

MEMBER COUNTRY PROFILE – AUSTRALIA

Country: Australia

Organisation: National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA)

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Regime scope: NOPSEMA is Australia's national regulator of offshore energy operations encompassing petroleum, greenhouse gas storage, offshore renewable energy and offshore electricity infrastructure activities.

NOPSEMA has primary responsibilities over the entire project lifecycle for the regulation of:

- health and safety and facility integrity
- well integrity
- environmental management.

Governance arrangements:

NOPSEMA is an independent regulatory authority established under statute. It is a Commonwealth (Federal) Government agency with a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who reports directly to the Commonwealth Minister for Resources in relation to petroleum and greenhouse gas operations and to the Commonwealth Minister for Climate Change and Energy in relation to offshore renewable energy and offshore electricity infrastructure operations.

An advisory board with functions to provide advice to the Resources Minister and to the CEO in relation to petroleum and greenhouse gas storage matters is established under legislation.

NOPSEMA is subject to formal independent operational reviews every five years.

Legislation type: The *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* provides the legislative framework for all offshore petroleum and greenhouse gas operations in Australia's Commonwealth waters. This Act and its supporting regulations cover matters including safety, well integrity, diving, and environmental management.

The Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021 provides the legislative framework for all offshore renewable energy and offshore electricity infrastructure operations in Australia's Commonwealth waters including matters relating to work health and safety, infrastructure integrity and environmental management.

Link to:

[*Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006*](#)

[*Offshore Electricity Infrastructure Act 2021*](#)

Extent of Government approval:

NOPSEMA regulates offshore energy activities primarily by assessing, and accepting where appropriate, prescribed dutyholder management plans and subsequently by undertaking a range of compliance monitoring and enforcement functions. The prescribed management plans must be accepted prior to a dutyholder commencing any activity.

The prescribed plans include:

- safety cases
- well operations management plans
- diving safety management systems
- environment plans
- offshore electricity infrastructure management plans

Nature of duties imposed:

General duties are imposed on operators of facilities, licence holders, persons in control of particular work, employers and others.

Duties are performance based, with health and safety, facility integrity and well integrity risks required to be reduced to a level that is as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP) and environmental impacts reduced to ALARP and acceptable levels.

Once prescribed management plans have been accepted, dutyholders must operate in accordance with the arrangements documented within the relevant plan.

Physical objects in the regime:

Approximately 33 platforms, 8 FPSO/FSOs, 7 MODUs, 6 vessels and 91 pipeline facilities.

Compliance assurance mechanisms:

NOPSEMA:

- assesses dutyholder management plans against prescribed acceptance criteria
- conducts inspections of dutyholder compliance at regulated offshore and onshore premises
- investigates accidents, incidents and dangerous occurrences
- undertakes compliance enforcement action utilising a range of statutory enforcement options
- provides advice to industry and other stakeholders on compliance with relevant requirements.

Transparency: Information is published through a dedicated website and regular publications including numerical inspection and incident data, aggregated health and safety statistics, guidance and advice on regulatory compliance including management plan preparation, inspection, investigation and enforcement activities. NOPSEMA is also bound by government accountability processes and participates in various public forums.

Financial basis: Full cost recovery from industry through legislated fees and levies.

Research N/A

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