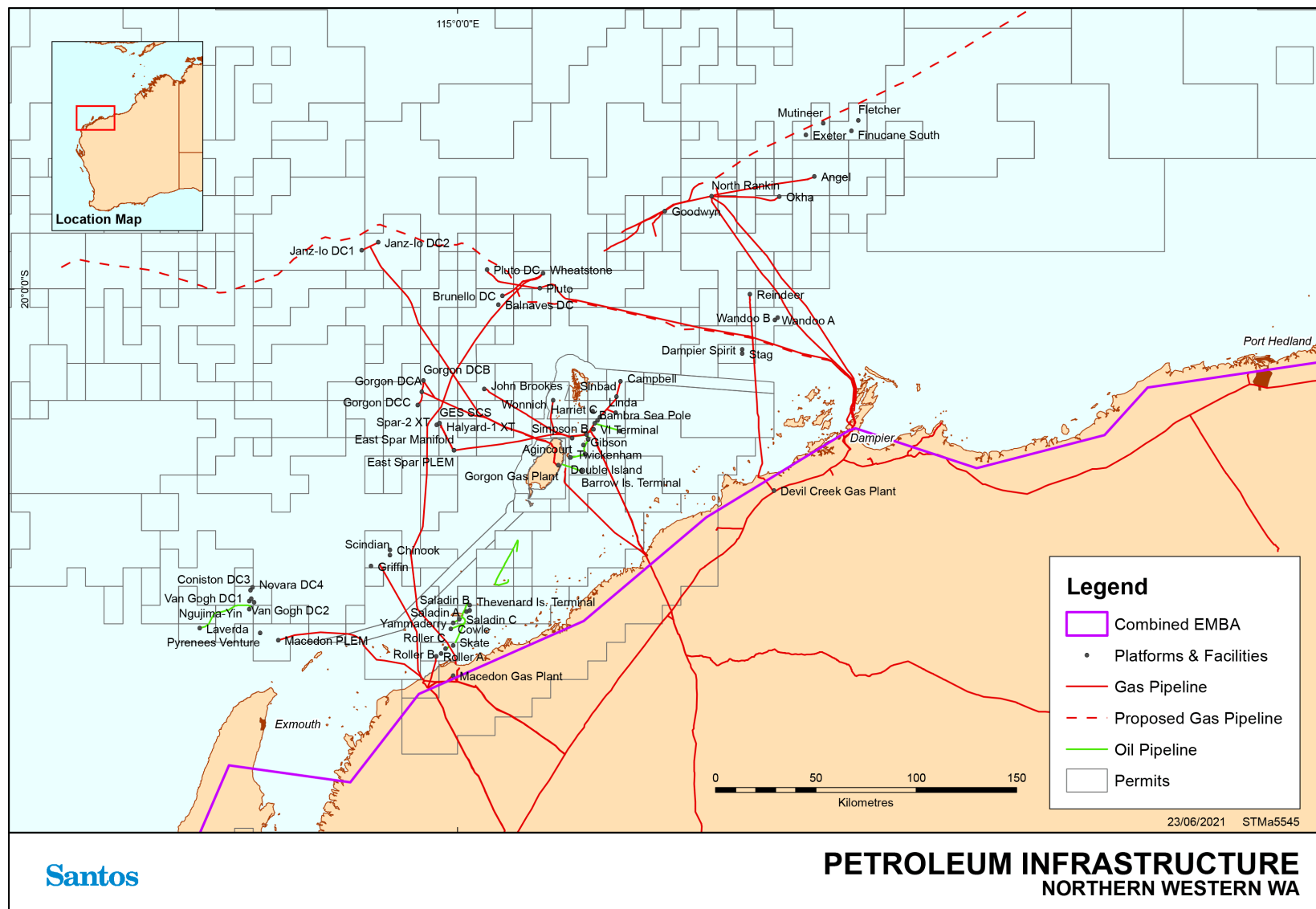


Figure 14-2: Existing petroleum infrastructure, permits and licences – Northern Western WA

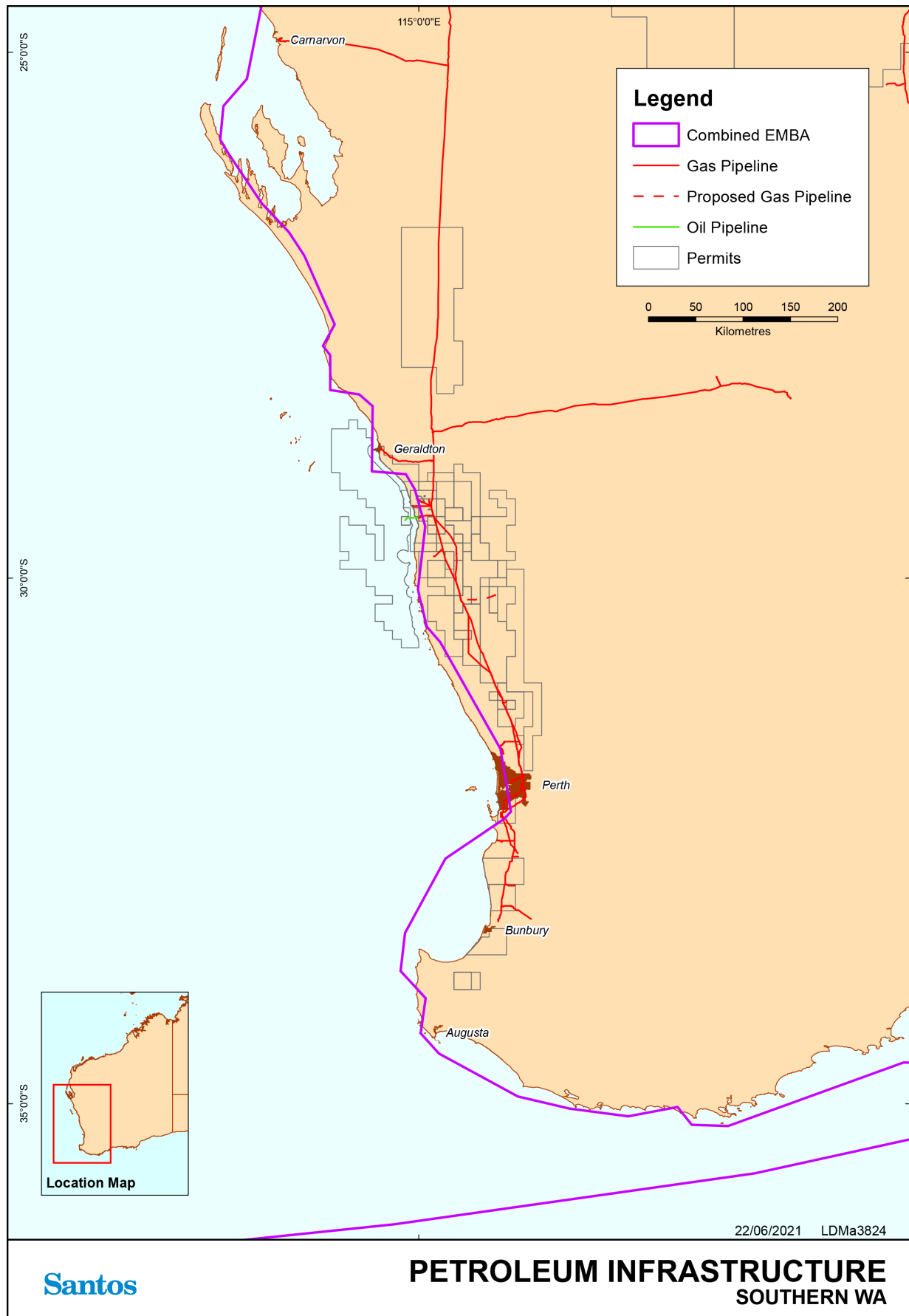


Figure 14-3: Existing petroleum infrastructure, permits and licences –Southern WA

14.3 Shipping

The Western Australian coastline supports twelve ports including the major ports of Dampier, Port Hedland and Broome which are operated by their respective port authorities. Large cargo vessels move through the region to and from Fremantle, transiting along coastline. Commercial shipping also moves to and from marine terminals associated with the oil and gas industry (see **Section 14.1**). Other large ports include Geraldton, Busselton, Albany and Esperance. Closer proximity shipping also includes construction vessels/barges/dredges, domestic support vessels, and offshore survey vessels.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) has established a network of shipping fairways off the north-west coast of Australia to manage traffic patterns (AMSA 2013). The Shipping Fairways are designed to keep shipping traffic away from offshore infrastructure and aims to reduce the risk of collision (AMSA 2013).

Use of the fairways is strongly recommended but not mandatory. The International Regulations for *Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972* apply to all vessels navigating within or outside the shipping fairways. The use of these fairways does not give vessels any special right of way (AMSA 2012).

Under the *Commonwealth Navigation Act 2012*, certain vessels operating in Australian waters are required to report their location on a daily basis to the Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) in Canberra. This Australian Ship Reporting System (AUSREP) is an integral part of the Australian Maritime Search and Rescue system and is operated by AMSA through the RCC. Vessels recorded in waters in the combined EMBA through the AUSREP system in 2021 are shown in **Figure 14-4**.

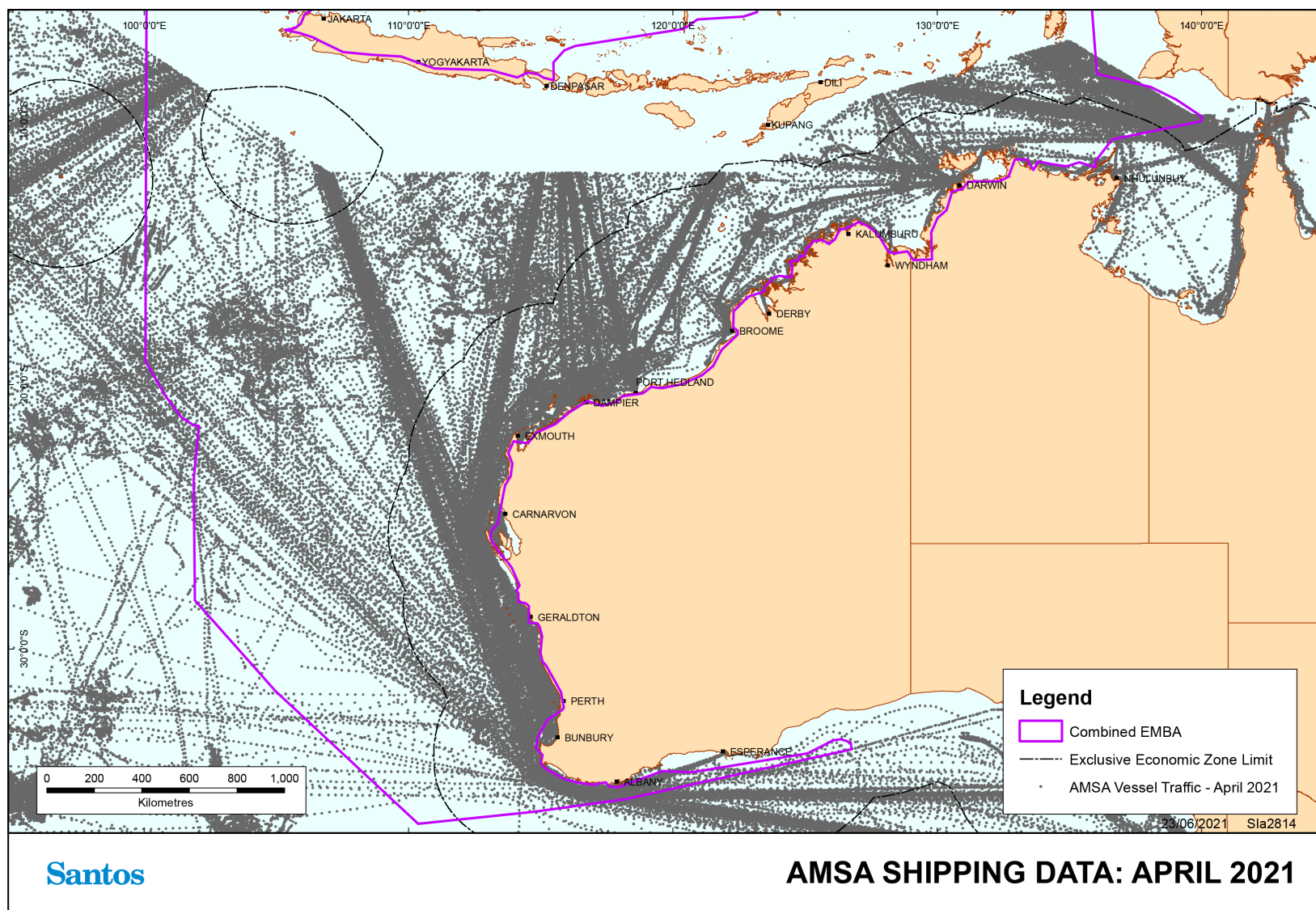


Figure 14-4: AMSA ship locations and shipping routes

14.4 Defence Activities

Key defence bases and facilities are illustrated in **Figure 14-5**.

The Naval Communication Station Harold E. Holt is located on the northwest coast of Australia, 6 km north of Exmouth. The town of Exmouth was built at the same time as the communications station to provide support to the base and to house dependent families of US Navy personnel (Shire of Exmouth 2018, DoE 2014).

The station provides very low frequency radio transmission to US Navy and Royal Australian Navy ships and submarines in the western Pacific Ocean and eastern Indian Ocean. With a transmission power of 1 megawatt, it is the most powerful transmission station in the southern hemisphere (Shire of Exmouth 2018, DoE 2014).

Two Royal Australian Airforce (RAAF) bases are located in the northwest of WA; Learmonth RAAF Base, near Exmouth and Curtin RAAF Base near Derby (RAAF 2014).

Designated military exercise areas occur over waters and airspace of the north west of WA and may be activated following the required notifications.

Additional defence activities that occur within the combined EMBA include:

- + Broome training depot;
- + Exmouth admin and high frequency transmitting;
- + Exmouth Very Low Frequency transmitting station;
- + Geraldton training depot "A" Company 16th Battalion;
- + HMAS Stirling-Rockingham;
- + HMAS Stirling-Garden Island;
- + Karratha training depot;
- + Learmonth – air weapons range;
- + Learmonth radar site – Vlaming Head Exmouth; and
- + Yampi Sound training area.
- + Bradshaw Defence field training area
- + Artillery Barracks – Fremantle
- + Camble Barracks- Swanborne
- + Irwin Barracks – Karrakatta
- + Lancelin Training Area
- + Leeuwin Barracks- East Fremantle
- + Preston Point Training Depot
- + Rockingham – Navy CPSO
- + Swanbourne Rifle Range

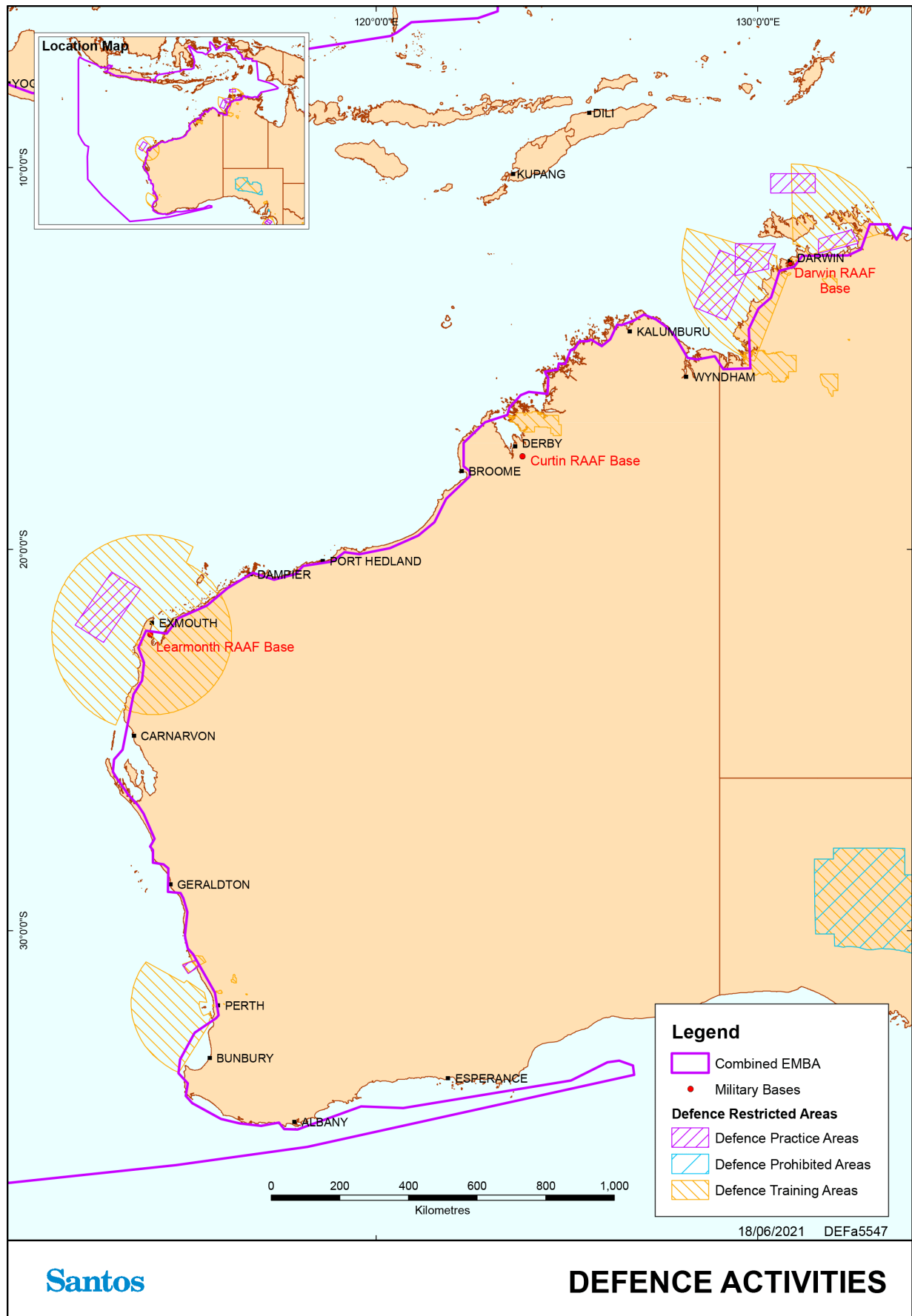


Figure 14-5: Defence activities

14.5 Tourism

The Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne regions are popular visitor destination for Australian and international tourists. Tourism is concentrated in the vicinity of population centres including Broome, Dampier, Exmouth, Coral Bay and Shark Bay.

Marine and coastal use is also clustered around major population centres along the WA coastline including Perth, Bunbury, Geraldton, Margaret River, Jurien Bay, August and Albany.

Marine tourism to offshore Islands includes various Pilbara nearshore Islands (Muiron, Serrurier, Sholl and Montebello) and the Abrolhos Islands near Geraldton. Currently visitation to the Abrolhos is low because the park is only accessible via recreational boat, charter flight or commercial tour (either on a boat or aircraft); however, there is an increasing number of visitors, with visitations peaking between February and May (DBCA, 2022). The Montebello Islands are ranked among the world's most bio-diverse marine environments (DBCA) and are attracting a growing number of nature-based tourism operators, with people participating in activities such as fishing, diving, wildlife viewing, island exploration and surfing (DEC, 2007).

Tourism contributes to local economies in terms of both income and employment and tourists include local, interstate and international visitors. Popular water-based activities include fishing, swimming, snorkelling/diving, surfing/windsurfing/kiting and boating, while popular land based activities include bushwalking, camping, bird watching and four-wheel driving.

Seasonal nature-based tourism such as humpback whale watching, whale shark encounters and tours of turtle hatching mainly occurring around Ningaloo Reef, Cape Range National Park, Broome and Perth (Tourism Western Australia 2014). Seasonal aggregations of whale sharks, manta rays, sea turtles and whales, as well as the annual mass spawning of coral attract large numbers of visitors to Ningaloo each year (CALM 2005).

14.6 Cultural Heritage

Four places of cultural significance are protected as National Heritage Places in the waters from Busselton to the NT. The Dampier Archipelago (including Burrup Peninsula), Batavia Shipwreck Site and Survivor Camps Area 1629 – Houtman Abrolhos, Dirk Hartog Landing Site 1616 – Cape Inscription area and the HMAS Sydney II and HSK Kormoran Shipwreck Site are discussed in **Section 9**. Additional Commonwealth Heritage Places denoted for their historic value in the combined EMBA are listed in **Appendix A**.

14.6.1 Indigenous Heritage

Indigenous people have a strong ongoing association with the area that extends from the beginning of human settlement in Australia some 50,000 years ago. The close, long standing relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the coastal and marine environments of the area is evident in indigenous culture today, in addition to archaeological sites such as the Burrup Peninsula. The Indigenous peoples of the northwest continue to rely on coastal and marine environments and resources for their cultural identity, health and wellbeing, as well as their domestic and commercial economies (DEWHA 2008a). Within the combined EMBA, Barrow Island, Montebello Islands, Exmouth, Ningaloo Reef, Kimberly Coast, Eighty Mile Beach, Roebuck Bay, Dampier Peninsula and the South West and the adjacent foreshores have a long history of occupancy by Indigenous communities. Areas that are covered by registered native title claims are likely to practice indigenous fishing techniques at various sections of the WA coastline, most notably in the Kimberley coastal region and islands.

Marine resource use by Indigenous people is generally restricted to coastal waters. Fishing, hunting and the maintenance of maritime cultures and heritage through ritual, stories and traditional knowledge continue as important uses of the nearshore region and adjacent areas. However, while direct use by Aboriginal people deeper offshore waters is limited, many groups continue to have a direct cultural interest in decisions affecting the management of these waters. The cultural connections Aboriginal people maintain with the sea may be affected, for example, by offshore fisheries and industries. In addition, some Indigenous people are involved in commercial activities such as fishing and marine tourism, so have an interest in how these industries are managed in offshore waters with respect to their cultural heritage and commercial interests (DEWHA 2008a).

In the Northern Territory there are a number of sacred and significant sites located on the Tiwi Islands. There are currently four registered sacred sites on the Tiwi Islands (Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, 2016). Another 56 sites of significance to Tiwi Islanders have been recorded, including two sites on the NT mainland (Tiwi Land Council, 2003). The Tiwi Islands sites hold importance as they have high spiritual and cultural history value (Tiwi Land Council 2003).

14.6.2 Maritime Heritage

Details of recorded shipwreck sites are available on the Australian National Shipwreck Database are managed by the DAWE although precise locations of the wrecks are sometimes unknown. the combined EMBA. Key shipwrecks in the North West Marine Region are shown in **Figure 14-10** to **Figure 14-6**, in addition to the Ann Millicent (DEWHA 2008a). Under the Commonwealth *Underwater Culture Heritage Act 2018* all shipwrecks older than 75 years are protected, while those dated pre-1900 are protected by WA law under the *Maritime Archaeology Act 1973*. Within the combined EMBA, there are 1033 shipwrecks known to be in excess of 75 years old.

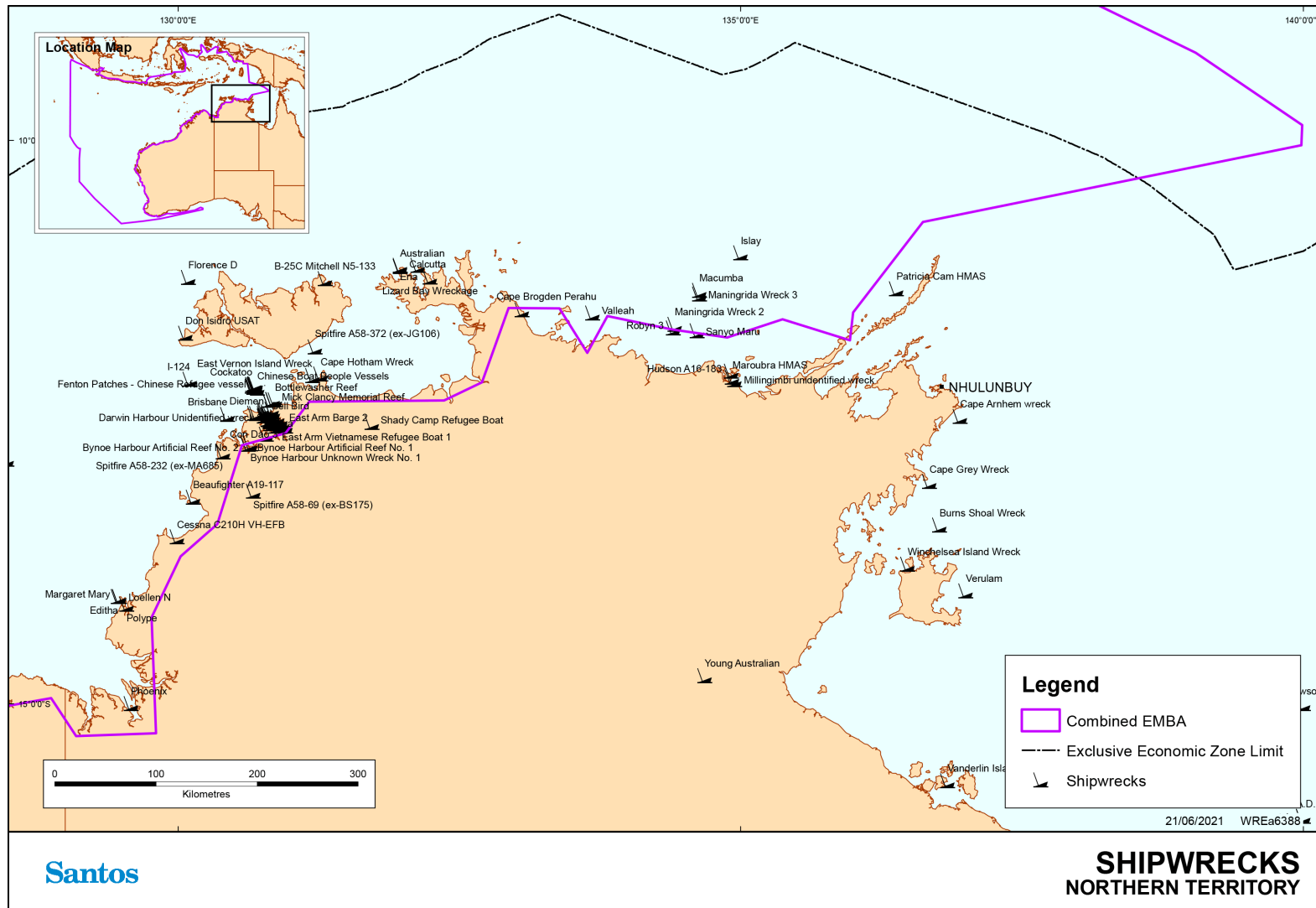


Figure 14-6: Shipwrecks –NT

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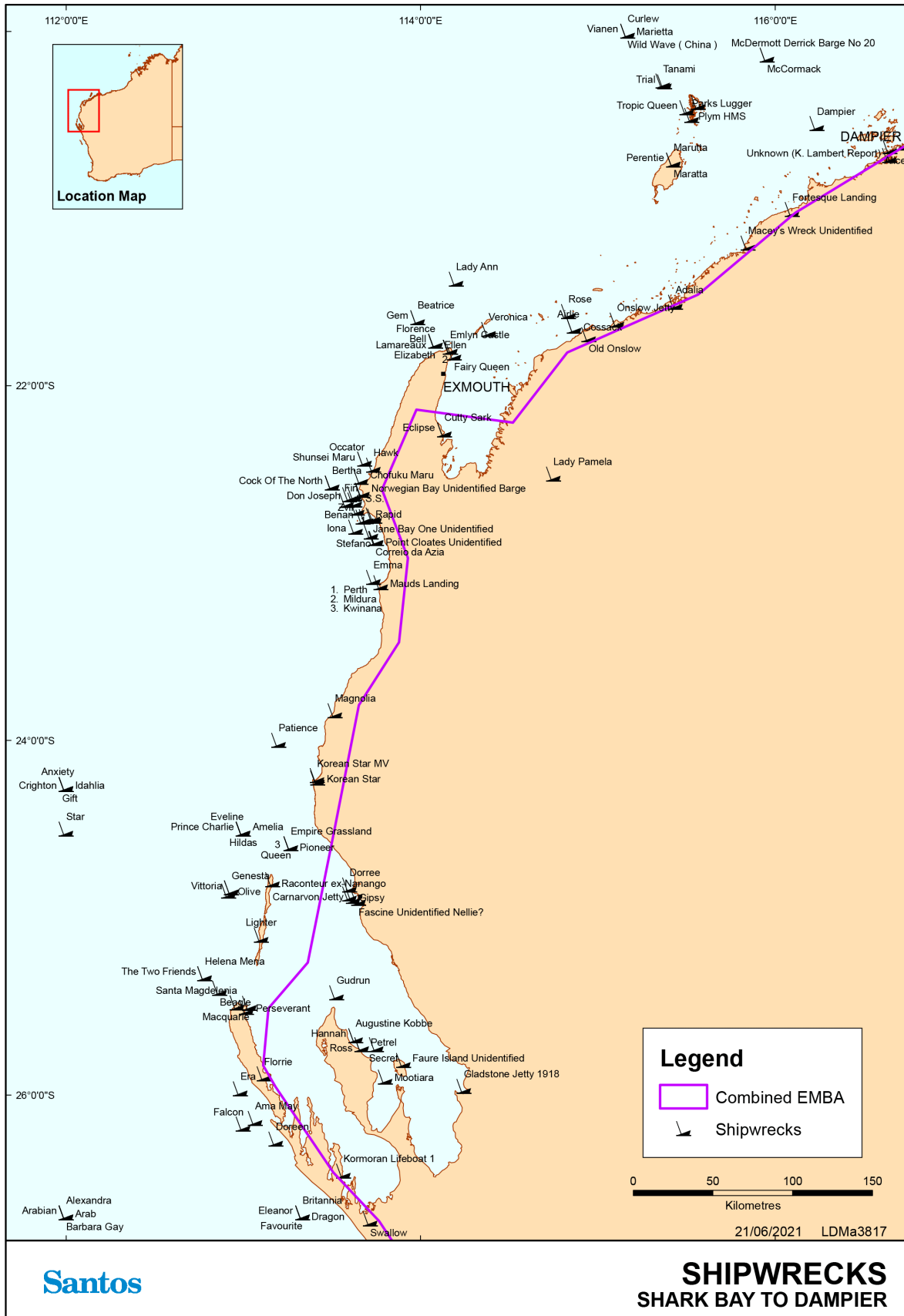


Figure 14-8: Shipwrecks – Shark Bay – Dampier

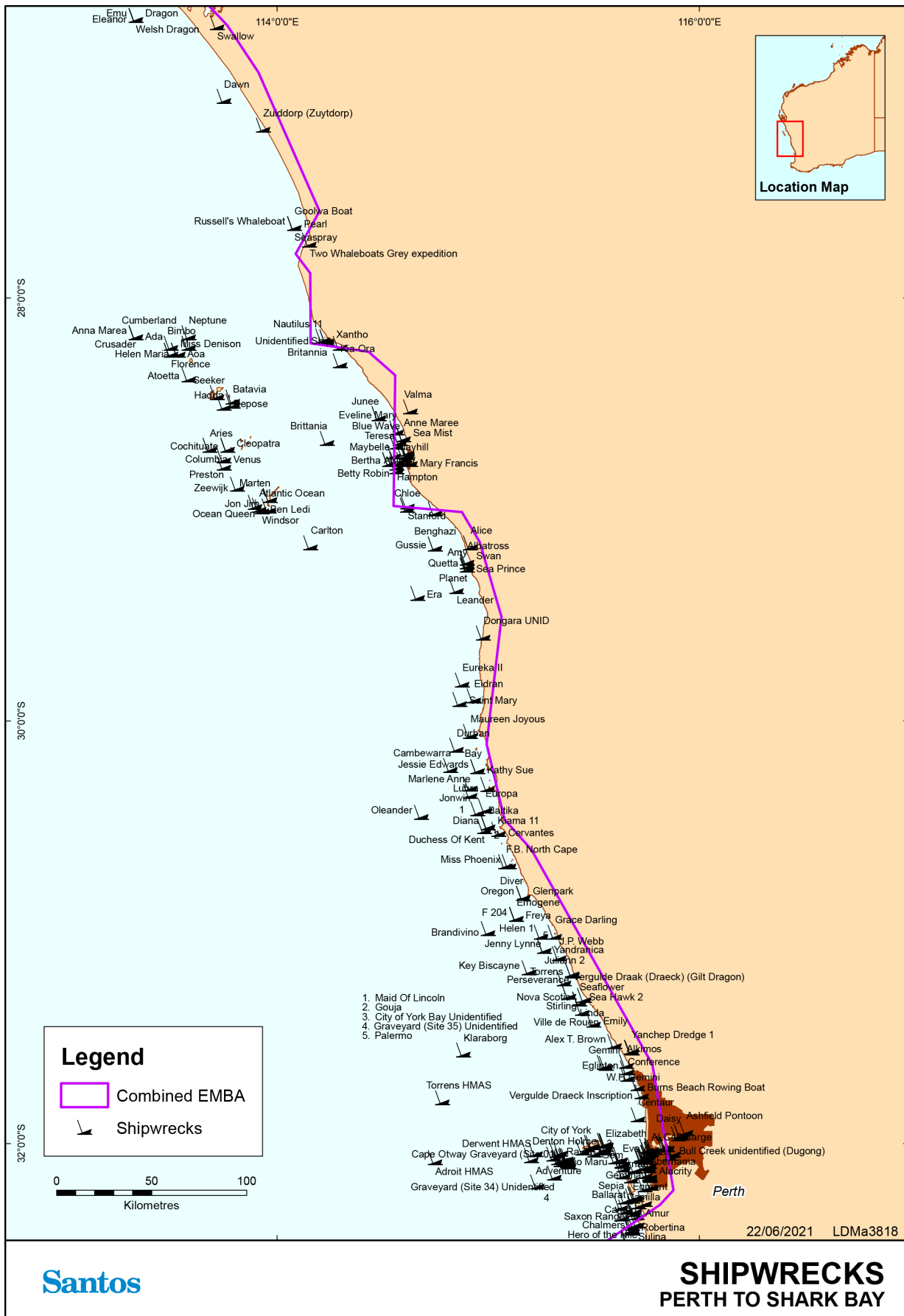


Figure 14-9: Shipwrecks – Perth – Shark Bay

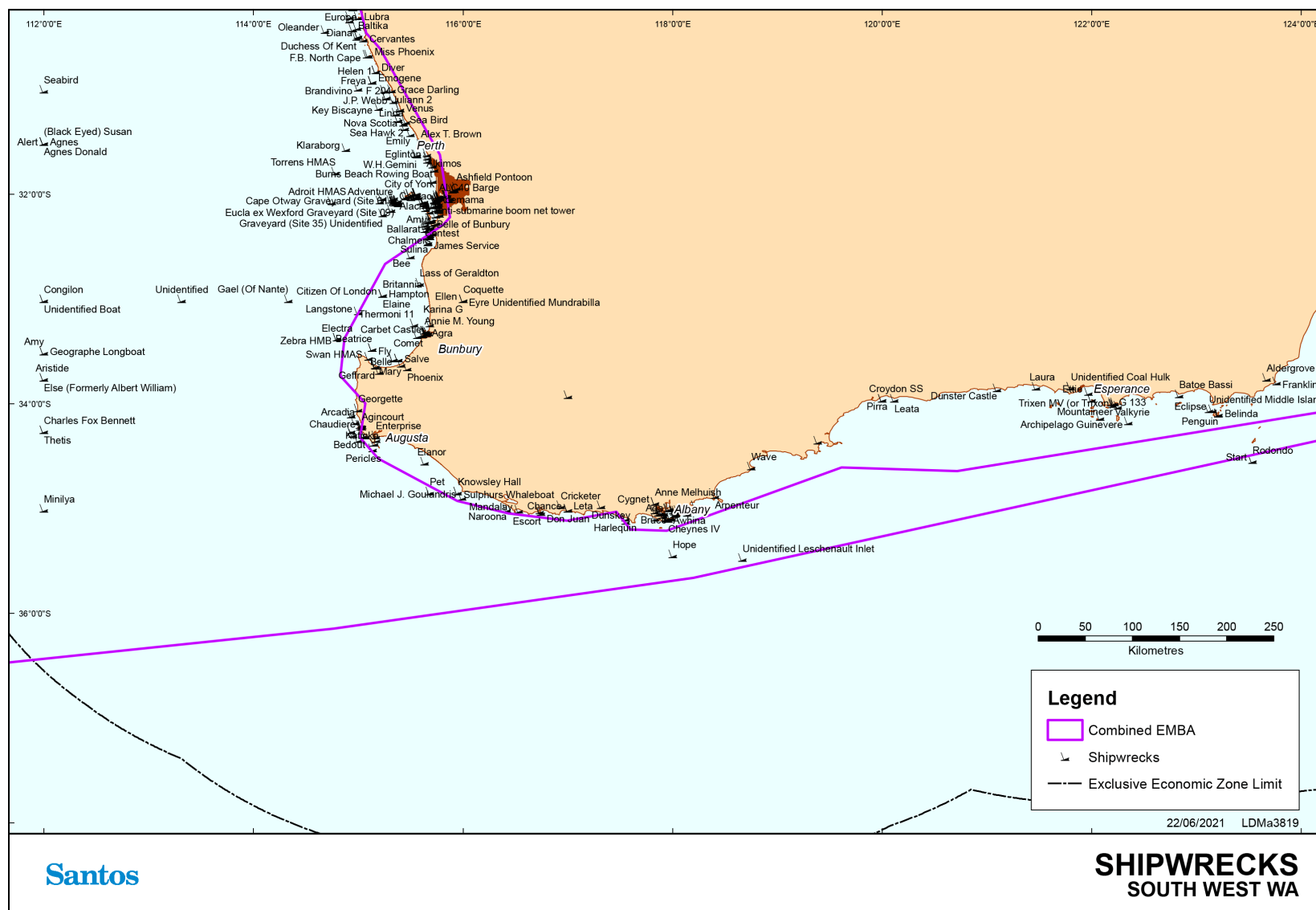


Figure 14-10: Shipwrecks – South West WA

14.7 Commercial Fisheries

A valuable and diverse commercial fishing industry is supported by both the offshore and coastal waters in the North Coast, Gascoyne, West Coast and South Coast Bioregions between the WA and NT and South Australian borders. The major fisheries in this area target tropical finfish, large pelagic fish species, crustaceans (prawns and scampi), Western Rock Lobster and pearl oysters (Fletcher and Santoro 2013). A number of smaller fisheries also exist in this area including the octopus and beche-de-mer fisheries.

14.7.1 State Fisheries

State fisheries are managed by the WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) (formerly Department of Fisheries (DoF)) with specific management plans, regulations and a variety of subsidiary regulatory instruments under the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* (WA). The information on State managed fisheries has been derived from 'The State of the Fisheries' Report 2018/2019 (Gaughan *et al.* 2020) and direct consultation with DPIRD. Santos consults regularly with State fisheries relevant to activity operational areas, mainly by distribution of an Annual Consultation Update by post.

State commercial fisheries that exist between Kalbarri (WA) and the NT border are shown in **Figure 14-12**. Fisheries in the Northern Territory are shown in **Figure 14-11**. A summary of all commercial fisheries in the area is also provided in **Table 14-1**. These are:

North Coast Bioregion

- + Onslow Prawn Managed Fishery (OPMF);
- + Nickol Bay Prawn Managed Fishery (NBPMF) – referred to as Nickol Bay Prawn Limited Entry Fishery in **Figure 14-12**;
- + Broome Prawn Managed Fishery (BPMF);
- + Kimberley Prawn Managed Fishery (KPMF);
- + Kimberley Gillnet & Barramundi Managed Fishery (KGBF);
- + Kimberley Developing Mud Crab Fishery¹⁴;
- + Northern Demersal Scalefish Managed Fishery (NDSF);
- + North Coast Traditional Trochus Fishery¹⁴;
- + Pilbara Demersal Scalefish Fisheries¹⁴;
- + Pilbara Developing Crab Fishery¹⁴;
- + Pilbara Fish Trawl (Interim) Managed Fishery (PFTIMF);
- + Pilbara Trap Managed Fishery (PTMF);
- + Pilbara Line Fishery;
- + Western Australian Sea Cucumber Fishery;
- + Mackerel Managed Fishery (Area 1 – Kimberley and Area 2 – Pilbara);

¹⁴ Not shown in **Figure 14-12**

- + Western Australian Pearl Oyster Fishery – referred to as Pearl Oyster Managed Fishery in **Figure 14-12**;
- + Northern Shark Fisheries (closed¹⁴) including:
 - + Western Australian North Coast Shark Fishery¹⁴; and
 - + Joint Authority Northern Shark Fishery¹⁴
 - + North Coast Trochus Fishery¹⁴; and
 - + Pilbara Developing Crab Fishery¹⁴.

Northern Territory

- + Coastal Line Fishery;
- + Aquarium Fishery;
- + Trepang Fishery;
- + Development Small Pelagic Fishery;
- + Coastal Net Fishery;
- + Spanish Mackerel Fishery;
- + Offshore Net and Line Fishery;
- + Timor Reef Fishery;
- + Demersal Fishery; and
- + Barramundi Fishery.

Gascoyne Bioregion

- + Exmouth Gulf Prawn Managed Fishery;
- + Gascoyne Demersal Scalefish Managed Fishery;
- + Shark Bay Scallop Managed Fishery – referred to as Shark Bay Scallop Limited Entry Fishery on **Figure 14-12**;
- + Shark Bay Prawn Managed Fishery – referred to as Shark Bay Prawn Limited Entry Fishery on **Figure 14-12**;
- + Shark Bay Beach Seine and Mesh Net Managed Fishery¹⁴;
- + Shark Bay Crab Interim Managed Fishery; and
- + Mackerel Fishery (Area 3 – Gascoyne/West Coast).

West Coast Bioregion

- + Roe's Abalone¹⁴;
- + Abrolhos Islands and Mid-West Trawl Managed Fishery (AIMWRMF) (Closed) – referred to as Abrolhos Islands and Mid-West Trawl Limited Entry Fishery in **Figure 14-12**;
- + West Coast Demersal Scalefish Interim Managed Fishery (WCDSIMF);

- + South West Trawl Managed Fishery – referred to as South West Trawl Limited Entry Fishery in **Figure 14-12**;
- + Mandurah to Bunbury Developing Crab Fishery¹⁴;
- + Cockburn Sound Crab Managed Fishery¹⁴;
- + Cockburn Sound Line and Pot Managed Fishery¹⁴;
- + Cockburn Sound Mussel Managed Fishery¹⁴;
- + Warnbro Sound Crab Managed Fishery (closed)¹⁴;
- + West Coast Nearshore and Estuarine Finfish Fisheries, including:
 - + Cockburn Sound Fish Net Managed Fishery¹⁴;
 - + West Coast Beach Baited Managed Fishery¹⁴;
 - + South West Beach Seine Fishery¹⁴; and
 - + West Coast Estuarine Managed Fishery¹⁴;
- + Temperate Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Fisheries, including:
 - + West Coast Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline (Interim) Managed Fishery (West Coast Bioregion)¹⁴;
 - + West Coast Deep Sea Crab (Interim) Managed Fishery – referred to as West Coast Deep Sea Crustacean Managed Fishery in **Figure 14-12**;
 - + West Coast Nearshore Net Managed Fishery¹⁴;
 - + Octopus Interim Managed Fishery¹⁴;
 - + West Coast Rock Lobster Managed Fishery; and
 - + West Coast Purse Seine Fishery¹⁴.

South Coast Bioregion

- + Greenlip/Brownlip Abalone Fishery¹⁴;
- + South Coast Crustacean Managed Fishery¹⁴;
- + South Coast Deep-Sea Crab Fishery¹⁴;
- + South Coast Estuarine Managed Fishery¹⁴;
- + South Coast Open Access Netting Fishery¹⁴; and
- + South West Coast Beach Net¹⁴.
- + South Coast Salmon Managed Fishery;
- + South Coast Trawl Fishery;
- + South West Coast Salmon Managed Fishery¹⁴;
- + Temperate Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Fisheries including:

- + Joint Authority Southern Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Managed Fishery (South Coast Bioregion)
- + South West Trawl Managed Fishery (SWTMF) – referred to as South Coast Trawl Limited Entry Fishery in **Figure 14-12**; and
- + Windy Harbour/Augusta Rock Lobster Managed Fishery ¹⁴.

Whole of State Fisheries

- + Marine Aquarium Fish Managed Fishery (MAFMF);
- + Specimen Shell Managed Fishery; and
- + Hermit Crab Fishery (HCF) ¹⁴.

Some of the fisheries listed above will be more susceptible to impacts than others, particularly fisheries without the ability to escape impacts. For example, above average water temperatures over the last three years will have had an impact on prawn fisheries in Exmouth and scallops and blue swimmer crabs in Shark Bay which have been significantly affected by the initial heat wave event of 2010/11 (Caputi *et al.* 2014).

14.7.2 Commonwealth Fisheries

Commonwealth fisheries are those within the 200 nautical mile Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ) managed by Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) and are, on the high seas, and, in some cases, by agreement with the States and Territory, to the low water mark. Information on Commonwealth managed fisheries has been derived from 'Fishery Status' Report 2019 (Department of Agriculture 2019)

Commonwealth fisheries who have permits to operate in the combined EMBA include as shown in **Figure 14-13**:

- + North West Slope Trawl (NWST);
- + Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF);
- + Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery (SBFTF);
- + Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery (WTBF) (including Southern Tuna and Billfish Fishery);
- + Small Pelagic Fishery (SPF);
- + Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF) – not shown in **Figure 14-13**;
- + Skipjack Tuna Fishery (STF) (referred to as Western Skipjack Tuna Fishery in **Figure 14-13**); and
- + Western Deepwater Trawl (WDTF) (referred to as Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery in **Figure 14-13**).

Commonwealth commercial fisheries between Kalbarri (WA) and the NT Border are shown **Figure 14-13** and summarised in **Table 14-1**.

14.7.3 Indonesian Commercial and Subsistence Fishing

Within the northern and north-western extent of the combined EMBA is a defined area where a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) exists between the Australian and Indonesian Governments. The Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia Relating to Cooperation in Fisheries (1992 Fisheries Cooperation Agreement) provides the framework for fisheries and marine cooperation between Australia and Indonesia, and facilitates information exchange on research,

management and technological developments, complementary management of shared stocks, training and technical exchanges, aquaculture development, trade promotion and cooperation to deter illegal fishing.

Cooperation under the Agreement today takes place under the auspices of the Working Group on Marine Affairs and Fisheries. Established in 2001, the Working Group on Marine Affairs and Fisheries is the primary bilateral forum to enhance collaboration across the spectrum of marine and fisheries issues relevant to the areas of the Arafura and Timor seas. The Working Group brings together the fisheries, environment and scientific research portfolios and agencies from both countries.

The MoU Box (shown on **Figure 14-13**) is an area of Australian water in the Timor Sea where Indonesian traditional fishers, using traditional fishing methods only, are permitted to operate. Officially it is known as the Australia-Indonesia Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Operations of Indonesian Traditional Fishermen in Areas of the Australian Fishing Zone and Continental Shelf – 1974.

As part of negotiations to delineate seabed boundaries, Australia and Indonesia entered into the MoU which recognises the rights of access for traditional Indonesian fishers in shared waters to the north of Australia. This access was granted in recognition of the long history of traditional Indonesian fishing in the area. The MoU provides Australia with a tool to manage access to its waters while for Indonesia, it enables Indonesian traditional fishers to continue their customary practices and target species such as trepang, trochus, abalone and sponges. Guidelines under the MoU were agreed in 1989 in order to clarify access boundaries for traditional fishers and take into account the declaration of the 200 nautical mile fishing zones. Because of its approximate shape the MoU area became known as the MoU Box.

Between 2006 and 2008, a series of surveys were undertaken to understand the traditional practice of Indonesian fishers that journey to Scott Reef within the MoU boundary (ERM 2008, 2009). The majority of perahu (vessels) that travel to Scott Reef originate from the islands of Rote (near West Timor) and Tonduk and Raas (in East Java). Some crew from the Rote perahus are recruited from the region of Alor (one of the Lesser Sundas chain, located north of East Timor and east of Bali). In 2007, an estimated 800 fishers (approximately 80 vessels) travelled from these home islands to Scott Reef, mainly to collect trepang. Similar vessel numbers sailed to Scott Reef in 2008.

Journeys to Scott Reef are generally restricted to drier months when wind speeds and directions are more desirable. Most Indonesian fishers travel to Scott Reef during July to October, although a few Rotenese make the journey to Scott Reef in the early season between April and June. Other fishers plan to go after Aidil Fitri, a religious holiday widely celebrated on Tonduk Island that celebrates the end of Ramadan.

The fishers focus their activities in and around the shallow water lagoons of Scott Reef primarily targeting trepang; and opportunistically gather trochus shells. They also catch fish largely for subsistence purposes although the average fish catch per lete-lete (traditional Indonesian fishing vessel) in 2008 increased to commercial volumes. Although deeper waters are more plentiful in trepang, deep diving is generally not undertaken by the fishers due to the MoU stipulation on the exclusive use of traditional equipment only (Woodside Energy Limited 2011).

14.8 Aquaculture

14.8.1 South West Bioregion

The predominant aquaculture activity undertaken in this region is the production of mussels and oysters from Oyster Harbour at Albany. This activity is restricted to this area where there are sufficient nutrient levels related to terrestrial run-off to provide the planktonic food necessary to promote growth of filter-feeding

bivalves fishing (Fletcher and Santoro 2015). The high-energy environment and limited protected deep waters limits other forms of aquaculture such as sea cage farming.

Further invertebrate aquaculture operations are expected within Albany following recent funding and declaration of the Albany Aquaculture Development Zone by DPIRD. Two zones have already been declared with the Oyster Harbour area declared in August 2020 and the Princess Royal Harbour and King George Sound areas declared in December 2021. Once fully established, the Albany Aquaculture Development Zone will be the largest single zone dedicated to marine shellfish farming in Australia (DPIRD, 2020).

Further aquaculture in the region includes the Rare Foods Australia (formerly Ocean Grown Abalone) Project in Flinders Bay in the South West region of Western Australia. The project is the world's first commercial abalone ranch using concrete artificial reef structures, known as ABITATs. The ABITATs are lowered into two lease areas where the ranches are self-sustaining and the abalone nurture and feed from the ocean until they are ready for harvest (information available from . <https://rarefoodsaustralia.com.au/a-world-first-ocean-ranching/>)

14.8.2 West Coast Bioregion

The principal aquaculture development activities in this region are the production of blue mussels (*Mytilus galloprovincialis*) and marine algae (*Dunaliella salina*) and the emerging black pearl industry based on the production of *Pinctada margaritifera* at the Abrolhos Islands. The main mussel farming area is in southern Cockburn Sound, where conditions are sheltered and the nutrient and planktonic food levels are sufficient to promote good growth rates fishing (Fletcher and Santoro 2015).

Further aquaculture operations are expected following the establishment of the Mid-West Aquaculture Development Zone by DPIRD, which aims to provide a platform to stimulate aquaculture investment and development in the bioregion (Gaughan and Santoro 2020).

14.8.3 Gascoyne Coast Bioregion

Hatchery production of oysters is the core of the pearling industry in the Gascoyne region. Hatcheries in Carnarvon and Exmouth supply spat to pearl farms in the north-west and several hatcheries supply juveniles to the black-lip pearl oyster to developing black pearl farms in the region. Pearl production is carried out on a small scale in Shark Bay and Exmouth Gulf. The local aquaculture sector is also focussing on the production of aquarium species.

14.8.4 North Coast Bioregion

Aquaculture development in this region is dominated by the production of pearls from the species *Pinctada maxima*. Each year, approximately 500,000 wild individuals are harvested, with the majority being from Eighty Mile Bean in Broome, Western Australia (sourced from Fisheries Research and Development Cooperation in Thomas and Miller 2022). A large number of pearl oysters for seeding is obtained from wild stocks and supplemented by hatchery-produced oysters with major hatcheries operating at Broome and the Dampier Peninsular. Pearl farm sites are located mainly along the Kimberley coast, particularly in the Buccaneer Archipelago, in Roebuck Bay and at the Montebello Islands. Developing marine aquaculture initiatives in this region include growing trochus and barramundi.

The Pearl Oyster Fishery of Western Australia operates in shallow coastal waters (DoF 2006). All the leases are within the 35m diving depth, with commercial diving predominantly occurring in nearshore habitats of 8-15 m depths (Thomas and Miller, 2022). Through consultation the Pearl Producer's Association (PPA) have raised concern that spawning stock is found to the 100 m depth contour. However, this is not supported in the study by Condie *et al* (2006) who modelled oyster larva transport in the Eighty Mile Beach region and

found that while some larvae travelled more than 60 km, most were transported less than 30 km. The model results suggest that spawning in the Eighty Mile Beach region is concentrated around the 8 to 15m depth range, with potential smaller contributions from the northeast. These spawning events are likely to lead to successful recruitment locally and alongshore to the southwest.

They also feed larvae into neighbouring shallow coastal environments (through tidal oscillations) and deeper waters to the west (>20 m). However, spat abundances seem to be low in these areas, suggesting that recruitment is strongly limited by habitat availability and possibly high mortality rates in shallow water. High local abundances of broodstock and spat observed occasionally in deeper water (<30 m) seem to be supported by intermittent larval transport from inshore populations. Spawning in this area seems to contribute little to recruitment in the inshore populations.

Further aquaculture in this region mainly focuses on barramundi farming within Cone Bay, with two aquaculture licences granted in this area located about 200 km north-east of Broome (Gaughan and Santoro 2020).

Further aquaculture operations have expanded in the region with the establishment of the Kimberley Aquaculture Development zone, which encompasses almost 2,000 ha of coastal waters within Cone Bay supporting the production of up to 20,000 t of finfish annually (Gaughan and Santoro 2020).

