



MEDIA RELEASE

MARTIN FERGUSON

Minister for Resources and Energy
Minister for Tourism

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FINAL REPORT OF THE MONTARA COMMISSION OF INQUIRY RELEASED

Following a period of detailed consideration the Government has today released the Report of the Montara Commission of Inquiry and a draft Government response.

The Inquiry was set up to investigate the likely causes of the uncontrolled release of oil and gas into the Timor Sea from the Montara Wellhead Platform on 21 August 2009 and make recommendations to the Government on how to prevent future incidents.

The Report contains 100 findings and 105 recommendations, which have implications for governments, regulators, and the offshore petroleum industry. The Government proposes accepting 92, noting 10, and not accepting three of the Report's recommendations.

Outlining the Government's draft response, Minister for Resources and Energy noted that it provides a comprehensive plan to tackle head on the tough policy challenges posed by the Montara incident.

"The fact is that we were lucky with Montara – no lives were lost, there were no serious injuries and the quick, coordinated response from governments, regulators and industry meant that the impact on the marine environment was minimal," Minister Ferguson said.

"Montara was the first major loss of well control in 25 years of safe offshore petroleum operations.

"Our challenge – collectively – is to minimise the risks of any future incidents. That is why I set up the Montara Commission of Inquiry.

"We can't just turn our backs on this industry – it is too important to Australia's economic and energy security. What we can do – working together – is make Australia's offshore safety regime the best and safest in the world.

"The report recognises that while there is room for some improvements, our regulatory regime is good – it is effective.

"At the heart of this matter is the failure of the operator and the failure of the regulator to adhere to this regime.

"Montara was preventable.

"If either - or preferably both – PTTEP AA or the Northern Territory Designated Authority had done their jobs properly and complied with requirements, the Montara Blowout would never have happened.

"I have already taken action on the most pressing issues arising from the Montara Commission of Inquiry.

“We will now commence a period of consultation with industry, community and other key stakeholders to inform the Government’s final response.

“A key aspect of this will be the Government’s intention to move toward a single national offshore regulator – consistent with the Report’s recommendations.

“In line with the Commissioner’s recommendations the Government will also move to legislate the polluter pays principle and the requirements for environmental monitoring, further strengthening environmental safeguards

“I am confident that by working methodically and diligently through the implementation of the remaining recommendations we will achieve a result that benefits all and maintains the industry’s social licence to operate.”

The Report of the Montara Commission of Inquiry Report, the Government’s draft response, information on how to make submissions and other supporting documents are available at www.ret.gov.au/montarainquiryresponse

Media contact: Fiona Scott – 0457 542 330