



Offshore Petroleum Factsheet Series: Key Terms and Definitions

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Key terms and definitions

The table below defines key terms associated with offshore oil and gas projects.

NOPSEMA	<p>The National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) is an independent agency responsible for regulating certain aspects of offshore petroleum activities in Commonwealth waters, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• health and safety• environmental management• well integrity <p>By law, offshore petroleum activities cannot commence before NOPSEMA has assessed and accepted detailed risk management plans.</p>
Joint Authorities	<p>Joint Authorities are responsible for deciding whether to grant a petroleum title over Commonwealth waters.¹ The Joint Authority is made up of the responsible Commonwealth Minister and the relevant State or Territory Minister.² For the area offshore of Tasmania, the Joint Authority is the Commonwealth Minister <i>only</i>.³ As of April 2023, the responsible Commonwealth Minister is the Minister for the Department of Industry, Science and Resources.</p>

¹ *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* (Cth) (**OPGGS Act**) Part 1.3

² OPGGS Act s 56(2)

³ OPGGS Act s 56(2A)



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NOPTA	The National Offshore Petroleum Titles Administrator (NOPTA) supports the Joint Authority by keeping a register of petroleum titles and managing confidential data from petroleum companies. ⁴
Commonwealth waters	The offshore area surrounding Australia – which starts at 3 nautical miles from shore and extends to approximately 200 nautical miles from shore. ⁵
Petroleum	Includes gas, condensate, and oil.
Petroleum title	A petroleum title grants a company the <i>right</i> to explore for (exploration permit) or extract (production licence) petroleum. However, titles alone do not authorise petroleum activities.
Company	A company that has applied for or has been granted an offshore petroleum title. Note that multiple companies can hold a petroleum title as a joint venture.
Activity (Petroleum)	An activity is any petroleum operation or works in Commonwealth waters, such as seismic surveying, drilling, installation of production facilities, pipelines and decommissioning. Every activity requires an approved environment plan.
Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)	Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is a process that captures greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide (CO ₂), from industrial and energy-related sources, then transports and injects the gas deep underground for geological storage.
Offshore Project Proposal	An approved Offshore Project Proposal is required for petroleum activities that will impact matters of national environmental significance (under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)). Matters of national environmental significance include federally listed threatened species and ecological communities, World Heritage values, National Heritage and Commonwealth Heritage places.
Environment Plan	An environmental assessment of petroleum activities that sets out all potential environmental impacts and risks and how these will be managed by the company. An approved environment plan is required before petroleum activities can commence.

⁴ OPGGS Act Part 6.10

⁵ OPGGS Act s 8 – Definition of ‘offshore areas’



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Relevant persons	A person or group whose functions, activities or interests are affected by an environment plan.
Environment that May be Affected (EMBA)	Description of the largest spatial extent where unplanned events, such as a petroleum spill, could impact the environment and other values such as cultural and social values. Usually depicted as a map in an environment plan.
Petroleum Activity Area (PAA)	Description of the offshore area where petroleum activities will take place.
Production facility	Infrastructure that allows companies to drill for and extract petroleum. Infrastructure can either be fixed to the ocean floor, such as an offshore oil rig, or it can be floating. Floating production and storage offloading facilities (FPSO) are commonly used in Australia and can generally be described as a large shipping tanker.
Hydrocarbon release	A petroleum leak or spill. Often referred to in environment plans.
ALARP	The environmental regulations require environmental impacts and risks to be reduced 'as low as reasonably practicable'. This requirement is abbreviated to ALARP .
Environmental performance	Companies must set standards for environmental management as part of their environment plan. Environmental performance refers to their compliance with these standards.

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