14.8.5 Northern Territory

The Northern Territory boasts a diverse and vibrant aquaculture industry. An extensive range of commercial activity includes barramundi farming, trepang (sea cucumber), pearling and the collection of marine fish and coral for the tropical aquarium market. A pond-based barramundi farm on the Adelaide River produces more than 1,000 tonnes of Barramundi a year (Northern Territory Government, 2016). Giant clams are also farmed with trials on Groote Eylandt and Goulburn Island growing sea clams in sea-based cages. The silver-lipped pearl oyster is farmed in four main areas of the NT: Bynoe Harbour, Beagle Gulf, Cobourg Peninsula and Croker Island around the islands north west of Nhulunbuy.

14.8.6 Indonesian Aquaculture

An analysis by WorldFish has indicated that aquaculture will overtake capture fisheries as the major source of fish in Indonesia before 2030 (Phillips *et al.* 2015). By volume, Indonesian aquatic production is dominated by seaweeds, but by value, domestically consumed species such tilapia and milkfish, together with export-orientated commodities such as shrimp and tuna, are of greater importance (Phillips *et al.* 2015).

Carrageenan seaweed farming based primarily on the cultivation of *Kappaphycus* and *Eucheuma* species has grown significantly in Indonesia. Due to the simple farming techniques required, low requirements of capital and material inputs, and short production cycles it has become a favourable livelihood for smallholder farmers and fishers (Valderrama *et al.* 2013). Indonesia's coastline provides ideal conditions for fish farming in "brackish waters". Aquaculture in Indonesia is predominantly used for seaweed production, whilst offshore fish cultivation remains relatively undeveloped (Global Business Guide 2014).

14.9 Recreational Fisheries

14.9.1 South West Bioregion

The South West Bioregion includes the water from Augusta to Eucla on the Western Australia/South Australia border. The continental shelf waters of this region are generally temperate but low in nutrients due to the seasonal presence of the tail of the tropical Leeuwin current and limited terrestrial run-off. As much of the south coast is remote or difficult to access, recreational beach and boat fishing tends to be concentrated

around the main population and holiday centres. The major target species for beach and rock anglers are salmon, herring, whiting and trevally, while boat anglers target pink snapper, queen snapper, Bight redfish, a number of shark species, salmon fish and King George whiting. Another component of the recreational fishery is dinghy and shoreline fishing off estuaries and rivers where the main angling targets are black bream and whiting. Recreational netting primarily targeting mullet also occurs in these estuaries (WAFIC 2016).

14.9.2 West Coast Bioregion

The marine environment of the West Coast Bioregion which lies between Kalbarri and Augusta is predominantly a temperate oceanic zone, but it is heavily influenced by the Leeuwin current, which transports warm tropical water southward along the edge of the continental shelf. This region contains the state's major population centres and is the most heavily used bioregion for recreational fishing (Fletcher and Santoro 2015). The range of recreational fishing opportunities includes estuarine fishing, beach fishing and boat fishing either in embayments or offshore for demersal and pelagic game species often around the islands and out to the continental shelf (WAFIC 2016).

14.9.3 Gascoyne Coast Bioregion

The Gascoyne Coast Bioregion extends from just north of Kalbarri to the Ashburton River, south of Onslow. The marine environment of this region represents a transition between the fully tropical waters of the north-west shelf of the north coast region and the temperate waters of the west coast region. This region has been identified as one of the 18 world 'hotspots' in terms of tropical reef endemism and the second most diverse marine environment in the world in terms of tropical reef species. This region is a focal point for winter recreational fishing and is a key component of many tourist visits. Angling activities include beach and cliff fishing (e.g. Steep Point and Quobba), embayment and shallow-water boat angling (e.g. Shark Bay, Exmouth Gulf and Ningaloo lagoons), and offshore boat angling for demersal and larger pelagic species (e.g. off Ningaloo). The predominant target species include the tropical species such as emperors, tropical snappers, groupers, mackerels, trevallies and other game fish. Temperate species at the northern end of their ranges such as pink snapper, tailor and whiting also provide significant catches, particularly in Shark Bay (WAFIC 2016).

14.9.4 North Coast Bioregion

The North Coast Bioregion (Pilbara/Kimberley) runs from the Ashburton River to the Western Australia/Northern Territory border (WAFIC 2016). The oceanography of this region includes waters of Pacific Ocean origin that enter through the Indonesian archipelago bringing warm, low salinity waters polewards via the Indonesian throughflow and Holloway currents which flow seasonally and interact with Indian ocean waters. Recreational fishing is experiencing a significant growth in this region, with a distinct seasonal peak in winter when the local population increases by significant numbers of metropolitan and inter-state tourists. This has been added to by the increased recreational fishing by those involved in the construction or operation of major developments in this region. Owing to the high tidal range, much of the angling activity is boat-based with beach fishing limited to periods of flood tides and high water. Numerous creek systems, mangroves, rivers and ocean beaches provide shore and small boat fishing for a variety of species including barramundi, tropical emperors, mangrove jack, trevallies, sooty grunter, threadfin, mud crabs and cods. Offshore islands, coral reef systems and continental shelf waters provide species of major recreational interest including saddletail snapper and red emperor, cods, coral and coronation trout, sharks, trevally, tuskfish, mackerels and billfish (WAFIC 2016).

14.9.5 Northern Territory

The most recent available data on recreational fishing in the Greater Darwin area indicates that line fishing (using bait, lures or flies) was the most common fishing method used, accounting for 72% of the total effort, followed by Mud Crab potting (23%). The use of cast nets and other fishing methods was far less common. Approximately 70% of all recreational fishing effort occurred in estuarine waters (Matthews et al, 2019). The Darwin Harbour region and its associated arms and creeks supported 40% of the total fishing effort, followed by Bynoe Harbour (14%) and Shoal Bay (6%). The offshore regions seaward of Bynoe Harbour and Dundee were the most popular sites for those fishers venturing beyond estuarine waters. Most of the catch (84%) comprised of fish species (i.e. bony fish and sharks/rays) with the bulk of the remaining catch consisting of crabs and prawns.

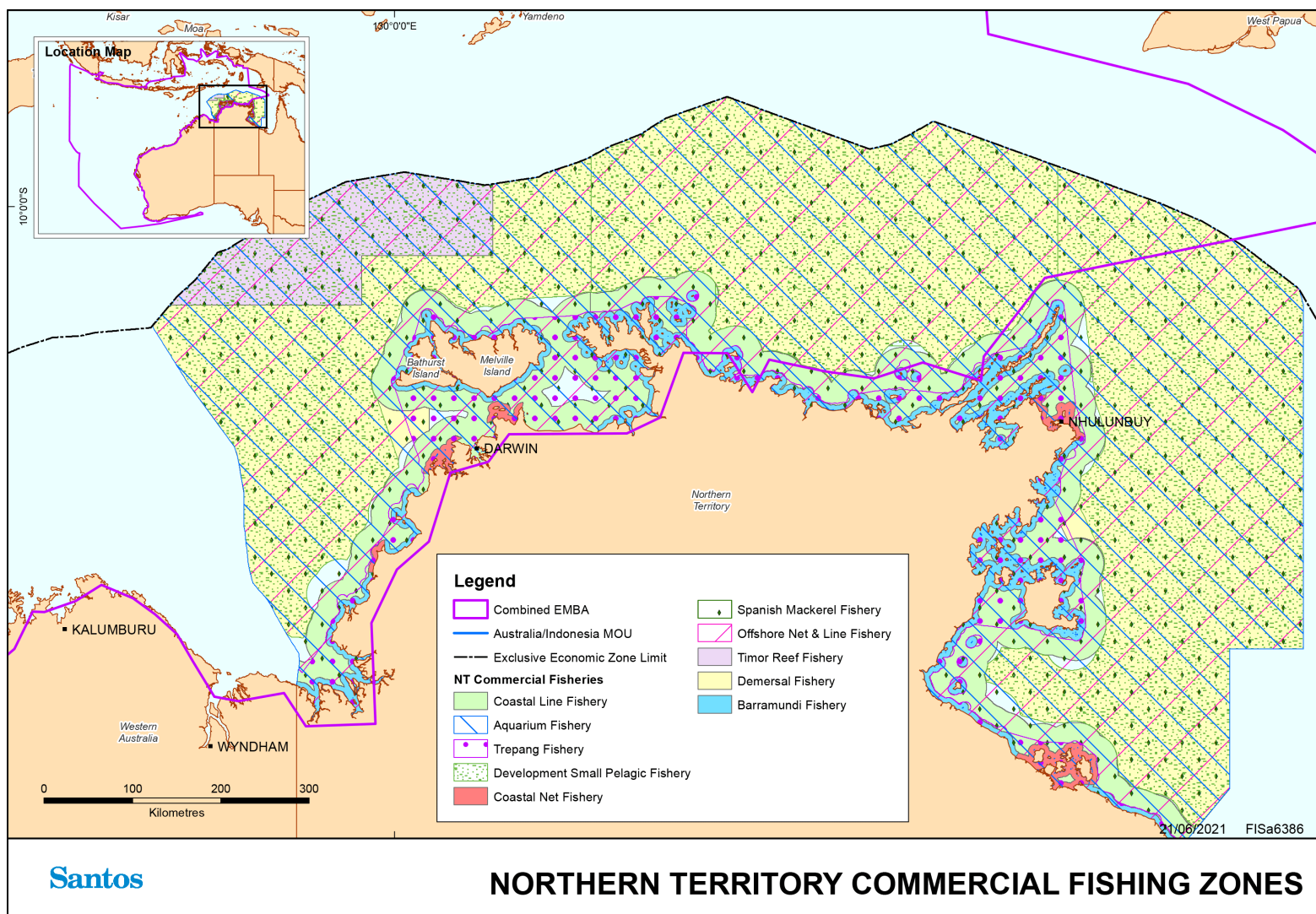


Figure 14-11:NT state commercial fishing zones

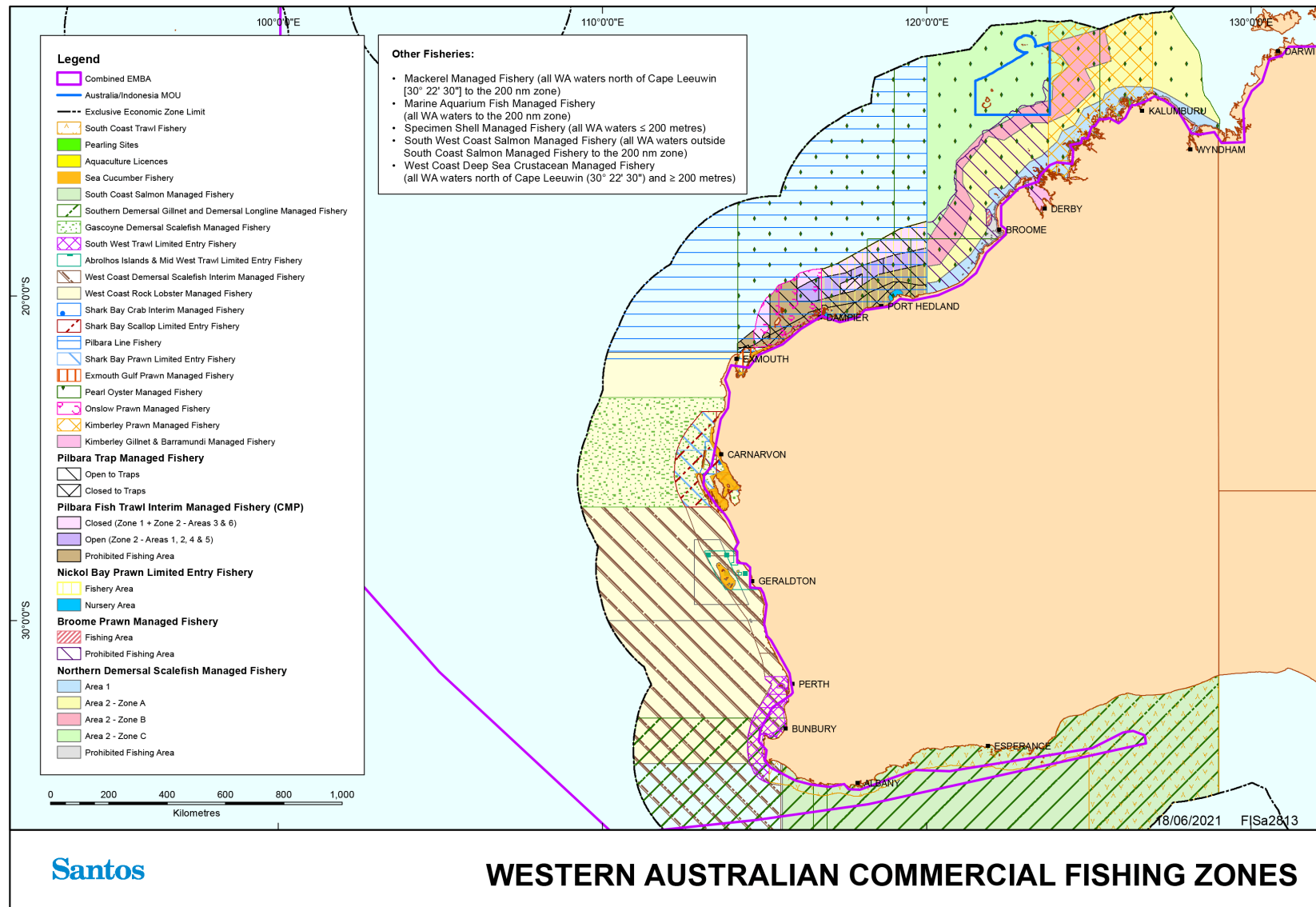


Figure 14-12:WA state commercial fishing zones

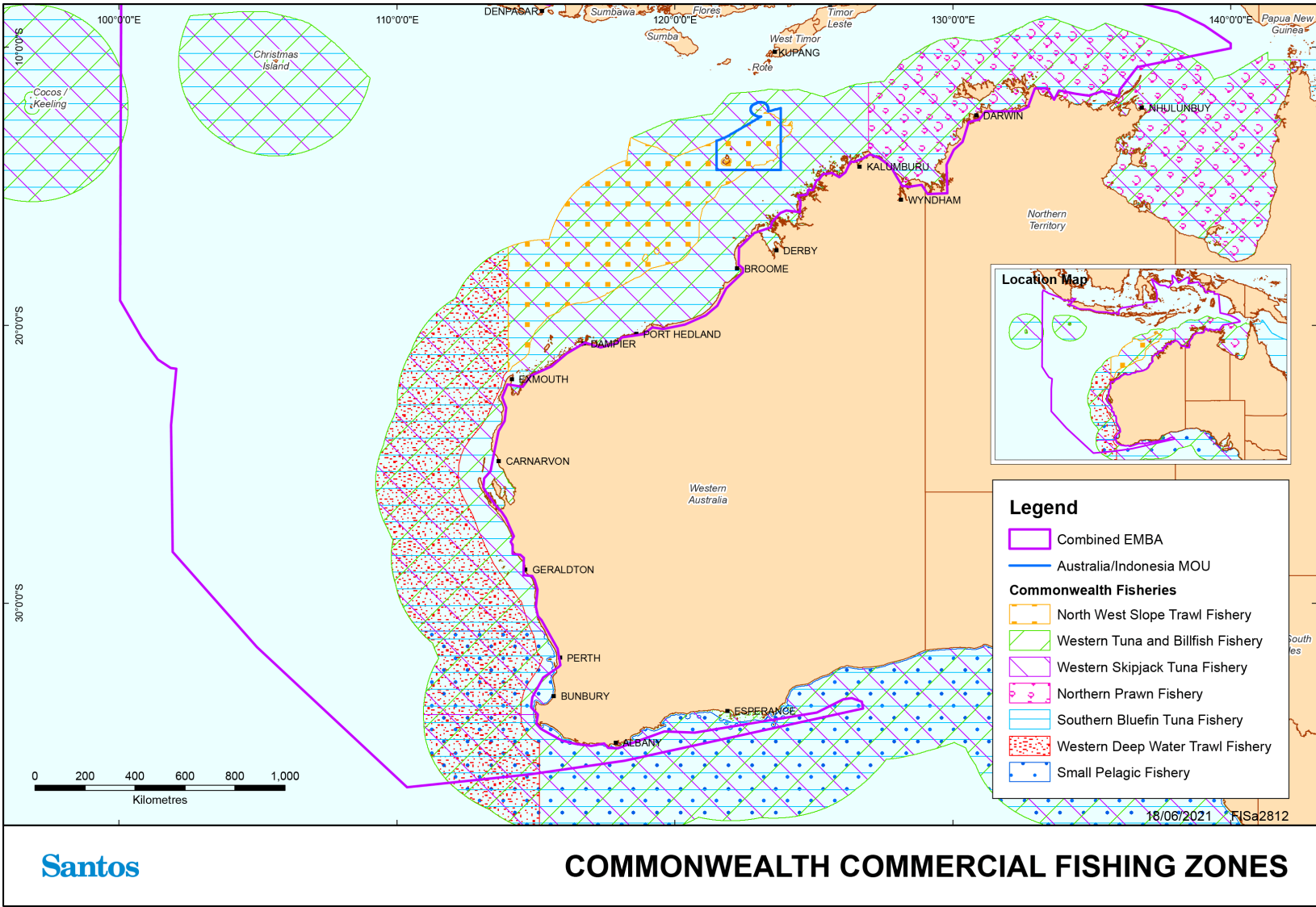


Figure 14-13: Commonwealth commercial fishing zones

Table 14-1: Commercial fisheries with permits to operate within the combined EMBA

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
State Managed Fisheries				
Abrolhos Islands and Mid-West Trawl Managed Fishery (AIMWTMF)	Saucer scallops (<i>Ylistrum balloti</i>), with a small component targeting the western king prawn (<i>Penaeus latisulcatus</i>)	2017/2018: 651 tonnes	Operates using low opening otter trawl systems.	All the waters of the Indian Ocean adjacent to Western Australia between 27°51' south latitude and 29°03' south latitude on the landward side of the 200 m isobath'.
Aquarium Fishery	Multi-species catch including; invertebrates (hermit crabs, various snails, whelks and hard and soft corals) and finfish (rainbowfish, catfishes and scats).	Unknown	Dive-based method of collection, using barrier, cast, scoop, drag and skimmer nets, hand pumps, freshwater pumps and handheld instruments.	The Aquarium fishery is a small-scale, multi-species fishery that prospects freshwater, estuarine and marine habitats to the outer boundary of the AFZ. Most of the harvest occurs within 100km of Darwin, though one license holder does collect from two offshore locations; Evans Shoal and Lynedoch Bank. Fishing activities may occur year round.
Barramundi Fishery	Barramundi King threadfin	The fishery is restricted to 14 licences all of which are currently allocated to fishers.	Gill nets	The annual commercial barramundi fishing season in the NT is from 1 February to 30 September. Fishing is allowed from the high water mark to three nautical miles seaward of the low water mark. The area is restricted to waters seaward from the coast, river mouths and legislated closed lines
Broome Prawn Managed Fishery (BPMF)	Western king prawns (<i>Penaeus latisulcatus</i>) and coral prawns (a combined category of small penaeid species).	Extremely low fishing effort occurred as only a single boat undertook trial fishing to investigate whether catch rates were sufficient for commercial fishing. This resulted in negligible landings of western king prawns with no byproduct recorded.	Otter trawl	The BPMF operates in a designated trawl zone off Broome. The boundaries of the BPMF are 'all Western Australian waters of the Indian Ocean lying east of 120° east longitude and west of 123°45' east longitude on the landward side of the 200 m isobath'. The actual trawl area is contained within a delineated small area north west of Broome.

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
Coastal Line Fishery	Black jewfish Golden snapper	Fishery is restricted to 52 licenses, with approximately one third of these being active in 2015.	Lines, nets and traps	Fishing occurs along the NT coast between high water marks and 15 nm from low water mark. Majority of activity is concentrated around rocky reefs along the coastline within 100km from Darwin. Fishing activities occur year-round.
Coastal Net Fishery	Mullet	This fishery is restricted to five licences, all of which are allocated.	Nets	The fishery extends from the high water mark to three nautical miles out from the low water mark. The fishery is divided into regions including: - Darwin – from Cape Hotham to Native Point and Cape Ford to Cape Dooley - Gove – between Cape Arnhem and Cape Wilberforce - Borrooloola – from Bing Bong Creek and Pelican Spit.
Cockburn Sound Mussel Managed Fishery	Blue mussels (<i>Mytilus edulis</i>)	2015: Unspecified	Agriculture	Main mussel farming occurs in southern Cockburn Sound.
Cockburn Sound Crab Managed Fishery	Blue Swimmer (<i>Portunus armatus</i>) Blue swimmer crab (<i>Portunus armatus</i>)	2017/2018: 5: closed to commercial and recreational fishing since April 2014	Drop nets, scoop nets, diving	Encompasses the inner waters of Cockburn Sound, from South Mole at Fremantle to Stragglers Rocks, through Mewstone to Carnac Island and Garden Island, along the eastern shore of Garden Island and back to John Point on the mainland.
Cockburn Sound Line and Pot Managed Fishery	Southern garfish (<i>Hyporhamphus melanochir</i>), Australian herring (<i>Arripis geogianus</i>)	2017/2018: 257 tonnes	Line (fish) Shelter and trigger pots (octopus)	Encompasses the inner waters of Cockburn Sound, from South Mole at Fremantle to Stragglers Rocks, through Mewstone to Carnac Island and Garden Island, along the eastern shore of Garden Island and back to John Point on the mainland.

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
Demersal Fishery	Red snappers Goldband snappers	There are currently 19 licenses issued for the fishery, with around 9 active.	Handline Dropline Fish traps Although, essentially trap-based since 2002	This fishery extends from waters 15nm from the coastal waters mark to the outer limit of the AFZ, excluding the area of the Timor Reef Fishery.
Exmouth Gulf Prawn Managed Fishery	Western king prawns (<i>Penaeus latisulcatus</i>), brown tiger prawns (<i>Penaeus esculentus</i>), endeavour prawns (<i>Metapenaeus</i> spp.) and banana prawns (<i>Penaeus merguensis</i>).	2017/2018: 713 tonnes	Low opening otter trawls.	Sheltered waters of Exmouth Gulf Essentially the western half of the Exmouth Gulf (eastern part is a nursery ground). The Muiron Islands and Point Murat provide the western boundary; Serrurier Island provides the northern limit
Gascoyne Demersal Scalefish Managed Fishery (GDSMF)	Targets pink snapper (<i>Pagrus auratus</i>) and goldband snapper (<i>Pristipomoides multidens</i>). Other demersal species caught include the rosy snapper (<i>P. filamentosus</i>), ruby snapper (<i>Etelis carbunculus</i>), red emperor (<i>Lutjanus sebae</i>), emperors (Lethrinidae, including spangled emperor, <i>Lethrinus nebulosus</i> , and redthroat emperor, <i>L. miniatus</i>), cods (Epinephelidae, including Rankin cod, <i>Epinephelus multinotatus</i> and goldspotted rockcod, <i>E. coioides</i>), pearl perch (<i>Glaucosoma burgeri</i>), mulloway (<i>Argyrosomus japonicus</i>), amberjack (<i>Seriola dumerili</i>) and trevallies (Carangidae).	2017/2018: Snapper: 133 tonnes Other demersals: 144 tonnes	Mechanised handlines	The GDSF operates in the waters of the Indian Ocean and Shark Bay between latitudes 23°07'30"S and 26°30'S. Vessels are not permitted to fish in inner Shark Bay.
Abalone Managed Fishery	Greenlip abalone (<i>Haliotis laevis</i>) Brownlip abalone (<i>H. conicopora</i>)	2017/2018: 98 tonnes	Dive fishery The principal harvest method is a diver working off 'hookah' (surface supplied breathing apparatus) or SCUBA using an abalone 'iron' to prise the	Shallow coastal waters off the south-west and south coasts of Western Australia Covers all Western Australian coastal waters, which are divided into eight management areas. Commercial fishing for greenlip/brownlip abalone is managed in three separate areas.

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
			shellfish off rocks – both commercial and recreational divers employ this method.	
Hermit Crab Fishery (HCF)	Australian land hermit crab (<i>Coenobita variabilis</i>)	2017/2018: 58,643 (lowest reported in the last 10 years (2008-2017; catch range 58,643-118,203).	Land based hand collection typically using four-wheel drives to access remote beaches	Operates in Western Australian waters north of the Exmouth Gulf (22°30'S)
Kimberley Developing Mud Crab Managed Fishery	Mud crab (<i>Scylla serrata</i>)	2017/2018: 60 tonnes (also includes catch data from Pilbara Developmental crab fishery)	Mud Crab traps	This fishery operates between Broome and Cambridge Gulf. Three commercial operators are permitted to fish from King Sound to the Northern Territory border, with closed areas around communities and fishing camps. One Aboriginal Corporation is permitted to fish in King Sound, with the other Aboriginal Corporation permitted to fish in a small area on the western side of the Dampier peninsula, north of Broome. Notices issued under the <i>Fish Resources Management Act 1994</i> prohibit all commercial fishing for mud crabs in Roebuck Bay and an area of King Sound near Derby.
Kimberley Gillnet and Barramundi Managed Fishery (KGBF)	Barramundi (<i>Lates calcarifer</i>), King threadfin (<i>Polydactylus macrochir</i>), Blue threadfin (<i>Eleutheronema tetradactylum</i>)	2017/2018: 79.9 tonnes	Gill net in inshore waters	Nearshore and estuarine zones of the North Coast Bioregion from the WA/NT border (129°E) to the top end of Eighty Mile Beach, south of Broome (19°S). The waters of the KGBF are defined as 'all Western Australian waters north of 19° south latitude and west of 129° east longitude and within three nautical miles of the high water mark of the mainland of Western Australia and the waters of King Sound south of 16°21.47' south latitude.

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
Kimberley Prawn Managed Fishery (KPMF)	Banana prawns (<i>Penaeus merguensis</i>) Tiger prawns (<i>Penaeus esculentus</i>) Endeavour prawns (<i>Metapenaeus endeavouri</i>) Western king prawns (<i>Penaeus latisulcatus</i>)	2017/2018: 269 tonnes	Otter trawl	The KPMF operates off the north of the state between Koolan Island and Cape Londonderry. The boundaries of the KPMF are 'all Western Australian waters of the Indian Ocean lying east of 123°45' east longitude and west of 126°58' east longitude'. It abuts the western boundary of the Commonwealth Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF).
Mandurah to Bunbury Developing Crab Fishery	Blue swimmer crab (<i>Portunus armatus</i>)	2017/2018: 5.2 tonnes	Drop nets, scoop nets, diving	Fishery extends from south of the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park (32°22'40"S) to Point McKenna near Bunbury (33°16'S) and offshore to 115°30'E. The fishery is divided into two zones with crab fishing historically being permitted within Area 1, Comet Bay between 32°22'40"S and 32°30'S, and Area 2, Cape Bouvard to the southern boundary of the fishery. In 2015 crab fishing within Area 2 ceased.
Marine Aquarium Fish Managed Fishery (MAFMF)	Over 250 target species of finfish. (228 species caught in 2012). Fishermen can also take coral, live rock, algae, seagrass and invertebrates. The main fish species landed in 2012 were scribbled angelfish (<i>Chaetodontoplus duboulayi</i>) and green chromis (<i>Chromis cinerascens</i>) The main coral species landed in 2012 were the coral like anemones of the Corallimorpharia.	2017/2018: Total catch of 150,544 fishes, 21.9 t of coral, live rock & living sand and 322 L of marine plants.	Hand harvest while diving or wading. Hand held nets	Dive based fishery operating all year throughout WA waters, but restricted by diving depths. The MAFMF is able to operate in all State waters (between the Northern Territory border and South Australian border). The fishery is typically more active in waters south of Broome with higher levels of effort around the Capes region, Perth, Geraldton, Exmouth and Dampier. Operators in the MAFMF are also permitted to take coral, live rock, algae, seagrass and invertebrates under the Prohibition on Fishing (Coral, 'Live Rock' and Algae) Order 2007 and by way of Ministerial Exemption (Gaughan & Santoro, 2018).

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
Nickol Bay Prawn Managed Fishery (NBPMF)	Primarily targets banana prawns (<i>Penaeus merguensis</i>)	2017/2018: 227 tonnes	Otter trawl	Operates along the western part of the North-West Shelf in coastal shallow waters The boundaries of the NBPMF are 'all the waters of the Indian Ocean and Nickol Bay between 116°45' east longitude and 120° east longitude on the landward side of the 200 m isobath'. The NBPMF incorporates the Nickol Bay, Extended Nickol Bay, Depuch and De Grey size managed fish grounds (State of the Fisheries 2014-15).
North Coast Trochus Fishery	Trochus (<i>Tectus niloticus</i>)	2017/2018: Unspecified	Harvested by with handheld levers or chisels	Indigenous fishery operating within King Sound
Northern Demersal Scalefish Managed Fishery (NDSF)	Red emperor (<i>Lutjanus sebae</i>) Goldband snapper (<i>Pristipomoides multidens</i>)	2017/2018:1317 tonnes (total) Goldband snapper (not including other jobfish): 473 tonnes Red emperor: 34 – 47 tonnes	The permitted means of operation within the fishery include handline, dropline and fish traps, but since 2002 it has essentially been a trap-based fishery which uses gear time access and spatial zones as the primary management measures (State of the Fisheries 2014-15).	The Northern Demersal Scalefish Managed Fishery (NDSF) operates off the northwest coast of Western Australia in the waters east of 120° E longitude. These waters extend out to the edge of the Australian Fishing Zone (200 nautical miles). The Fishery consists of three zones; Zone A is an inshore area, Zone B comprises the area with most historical fishing activity and Zone C is an offshore deep slope developmental area. The fishery is further divided into two fishing areas; an inshore sector and an offshore sector. The inshore waters in the vicinity of Broome are closed to commercial fishing.
WA North Coast Shark Fisheries	Sandbar (<i>Carcharhinus plumbeus</i>), hammer head (<i>Sphyrnidae</i>), blacktip (<i>Carcharhinus melanopterus</i>) and lemon sharks (<i>Negaprion brevirostris</i>).	2017/2018: closed since 2008/2009	Gill net, longline	Comprised of the State-managed WA North Coast Shark Fishery in the Pilbara and western Kimberley, and the Joint Authority Northern Shark Fishery in the eastern Kimberley.
Octopus Interim Managed Fishery	<i>Octopus cf. tetricus</i> , with occasional bycatch of <i>O. ornatus</i> and <i>O. cyanea</i> in the northern parts of the fishery, and	2017/2018: Commercial: 257 tonnes	Line and pots Trawl and trap (land Octopus as byproduct)	Fishery in development phase. Four main categories in WA waters. Octopus are primarily caught in the Developing Octopus Interim

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
	<i>O.maorum</i> in the southern and deeper sectors.	Recreational: 1 tonne		Managed Fishery (largest fishery) are limited to the boundaries of the developmental fishery, which is an area bounded by the Kalbarri Cliffs (26°30'S) in the north and Esperance in the south. Passive and by-product harvests of octopus occur in both the Cockburn Sound (Line and Pot) Managed Fishery and the West Coast Rock Lobster Managed Fishery.
Offshore Net and Line Fishery	Blacktip sharks Grey mackerel,	The number of licences for the fishery is restricted to 17 and only 10 boats operated in 2015. Limited effort was undertaken in the outer offshore area of the fishery during 2012.	Lines and nets	The fishery covers an area of over 522,000 km ² and extends from the NT high water mark to the boundary of the AFZ. Majority of the fishing effort is in the coastal zone (within 12 nm of the coast) and immediately offshore in the Gulf of Carpentaria.
Onslow Prawn Managed Fishery (OPMF)	Western king prawns (<i>Penaeus latisulcatus</i>), brown tiger prawns (<i>Penaeus esculentus</i>), endeavour prawns (<i>Metapenaeus</i> spp.)	2017/2018: Negligible (Minimal fishing occurred in 2017)	Otter trawl	Operates along the western part of the North-West Shelf with most prawning activities concentrated in the shallower water off the mainland. The boundaries of the OPMF are 'all the Western Australian waters between the Exmouth Prawn Fishery and the Nickol Bay prawn fishery east of 114°39.9' on the landward side of the 200 m depth isobath'.
Pilbara Developmental Crab Fishery	Blue Swimmer (<i>Portunus armatus</i>) Mud Crab (<i>Scylla</i> spp)	2017/2018: 60 tonnes (total number includes Kimberley Developing Mud Crab Fishery)	Variety of gear but mostly commercial crab pots (Hourglass traps used in inshore waters from Onslow through to Port Hedland with most commercial and activity occurring in and around Nickol Bay)	The majority of the commercially and recreationally-fished stocks are concentrated in the coastal embayments and estuaries between Geographe Bay in the south west and Nickol Bay in the north. Crabbing activity along the Pilbara coast is centred largely on the inshore waters from Onslow through to Port Hedland, with most commercial and recreational activity occurring in and around Nickol Bay.

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
			Recreational fishers use drop nets or scoop nets, with diving for crabs becoming increasingly popular	
Pilbara Fish Trawl (Interim) Managed Fishery (PFTIMF)	Variety of demersal scalefish including goldband snapper (<i>Pristipomoides multidentis</i>), red emperor (<i>Lutjanus sebae</i>), bluespotted emperor (<i>Lethrinus punctulatus</i>), crimson snapper (<i>Lutjanus erythropterus</i>), saddletail snapper (<i>Lutjanus malabaricus</i>), Rankin cod (<i>Epinephelus multinotatus</i>), brownstripe snapper (<i>Lutjanus vitta</i>), rosy threadfin bream (<i>Nemipterus furcosus</i>), spangled emperor (<i>Lethrinus nebulosus</i>) and frypan Moses' snapper (<i>Argyrops lutjanusspinifer russelli</i>).	2017/2018: 1,780 tonnes	Demersal trawl	The Pilbara Fish Trawl (Interim) Managed Fishery is situated in the Pilbara region in the north west of Australia. It occupies the waters north of latitude 21°35'S and between longitudes 114°9'36"E and 120°E. The Fishery is seaward of the 50 m isobath and landward of the 200 m isobath. The Fishery consists of two zones; Zone 1 in the south west of the Fishery (which is closed to trawling) and Zone 2 in the North, which consists of six management areas.
Pilbara Trap Managed Fishery (PTMF)	Blue-spot emperor (<i>Lethrinus hutchinsi</i>), Red snapper (<i>Lutjanus erythropterus</i>), Goldband snapper (<i>Pristipomoides multidentis</i>), Scarlet perch (<i>Lutjanus malabaricus</i>), Red emperor (<i>Lutjanus sebae</i>), Spangled emperor (<i>Lethrinus nebulosus</i>), Rankin cod (<i>Epinephelus multinotatus</i>)	2017/2018: 400–600 tonnes	Use of rectangular traps with single opening and 50 mm x 70 mm rectangular mesh panels. Trap fishing normally targets areas around rocky outcrops and reefs	Permitted to operate within waters bounded by a line commencing at the intersection of 21°56' S latitude and the high water mark on the western side of the North West Cape.
Pilbara Line Managed Fishery	Variety of demersal scalefish including goldband snapper (<i>Pristipomoides multidentis</i>), red emperor (<i>Lutjanus sebae</i>), bluespotted emperor (<i>Lethrinus punctulatus</i>), crimson snapper (<i>Lutjanus erythropterus</i>), saddletail snapper (<i>Lutjanus malabaricus</i>), Rankin cod	2017/2018: 50–115 tonnes	Line	The Pilbara Trap Managed Fishery lies north of latitude 21°44' S and between longitudes 114°9'36" E and 120° E on the landward side of a boundary approximating the 200 m isobath and seaward of a line generally following the 30 m isobath.

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
	<i>(Epinephelus multinotatus)</i> , brownstripe snapper (<i>Lutjanus vitta</i>), rosy threadfin bream (<i>Nemipterus furcosus</i>), spangled emperor (<i>Lethrinus nebulosus</i>) and frypan snapper (<i>Argyrops spinifer</i>), Ruby snapper (<i>Etelis carbunculus</i>) and eightbar grouper (<i>Hyporthodus octofasciatus</i>)			
Roe's Abalone	Western Australian Roe's abalone (<i>Haliotis roei</i>)	2017/2018: Commercial: 49 tonnes Recreational: 23 tonnes	Dive and wade fishery. The commercial fishery harvest method is a single diver working off a 'hookah' (surface-supplied breathing apparatus) using an abalone 'iron' to prise the shellfish off rocks. Abalone divers operate from small fishery vessels (generally less than 9 metres in length).	Operating in shallow coastal waters along WA's western and southern coasts from Shark Bay to the SA border. Divided into 8 management areas. Commercial fishing for Roe's abalone is managed in 6 separate regions from the South Australian border to Busselton Jetty – Areas 1, 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Area 8 of the fishery was not fished in 2013.
Shark Bay Crab Interim Managed Fishery	Blue swimmer crab (<i>Portunus armatus</i>)	2017/2018: 443 tonnes total Crab: 153 tonnes	Trawl and trap	Waters of Shark Bay north of Cape Inscription, to Bernier and Dorre Islands and Quobba Point. In addition, two fishers with long-standing histories of trapping crabs in Shark Bay are permitted to fish in the waters of Shark Bay south of Cape Inscription.
Shark Bay Prawn Managed Fishery	Western king prawn (<i>Penaeus latisulcatus</i>), brown tiger prawn (<i>Penaeus esculentus</i>), Variety of smaller prawn species including endeavour prawns (<i>Metapenaeus</i> spp.) and coral prawns (various species).	2017/2018: 1,608 tonnes	Low opening otter trawls	The boundaries of the Shark Bay Prawn Managed Fishery are located in and near the waters of Shark Bay

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
Shark Bay Scallop Managed Fishery	Saucer Scallop (<i>Ylistrum balloti</i>)	2017/2018: 1,632 tonnes	Low opening otter trawls	The boundaries of the Shark Bay Scallop Managed Fishery are located in and near the waters of Shark Bay
South Coast Open Access Netting Fishery	Insufficient information	Insufficient information	Insufficient information	Bunbury to the South Australian Border
Specimen Shell Managed Fishery (SSF)	Shells (cowries, cones) The Specimen Shell Managed Fishery (SSF) is based on the collection of individual shells for the purposes of display, collection, cataloguing, classification and sale. Just under 200 (196) different Specimen Shell species were collected in 2012, using a variety of methods.	2017/2018: 7,806 shells	Hand harvest while diving or wading along coastal beaches below the high water mark An exemption method being employed by the fishery is using a remote controlled underwater vehicle at depths between 60 and 300 m.	Dive based fishery operating all year throughout WA waters, but restricted by diving depths. The fishing area includes all Western Australian waters between the high water mark and the 200 m isobath. While the fishery covers the entire WA coastline, there is some concentration of effort in areas adjacent to population centres such as Broome, Karratha, Exmouth, Shark Bay, metropolitan Perth, Mandurah, the Capes area and Albany.
South Coast Salmon Managed Fishery	WA salmon (<i>Arripis truttaceus</i>)	2017: 50 tonnes	Beach seine net, rod and line	Licensees operate from 18 designated beaches within the South Coast Bioregion, many of which have huts that are referred to as salmon camps.
South West Coast Salmon Managed Fishery	WA salmon (<i>Arripis truttaceus</i>)	Insufficient information	Insufficient information	Insufficient information
South West Coast Beach Net	Insufficient information	Insufficient information	Insufficient information	Insufficient information
South West Trawl Managed Fishery (SWTMF)	Saucer scallops (<i>Ylistrum balloti</i>)	2017/2018: 460 t meat weight (2,301 t whole weight)	Otter trawls	Waters between 31°34'27''S and 115°8'8''E where it intersects with the high water mark at Cape Leeuwin and on the landward side of the 200 m isobath.
Spanish Mackerel Fishery	Narrow-barred spanish Mackerel	In 2012, there were 16 fishery licences of which 12 were actively operating (DPIF 2014).	Near-surface trolling gear from vessels or handline.	The fishery extends from the NT waters seaward off the coast and river mouths to the outer limit of the AFZ. The majority of the fishing effort occurs

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
		The 2012 fishing effort was 719 boat-days; a decrease from 813 boat-days in 2011 but an increase from the 672 boat-days in 2010.		coastal areas around reefs, shoals and headlands. The majority of the catch is taken in the Kimberley Area and north of Port Hedland.
Temperate Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Fisheries (TDGDLF)	Gummy shark (<i>Mustelus antarcticus</i>), dusky shark (<i>Carcharhinus obscurus</i>), whiskery shark (<i>Furgaleus macki</i>) and sandbar shark (<i>Carcharhinus plumbeus</i>).	2017/2018: 2016-17Sharks and rays: 936 tonnes Scalefish: 133 tonnes	Demersal gillnets and power-hauled reels (to target sharks) Demersal longline	The Temperate Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline fisheries consists of Zone 1 of the Joint Authority Southern Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Managed Fishery and the West Coast Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline (Interim) Managed Fishery. The Joint Authority Southern Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Managed Fishery (JASDGDLF) spans the waters from 33° S latitude to the WA/SA border and comprises three management zones Zone 1 extends southwards from 33° S to 116° 30' E longitude off the south coast. Zone 2 extends from 116°30' E to the WA/SA border (129° E). A small number of Zone 3 units permit fishing throughout Zone 1 and eastwards to 116° 55'40" E. The West Coast Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline (Interim) Managed Fishery (WCDGDLF) technically extends northwards from 33° S latitude to 26° S longitude. However, the use of shark fishing gear has been prohibited north of 26° 30' S (Steep Point) since 1993. Demersal gillnet and longline fishing inside the 250 metre depth contour has been prohibited off the Metropolitan coast (between latitudes 31° S and 33° S) since November 2007.

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
Trepang Fishery	Sea cucumber (sandfish species)	The fishery is restricted to six licences, all of which are currently allocated.	Trepang are harvested by hand, either on foot or by diving.	Commercial fishing for sea cucumber is allowed from the high water mark to three nautical miles seaward from the territorial sea baseline. Most sea cucumbers are collected along the Arnhem Land coast, mainly around the Cobourg Peninsula and Groote Eylandt
Timor Reef Fishery	Goldband snapper	Consultation undertaken in 2016 confirmed there are only two active fishers currently operating in the fishery	Drop lines primarily in the 100 m–200 m depth range	Operates in remote offshore waters in the Timor Sea in a defined area approximately 370 km north-west of Darwin.
Warnbro Sound Crab Managed Fishery	Blue Swimmer (<i>Portunus armatus</i>) Blue swimmer crab (<i>Portunus armatus</i>)	2017/2018: closed to commercial and recreational fishing	Drop nets, scoop nets, diving	Includes Warnbro sound and adjacent water, extending from Becher Point to John Point.
West Coast Deep Sea Crustacean (Interim) Managed Fishery	Crystal (Snow) crabs (<i>Chaceon albus</i>), Giant (King) crabs (<i>Pseudocarcinus gigas</i>) and Champagne (Spiny) crabs (<i>Hypothalassia acerba</i>).	2017/2018: 164.4 tonnes	Baited pots operated in a longline formation in the shelf edge waters (>150 m)	North of latitude 34° 24' S (Cape Leeuwin) and west of the Northern Territory border on the seaward side of the 150 m isobath out to the extent of the AFZ, mostly in 500 to 800 m of water.
West Coast Demersal Scalefish (Interim) Managed Fishery	West Coast Inshore Demersals: West Australian Dhufish (<i>Glaucosoma hebraicum</i>), Pink snapper (<i>Pagrus auratus</i>) with other species captured including Redthroat Emperor (<i>Lethrinus miniatus</i>), Bight Redfish (<i>Centroberyx gerrardi</i>) and Baldchin Groper (<i>Choerodon rubescens</i>). West Coast Offshore Demersals: Eightbar Grouper <i>Hyporthodus octofasciatus</i> , Hapuku <i>Polyprion oxygeneios</i> , Blue-eye Trevalla <i>Hyperoglyphe antarctica</i> and Ruby Snapper <i>Etelis carbunculus</i> .	2017/2018: 248 tonnes	Handline and drop line	The WCDSIMF encompasses the waters of the Indian Ocean just south of Shark Bay (at 26°30'S) to just east of Augusta (at 115°30'E) and extends seaward to the 200 nm boundary of the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ). The commercial fishery is divided into five management areas comprising four inshore areas and one offshore area. The inshore areas, i.e. Kalbarri, Mid-West, Metropolitan and South-West, extend outwards to the 250 m depth contour, while the Offshore Area extends the entire length of the fishery from the 250 m depth contour to the boundary of the AFZ.

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
West Coast Estuarine Managed Fishery	Blue swimmer crab (<i>Portunus armatus</i>)	2017/2018: 353 tonnes (blue swimmer crab) commercial and 58-77 tonnes recreational	Drop nets, scoop nets, diving (crabs)	Includes the waters of the Swan and Canning Rivers (Area 1), the waters of the Peel Inlet and Harvey Estuary, together with the Murray Serpentine, Harvey and Dandalup Rivers (Area 2) and waters of the Hardy Inlet (Area 3). Of these areas only Areas 1-2 are permitted for crab fishing.
West Coast Nearshore and Estuarine Finfish Fisheries	<u>Nearshore:</u> whitebait (<i>Hyperlophus vittatus</i>), western Australian salmon (<i>Arripis truttaceus</i>), Australian herring (<i>Arripis georgianus</i>), southern school whiting (<i>Sillago bassensis</i>), yellowfin whiting (<i>Sillago schomburgkii</i>), yelloweye mullet (<i>Aldrichetta forsteri</i>), tailor (<i>Pomatomus saltatrix</i>), southern garfish (<i>Hyporhamphus melanochir</i>), silver trevally (<i>Pseudocaranx georgianus</i>) and King George whiting (<i>Sillaginodes punctate</i>). <u>Estuarine:</u> sea mullet (<i>Mugil cephalus</i>), estuary cobbler (<i>Cnidoglanis macrocephalus</i>) and black bream (<i>Acanthopagrus butcheri</i>).	2017/2018: 353 tonnes	Haul, beach seine and gill netting (commercial). Line fishing (recreational)	Five commercial fisheries target nearshore and/or estuarine finfish in the West Coast Bioregion. <u>Nearshore:</u> Cockburn Sound Fish Net Managed Fishery operating within in Cockburn sound, South West Coast Salmon Managed Fishery operating on various beaches south of the Perth Metropolitan area, West Coast Beach Bait Managed Fishery operating on beaches spanning from Moore River to Tim's Thicket and the South West Beach Seine Fishery operating on various beaches from Tim's Thicket southwards to Port Geographe Bay Marina. <u>Estuarine:</u> West Coast Estuarine Managed Fishery operating in the Swan/Canning and Peel Harvey estuaries, and in the Hardy Inlet
West Coast Nearshore Net Managed Fishery	Southern garfish (<i>Hyporhamphus melanochir</i>), Australian herring (<i>Arripis georgianus</i>),	Insufficient information	Insufficient information	Insufficient information
West Coast Purse Seine Fishery	Scaly mackerel (<i>Sardinella lemuru</i>), pilchard (<i>S. sagax</i>), Australian anchovy (<i>Engraulis australis</i>), yellowtail scad (<i>Trachurus novaezelandiae</i>) and maray (<i>Etrumeus teres</i>).	2017/2018: 1,095 tonnes	Purse seine gear	Waters between Ningaloo and Cape Leeuwin including three separate zones: Northern Development (22°00'S to 31°00'S), Perth Metropolitan (31°00'S to 33°00'S) and Southern Development Zone (33°00'S to Cape Leeuwin).

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
West Coast Rock Lobster Managed Fishery (WCRLMF)	Western rock lobster (<i>Panulirus cygnus</i>)	2016: 272 – 400 tonnes (346-481 tonnes based on updated average weight)	Baited traps (pots). Pots and diving (recreational catch)	The fishery is situated along the west coast of Australia between Latitudes 21°44' to 34°24' S. The fishery is managed in three zones: Zone A – Abrolhos Islands, north of latitude 30° S excluding the Abrolhos Islands (Zone B) and south of latitude 30° S (Zone C).
West Coast Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline (WCDGDLF)*	Gummy shark (<i>Mustelus antarcticus</i>), dusky shark (<i>Carcharhinus obscurus</i>), whiskery shark (<i>Furgaleus macki</i>) and sandbar shark (<i>C. plumbeus</i>)	2016/2018: 936 tonnes of sharks and rays	Demersal gillnets and demersal longline (not widely used)	Operates between 26° and 33° S.
Mackerel Fishery	Spanish mackerel (<i>Scomberomorus commerson</i>), grey mackerel (<i>S.semifasciatus</i>), with other species from the genera <i>Scomberomorus</i> , <i>Grammatorcynus</i> and <i>Acanthocybium</i> also contributing to commercial catches.	2016: Commercial: The commercial catch of spanish mackerel was 276 tonnes in 2016 (Gaughan & Santoro, 2018)	Trolling or handline Near-surface trolling gear from vessels in coastal areas around reefs, shoals and headlands. Jig fishing is also used to capture grey mackerel (<i>S.semifasciatus</i>)	The Fishery extends from the West Coast Bioregion to the WA/NT border, to the 200 nautical mile AFZ with most effort and catches recorded north of Geraldton, especially from the Kimberley and Pilbara coasts of the Northern Bioregion. Restricted to coastal and shallower waters. Catches are reported separately for three Areas: Area 1 - Kimberley (121° E to WA/NT border); Area 2 -Pilbara (114° E to 121° E); Area 3 - Gascoyne (27° S to 114° E) and West Coast (Cape Leeuwin to 27° S).
Western Australian Pearl Oyster Managed Fishery	Indo- Pacific silver-lipped pearl oyster (<i>Pinctada maxima</i>).	2018: 468,573 shells	Drift diving restricted to shallow diveable depths. The collection of pearl oysters for the Pearl Oyster Managed Fishery is restricted to shallow diving depths below 35 m. Divers are attached to large outrigger booms on a vessel and towed slowly over the pearl oyster beds, harvesting	The fishery is separated into four zones: Pearl Oyster Zone 1: NW Cape (including Exmouth Gulf) to longitude 119°30'E. There are five licensees in this zone. No fishing in this zone since 2008 Pearl Oyster Zone 2: East of Cape Thoun (118°20' E) and south of latitude 18°14' S. The 9 licensees in this zone also have full access to Zone 3. This zone is the mainstay of the fishery.

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
			legalised oysters by hand as they are seen.	Pearl Oyster Zone 3: West of longitude 125°20' E and north of latitude 18°14' S. The 2 licensees in this zone also have partial access to Zone 2. Pearl Oyster Zone 4: East of longitude 125°20' E to the Western Australia/Northern Territory border. Although all licensees have access to this zone, exploratory fishing has shown that stocks in this area are not economically viable. However, pearl farming does occur.
Western Australian Sea Cucumber Fishery (formerly known as Beche-de-mer)	Sandfish (<i>Holothuria scabra</i>) and deepwater redfish (<i>Actinopyga echinites</i>).	2016: 93 tonnes	Hand-harvest fishery, with animals caught principally by diving, and a smaller amount by wading.	The Western Australian Sea Cucumber Fishery is permitted to operate throughout WA waters with the exception of a number of specific closures around the Dampier Archipelago, Cape Keraudren, Cape Preston and Cape Lambert, the Rowley Shoals and the Abrolhos Islands. The fishery is primarily based in the northern half of the State, from Exmouth Gulf to the Northern Territory border.
Commonwealth Managed Fisheries				
North West Slope Trawl	Scampi (crayfish): velvet scampi (<i>Metanephrops velutinus</i>) and boschmai scampi (<i>Metanephrops boschmai</i>). Deepwater prawns (penaeid and carid): pink prawn (<i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>), red prawn (<i>Aristaeomorpha foliacea</i>), striped prawn (<i>Aristeus virilis</i>), giant scarlet prawn (<i>Aristaeopsis edwardsiana</i>), red carid prawn (<i>Heterocarpus woodmasoni</i>) and white carid prawn (<i>Heterocarpus sibogae</i>). Snapper.	2017-18: 79.7 total tonnes.	Demersal crustacean trawl seaward of the 200 m isobath.	Extends from 114° E to approximately 125° E off the WA coast between the 200 m isobath and the outer limit of the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ).

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
Western Skipjack Tuna Fishery	Skipjack tuna (<i>Katsuwonus pelamis</i>)	2017-18: None in either zones	Purse seine	The Skipjack Tuna Fishery is split into two sectors; east and west. The Western Skipjack Tuna Fishery is located in all Australia waters west of 142° 30' 00"E, out to 200 nm from the coast. There has been no fishing effort in the Skipjack Tuna Fishery since the 2008-09 season, and in that season activity concentrated off South Australia (Department of Agriculture 2019).
Small Pelagic Fishery	Australian sardine (<i>Sardinops sagax</i>), blue mackerel (<i>Scomber australasicus</i>), jack mackerel (<i>Trachurus declivis</i>) and redbait (<i>Emmelichthys nitidus</i>).	2018-19: 9,424 tonnes	Purse-seine and midwater trawling	Extends from Queensland to southern Western Australia.
Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery	Southern bluefin tuna (<i>Thunnus maccoyii</i>).	2017-18: 6,159 tonnes	Purse seine vessels primarily in Great Australian Bight all year round and longline off southern NSW in winter. Around 98% of Australia's SBT quota is taken by 5–10 purse seine vessels fishing for 13–25 kg southern bluefin tuna.	Fishery includes all waters of Australia, out to 200 nm from the coast. No current effort on the North West Shelf, fishing activity is concentrated in the Great Australian Bight and off South-east Australia (Department of Agriculture 2019).
Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery	A diverse range of species are caught, ranging from tropical and ruby snappers on the shelf edge to orange roughy (<i>Hoplostethus atlanticus</i>), oreo dories and bugs (<i>Ibacus</i> spp.) in the deeper temperate waters.	2017-18: 101.9 tonnes	Demersal fish trawl seaward of the 200 m isobath.	Its northernmost point is from the boundary of the AFZ to longitude 114° E, and its southernmost point is from the boundary of the AFZ to longitude 115°08' E. Deep water off WA, from the 200 m isobath to the edge of the AFZ.
Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery	Broadbill swordfish (<i>Xiphias gladius</i>), albacore tuna (<i>Thunnus alalunga</i>), striped marlin (<i>Kajikia audax</i>), bigeye tuna (<i>T. obesus</i>) and yellowfin tuna (<i>T. albacares</i>).	2018: 278 tonnes	Pelagic, longline, minor line and purse seine.	Extends westward from Cape York Peninsula (142°30' E) off Queensland to 34° S off the WA west coast. It also extends eastward from 34° S off the west coast of WA across the Great Australian Bight to 141° E at the South Australian–Victorian border. In recent years,

Fishery	Target Species	Catch ¹	Fishing Method	Area Description
				fishing effort has concentrated off south-west Western Australia and South Australia with no current effort on the North West Shelf (Department of Agriculture 2019).

