

MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

**PLUTO LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS DEVELOPMENT (SITE B OPTION)
BURRUP PENINSULAR, SHIRE OF ROEBOURNE – PROPOSAL UNDER S46
OF THE EP ACT TO AMEND CONDITIONS 6-12, 6-13 AND 6-14 OF
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT 757**

I refer to your letter of 31 August 2010 requesting the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) inquire into and report to you under section 46(1) of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* on Woodside Energy Ltd's proposed changes to the environmental conditions for the Pluto Liquefied Natural Gas Development (Ministerial Statement 757).

The following is the EPA's Report and Recommendations (No. 1373) to you pursuant to section 46(3) of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.

Introduction

The proponent, Woodside Energy Ltd, has approval to develop the Pluto Gas Field on the North-West Shelf, and construct liquefied natural gas processing and export facilities on the Burrup Peninsula. This approval included as a component a large scale dredging program, which was acknowledged to significantly impact the marine environment.

The EPA noted in Bulletin 1259 that due to the potential for significant exceedance of the coral loss threshold, the potential for impact on the proposed Dampier Archipelago Marine Park and the uncertainty regarding the environmental impact from the marine wastewater discharge, the proposal, as presented, did not fully meet the EPA's environmental objectives concerning marine impacts. However, the EPA also held the view that the Pluto LNG Development could be approved provided a substantive offset package was agreed, and stringent conditions were fully implemented.

The significant concerns regarding potential impacts to the marine environment lead to the inclusion of Condition 6 – Marine Impacts in Ministerial Statement 757. Conditions 6-12, 6-13 and 6-14 are the subject of this Report and are set out below:

6-12 Within three months following completion of the marine works, the proponent shall repeat the Comprehensive Field Survey required by condition 6-11, and shall submit a report on the results of that survey to the Department of Environment and Conservation.

This will constitute the first Post-Dredging Marine Habitat Survey, reporting any changes which may have occurred between the Baseline Marine Habitat Survey and the first Post-Dredging Marine Habitat Survey.

6-13 The proponent shall repeat the Post-Dredging Marine Habitat Survey referred to in condition 6-12, at the same time of year annually for three years, or until such time, as determined by the Minister for the Environment on advice of the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Fisheries.

6-14 Within three months following completion of each of the surveys required by conditions 6-12 and 6-13, the proponent shall report the findings of each of the surveys to the Department of Environment and Conservation.

On 22 June 2010, the proponent wrote to you to request that Conditions 6-12, 6-13 and 6-14 be removed from Ministerial Statement 757. The rationale provided for this was that the objectives of these conditions were no longer predicted to hold as much value in their implementation as was originally anticipated, as after the completion of the marine works program, the monitoring results obtained generally demonstrated a small level of environmental impact.

Discussion

The intent of Conditions 6-12, 6-13 and 6-14 was to determine the level of impact of dredging. The EPA agrees with the proponent's view that there is little merit in including broad scale habitat mapping in any repeat habitat surveys. However, repeat surveys of a subset of the fixed health monitoring sites have merit and are still necessary, including all the diver surveys and a subset of the drop camera surveys. In this context, modifying the existing Conditions 6-12, 6-13 and 6-14 is preferable to their complete removal. Proposed text for the revised Conditions 6-12, 6-13 and 6-14 is set out below under the EPA Recommendation heading. The revised Conditions specify which components of Conditions 6-12, 6-13 and 6-14 are still required to be implemented.

The exact sites to be re-surveyed will be confirmed in consultation with the proponent, and then these activities will be described as a set of geographic coordinates.

EPA Recommendation

That the existing conditions 6-12, 6-13 and 6-14 in Ministerial Statement 757 be replaced with:

- 6-12 *Within three months following completion of the marine works, the proponent shall repeat evaluation of the health of benthic communities, at the representative survey sites established by conditions 6-11(4) and 6-11(5), to the requirements of the Office of the Environmental Protection Authority.*
- 6-13 *The proponent shall repeat the survey required by condition 6-12, at the same time of year annually for three years, or until such earlier time, as determined by the Director General of the Department of Environment and Conservation, on advice of the Department of Fisheries.*
- 6-14 *Within three months following completion of each of the surveys required by conditions 6-12 and 6-13, the proponent shall report the findings of each of the surveys to the Office of the Environmental Protection Authority and the Department of Environment and Conservation.*

Dr Paul Vogel
CHAIRMAN

26 November 2010