Source: Apache (2008); Australian Fisheries Management Authority (2011); Department of Fisheries (2013), Stakeholder consultation.

¹Sources for catch data: Department of Agriculture 2019; Gaughan *et al*, 2019; DPIRD 2018.

15. Document review

This document is to be reviewed annually at a minimum. The review and revision will consider any changes to the spatial scope of the document, i.e. the Environment that May be Affected (EMBA), as well as any changes to EPBC Act Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) from one review year to the next, regardless of any changes to the spatial extent of the combined EMBA. A review of changes to MNES shall consider at a minimum any changes to EPBC Act species lists, species management/recovery plans and MNES spatial layers. Changes are to be recorded within the MNES review register (**Appendix B**).

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16.1 Physical Environment

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Appendix A: EPBC Act Protected Matters Reports

Due to restrictions on spatial file size and features that can be uploaded to the PMST (DAWE, 2021 available at: <https://haveyoursay.agriculture.gov.au/upgrading-the-protected-matters-search-tool/widgets/360422/documents>) the EMBA shapefile was separated into smaller sections to produce separate reports, which were then combined to produce the final report.

As described in Caveat 3 of the PMST report, where little information is available for a species or large number of maps are required in a short time-frame, maps are derived either from 0.04 or 0.02 decimal degree cells; by an automated process using polygon capture techniques (static two kilometre grid cells, alpha-hull and convex hull); or captured manually or by using topographic features (national park boundaries, islands, etc.).

This may cause some species to show up in the PMST report solely due to the polygon capture techniques utilised by the tool, which affect the resolution of the report (for example, near coastal boundaries). Hence any terrestrial species that are not expected to occur in significant numbers in the marine and coastal environments in the combined EMBA were not described further in **Section 6, 7 and 8**.

Appendix B: MNES Review Register

Table B 1: Review Register

Taxon	2022 Rev 10	Reason for Change	Sections Updated within this Document
Threatened Species			
Table 5-1	Various species updated as per BC Act update (Gazette 144 of 2022)	Legislation update	Table 5-1
Table 7-1	Various species updated as per BC Act update (Gazette 144 of 2022)	Legislation update	Table 7-1
Table 8-1	Various species updated as per BC Act update (Gazette 144 of 2022)	Legislation update	Table 8-1
Abbott's booby	<i>Papasula abbotti</i>	Incorrect spelling of scientific name	Table 8-6
Abbott's booby	Changed BIA from 'Yes' to 'No' – as BIA is no longer listed	Legislative update	Table 8-1
Abbott's booby	Removed from BIA table as the BIA is no longer listed	Legislative update	Table 8-6
Australian fairy tern	Terminology added (Foraging)	Legislative update	Table 8-1
Sea Birds	<i>Anous tenuirostris melanops</i>	Incorrect spelling	Table 8-6
Black-browed albatross	Terminology added (Migratory)	EP Act Legislative update	Table 8-1
Christmas Island frigatebird	Changed BIA from 'Yes' to 'No' – as BIA is no longer listed	Legislative update	Table 8-1
Christmas Island frigatebird	Removed from BIA table as the BIA is no longer listed	Legislative update	Table 8-6
Humpback whale	Updated EPBC status and outlined that despite removal from threatened species list, that they are still protected under EPBC Act Division 3	Legislative update	Section 7.1.5
Humpback whale	Terminology deleted (Vulnerable)	Ep Act Legislative update	Table 7-1
Humpback whale	Removed Conservation Advice for Megaptera novaeangliae (humpback whale) (2015) as it is no longer approved/current	Removed Conservation Advice for Megaptera novaeangliae (humpback whale) (2015) as it is no longer approved/current	Table 13-1
Mammals	EPBC terminology altered from Vulnerable to Endangered	EP Act Legislative update	Table 7-1
Red Knot	Population numbers added	Not included in current revision	Table 8-5

Hawksbill Turtle	Added new tagging research identifying that turtles migrating from WA remain on the continental shelf during certain phases.	Literature update – information in current revision was outdated	Section 6.1.3
Hawksbill Turtle	Added NWSS and Fossette <i>et al</i> findings on BIA overlaps	Literature update as per Santos comments on Rev9A	Section 6.1.3
Flatback Turtle	Added information on homing instinct, growth rates / population assessment implications (Turner Tomaszewicz et al, 2022)	Literature update as per Santos comments on Rev9A	Section 6.1.4
Olive Ridley Turtle	Updated information based on recent tagging study showing deeper diving capabilities.	Literature update	Section 6.1.6
Sei Whale	Provided reference on migration description	Missing reference in document	Section 7.1.1
Blue Whale	Provided additional paragraph describing existing acoustic populations (including 2 recent discoveries).	Literature update	Section 7.1.2
Blue Whale	Updated info on feeding grounds	Existing information was lacking and out of date.	Section 7.1.2
Blue Whale	Provided reference for migration pattern	Missing reference in document	Section 7.1.2
Humpback Whale	Added information on WA having the largest known population	Literature update	Section 7.1.5
Sperm Whale	Updated depth range from 200 to 400m based on two more recent references	Outdated figure	Section 7.1.6
Whale Shark	Added additional information on high proportion of surface swimming and recent tracking study demonstrating risk to vessel collisions.	Literature update	Section 5.3.4
Whale Shark	Updated info from various references on sexual maturity/surface feeding and associated vulnerabilities	Literature update as per Santos comments on Rev9A	Section 5.3.4
Migratory Species			
None			
Provinces			
Southwest Shelf Province	Added information on Bremer Canyon	Santos Rev 9A comment	Section 2.1.4
Coral Reefs	Added the 2011 Ningaloo reef bleaching event, as well as the 2016 bleaching event at Scott reef.	Referenced bleach event in current revision outdated	Section 3.1

Northwest Transition	Added reference to the 2009 Mermaid reef coral survey and that it is comparable to the original 1993 survey referenced.	Outdated survey findings.	Section 3.1.6
Northwest Transition	Added paragraph outlining that recent genetic studies on offshore reefs within the region have shown high genetic diversity and potential vulnerability to impacts due to isolation and reliance on local recruitment.	Literature update	Section 3.1.6
Timor Province	Added number of Scleractinian coral taxa found at Scott reef as of 2013.	No description of coral taxa numbers provided	Section 3.1.9
Protected Areas			
State Marine Conservation Reserves	Added recently proposed marine reserves: - Bardi Jawa Gaarra Marine Park - Mayala Marine Park - Laland-gaddam Marine Park	Newly proposed marine protected areas in Kimberley coastal (i.e., state) waters. Expected to be gazetted in 2024.	New sections 11.1.18, 11.1.19 and 11.1.20
Social, Economic and Cultural Features			
Recreational Fisheries: Southwest Bioregion	Updated info on the Albany Aquaculture Development Zone and included information on the Rare Foods Australia (Ocean Grown Abalone) Project	As per Santos Comment on Rev 9A	Section 14.9.1
Tourism			
Tourism	Added additional information on the Abrolhos and Montebello Islands where information specific to tourism growth was available	As per Santos Comment on Rev 9A	Section 14.1.4
Other edits			
General grammar/minor terminology	Minor edits on grammar, terminology (e.g. Santos WA removed) etc have been updated as per Santos' Review of Rev9A	As per Santos Comment on Rev 9A	Throughout
Appendix A (PMST)	Included additional information on how the PMST search was conducted and how the tool has been updated (as per caveat 3 referenced in all PMST reports)	As per Santos Comment on Rev 9A	Appendix A
Coral Reefs	Added the 2011 Ningaloo reef bleaching event, as well as the 2016 bleaching event at Scott reef.	Referenced bleach event in current revision outdated	Section 3.1
Northwest Transition	Added reference to the 2009 Mermaid reef coral survey and that it is comparable to the original 1993 survey referenced.	Outdated survey findings.	Section 3.1.6
Northwest Transition	Added paragraph outlining that recent genetic studies on offshore reefs within the region have shown high genetic diversity and potential vulnerability to impacts due to isolation and reliance on local recruitment.	Literature update	Section 3.1.6

Timor Province	Added number of Scleractinian coral taxa found at Scott reef as of 2013.	No description of coral taxa numbers provided	Section 3.1.9
Asian Dowitcher	Population numbers added	Environment.gov.au update	Table 8-5
Grey-tailed Tattler	Population numbers added	Not included in current revision	Table 8-5
Oriental Plover	Population numbers updated	Environment.gov.au update	Table 8-5
Pacific Golden Plover	Internationally important location removed	No longer on the government.gov.au site	Table 8-5
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Added internationally important sites	Not included in current revision	Table 8-5
Whimbrel	Added internationally important sites	Not included in current revision	Table 8-5
Seabirds	Added species listed under the Wildlife Conservation Plan for Seabirds (2020) to table + Red-tailed Tropicbird; + White-tailed Tropicbird; + Broad-billed Prion; + Fairy Prion; + Wedge-tailed Shearwater; + Flesh-footed Shearwater; + Sooty Shearwater; + Short-tailed Shearwater; + Streaked Shearwater; + Lesser Frigatebird; + Great Frigatebird; + Masked Booby; + Red-footed Booby; + Brown Booby; + Common Noddy; + Bridled Tern; + Little Tern; + Caspian Tern; + Roseate Tern and;	New Conservation plan (effective June 2022)	Table 13-1

	+ Osprey;		
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Appendix E: EPBC PMST Reports

Order of PMST outputs are:

1 – EMBA

2 – MEVA

3 – Operational area



Australian Government

Department of Climate Change, Energy,
the Environment and Water

EPBC Act Protected Matters Report

This report provides general guidance on matters of national environmental significance and other matters protected by the EPBC Act in the area you have selected. Please see the caveat for interpretation of information provided here.

Report created: 08-Nov-2023

[Summary](#)

[Details](#)

[Matters of NES](#)

[Other Matters Protected by the EPBC Act](#)

[Extra Information](#)

[Caveat](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

Summary

Matters of National Environment Significance

This part of the report summarises the matters of national environmental significance that may occur in, or may relate to, the area you nominated. Further information is available in the detail part of the report, which can be accessed by scrolling or following the links below. If you are proposing to undertake an activity that may have a significant impact on one or more matters of national environmental significance then you should consider the [Administrative Guidelines on Significance](#).

World Heritage Properties:	1
National Heritage Places:	1
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar	None
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park:	None
Commonwealth Marine Area:	4
Listed Threatened Ecological Communities:	None
Listed Threatened Species:	42
Listed Migratory Species:	62

Other Matters Protected by the EPBC Act

This part of the report summarises other matters protected under the Act that may relate to the area you nominated. Approval may be required for a proposed activity that significantly affects the environment on Commonwealth land, when the action is outside the Commonwealth land, or the environment anywhere when the action is taken on Commonwealth land. Approval may also be required for the Commonwealth or Commonwealth agencies proposing to take an action that is likely to have a significant impact on the environment anywhere.

The EPBC Act protects the environment on Commonwealth land, the environment from the actions taken on Commonwealth land, and the environment from actions taken by Commonwealth agencies. As heritage values of a place are part of the 'environment', these aspects of the EPBC Act protect the Commonwealth Heritage values of a Commonwealth Heritage place. Information on the new heritage laws can be found at <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage>

A [permit](#) may be required for activities in or on a Commonwealth area that may affect a member of a listed threatened species or ecological community, a member of a listed migratory species, whales and other cetaceans, or a member of a listed marine species.

Commonwealth Lands:	None
Commonwealth Heritage Places:	2
Listed Marine Species:	109
Whales and Other Cetaceans:	32
Critical Habitats:	None
Commonwealth Reserves Terrestrial:	None
Australian Marine Parks:	9
Habitat Critical to the Survival of Marine Turtles:	4

Extra Information

This part of the report provides information that may also be relevant to the area you have

State and Territory Reserves:	15
Regional Forest Agreements:	None
Nationally Important Wetlands:	2
EPBC Act Referrals:	175
Key Ecological Features (Marine):	7
Biologically Important Areas:	33
Bioregional Assessments:	None
Geological and Bioregional Assessments:	None

Details

Matters of National Environmental Significance

World Heritage Properties			[Resource Information]
Name	State	Legal Status	
The Ningaloo Coast	WA	Declared property	

National Heritage Places			[Resource Information]
Name	State	Legal Status	
Natural			
The Ningaloo Coast	WA	Listed place	

Commonwealth Marine Area			[Resource Information]
Approval is required for a proposed activity that is located within the Commonwealth Marine Area which has, will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on the environment. Approval may be required for a proposed action taken outside a Commonwealth Marine Area but which has, may have or is likely to have a significant impact on the environment in the Commonwealth Marine Area.			

Feature Name
Commonwealth Marine Areas (EPBC Act)
Commonwealth Marine Areas (EPBC Act)
Commonwealth Marine Areas (EPBC Act)
Commonwealth Marine Areas (EPBC Act)

Listed Threatened Species			[Resource Information]
Status of Conservation Dependent and Extinct are not MNES under the EPBC Act. Number is the current name ID.			
Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text	
BIRD			
Calidris canutus	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	
Calidris ferruginea	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	
Charadrius leschenaultii	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	
Greater Sand Plover, Large Sand Plover [877]			

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Erythrotriorchis radiatus Red Goshawk [942]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Falco hypoleucos Grey Falcon [929]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Limosa lapponica menzbieri Northern Siberian Bar-tailed Godwit, Russkoye Bar-tailed Godwit [86432]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Macronectes giganteus Southern Giant-Petrel, Southern Giant Petrel [1060]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Numenius madagascariensis Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew [847]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Papasula abbotti Abbott's Booby [59297]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Pezoporus occidentalis Night Parrot [59350]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Phaethon lepturus fulvus Christmas Island White-tailed Tropicbird, Golden Bosunbird [26021]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Pterodroma mollis Soft-plumaged Petrel [1036]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Rostratula australis Australian Painted Snipe [77037]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Sternula nereis nereis Australian Fairy Tern [82950]	Vulnerable	Breeding known to occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Thalassarche carteri Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross [64464]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Thalassarche impavida Campbell Albatross, Campbell Black-browed Albatross [64459]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
FISH		
Milyeringa veritas Cape Range Cave Gudgeon, Blind Gudgeon [66676]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Ophisternon candidum Blind Cave Eel [66678]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Thunnus maccoyii Southern Bluefin Tuna [69402]	Conservation Dependent	Breeding known to occur within area
MAMMAL		
Balaenoptera borealis Sei Whale [34]	Vulnerable	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area
Balaenoptera musculus Blue Whale [36]	Endangered	Migration route known to occur within area
Balaenoptera physalus Fin Whale [37]	Vulnerable	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area
Dasyurus hallucatus Northern Quoll, Digul [Gogo-Yimidir], Wijingadda [Dambimangari], Wiminji [Martu] [331]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Eubalaena australis Southern Right Whale [40]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Lagorchestes hirsutus Central Australian subspecies		
Mala, Rufous Hare-Wallaby (Central Australia) [88019]	Endangered	Translocated population known to occur within area
Macroderma gigas		
Ghost Bat [174]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Petrogale lateralis lateralis		
Black-flanked Rock-wallaby, Moororong, Black-footed Rock Wallaby [66647]	Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Rhinonicteris aurantia (Pilbara form)		
Pilbara Leaf-nosed Bat [82790]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
REPTILE		
Aipysurus apraefrontalis		
Short-nosed Seasnake [1115]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Aipysurus foliosquama		
Leaf-scaled Seasnake [1118]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Caretta caretta		
Loggerhead Turtle [1763]	Endangered	Breeding known to occur within area
Chelonia mydas		
Green Turtle [1765]	Vulnerable	Breeding known to occur within area
Dermochelys coriacea		
Leatherback Turtle, Leathery Turtle, Luth [1768]	Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Eretmochelys imbricata		
Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Vulnerable	Breeding known to occur within area
Natator depressus		
Flatback Turtle [59257]	Vulnerable	Breeding known to occur within area
SHARK		
Carcharias taurus (west coast population)		
Grey Nurse Shark (west coast population) [68752]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Carcharodon carcharias White Shark, Great White Shark [64470]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Pristis clavata Dwarf Sawfish, Queensland Sawfish [68447]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Pristis pristis Freshwater Sawfish, Largetooth Sawfish, River Sawfish, Leichhardt's Sawfish, Northern Sawfish [60756]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Pristis zijsron Green Sawfish, Dindagubba, Narrowsnout Sawfish [68442]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Rhincodon typus Whale Shark [66680]	Vulnerable	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur within area
Sphyrna lewini Scalloped Hammerhead [85267]	Conservation Dependent	Species or species habitat known to occur within area

Listed Migratory Species	[Resource Information]	
Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Migratory Marine Birds		
Anous stolidus Common Noddy [825]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Apus pacificus Fork-tailed Swift [678]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Ardenna carneipes Flesh-footed Shearwater, Fleshy-footed Shearwater [82404]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Ardenna pacifica Wedge-tailed Shearwater [84292]		Breeding known to occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Calonectris leucomelas Streaked Shearwater [1077]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Fregata ariel Lesser Frigatebird, Least Frigatebird [1012]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Fregata minor Great Frigatebird, Greater Frigatebird [1013]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hydroprogne caspia Caspian Tern [808]		Breeding known to occur within area
Macronectes giganteus Southern Giant-Petrel, Southern Giant Petrel [1060]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Onychoprion anaethetus Bridled Tern [82845]		Breeding known to occur within area
Phaethon lepturus White-tailed Tropicbird [1014]		Breeding known to occur within area
Phaethon rubricauda Red-tailed Tropicbird [994]		Breeding known to occur within area
Sterna dougallii Roseate Tern [817]		Breeding known to occur within area
Sternula albifrons Little Tern [82849]		Congregation or aggregation known to occur within area
Sula leucogaster Brown Booby [1022]		Breeding known to occur within area
Thalassarche carteri Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross [64464]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Thalassarche impavida Campbell Albatross, Campbell Black-browed Albatross [64459]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Migratory Marine Species		
Anoxypristis cuspidata Narrow Sawfish, Knifetooth Sawfish [68448]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Balaenoptera bonaerensis Antarctic Minke Whale, Dark-shoulder Minke Whale [67812]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Balaenoptera borealis Sei Whale [34]	Vulnerable	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area
Balaenoptera edeni Bryde's Whale [35]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Balaenoptera musculus Blue Whale [36]	Endangered	Migration route known to occur within area
Balaenoptera physalus Fin Whale [37]	Vulnerable	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area
Carcharhinus longimanus Oceanic Whitetip Shark [84108]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Carcharodon carcharias White Shark, Great White Shark [64470]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Caretta caretta Loggerhead Turtle [1763]	Endangered	Breeding known to occur within area
Chelonia mydas Green Turtle [1765]	Vulnerable	Breeding known to occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Dermochelys coriacea Leatherback Turtle, Leathery Turtle, Luth [1768]	Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Dugong dugon Dugong [28]		Breeding known to occur within area
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Vulnerable	Breeding known to occur within area
Eubalaena australis as Balaena glacialis australis Southern Right Whale [40]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Isurus oxyrinchus Shortfin Mako, Mako Shark [79073]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Isurus paucus Longfin Mako [82947]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Megaptera novaeangliae Humpback Whale [38]		Breeding known to occur within area
Mobula alfredi as Manta alfredi Reef Manta Ray, Coastal Manta Ray [90033]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Mobula birostris as Manta birostris Giant Manta Ray [90034]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Natator depressus Flatback Turtle [59257]	Vulnerable	Breeding known to occur within area
Orcaella heinsohni Australian Snubfin Dolphin [81322]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Orcinus orca Killer Whale, Orca [46]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Physeter macrocephalus Sperm Whale [59]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Pristis clavata Dwarf Sawfish, Queensland Sawfish [68447]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Pristis pristis Freshwater Sawfish, Largetooth Sawfish, River Sawfish, Leichhardt's Sawfish, Northern Sawfish [60756]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Pristis zijsron Green Sawfish, Dindagubba, Narrowsnout Sawfish [68442]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Rhincodon typus Whale Shark [66680]	Vulnerable	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur within area
Sousa sahalensis as Sousa chinensis Australian Humpback Dolphin [87942]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Tursiops aduncus (Arafura/Timor Sea populations) Spotted Bottlenose Dolphin (Arafura/Timor Sea populations) [78900]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Migratory Terrestrial Species		
Hirundo rustica Barn Swallow [662]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Motacilla cinerea Grey Wagtail [642]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Motacilla flava Yellow Wagtail [644]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Migratory Wetlands Species		
Actitis hypoleucos Common Sandpiper [59309]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Calidris acuminata Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [874]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Calidris canutus Red Knot, Knot [855]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Calidris ferruginea Curlew Sandpiper [856]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Calidris melanotos Pectoral Sandpiper [858]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Charadrius leschenaultii Greater Sand Plover, Large Sand Plover [877]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Charadrius veredus Oriental Plover, Oriental Dotterel [882]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Glareola maldivarum Oriental Pratincole [840]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Limosa lapponica Bar-tailed Godwit [844]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Numenius madagascariensis Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew [847]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Pandion haliaetus Osprey [952]		Breeding known to occur within area
Thalasseus bergii Greater Crested Tern [83000]		Breeding known to occur within area
Tringa nebularia Common Greenshank, Greenshank [832]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area

Other Matters Protected by the EPBC Act

Commonwealth Heritage Places		[Resource Information]
Name	State	Status
Natural		
Mermaid Reef - Rowley Shoals	WA	Listed place
Ningaloo Marine Area - Commonwealth Waters	WA	Listed place

Listed Marine Species		[Resource Information]
Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Bird		
Actitis hypoleucos Common Sandpiper [59309]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Anous stolidus Common Noddy [825]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Apus pacificus Fork-tailed Swift [678]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area overfly marine area
Ardenna carneipes as Puffinus carneipes Flesh-footed Shearwater, Fleshy-footed Shearwater [82404]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Ardenna pacifica as Puffinus pacificus Wedge-tailed Shearwater [84292]		Breeding known to occur within area
Bubulcus ibis as Ardea ibis Cattle Egret [66521]		Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area
Calidris acuminata Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [874]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Calidris canutus Red Knot, Knot [855]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area overfly marine area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Calidris ferruginea Curlew Sandpiper [856]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area overfly marine area
Calidris melanotos Pectoral Sandpiper [858]		Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area
Calonectris leucomelas Streaked Shearwater [1077]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Chalcites osculans as Chrysococcyx osculans Black-eared Cuckoo [83425]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area overfly marine area
Charadrius leschenaultii Greater Sand Plover, Large Sand Plover [877]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Charadrius veredus Oriental Plover, Oriental Dotterel [882]		Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area
Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae as Larus novaehollandiae Silver Gull [82326]		Breeding known to occur within area
Fregata ariel Lesser Frigatebird, Least Frigatebird [1012]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Fregata minor Great Frigatebird, Greater Frigatebird [1013]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Glareola maldivarum Oriental Pratincole [840]		Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Haliaeetus leucogaster White-bellied Sea-Eagle [943]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Hirundo rustica Barn Swallow [662]		Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area
Hydroprogne caspia as Sterna caspia Caspian Tern [808]		Breeding known to occur within area
Limosa lapponica Bar-tailed Godwit [844]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Macronectes giganteus Southern Giant-Petrel, Southern Giant Petrel [1060]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Merops ornatus Rainbow Bee-eater [670]		Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area
Motacilla cinerea Grey Wagtail [642]		Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area
Motacilla flava Yellow Wagtail [644]		Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area
Numenius madagascariensis Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew [847]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Onychoprion anaethetus as Sterna anaethetus Bridled Tern [82845]		Breeding known to occur within area
Onychoprion fuscatus as Sterna fuscata Sooty Tern [90682]		Breeding known to occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Pandion haliaetus Osprey [952]		Breeding known to occur within area
Papasula abbotti Abbott's Booby [59297]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Phaethon lepturus White-tailed Tropicbird [1014]		Breeding known to occur within area
Phaethon lepturus fulvus Christmas Island White-tailed Tropicbird, Golden Bosunbird [26021]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Phaethon rubricauda Red-tailed Tropicbird [994]		Breeding known to occur within area
Pterodroma mollis Soft-plumaged Petrel [1036]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Rostratula australis as Rostratula benghalensis (sensu lato) Australian Painted Snipe [77037]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area overfly marine area
Sterna dougallii Roseate Tern [817]		Breeding known to occur within area
Sternula albifrons as Sterna albifrons Little Tern [82849]		Congregation or aggregation known to occur within area
Sternula nereis as Sterna nereis Fairy Tern [82949]		Breeding known to occur within area
Sula leucogaster Brown Booby [1022]		Breeding known to occur within area
Thalassarche carteri Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross [64464]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Thalassarche impavida Campbell Albatross, Campbell Black-browed Albatross [64459]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Thalasseus bengalensis as Sterna bengalensis Lesser Crested Tern [66546]		Breeding known to occur within area
Thalasseus bergii as Sterna bergii Greater Crested Tern [83000]		Breeding known to occur within area
Tringa nebularia Common Greenshank, Greenshank [832]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area overfly marine area
Fish		
Acentronura larsonae Helen's Pygmy Pipehorse [66186]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Bhanotia fasciolata Corrugated Pipefish, Barbed Pipefish [66188]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Bulbonaricus brauni Braun's Pughead Pipefish, Pug-headed Pipefish [66189]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Campichthys tricarinatus Three-keel Pipefish [66192]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Choeroichthys brachysoma Pacific Short-bodied Pipefish, Short-bodied Pipefish [66194]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Choeroichthys latispinosus Muiron Island Pipefish [66196]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Choeroichthys suillus Pig-snouted Pipefish [66198]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Corythoichthys amplexus Fijian Banded Pipefish, Brown-banded Pipefish [66199]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Corythoichthys flavofasciatus Reticulate Pipefish, Yellow-banded Pipefish, Network Pipefish [66200]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Corythoichthys intestinalis Australian Messmate Pipefish, Banded Pipefish [66202]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Corythoichthys schultzi Schultz's Pipefish [66205]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Cosmocampus banneri Roughridge Pipefish [66206]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Doryrhamphus dactyliophorus Banded Pipefish, Ringed Pipefish [66210]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Doryrhamphus excisus Bluestripe Pipefish, Indian Blue-stripe Pipefish, Pacific Blue-stripe Pipefish [66211]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Doryrhamphus janssi Cleaner Pipefish, Janss' Pipefish [66212]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Doryrhamphus multiannulatus Many-banded Pipefish [66717]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Doryrhamphus negrosensis Flagtail Pipefish, Masthead Island Pipefish [66213]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Festucalex scalaris Ladder Pipefish [66216]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Filicampus tigris Tiger Pipefish [66217]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Halicampus brocki Brock's Pipefish [66219]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Halicampus dunckeri Red-hair Pipefish, Duncker's Pipefish [66220]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Halicampus grayi Mud Pipefish, Gray's Pipefish [66221]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Halicampus nitidus Glittering Pipefish [66224]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Halicampus spinirostris Spiny-snout Pipefish [66225]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Haliichthys taeniophorus Ribboned Pipehorse, Ribboned Seadragon [66226]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippichthys penicillus Beady Pipefish, Steep-nosed Pipefish [66231]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus angustus Western Spiny Seahorse, Narrow-bellied Seahorse [66234]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus histrix Spiny Seahorse, Thorny Seahorse [66236]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus kuda Spotted Seahorse, Yellow Seahorse [66237]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Hippocampus planifrons Flat-face Seahorse [66238]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus spinosissimus Hedgehog Seahorse [66239]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus trimaculatus Three-spot Seahorse, Low-crowned Seahorse, Flat-faced Seahorse [66720]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Micrognathus micronotopterus Tidepool Pipefish [66255]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Phoxocampus belcheri Black Rock Pipefish [66719]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Solegnathus hardwickii Pallid Pipehorse, Hardwick's Pipehorse [66272]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Solegnathus lettiensis Gunther's Pipehorse, Indonesian Pipefish [66273]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Solenostomus cyanopterus Robust Ghostpipefish, Blue-finned Ghost Pipefish, [66183]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Syngnathoides biaculeatus Double-end Pipehorse, Double-ended Pipehorse, Alligator Pipefish [66279]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Trachyrhamphus bicoarctatus Bentstick Pipefish, Bend Stick Pipefish, Short-tailed Pipefish [66280]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Trachyrhamphus longirostris Straightstick Pipefish, Long-nosed Pipefish, Straight Stick Pipefish [66281]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Dugong dugon Dugong [28]		Breeding known to occur within area
Reptile		
Acalyptophis peronii Horned Seasnake [1114]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Aipysurus apraefrontalis Short-nosed Seasnake [1115]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Aipysurus duboisii Dubois' Seasnake [1116]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Aipysurus eydouxii Spine-tailed Seasnake [1117]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Aipysurus foliosquama Leaf-scaled Seasnake [1118]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Aipysurus laevis Olive Seasnake [1120]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Aipysurus tenuis Brown-lined Seasnake [1121]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Astrotia stokesii Stokes' Seasnake [1122]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Caretta caretta Loggerhead Turtle [1763]	Endangered	Breeding known to occur within area
Chelonia mydas Green Turtle [1765]	Vulnerable	Breeding known to occur within area
Chitulia ornata as Hydrophis ornatus Spotted Seasnake, Ornate Reef Seasnake [87377]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Dermochelys coriacea Leatherback Turtle, Leathery Turtle, Luth [1768]	Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Disteira kingii Spectacled Seasnake [1123]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Disteira major Olive-headed Seasnake [1124]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Emydocephalus annulatus Turtle-headed Seasnake [1125]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Ephalophis greyi North-western Mangrove Seasnake [1127]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Vulnerable	Breeding known to occur within area
Hydrelaps darwiniensis Black-ringed Seasnake [1100]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hydrophis elegans Elegant Seasnake [1104]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hydrophis macdowelli as Hydrophis mcdowelli Small-headed Seasnake [75601]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Leioselasma czeblukovi as Hydrophis czeblukovi Fine-spined Seasnake, Geometrical Seasnake [87374]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Natator depressus Flatback Turtle [59257]	Vulnerable	Breeding known to occur within area
Pelamis platurus Yellow-bellied Seasnake [1091]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Whales and Other Cetaceans		[Resource Information]
Current Scientific Name	Status	Type of Presence
Mammal		
Balaenoptera acutorostrata Minke Whale [33]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Balaenoptera bonaerensis Antarctic Minke Whale, Dark-shoulder Minke Whale [67812]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Balaenoptera borealis Sei Whale [34]	Vulnerable	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area
Balaenoptera edeni Bryde's Whale [35]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Balaenoptera musculus Blue Whale [36]	Endangered	Migration route known to occur within area
Balaenoptera physalus Fin Whale [37]	Vulnerable	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area
Delphinus delphis Common Dolphin, Short-beaked Common Dolphin [60]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Eubalaena australis Southern Right Whale [40]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Feresa attenuata Pygmy Killer Whale [61]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Globicephala macrorhynchus Short-finned Pilot Whale [62]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Current Scientific Name	Status	Type of Presence
Grampus griseus Risso's Dolphin, Grampus [64]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Indopacetus pacificus Longman's Beaked Whale [72]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Kogia breviceps Pygmy Sperm Whale [57]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Kogia sima Dwarf Sperm Whale [85043]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Lagenodelphis hosei Fraser's Dolphin, Sarawak Dolphin [41]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Megaptera novaeangliae Humpback Whale [38]		Breeding known to occur within area
Mesoplodon densirostris Blainville's Beaked Whale, Dense-beaked Whale [74]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Mesoplodon ginkgodens Ginkgo-toothed Beaked Whale, Ginkgo-toothed Whale, Ginkgo Beaked Whale [59564]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Orcaella heinsohni Australian Snubfin Dolphin [81322]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Orcinus orca Killer Whale, Orca [46]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Peponocephala electra Melon-headed Whale [47]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Current Scientific Name	Status	Type of Presence
Physeter macrocephalus Sperm Whale [59]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Pseudorca crassidens False Killer Whale [48]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Sousa sahalensis Australian Humpback Dolphin [87942]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Stenella attenuata Spotted Dolphin, Pantropical Spotted Dolphin [51]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Stenella coeruleoalba Striped Dolphin, Euphrosyne Dolphin [52]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Stenella longirostris Long-snouted Spinner Dolphin [29]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Steno bredanensis Rough-toothed Dolphin [30]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Tursiops aduncus Indian Ocean Bottlenose Dolphin, Spotted Bottlenose Dolphin [68418]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Tursiops aduncus (Arafura/Timor Sea populations) Spotted Bottlenose Dolphin (Arafura/Timor Sea populations) [78900]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Tursiops truncatus s. str. Bottlenose Dolphin [68417]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Ziphius cavirostris Cuvier's Beaked Whale, Goose-beaked Whale [56]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Australian Marine Parks		[Resource Information]
Park Name	Zone & IUCN Categories	
Dampier	Habitat Protection Zone (IUCN IV)	
Argo-Rowley Terrace	Multiple Use Zone (IUCN VI)	
Argo-Rowley Terrace	Multiple Use Zone (IUCN VI)	
Gascoyne	Multiple Use Zone (IUCN VI)	
Montebello	Multiple Use Zone (IUCN VI)	
Dampier	National Park Zone (IUCN II)	
Mermaid Reef	National Park Zone (IUCN II)	
Ningaloo	Recreational Use Zone (IUCN IV)	
Argo-Rowley Terrace	Special Purpose Zone (Trawl) (IUCN VI)	

Habitat Critical to the Survival of Marine Turtles		
Scientific Name	Behaviour	Presence
Aug - Sep		
Natator depressus		
Flatback Turtle [59257]	Nesting	Known to occur
Dec - Jan		
Chelonia mydas		
Green Turtle [1765]	Nesting	Known to occur
Nov-Feb		
Caretta caretta		
Loggerhead Turtle [1763]	Nesting	Known to occur
Nov - May		
Eretmochelys imbricata		
Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Nesting	Known to occur

Extra Information

State and Territory Reserves			[Resource Information]
Protected Area Name	Reserve Type	State	
Barrow Island	Marine Management Area	WA	
Bessieres Island	Nature Reserve	WA	
Cape Range	National Park	WA	
Jurabi Coastal Park	5(1)(h) Reserve	WA	
Montebello Islands	Conservation Park	WA	
Montebello Islands	Marine Park	WA	
Montebello Islands	Conservation Park	WA	
Muiron Islands	Nature Reserve	WA	
Muiron Islands	Marine Management Area	WA	
Ningaloo	Marine Park	WA	
Round Island	Nature Reserve	WA	
Rowley Shoals	Marine Park	WA	
Serrurier Island	Nature Reserve	WA	
Unnamed WA41080	5(1)(h) Reserve	WA	
Unnamed WA44665	5(1)(h) Reserve	WA	

Nationally Important Wetlands		[Resource Information]
Wetland Name		State
Cape Range Subterranean Waterways		WA
Mermaid Reef		EXT

EPBC Act Referrals				[Resource Information]
Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status	
Browse to North West Shelf Development, Indian Ocean, WA	2018/8319		Approval	
Gorgon Gas Development	2003/1294		Post-Approval	
Project Highclere Cable Lay and Operation	2022/09203		Completed	

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Action clearly unacceptable			
Highlands 3D Marine Seismic Survey	2012/6680	Action Clearly Unacceptable	Completed
Controlled action			
'Van Gogh' Petroleum Field Development	2007/3213	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Construct and operate LNG & domestic gas plant including onshore and offshore facilities - Wheatston	2008/4469	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Develop Jansz-lo deepwater gas field in Permit Areas WA-18-R, WA-25-R and WA-26-	2005/2184	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Development of Angel gas and condensate field, North West Shelf	2004/1805	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Development of Browse Basin Gas Fields (Upstream)	2008/4111	Controlled Action	Completed
Development of Coniston/Novara fields within the Exmouth Sub-basin	2011/5995	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Development of Stybarrow petroleum field incl drilling and facility installation	2004/1469	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Echo-Yodel Production Wells	2000/11	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Enfield full field development	2001/257	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Equus Gas Fields Development Project, Carnarvon Basin	2012/6301	Controlled Action	Completed
Gorgon Gas Development 4th Train Proposal	2011/5942	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Greater Enfield (Vincent) Development	2005/2110	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Light Crude Oil Production	2001/365	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Pluto Gas Project	2005/2258	Controlled Action	Completed
Pluto Gas Project Including Site B	2006/2968	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Pyrenees Oil Fields Development	2005/2034	Controlled Action	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Controlled action			
The Scarborough Project - FLNG & assoc subsea infrastructure, Carnarvon Basin	2013/6811	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Vincent Appraisal Well	2000/22	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Not controlled action			
'Goodwyn A' Low Pressure Train Project	2003/914	Not Controlled Action	Completed
'Van Gogh' Oil Appraisal Drilling Program, Exploration Permit Area WA-155-P(1)	2006/3148	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Bollinger 2D Seismic Survey 200km North of North West Cape WA	2004/1868	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Bultaco-2, Laverda-2, Laverda-3 and Montesa-2 Appraisal Wells	2000/103	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Carnarvon 3D Marine Seismic Survey	2004/1890	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Cazadores 2D seismic survey	2004/1720	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Construction and operation of an unmanned sea platform and connecting pipeline to Varanus Island for	2004/1703	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Controlled Source Electromagnetic Survey	2007/3262	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Development of Halyard Field off the west coast of WA	2010/5611	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Development of Mutineer and Exeter petroleum fields for oil production, Permit	2003/1033	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Drilling of an exploration well Gats-1 in Permit Area WA-261-P	2004/1701	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Eagle-1 Exploration Drilling, North West Shelf, WA	2019/8578	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Echo A Development WA-23-L, WA-24-L	2005/2042	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Exploration drilling well WA-155-P(1)	2003/971	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Exploration of appraisal wells	2006/3065	Not Controlled Action	Completed

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action			
Exploration Well in Permit Area WA-155-P(1)	2002/759	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Exploratory drilling in permit area WA-225-P	2001/490	Not Controlled Action	Completed
HCA05X Macedon Experimental Survey	2004/1926	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Hess Exploration Drilling Programme	2007/3566	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Huascaran-1 exploration well (WA-292-P)	2001/539	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Improving rabbit biocontrol: releasing another strain of RHDV, sthrn two thirds of Australia	2015/7522	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Infill Production Well (Griffin-9)	2001/417	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Jansz-2 and 3 Appraisal Wells	2002/754	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Klammer 2D Seismic Survey	2002/868	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Maia-Gaea Exploration wells	2000/17	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Manaslu - 1 and Huascaran - 1 Offshore Exploration Wells	2001/235	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Montesa-1 and Bultaco-1 Exploration Wells	2000/102	Not Controlled Action	Completed
North Rankin B gas compression facility	2005/2500	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Pipeline System Modifications Project	2000/3	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Project Highclere Geophysical Survey	2021/9023	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Searipple gas and condensate field development	2000/89	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Subsea Gas Pipeline From Stybarrow Field to Griffin Venture Gas Export Pipeline	2005/2033	Not Controlled Action	Completed
sub-sea tieback of Perseus field wells	2004/1326	Not Controlled Action	Completed

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action			
Telstra North Rankin Spur Fibre Optic Cable	2016/7836	Not Controlled Action	Completed
To construct and operate an offshore submarine fibre optic cable, WA	2014/7373	Not Controlled Action	Completed
WA-295-P Kerr-McGee Exploration Wells	2001/152	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Wanda Offshore Research Project, 80 km north-east of Exmouth, WA	2018/8293	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Western Flank Gas Development	2005/2464	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Wheatstone 3D seismic survey, 70km north of Barrow Island	2004/1761	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Not controlled action (particular manner)			
'Kate' 3D marine seismic survey, exploration permits WA-320-P and WA-345-P, 60km	2005/2037	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
'Tourmaline' 2D marine seismic survey, permit areas WA-323-P, WA-330-P and WA-32	2005/2282	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
"Leanne" offshore 3D seismic exploration, WA-356-P	2005/1938	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
2D and 3D seismic surveys	2005/2151	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
2D Seismic Survey	2005/2146	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
2D Seismic Survey Permit Area WA-352-P	2008/4628	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
2D seismic survey within permit WA-291	2007/3265	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D marine seismic survey	2008/4281	Not Controlled Action (Particular	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)		Manner)	
3D Marine Seismic Survey (WA-482-P, WA-363-P), WA	2013/6761	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D Marine Seismic Survey in Permit Areas WA-15-R, WA-18-R, WA-205-P, WA-253-P, WA-267-P and WA-268-P	2003/1271	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D Marine Seismic Survey in WA 457-P & WA 458-P, North West Shelf, offshore WA	2013/6862	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D marine seismic survey over petroleum title WA-268-P	2007/3458	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D Marine Seismic Surveys - Contos CT-13 & Supertubes CT-13, offshore WA	2013/6901	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D seismic survey	2006/2715	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D Seismic Survey, WA	2008/4428	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D Seismic Survey in the Carnarvon Bsin on the North West Shelf	2002/778	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D sesmic survey	2006/2781	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Apache Northwest Shelf Van Gogh Field Appraisal Drilling Program	2007/3495	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Aperio 3D Marine Seismic Survey, WA	2012/6648	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)			
Artemis-1 Drilling Program (WA-360-P)	2010/5432	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Babylon 3D Marine Seismic Survey, Commonwealth Waters, nr Exmouth WA	2013/7081	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Balnaves Condensate Field Development	2011/6188	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Cable Seismic Exploration Permit areas WA-323-P and WA-330-P	2008/4227	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
CGGVERITAS 2010 2D Seismic Survey	2010/5714	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Charon 3D Marine Seismic Survey	2007/3477	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Coverack Marine Seismic Survey	2001/399	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Cue Seismic Survey within WA-359-P, WA-361-P and WA-360-P	2007/3647	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
CVG 3D Marine Seismic Survey	2012/6654	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
DAVROS MC 3D marine seismic survey northwaet of Dampier, WA	2013/7092	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Decommissioning of the Legendre facilities	2010/5681	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Deep Water Drilling Program	2010/5532	Not Controlled Action (Particular	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)		Manner)	
Deep Water Northwest Shelf 2D Seismic Survey	2007/3260	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Demeter 3D Seismic Survey, off Dampier, WA	2002/900	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Draeck 3D Marine Seismic Survey, WA-205-P	2006/3067	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Drilling 35-40 offshore exploration wells in deep water	2008/4461	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Eendracht Multi-Client 3D Marine Seismic Survey	2009/4749	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Effect of marine seismic sounds to demersal fish and pearl oysters, north-west WA	2018/8169	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Enfield M3 & Vincent 4D Marine Seismic Surveys	2008/3981	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Completed
Enfield M3 4D, Vincent 4D & 4D Line Test Marine Seismic Surveys	2008/4122	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Enfield M4 4D Marine Seismic Survey	2008/4558	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Enfield oilfield 3D Seismic Survey	2006/3132	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Exmouth West 2D Marine Seismic Survey	2008/4132	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)			
Exploration drilling of Zeus-1 well	2008/4351	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Fletcher-Finucane Development, WA26-L and WA191-P	2011/6123	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Foxhound 3D Non-Exclusive Marine Seismic Survey	2009/4703	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Gazelle 3D Marine Seismic Survey in WA-399-P and WA-42-L	2010/5570	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Geco Eagle 3D Marine Seismic Survey	2008/3958	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Glencoe 3D Marine Seismic Survey WA-390-P	2007/3684	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Greater Western Flank Phase 1 gas Development	2011/5980	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Grimalkin 3D Seismic Survey	2008/4523	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Guacamole 2D Marine Seismic Survey	2008/4381	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Harmony 3D Marine Seismic Survey	2012/6699	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Harpy 1 exploration well	2001/183	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Honeycombs MC3D Marine Seismic Survey	2012/6368	Not Controlled Action (Particular	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)		Manner)	
Huzzas MC3D Marine Seismic Survey (HZ-13) Carnarvon Basin, offshore WA	2013/7003	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Huzzas phase 2 marine seismic survey, Exmouth Plateau, Northern Carnarvon Basin, WA	2013/7093	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
John Ross & Rosella Off Bottom Cable Seismic Exploration Program	2008/3966	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Judo Marine 3D Seismic Survey within and adjacent to WA-412-P	2008/4630	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Judo Marine 3D Seismic Survey within and adjacent to WA-412-P	2009/4801	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Julimar Brunello Gas Development Project	2011/5936	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Kingtree & Ironstone-1 Exploration Wells	2011/5935	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Klimt 2D Marine Seismic Survey	2007/3856	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Laverda 3D Marine Seismic Survey and Vincent M1 4D Marine Seismic Survey	2010/5415	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Lion 2D Marine Seismic Survey	2007/3777	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Macedon Gas Field Development	2008/4605	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)			
Marine reconnaissance survey	2008/4466	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Mariner Non-Exclusive 2D Seismic Survey	2011/6172	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Moosehead 2D seismic survey within permit WA-192-P	2005/2167	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Munmorah 2D seismic survey within permits WA-308/9-P	2003/970	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Ocean Bottom Cable Seismic Program, WA-264-P	2007/3844	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Ocean Bottom Cable Seismic Survey	2005/2017	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Offshore Canning Multi Client 2D Marine Seismic Survey	2010/5393	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Offshore Drilling Campaign	2011/5830	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Offshore Fibre Optic Cable Network Construction & Operation, Port Hedland WA to Darwin NT	2014/7223	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Orcus 3D Marine Seismic Survey in WA-450-P	2010/5723	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Osprey and Dionysus Marine Seismic Survey	2011/6215	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Outer Canning exploration drilling program off NW coast of WA	2012/6618	Not Controlled Action (Particular	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)		Manner)	
Phoenix 3D Seismic Survey, Bedout Sub-Basin	2010/5360	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Pomodoro 3D Marine Seismic Survey in WA-426-P and WA-427-P	2010/5472	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Pyrenees 4D Marine Seismic Monitor Survey, HCA12A	2012/6579	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Pyrenees-Macedon 3D marine seismic survey	2005/2325	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Reindeer gas reservior development, Devil Creek, Carnarvon Basin - WA	2007/3917	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Repsol 3d & 2D Marine Seismic Survey	2012/6658	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Rose 3D Seismic Program	2008/4239	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Rydal-1 Petroleum Exploration Well, WA	2012/6522	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Salsa 3D Marine Seismic Survey	2010/5629	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Santos Winchester three dimensional seismic survey - WA-323-P & WA-330-P	2011/6107	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Skorpion Marine Seismic Survey WA	2001/416	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)			
Sovereign 3D Marine Seismic Survey	2011/5861	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Stag 4D & Reindeer MAZ Marine Seismic Surveys, WA	2013/7080	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Stag Off-bottom Cable Seismic Survey	2007/3696	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Stybarrow 4D Marine Seismic Survey	2011/5810	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Stybarrow Baseline 4D marine seismic survey	2008/4530	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Tantabiddi Boat Ramp Sand Bypassing	2015/7411	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Tidepole Maz 3D Seismic Survey Campaign	2007/3706	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Tortilla 2D Seismic Survey, WA	2011/6110	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Triton 3D Marine Seismic Survey, WA-2-R and WA-3-R	2006/2609	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Undertake a 3D marine seismic survey	2010/5695	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Undertake a three dimensional marine seismic survey	2010/5679	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Vampire 2D Non Exclusive Seismic Survey, WA	2010/5543	Not Controlled Action (Particular	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)			
		Manner)	
Vincent M1 and Enfield M5 4D Marine Seismic Survey	2010/5720	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Warramunga Non-Inclusive 3D Seismic Survey	2008/4553	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
West Anchor 3D Marine Seismic Survey	2008/4507	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
West Panaeus 3D seismic survey	2006/3141	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Westralia SPAN Marine Seismic Survey, WA & NT	2012/6463	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Wheatstone 3D MAZ Marine Seismic Survey	2011/6058	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Wheatstone Iago Appraisal Well Drilling	2007/3941	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Wheatstone Iago Appraisal Well Drilling	2008/4134	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Referral decision			
3D Seismic Survey	2008/4219	Referral Decision	Completed
Bianchi 3D Marine Seismic Survey, Carnavon Basin, WA	2013/7078	Referral Decision	Completed
CVG 3D Marine Seismic Survey	2012/6270	Referral Decision	Completed
Enfield 4D Marine Seismic Surveys, Production Permit WA-28-L	2005/2370	Referral Decision	Completed
Rose 3D Seismic acquisition survey	2008/4220	Referral Decision	Completed

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Referral decision			
Stybarrow Baseline 4D Marine Seismic Survey (Permit Areas WA-255-P, WA-32-L, WA-	2008/4165	Referral Decision	Completed

Key Ecological Features

[[Resource Information](#)]

Key Ecological Features are the parts of the marine ecosystem that are considered to be important for the biodiversity or ecosystem functioning and integrity of the Commonwealth Marine Area.

Name	Region
Ancient coastline at 125 m depth contour	North-west
Canyons linking the Cuvier Abyssal Plain and the Cape Range Peninsula	North-west
Commonwealth waters adjacent to Ningaloo Reef	North-west
Continental Slope Demersal Fish Communities	North-west
Exmouth Plateau	North-west
Glomar Shoals	North-west
Mermaid Reef and Commonwealth waters surrounding Rowley Shoals	North-west

Biologically Important Areas		
Scientific Name	Behaviour	Presence
Dugong		
Dugong dugon		
Dugong [28]	Breeding	Known to occur
Dugong dugon		
Dugong [28]	Calving	Known to occur
Dugong dugon		
Dugong [28]	Foraging (high density seagrass beds)	Known to occur
Dugong dugon		
Dugong [28]	Nursing	Known to occur

Marine Turtles		
Caretta caretta		
Loggerhead Turtle [1763]	Internesting buffer	Known to occur

Scientific Name	Behaviour	Presence
Caretta caretta Loggerhead Turtle [1763]	Nesting	Known to occur
Chelonia mydas Green Turtle [1765]	Foraging	Known to occur
Chelonia mydas Green Turtle [1765]	Internesting	Known to occur
Chelonia mydas Green Turtle [1765]	Internesting buffer	Known to occur
Chelonia mydas Green Turtle [1765]	Mating	Known to occur
Chelonia mydas Green Turtle [1765]	Nesting	Known to occur
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Foraging	Known to occur
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Internesting buffer	Known to occur
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Mating	Known to occur
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Nesting	Known to occur
Natator depressus Flatback Turtle [59257]	Foraging	Known to occur
Natator depressus Flatback Turtle [59257]	Internesting buffer	Known to occur
Natator depressus Flatback Turtle [59257]	Mating	Known to occur
Natator depressus Flatback Turtle [59257]	Nesting	Known to occur

Seabirds

Scientific Name	Behaviour	Presence
Ardenna pacifica Wedge-tailed Shearwater [84292]	Breeding	Known to occur
Fregata ariel Lesser Frigatebird [1012]	Breeding	Known to occur
Phaethon lepturus White-tailed Tropicbird [1014]	Breeding	Known to occur
Sterna dougallii Roseate Tern [817]	Breeding	Known to occur
Sternula albifrons sinensis Little Tern [82850]	Resting	Known to occur
Sternula nereis Fairy Tern [82949]	Breeding	Known to occur
Sula leucogaster Brown Booby [1022]	Breeding	Known to occur
Thalasseus bengalensis Lesser Crested Tern [66546]	Breeding	Known to occur
Sharks		
Rhincodon typus Whale Shark [66680]	Foraging	Known to occur
Rhincodon typus Whale Shark [66680]	Foraging (high density prey)	Known to occur
Whales		
Balaenoptera musculus brevicauda Pygmy Blue Whale [81317]	Distribution	Known to occur
Balaenoptera musculus brevicauda Pygmy Blue Whale [81317]	Foraging	Known to occur
Balaenoptera musculus brevicauda Pygmy Blue Whale [81317]	Migration	Known to occur

Scientific Name	Behaviour	Presence
Megaptera novaeangliae		
Humpback Whale [38]	Migration (north and south)	Known to occur

Caveat

1 PURPOSE

This report is designed to assist in identifying the location of matters of national environmental significance (MNES) and other matters protected by the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) (EPBC Act) which may be relevant in determining obligations and requirements under the EPBC Act.

The report contains the mapped locations of:

- World and National Heritage properties;
- Wetlands of International and National Importance;
- Commonwealth and State/Territory reserves;
- distribution of listed threatened, migratory and marine species;
- listed threatened ecological communities; and
- other information that may be useful as an indicator of potential habitat value.

2 DISCLAIMER

This report is not intended to be exhaustive and should only be relied upon as a general guide as mapped data is not available for all species or ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act (see below). Persons seeking to use the information contained in this report to inform the referral of a proposed action under the EPBC Act should consider the limitations noted below and whether additional information is required to determine the existence and location of MNES and other protected matters.

Where data are available to inform the mapping of protected species, the presence type (e.g. known, likely or may occur) that can be determined from the data is indicated in general terms. It is the responsibility of any person using or relying on the information in this report to ensure that it is suitable for the circumstances of any proposed use. The Commonwealth cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of any use of the report or any part thereof. To the maximum extent allowed under governing law, the Commonwealth will not be liable for any loss or damage that may be occasioned directly or indirectly through the use of, or reliance

3 DATA SOURCES

Threatened ecological communities

For threatened ecological communities where the distribution is well known, maps are generated based on information contained in recovery plans, State vegetation maps and remote sensing imagery and other sources. Where threatened ecological community distributions are less well known, existing vegetation maps and point location data are used to produce indicative distribution maps.

Threatened, migratory and marine species

Threatened, migratory and marine species distributions have been discerned through a variety of methods. Where distributions are well known and if time permits, distributions are inferred from either thematic spatial data (i.e. vegetation, soils, geology, elevation, aspect, terrain, etc.) together with point locations and described habitat; or modelled (MAXENT or BIOCLIM habitat modelling) using

Where little information is available for a species or large number of maps are required in a short time-frame, maps are derived either from 0.04 or 0.02 decimal degree cells; by an automated process using polygon capture techniques (static two kilometre grid cells, alpha-hull and convex hull); or captured manually or by using topographic features (national park boundaries, islands, etc.).

In the early stages of the distribution mapping process (1999-early 2000s) distributions were defined by degree blocks, 100K or 250K map sheets to rapidly create distribution maps. More detailed distribution mapping methods are used to update these distributions

4 LIMITATIONS

The following species and ecological communities have not been mapped and do not appear in this report:

- threatened species listed as extinct or considered vagrants;
- some recently listed species and ecological communities;
- some listed migratory and listed marine species, which are not listed as threatened species; and
- migratory species that are very widespread, vagrant, or only occur in Australia in small numbers.

The following groups have been mapped, but may not cover the complete distribution of the species:

- listed migratory and/or listed marine seabirds, which are not listed as threatened, have only been mapped for recorded
- seals which have only been mapped for breeding sites near the Australian continent

The breeding sites may be important for the protection of the Commonwealth Marine environment.

Refer to the metadata for the feature group (using the Resource Information link) for the currency of the information.

Acknowledgements

This database has been compiled from a range of data sources. The department acknowledges the following custodians who have contributed valuable data and advice:

- [-Office of Environment and Heritage, New South Wales](#)
- [-Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Victoria](#)
- [-Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Tasmania](#)
- [-Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, South Australia](#)
- [-Department of Land and Resource Management, Northern Territory](#)
- [-Department of Environmental and Heritage Protection, Queensland](#)
- [-Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia](#)
- [-Environment and Planning Directorate, ACT](#)
- [-Birdlife Australia](#)
- [-Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme](#)
- [-Australian National Wildlife Collection](#)
- [-Natural history museums of Australia](#)
- [-Museum Victoria](#)
- [-Australian Museum](#)
- [-South Australian Museum](#)
- [-Queensland Museum](#)
- [-Online Zoological Collections of Australian Museums](#)
- [-Queensland Herbarium](#)
- [-National Herbarium of NSW](#)
- [-Royal Botanic Gardens and National Herbarium of Victoria](#)
- [-Tasmanian Herbarium](#)
- [-State Herbarium of South Australia](#)
- [-Northern Territory Herbarium](#)
- [-Western Australian Herbarium](#)
- [-Australian National Herbarium, Canberra](#)
- [-University of New England](#)
- [-Ocean Biogeographic Information System](#)
- [-Australian Government, Department of Defence](#)
- [Forestry Corporation, NSW](#)
- [-Geoscience Australia](#)
- [-CSIRO](#)
- [-Australian Tropical Herbarium, Cairns](#)
- [-eBird Australia](#)
- [-Australian Government – Australian Antarctic Data Centre](#)
- [-Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory](#)
- [-Australian Government National Environmental Science Program](#)
- [-Australian Institute of Marine Science](#)
- [-Reef Life Survey Australia](#)
- [-American Museum of Natural History](#)
- [-Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Inveresk, Tasmania](#)
- [-Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, Tasmania](#)
- [-Other groups and individuals](#)

The Department is extremely grateful to the many organisations and individuals who provided expert advice and information on numerous draft distributions.

Please feel free to provide feedback via the [Contact us](#) page.

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EPBC Act Protected Matters Report

This report provides general guidance on matters of national environmental significance and other matters protected by the EPBC Act in the area you have selected. Please see the caveat for interpretation of information provided here.

Report created: 08-Nov-2023

[Summary](#)

[Details](#)

[Matters of NES](#)

[Other Matters Protected by the EPBC Act](#)

[Extra Information](#)

[Caveat](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

Summary

Matters of National Environment Significance

This part of the report summarises the matters of national environmental significance that may occur in, or may relate to, the area you nominated. Further information is available in the detail part of the report, which can be accessed by scrolling or following the links below. If you are proposing to undertake an activity that may have a significant impact on one or more matters of national environmental significance then you should consider the [Administrative Guidelines on Significance](#).

World Heritage Properties:	None
National Heritage Places:	None
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar	None
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park:	None
Commonwealth Marine Area:	3
Listed Threatened Ecological Communities:	None
Listed Threatened Species:	25
Listed Migratory Species:	40

Other Matters Protected by the EPBC Act

This part of the report summarises other matters protected under the Act that may relate to the area you nominated. Approval may be required for a proposed activity that significantly affects the environment on Commonwealth land, when the action is outside the Commonwealth land, or the environment anywhere when the action is taken on Commonwealth land. Approval may also be required for the Commonwealth or Commonwealth agencies proposing to take an action that is likely to have a significant impact on the environment anywhere.

The EPBC Act protects the environment on Commonwealth land, the environment from the actions taken on Commonwealth land, and the environment from actions taken by Commonwealth agencies. As heritage values of a place are part of the 'environment', these aspects of the EPBC Act protect the Commonwealth Heritage values of a Commonwealth Heritage place. Information on the new heritage laws can be found at <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage>

A [permit](#) may be required for activities in or on a Commonwealth area that may affect a member of a listed threatened species or ecological community, a member of a listed migratory species, whales and other cetaceans, or a member of a listed marine species.

Commonwealth Lands:	None
Commonwealth Heritage Places:	None
Listed Marine Species:	79
Whales and Other Cetaceans:	28
Critical Habitats:	None
Commonwealth Reserves Terrestrial:	None
Australian Marine Parks:	2
Habitat Critical to the Survival of Marine Turtles:	1

Extra Information

This part of the report provides information that may also be relevant to the area you have

State and Territory Reserves:	None
Regional Forest Agreements:	None
Nationally Important Wetlands:	None
EPBC Act Referrals:	86
Key Ecological Features (Marine):	3
Biologically Important Areas:	11
Bioregional Assessments:	None
Geological and Bioregional Assessments:	None

Details

Matters of National Environmental Significance

Commonwealth Marine Area

[Resource Information]

Approval is required for a proposed activity that is located within the Commonwealth Marine Area which has, will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on the environment. Approval may be required for a proposed action taken outside a Commonwealth Marine Area but which has, may have or is likely to have a significant impact on the environment in the Commonwealth Marine Area.

Feature Name

Commonwealth Marine Areas (EPBC Act)

Commonwealth Marine Areas (EPBC Act)

Commonwealth Marine Areas (EPBC Act)

Listed Threatened Species

[Resource Information]

Status of Conservation Dependent and Extinct are not MNES under the EPBC Act.
Number is the current name ID.

Scientific Name

Threatened Category

Presence Text

BIRD

[Calidris canutus](#)

Red Knot, Knot [855]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
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[Calidris ferruginea](#)

Curlew Sandpiper [856]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
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[Macronectes giganteus](#)

Southern Giant-Petrel, Southern Giant Petrel [1060]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
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[Numenius madagascariensis](#)

Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew [847]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
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[Papasula abbotti](#)

Abbott's Booby [59297]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
------------------------	------------	--

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Phaethon lepturus fulvus Christmas Island White-tailed Tropicbird, Golden Bosunbird [26021]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Sternula nereis nereis Australian Fairy Tern [82950]	Vulnerable	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area
FISH		
Thunnus maccoyii Southern Bluefin Tuna [69402]	Conservation Dependent	Breeding known to occur within area
MAMMAL		
Balaenoptera borealis Sei Whale [34]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Balaenoptera musculus Blue Whale [36]	Endangered	Migration route known to occur within area
Balaenoptera physalus Fin Whale [37]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
REPTILE		
Aipysurus apraefrontalis Short-nosed Seasnake [1115]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Aipysurus foliosquama Leaf-scaled Seasnake [1118]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Caretta caretta Loggerhead Turtle [1763]	Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Chelonia mydas Green Turtle [1765]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Dermochelys coriacea Leatherback Turtle, Leathery Turtle, Luth [1768]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Natator depressus Flatback Turtle [59257]	Vulnerable	Congregation or aggregation known to occur within area

SHARK		
Carcharias taurus (west coast population) Grey Nurse Shark (west coast population) [68752]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Carcharodon carcharias White Shark, Great White Shark [64470]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Pristis clavata Dwarf Sawfish, Queensland Sawfish [68447]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Pristis pristis Freshwater Sawfish, Largetooth Sawfish, River Sawfish, Leichhardt's Sawfish, Northern Sawfish [60756]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Pristis zijsron Green Sawfish, Dindagubba, Narrowsnout Sawfish [68442]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Rhincodon typus Whale Shark [66680]	Vulnerable	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur within area
Sphyrna lewini Scalloped Hammerhead [85267]	Conservation Dependent	Species or species habitat known to occur within area

Listed Migratory Species		[Resource Information]
Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Migratory Marine Birds		
Anous stolidus Common Noddy [825]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Calonectris leucomelas Streaked Shearwater [1077]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Fregata ariel Lesser Frigatebird, Least Frigatebird [1012]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Fregata minor Great Frigatebird, Greater Frigatebird [1013]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Macronectes giganteus Southern Giant-Petrel, Southern Giant Petrel [1060]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Phaethon lepturus White-tailed Tropicbird [1014]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Sterna dougallii Roseate Tern [817]		Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area
Migratory Marine Species		
Anoxypristis cuspidata Narrow Sawfish, Knifetooth Sawfish [68448]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Balaenoptera borealis Sei Whale [34]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Balaenoptera edeni Bryde's Whale [35]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Balaenoptera musculus Blue Whale [36]	Endangered	Migration route known to occur within area
Balaenoptera physalus Fin Whale [37]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Carcharhinus longimanus Oceanic Whitetip Shark [84108]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Carcharodon carcharias White Shark, Great White Shark [64470]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Caretta caretta Loggerhead Turtle [1763]	Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Chelonia mydas Green Turtle [1765]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Dermochelys coriacea Leatherback Turtle, Leathery Turtle, Luth [1768]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Dugong dugon Dugong [28]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Isurus oxyrinchus Shortfin Mako, Mako Shark [79073]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Isurus paucus Longfin Mako [82947]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Megaptera novaeangliae Humpback Whale [38]		Breeding known to occur within area
Mobula alfredi as Manta alfredi Reef Manta Ray, Coastal Manta Ray [90033]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Mobula birostris as Manta birostris Giant Manta Ray [90034]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Natator depressus Flatback Turtle [59257]	Vulnerable	Congregation or aggregation known to occur within area
Orcaella heinsohni Australian Snubfin Dolphin [81322]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Orcinus orca Killer Whale, Orca [46]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Physeter macrocephalus Sperm Whale [59]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Pristis clavata Dwarf Sawfish, Queensland Sawfish [68447]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Pristis pristis Freshwater Sawfish, Largetooth Sawfish, River Sawfish, Leichhardt's Sawfish, Northern Sawfish [60756]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Pristis zijsron Green Sawfish, Dindagubba, Narrowsnout Sawfish [68442]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Rhincodon typus Whale Shark [66680]	Vulnerable	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur within area
Sousa sahalensis as Sousa chinensis Australian Humpback Dolphin [87942]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Tursiops aduncus (Arafura/Timor Sea populations) Spotted Bottlenose Dolphin (Arafura/Timor Sea populations) [78900]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Migratory Wetlands Species		

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Actitis hypoleucos Common Sandpiper [59309]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Calidris acuminata Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [874]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Calidris canutus Red Knot, Knot [855]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Calidris ferruginea Curlew Sandpiper [856]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Calidris melanotos Pectoral Sandpiper [858]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Numenius madagascariensis Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew [847]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area

Other Matters Protected by the EPBC Act

Listed Marine Species	[Resource Information]	
Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Bird		
Actitis hypoleucos Common Sandpiper [59309]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Anous stolidus Common Noddy [825]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Calidris acuminata Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [874]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Calidris canutus Red Knot, Knot [855]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area
Calidris ferruginea Curlew Sandpiper [856]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area
Calidris melanotos Pectoral Sandpiper [858]		Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area
Calonectris leucomelas Streaked Shearwater [1077]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Fregata ariel Lesser Frigatebird, Least Frigatebird [1012]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Fregata minor Great Frigatebird, Greater Frigatebird [1013]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Macronectes giganteus Southern Giant-Petrel, Southern Giant Petrel [1060]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Numenius madagascariensis Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew [847]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Papasula abbotti Abbott's Booby [59297]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Phaethon lepturus White-tailed Tropicbird [1014]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Phaethon lepturus fulvus Christmas Island White-tailed Tropicbird, Golden Bosunbird [26021]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Sterna dougallii Roseate Tern [817]		Foraging, feeding or related behaviour likely to occur within area
Fish		
Acentronura larsonae Helen's Pygmy Pipehorse [66186]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Bhanotia fasciolata Corrugated Pipefish, Barbed Pipefish [66188]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Bulbonaricus brauni Braun's Pughead Pipefish, Pug-headed Pipefish [66189]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Campichthys tricarinatus Three-keel Pipefish [66192]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Choeroichthys brachysoma Pacific Short-bodied Pipefish, Short-bodied Pipefish [66194]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Choeroichthys latispinosus Muiron Island Pipefish [66196]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Choeroichthys suillus Pig-snouted Pipefish [66198]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Corythoichthys amplexus Fijian Banded Pipefish, Brown-banded Pipefish [66199]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Corythoichthys flavofasciatus Reticulate Pipefish, Yellow-banded Pipefish, Network Pipefish [66200]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Corythoichthys intestinalis Australian Messmate Pipefish, Banded Pipefish [66202]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Corythoichthys schultzi Schultz's Pipefish [66205]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Cosmocampus banneri Roughridge Pipefish [66206]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Doryrhamphus dactyliophorus Banded Pipefish, Ringed Pipefish [66210]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Doryrhamphus excisus Bluestripe Pipefish, Indian Blue-stripe Pipefish, Pacific Blue-stripe Pipefish [66211]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Doryrhamphus janssi Cleaner Pipefish, Janss' Pipefish [66212]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Doryrhamphus multiannulatus Many-banded Pipefish [66717]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Doryrhamphus negrosensis Flagtail Pipefish, Masthead Island Pipefish [66213]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Festucalex scalaris Ladder Pipefish [66216]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Filicampus tigris Tiger Pipefish [66217]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Halicampus brocki Brock's Pipefish [66219]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Halicampus dunckeri Red-hair Pipefish, Duncker's Pipefish [66220]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Halicampus grayi Mud Pipefish, Gray's Pipefish [66221]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Halicampus nitidus Glittering Pipefish [66224]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Halicampus spirostris Spiny-snout Pipefish [66225]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Haliichthys taeniophorus Ribbioned Pipehorse, Ribbioned Seadragon [66226]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippichthys penicillus Beady Pipefish, Steep-nosed Pipefish [66231]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus angustus Western Spiny Seahorse, Narrow-bellied Seahorse [66234]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus histrix Spiny Seahorse, Thorny Seahorse [66236]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus kuda Spotted Seahorse, Yellow Seahorse [66237]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus planifrons Flat-face Seahorse [66238]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus spinosissimus Hedgehog Seahorse [66239]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus trimaculatus Three-spot Seahorse, Low-crowned Seahorse, Flat-faced Seahorse [66720]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Micrognathus micronotopterus Tidepool Pipefish [66255]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Phoxocampus belcheri Black Rock Pipefish [66719]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Solegnathus hardwickii Pallid Pipehorse, Hardwick's Pipehorse [66272]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Solegnathus lettiensis Gunther's Pipehorse, Indonesian Pipefish [66273]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Solenostomus cyanopterus Robust Ghostpipefish, Blue-finned Ghost Pipefish, [66183]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Syngnathoides biaculeatus Double-end Pipehorse, Double-ended Pipehorse, Alligator Pipefish [66279]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Trachyrhamphus bicoarctatus Bentstick Pipefish, Bend Stick Pipefish, Short-tailed Pipefish [66280]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Trachyrhamphus longirostris Straightstick Pipefish, Long-nosed Pipefish, Straight Stick Pipefish [66281]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Mammal		
Dugong dugon Dugong [28]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Reptile		
Acalyptophis peronii Horned Seasnake [1114]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Aipysurus apraefrontalis Short-nosed Seasnake [1115]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Aipysurus duboisii Dubois' Seasnake [1116]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Aipysurus eydouxii Spine-tailed Seasnake [1117]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Aipysurus foliosquama Leaf-scaled Seasnake [1118]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Aipysurus laevis Olive Seasnake [1120]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Aipysurus tenuis Brown-lined Seasnake [1121]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Astrotia stokesii Stokes' Seasnake [1122]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Caretta caretta Loggerhead Turtle [1763]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Chelonia mydas Green Turtle [1765]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Chitulia ornata as Hydrophis ornatus Spotted Seasnake, Ornate Reef Seasnake [87377]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Dermochelys coriacea Leatherback Turtle, Leathery Turtle, Luth [1768]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Disteira kingii Spectacled Seasnake [1123]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Disteira major Olive-headed Seasnake [1124]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Emydocephalus annulatus Turtle-headed Seasnake [1125]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Ephalophis greyi North-western Mangrove Seasnake [1127]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Hydrelaps darwiniensis Black-ringed Seasnake [1100]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hydrophis elegans Elegant Seasnake [1104]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hydrophis macdowellii as Hydrophis mcdowellii Small-headed Seasnake [75601]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Leioselasma czeblukovi as Hydrophis czeblukovi Fine-spined Seasnake, Geometrical Seasnake [87374]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Natator depressus Flatback Turtle [59257]	Vulnerable	Congregation or aggregation known to occur within area
Pelamis platurus Yellow-bellied Seasnake [1091]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Whales and Other Cetaceans		[Resource Information]
Current Scientific Name	Status	Type of Presence
Mammal		

Current Scientific Name	Status	Type of Presence
Balaenoptera acutorostrata Minke Whale [33]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Balaenoptera borealis Sei Whale [34]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Balaenoptera edeni Bryde's Whale [35]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Balaenoptera musculus Blue Whale [36]	Endangered	Migration route known to occur within area
Balaenoptera physalus Fin Whale [37]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Delphinus delphis Common Dolphin, Short-beaked Common Dolphin [60]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Feresa attenuata Pygmy Killer Whale [61]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Globicephala macrorhynchus Short-finned Pilot Whale [62]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Grampus griseus Risso's Dolphin, Grampus [64]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Kogia breviceps Pygmy Sperm Whale [57]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Kogia sima Dwarf Sperm Whale [85043]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Current Scientific Name	Status	Type of Presence
Lagenodelphis hosei Fraser's Dolphin, Sarawak Dolphin [41]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Megaptera novaeangliae Humpback Whale [38]		Breeding known to occur within area
Mesoplodon densirostris Blainville's Beaked Whale, Dense-beaked Whale [74]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Orcaella heinsohni Australian Snubfin Dolphin [81322]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Orcinus orca Killer Whale, Orca [46]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Peponocephala electra Melon-headed Whale [47]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Physeter macrocephalus Sperm Whale [59]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Pseudorca crassidens False Killer Whale [48]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Sousa sahalensis Australian Humpback Dolphin [87942]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Stenella attenuata Spotted Dolphin, Pantropical Spotted Dolphin [51]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Stenella coeruleoalba Striped Dolphin, Euphrosyne Dolphin [52]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Current Scientific Name	Status	Type of Presence
Stenella longirostris Long-snouted Spinner Dolphin [29]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Steno bredanensis Rough-toothed Dolphin [30]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Tursiops aduncus Indian Ocean Bottlenose Dolphin, Spotted Bottlenose Dolphin [68418]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Tursiops aduncus (Arafura/Timor Sea populations) Spotted Bottlenose Dolphin (Arafura/Timor Sea populations) [78900]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Tursiops truncatus s. str. Bottlenose Dolphin [68417]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Ziphius cavirostris Cuvier's Beaked Whale, Goose-beaked Whale [56]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Australian Marine Parks		[Resource Information]
Park Name	Zone & IUCN Categories	
Argo-Rowley Terrace	Multiple Use Zone (IUCN VI)	
Montebello	Multiple Use Zone (IUCN VI)	

Habitat Critical to the Survival of Marine Turtles		
Scientific Name	Behaviour	Presence
Aug - Sep		
Natator depressus Flatback Turtle [59257]	Nesting	Known to occur

Extra Information

EPBC Act Referrals				[Resource Information]
Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status	
Browse to North West Shelf Development, Indian Ocean, WA	2018/8319		Approval	

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Gorgon Gas Development	2003/1294		Post-Approval
Project Highclere Cable Lay and Operation	2022/09203		Completed
Controlled action			
Construct and operate LNG & domestic gas plant including onshore and offshore facilities - Wheatston	2008/4469	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Develop Jansz-10 deepwater gas field in Permit Areas WA-18-R, WA-25-R and WA-26-	2005/2184	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Development of Angel gas and condensate field, North West Shelf	2004/1805	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Development of Browse Basin Gas Fields (Upstream)	2008/4111	Controlled Action	Completed
Echo-Yodel Production Wells	2000/11	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Equus Gas Fields Development Project, Carnarvon Basin	2012/6301	Controlled Action	Completed
Gorgon Gas Development 4th Train Proposal	2011/5942	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Pluto Gas Project	2005/2258	Controlled Action	Completed
Pluto Gas Project Including Site B	2006/2968	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Not controlled action			
'Goodwyn A' Low Pressure Train Project	2003/914	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Cazadores 2D seismic survey	2004/1720	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Construction and operation of an unmanned sea platform and connecting pipeline to Varanus Island for	2004/1703	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Development of Halyard Field off the west coast of WA	2010/5611	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Development of Mutineer and Exeter petroleum fields for oil production, Permit	2003/1033	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Echo A Development WA-23-L, WA-24-L	2005/2042	Not Controlled Action	Completed

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action			
Exploration of appraisal wells	2006/3065	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Huascaran-1 exploration well (WA-292-P)	2001/539	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Jansz-2 and 3 Appraisal Wells	2002/754	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Maia-Gaea Exploration wells	2000/17	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Manaslu - 1 and Huascaran - 1 Offshore Exploration Wells	2001/235	Not Controlled Action	Completed
North Rankin B gas compression facility	2005/2500	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Pipeline System Modifications Project	2000/3	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Project Highclere Geophysical Survey	2021/9023	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Searipple gas and condensate field development	2000/89	Not Controlled Action	Completed
sub-sea tieback of Perseus field wells	2004/1326	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Telstra North Rankin Spur Fibre Optic Cable	2016/7836	Not Controlled Action	Completed
To construct and operate an offshore submarine fibre optic cable, WA	2014/7373	Not Controlled Action	Completed
WA-295-P Kerr-McGee Exploration Wells	2001/152	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Western Flank Gas Development	2005/2464	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Wheatstone 3D seismic survey, 70km north of Barrow Island	2004/1761	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Not controlled action (particular manner)			
'Tourmaline' 2D marine seismic survey, permit areas WA-323-P, WA-330-P and WA-32	2005/2282	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
"Leanne" offshore 3D seismic exploration, WA-356-P	2005/1938	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)			
2D Seismic Survey Permit Area WA-352-P	2008/4628	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
2D seismic survey within permit WA-291	2007/3265	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D Marine Seismic Survey (WA-482-P, WA-363-P), WA	2013/6761	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D Marine Seismic Survey in Permit Areas WA-15-R, WA-18-R, WA-205-P, WA-253-P, WA-267-P and WA-268-P	2003/1271	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D Marine Seismic Survey in WA 457-P & WA 458-P, North West Shelf, offshore WA	2013/6862	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D seismic survey	2006/2715	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D seismic survey	2006/2781	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Aperio 3D Marine Seismic Survey, WA	2012/6648	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Artemis-1 Drilling Program (WA-360-P)	2010/5432	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Balnaves Condensate Field Development	2011/6188	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Cable Seismic Exploration Permit areas WA-323-P and WA-330-P	2008/4227	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
CGGVERITAS 2010 2D Seismic Survey	2010/5714	Not Controlled Action (Particular	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)		Manner)	
Cue Seismic Survey within WA-359-P, WA-361-P and WA-360-P	2007/3647	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
DAVROS MC 3D marine seismic survey northwaet of Dampier, WA	2013/7092	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Decommissioning of the Legendre facilities	2010/5681	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Deep Water Northwest Shelf 2D Seismic Survey	2007/3260	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Demeter 3D Seismic Survey, off Dampier, WA	2002/900	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Drilling 35-40 offshore exploration wells in deep water	2008/4461	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Effect of marine seismic sounds to demersal fish and pearl oysters, north-west WA	2018/8169	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Exploration drilling of Zeus-1 well	2008/4351	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Fletcher-Finucane Development, WA26-L and WA191-P	2011/6123	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Foxhound 3D Non-Exclusive Marine Seismic Survey	2009/4703	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Greater Western Flank Phase 1 gas Development	2011/5980	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)			
Harmony 3D Marine Seismic Survey	2012/6699	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
John Ross & Rosella Off Bottom Cable Seismic Exploration Program	2008/3966	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Judo Marine 3D Seismic Survey within and adjacent to WA-412-P	2008/4630	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Judo Marine 3D Seismic Survey within and adjacent to WA-412-P	2009/4801	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Julimar Brunello Gas Development Project	2011/5936	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Klimt 2D Marine Seismic Survey	2007/3856	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Moosehead 2D seismic survey within permit WA-192-P	2005/2167	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Offshore Canning Multi Client 2D Marine Seismic Survey	2010/5393	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Offshore Drilling Campaign	2011/5830	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Offshore Fibre Optic Cable Network Construction & Operation, Port Hedland WA to Darwin NT	2014/7223	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Osprey and Dionysus Marine Seismic Survey	2011/6215	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Outer Canning exploration drilling program off NW coast of WA	2012/6618	Not Controlled Action (Particular	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)		Manner)	
Pomodoro 3D Marine Seismic Survey in WA-426-P and WA-427-P	2010/5472	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Reindeer gas reservior development, Devil Creek, Carnarvon Basin - WA	2007/3917	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Repsol 3d & 2D Marine Seismic Survey	2012/6658	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Rose 3D Seismic Program	2008/4239	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Santos Winchester three dimensional seismic survey - WA-323-P & WA-330-P	2011/6107	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Stag 4D & Reindeer MAZ Marine Seismic Surveys, WA	2013/7080	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Tidepole Maz 3D Seismic Survey Campaign	2007/3706	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Triton 3D Marine Seismic Survey, WA-2-R and WA-3-R	2006/2609	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
West Anchor 3D Marine Seismic Survey	2008/4507	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
West Panaeus 3D seismic survey	2006/3141	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Westralia SPAN Marine Seismic Survey, WA & NT	2012/6463	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)			
Wheatstone 3D MAZ Marine Seismic Survey	2011/6058	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Wheatstone Iago Appraisal Well Drilling	2007/3941	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Wheatstone Iago Appraisal Well Drilling	2008/4134	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Referral decision			
3D Seismic Survey	2008/4219	Referral Decision	Completed
Rose 3D Seismic acquisition survey	2008/4220	Referral Decision	Completed

Key Ecological Features

[[Resource Information](#)]

Key Ecological Features are the parts of the marine ecosystem that are considered to be important for the biodiversity or ecosystem functioning and integrity of the Commonwealth Marine Area.

Name	Region
Ancient coastline at 125 m depth contour	North-west
Continental Slope Demersal Fish Communities	North-west
Glomar Shoals	North-west

Biologically Important Areas		
Scientific Name	Behaviour	Presence
Marine Turtles		
Chelonia mydas Green Turtle [1765]	Internesting buffer	Known to occur
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Internesting buffer	Known to occur
Natator depressus Flatback Turtle [59257]	Internesting buffer	Known to occur
Seabirds		
Ardenna pacifica Wedge-tailed Shearwater [84292]	Breeding	Known to occur

Scientific Name	Behaviour	Presence
Fregata ariel Lesser Frigatebird [1012]	Breeding	Known to occur
Phaethon lepturus White-tailed Tropicbird [1014]	Breeding	Known to occur
Sterna dougallii Roseate Tern [817]	Breeding	Known to occur
Sharks		
Rhincodon typus Whale Shark [66680]	Foraging	Known to occur
Whales		
Balaenoptera musculus brevicauda Pygmy Blue Whale [81317]	Distribution	Known to occur
Balaenoptera musculus brevicauda Pygmy Blue Whale [81317]	Migration	Known to occur
Megaptera novaeangliae Humpback Whale [38]	Migration (north and south)	Known to occur

Caveat

1 PURPOSE

This report is designed to assist in identifying the location of matters of national environmental significance (MNES) and other matters protected by the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) (EPBC Act) which may be relevant in determining obligations and requirements under the EPBC Act.

The report contains the mapped locations of:

- World and National Heritage properties;
- Wetlands of International and National Importance;
- Commonwealth and State/Territory reserves;
- distribution of listed threatened, migratory and marine species;
- listed threatened ecological communities; and
- other information that may be useful as an indicator of potential habitat value.

2 DISCLAIMER

This report is not intended to be exhaustive and should only be relied upon as a general guide as mapped data is not available for all species or ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act (see below). Persons seeking to use the information contained in this report to inform the referral of a proposed action under the EPBC Act should consider the limitations noted below and whether additional information is required to determine the existence and location of MNES and other protected matters.

Where data are available to inform the mapping of protected species, the presence type (e.g. known, likely or may occur) that can be determined from the data is indicated in general terms. It is the responsibility of any person using or relying on the information in this report to ensure that it is suitable for the circumstances of any proposed use. The Commonwealth cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of any use of the report or any part thereof. To the maximum extent allowed under governing law, the Commonwealth will not be liable for any loss or damage that may be occasioned directly or indirectly through the use of, or reliance

3 DATA SOURCES

Threatened ecological communities

For threatened ecological communities where the distribution is well known, maps are generated based on information contained in recovery plans, State vegetation maps and remote sensing imagery and other sources. Where threatened ecological community distributions are less well known, existing vegetation maps and point location data are used to produce indicative distribution maps.

Threatened, migratory and marine species

Threatened, migratory and marine species distributions have been discerned through a variety of methods. Where distributions are well known and if time permits, distributions are inferred from either thematic spatial data (i.e. vegetation, soils, geology, elevation, aspect, terrain, etc.) together with point locations and described habitat; or modelled (MAXENT or BIOCLIM habitat modelling) using

Where little information is available for a species or large number of maps are required in a short time-frame, maps are derived either from 0.04 or 0.02 decimal degree cells; by an automated process using polygon capture techniques (static two kilometre grid cells, alpha-hull and convex hull); or captured manually or by using topographic features (national park boundaries, islands, etc.).

In the early stages of the distribution mapping process (1999-early 2000s) distributions were defined by degree blocks, 100K or 250K map sheets to rapidly create distribution maps. More detailed distribution mapping methods are used to update these distributions

4 LIMITATIONS

The following species and ecological communities have not been mapped and do not appear in this report:

- threatened species listed as extinct or considered vagrants;
- some recently listed species and ecological communities;
- some listed migratory and listed marine species, which are not listed as threatened species; and
- migratory species that are very widespread, vagrant, or only occur in Australia in small numbers.

The following groups have been mapped, but may not cover the complete distribution of the species:

- listed migratory and/or listed marine seabirds, which are not listed as threatened, have only been mapped for recorded
- seals which have only been mapped for breeding sites near the Australian continent

The breeding sites may be important for the protection of the Commonwealth Marine environment.

Refer to the metadata for the feature group (using the Resource Information link) for the currency of the information.

Acknowledgements

This database has been compiled from a range of data sources. The department acknowledges the following custodians who have contributed valuable data and advice:

- [-Office of Environment and Heritage, New South Wales](#)
- [-Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Victoria](#)
- [-Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Tasmania](#)
- [-Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, South Australia](#)
- [-Department of Land and Resource Management, Northern Territory](#)
- [-Department of Environmental and Heritage Protection, Queensland](#)
- [-Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia](#)
- [-Environment and Planning Directorate, ACT](#)
- [-Birdlife Australia](#)
- [-Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme](#)
- [-Australian National Wildlife Collection](#)
- [-Natural history museums of Australia](#)
- [-Museum Victoria](#)
- [-Australian Museum](#)
- [-South Australian Museum](#)
- [-Queensland Museum](#)
- [-Online Zoological Collections of Australian Museums](#)
- [-Queensland Herbarium](#)
- [-National Herbarium of NSW](#)
- [-Royal Botanic Gardens and National Herbarium of Victoria](#)
- [-Tasmanian Herbarium](#)
- [-State Herbarium of South Australia](#)
- [-Northern Territory Herbarium](#)
- [-Western Australian Herbarium](#)
- [-Australian National Herbarium, Canberra](#)
- [-University of New England](#)
- [-Ocean Biogeographic Information System](#)
- [-Australian Government, Department of Defence](#)
- [Forestry Corporation, NSW](#)
- [-Geoscience Australia](#)
- [-CSIRO](#)
- [-Australian Tropical Herbarium, Cairns](#)
- [-eBird Australia](#)
- [-Australian Government – Australian Antarctic Data Centre](#)
- [-Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory](#)
- [-Australian Government National Environmental Science Program](#)
- [-Australian Institute of Marine Science](#)
- [-Reef Life Survey Australia](#)
- [-American Museum of Natural History](#)
- [-Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Inveresk, Tasmania](#)
- [-Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, Tasmania](#)
- [-Other groups and individuals](#)

The Department is extremely grateful to the many organisations and individuals who provided expert advice and information on numerous draft distributions.

Please feel free to provide feedback via the [Contact us](#) page.

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EPBC Act Protected Matters Report

This report provides general guidance on matters of national environmental significance and other matters protected by the EPBC Act in the area you have selected. Please see the caveat for interpretation of information provided here.

Report created: 20-Oct-2023

[Summary](#)

[Details](#)

[Matters of NES](#)

[Other Matters Protected by the EPBC Act](#)

[Extra Information](#)

[Caveat](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

Summary

Matters of National Environment Significance

This part of the report summarises the matters of national environmental significance that may occur in, or may relate to, the area you nominated. Further information is available in the detail part of the report, which can be accessed by scrolling or following the links below. If you are proposing to undertake an activity that may have a significant impact on one or more matters of national environmental significance then you should consider the [Administrative Guidelines on Significance](#).

World Heritage Properties:	None
National Heritage Places:	None
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar	None
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park:	None
Commonwealth Marine Area:	1
Listed Threatened Ecological Communities:	None
Listed Threatened Species:	20
Listed Migratory Species:	33

Other Matters Protected by the EPBC Act

This part of the report summarises other matters protected under the Act that may relate to the area you nominated. Approval may be required for a proposed activity that significantly affects the environment on Commonwealth land, when the action is outside the Commonwealth land, or the environment anywhere when the action is taken on Commonwealth land. Approval may also be required for the Commonwealth or Commonwealth agencies proposing to take an action that is likely to have a significant impact on the environment anywhere.

The EPBC Act protects the environment on Commonwealth land, the environment from the actions taken on Commonwealth land, and the environment from actions taken by Commonwealth agencies. As heritage values of a place are part of the 'environment', these aspects of the EPBC Act protect the Commonwealth Heritage values of a Commonwealth Heritage place. Information on the new heritage laws can be found at <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage>

A [permit](#) may be required for activities in or on a Commonwealth area that may affect a member of a listed threatened species or ecological community, a member of a listed migratory species, whales and other cetaceans, or a member of a listed marine species.

Commonwealth Lands:	None
Commonwealth Heritage Places:	None
Listed Marine Species:	57
Whales and Other Cetaceans:	25
Critical Habitats:	None
Commonwealth Reserves Terrestrial:	None
Australian Marine Parks:	None
Habitat Critical to the Survival of Marine Turtles:	None

Extra Information

This part of the report provides information that may also be relevant to the area you have

State and Territory Reserves:	None
Regional Forest Agreements:	None
Nationally Important Wetlands:	None
EPBC Act Referrals:	21
Key Ecological Features (Marine):	2
Biologically Important Areas:	4
Bioregional Assessments:	None
Geological and Bioregional Assessments:	None

Details

Matters of National Environmental Significance

Commonwealth Marine Area

[Resource Information]

Approval is required for a proposed activity that is located within the Commonwealth Marine Area which has, will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on the environment. Approval may be required for a proposed action taken outside a Commonwealth Marine Area but which has, may have or is likely to have a significant impact on the environment in the Commonwealth Marine Area.

Feature Name

Commonwealth Marine Areas (EPBC Act)

Listed Threatened Species

[Resource Information]

Status of Conservation Dependent and Extinct are not MNES under the EPBC Act.
Number is the current name ID.

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
BIRD		
Calidris canutus		
Red Knot, Knot [855]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Numenius madagascariensis		
Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew [847]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Phaethon lepturus fulvus		
Christmas Island White-tailed Tropicbird, Golden Bosunbird [26021]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Sternula nereis nereis		
Australian Fairy Tern [82950]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
FISH		
Thunnus maccoyii		
Southern Bluefin Tuna [69402]	Conservation Dependent	Breeding known to occur within area
MAMMAL		
Balaenoptera borealis		
Sei Whale [34]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Balaenoptera musculus Blue Whale [36]	Endangered	Migration route known to occur within area
Balaenoptera physalus Fin Whale [37]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
REPTILE		
Aipysurus apraefrontalis Short-nosed Seasnake [1115]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Caretta caretta Loggerhead Turtle [1763]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Chelonia mydas Green Turtle [1765]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Dermochelys coriacea Leatherback Turtle, Leathery Turtle, Luth [1768]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Natator depressus Flatback Turtle [59257]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
SHARK		
Carcharias taurus (west coast population) Grey Nurse Shark (west coast population) [68752]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Carcharodon carcharias White Shark, Great White Shark [64470]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Pristis pristis Freshwater Sawfish, Largetooth Sawfish, River Sawfish, Leichhardt's Sawfish, Northern Sawfish [60756]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Pristis zijsron Green Sawfish, Dindagubba, Narrowsnout Sawfish [68442]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Rhincodon typus Whale Shark [66680]	Vulnerable	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur within area
Sphyrna lewini Scalloped Hammerhead [85267]	Conservation Dependent	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area

Listed Migratory Species	[Resource Information]	
Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Migratory Marine Birds		
Anous stolidus Common Noddy [825]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Calonectris leucomelas Streaked Shearwater [1077]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Fregata ariel Lesser Frigatebird, Least Frigatebird [1012]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Fregata minor Great Frigatebird, Greater Frigatebird [1013]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Phaethon lepturus White-tailed Tropicbird [1014]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area

Migratory Marine Species		
Anoxypristis cuspidata Narrow Sawfish, Knifetooth Sawfish [68448]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Balaenoptera borealis Sei Whale [34]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Balaenoptera edeni Bryde's Whale [35]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Balaenoptera musculus Blue Whale [36]	Endangered	Migration route known to occur within area
Balaenoptera physalus Fin Whale [37]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Carcharhinus longimanus Oceanic Whitetip Shark [84108]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Carcharodon carcharias White Shark, Great White Shark [64470]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Caretta caretta Loggerhead Turtle [1763]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Chelonia mydas Green Turtle [1765]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Dermochelys coriacea Leatherback Turtle, Leathery Turtle, Luth [1768]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Isurus oxyrinchus Shortfin Mako, Mako Shark [79073]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Isurus paucus Longfin Mako [82947]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Megaptera novaeangliae Humpback Whale [38]		Breeding known to occur within area
Mobula alfredi as Manta alfredi Reef Manta Ray, Coastal Manta Ray [90033]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Mobula birostris as Manta birostris Giant Manta Ray [90034]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Natator depressus Flatback Turtle [59257]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Orcinus orca Killer Whale, Orca [46]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Physeter macrocephalus Sperm Whale [59]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Pristis pristis Freshwater Sawfish, Largetooth Sawfish, River Sawfish, Leichhardt's Sawfish, Northern Sawfish [60756]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Pristis zijsron Green Sawfish, Dindagubba, Narrowsnout Sawfish [68442]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Rhincodon typus Whale Shark [66680]	Vulnerable	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur within area
Tursiops aduncus (Arafura/Timor Sea populations) Spotted Bottlenose Dolphin (Arafura/Timor Sea populations) [78900]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Migratory Wetlands Species		
Actitis hypoleucos Common Sandpiper [59309]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Calidris acuminata Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [874]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Calidris canutus Red Knot, Knot [855]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Calidris melanotos Pectoral Sandpiper [858]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Numenius madagascariensis Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew [847]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area

Other Matters Protected by the EPBC Act

Listed Marine Species	[Resource Information]	
Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Bird		
Actitis hypoleucos Common Sandpiper [59309]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Anous stolidus Common Noddy [825]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Calidris acuminata Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [874]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Calidris canutus Red Knot, Knot [855]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area
Calidris melanotos Pectoral Sandpiper [858]		Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Calonectris leucomelas Streaked Shearwater [1077]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Fregata ariel Lesser Frigatebird, Least Frigatebird [1012]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Fregata minor Great Frigatebird, Greater Frigatebird [1013]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Numenius madagascariensis Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew [847]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Phaethon lepturus White-tailed Tropicbird [1014]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Phaethon lepturus fulvus Christmas Island White-tailed Tropicbird, Golden Bosunbird [26021]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Fish		
Campichthys tricarinatus Three-keel Pipefish [66192]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Choeroichthys brachysoma Pacific Short-bodied Pipefish, Short-bodied Pipefish [66194]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Choeroichthys suillus Pig-snouted Pipefish [66198]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Corythoichthys flavofasciatus Reticulate Pipefish, Yellow-banded Pipefish, Network Pipefish [66200]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Cosmocampus banneri Roughridge Pipefish [66206]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Doryrhamphus dactyliophorus Banded Pipefish, Ringed Pipefish [66210]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Doryrhamphus excisus Bluestripe Pipefish, Indian Blue-stripe Pipefish, Pacific Blue-stripe Pipefish [66211]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Doryrhamphus janssi Cleaner Pipefish, Janss' Pipefish [66212]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Filicampus tigris Tiger Pipefish [66217]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Halicampus brocki Brock's Pipefish [66219]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Halicampus grayi Mud Pipefish, Gray's Pipefish [66221]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Halicampus spinirostris Spiny-snout Pipefish [66225]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Haliichthys taeniophorus Ribboned Pipehorse, Ribboned Seadragon [66226]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippichthys penicillus Beady Pipefish, Steep-nosed Pipefish [66231]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus angustus Western Spiny Seahorse, Narrow-bellied Seahorse [66234]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus histrix Spiny Seahorse, Thorny Seahorse [66236]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Hippocampus kuda Spotted Seahorse, Yellow Seahorse [66237]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus planifrons Flat-face Seahorse [66238]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hippocampus spinosissimus Hedgehog Seahorse [66239]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Micrognathus micronotopterus Tidepool Pipefish [66255]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Solegnathus hardwickii Pallid Pipehorse, Hardwick's Pipehorse [66272]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Solegnathus lettiensis Gunther's Pipehorse, Indonesian Pipefish [66273]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Solenostomus cyanopterus Robust Ghostpipefish, Blue-finned Ghost Pipefish, [66183]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Syngnathoides biaculeatus Double-end Pipehorse, Double-ended Pipehorse, Alligator Pipefish [66279]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Trachyrhamphus bicoarctatus Bentstick Pipefish, Bend Stick Pipefish, Short-tailed Pipefish [66280]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Trachyrhamphus longirostris Straightstick Pipefish, Long-nosed Pipefish, Straight Stick Pipefish [66281]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Reptile		
Acalyptophis peronii Horned Seasnake [1114]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Aipysurus apraefrontalis Short-nosed Seasnake [1115]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area
Aipysurus duboisii Dubois' Seasnake [1116]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Aipysurus eydouxii Spine-tailed Seasnake [1117]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Aipysurus laevis Olive Seasnake [1120]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Aipysurus tenuis Brown-lined Seasnake [1121]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Astrotia stokesii Stokes' Seasnake [1122]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Caretta caretta Loggerhead Turtle [1763]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Chelonia mydas Green Turtle [1765]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Chitulia ornata as Hydrophis ornatus Spotted Seasnake, Ornate Reef Seasnake [87377]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area
Dermochelys coriacea Leatherback Turtle, Leathery Turtle, Luth [1768]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Disteira kingii Spectacled Seasnake [1123]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text
Disteira major Olive-headed Seasnake [1124]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Ephalophis greyi North-western Mangrove Seasnake [1127]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill Turtle [1766]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Hydrophis elegans Elegant Seasnake [1104]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Hydrophis macdowelli as Hydrophis mcdowelli Small-headed Seasnake [75601]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Leioselasma czeblukovi as Hydrophis czeblukovi Fine-spined Seasnake, Geometrical Seasnake [87374]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Natator depressus Flatback Turtle [59257]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Pelamis platurus Yellow-bellied Seasnake [1091]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Whales and Other Cetaceans [Resource Information]		
Current Scientific Name	Status	Type of Presence
Mammal		
Balaenoptera borealis Sei Whale [34]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Balaenoptera edeni Bryde's Whale [35]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area

Current Scientific Name	Status	Type of Presence
Balaenoptera musculus Blue Whale [36]	Endangered	Migration route known to occur within area
Balaenoptera physalus Fin Whale [37]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Delphinus delphis Common Dolphin, Short-beaked Common Dolphin [60]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Feresa attenuata Pygmy Killer Whale [61]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Globicephala macrorhynchus Short-finned Pilot Whale [62]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Grampus griseus Risso's Dolphin, Grampus [64]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Kogia breviceps Pygmy Sperm Whale [57]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Kogia sima Dwarf Sperm Whale [85043]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Lagenodelphis hosei Fraser's Dolphin, Sarawak Dolphin [41]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Megaptera novaeangliae Humpback Whale [38]		Breeding known to occur within area
Mesoplodon densirostris Blainville's Beaked Whale, Dense-beaked Whale [74]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Current Scientific Name	Status	Type of Presence
Orcinus orca Killer Whale, Orca [46]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Peponocephala electra Melon-headed Whale [47]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Physeter macrocephalus Sperm Whale [59]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Pseudorca crassidens False Killer Whale [48]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area
Stenella attenuata Spotted Dolphin, Pantropical Spotted Dolphin [51]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Stenella coeruleoalba Striped Dolphin, Euphrosyne Dolphin [52]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Stenella longirostris Long-snouted Spinner Dolphin [29]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Steno bredanensis Rough-toothed Dolphin [30]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Tursiops aduncus Indian Ocean Bottlenose Dolphin, Spotted Bottlenose Dolphin [68418]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Tursiops aduncus (Arafura/Timor Sea populations) Spotted Bottlenose Dolphin (Arafura/Timor Sea populations) [78900]		Species or species habitat may occur within area
Tursiops truncatus s. str. Bottlenose Dolphin [68417]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Current Scientific Name	Status	Type of Presence
Ziphius cavirostris Cuvier's Beaked Whale, Goose-beaked Whale [56]		Species or species habitat may occur within area

Extra Information

EPBC Act Referrals		[Resource Information]	
Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Browse to North West Shelf Development, Indian Ocean, WA	2018/8319		Approval
Project Highclere Cable Lay and Operation	2022/09203		Completed
Controlled action			
Development of Angel gas and condensate field, North West Shelf	2004/1805	Controlled Action	Post-Approval
Development of Browse Basin Gas Fields (Upstream)	2008/4111	Controlled Action	Completed
Not controlled action			
Development of Mutineer and Exeter petroleum fields for oil production. Permit	2003/1033	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Maia-Gaea Exploration wells	2000/17	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Project Highclere Geophysical Survey	2021/9023	Not Controlled Action	Completed
Not controlled action (particular manner)			
2D Seismic Survey Permit Area WA-352-P	2008/4628	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D Marine Seismic Survey in WA 457-P & WA 458-P, North West Shelf, offshore WA	2013/6862	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
3D sesmic survey	2006/2781	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)			
Cue Seismic Survey within WA-359-P, WA-361-P and WA-360-P	2007/3647	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
DAVROS MC 3D marine seismic survey northwaet of Dampier, WA	2013/7092	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Deep Water Northwest Shelf 2D Seismic Survey	2007/3260	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Demeter 3D Seismic Survey, off Dampier, WA	2002/900	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Fletcher-Finucane Development, WA26-L and WA191-P	2011/6123	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Judo Marine 3D Seismic Survey within and adjacent to WA-412-P	2008/4630	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Judo Marine 3D Seismic Survey within and adjacent to WA-412-P	2009/4801	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Offshore Drilling Campaign	2011/5830	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Rose 3D Seismic Program	2008/4239	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Westralia SPAN Marine Seismic Survey, WA & NT	2012/6463	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval
Referral decision			
3D Seismic Survey	2008/4219	Referral Decision	Completed

Key Ecological Features are the parts of the marine ecosystem that are considered to be important for the biodiversity or ecosystem functioning and integrity of the Commonwealth Marine Area.

Name	Region
Ancient coastline at 125 m depth contour	North-west
Glomar Shoals	North-west

Biologically Important Areas

Scientific Name	Behaviour	Presence
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Seabirds

Ardena pacifica		
Wedge-tailed Shearwater [84292]	Breeding	Known to occur

Sharks

Rhincodon typus		
Whale Shark [66680]	Foraging	Known to occur

Whales

Balaenoptera musculus brevicauda		
Pygmy Blue Whale [81317]	Distribution	Known to occur

Balaenoptera musculus brevicauda		
Pygmy Blue Whale [81317]	Migration	Known to occur

Caveat

1 PURPOSE

This report is designed to assist in identifying the location of matters of national environmental significance (MNES) and other matters protected by the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) (EPBC Act) which may be relevant in determining obligations and requirements under the EPBC Act.

The report contains the mapped locations of:

- World and National Heritage properties;
- Wetlands of International and National Importance;
- Commonwealth and State/Territory reserves;
- distribution of listed threatened, migratory and marine species;
- listed threatened ecological communities; and
- other information that may be useful as an indicator of potential habitat value.

2 DISCLAIMER

This report is not intended to be exhaustive and should only be relied upon as a general guide as mapped data is not available for all species or ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act (see below). Persons seeking to use the information contained in this report to inform the referral of a proposed action under the EPBC Act should consider the limitations noted below and whether additional information is required to determine the existence and location of MNES and other protected matters.

Where data are available to inform the mapping of protected species, the presence type (e.g. known, likely or may occur) that can be determined from the data is indicated in general terms. It is the responsibility of any person using or relying on the information in this report to ensure that it is suitable for the circumstances of any proposed use. The Commonwealth cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of any use of the report or any part thereof. To the maximum extent allowed under governing law, the Commonwealth will not be liable for any loss or damage that may be occasioned directly or indirectly through the use of, or reliance

3 DATA SOURCES

Threatened ecological communities

For threatened ecological communities where the distribution is well known, maps are generated based on information contained in recovery plans, State vegetation maps and remote sensing imagery and other sources. Where threatened ecological community distributions are less well known, existing vegetation maps and point location data are used to produce indicative distribution maps.

Threatened, migratory and marine species

Threatened, migratory and marine species distributions have been discerned through a variety of methods. Where distributions are well known and if time permits, distributions are inferred from either thematic spatial data (i.e. vegetation, soils, geology, elevation, aspect, terrain, etc.) together with point locations and described habitat; or modelled (MAXENT or BIOCLIM habitat modelling) using

Where little information is available for a species or large number of maps are required in a short time-frame, maps are derived either from 0.04 or 0.02 decimal degree cells; by an automated process using polygon capture techniques (static two kilometre grid cells, alpha-hull and convex hull); or captured manually or by using topographic features (national park boundaries, islands, etc.).

In the early stages of the distribution mapping process (1999-early 2000s) distributions were defined by degree blocks, 100K or 250K map sheets to rapidly create distribution maps. More detailed distribution mapping methods are used to update these distributions

4 LIMITATIONS

The following species and ecological communities have not been mapped and do not appear in this report:

- threatened species listed as extinct or considered vagrants;
- some recently listed species and ecological communities;
- some listed migratory and listed marine species, which are not listed as threatened species; and
- migratory species that are very widespread, vagrant, or only occur in Australia in small numbers.

The following groups have been mapped, but may not cover the complete distribution of the species:

- listed migratory and/or listed marine seabirds, which are not listed as threatened, have only been mapped for recorded
- seals which have only been mapped for breeding sites near the Australian continent

The breeding sites may be important for the protection of the Commonwealth Marine environment.

Refer to the metadata for the feature group (using the Resource Information link) for the currency of the information.

Acknowledgements

This database has been compiled from a range of data sources. The department acknowledges the following custodians who have contributed valuable data and advice:

- [-Office of Environment and Heritage, New South Wales](#)
- [-Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Victoria](#)
- [-Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Tasmania](#)
- [-Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, South Australia](#)
- [-Department of Land and Resource Management, Northern Territory](#)
- [-Department of Environmental and Heritage Protection, Queensland](#)
- [-Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia](#)
- [-Environment and Planning Directorate, ACT](#)
- [-Birdlife Australia](#)
- [-Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme](#)
- [-Australian National Wildlife Collection](#)
- [-Natural history museums of Australia](#)
- [-Museum Victoria](#)
- [-Australian Museum](#)
- [-South Australian Museum](#)
- [-Queensland Museum](#)
- [-Online Zoological Collections of Australian Museums](#)
- [-Queensland Herbarium](#)
- [-National Herbarium of NSW](#)
- [-Royal Botanic Gardens and National Herbarium of Victoria](#)
- [-Tasmanian Herbarium](#)
- [-State Herbarium of South Australia](#)
- [-Northern Territory Herbarium](#)
- [-Western Australian Herbarium](#)
- [-Australian National Herbarium, Canberra](#)
- [-University of New England](#)
- [-Ocean Biogeographic Information System](#)
- [-Australian Government, Department of Defence](#)
- [Forestry Corporation, NSW](#)
- [-Geoscience Australia](#)
- [-CSIRO](#)
- [-Australian Tropical Herbarium, Cairns](#)
- [-eBird Australia](#)
- [-Australian Government – Australian Antarctic Data Centre](#)
- [-Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory](#)
- [-Australian Government National Environmental Science Program](#)
- [-Australian Institute of Marine Science](#)
- [-Reef Life Survey Australia](#)
- [-American Museum of Natural History](#)
- [-Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Inveresk, Tasmania](#)
- [-Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, Tasmania](#)
- [-Other groups and individuals](#)

The Department is extremely grateful to the many organisations and individuals who provided expert advice and information on numerous draft distributions.

Please feel free to provide feedback via the [Contact us](#) page.

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Appendix F: Historical Environment Plan Consultation for Decommissioning

Historical Consultation Summary – Table 6-4 of MEFF CoP and Decommissioning EP (as at Rev 5 which was first submission for Decommissioning)

Table F-1: Consultation summary for decommissioning

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Consultation Summary (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(i))	
Commonwealth departments/agencies		
Australian Border Force (ABF) - Maritime Border Command	ABF was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from ABF. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA)	AFMA was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. AFMA responded on 6 July 2022 and provided the following feedback: + AFMA had no specific comment on proposed activities. [INFORMATION 001] + AFMA said it was important to consult operators with an entitlement to fish in the area, which could be done through relevant fishing associations or directly with operators. [REQUEST 001] + AFMA provided advice on how to identify relevant fishing associations. [INFORMATION 002] + AFMA provided advice on how to obtain individual licence holder contact details. [INFORMATION 003] Santos responded to AFMA on 7 July 2022 and addressed the matters raised in its feedback of 6 July 2022 (refer assessment of stakeholder objections and claims below). This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. This stakeholder is listed as a recipient of Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections and claims (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii)), information and requests	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections and claims (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii)), and information and requests
	[INFORMATION 001] Santos notes that AFMA has no specific comment about proposed activities.	Santos responded to AFMA and acknowledged its advice.
	[REQUEST 001] Santos confirmed that there had been no historic effort by fishers in overlapping Commonwealth fisheries and that relevant fishing representative	Santos responded to AFMA and acknowledged its request.

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Consultation Summary (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(i))	
	organisations had been provided the consultation package.	
	[INFORMATION 002] Santos notes AFMA's advice on how to identify relevant fishing associations.	Santos responded to AFMA and acknowledged its advice.
	[INFORMATION 003] Santos notes AFMA's advice on how to obtain individual licence holder contact details.	Santos responded to AFMA and acknowledged its advice.
Australian Hydrographic Office (AHO)	AHO was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. AHO responded on 2 June 2022 via an auto generated email confirming that Santos' information had been received and logged for processing. AHO notification requirements, as requested by AMSA (maritime safety) (refer this table), are addressed Table 11-4. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future	
	Assessment of the merits of objections and claims (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii)), information and requests	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections and claims (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii)), and information and requests
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) – maritime safety	AMSA was provided the consultation package via email 1 June 2022. AMSA responded by email on 7 June 2022 requesting timely and relevant Maritime Safety Information is promulgated for the area and nature of operations as follows: + Contact the AHO at datacentre@hydro.gov.au no less than four weeks before operations, with details relevant to the operations. The AHO will promulgate the appropriate Notice to Mariners, which will ensure other vessels receive information on activities. [REQUEST 001] + Notify AMSA's Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) by email rccaus@amsa.gov.au for promulgation of radio-navigation warnings at least 24-48 hours before operations commence. The JRCC will require vessel details (including name, callsign and Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI)), satellite communications details (including INMARSAT-C and satellite telephone numbers), area of operation, requested clearance from other vessels and any other information that may contribute to safety at sea. JRCC will also need to be advised when operations start and end. [REQUEST 002] + Provide updates to both the Australian Hydrographic Office and the JRCC on progress and, importantly, any changes to the intended operations. [REQUEST 003] + Exhibit appropriate lights and shapes to reflect the nature of operations –we remind vessels of their obligation to comply with the International Rules for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs), in particular, the use of appropriate lights and shapes to reflect the nature of your operations (e.g., restricted in the ability to manoeuvre). Vessels should also ensure their navigation status is set correctly in the ship's Automatic Identification System (AIS) unit. [REQUEST 004]	

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Consultation Summary (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(i))	
	+ To obtain a vessel traffic plot showing AIS traffic data for your area of interest, please visit AMSA's spatial data gateway and Spatial@AMSA portal to download digital data sets and maps. [INFORMATION 001] Santos responded to AMSA on 24 June 2022 and addressed the matters raised in its feedback of 7 June 2022 (refer assessment of stakeholder objections and claims below). This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections and claims (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii)), information and requests	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections and claims (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii)), and information and requests
	[REQUEST 001] Santos will notify the AHO no less than four weeks before operations commence where practicable. Notification requirements are addressed in Table 11-4 .	Santos responded to AMSA confirming the notifications requirements would be addressed in the EP.
	[REQUEST 002] Santos will notify AMSA's JRCC at least 24–48 hours before operations commence for each activity and advise when operations start and end. Notification requirements are addressed in Table 11-4 .	Santos responded to AMSA confirming the notifications requirements would be addressed in the EP.
	[REQUEST 003] Santos will notify both AHO and AMSA's JRCC on any changes to the intended operations. Notification requirements are addressed in Table 11-4 .	Santos responded to AMSA confirming the notifications requirements would be addressed in the EP.
	[REQUEST 004] Santos noted the advice on obligations to comply with COLREGs, in particular, the use of appropriate lights and shapes to reflect the nature of operations and this is addressed in Table 11-2 .	Santos responded to AMSA and noted the information provided.
	[INFORMATION 001] Santos notes the information provided on traffic data.	Santos responded to AMSA and noted the information provided.
Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) – marine pollution	AMSA (marine pollution) was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from AMSA (marine pollution). Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections and claims (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii)), information and requests	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections and claims (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii)), and information and requests

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Consultation Summary (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(i))	
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water– Biosecurity (DCCEE) – marine pests	DCCEE (marine pests) was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. The consultation package was re-sent on 21 June 2022 as it may not have been received due to a mail error. Consultation information was re-sent via email to DAWE on 21 June 2022. No formal response has been received from DAWE (marine pests). This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections and claims (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii)), information and requests	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections and claims (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii)), and information and requests
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEE) – fisheries	DCCEE (vessels, aircraft and personnel) was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from DAWE (vessels, aircraft and personnel). This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water – Biosecurity (DCCEE) – vessels, aircraft and personnel	DCCEE (fisheries) was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from DCCEE (fisheries). This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections and claims (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii)), information and requests	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections and claims (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii)), and information and requests
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER)	DISER was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from DISER. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections and claims (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii)), information and requests	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections and claims (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii)), and information and requests

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Consultation Summary (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(i))	
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Director of National Parks (DNP)	DNP was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. DNP responded by email on 28 June 2022 and provided the following feedback: + No authorisations are required from the DNP. [INFORMATION 001] + A Sea Dumping permit may be required for proposed activities. [INFORMATION 002] + DNP requested Santos to consider the NOPSEMA Guidance Note Petroleum Activities and Australian Marine Parks (N-04750-GN1785 A620236, 03/06/2020) in preparing the Environment Plan. [REQUEST 001] + DNP requested Santos to consider the North-West Marine Parks Network Management Plan (2018) and Australian Marine Parks Science Atlas in preparing the Environment Plan. [REQUEST 002] + DNP requested to be notified if a marine pollution event occurred within a marine park nor was likely to impact on a marine park. DNP provided contact details for marine pollution notification. [REQUEST 003] Santos responded to DNP on 5 July 2022 and addressed the matters raised in its feedback of 28 June 2022 (refer assessment of stakeholder objections and claims below). This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	[INFORMATION 001] Santos notes no authorisations are required from the DNP.	Santos responded to DNP and acknowledged its advice.
	[INFORMATION 002] Santos notes DNP's advice on Sea Dumping permissions and confirmed it had been in contact with DAWE (Sea Dumping branch) as part of planning activities for the decommissioning of the MEFF Field. Santos confirmed it would continue to consult with DAWE (Sea Dumping branch) on the matter of sea dumping permits as they may be relevant to the MEFF Field future decommissioning, such that the application of the Environmental Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981 is met.	Santos responded to DNP and acknowledged its advice.
	[REQUEST 001] Santos has considered NOPSEMA Guidance Note Petroleum Activities and Australian Marine Parks (N-04750-GN1785 A620236, 03/06/2020).	Santos responded to DNP and confirmed it has followed the NOPSEMA guidance note in preparation of the EP.

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Consultation Summary (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(i))	
	Santos has identified the relevant Australian Marine Parks and their values (Section 5.2.4.1).	
	[INFORMATION 002] Santos has considered information within the Australian Marine Parks North-West Marine Parks Network Management Plan (2018) and Australian Marine Parks Science Atlas. Refer to Section 5.2.4.1 .	Santos responded to DNP and acknowledged its advice.
	[REQUEST 003] Santos has addressed DNP emergency notification requirements in Table 11-4 of the EP and Section 7 of the OPEP.	Santos responded to DNP the OPEP for the activity includes DNPs notification requirements. These can be found in Section 7 of the OPEP.
WA Government departments/agencies		
Department of Biodiversity and Conservation Attractions (DBCA)	DBCA was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. DBCA responded by email on 7 June 2022 and confirmed it had no comment on proposed activities in relation to its responsibilities under the <i>Conservation and Land Management Act 1984</i> and <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i>, based on Santos consultation information and other readily available information. Santos responded by email on 7 June 2022 and acknowledged its advice. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
WA Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DEMIRS)	DMIRS was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from DMIRS. Santos notes previous advice from DEMIRS for pre-start and cessation of activity notifications. This commitment is included in Table 8-4. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Department of Primary Industries & Regional	DPIRD was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from DPIRD. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Consultation Summary (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(i))	
Development (DPIRD)	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Department of Transport (DoT)	DoT was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. DoT responded by email on 14 June 2022 requesting that it be consulted in accordance with the Department's <i>Offshore Petroleum Industry Guidance Note – Marine Oil Pollution: Response and Consultation Arrangements</i> (July 2020) if there is any risk of a spill impacting State waters from proposed activities. [REQUEST 001] Santos responded by email on 23 June 2022 and provided a final draft of the OPEP for feedback. Santos advised that the oil spill risks for decommissioning were the same as the Mutineer, Exeter, Fletcher, Finucane Cessation of Production OPEP previously reviewed by DoT, with the exception of the Oiled Wildlife Response (OWR) section and related content which had been updated to reflect the recently released WA OWR Plan by DBCA. DoT responded by email on 13 July 2022 advising it would review and respond to Santos if it had any queries. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	[REQUEST 001] Santos has provided a copy of the OPEP for proposed activities.	DoT responded by email on 13 July 2022 advising it would review and respond to Santos if it had any queries.
Industry Bodies		
Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA)	APPEA was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2021. No formal response has been received from APPEA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association (ASBTIA)	ASBTIA was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from ASBTIA. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims,

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Consultation Summary (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(i))	
	requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA)	CFA was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. CFA responded by email on 2 June 2022 and provided the following response: + CFA advised that it did not have the resources to respond on behalf of members. [INFORMATION 001] + CFA requested Santos liaise directly with identified affected fisheries. [REQUEST 001] Santos responded by email on 2 June 2022 requesting a meeting to discuss CFA's feedback and guidance on fishery engagement. Santos met by phone with CFA on 3 June 2022 to discuss engagement with CFA and fishers in Commonwealth-managed fisheries. Santos responded to CFA on 5 July 2022 and addressed the matters raised in its feedback of 2 June 2022 and meeting of 3 June 2022 (refer assessment of stakeholder objections and claims below). This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	[INFORMATION 001] Santos acknowledged CFA's advice that it did not have sufficient resources to engage member companies.	Santos responded to CFA and acknowledged its advice.
	[REQUEST 001] Santos confirmed that individual licence holders had not been consulted as proposed activities were not expected to impact fishers given the MEFF location and historical effort by fishers. Santos also confirmed that it had provided the consultation package to representative organisations for information and did not expect CFA to engage member companies where no impacts to fishers were expected.	Santos responded to CFA's request and provided greater clarity on expected impacts to fishers and fishery consultation.
Marine Tourism WA (MTWA)	MTWA was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from MTWA. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Consultation Summary (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(i))	
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Pearl Producers Association (PPA)	PPA was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from MTWA. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Recfishwest	Recfishwest was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. Recfishwest responded on 17 June 2022 by way of a letter emailed to Santos and provided the following response: + An overview of Recfishwest's role in ensuring high quality recreational fishing experiences are maintained and enjoyed for all in the community. [INFORMATION 001] + An overview of health, well-being, and economic contribution that recreational fishing makes to Western Australia and its regional communities. [INFORMATION 002] + An overview of target fish species of interest to recreational fishers. [INFORMATION 003] + Advice that the MEFF region is infrequently visited by recreational fishers. [INFORMATION 004] + Recfishwest does not object to the steps being taken by Santos to address potential concerns held by recreational fishers. [INFORMATION 005] + Recfishwest requested to be consulted on future exploration activities, irrespective of distance from the shore and that all charts are updated so that recreational fishers can locate the areas. [REQUEST 001] Santos responded to Recfishwest on 24 June 2022 and addressed the matters raised in its feedback of 17 June 2022 (refer assessment of stakeholder objections and claims below). This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	[INFORMATION 001] Santos notes feedback from Recfishwest on its advocacy role for recreational fishing in Western Australia.	Santos responded to Recfishwest and acknowledged its feedback.
	[INFORMATION 002] Santos notes feedback from Recfishwest on the health, well-being, and economic contribution that	Santos responded to Recfishwest and acknowledged its feedback.

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Consultation Summary (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(i))	
	recreational fishing makes to Western Australia and its regional communities.	
	[INFORMATION 003] Santos notes feedback from Recfishwest on target fish species of interest to recreational fishers.	Santos responded to Recfishwest and acknowledged its feedback.
	[INFORMATION 004] Santos notes feedback from Recfishwest on target fish species of interest to recreational fishers.	Santos responded to Recfishwest and acknowledged its feedback.
	[INFORMATION 005] Santos notes that Recfishwest does not object to the steps being taken by Santos to address potential concerns held by recreational fishers.	Santos responded to Recfishwest and acknowledged its feedback.
	[REQUEST 001] Santos sought clarification from Recfishwest on its feedback with respect to exploration activities.	Santos responded to Recfishwest and acknowledged its feedback.
Tuna Australia	Tuna Australia was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from MTWA. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC)	WAFIC was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. WAFIC responded by email on 4 July 2022, advising Santos it had developed a decommissioning policy which was currently under review. [INFORMATION 001] WAFIC requested the following information: + The expected volume and impacts of the release of residual hydrocarbons. + Confirmation that infrastructure proposed to be left <i>in situ</i> was clean and free of toxic substances. Santos responded by email on 5 July 2022 and addressed the matters raised in its feedback of 17 June 2022 (refer assessment of stakeholder objections and claims below). This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	[REQUEST 001] Santos confirmed that it flushed the subsea system to industry	Santos responded to WAFIC and responded to the request.

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Consultation Summary (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(i))	
	standard in 2018 before the FPSO departed the field, adding that the cut and recovery of subsea equipment would result in the release of residual hydrocarbons to the water column (at 30 - 40ppm within approximately 2238m³ of treated seawater) with the potential for residual entrapped hydrocarbons in the carcass of the flexible flowlines. Santos noted that cut and recovery was an industry standard technique to allow removal of equipment, and that discharges from cut sections would result in full discharge to the water column but the discharge would occur gradually during the recovery as the assets are cut and lifted through the water column.	
	[REQUEST 002] Santos confirmed that none of the infrastructure proposed to remain had ever been in contact with produced fluids or hydrocarbons. Santos provided details on the composition of the proposed remaining infrastructure: + 6 x fully buried anchors – 98% steel (with an Iron content in the order of 97%, and the remaining percentage made up by a combination of other trace elements (e.g. Carbon, Manganese, Aluminium, Vanadium, Niobium, Titanium, etc.), and epoxy based paint (estimated under 5kg per anchor). + 6 x anchor chains lengths (partially buried) – the anchors, chains and shackles are made entirely of steel with the chains and shackles being chain grade RQ3. + 2 x epoxy coated, steel gravity bases made up of approximately 218t of steel, 10t of concrete, 850kg of anode, 376kg of cured epoxy coating and 200g of plastic (within 2 ball valves at the top of each gravity base buoyancy tank)) + 2 x ballast modules made up of approximately 7t steel, 45t concrete and 41kg of cured epoxy coating. Santos advised WAFIC that it considered that it is ALARP and acceptable to leave this infrastructure in situ.	Santos responded to WAFIC and responded to the request.

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Consultation Summary (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(i))	
Commercial fisheries – State Managed		
Mackerel Managed Fishery (Area 2)	Licence holders were provided the consultation package via mail on 1 June 2022. A reminder letter was sent on 11 July 2022 inviting feedback. No formal response has been received from licence holders. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Pilbara Trawl Interim Managed Fishery	Licence holders were provided the consultation package via mail on 1 June 2022. A reminder letter was sent on 11 July 2022 inviting feedback. No formal response has been received from licence holders. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Other industry		
Finder Energy	Finder Energy was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. Finder Energy responded by email on 2 June 2022 and advised it had no comments on proposed activities. Santos responded by email on 3 June 2022 thanking Finder Energy for its feedback. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Woodside Energy	Woodside Energy was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from Woodside Energy. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Other stakeholders		
	AMOSC was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022.	

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Consultation Summary (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(i))	
Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre (AMOSC)	No formal response has been received from AMOSC. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Pilbara Development Commission (PDC)	PDC was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from PDC. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
City of Karratha (CK)	CK was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from CK. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.
Karratha and Districts Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KDCCI)	KDCCI was provided the consultation package via email on 1 June 2022. No formal response has been received from KDCCI. This stakeholder also receives Santos' Quarterly Consultation Update for WA. Santos considers the level of consultation to be adequate and will address any comments from this stakeholder should they arise in the future.	
	Assessment of the merits of objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(ii))	Statement of response, or proposed response, to the objections, claims, information and requests (OPGGS(E) Regulation 16 (b)(iii))
	No assessment required.	No response required.

Appendix G: Consultation Materials

From: [Consultation, Santos](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Consultation, Santos](#)
Subject: FOR DISCUSSION | Preliminary Consultation for Proposed Offshore Activities
Date: Monday, 29 May 2023 2:58:04 PM
Attachments: [Santos Decommissioning EMBA Map.pdf](#)
[image001.png](#)
[Santos Drilling and PA EMBA Map.pdf](#)

Dear [REDACTED]

Santos is contacting you as we are preparing to undertake consultation activities for a number of proposed activities in Commonwealth and WA State waters.

Based on a review of publicly available information, we have identified that [REDACTED] may have functions, interests or activities that may be affected by these proposed activities.

Preliminary consultation

Santos would like to meet with you to discuss whether the functions, interests or activities of [REDACTED] may be affected, including consideration of any values or sensitivities of importance.

If you consider that they may be affected by our proposed activities, we can then discuss consultation methods appropriate to [REDACTED] information needs and interests.

This engagement is a preliminary step ahead of consultation for each activity, which is planned to commence on **26 June 2023**. Consultation is required under Commonwealth and State environmental Regulations and a key part of preparing Environment Plans (EPs) for each activity. Regulator-accepted EPs are required before any petroleum activity can commence.

Proposed Activities Offshore WA

The table below provides a summary of proposed activities, some of which have been consulted on previously with environment plans (EPs) under Regulator assessment.

Environment Plan	Activity summary	EP status
Drilling + Plug and Abandonment Activities		
Spar-Halyard	+ Drilling of a development well (infill) to support ongoing production at the Varanus Island (VI) Hub. The well is approximately 114 km north of Onslow. Activity commencement is planned from Q1 2024	+ New activity for consultation
WA-63-L	+ Drilling of up to four exploration wells to support future production through the VI Hub Operations. Activity commencement is planned from Q1 2024. WA-63-L is approximately 107 km north of Onslow.	+ New activity for consultation
Simpson	+ Plug and abandonment activities of eight wells no longer required for production via the offshore Simpson facility. The wells are approximately 102 km west of Dampier. Activity commencement is planned from Q2 2024.	+ New activity for consultation
Gibson	+ Plug and abandonment activities of four wells no longer required for production via the offshore Gibson facility. The wells are approximately 113 km north east of	+ New activity for consultation

	Onslow. Activity is planned for Q2 2024.	
Mutineer Exeter Fletcher Finucane (MEFF)	+ Plug and abandonment activities for 12 wells no longer required for production. The MEFF wells are approximately 147 km north of Dampier. Activity is planned for Q2 2024.	+ Under assessment by Regulator
Decommissioning Activities		
Harriet Joint Venture (HJV) Decommissioning	+ Decommissioning of the HJV field, comprising removal of all platforms and substructures, as well as pipelines associated with the Simpson facility. The HJV field is approximately 117 km west of Dampier and 117 km north east of Onslow. Activity commencement planned is from Q1 2024.	+ New activity for consultation
MEFF Decommissioning	+ Decommissioning of the MEFF field, comprising partial removal of subsea infrastructure. The MEFF field is approximately 147 km north of Dampier. Activity commencement is anticipated from Q3 2024.	+ Under assessment by Regulator
Campbell Decommissioning	+ Removal of the platform and substructures of the Campbell facility, which is approximately 105 km west of Dampier. Activity commencement is planned from Q1 2024.	+ New activity for consultation
WA-20-L	+ Leave in-situ one plugged and abandoned wellhead, approximately 101 km north of Dampier. The WA-20-L petroleum permit is subject to an ongoing environmental monitoring for the duration of the EP to monitor for gas release.	+ Under assessment by Regulator
WA-1-P	+ Leave in situ three plugged and abandoned wellheads. Activity is ongoing following environment plan acceptance. The nearest well is approximately 85 km north-northwest of Dampier.	+ New activity for consultation

We have attached two maps – one for drilling and plug and abandonment activities and one for decommissioning activities.

These maps depict locations for proposed activities, as well as a consolidated Environment That May Be Affected (EMBA) for all proposed activities. The 'EMBA' represents the greatest spatial extent that could be affected by unplanned 'worst case' spill scenarios, noting that in the unlikely event of a spill not all environmental, social, economic and cultural aspects would be affected.

We have used these consolidated EMBAs to identify persons or organisations who may have functions, interests or activities that may be affected ('relevant persons') for all activities.

We have also developed consultation information sheets for each activity, which can be found on our [web site](#) to provide further details for you to understand if your functions, interests or

activities may be affected. A QR Code linking to this site is also provided for convenience.



Additional resources

More information about how community members can participate in environmental approvals for activities proposed in Commonwealth waters has been published by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA). This [brochure](#) sets out titleholders' responsibilities for consultation, as well as opportunities for relevant persons to provide guidance for consultation expectations.

Next steps

Please let us know whether:

- You need additional information to understand if you may be affected.
- You consider you may be relevant and would like to discuss consultation methods.
- You would like to provide feedback now on any of the above proposed activities.

If you have previously been consulted on Santos activities currently under assessment, you are welcome to provide additional feedback, which will be included in updates to respective EPs under assessment. If you have no further comment to make, then your previous feedback will be carried forward in the updated EP.

Importantly, we recognise that there may be some sensitivities about sharing culturally sensitive information so we will take your guidance on the best approach when undertaking consultation activities.

Please also us know if you would like any sensitive information you provide to remain private. If requested, Santos will ensure your information remains confidential between us and the regulator and will not be published or otherwise made publicly available. Santos will handle your information in accordance with our Offshore Western Australia Consultation Privacy Policy, which can be found [here](#).

We look forward to hearing from you soon.



As a service provider to

Santos Limited, Level 7, 100 St Georges Tce
Perth WA 6000



<https://www.santos.com/>

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FOR CONSULTATION | Proposed Carnarvon Basin Activities
Date: Monday, 26 June 2023 9:22:32 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

Dear [REDACTED]

Santos is contacting you as again as preliminary consultation for proposed activities in the Carnarvon Basin has closed.

We are now asking for relevant persons to provide any feedback on the proposed activities outlined in the table below by **26 July 2023**.

More information on each proposed activity can be found via links provided below to activity fact sheets, which are published on our [web site](#).

Environment Plan	Activity summary	EP status
Drilling + Plug and Abandonment Activities		
Spar-Halyard	Drilling of a development well (infill) to support ongoing production at the Varanus Island (VI) Hub. The well is approximately 114 km north of Onslow. Activity commencement is planned from Q1 2024.	New activity for consultation
Simpson	Plug and abandonment activities of eight wells no longer required for production via the offshore Simpson facility. The wells are approximately 102 km west of Dampier. Activity commencement is planned from Q2 2024.	New activity for consultation
Gibson	Plug and abandonment activities of four wells no longer required for production via the offshore Gibson facility. The wells are approximately 113 km north east of Onslow. Activity is planned for Q2 2024.	New activity for consultation
Mutineer Exeter Fletcher Finucane (MEFF)	Plug and abandonment activities for 12 wells no longer required for production. The MEFF wells are approximately 147 km north of Dampier. Activity is planned for Q2 2024.	Under assessment by Regulator
Decommissioning Activities		
Harriet Joint Venture (HJV) Decommissioning	Decommissioning of the HJV field, comprising removal of all platforms and substructures, as well as pipelines associated with the Simpson facility. The HJV field is approximately 117 km west of Dampier and 117 km north east of Onslow. Activity commencement planned is from Q1 2024.	New activity for consultation
MEFF Decommissioning	Decommissioning of the MEFF field, comprising partial removal of subsea infrastructure. The MEFF field is approximately 147 km north of Dampier. Activity commencement is anticipated from	Under assessment by Regulator

	Q3 2024.	
Campbell Decommissioning	Removal of the platform and substructures of the Campbell facility, which is approximately 105 km west of Dampier. Activity commencement is planned from Q1 2024.	New activity for consultation
WA-20-L	Leave in-situ one plugged and abandoned wellhead, approximately 101 km north of Dampier. The WA-20-L petroleum permit is subject to an ongoing environmental monitoring for the duration of the EP to monitor for gas release.	Under assessment by Regulator
WA-1-P	Leave in situ three plugged and abandoned wellheads. Activity is ongoing following environment plan acceptance. The nearest well is approximately 85 km north-northwest of Dampier.	New activity for consultation

Providing feedback

As part of consultation, we are asking for relevant persons to provide any feedback on proposed activities by **26 July 2023**.

If you have previously been consulted on Santos activities currently under assessment, you are welcome to provide additional feedback, which will be included in updates to respective EPs under assessment. If you have no further comment to make, then your previous feedback will be carried forward in the updated EP.

Please let us know if you would like any sensitive information you provide to remain private. If requested, Santos will ensure your information remains confidential between us and the regulator and will not be published or otherwise made publicly available. Santos will handle your information in accordance with our Offshore Western Australia Consultation Privacy Policy, which can be found [here](#).

Activity notifications and emergency communications

Please let us know if you require notification prior to the start and upon activity completion.

We would also appreciate any preferred arrangements to support communications in the event of an emergency that may impact your functions, interests or activities.

Additional resources

More information about how community members can participate in environmental approvals for activities proposed in Commonwealth waters has been published in a [brochure](#) by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA).

Regards



Consultation Lead

As a service provider to

Santos



From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: FOR CONSULTATION | Proposed Carnarvon Basin Activities
Date: Wednesday, 19 July 2023 4:34:06 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Dear [REDACTED]

Santos is sending you this reminder email as the feedback period for consultation on the activities outlined below closes on **Wednesday 26 July 2023**.

Consultation is required under Commonwealth and State Environmental Regulations and is a key part of preparing Environment Plans (EPs) for our proposed activities. Regulator-accepted EPs are required before any petroleum activity can commence.

Providing feedback

Please provide feedback at the earliest opportunity so we can assess your feedback and respond in a timely manner.

A summary of your feedback and our response will be included in the relevant Environment Plan, which will be submitted to the Regulator for assessment.

Please let us know if you would like any sensitive information you provide to remain private. If requested, Santos will ensure your information remains confidential between us and the Regulator and will not be published or otherwise made publicly available. Santos will handle your information in accordance with our Offshore Western Australia Consultation Privacy Policy, which can be found [here](#).

You can provide feedback via return email or call us toll free on **1800 267 600**.

As previously advised, if you have already been consulted on Santos' activities currently under assessment, you are welcome to provide additional feedback, which will be included in updates to respective EPs under assessment. If you have no further comment to make, then your previous feedback will be carried forward in the updated EP.

Activity notifications and emergency communications

Please let us know if you require notification prior to the start and upon activity completion.

If you would like to be notified in the instance of an emergency situation that may impact your functions, interested or activities, please let us know.

Please visit our [website](#) if you would like to know more about our proposed activities.

Regards

Santos Consultation Team

Santos

t: +61 1800 267 600 | e: offshore.consultation@santos.com
[Santos.com](https://www.santos.com) | Follow us on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter

Santos acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we operate. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 29, 2023 8:32 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FOR CONSULTATION | Proposed Carnarvon Basin Activities

Dear [REDACTED]

Santos is contacting you as we are asking for relevant persons to provide any feedback on the proposed activities outlined in the table below.

More information on each proposed activity, some of which are under regulator assessment, can be found via links provided below to activity fact sheets, which are published on our [web site](#).

Environment Plan	Activity summary	EP status
Drilling + Plug and Abandonment Activities		
Spar-Halyard	Drilling of a development well (infill) to support ongoing production at the Varanus Island (VI) Hub. The well is approximately 114 km north of Onslow. Activity commencement is planned from Q1 2024.	New activity for consultation
Simpson	Plug and abandonment activities of eight wells no longer required for production via the offshore Simpson facility. The wells are approximately 102 km west of Dampier. Activity commencement is planned from Q2 2024.	New activity for consultation
Gibson	Plug and abandonment activities of four wells no longer required for production via the offshore Gibson facility. The wells are approximately 113 km north east of Onslow. Activity is planned for Q2 2024.	New activity for consultation
Mutineer Exeter Fletcher Finucane (MEFF)	Plug and abandonment activities for 12 wells no longer required for production. The MEFF wells are approximately 147 km north of Dampier. Activity is planned for Q2	Under assessment by Regulator

	2024.	
Decommissioning Activities		
<u>Harriet Joint Venture (HJV) Decommissioning</u>	Decommissioning of the HJV field, comprising removal of all platforms and substructures, as well as pipelines associated with the Simpson facility. The HJV field is approximately 117 km west of Dampier and 117 km north east of Onslow. Activity commencement planned is from Q1 2024.	New activity for consultation
<u>MEFF Decommissioning</u>	Decommissioning of the MEFF field, comprising partial removal of subsea infrastructure. The MEFF field is approximately 147 km north of Dampier. Activity commencement is anticipated from Q3 2024.	Under assessment by Regulator
<u>Campbell Decommissioning</u>	Removal of the platform and substructures of the Campbell facility, which is approximately 105 km west of Dampier. Activity commencement is planned from Q1 2024.	New activity for consultation
<u>WA-20-L</u>	Leave in-situ one plugged and abandoned wellhead, approximately 101 km north of Dampier. The WA-20-L petroleum permit is subject to an ongoing environmental monitoring for the duration of the EP to monitor for	Under assessment by Regulator

	gas release.	
WA-1-P	Leave in situ three plugged and abandoned wellheads. Activity is ongoing following environment plan acceptance. The nearest well is approximately 85 km north-northwest of Dampier.	New activity for consultation

Providing feedback

As part of consultation, we are asking for relevant persons to provide any feedback on proposed activities by **26 July 2023**.

If you have previously been consulted on Santos' activities currently under assessment, you are welcome to provide additional feedback, which will be included in updates to respective EPs under assessment. If you have no further comment to make, then your previous feedback will be carried forward in the updated EP.

Please let us know if you would like any sensitive information you provide to remain private. If requested, Santos will ensure your information remains confidential between us and the regulator and will not be published or otherwise made publicly available. Santos will handle your information in accordance with our Offshore Western Australia Consultation Privacy Policy, which can be found [here](#).

Activity notifications and emergency communications

Please let us know if you require notification prior to the start and upon activity completion.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

Santos Consultation Team

Santos

t: +61 1800 267 600 | e: offshore.consultation@santos.com
[Santos.com](https://www.santos.com) | Follow us on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter

**NET
ZERO BY 2040**

Read more at [Santos.com/sustainability/climate-change](https://www.santos.com/sustainability/climate-change)

Santos acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we operate. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

SEEKING RELEVANT PERSONS

CARNARVON BASIN DECOMMISSIONING ENVIRONMENT PLANS

Santos

Santos is seeking to identify and consult with relevant persons whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by our proposed decommissioning activities off Western Australia's north west coast.

Santos is planning several offshore decommissioning activities offshore Western Australia:

- + **Harriet Joint Venture (HJV):** Decommissioning of the HJV field, comprising removal of all platforms and substructures, as well as pipelines associated with the Simpson facility. The HJV field is approximately 102 km west of Dampier and 105 km north east of Onslow. Activity commencement planned is from Q1 2024.
- + **Mutineer Exeter Fletcher Finucane (MEFF):** Decommissioning of the MEFF field, comprising partial removal of subsea infrastructure. The MEFF field is approximately 147 km north of Dampier. Activity commencement is anticipated from Q4 2024.
- + **Campbell:** Removal of the platform and substructures of the Campbell facility, which is approximately 105 km west of Dampier. Activity commencement is planned from Q1 2024.
- + **WA-20-L:** Leave in-situ one plugged and abandoned wellhead, approximately 101 km north of Dampier. The WA-20-L petroleum permit is subject to an ongoing environmental monitoring for the duration of the EP to monitor for gas release.
- + **WA-1-P:** Leave in situ three plugged and abandoned wellheads. The nearest well is approximately 85 km north-northwest of Dampier. Activity is ongoing following environment plan acceptance.

The environment that may be affected (EMBA) by proposed activities

Santos is assessing impacts and risks to the environment that may be affected (EMBA) by each of these activities, including on ecosystems (including people and communities), natural and physical resources, the qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas and the heritage value of places. This will include assessment of the social, economic and cultural features of the environment.

The map below depicts activity locations and a consolidated EMBA for all proposed activities. The 'EMBA' represents the greatest spatial extent that could be affected by unplanned 'worst case' spill scenarios, noting that in the unlikely event of a spill not all environmental, social, economic and cultural aspects would be affected.

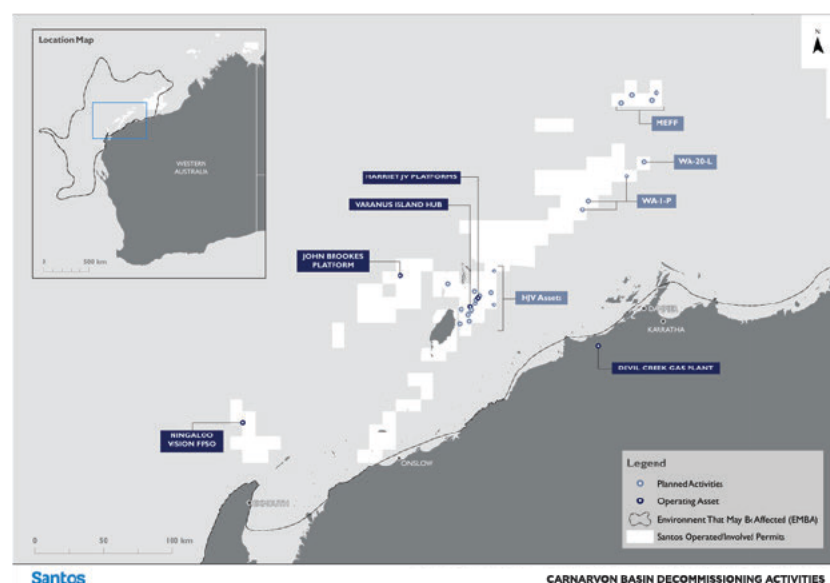
Santos is proposing to implement measures to reduce the impacts and risks of the activities. It is a requirement under relevant environmental legislation that these impacts and risks are reduced to as low as reasonably practicable and to an acceptable level.

Seeking Relevant Persons for Environment Plans

All petroleum activities must have an Environment Plan (EP) accepted by the respective Commonwealth, State or Territory Regulator before they can take place.

Santos is required to consult with relevant persons about those activities when preparing each EP.

A relevant person includes a person or an organisation whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by the proposed activity. Such functions, interests or activities may include those arising in relation to spiritual or cultural connections to land and sea country in accordance with Indigenous tradition; tourism; recreational and commercial fishing; other commercial or recreational activities and local communities that might be affected by our proposed activities (these are examples and not an exhaustive list).



Feedback from relevant persons is used to refine or change measures proposed to manage activity impacts and risks to a level that is as low as reasonably practicable and acceptable.

Consultation also helps us to identify environmental, social, economic and cultural values and sensitivities that may be affected, in addition to those identified by Santos based on our long-standing operating knowledge in these regions.

If you think your functions, interests or activities may be affected by any of these activities, you may be a relevant person with whom Santos must consult.

We welcome your feedback

We will use feedback from relevant persons to help us manage impacts and risks associated with these activities, ahead of submitting environment plans for each of our Carnarvon Basin activities activity to Commonwealth and State Regulators for assessment, depending on the location of activities. These Regulators are the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) and the WA Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS). Regulator acceptance of these environment plans is required before any petroleum activity can begin.

We have prepared consultation information sheets for each activity, which includes information about planned activities, identified environmental, social, economic and cultural aspects within each EMBA and how we propose to manage impacts and risks.

Contact us

If you consider you may be a relevant person, please contact us by **26 June 2023** to allow Santos to initiate consultation with you in relation to the proposed activity and so you can tell us how you would like to be consulted throughout this process.

Santos is committed to undertaking genuine and meaningful consultation. We want to provide information for people to make informed assessments of the possible consequences of the proposed activity on them.



Your feedback and input are important to us and input will be considered in the development of our environment plans for each activity.

Visit www.santos.com/offshoreconsultation, email offshore.consultation@santos.com or call **1800 267 600** for more information, to self-identify as relevant person or to provide feedback.

CARNARVON BASIN ENVIRONMENT PLAN CONSULTATION

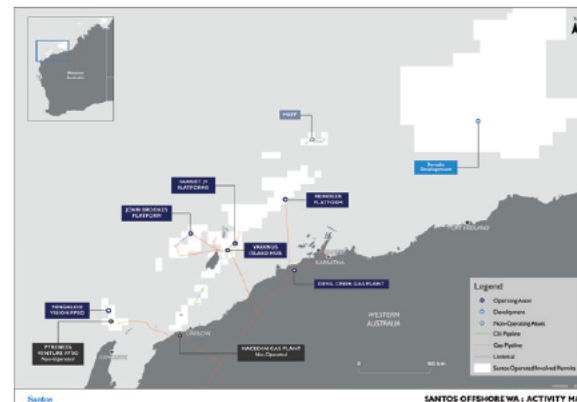
Santos is now consulting with relevant persons for Drilling, Plug and Abandonment and Decommissioning Environment Plans. Relevant persons are those whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by our proposed activities in the Carnarvon Basin off Western Australia's north west coast.

Proposed activities include:

- + **Spar-Halyard:** Drilling of a development well (infill) to support ongoing production at the Varanus Island (VI) Hub. The well is approximately 114 km north of Onslow. Activity commencement is planned from Q2 2024.
- + **Simpson:** Plug and abandonment activities of eight wells no longer required for production via the offshore Simpson facility. The wells are approximately 102 km west of Dampier. Activity commencement is planned from Q1 2024.
- + **Gibson:** Plug and abandonment activities of four wells no longer required for production via the offshore Gibson facility. The wells are approximately 113 km north east of Onslow. Activity is planned for Q1 2024.
- + **Mutineer Exeter Fletcher Flinucane (MEFF):** Plug and abandonment activities for 12 wells no longer required for production. The MEFF wells are approximately 147 km north of Dampier. Activity is planned for first half of 2024.
- + **Harriet Joint Venture (HJV):** Decommissioning of the HJV field, comprising removal of all platforms and substructures, as well as pipelines associated with the Simpson facility. The HJV field is approximately 102 km west of Dampier and 105 km north east of Onslow. Activity commencement is planned from Q1 2024.
- + **MEFF:** Decommissioning of the MEFF field, comprising partial removal of subsea infrastructure. The MEFF field is approximately 147 km north of Dampier. Activity commencement is anticipated from Q4 2024.
- + **Campbell:** Removal of the platform and substructures of the Campbell facility, which is approximately 105 km west of Dampier. Activity commencement is planned from Q1 2024.

- + **WA-20-L:** Leave in-situ one plugged and abandoned wellhead, approximately 101 km north of Dampier. The WA-20-L petroleum permit is subject to an ongoing environmental monitoring for the duration of the environment plan to monitor for gas release.
- + **WA-1-P:** Leave in-situ three legacy plugged and abandoned wellheads. The nearest well is approximately 85 km north-north west of Dampier. Inspection activities will commence following environment plan acceptance.

The map below depicts activity locations for all proposed activities.



We welcome your feedback

We will use feedback from relevant persons to help us manage impacts and risks associated with these activities, ahead of submitting environment plans for each of our Carnarvon Basin activities activity to Commonwealth and State Regulators for assessment, depending on the location of activities.

For more information

More information, including information sheets for each activity, is available at santos.com/offshoreconsultation. These information sheets provide details on each proposed activity, the environment that may be affected, potential environmental impacts and risks, and proposed control measures to seek to reduce any impacts and risks to as low as reasonably practicable and an acceptable level.

If you consider you may be a relevant person, please contact us as soon as possible if you require any further information or if you think you are not on our consultation list.

We are asking for relevant persons to provide feedback by 26 July 2023.

CONTACT US

Visit:
santos.com/offshoreconsultation
Phone:
1800 267 600
Email:
offshore.consultation@santos.com
or scan the QR code



Santos

EXMOUTH COMMUNITY LIAISON GROUP



27 July 2023

Presented by Name Surname

Exmouth Community Liaison Group

1	Welcome and introductions
2	Business overview
3	Ningaloo Vision operations update
4	Stakeholder consultation update
5	Community and Social Performance update
6	Australian Institute of Marine Science presentation: Whale Shark research

Disclaimer and important notice

Forward looking statements

This presentation contains forward looking statements that are subject to risk factors associated with the oil and gas industry. It is believed that the expectations reflected in these statements are reasonable but they may be affected by a range of variables which could cause actual results or trends to differ materially, including but not limited to: price fluctuations, actual demand, currency fluctuations, geotechnical factors, drilling and production results, gas commercialisation, development progress, operating results, engineering estimates, reserve estimates, loss of market, industry competition, environmental risks, physical risks, legislative, fiscal and regulatory developments, economic and financial markets conditions in various countries, approvals and cost estimates.

This presentation should not be relied upon as a recommendation or forecast by Santos and no representation or warranty is made as to the accuracy, completeness or reliability of such forward looking statements.

Third party information

Some of the information contained in this presentation is derived from publicly available sources and has not been independently verified. No representation or warranty is made as to the accuracy, completeness or reliability of such information.

No offer of securities

Nothing in this presentation should be construed as either an offer to sell or buy, or a solicitation of an offer to buy or sell, Santos securities in any jurisdiction.

References to “Santos”

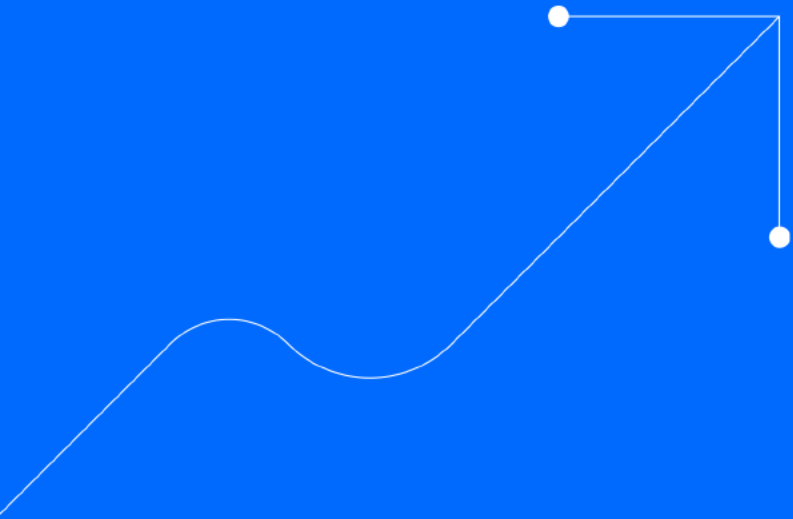
A reference to “Santos” in this presentation may be a reference to a subsidiary of Santos Limited.

Welcome and Introductions

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

The Ningaloo Vision Operation
is a joint venture with INPEX, operated by Santos
(Santos 52.5% / INPEX 47.5%)





BUSINESS OVERVIEW

TOGETHER, LET'S CREATE A POSITIVE ENERGY LEGACY.

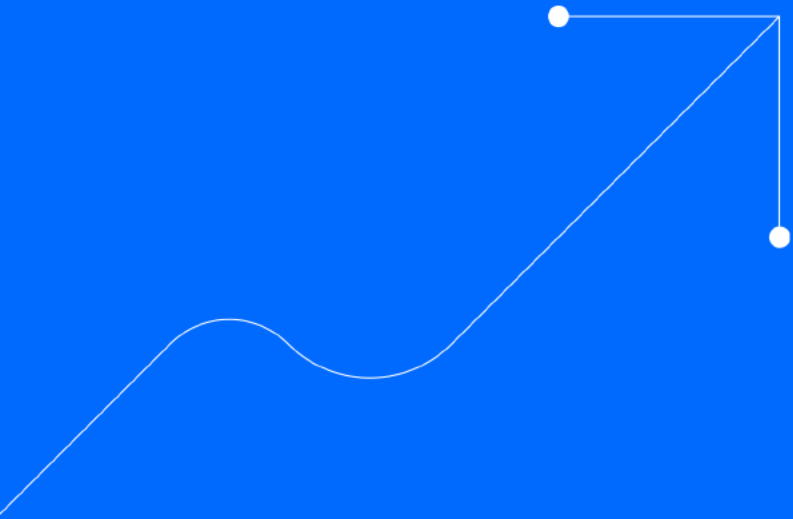
Our mission is to provide cleaner energy that is both affordable and sustainable to help create a better world for everyone.

MIDSTREAM INFRASTRUCTURE PORTFOLIO CCS AND CLEAN FUELS HUBS

- OPERATED FACILITIES
- PLANNED PROJECT LOCATION
- NON-OPERATED FACILITIES
- Major Santos Office Locations

Santos

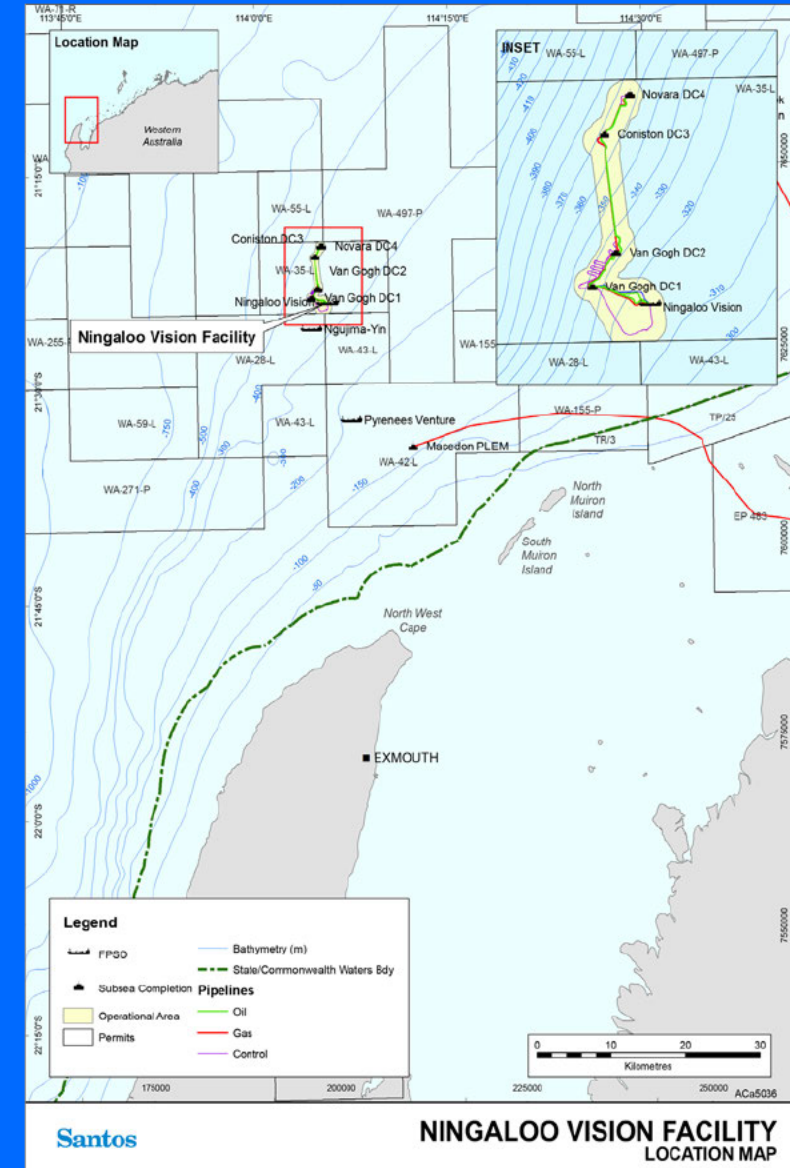


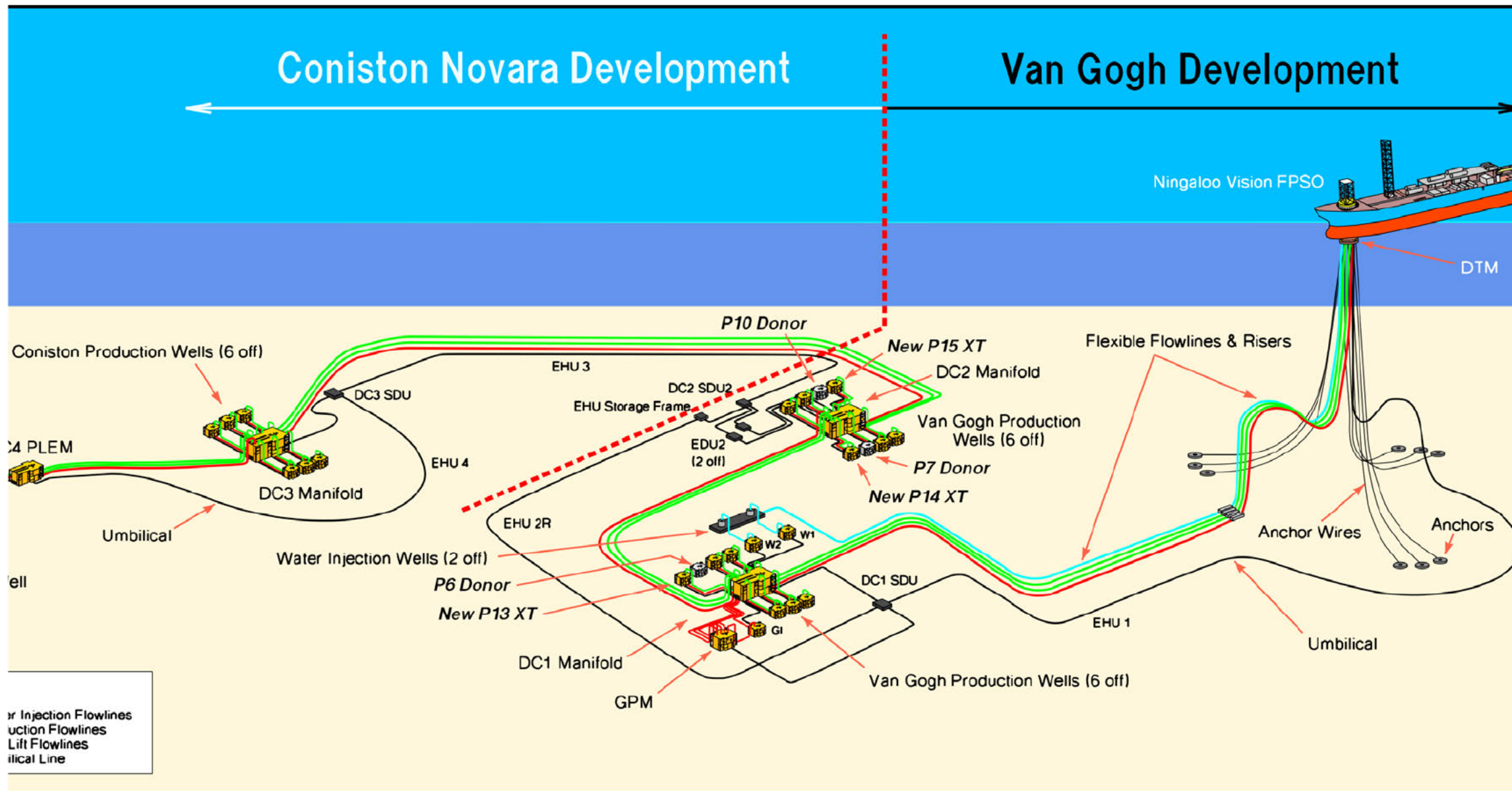


NINGALOO VISION OPERATIONS UPDATE

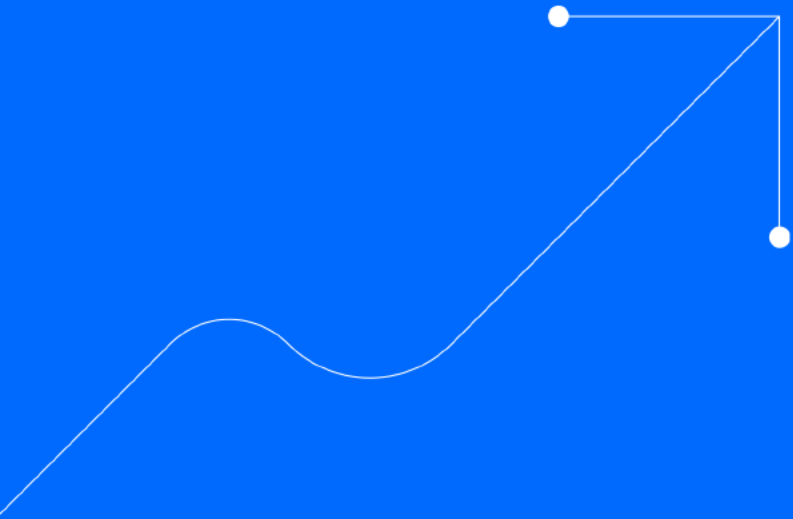
Ningaloo Vision Operations

- Business as usual on the Ningaloo Vision FPSO.
- Facility shutdown being planned for October – 2x weeks; aligned with a subsea campaign using a FSV
- From 1st July, facility is operating under a production intensive emissions baseline -> further strengthening the team's commitment to reduce emissions





VAN GOGH, CONISTON AND NOVARA FIELD SCHEMATIC : NEW VGID2 DEVELOPMENT



STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION UPDATE

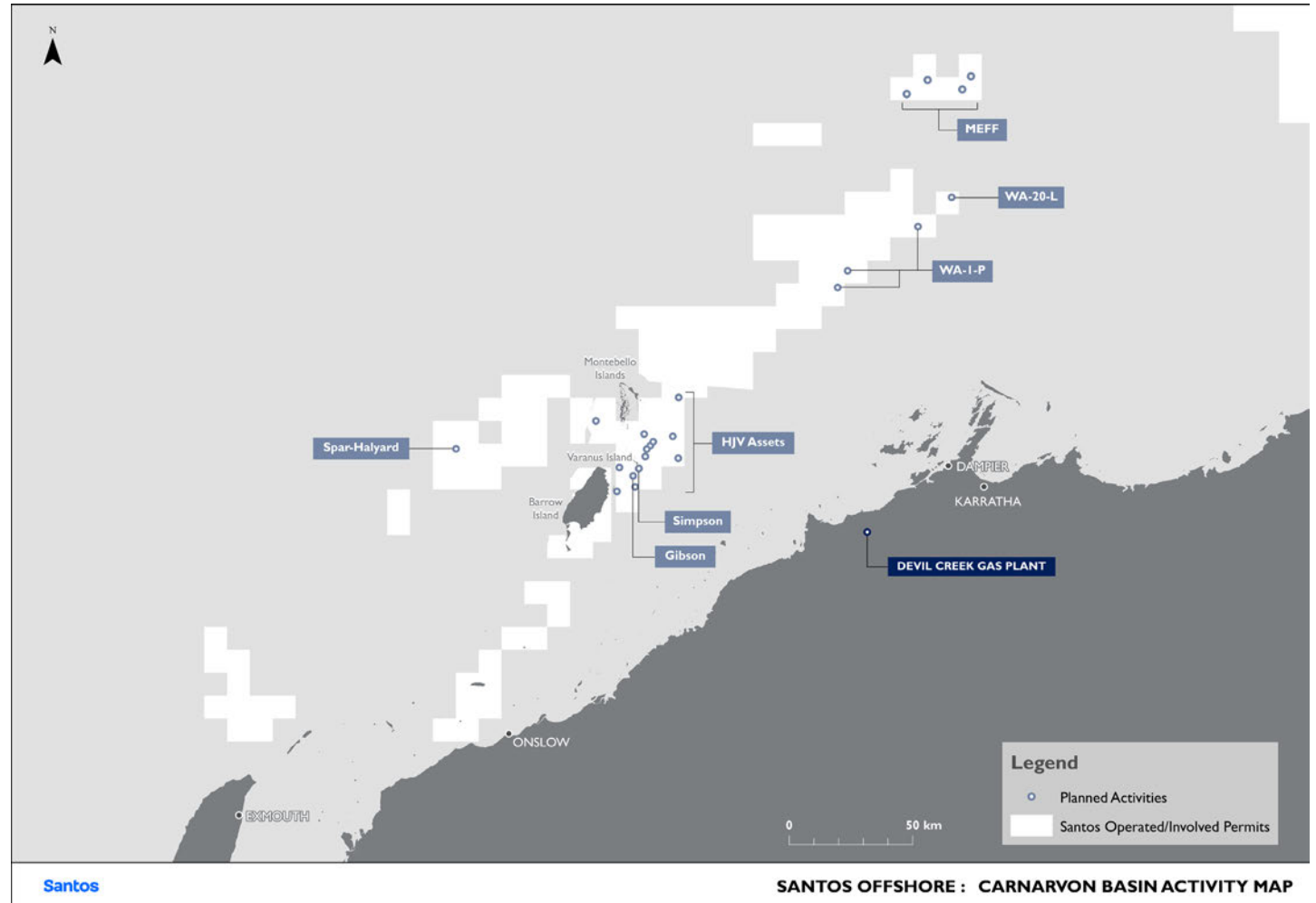
Relevant person consultation

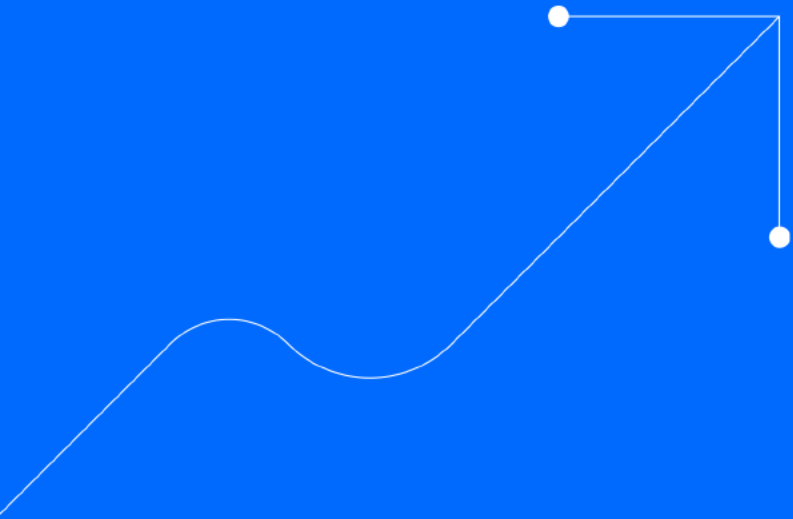
Drilling and P&A Activities

- Spar Halyard – development well
- Mutineer Exeter Fletcher Finucane (MEFF) – P&A 12 wells
- Harriet Joint Venture (HJV) – Simpson – P&A 8 wells
- HJV – Gibson – P&A 4 wells

Decommissioning Activities

- MEFF – removal of most subsea equipment
- HJV – All platforms and Simpson pipelines
- HJV – Campbell – removal of platforms and substructures
- WA-1-P – leave in situ three wellheads
- WA-20-L – leave in situ one wellhead





COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Santos' community investment framework

Our objective is to leave a positive legacy in the communities in which we operate:

We seek to:

- Create a positive legacy and build capacity in the communities where we operate
- Support sustainable communities through investing in local jobs and supporting local businesses
- Create opportunities for local and Indigenous suppliers to increase their capability and capacity to supply



Santos community investment framework

Santos corporate Social Responsibility Pillars.



Environment and climate change

Community carbon abatement schemes, environmental research and education, water preservation, land conservation, community clean up and reforestation



Indigenous communities, diversity and inclusion

Improve the lives and prosperity of indigenous people through support programs, provide sustainable health, employment or economic benefits, or celebrate and protect Cultural Heritage



Mental health and healthy living

Programs or events that encourage healthy lifestyles, and or support those impacted by illness or mental health issues or improve the long-term health outcomes of community groups



STEM training and education

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths) learning aims to build industry skills and knowledge through scholarships, traineeships, cadetships and academic support



Strengthening local economies and communities

We will support grassroots regional programs that enhance the lives of those who live in the areas in which we operate. Our focus is on farming and agriculture, local events, support for regional sporting teams and infrastructure investment

Santos Community Investment Framework

Guiding principles for community investments



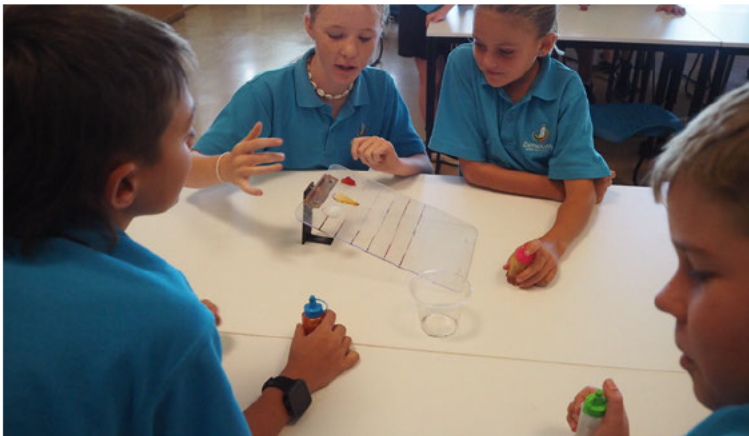
Every community investment will be assessed on the following guiding principles which determine whether there is a strategic fit with the Santos business and brand:

- They must fall within the regional areas where Santos operates
- They must achieve capacity building for communities & meet a community need
- They must be aligned with Santos' Corporate Social Responsibility pillars
- Where possible, they should also provide engagement opportunities for a broader group of stakeholders

Visit our website for more information

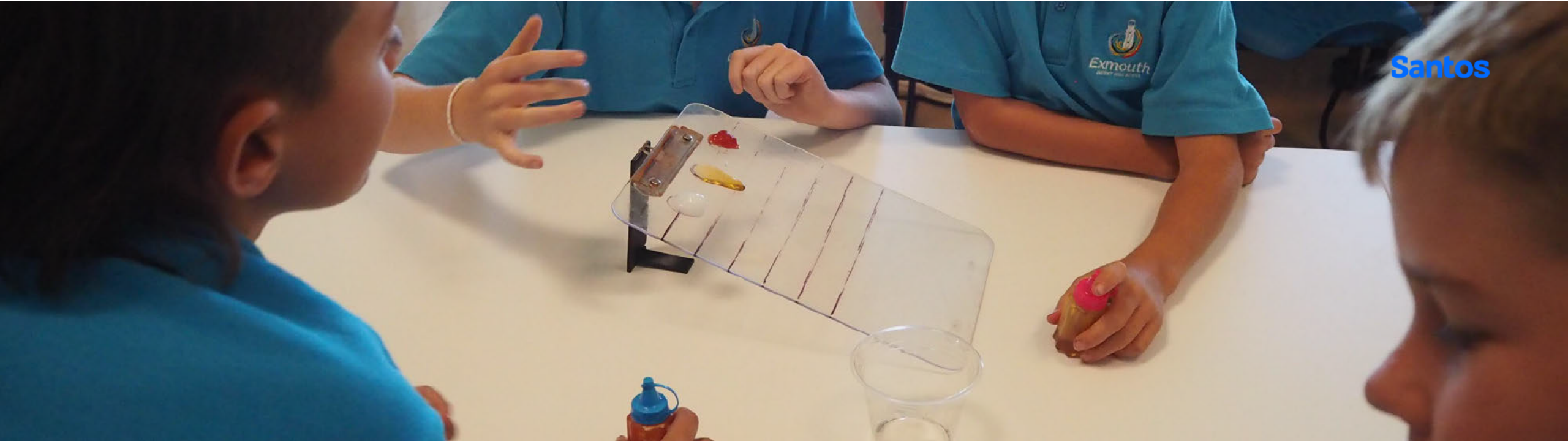
www.santos.com/sustainability/community/sponsorships/

Santos community investments – 2023



Sponsorships and grants – Exmouth 2023

Organisation	Initiative/Program	Benefit
Community		
Exmouth Shire	Recreation precinct upgrade works	Improved local amenity & family precinct
Exmouth District High School	STEM Technology	Purchase 30 additional iPads to support STEM program
Exmouth District High School	NAIDOC week activities	Support celebration and understanding of aboriginal culture
Exmouth Shire	Community and Sports awards	Recognise importance of volunteers & local participation
Exmouth Netball Club	Club development	Support local community and encourage healthy living
Exmouth Amateur Swimming Club	Club development	Support local community and encourage healthy living
Exmouth Junior Sports Club	Club development	Support local community and encourage healthy living
Santos/INPEX as JV Participants		
Australian Institute of Marine Science	Whale Shark Research	Improve knowledge of whale sharks to support management initiatives
Exmouth CCI	Skills based training program	Build local capacity and workforce
Exmouth Game Fishing Club	GAMEX & Family Fun Day	Support Exmouth's largest community event
Exmouth Shire	Water refill stations	Reduce single use plastics
Exmouth District High School	STEM Technology	See above
Exmouth District High School	Aquatic Program	Improve water safety and encourage healthy living
Exmouth Wildlife Carers	Support for care and veterinary costs	Support local volunteers

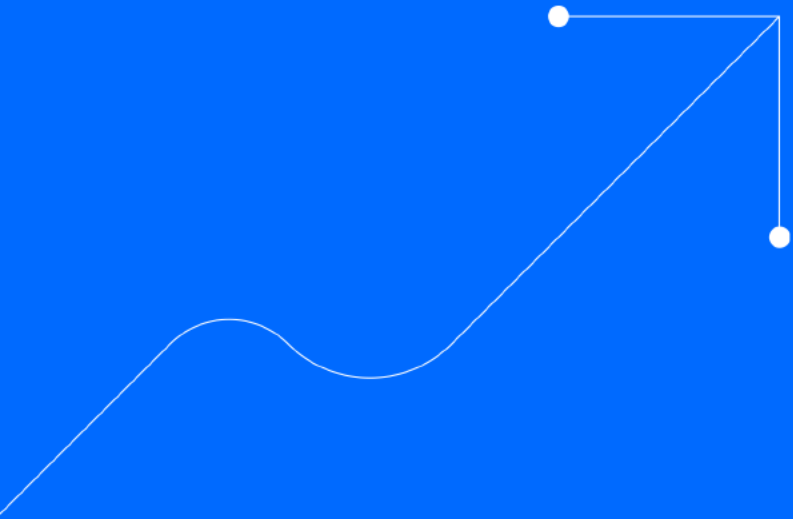


Western Australian Community Partnerships

Exmouth CLG – 27 July 2023

Santos' broader community partnerships help support the Exmouth Community:

- + Ronald McDonald House Charities - Family Resources Centre, Perth Children's Hospital
- + Lifeline WA - Volunteer Crisis Supporters & regional training programs
- + Energy Club of WA - Next Generation Schools Program
- + AusEarth Ed – Australian Primary Literacy Mathematics and Science Program



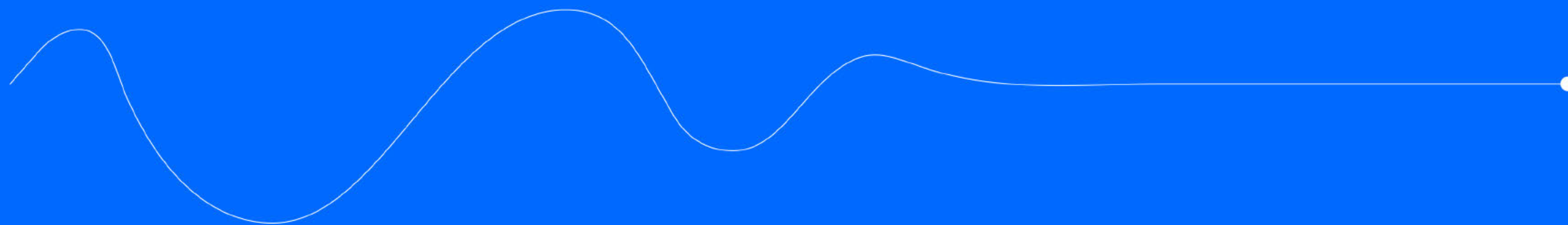
AIMS WHALE SHARK RESEARCH REPORT

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PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION – CARNARVON BASIN

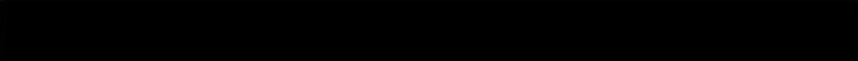
Meeting with



Agenda

Meeting purpose

Introductions

About 

About Santos

Our consultation approach

Proposed activities

Consultation opportunities

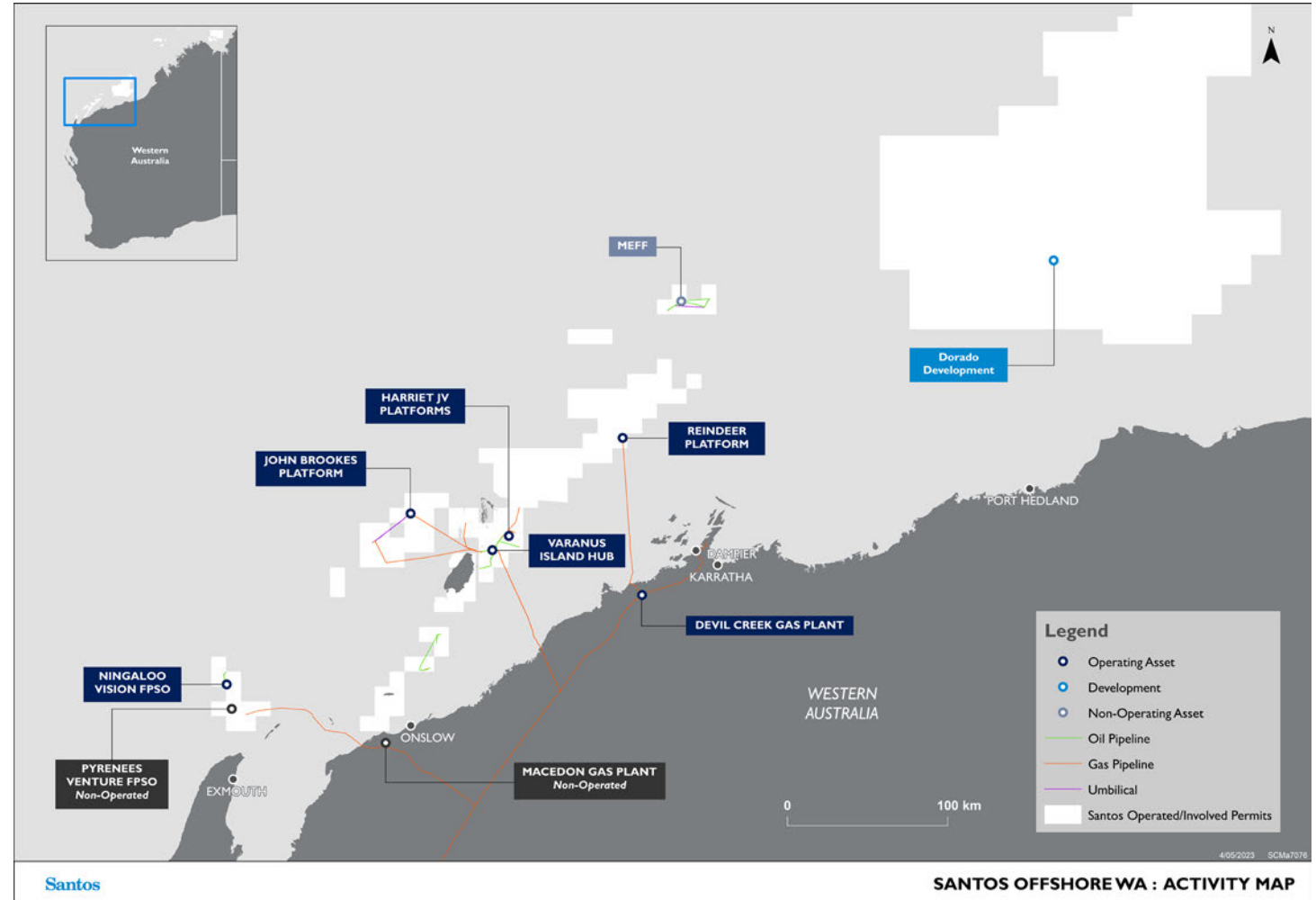
Questions and next steps



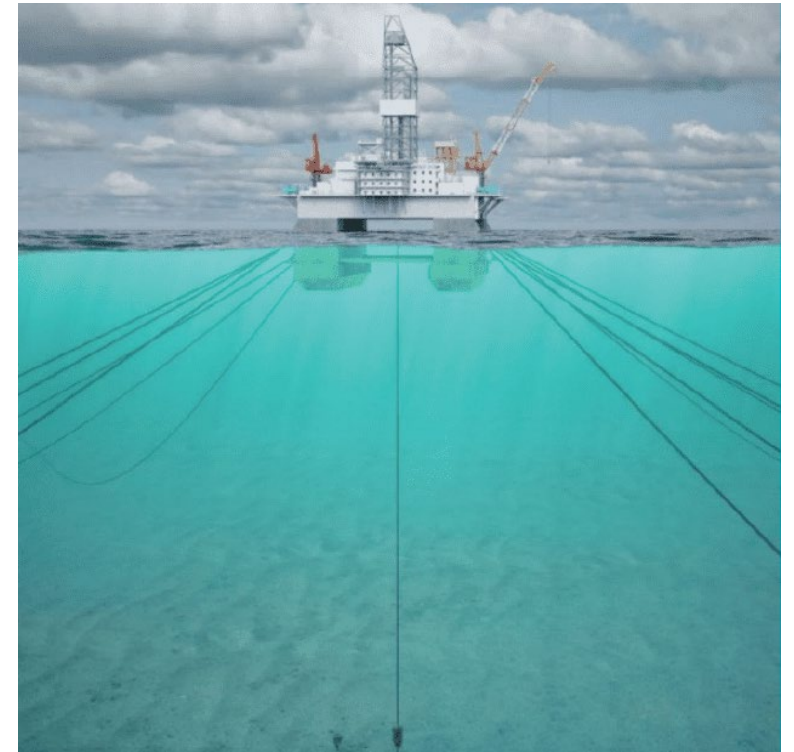
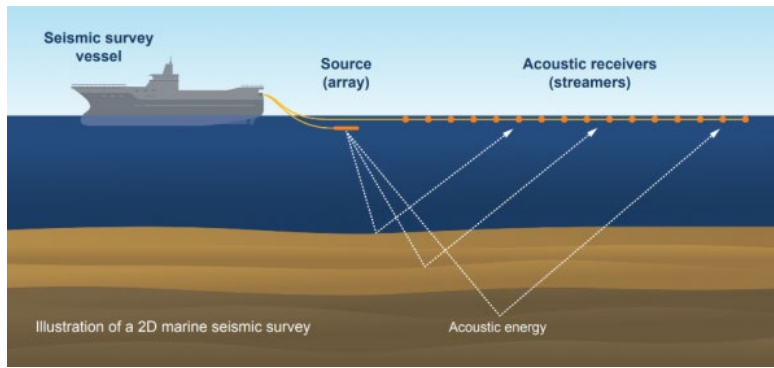
SECTION 1 ABOUT SANTOS

About Santos

- Biggest producer of domestic gas in WA
- First offshore discovery, in the Carnarvon Basin, in the early 1980s
- WA products – gas, oil and condensate
- Interests in three of WA's major dedicated domestic gas plants
- Our business focus:
 - Safe, reliable operations
 - Minimise our social and environmental impacts
 - Near-field exploration opportunities
 - Progressive decommissioning of assets no longer required



About Oil and Gas Activities



About Santos

Our WA operations



Devil Creek Gas Plant



Varanus Island Gas Plant



Ningaloo Vision FPSO

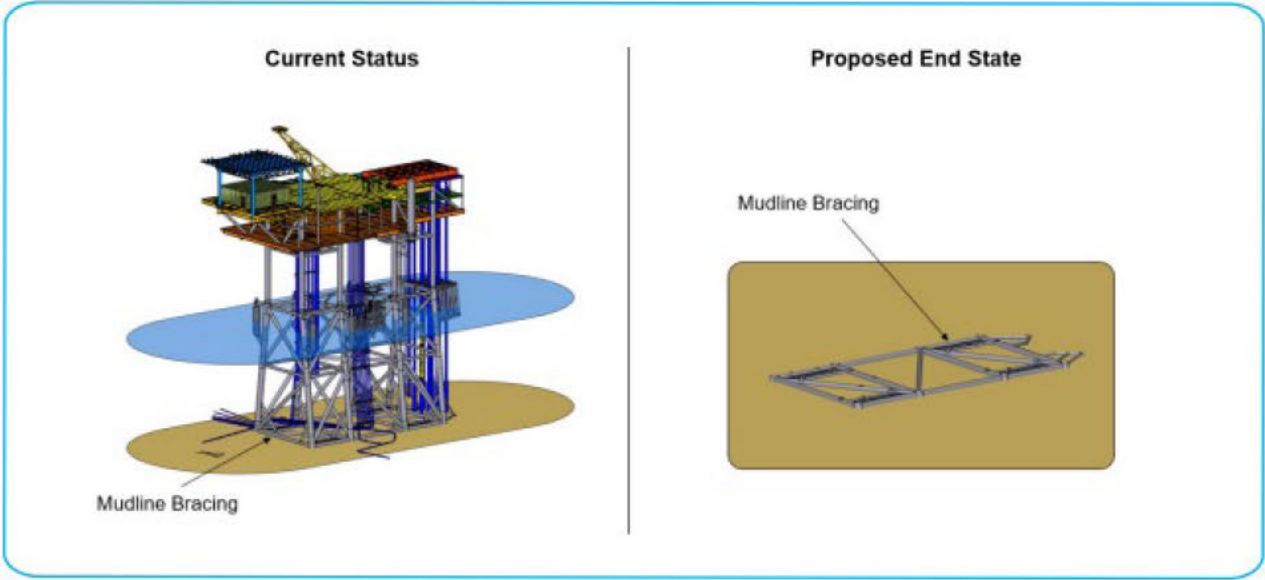
About Oil and Gas Activities



Legendre-1 wellhead



Campbell Platform



Harriet Bravo Platform



SECTION 2 OUR CONSULTATION APPROACH

Consultation – Regulatory Requirements

- **Commonwealth waters** – National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA)
- **WA State waters** – Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS)

*“In the course of preparing an Environment Plan, a titleholder **must consult with relevant persons** in accordance with Division 2.2A, Regulation 11A...*

*“The purpose of consultation under regulation 11A of the Environment Regulations is to ensure that **authorities, persons or organisations that are potentially affected by activities are consulted and their input considered in the development of environment plans.**”*

Guideline - Consultation in the course of preparing an environment plan, NOPSEMA

*“The implementation strategy must provide for appropriate consultation with **relevant authorities and other relevant interested persons or organisations...***

*“The identification of potential stakeholders must take into consideration the **activity type, location, environmental impacts and risks (planned activities and unplanned events) and relevant stakeholder interests or concerns.**”*

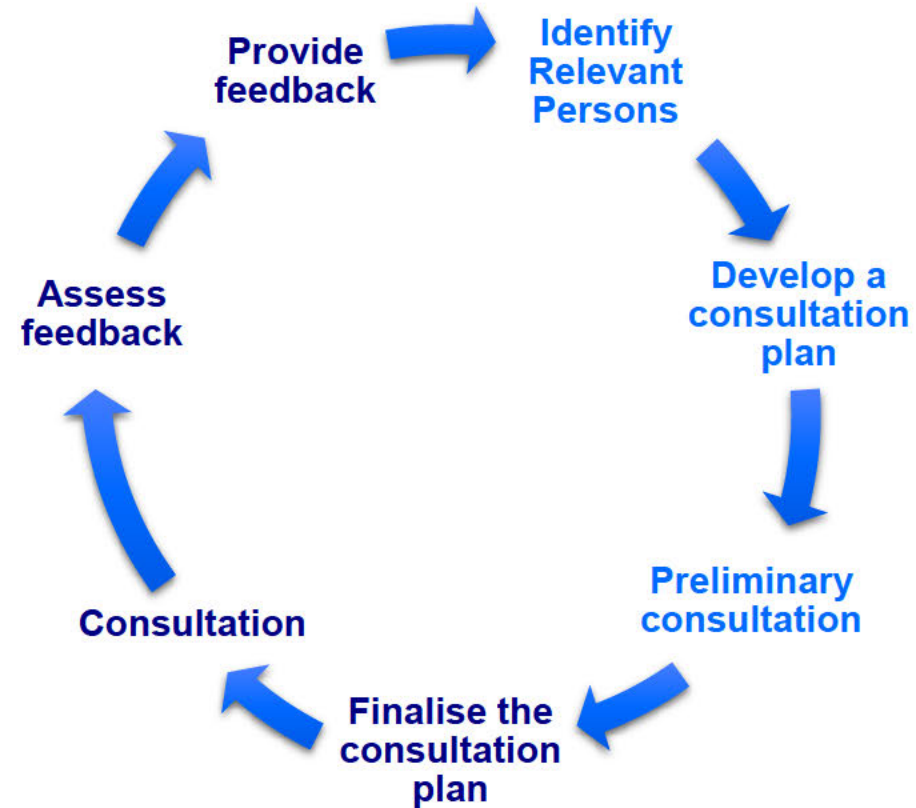
Guideline for the Development of Petroleum, Geothermal and Pipeline Environment Plans in Western Australia, DMIRS



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety**

Consultation – Santos Requirements

- Santos Management System
- Santos EP Consultation Methodology
 - Applied to Commonwealth and State jurisdictions
- Objective for all proposed activities is to **reduce environmental impacts and risks to a level that is ALARP and acceptable** over the life of the activity.
- Consultation feedback helps us to **refine or change proposed management measures** to address potential activity impacts and risks.
- Consultation also helps us to identify and understand environmental, social, economic and cultural features, values and sensitivities not available from publicly available sources.



Identifying Relevant Persons

We identify the functions, activities and interests of commercial fishers based on:

- EMBA intersect with Cwth and State Fisheries
- Review of government fishery publications (10-year history):
 - Fishery Status Reports (Cwth)
 - State of the Fisheries Reports (WA State)
- Review of other public information sources – eg studies, reports

Identification process is a starting point for conversations with potentially Relevant Persons ahead of formal consultation

Step 1	Identify and assess activity impacts and risks to define the Environment that May Be Affected (EMBA)
Step 2	Consider environmental, social, economic and cultural features that may be impacted
Step 3	Map categories of potentially Relevant Persons to environmental, social, economic and cultural features
Step 4	Research Relevant Person categories to identify authorities, persons and organisations whose functions, interests or activities may be affected

Identifying Relevant Persons

www.Santos.com/offshoreconsultation

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Simpson Offshore Assets and All Platforms Environment Plans

Information for Relevant Persons

Activity Overview

Santos is planning to progressively decommission the Harriet Joint Venture (HJV) offshore assets no longer required for production, commencing with the removal of 16 HJV platform/structures and the Simpson facility pipelines.

The Harriet Joint Venture (HJV) assets are located in Western Australian State waters in the Carnarvon Basin, with the Operational Area approximately 102 km west of Dampier and 105 km northeast of Onslow, Western Australia (see Figure 1). Activities are proposed to commence in Q1 2024.

Consultation & Feedback

All petroleum activities in Western Australian State waters must have an Environment Plan (EP) accepted by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) before any activities can take place.

Under State Environmental Regulations, Santos is required to consult with relevant authorities and other relevant interested persons and organisations about proposed activities when preparing an EP. This may include you if, for example, you have spiritual or cultural connections to land and sea country in accordance with Indigenous tradition that might be affected by our proposed activity, if you otherwise carry out recreational or commercial fishing, tourism or other activities that might be affected by our proposed activity or if you are part of a local community that might be affected by our proposed activity.

If you consider you may be a relevant authority or a relevant interested person or organisation, please contact us by 26 June 2023 to allow Santos time to initiate consultation with you so you can tell us how you would like to be consulted throughout this process or if you need additional information.

Details on how to contact us are included in the Providing Feedback section of this information sheet.

Figure 1. Harriet Joint Venture decommissioning activity location.



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SEEKING RELEVANT PERSONS

CARNARVON BASIN DRILLING AND PLUG AND ABANDONMENT ENVIRONMENT PLANS

Santos is seeking to identify and consult with relevant persons whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by our proposed activities off Western Australia's north west coast.

Santos is planning a number of drilling, plug and abandonment activities offshore Western Australia:

- Spur-Helgard:** Drilling of a development well (DWB) to support ongoing production at the Vortex Island (VI) Hub. The well is approximately 184 km north of Onslow. Activity commencement is planned from Q2 2024.
- Wah-A-L:** Drilling of up to four explorative wells to support future production through the VI Hub Operations. Wah-A-L is approximately 307 km north of Onslow. Activity commencement is planned from Q2 2024.
- Simpson:** Plug and abandonment activities of eight wells no longer required for production via the offshore Simpson facility. The wells are approximately 102 km west of Dampier. Activity commencement is planned from Q1 2024.
- Gibson:** Plug and abandonment activities of four wells no longer required for production via the offshore Gibson facility. The wells are approximately 113 km north east of Onslow. Activity is planned for Q2 2024.
- Mulhewer-Ester-Fletcher-Foucault (MEFF):** Plug and abandonment activities for 12 wells no longer required for production. The MEFF wells are approximately 147 km north of Dampier. Activity is planned for the first half of Q2 2024.

The environment that may be affected (EMBA) by proposed activities

Santos is assessing impacts and risks to the environment that may be affected (EMBA) by each of these activities, including on ecosystems (including people and communities), natural and physical resources, the quality and characteristics of locations, places and areas and the heritage value of places. This will include assessment of the social, economic and cultural features of the environment.

The map below depicts activity locations and a consolidated EMBA for all proposed activities. The EMBA represents the greatest spatial extent that could be affected by proposed 'worst case' activities, noting that in the unlikely event of a spill not all environmental, social, economic and cultural aspects would be affected.

Santos is proposing to implement measures to reduce the impacts and risks of the activities. It is a requirement under relevant environmental legislation that these impacts and risks are reduced to as low as reasonably practicable and to an acceptable level.

Seeking Relevant Persons for Environment Plans

In preparing its environment plans, Santos must consult with relevant persons for each of its proposed activities. A relevant person includes a person or an organisation whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by an activity proposed to be carried out under an environment plan. Such functions, interests or activities may include those arising in relation to spiritual or cultural connections to land and sea country in accordance with Indigenous traditions, tourism, recreational and commercial fishing, other commercial or recreational activities and local communities that might be affected by our proposed activities (these are examples and not an exhaustive list).

We welcome your feedback

We will use feedback from relevant persons to help us manage impacts and risks associated with these activities, ahead of submitting environment plans for each of our Carnarvon Basin activities to Commonwealth and State Regulators for assessment, depending on the location of activities. Those Regulators are the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) and the WA Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS). Regulator acceptance of these environment plans is required before any petroleum activity can begin.

We have prepared consultation information sheets for each activity, which includes information about planned activities, identified environmental, social, economic and cultural aspects within each EMBA and how we propose to manage impacts and risks.

Contact us

If you consider you may be a relevant person, please contact us by **26 June 2023** to allow Santos to initiate consultation with you in relation to the proposed activity and so you can tell us how you would like to be consulted throughout this process.

Santos is committed to undertaking genuine and meaningful consultation. We want to provide information for people to make informed assessments of the possible consequences of the proposed activity on them.

Your feedback and input are important to us and input will be considered in the development of our environment plans for each activity.

Visit www.santos.com/offshoreconsultation, email offshoreconsultation@santos.com or call 1800 287 400 for more information, to self-identify as relevant persons or to provide feedback.

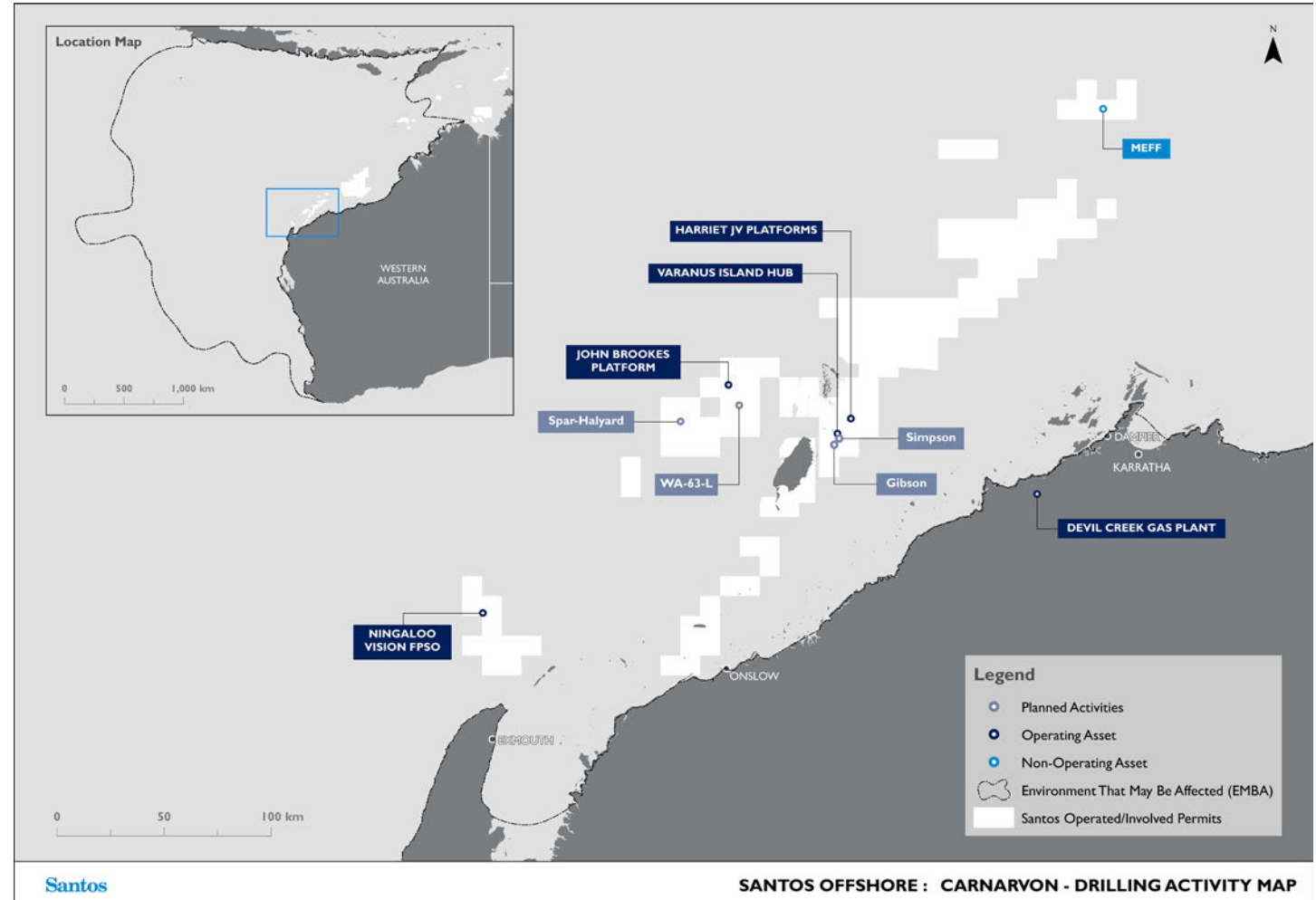





SECTION 3 PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

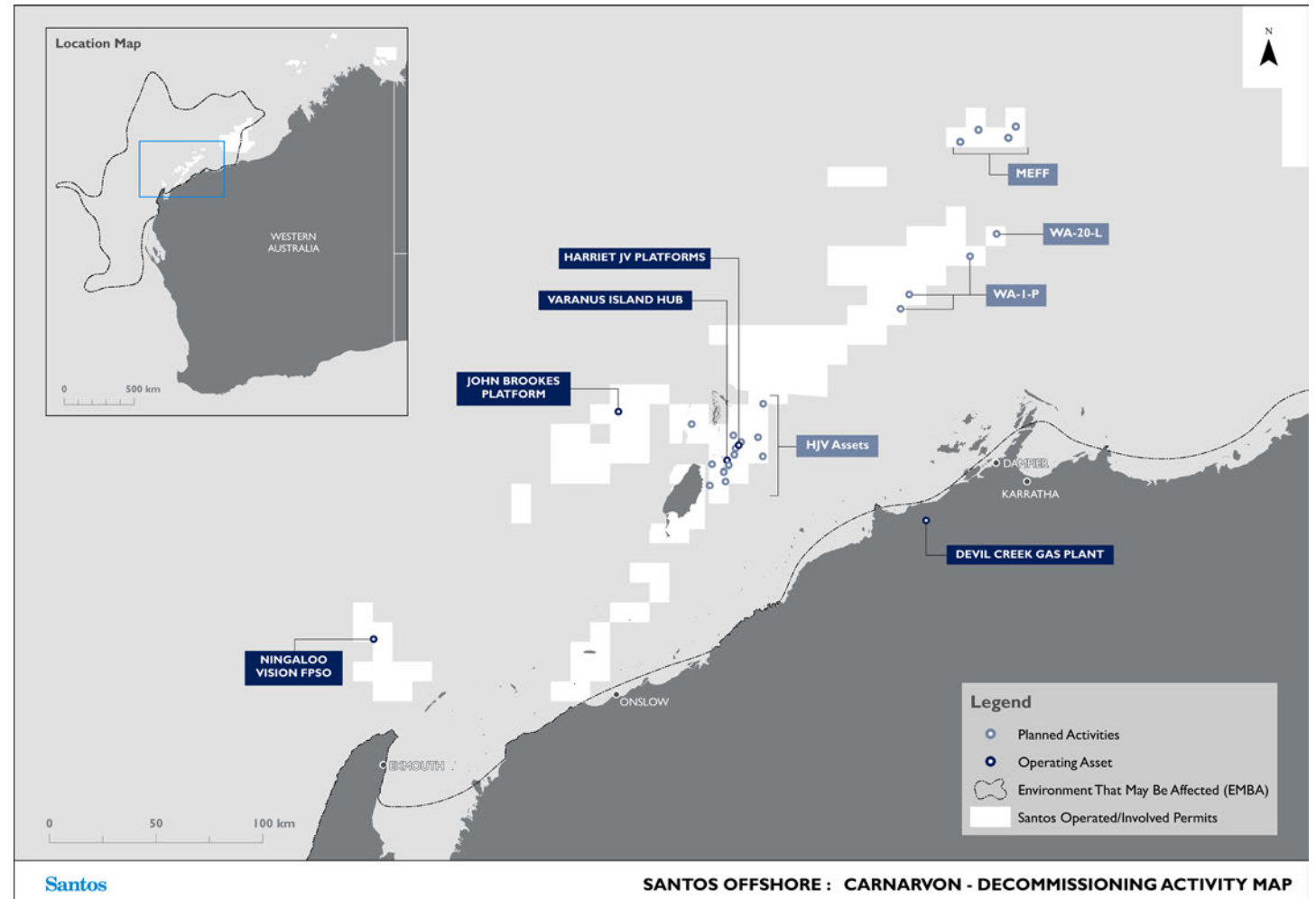
Drilling and Plug & Abandonment

- Spar Halyard – development well
- WA-63-L – up to four exploration wells
- Mutineer Exeter Fletcher Finucane (MEFF) – P&A 12 wells
- Harriet Joint Venture (HJV) – Simpson – P&A 8 wells
- HJV – Gibson – P&A 4 wells



Decommissioning

- MEFF – removal of most subsea equipment
- HJV – All platforms and Simpson pipelines
- HJV – Campbell – removal of platforms and substructures
- WA-1-P – leave in situ three wellheads
- WA-20-L – leave in situ one wellhead





SECTION 4 CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES

Consultation – planned activities and unplanned events

Santos is committed to co-designing consultation approaches that meet the information needs of Relevant Persons.

- **EP consultation**
 - Identification of Relevant Persons – entitlement to fish in EMBA vs active in Operational Area
 - Methods – emails, mail, one-on-one meetings, community drop-in sessions, technical fact sheet, activity summary fact sheets, posters and presentations, social media posts, video clips
 - Content – map, location, distance to shore, water depth ...
- **Activity notifications**
 - Government, rep body and licence holder expectations – methods and content
- **Emergency communications**
 - Government, rep body and licence holder expectations – methods and content

Consultation approach – next steps

Santos is committed to co-designing consultation approaches that meet the information needs of Relevant Persons. Opportunities include:

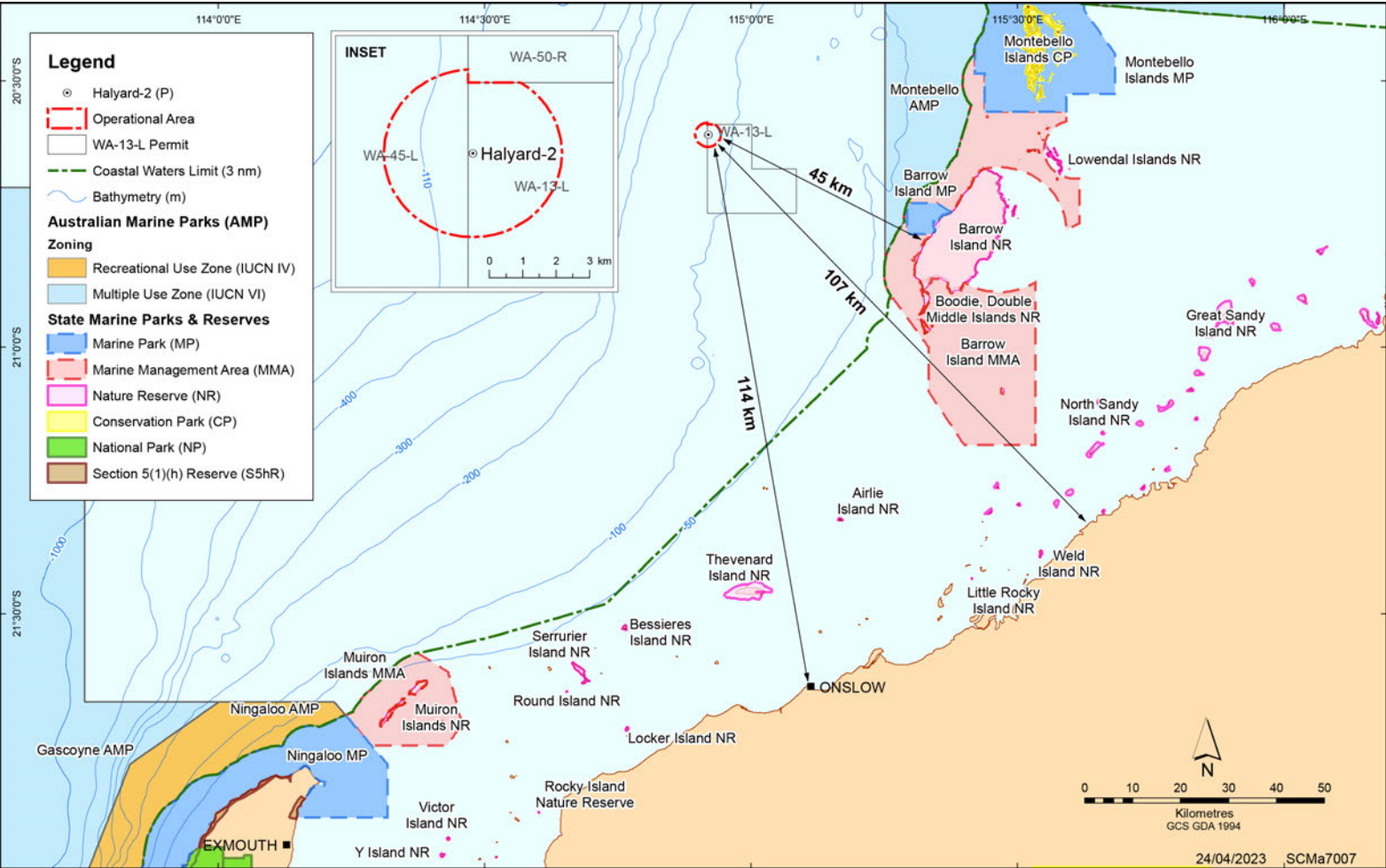
- Emails
- One-on-one meetings
- Community drop-in sessions
- Technical fact sheets
- Activity summary fact sheets
- Posters and presentations
- Social media posts
- Video clips
- Other opportunities



SECTION 5 QUESTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

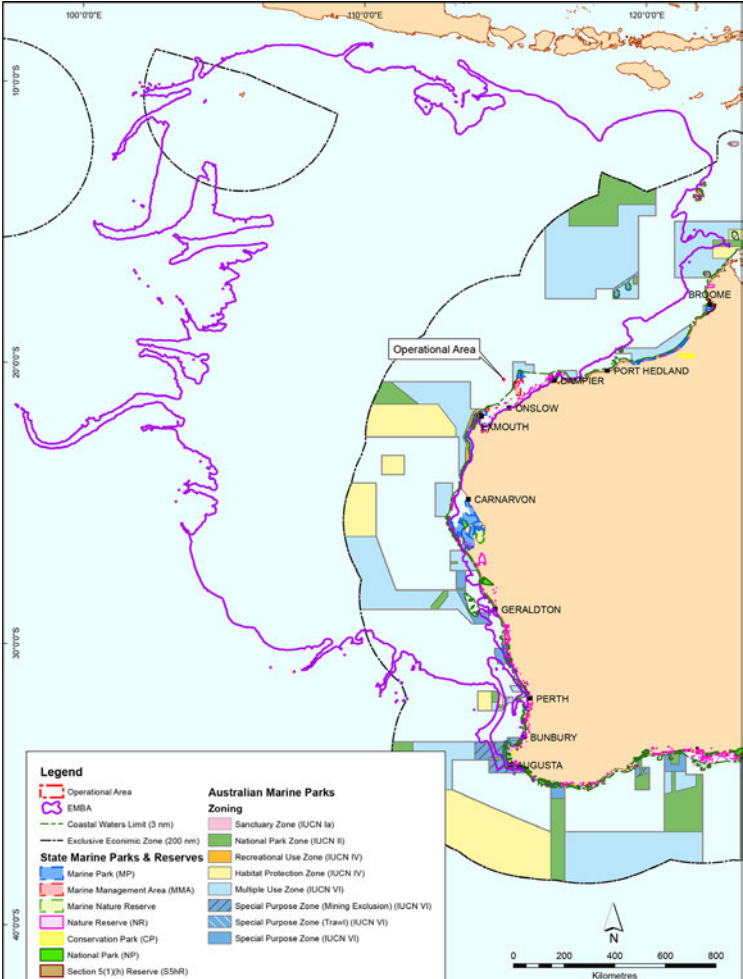
Santos

Spar Halyard



Santos

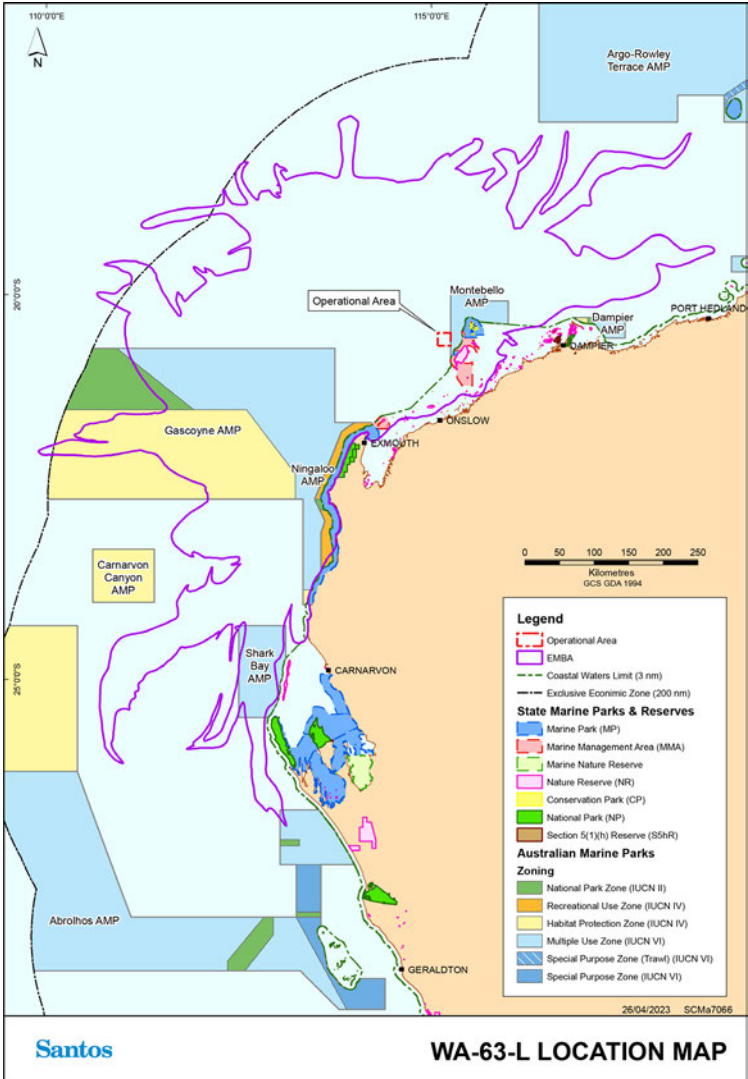
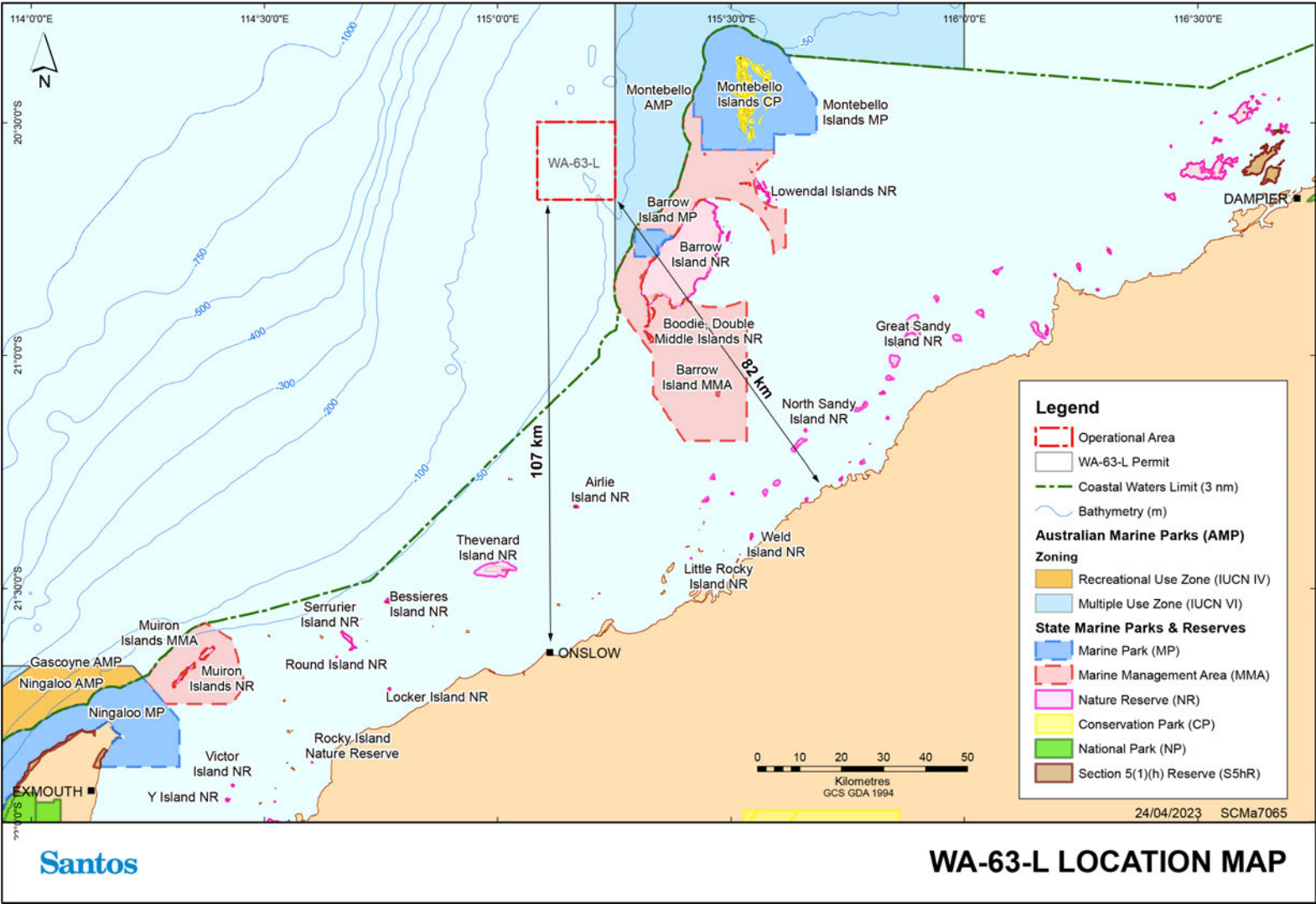
SPAR-HALYARD INFILL LOCATION MAP



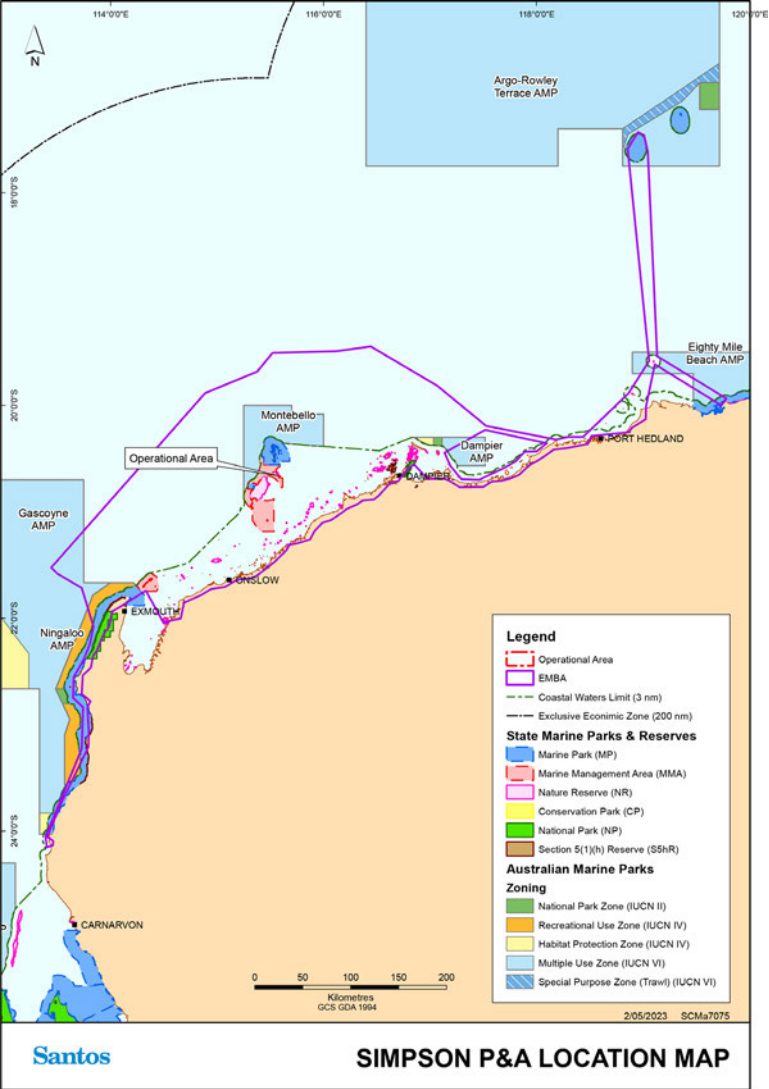
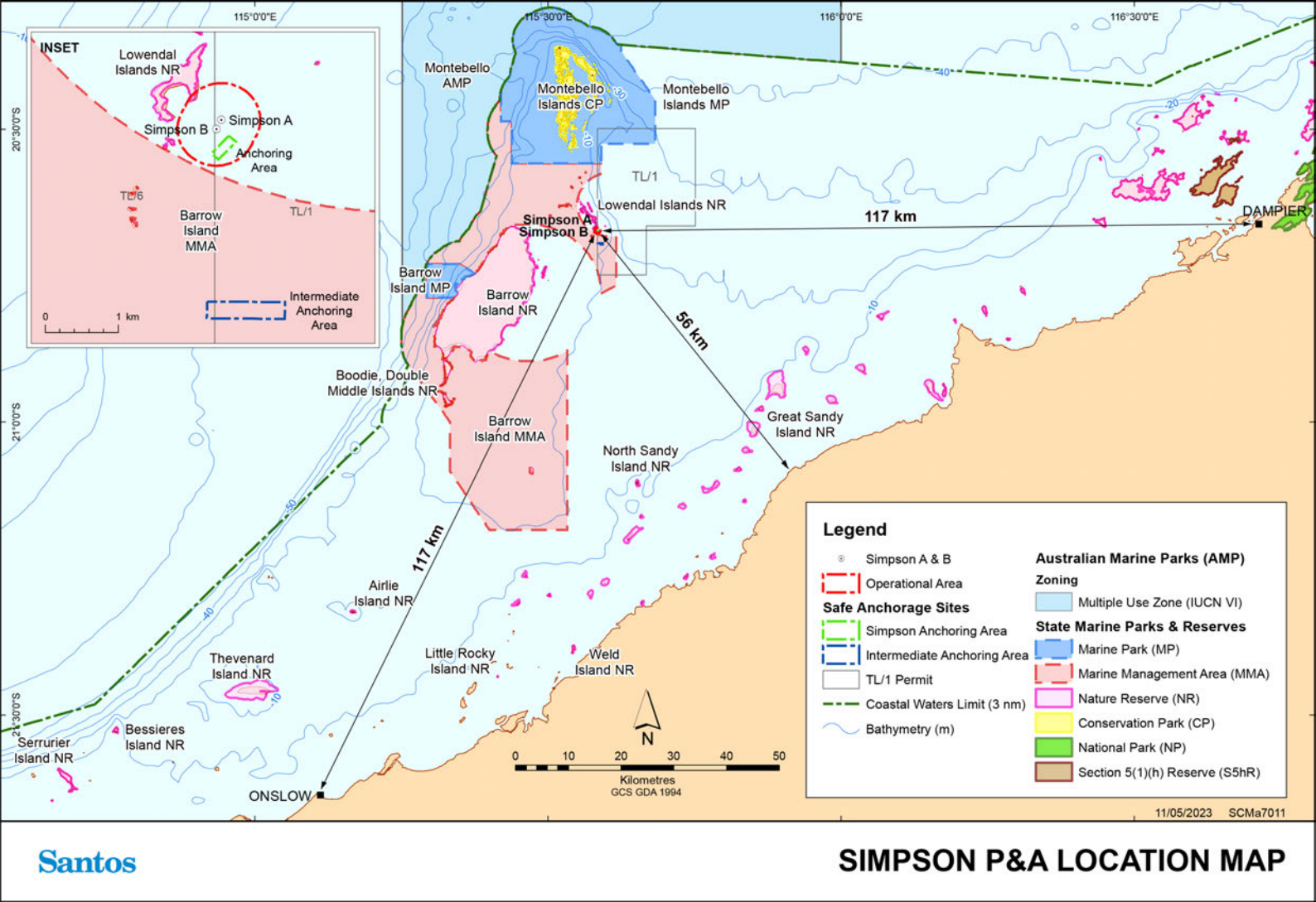
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SPAR-HALYARD INFILL LOCATION MAP

WA-63-L



HJV – Simpson P&A



INSET

Barrow Island MMA

Intermediate Anchoring Area

Gibson

Anchoring Area

TL/6

TL/1

0 1 km

20°30'0"S

21°00'0"S

115°00'0"E

116°00'0"E

Montebello AMP

Montebello Islands CP

Montebello Islands MP

Lowendal Islands NR

Gibson

Barrow Island MP

Barrow Island NR

Barrow Island MMA

Boodie, Double Middle Islands NR

North Sandy Island NR

Great Sandy Island NR

55 km

113 km

Airlie Island NR

Little Rocky Island NR

Weld Island NR

Thevenard Island NR

Bessieres Island NR

Serrurier Island NR

ONSLOW

DAMPIER

0 10 20 30 40 50

Kilometres

GCS GDA 1994

Legend

○ Gibson

□ Operational Area

Safe Anchorage Site

□ Gibson Anchoring Area

□ Intermediate Anchoring Area

□ TL/6 Permit

--- Coastal Waters Limit (3 nm)

~ Bathymetry (m)

Australian Marine Parks (AMP) Zoning

Multiple Use Zone (IUCN VI)

State Marine Parks & Reserves

Marine Park (MP)

Marine Management Area (MMA)

Nature Reserve (NR)

Conservation Park (CP)

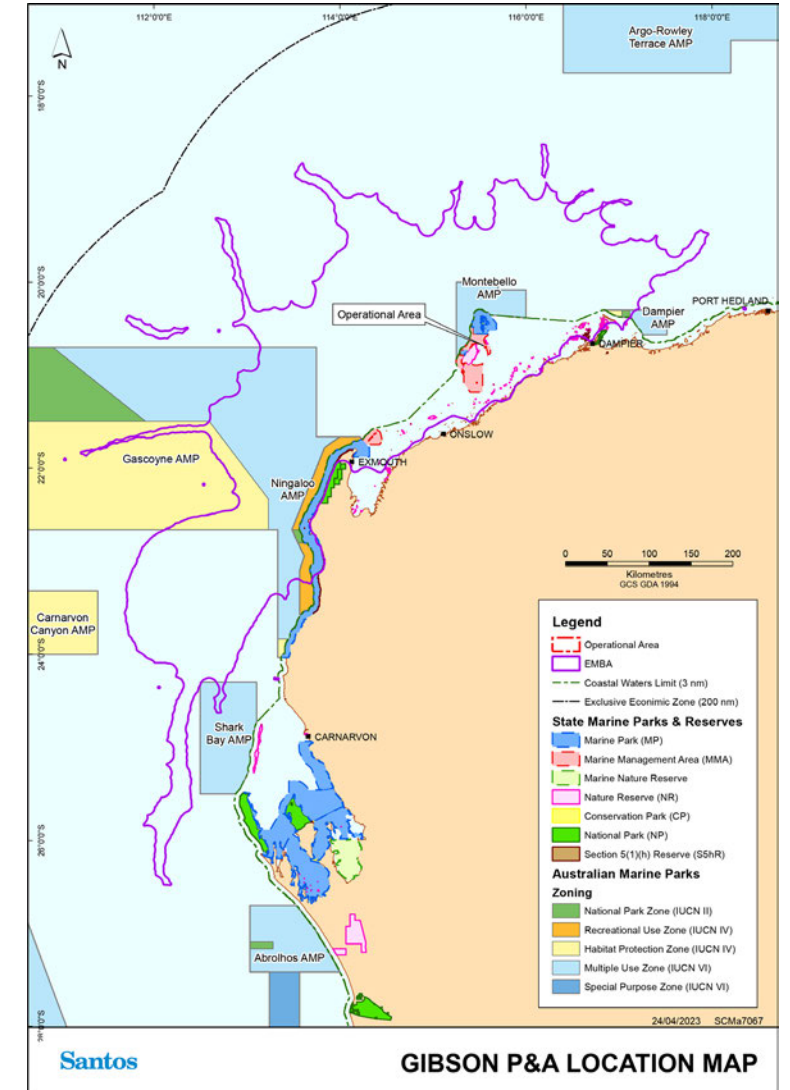
National Park (NP)

Section 5(1)(h) Reserve (S5hR)

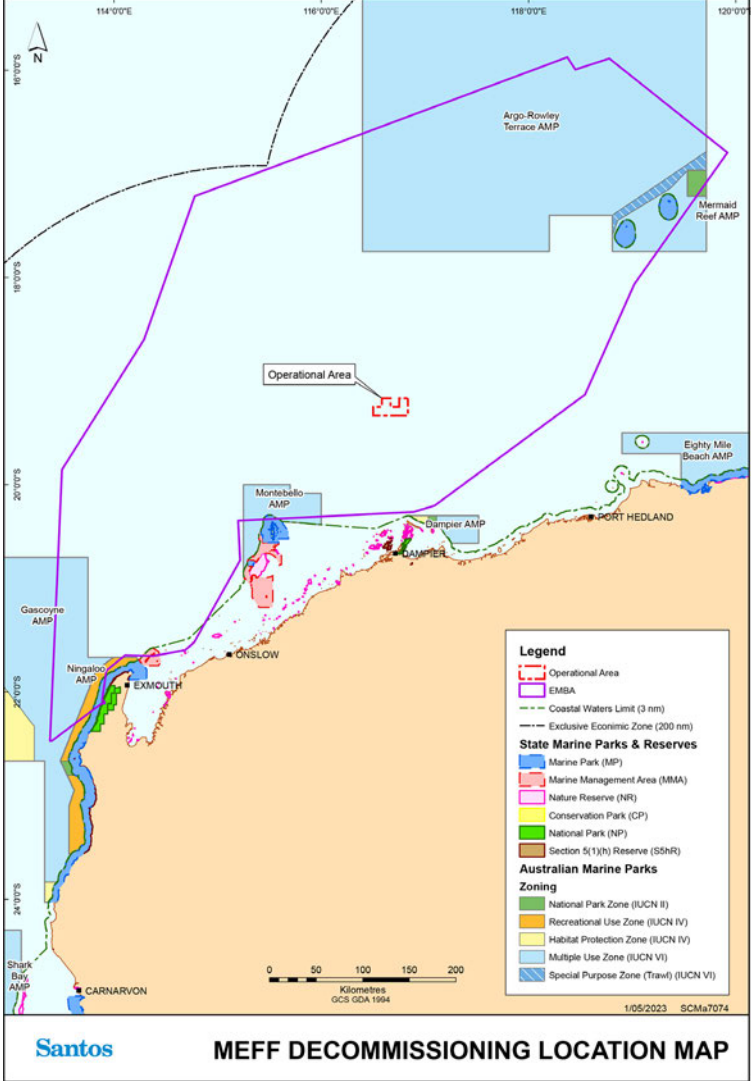
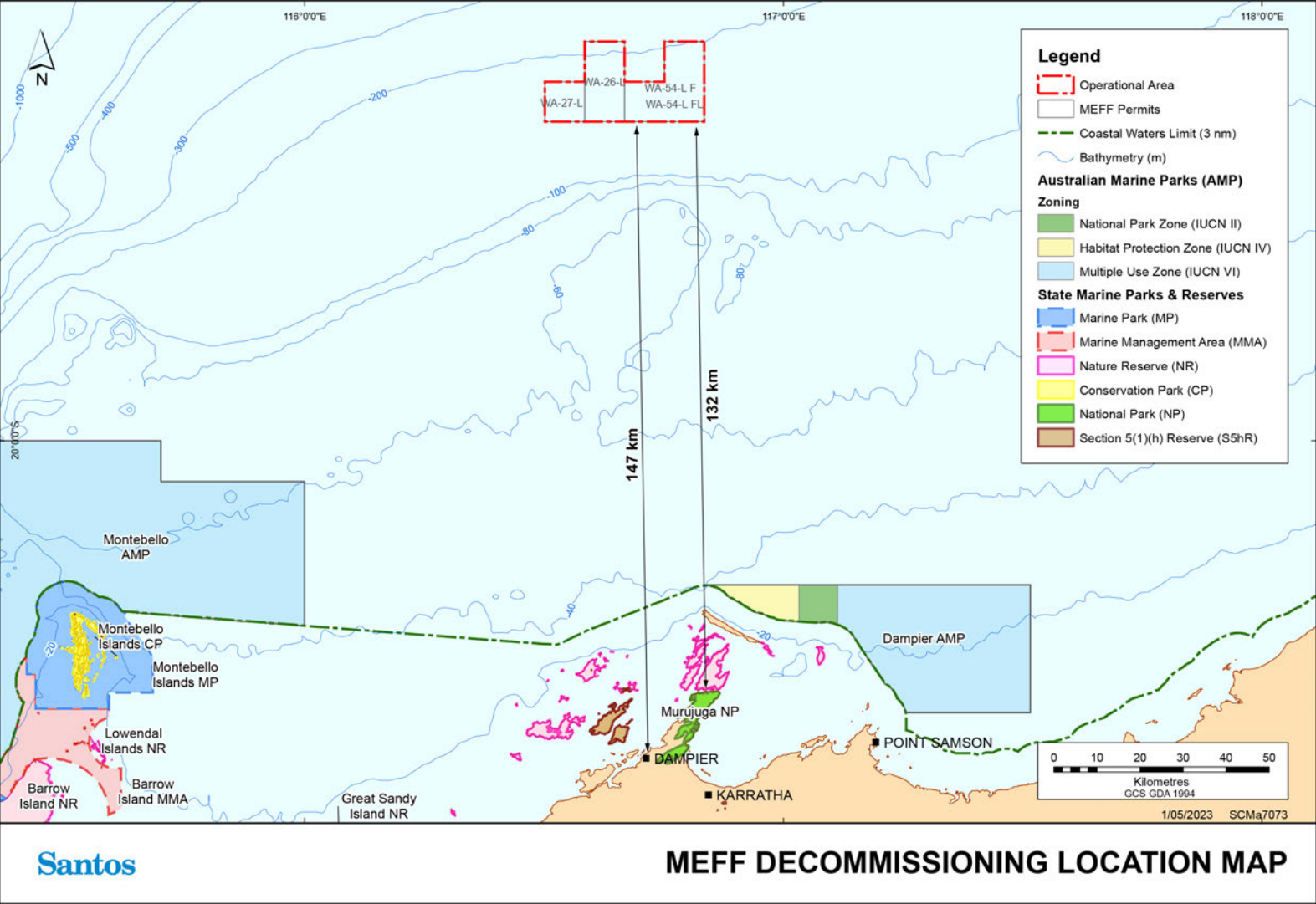
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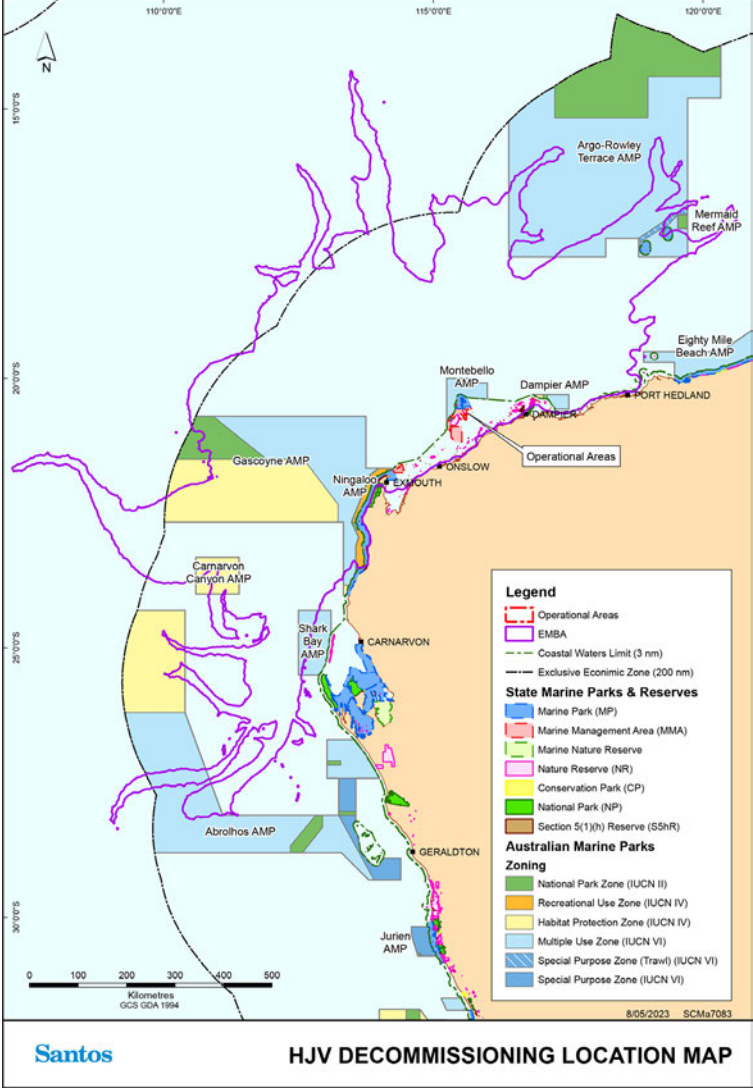
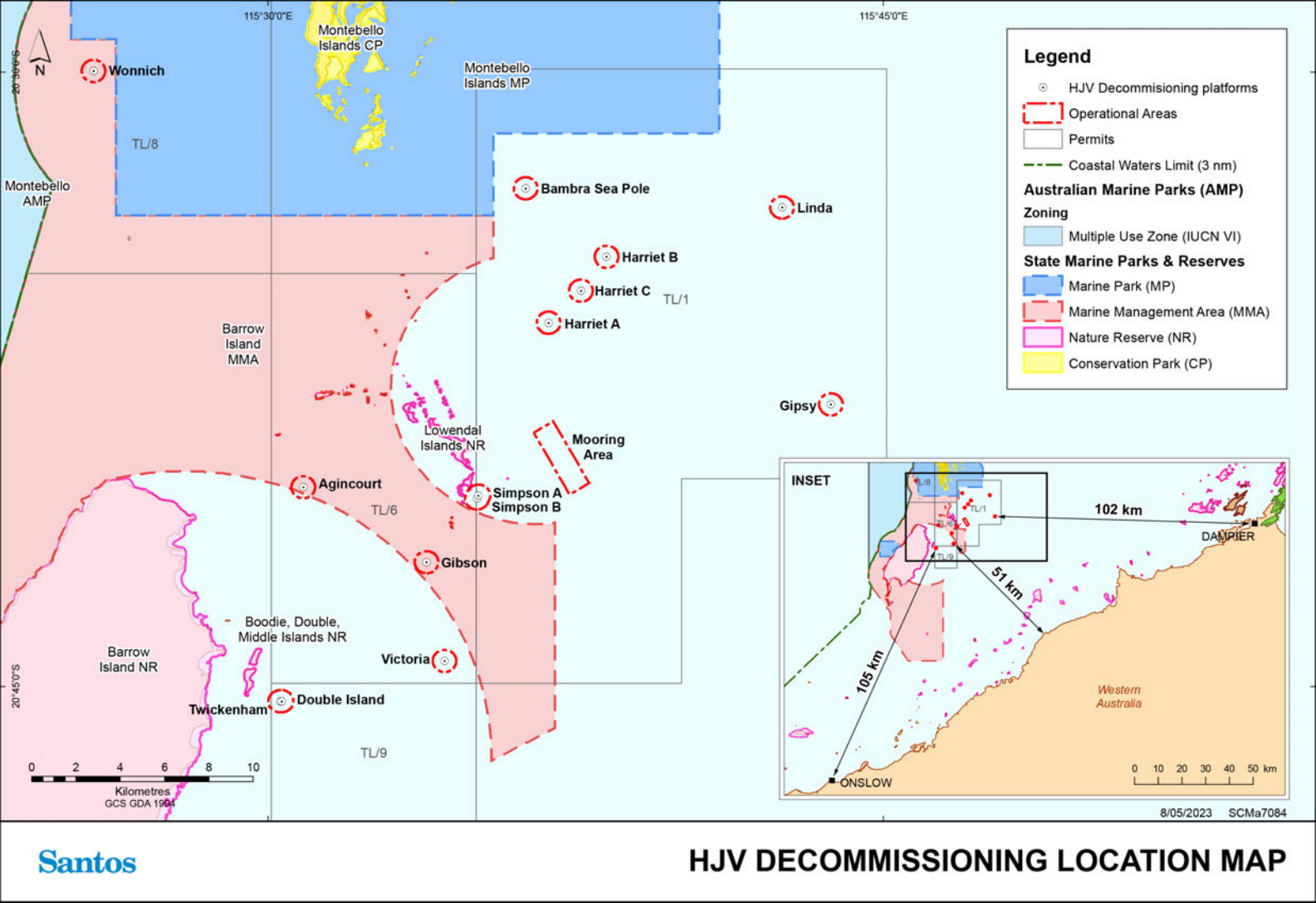
GIBSON P&A LOCATION MAP

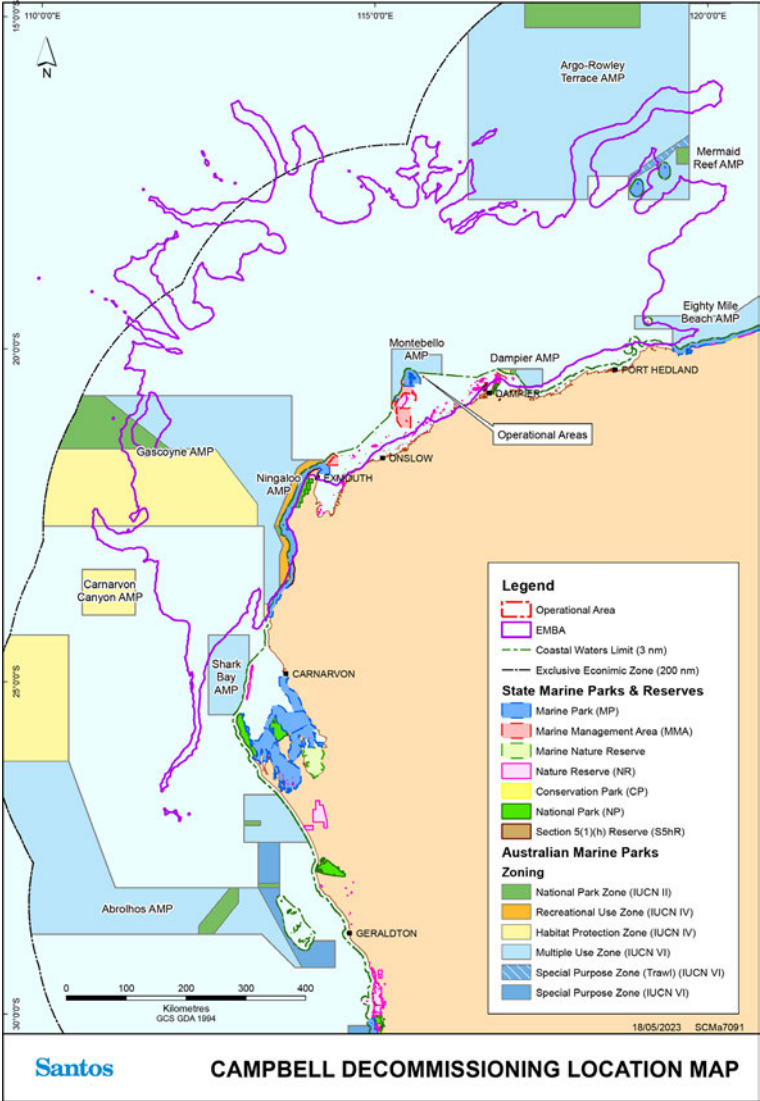
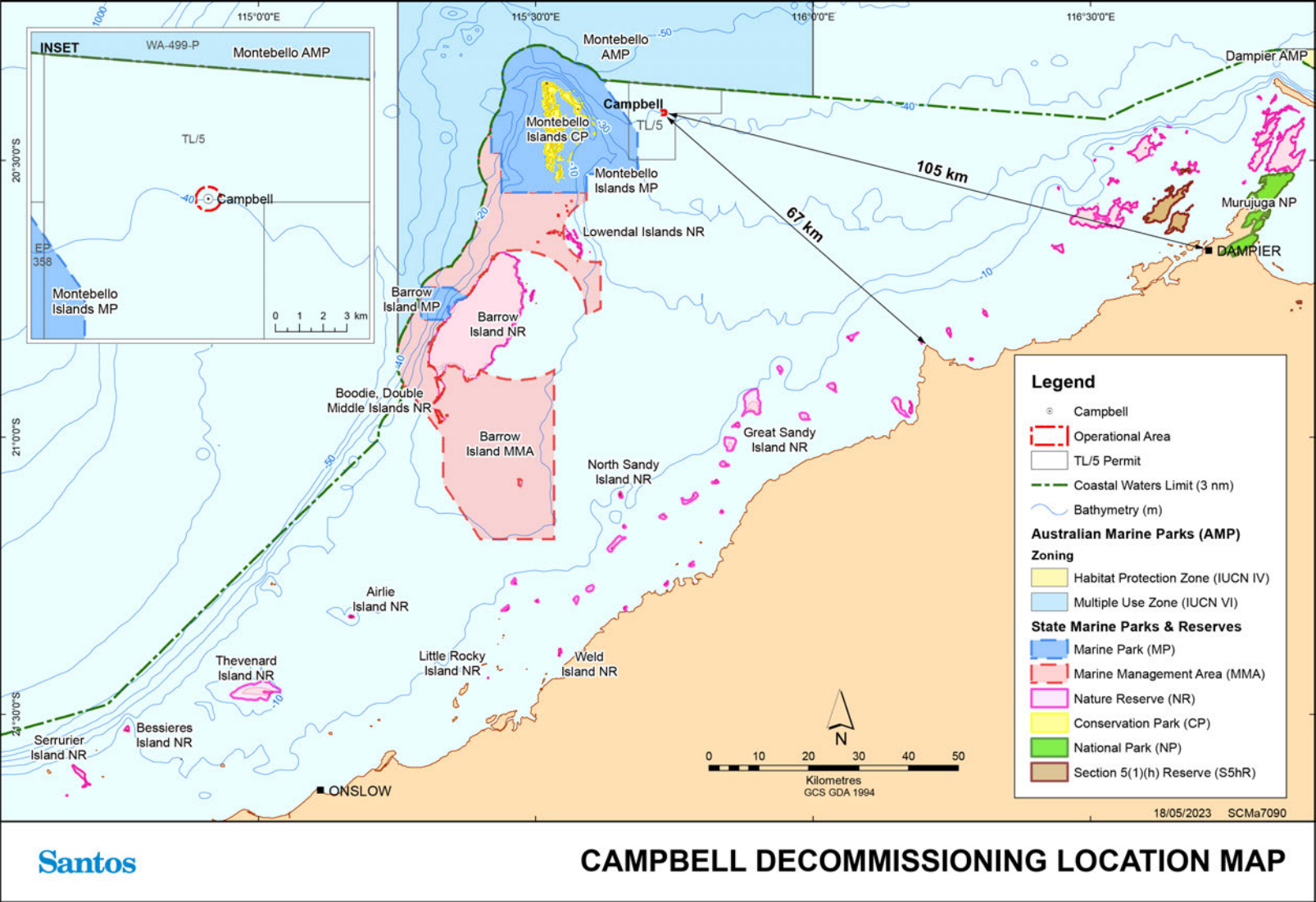


MEFF Decommissioning

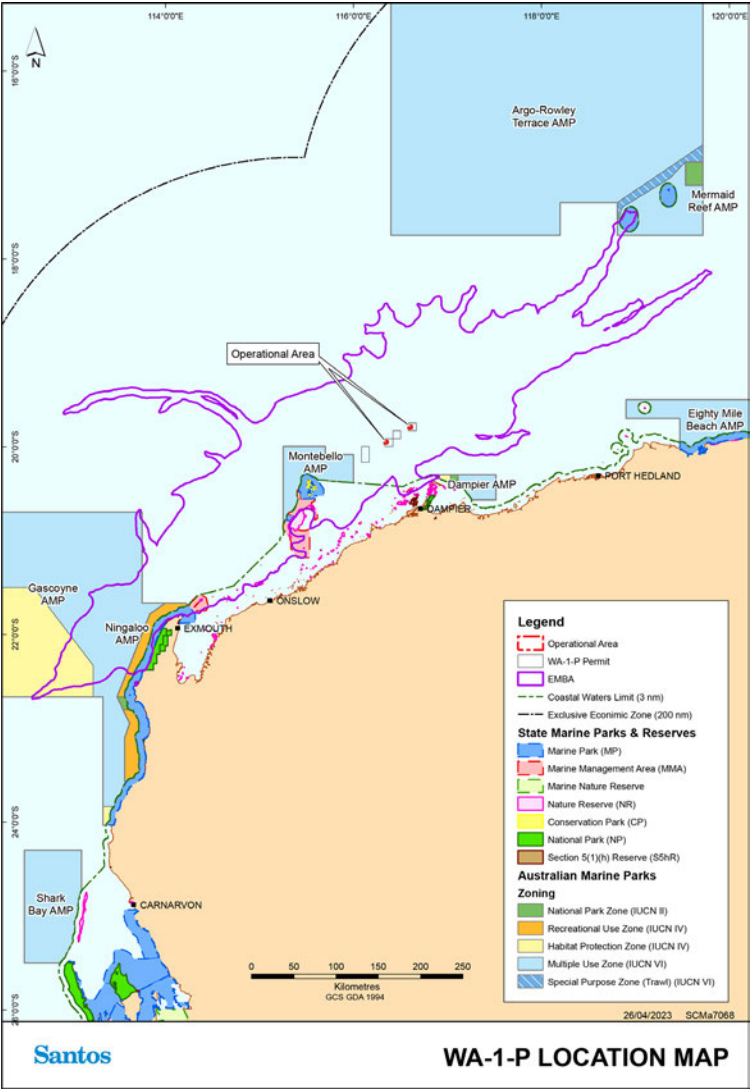
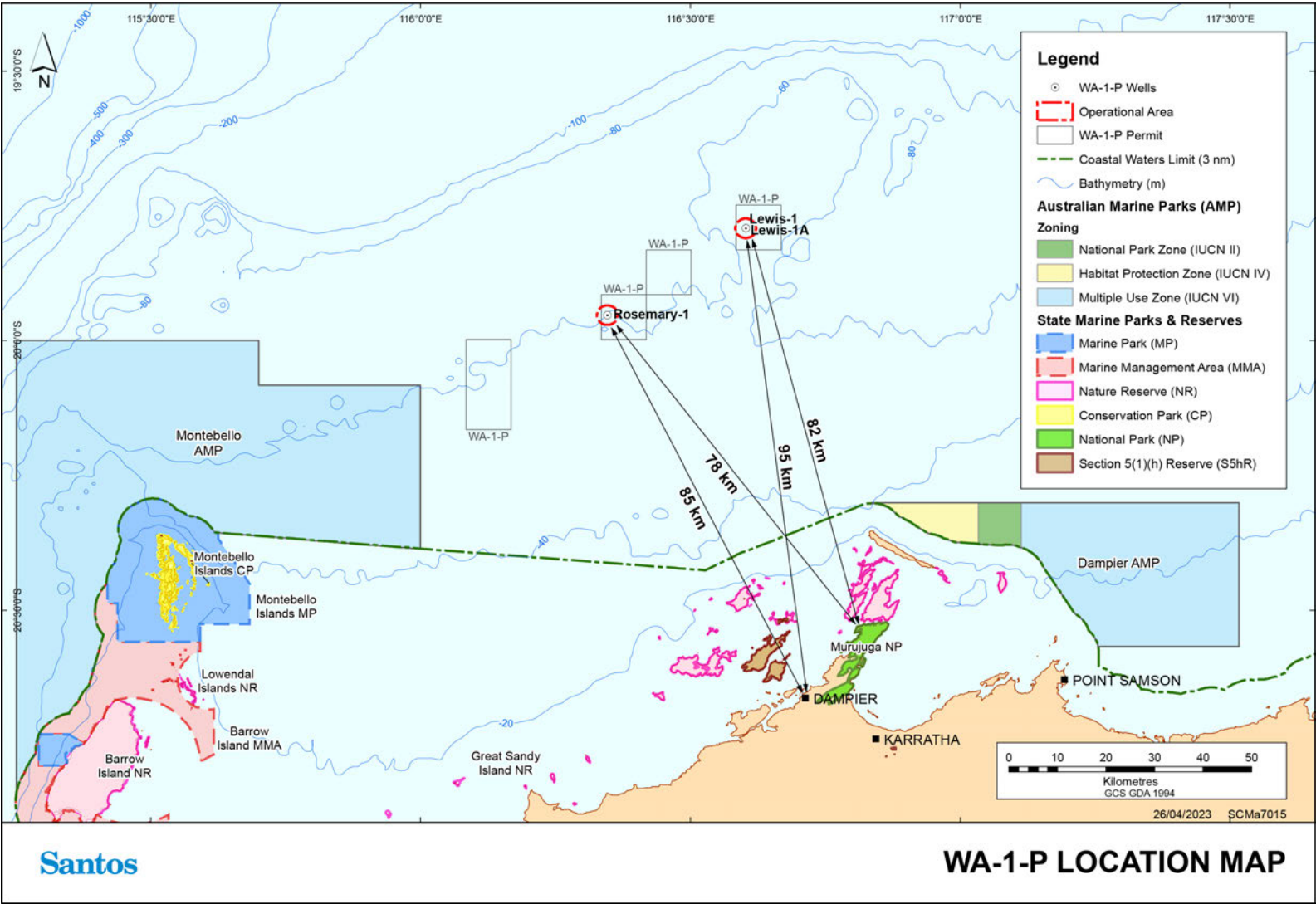


HJV Decommissioning

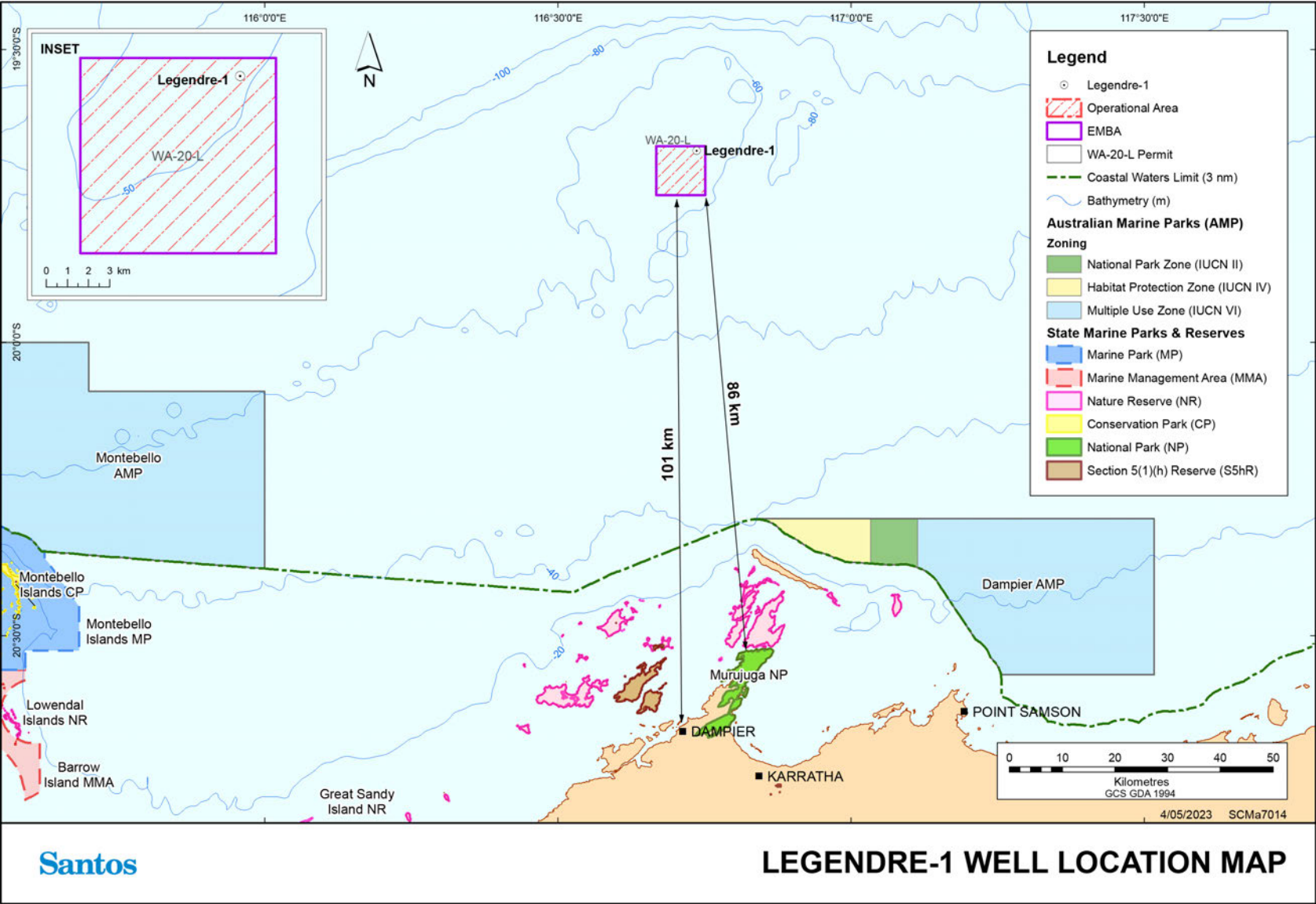




WA-1-P



WA-20-L



Mutineer Exeter Plug and Abandonment Environment Plan

Information for Relevant Persons



Activity Overview

Santos is preparing to permanently plug and abandon (P&A) 12 subsea wells within the Mutineer-Exeter, Fletcher and Finucane (MEFF) production licences commencing 2024.

The Operational Area for MEFF P&A activities is located in Commonwealth waters approximately 147 km north of Dampier, Western Australia (see Figure 1).

P&A activities are estimated to take 280 days. The estimated duration is subject to change based on further definition of the technical scope to P&A the wells. Actual duration during the activity may be affected by adverse weather conditions or technical/equipment issues that arise during operations.

Consultation & Feedback

All petroleum activities in Commonwealth waters must have an Environment Plan (EP) accepted by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) before any activities can take place.

Under Commonwealth Environmental Regulations, Santos is required to consult with relevant persons about proposed activities when preparing an EP. A relevant person includes authorities, persons or organisations whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by the proposed activity.

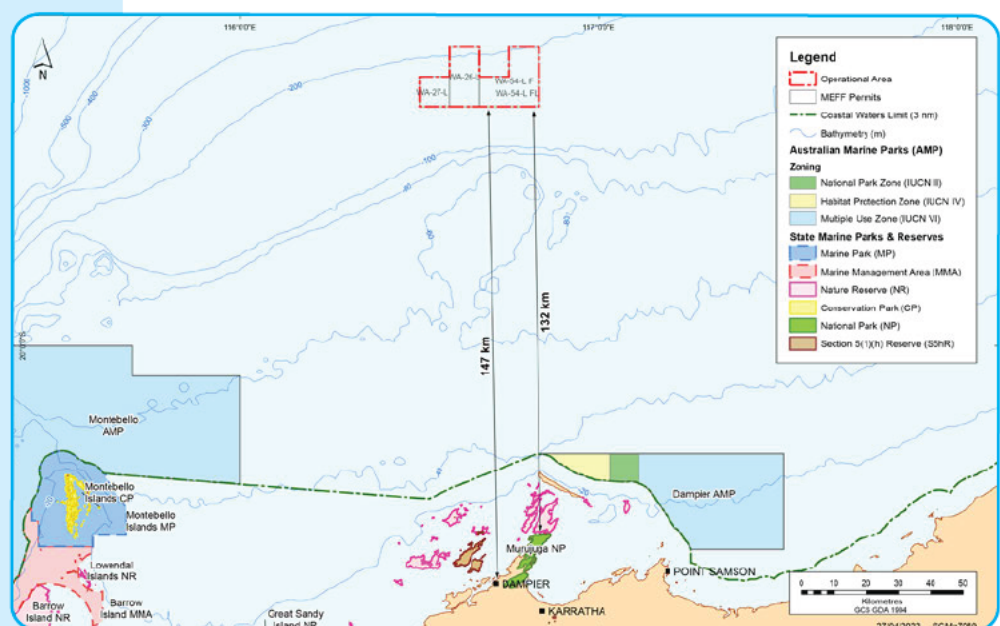
You might be a relevant person if, for example, you have spiritual or cultural connections to land and sea country in accordance with Indigenous tradition that might be

affected by our activity, if you otherwise carry out recreational or commercial fishing, tourism or other activities that might be affected by our proposed activity, or if you are part of a local community that might be affected by our proposed activity.

If you consider you may be a relevant person, please contact us by **26 June 2022** to allow Santos time to initiate consultation with you, so you can tell us how you would like to be consulted throughout this process or if you need additional information.

Details on how to contact us are included in the **Providing Feedback** section of this information sheet.

Figure 1. MEFF P&A activity location.



Activity Description

ACTIVITY DETAILS

Location	Approximately 147 km north of Dampier.
Timing	Activities are planned to commence in the first half of 2024.
Duration	P&A activities are estimated to take 280 days. The estimated duration is subject to change based on further definition of the technical scope to P&A the wells. Actual duration during the activity may be affected by adverse weather conditions or technical/equipment issues that arise during operations.
Water depth	Approximately 130 m to approximately 160 m
Planned activities	Plug and permanently abandon 12 subsea wells.
Vessels	+ Semi-Submersible Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit (MODU) or a Lightweight Intervention Vessel (LWIV) + Up to three Anchor Handling Tug and Supply vessels.
Aircraft	Helicopters may be used for crew changes, critical equipment supply and emergency response uses.
Description of the natural environment	The seabed in permit areas is generally flat and featureless. There are no protected marine parks over the operational area, but the Ancient Coastline Key Ecological Feature at 125 m depth contour intersects the south eastern portion of the Operational area.
Exclusion zone	A 500 m Petroleum Safety Zone (PSZ) exclusion zone will be in place around the MODU or LWIV for duration of P&A activities.
Operational Area	WA-26-L, WA 27-L and WA-54-L
Petroleum production licences	WA-26-L, WA 27-L and WA-54-L

ACTIVITY COORDINATES

Location	Latitude (GDA 94)	Longitude (GDA 94)
Operational Area		
Point 1	19° 9' 55.21" S	116° 35' 4.72" E
Point 2	19° 9' 55.21" S	116° 40' 4.72" E
Point 3	19° 14' 55.21" S	116° 40' 4.72" E
Point 4	19° 14' 55.21" S	116° 45' 4.72" E
Point 5	19° 9' 55.21" S	116° 45' 4.72" E
Point 6	19° 9' 55.20" S	116° 50' 4.72" E
Point 7	19° 19' 55.21" S	116° 50' 4.72" E
Point 8	19° 19' 55.22" S	116° 35' 4.72" E
Point 9	19° 19' 55.22" S	116° 30' 4.72" E
Point 10	19° 14' 55.22" S	116° 30' 4.72" E
Point 11	19° 14' 55.21" S	116° 35' 4.72" E
Point 12	19° 9' 55.21" S	116° 35' 4.72" E
Mutineer	19° 15' 32.8" S	116° 38' 16.3" E
Exeter	19° 18' 35.4" S	116° 33' 41.1" E
Fletcher	19° 14' 43.8" S	116° 47' 43.9" E
Finucane	19° 18' 17.3" S	116° 45' 32.9" E
Fin-South	19° 18' 16.9" S	116° 45' 31.7" E

About plugging and abandoning activities

The plugging and abandonment of wells is a normal part of industry activities for wells that are not required for oil or gas production and is the first step to offshore decommissioning of assets on title.

Key steps in the plug and abandonment process include:

- + Design of an abandonment program.
- + Cleaning of the well bore.
- + Installation of permanent barriers (e.g. cement) to isolate any oil and gas formations and aquifers.
- + Verification of permanent barriers to ensure that there are no leaks.
- + Recovery of subsea well infrastructure.

Activity Purpose and Approvals

The MEFF Development ceased production in 2018, following which the floating, production, storage and offtake vessel (FPSO) departed the field.

After the removal of a submerged mid-water disconnectable turret mooring (DTM) and two mid water arches (MWA) in Q1 2023, all that remains are 12 subsea wells, and a subsea production system.

The wells have either been placed into long-term suspension in preparation for permanent abandonment, or the wells have been permanently plugged and the wellhead is all that remains to be recovered. The subsea production system has been flushed of hydrocarbons with treated seawater and is in a preservation state.

The MEFF P&A activities will focus on plugging of the remaining wells followed by the severing and recovery of well infrastructure at the seabed.

Santos will use a MODU (see **Figure 2**) or a Lightweight Intervention Vessel located



Figure 2. A photo of a Semi-Submersible MODU.

over the wells to perform the P&A activity, supported by a variety of activity-specific vessels.

Materials may be placed within the wellbores during the activities, including cement, drilling mud, gels and other non-porous materials such as clays (e.g. bentonite) and other sealants (e.g. bismuth, resin) or lost circulation materials (e.g. fibrous materials).

Santos plans to remove the wellheads and conductors from the seabed, unless they cannot be removed by the MODU, in which case they will be removed prior to or during final decommissioning.

Mechanical plugs may be used in some wells to reduce the amount of cement required to plug a well or to provide additional protection from formation pressure in the well. Typically, mechanical plugs installed in a well will also have a cement plug placed on top.

Pre and Post MODU activities may consist of:

- + Inspection and operability tests of the subsea equipment (e.g. Manifold and XT valves).

- + Rig-less well intervention activities
- + Seabed surveys, including a pre-activity debris clearance survey using side scan sonar (SSS) tow fish and a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) if targets of concern are identified.
- + Post-abandonment well monitoring.
- + Post abandonment activities as required.

Activities may not be continuous and the project vessels may depart and then re-enter the operational area on a number of occasions.

An EP for proposed activities is currently under assessment for acceptance by NOPSEMA. The EP has been prepared in accordance with the Commonwealth Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2009 (OPGGGS(E)R). Additional feedback provided by relevant persons will be considered in an update to the [Mutineer-Exeter Plug and Abandonment Environment Plan](#).

Defining the Environment Area for Proposed Activities

Santos has undertaken an initial assessment to identify the environmental, social, economic and cultural values and sensitivities that may be affected by impacts and risks of proposed activities.

To do this we have considered the totality of the areas where activity impacts and risks may occur. These areas are summarised in Table 1. The widest extent of these areas is called the Environment that May Be Affected (EMBA), which for this activity is the outer boundary of a worst-

case spill resulting from a loss of well control during P&A activities. The EMBA for proposed activities is illustrated in Figure 3.

Oil spill EMBA's are defined by overlaying a great number (usually hundreds) of individual, computer simulated, hypothetical oil spill events into a single map. Each simulation run starts from the same location (release point) but each run will be subject to a different set of wind and weather conditions derived from historical data. The use of advanced and

sophisticated models enables us to present all the areas that could be affected.

While the EMBA represents the largest possible spatial extent that could be contacted by the worst-case spill events modelled, an actual spill event is more accurately represented by a single simulation run, resulting in a smaller spatial extent in the event of an actual spill. Often one or more simulation runs are selected to be representative of the 'worst-case' based on the nature and scale of the activity and the local environment.

Please see the [NOPSEMA Spill Modelling Video](#) for more information on oil spill modelling and why it is required for the preparation of Environment Plans.



Figure 3. Activity location with EMBA

TABLE 1
ENVIRONMENT AREA FOR
PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

ENVIRONMENT AREA

Operational Area

The area in which the MODU and support vessels will operate.

Environment that May Be Affected (EMBA)

The spatial extent of activity impacts (e.g., facility presence, light, noise) and risk (e.g., hydrocarbon spill).

Environmental, Social, Economic and Cultural Features

We have undertaken a review of publicly available information to identify environmental, social, economic and cultural features that may be affected by activity impacts and risks, which are summarised in **Table 2**. These aspects will be risk-assessed within the EP on a case-by-case basis.

TABLE 2
ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FEATURES

FEATURES	DESCRIPTION	OPERATIONAL AREA	EMBA	PUBLIC INFORMATION REVIEW
Aboriginal Heritage	Registered Aboriginal heritage sites protected under the: + <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984</i> + <i>WA Aboriginal Heritage Act 2021</i>	No	Yes	Multiple registered Aboriginal Heritage sites occur within the EMBA. While sea country is a recognised value, the registered site list is land-based sites, therefore could be impacted by unplanned hydrocarbon releases.
Cultural Heritage	Registered cultural sites under the: + <i>Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018</i>	No	Yes	Multiple registered cultural heritage sites occur within the EMBA. While sea country is a recognised value, the registered site list is land-based sites, therefore could be impacted by unplanned hydrocarbon releases.
Defence	Designated defence activity areas	No	Yes	Learmonth restricted air space and marine training area overlaps the EMBA.
Fishing	Commercial fishing	Yes	Yes	Three Commonwealth fisheries that overlap the operational area: Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery, Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery, Western Skipjack Tuna Fishery. Management boundaries of twelve state managed fisheries intersect WA-20-L. Four fisheries actively fished within WA-20-L for the period 2009-2019: Mackerel Managed Fishery, Pilbara Fish Trawl (Interim) Managed Fishery, Pilbara Demersal trap Managed Fishery, Pilbara Line Fishery. Although the fishery management zones overlap the operational area, activity within or near the operational area is not expected. A number of State fisheries are open within the operational area and EMBA; however, they do not have activity in this area.
	Indigenous, subsistence or customary fishing	No	Yes	Traditional Australian Indigenous fishing activities are generally concentrated within 3 nm of the Western Australian coastline.

Fishing	Recreational and charter boat fishing	No	Yes	Given the water depths and distance from the nearest mainland, it is unlikely recreational fishing would occur in the OA. Recreational fishing does occur within the EMBA and therefore could be impacted by a LOWC.
Oil and Gas Operations	Petroleum operations	No	Yes	Oil and gas facilities occur within the EMBA as do permits operated by other titleholders. Thus, oil and gas activities could be impacted by unplanned events.
Protected Areas (nearest Commonwealth and State marine parks)	Australian Marine Park (Cwth)	No	Yes	The Montebello Marine Park is approximately 98km southwest from the operational area.
	Marine Park (State)	No	Yes	The Montebello Marine Park is approximately 98km southwest from the operational area.
Shipping	Shipping fairway	Yes	Yes	The eastern boundary of the operational area abuts the Dampier shipping fairway. The shipping fairways of the region service Dampier and Karratha. Therefore, vessel traffic is expected in the vicinity of the operational area.
Telecommunications	Subsea telecommunications cables	No	Yes	The JASUR AUS cable system and the North West Cable System are located approximately 181 km and 185 km east of the operational area.
Tourism	Tourism operations	No	Yes	The EMBA encompasses a number of marine parks and reserves where shoreline accumulation of oil may also occur. Thus, ecotourism based on specific local values (game fish, nearshore reef snorkelling and diving) could be impacted by unplanned events.
Towns / communities	Dampier	No	Yes	Dampier is approximately 147 km south of the Operational Area.

Activity Impacts and Risk Management

We have summarised in **Table 3** potential environmental risks and impacts and associated management measures for the proposed activity. These aspects will be risk-assessed with the Environment Plan on a case-by-case basis.

TABLE 3
ACTIVITY IMPACT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

POTENTIAL ACTIVITY IMPACTS

Acoustic disturbance to marine fauna

Description of potential impacts

Potential impacts from noise emissions may occur in the operational area from the following sources:

- + MODU activities (e.g., drilling equipment, engines and machinery, LWIV DP systems (if engaged)).
- + Flaring during well bleed-off activities.
- + Positioning equipment installed on the seabed.
- + Support vessel activities (e.g., vessel engines, thrusters and other machinery such as winches, site surveys using echo sounders, side scan sonar (SSS) or similar).
- + ROV activities (e.g., thrusters, debris clearing activities and cutting activities).
- + Helicopter activities relating to crew change requirements (e.g., aircraft engine).

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + MODU/LWIV and Vessel Planned Maintenance System (PMS) to maintain vessel DP, engines and machinery.
- + Santos Marine Assurance Procedure.

Light emissions

Description of potential impacts

Potential impacts from light emissions may occur in the operational area from:

- + Safety, operational and navigational lighting on the MODU/LWIV.
- + Safety, operational and navigational lighting on the support vessels.
- + ROV spot lighting while it is operational underwater on an as-needed basis.
- + Light from flaring during well bleed-off.
 - + Lighting will typically consist of bright white (i.e., metal halide, halogen, fluorescent) lights typical of lighting used in the offshore petroleum industry and not dissimilar to lighting used for other offshore activities in the region, including shipping and fishing.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + MODU/vessels navigation lighting and equipment is compliant with the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 / Marine Orders 30: Prevention of Collisions, and with Marine Orders 21: Safety of Navigation and Emergency Procedures.

Atmospheric emissions

Description of potential impacts

Potential impacts from atmospheric emissions may occur in the operational area from the following sources:

- + Operation of MODU/LWIV and vessel engines, helicopters, generators, mobile and fixed plant and equipment.
- + Flaring from the MODU during well bleed off activities. Flaring is expected to last for approximately 6 - 12 hours per well.
- + Limited venting of hydrocarbons may occur as dead spaces or inaccessible areas of the well infrastructure are recovered and where any hydrocarbons cannot be directed to the bleed-off package.
- + Operation of incinerators on support vessels outside the 500 m exclusion zone around the MODU/LWIV.
- + When transferring dry bulk products used for drilling (e.g., barite, bentonite, cement), tank venting is necessary to prevent tank overpressure.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + Vessel fuel oil sulphur content is compliant with the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).
- + Pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, vessels will maintain a current International Air Pollution Prevention (IAPP) Certificate as relevant to vessel class.
- + MODU/LWIV and Vessel Planned Maintenance System (PMS) to maintain vessel DP, engines and machinery.

Seabed and benthic habitat disturbance

Description of potential impacts

Potential seabed disturbance may occur in the operational area from the following source:

- + Positioning and anchoring of the MODU at the well locations with the assistance of support vessels.
- + Cutting of wellheads.
- + Installation and recovery of pre lay equipment in preparation for rig arrival .
- + Installation and recovery of any seabed mounted survey or monitoring equipment.
- + Marine growth removal from critical areas of the subsea infrastructure.
- + Break up of cement patio.
- + Recovery of defunct material between the wellhead and the manifold / UTA / PUDU.
- + Wet storage of equipment on seabed for future recovery during decommissioning.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + No vessel or LWIV anchoring, unless in an emergency.
- + Objects dropped overboard are recovered (where possible and safe to do so) to mitigate the environmental consequences from objects remaining in the marine environment.

Physical presence and interaction with other marine users

Description of potential impacts

Interaction with other marine users may occur as a result of, but not limited to:

- + MODU/LWIV and ROV presence in the operational area.
- + Support vessels presence in the operational area.
- + Well infrastructure and other equipment on the seabed.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + If requested, stakeholders will be notified prior to the commencement of, and on cessation of each activity.
- + Relevant maritime notices issued.
- + A 500 m radius PSZ (exclusion zone) will be in place around the MODU/LWIV for the duration of the activity.
- + A visual and radar watch will be maintained on the support vessel bridge.
- + Support vessels (including the MODU) will be prohibited from recreational fishing within the operational area.
- + Santos commits to reducing impacts on commercial fishers through the provision of timely activity information to enable advance planning and avoidance of unexpected interference.

Operational vessel discharges

Description of potential impacts

Potential impacts may occur in the operational area from the following operational discharges:

- + sewage and grey water.
- + putrescible waste.
- + deck drainage.
- + cooling water.
- + bilge water.
- + brine.
- + ballast water.
- + swarf from subsea cutting activities.
- + hydraulic fluid from BOP operation.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + Routine vessel discharge (sewage, bilge water, food waste) will meet MARPOL requirements.
- + Deck cleaning products that may be discharged to the ocean will meet MARPOL requirements.

Drilling discharges

Description of potential impacts

During P&A activities, drilling fluids and cements used and potentially discharged are similar in nature (but of lesser quantities) to those discharged during the drilling of a conventional well and include:

- + brines, seawater and freshwater.
- + water based drilling / milling fluid (WBM).
- + hi-viscosity (Hi-Vis) pills.
- + other additives such as density increasing additives, viscosity additives, alkalinity and hardness control additives, lost circulation materials (LCM) and tracer dyes.
- + drilling cements and additives such as retarders, accelerators, light-weight additives, water loss additives and gas migration additives.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + Drilling and cement and chemicals potentially discharged to sea are Gold/Silver/D or E rated through OCNS, or PLONOR substances listed by OSPAR, or have a completed Santos risk assessment so that only environmentally acceptable products are used.
- + Only water-based muds will be used.

Spill response operations

In the event of a hydrocarbon spill, response strategies will be implemented where possible to reduce environmental impacts to ALARP but may include:

- + light, noise and atmospheric emissions.
- + Physical presence and disturbance.
- + Disruption to other users of marine and coastal areas and townships.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + In the event of a hydrocarbon spill, the Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (OPEP) requirements are implemented to mitigate environmental impacts.

ACTIVITY RISKS

Release of Solid Objects

Description of risks

Solid objects, such as those listed below, can be accidentally released to the marine environment, and potentially impact on sensitive receptors:

- + non-hazardous solid wastes, such as paper and packaging.
- + hazardous solid wastes, such as batteries, fluorescent tubes and aerosol cans.
- + equipment and materials, such as hard hats, tools or infrastructure parts.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + Dropped object prevention procedures
- + Waste (Garbage) Management Plan.
- + Hazardous chemical management procedures.
- + Dangerous goods managed in accordance with International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG Code).

Accidental introduction of invasive marine species (IMS)

Description of risks

Introduction of invasive marine species may occur due to:

- + MODU/LWIV or support vessels and external/internal (e.g., sea chests, seawater systems) niches.
- + biofouling on equipment that is routinely submerged in water (e.g., mooring lines, ROVs).
- + discharge of high-risk ballast water.
- + cross contamination between vessels.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + MODU/LWIV and vessels are managed to low risk in accordance with the Santos Invasive Marine Species Management Plan prior to movement/transit into or within the invasive marine species management zone, which requires:-
- + assessment of applicable MODU/vessels using the Department Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD) Vessel Check Tool; and
- + the management of immersible equipment to low risk.

Unplanned interaction with marine fauna

Description of risks

There is the potential for MODU/LWIV and vessels or equipment from the vessels involved in operational activities to interact with marine fauna, including potential strike or collision, potentially resulting in severe injury or mortality.

- + Fauna strike may also occur from helicopters during take-off and landing.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + Procedure for interacting with marine fauna.

Unplanned hazardous and non-hazardous discharges

Description of risks

Causes for accident hydrocarbon releases (other than diesel release from a vessel collision or bunkering, and LOWC) include:

- + Bulk Product Spills.
- + Mechanical / Structural Failure / Loss of Secondary Containment.
- + Loss of Primary Containment.
- + Incorrect Handling and Storage.
- + ROV Failure.
- + Hydrocarbon Fall-out during Flaring.
- + Rupture or leak from a flowline, service line, or umbilical.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + Dropped object prevention procedures.
- + General chemical management procedures.
- + Hazardous chemical management procedures.
- + Santos chemical selection procedure.
- + International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code.
- + Bulk liquids and solids transfer procedure.

Unplanned hydrocarbon release from a loss of well control, vessel collision or refuelling

Description of risks

- + A worst-case credible scenario for the proposed activity is a loss of well control at the seabed or surface.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + NOPSEMA-accepted MODU or LWIV safety case and Santos Well Operations Management Plan (WOMP) in place.
 - + A relief well plan will be developed prior to the commencement of P&A activities.
 - + Appropriate refuelling procedures and equipment will be used to prevent spills to the marine environment.
 - + NOPSEMA approved Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (OPEP), equipment and materials will be in place and maintained.
-



Consultation

Consultation provides Santos with an opportunity to receive feedback from authorities, persons and organisations whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by proposed petroleum activities.

This feedback helps us to refine or change the management measures we are planning to address potential activity impacts and risks. Santos' objective for proposed activities is to reduce environmental impacts and risks to a level that is As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP) and acceptable over the life of the activity.

Consultation also helps us to identify values and sensitivities where information is not publicly available, such as spiritual and cultural connection to land and sea country, as well as first-hand feedback on commercial and recreational fishing, tourism and local community activities and interests.

Providing feedback

If you consider you may be a relevant person, please contact us by **26 June 2023** to allow Santos time to initiate consultation with you in relation to the proposed activity and so you can tell us how you would like to be consulted throughout this process or if you need additional information.

Feedback provided by relevant persons will be considered in an update to the [Mutineer-Exeter Plug and Abandonment Environment Plan](#) currently under assessment by NOPSEMA and through the life of the activity. Feedback from relevant persons will be included in the updated EP that is submitted to NOPSEMA for assessment.

Please let us know if you would like your personal/organisational details or any part of your feedback to remain private and we will ensure this remains confidential to NOPSEMA.

Santos

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Mutineer Exeter Plug and Abandonment Environment Plan

Information for Relevant Persons



Activity Overview

Santos is preparing to permanently plug and abandon (P&A) 12 subsea wells within the Mutineer-Exeter, Fletcher and Finucane (MEFF) production licences commencing 2024.

The Operational Area for MEFF P&A activities is located in Commonwealth waters approximately 147 km north of Dampier, Western Australia (see Figure 1).

P&A activities are estimated to take 280 days. The estimated duration is subject to change based on further definition of the technical scope to P&A the wells. Actual duration during the activity may be affected by adverse weather conditions or technical/equipment issues that arise during operations.

Consultation & Feedback

All petroleum activities in Commonwealth waters must have an Environment Plan (EP) accepted by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) before any activities can take place.

Under Commonwealth Environmental Regulations, Santos is required to consult with relevant persons about proposed activities when preparing an EP. A relevant person includes authorities, persons or organisations whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by the proposed activity.

You might be a relevant person if, for example, you have spiritual or cultural connections to land and sea country in accordance with Indigenous tradition that might be affected by our activity, if you otherwise carry out recreational

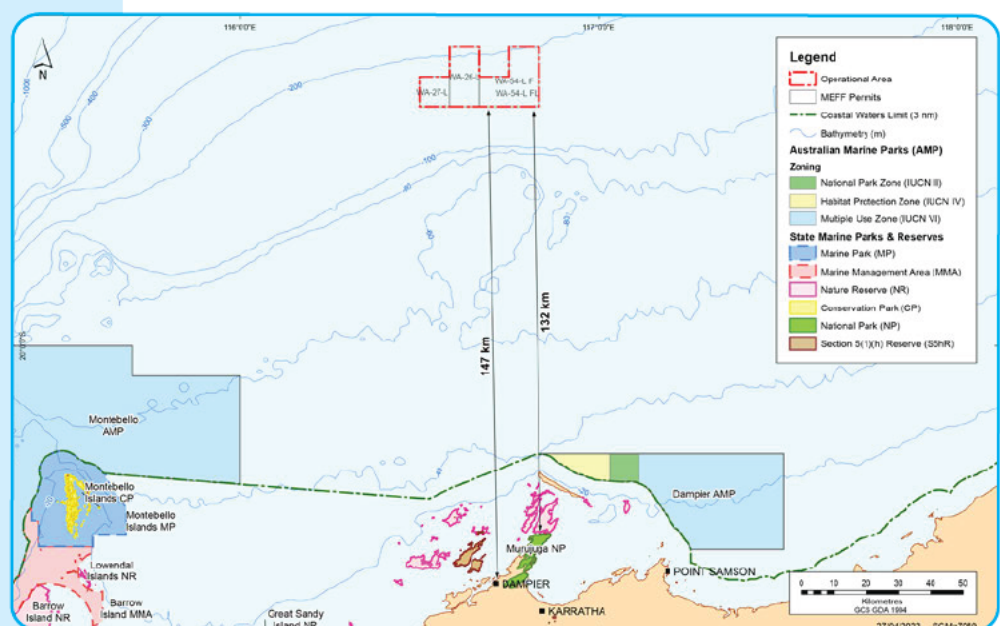
or commercial fishing, tourism or other activities that might be affected by our proposed activity, or if you are part of a local community that might be affected by our proposed activity.

Santos is now consulting with relevant persons for activities proposed to be managed under the Mutineer Exeter Plug and Abandonment Environment Plan. If you consider you may be a relevant person, please contact us as soon as possible if you require any further information or if you think you are not on our consultation list.

We are asking for relevant persons to provide feedback by **26 July 2023**.

Details on how to contact us are included in the **Providing Feedback** section of this information sheet.

Figure 1. MEFF P&A activity location.



Activity Description

ACTIVITY DETAILS

Location	Approximately 147 km north of Dampier.
Timing	Activities are planned to commence in the first half of v2024.
Duration	P&A activities are estimated to take 280 days. The estimated duration is subject to change based on further definition of the technical scope to P&A the wells. Actual duration during the activity may be affected by adverse weather conditions or technical/equipment issues that arise during operations.
Water depth	Approximately 130 m to approximately 160 m
Planned activities	Plug and permanently abandon 12 subsea wells.
Vessels	+ Semi-Submersible Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit (MODU) or a Lightweight Intervention Vessel (LWIV) + Up to three Anchor Handling Tug and Supply vessels.
Aircraft	Helicopters may be used for crew changes, critical equipment supply and emergency response uses.
Description of the natural environment	The seabed in permit areas is generally flat and featureless. There are no protected marine parks over the operational area, but the Ancient Coastline Key Ecological Feature at 125 m depth contour intersects the south eastern portion of the Operational area.
Exclusion zone	A 500 m Petroleum Safety Zone (PSZ) exclusion zone will be in place around the MODU or LWIV for duration of P&A activities.
Operational Area	WA-26-L, WA 27-L and WA-54-L
Petroleum production licences	WA-26-L, WA 27-L and WA-54-L

ACTIVITY COORDINATES

Location	Latitude (GDA 94)	Longitude (GDA 94)
Operational Area		
Point 1	19° 9' 55.21" S	116° 35' 4.72" E
Point 2	19° 9' 55.21" S	116° 40' 4.72" E
Point 3	19° 14' 55.21" S	116° 40' 4.72" E
Point 4	19° 14' 55.21" S	116° 45' 4.72" E
Point 5	19° 9' 55.21" S	116° 45' 4.72" E
Point 6	19° 9' 55.20" S	116° 50' 4.72" E
Point 7	19° 19' 55.21" S	116° 50' 4.72" E
Point 8	19° 19' 55.22" S	116° 35' 4.72" E
Point 9	19° 19' 55.22" S	116° 30' 4.72" E
Point 10	19° 14' 55.22" S	116° 30' 4.72" E
Point 11	19° 14' 55.21" S	116° 35' 4.72" E
Point 12	19° 9' 55.21" S	116° 35' 4.72" E
Mutineer	19° 15' 32.8" S	116° 38' 16.3" E
Exeter	19° 18' 35.4" S	116° 33' 41.1" E
Fletcher	19° 14' 43.8" S	116° 47' 43.9" E
Finucane	19° 18' 17.3" S	116° 45' 32.9" E
Fin-South	19° 18' 16.9" S	116° 45' 31.7" E

About plugging and abandoning activities

The plugging and abandonment of wells is a normal part of industry activities for wells that are not required for oil or gas production and is the first step to offshore decommissioning of assets on title.

Key steps in the plug and abandonment process include:

- + Design of an abandonment program.
- + Cleaning of the well bore.
- + Installation of permanent barriers (e.g. cement) to isolate any oil and gas formations and aquifers.
- + Verification of permanent barriers to ensure that there are no leaks.
- + Recovery of subsea well infrastructure.

Activity Purpose and Approvals

The MEFF Development ceased production in 2018, following which the floating, production, storage and offtake vessel (FPSO) departed the field.

After the removal of a submerged mid-water disconnectable turret mooring (DTM) and two mid water arches (MWA) in Q1 2023, all that remains are 12 subsea wells, and a subsea production system.

The wells have either been placed into long-term suspension in preparation for permanent abandonment, or the wells have been permanently plugged and the wellhead is all that remains to be recovered. The subsea production system has been flushed of hydrocarbons with treated seawater and is in a preservation state.

The MEFF P&A activities will focus on plugging of the remaining wells followed by the severing and recovery of well infrastructure at the seabed.

Santos will use a MODU (see **Figure 2**) or a Lightweight Intervention Vessel located



Figure 2. A photo of a Semi-Submersible MODU.

over the wells to perform the P&A activity, supported by a variety of activity-specific vessels.

Materials may be placed within the wellbores during the activities, including cement, drilling mud, gels and other non-porous materials such as clays (e.g. bentonite) and other sealants (e.g. bismuth, resin) or lost circulation materials (e.g. fibrous materials).

Santos plans to remove the wellheads and conductors from the seabed, unless they cannot be removed by the MODU, in which case they will be removed prior to or during final decommissioning.

Mechanical plugs may be used in some wells to reduce the amount of cement required to plug a well or to provide additional protection from formation pressure in the well. Typically, mechanical plugs installed in a well will also have a cement plug placed on top.

Pre and Post MODU activities may consist of:

- + Inspection and operability tests of the subsea equipment (e.g. Manifold and XT valves).

- + Rig-less well intervention activities

- + Seabed surveys, including a pre-activity debris clearance survey using side scan sonar (SSS) tow fish and a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) if targets of concern are identified.

- + Post-abandonment well monitoring.

- + Post abandonment activities as required.

Activities may not be continuous and the project vessels may depart and then re-enter the operational area on a number of occasions.

An EP for proposed activities is currently under assessment for acceptance by NOPSEMA. The EP has been prepared in accordance with the Commonwealth Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2009 (OPGGGS(E)R). Additional feedback provided by relevant persons will be considered in an update to the [Mutineer-Exeter Plug and Abandonment Environment Plan](#).

Defining the Environment Area for Proposed Activities

Santos has undertaken an initial assessment to identify the environmental, social, economic and cultural values and sensitivities that may be affected by impacts and risks of proposed activities.

To do this we have considered the totality of the areas where activity impacts and risks may occur. These areas are summarised in Table 1. The widest extent of these areas is called the Environment that May Be Affected (EMBA), which for this activity is the outer boundary of a worst-

case spill resulting from a loss of well control during P&A activities. The EMBA for proposed activities is illustrated in Figure 3.

Oil spill EMBAs are defined by overlaying a great number (usually hundreds) of individual, computer simulated, hypothetical oil spill events into a single map. Each simulation run starts from the same location (release point) but each run will be subject to a different set of wind and weather conditions derived from historical data. The use of advanced and

sophisticated models enables us to present all the areas that could be affected.

While the EMBA represents the largest possible spatial extent that could be contacted by the worst-case spill events modelled, an actual spill event is more accurately represented by a single simulation run, resulting in a smaller spatial extent in the event of an actual spill. Often one or more simulation runs are selected to be representative of the 'worst-case' based on the nature and scale of the activity and the local environment.

Please see the [NOPSEMA Spill Modelling Video](#) for more information on oil spill modelling and why it is required for the preparation of Environment Plans.

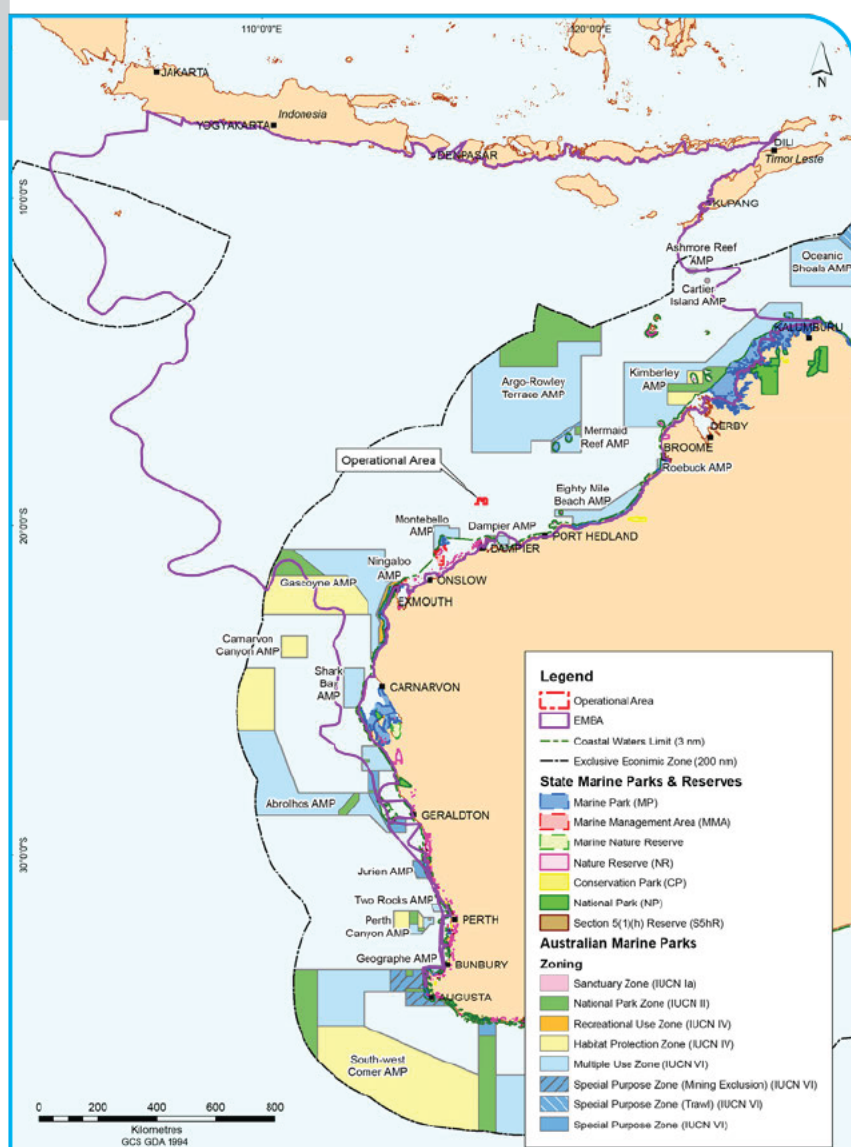


Figure 3. Activity location with EMBA

TABLE 1
ENVIRONMENT AREA FOR
PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

ENVIRONMENT AREA

Operational Area

The area in which the MODU and support vessels will operate.

Environment that May Be Affected (EMBA)

The spatial extent of activity impacts (e.g., facility presence, light, noise) and risk (e.g., hydrocarbon spill).

Environmental, Social, Economic and Cultural Features

We have undertaken a review of publicly available information to identify environmental, social, economic and cultural features that may be affected by activity impacts and risks, which are summarised in **Table 2**. These aspects will be risk-assessed within the EP on a case-by-case basis.

TABLE 2
ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FEATURES

FEATURES	DESCRIPTION	OPERATIONAL AREA	EMBA	PUBLIC INFORMATION REVIEW
Aboriginal Heritage	Registered Aboriginal heritage sites protected under the: + <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984</i> + <i>WA Aboriginal Heritage Act 2021</i>	No	Yes	Multiple registered Aboriginal Heritage sites occur within the EMBA. While sea country is a recognised value, the registered site list is land-based sites, therefore could be impacted by unplanned hydrocarbon releases.
Cultural Heritage	Registered cultural sites under the: + <i>Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018</i>	No	Yes	Multiple registered cultural heritage sites occur within the EMBA. While sea country is a recognised value, the registered site list is land-based sites, therefore could be impacted by unplanned hydrocarbon releases.
Defence	Designated defence activity areas	No	Yes	Learmonth restricted air space and marine training area overlaps the EMBA.
Fishing	Commercial fishing	Yes	Yes	Three Commonwealth fisheries that overlap the operational area: Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery, Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery, Western Skipjack Tuna Fishery. Management boundaries of twelve state managed fisheries intersect WA-20-L. Four fisheries actively fished within WA-20-L for the period 2009-2019: Mackerel Managed Fishery, Pilbara Fish Trawl (Interim) Managed Fishery, Pilbara Demersal trap Managed Fishery, Pilbara Line Fishery. Although the fishery management zones overlap the operational area, activity within or near the operational area is not expected. A number of State fisheries are open within the operational area and EMBA; however, they do not have activity in this area.
	Indigenous, subsistence or customary fishing	No	Yes	Traditional Australian Indigenous fishing activities are generally concentrated within 3 nm of the Western Australian coastline.

Fishing	Recreational and charter boat fishing	No	Yes	Given the water depths and distance from the nearest mainland, it is unlikely recreational fishing would occur in the OA. Recreational fishing does occur within the EMBA and therefore could be impacted by a LOWC.
Oil and Gas Operations	Petroleum operations	No	Yes	Oil and gas facilities occur within the EMBA as do permits operated by other titleholders. Thus, oil and gas activities could be impacted by unplanned events.
Protected Areas (nearest Commonwealth and State marine parks)	Australian Marine Park (Cwth)	No	Yes	The Montebello Marine Park is approximately 98km southwest from the operational area.
	Marine Park (State)	No	Yes	The Montebello Marine Park is approximately 98km southwest from the operational area.
Shipping	Shipping fairway	Yes	Yes	The eastern boundary of the operational area abuts the Dampier shipping fairway. The shipping fairways of the region service Dampier and Karratha. Therefore, vessel traffic is expected in the vicinity of the operational area.
Telecommunications	Subsea telecommunications cables	No	Yes	The JASURAU cable system and the North West Cable System are located approximately 181 km and 185 km east of the operational area.
Tourism	Tourism operations	No	Yes	The EMBA encompasses a number of marine parks and reserves where shoreline accumulation of oil may also occur. Thus, ecotourism based on specific local values (game fish, nearshore reef snorkelling and diving) could be impacted by unplanned events.
Towns / communities	Dampier	No	Yes	Dampier is approximately 147 km south of the Operational Area.

Activity Impacts and Risk Management

We have summarised in **Table 3** potential environmental risks and impacts and associated management measures for the proposed activity. These aspects will be risk-assessed with the Environment Plan on a case-by-case basis.

TABLE 3
ACTIVITY IMPACT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

POTENTIAL ACTIVITY IMPACTS

Acoustic disturbance to marine fauna

Description of potential impacts

Potential impacts from noise emissions may occur in the operational area from the following sources:

- + MODU activities (e.g., drilling equipment, engines and machinery, LWIV DP systems (if engaged)).
- + Flaring during well bleed-off activities.
- + Positioning equipment installed on the seabed.
- + Support vessel activities (e.g., vessel engines, thrusters and other machinery such as winches, site surveys using echo sounders, side scan sonar (SSS) or similar).
- + ROV activities (e.g., thrusters, debris clearing activities and cutting activities).
- + Helicopter activities relating to crew change requirements (e.g., aircraft engine).

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + MODU/LWIV and Vessel Planned Maintenance System (PMS) to maintain vessel DP, engines and machinery.
- + Santos Marine Assurance Procedure.

Light emissions

Description of potential impacts

Potential impacts from light emissions may occur in the operational area from:

- + Safety, operational and navigational lighting on the MODU/LWIV.
- + Safety, operational and navigational lighting on the support vessels.
- + ROV spot lighting while it is operational underwater on an as-needed basis.
- + Light from flaring during well bleed-off.
 - + Lighting will typically consist of bright white (i.e., metal halide, halogen, fluorescent) lights typical of lighting used in the offshore petroleum industry and not dissimilar to lighting used for other offshore activities in the region, including shipping and fishing.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + MODU/vessels navigation lighting and equipment is compliant with the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 / Marine Orders 30: Prevention of Collisions, and with Marine Orders 21: Safety of Navigation and Emergency Procedures.

Atmospheric emissions

Description of potential impacts

Potential impacts from atmospheric emissions may occur in the operational area from the following sources:

- + Operation of MODU/LWIV and vessel engines, helicopters, generators, mobile and fixed plant and equipment.
- + Flaring from the MODU during well bleed off activities. Flaring is expected to last for approximately 6 - 12 hours per well.
- + Limited venting of hydrocarbons may occur as dead spaces or inaccessible areas of the well infrastructure are recovered and where any hydrocarbons cannot be directed to the bleed-off package.
- + Operation of incinerators on support vessels outside the 500 m exclusion zone around the MODU/LWIV.
- + When transferring dry bulk products used for drilling (e.g., barite, bentonite, cement), tank venting is necessary to prevent tank overpressure.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + Vessel fuel oil sulphur content is compliant with the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).
- + Pursuant to MARPOL Annex VI, vessels will maintain a current International Air Pollution Prevention (IAPP) Certificate as relevant to vessel class.
- + MODU/LWIV and Vessel Planned Maintenance System (PMS) to maintain vessel DP, engines and machinery.

Seabed and benthic habitat disturbance

Description of potential impacts

Potential seabed disturbance may occur in the operational area from the following source:

- + Positioning and anchoring of the MODU at the well locations with the assistance of support vessels.
- + Cutting of wellheads.
- + Installation and recovery of pre lay equipment in preparation for rig arrival .
- + Installation and recovery of any seabed mounted survey or monitoring equipment.
- + Marine growth removal from critical areas of the subsea infrastructure.
- + Break up of cement patio.
- + Recovery of defunct material between the wellhead and the manifold / UTA / PUDU.
- + Wet storage of equipment on seabed for future recovery during decommissioning.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + No vessel or LWIV anchoring, unless in an emergency.
- + Objects dropped overboard are recovered (where possible and safe to do so) to mitigate the environmental consequences from objects remaining in the marine environment.

Physical presence and interaction with other marine users

Description of potential impacts

Interaction with other marine users may occur as a result of, but not limited to:

- + MODU/LWIV and ROV presence in the operational area.
- + Support vessels presence in the operational area.
- + Well infrastructure and other equipment on the seabed.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + If requested, stakeholders will be notified prior to the commencement of, and on cessation of each activity.
- + Relevant maritime notices issued.
- + A 500 m radius PSZ (exclusion zone) will be in place around the MODU/LWIV for the duration of the activity.
- + A visual and radar watch will be maintained on the support vessel bridge.
- + Support vessels (including the MODU) will be prohibited from recreational fishing within the operational area.
- + Santos commits to reducing impacts on commercial fishers through the provision of timely activity information to enable advance planning and avoidance of unexpected interference.

Operational vessel discharges

Description of potential impacts

Potential impacts may occur in the operational area from the following operational discharges:

- + sewage and grey water.
- + putrescible waste.
- + deck drainage.
- + cooling water.
- + bilge water.
- + brine.
- + ballast water.
- + swarf from subsea cutting activities.
- + hydraulic fluid from BOP operation.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + Routine vessel discharge (sewage, bilge water, food waste) will meet MARPOL requirements.
- + Deck cleaning products that may be discharged to the ocean will meet MARPOL requirements.

Drilling discharges

Description of potential impacts

During P&A activities, drilling fluids and cements used and potentially discharged are similar in nature (but of lesser quantities) to those discharged during the drilling of a conventional well and include:

- + brines, seawater and freshwater.
- + water based drilling / milling fluid (WBM).
- + hi-viscosity (Hi-Vis) pills.
- + other additives such as density increasing additives, viscosity additives, alkalinity and hardness control additives, lost circulation materials (LCM) and tracer dyes.
- + drilling cements and additives such as retarders, accelerators, light-weight additives, water loss additives and gas migration additives.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + Drilling and cement and chemicals potentially discharged to sea are Gold/Silver/D or E rated through OCNS, or PLONOR substances listed by OSPAR, or have a completed Santos risk assessment so that only environmentally acceptable products are used.
- + Only water-based muds will be used.

Spill response operations

In the event of a hydrocarbon spill, response strategies will be implemented where possible to reduce environmental impacts to ALARP but may include:

- + light, noise and atmospheric emissions.
- + Physical presence and disturbance.
- + Disruption to other users of marine and coastal areas and townships.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + In the event of a hydrocarbon spill, the Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (OPEP) requirements are implemented to mitigate environmental impacts.

ACTIVITY RISKS

Release of Solid Objects

Description of risks

Solid objects, such as those listed below, can be accidentally released to the marine environment, and potentially impact on sensitive receptors:

- + non-hazardous solid wastes, such as paper and packaging.
- + hazardous solid wastes, such as batteries, fluorescent tubes and aerosol cans.
- + equipment and materials, such as hard hats, tools or infrastructure parts.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + Dropped object prevention procedures
- + Waste (Garbage) Management Plan.
- + Hazardous chemical management procedures.
- + Dangerous goods managed in accordance with International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG Code).

Accidental introduction of invasive marine species (IMS)

Description of risks

Introduction of invasive marine species may occur due to:

- + MODU/LWIV or support vessels and external/internal (e.g., sea chests, seawater systems) niches.
- + biofouling on equipment that is routinely submerged in water (e.g., mooring lines, ROVs).
- + discharge of high-risk ballast water.
- + cross contamination between vessels.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + MODU/LWIV and vessels are managed to low risk in accordance with the Santos Invasive Marine Species Management Plan prior to movement/transit into or within the invasive marine species management zone, which requires:-
- + assessment of applicable MODU/vessels using the Department Primary Industry and Regional Development (DPIRD) Vessel Check Tool; and
- + the management of immersible equipment to low risk.

Unplanned interaction with marine fauna

Description of risks

There is the potential for MODU/LWIV and vessels or equipment from the vessels involved in operational activities to interact with marine fauna, including potential strike or collision, potentially resulting in severe injury or mortality.

- + Fauna strike may also occur from helicopters during take-off and landing.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + Procedure for interacting with marine fauna.

Unplanned hazardous and non-hazardous discharges

Description of risks

Causes for accident hydrocarbon releases (other than diesel release from a vessel collision or bunkering, and LOWC) include:

- + Bulk Product Spills.
- + Mechanical / Structural Failure / Loss of Secondary Containment.
- + Loss of Primary Containment.
- + Incorrect Handling and Storage.
- + ROV Failure.
- + Hydrocarbon Fall-out during Flaring.
- + Rupture or leak from a flowline, service line, or umbilical.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + Dropped object prevention procedures.
- + General chemical management procedures.
- + Hazardous chemical management procedures.
- + Santos chemical selection procedure.
- + International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code.
- + Bulk liquids and solids transfer procedure.

Unplanned hydrocarbon release from a loss of well control, vessel collision or refuelling

Description of risks

- + A worst-case credible scenario for the proposed activity is a loss of well control at the seabed or surface.

Compliance with the following key management measures

- + NOPSEMA-accepted MODU or LWIV safety case and Santos Well Operations Management Plan (WOMP) in place.
 - + A relief well plan will be developed prior to the commencement of P&A activities.
 - + Appropriate refuelling procedures and equipment will be used to prevent spills to the marine environment.
 - + NOPSEMA approved Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (OPEP), equipment and materials will be in place and maintained.
-



Consultation

Consultation provides Santos with an opportunity to receive feedback from authorities, persons and organisations whose functions, interests or activities may be affected by proposed petroleum activities.

This feedback helps us to refine or change the management measures we are planning to address potential activity impacts and risks. Santos' objective for proposed activities is to reduce environmental impacts and risks to a level that is As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP) and acceptable over the life of the activity.

Consultation also helps us to identify values and sensitivities where information is not publicly available, such as spiritual and cultural connection to land and sea country, as well as first-hand feedback on commercial and recreational fishing, tourism and local community activities and interests.

Providing feedback

If you consider you may be a relevant person, please contact us as soon as possible if you require any further information or if you think you are not on our consultation list.

We are asking for relevant persons to provide feedback by **26 July 2023**.

Feedback provided by relevant persons will be considered in an update to the [Mutineer-Exeter Plug and Abandonment Environment Plan](#) currently under assessment by NOPSEMA and through the life of the activity. Feedback from relevant persons will be included in the updated EP that is submitted to NOPSEMA for assessment.

Please let us know if you would like your personal/organisational details or any part of your feedback to remain private and we will ensure this remains confidential to NOPSEMA.

Santos

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Appendix H: Environment Consequence Descriptors

Excerpt from Offshore Division Environmental Hazard Identification and Assessment Guideline (EA-91-IG-00004), Revision 5 (Issued October 2020)

Consequence Level		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Acceptability		Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
Severity Description		Negligible <i>No impact or negligible impact.</i>	Minor <i>Detectable but insignificant change to local population, industry or ecosystem factors. Localised effect</i>	Moderate <i>Significant impact to local population, industry or ecosystem factors.</i>	Major <i>Major long-term effect on local population, industry or ecosystem factors.</i>	Severe <i>Complete loss of local population, industry or ecosystem factors AND/ OR extensive regional impacts with slow recovery.</i>	Critical <i>Irreversible impact to regional population, industry or ecosystem factors.</i>
Environmental Receptors	Fauna In particular, EPBC Act listed threatened/migratory fauna or <i>WA Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> specially protected fauna	Short-term behavioural impacts only to small proportion of local population and not during critical lifecycle activity. No decrease in local population size. No reduction in area of occupancy of species. No loss/disruption of habitat critical to survival of a species. No disruption to the breeding cycle of any individual. No introduction of disease likely to cause a detectable population decline.	Detectable but insignificant decrease in local population size. Insignificant reduction in area of occupancy of species. Insignificant loss/disruption of habitat critical to survival of a species. Insignificant disruption to the breeding cycle of local population.	Significant decrease in local population size but no threat to overall population viability. Significant behavioural disruption to local population. Significant disruption to the breeding cycle of a local population. Significant reduction in area of occupancy of species. Significant loss of habitat critical to survival of a species. Modify, destroy, remove, isolate or decrease availability of quality of habitat to the extent that a significant decline in local population is likely. Introduce disease likely to cause a significant population decline.	Long-term decrease in local population size and threat to local population viability. Major disruption to the breeding cycle of local population. Major reduction in area of occupancy of species. Fragmentation of existing population. Major loss of habitat critical to survival of a species. Modify, destroy, remove, isolate or decrease availability of quality of habitat to the extent that a long-term decline in local population is likely. Introduce disease likely to cause a long-term population decline.	Complete loss of local population. Complete loss of habitat critical to survival of local population. Widespread (regional) decline in population size or habitat critical to regional population.	Complete loss of regional population. Complete loss of habitat critical to survival of regional population.
	Physical Environment/Habitat Includes: air quality; water quality; benthic habitat (biotic/abiotic), particularly habitats that are rare or unique; habitat that represents a Key Ecological Feature ² ; habitat within a protected area; habitats that include benthic primary producers ³ and/ or epi-fauna ⁴	No or negligible reduction in physical environment/habitat area/function.	Detectable but localised and insignificant loss of area/function of physical environment/habitat. Rapid recovery evident within around two years (two season recovery)	Significant loss of area and/or function of local physical environment/habitat. Recovery over medium term (two to ten years)	Major, large-scale loss of area and/or function of physical environment/local habitat. Slow recovery over decades.	Extensive destruction of local physical environment/habitat with no recovery. Long-term (decades) and widespread loss of area or function of primary producers on a regional scale.	Complete destruction of regional physical environment/habitat with no recovery. Complete loss of area or function of primary producers on a regional scale.
	Threatened ecological communities (EPBC Act listed ecological communities)	No decline in threatened ecological community	Detectable but insignificant decline in threatened ecological community population size, diversity or function. Insignificant reduction in area of threatened ecological community.	Significant decline in threatened ecological	Major, long-term decline in threatened ecological	Extensive, long-term decline in threatened ecological community population size, diversity or function. Complete loss of threatened ecological community.	Complete loss of threatened ecological community with no recovery.

² As defined by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)

³ Benthic photosynthetic organisms such as seagrass, algae, hard corals and mangroves

⁴ Fauna attached to the substrate including sponges, soft corals and crinoids.

Consequence Level		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Acceptability		Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
Severity Description		Negligible <i>No impact or negligible impact.</i>	Minor <i>Detectable but insignificant change to local population, industry or ecosystem factors. Localised effect</i>	Moderate <i>Significant impact to local population, industry or ecosystem factors.</i>	Major <i>Major long-term effect on local population, industry or ecosystem factors.</i>	Severe <i>Complete loss of local population, industry or ecosystem factors AND/ OR extensive regional impacts with slow recovery.</i>	Critical <i>Irreversible impact to regional population, industry or ecosystem factors.</i>
		population size, diversity or function. No reduction in area of threatened ecological community. No introduction of disease likely to cause decline in threatened ecological community population size, diversity or function.		community population size, diversity or function. Significant reduction in area of threatened ecological community. Introduction of disease likely to cause significant decline in threatened ecological community population size, diversity or function.	community population size, diversity or function. Major reduction in area of threatened ecological community. Fragmentation of threatened ecological community. Introduce disease likely to cause long-term decline in threatened ecological community population size, diversity or function.		
	Protected Areas Includes: World Heritage Properties; Ramsar wetlands; Commonwealth/National Heritage Areas; Land/Marine Conservation Reserves	No or negligible impact on protected area values. No decline in species population within protected area. No or negligible alteration, modification, obscuring or diminishing of protected area values*.	Detectable but insignificant impact on one of more of protected area's values. Detectable but insignificant decline in species population within protected area. Detectable but insignificant alteration, modification, obscuring or diminishing of protected area values*.	Significant impact on one of more of protected area's values. Significant decrease in population within protected area. Significant alteration, modification, obscuring or diminishing of protected area values.	Major long-term effect on one of more of protected area's values Long-term decrease in species population contained within protected area and threat to that population's viability Major alteration, modification, obscuring or diminishing of protected area values	Extensive loss of one or more of protected area's values. Extensive loss of species population contained within protected area.	Complete loss of one or more of protected area's values with no recovery. Complete loss of species population contained within protected area with no recovery.
	Socio-economic receptors Includes: fisheries (commercial and recreational); tourism; oil and gas; defence; commercial shipping	No or negligible loss of value of the local industry. No or negligible reduction in key natural features or populations supporting the activity.	Detectable but insignificant short-term loss of value of the local industry. Detectable but insignificant reduction in key natural features or population supporting the local activity.	Significant loss of value of the local industry. Significant medium-term reduction of key natural features or populations supporting the local activity.	Major long-term loss of value of the local industry and threat to viability. Major reduction of key natural features or populations supporting the local activity.	Shutdown of local industry or widespread major damage to regional industry. Extensive loss of key natural features or populations supporting the local industry.	Permanent shutdown of local or regional industry. Permanent loss of key natural features or populations supporting the local or regional industry.

Appendix I: Spill Modelling Results

Appendix I1: Stochastic Spill Modelling Results for 604 m³ MDO release and subsea release of hydrocarbons in the event of a loss of well control

Appendix I2: High Environmental Value Consequence Summary

Appendix I1: Stochastic Spill Modelling Results for 604 m³ MDO release and subsea release of hydrocarbons in the event of a loss of well control

Spill modelling results for surface release of MDO

Receptor	Receptor Type	Minimum time to contact (days)							Maximum hydrocarbon concentration							Maximum oil ashore (tonnes)	Maximum length of oiled shoreline (km)
		Moderate exposure values				High exposure values			Moderate exposure values				High exposure values				
		Shoreline accumulation 100 g/m ²	Surface hydrocarbons (10 g/m ²)	Dissolved hydrocarbons (50 ppb)	Entrained Hydrocarbons (100 ppb)	Dissolved hydrocarbons (400 ppb)	Shoreline accumulation (1000 g/m ²)	Surface hydrocarbons (50 g/m ²)	Shoreline accumulation (100 g/m ²)	Surface hydrocarbons (10 g/m ²)	Dissolved hydrocarbons (50 ppb)	Entrained Hydrocarbons (100 ppb)	Dissolved hydrocarbons (400 ppb)	Shoreline accumulation (1000 g/m ²)	Surface hydrocarbons (50 g/m ²)	Shoreline accumulation (100 g/m ²)	Shoreline accumulation (100 g/m ²)
Clerke Reef MP	Emergent	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Imperieuse Reef MP	Emergent	11.7	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	888.9	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	12.4	11.0
Southern Islands Coast	Intertidal	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Glomar Shoals	Submerged	NC	0.4	0.5	0.5	NC	NC	0.5	NC	217.4	265.6	449.2	NC	NC	0.5	NC	NC
Montebello MP	Submerged	NC	5.1	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	11.4	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Rowley Shoals Surrounds	Submerged	NC	6.8	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	21.3	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC

Receptor	Receptor Type	Minimum time to contact (days)							Maximum hydrocarbon concentration							Maximum oil ashore (tonnes)	Maximum length of oiled shoreline (km)
		Moderate exposure values				High exposure values			Moderate exposure values				High exposure values				
		Shoreline accumulation 100 g/m ²	Surface hydrocarbons (10 g/m ²)	Dissolved hydrocarbons (50 ppb)	Entrained Hydrocarbons (100 ppb)	Dissolved hydrocarbons (400 ppb)	Shoreline accumulation (1000 g/m ²)	Surface hydrocarbons (50 g/m ²)	Shoreline accumulation (100 gm ²)	Surface hydrocarbons (10 g/m ²)	Dissolved hydrocarbons (50 ppb)	Entrained Hydrocarbons (100 ppb)	Dissolved hydrocarbons (400 ppb)	Shoreline accumulation (1000 g/m ²)	Surface hydrocarbons (50 g/m ²)	Shoreline accumulation (100 g/m ²)	Shoreline accumulation (100 g/m ²)
Ningaloo – offshore	Submerged	NC	4.9	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	29.1	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC

Spill modelling results for subsea LOWC

Receptor	Receptor Type	Minimum time to contact (days)							Maximum hydrocarbon concentration							Maximum oil ashore (tonnes)	Maximum length of oiled shoreline (km)
		Moderate exposure values				High exposure values			Moderate exposure values				High exposure values				
		Shoreline accumulation 100 g/m²	Surface hydrocarbons (10 g/m²)	Dissolved hydrocarbons (50 ppb)	Entrained Hydrocarbons (100 ppb)	Dissolved hydrocarbons (400 ppb)	Shoreline accumulation (1000 g/m²)	Surface hydrocarbons (50 g/m²)	Shoreline accumulation (100 g/m²)	Surface hydrocarbons (10 g/m²)	Dissolved hydrocarbons (50 ppb)	Entrained Hydrocarbons (100 ppb)	Dissolved hydrocarbons (400 ppb)	Shoreline accumulation (1000 g/m²)	Surface hydrocarbons (50 g/m²)	Shoreline accumulation (100 g/m²)	Shoreline accumulation (100 g/m²)
Clerke Reef MP	Emergent	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Imperieuse Reef MP	Emergent	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Southern Islands Coast	Intertidal	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Glomar Shoals	Submerged	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Montebello MP	Submerged	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Rowley Shoals Surrounds	Submerged	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Ningaloo – offshore	Submerged	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC

Appendix I2: High Environmental Value Consequence Summary

Receptor (hotspot) name	HEV Ranking	Values	Oil Spill Modelling Parameter NC = No Contact		Subsea	Surface	Consequence Category	Consequence Ranking	Final
Imperieuse Reef Marine Park (Emergent)	3	The Rowley Shoals comprise three reef systems 30 to 40 km apart: Mermaid Reef, Clerke Reef and Imperieuse Reef	Probability of contact by floating oil at 10 g/m ²	(%)	NC	NC	Threatened / Migratory Fauna	IV IV IV IV	IV
		<u>Physical habitats</u>					Physical Environment/ Habitat		
		Coral reefs	Minimum time to contact by floating oil 10 g/m ²	Time (days)	NC	NC	Protected Areas		
		+ Exceptionally rich and diverse intertidal and subtidal reefs							
		+ Provide a source of invertebrate and fish recruits for reefs further south and are therefore regionally significant	Maximum accumulated oil ashore >100 g/m ²	tonnes	NC	12.4	Socio-Economic Receptors		
		Seagrasses	Maximum accumulated concentration >100 g/m ²	g/m ²	NC	889			
		+ Sparse seagrass found within subtidal areas in Rowley Shoals							
		Macroalgae	Maximum length of shoreline oiled (>100 g/m ²)	(km)	NC	11			
		+ Small patches may be present in lagoonal area							
		Sandy beaches	Maximum concentration of total submerged oil >100 ppb	(ppb)	NC	NC			
		+ Area of sand banks (intertidal) and Cunninghamham Island (an unvegetated sand cay)							
		<u>Marine fauna</u>							
		Invertebrates	Maximum concentration of dissolved	(ppb)	NC	NC			
		+ A number of invertebrate (echinoderms, cnidarians, molluscs and crustaceans) species commonly found at Scott Reef are also found here although in higher densities due to lack of fishing/collection (Commercial collection is prohibited)							
		Fish and sharks							

Receptor (hotspot) name	HEV Ranking	Values	Oil Spill Modelling Parameter NC = No Contact		Subsea	Surface	Consequence Category	Consequence Ranking	Final
		+ Fish populations similar to those on shelf edge reefs in the Indo-Pacific region but unique in WA waters + Rich diversity of fish (500+ species) Birds + Wide range of seabirds observed at Rowley Shoals Marine reptiles + Green and hawksbill turtles are present at the Rowley Shoals + Reefs not known to be regionally significant turtle habitats Marine mammals + Northward humpback whale migration pathway adjacent to Rowley Shoals; therefore, individuals may be present + Variety of toothed and baleen whales likely to be visitors to the area but not Rowley Shoals are not a key aggregation/calving/mating/ foraging area <u>Protected areas</u> + Rowley Shoals Commonwealth Marine Reserve in place to protect migratory seabirds and endangered loggerhead turtle, sharks, communities and habitats of 220 m to 5000 m, seafloor features, two KEFS and provides connectivity between Mermaid Reef Marine National Nature Reserve and reefs of the Western Australian Rowley Shoals Marine Park and the deeper waters of the region. It is an IUCN category zoning of II and VI.	hydrocarbon >50 ppb						

Receptor (hotspot) name	HEV Ranking	Values	Oil Spill Modelling Parameter NC = No Contact		Subsea	Surface	Consequence Category	Consequence Ranking	Final
		<u>Socio-economic and heritage values</u> + Tourism: nature-based tourism (charter boats, diving, snorkeling) and recreational fishing (although prohibited in certain zones) low usage, given distance to mainland; around 300 visitors per season (DoE, 2007) + Sanctuary zone within marine park + Indigenous values: none identified + Heritage values: none identified + Prohibition on commercial fishing and a ban on the take of key demersal fish by recreational fishers since 1987 + Low level of pressures on shoals makes them an important global benchmark for Indo-West pacific reefs + 'Mermaid Reef and the Commonwealth waters surrounding Rowley Shoals' are a designated KEF (an area of high biodiversity with enhanced productivity and feeding and breeding aggregations) + Rowley Shoals also have the KEF 'canyons linking the Argo Abyssal Plain with the Scott Plateau' (unique seafloor feature with enhanced productivity and feeding aggregations of species)							