

***Environmental Protection Act 1986***

**STATEMENT OF REASONS**

**REFERRAL NO LONGER ACTIVE**

**Proposal:** Greater Enfield Tieback Project – Exmouth Gulf

**Proponent:** Woodside Energy Ltd (Woodside)

**Decision**

For the reasons outlined below, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has determined that it cannot progress the referral of the Greater Enfield Tieback Project.

**Background**

On 21 January 2019, the Conservation Council of Western Australia referred the Proposal to the EPA under section 38 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). The Proposal included the operation of vessels and equipment, including the Global 1201, the Heavy Lift Vessels AAL Nanjing and Jumbo Fairlane, and the Deep Orient within Exmouth Gulf and identified three main activities:

- Transit of chartered vessels to and from the Exmouth Marina
- Supply and offtake of equipment and waste from chartered supply vessels within the Exmouth Gulf, primarily using a barge that is based in the Exmouth Marina
- Offloading of large equipment from heavy lift vessels using dynamic positioning to smaller vessels within the Gulf

The EPA requested further information on this proposal on 28 May 2019 and received the Exmouth Gulf Management Plan from Woodside on 2 August 2019.

The Exmouth Gulf Management Plan (the Plan) was developed to reduce the risk of vessel strike and potential negative impacts on the behaviour of humpback whales resting within the Gulf, from either vessel transit or lifting operations (cargo transfer). The Plan outlines management controls to minimise Woodside's potential impacts to humpback whales within the Gulf, ensure compliance with Woodside's regulatory obligations, and to respond proactively to concerns from key stakeholders.

On 12 September 2019, Woodside advised in writing that it is no longer operating any heavy lift ships in Exmouth Gulf and that the proposal referred has been completed.

## **Advice on Future Operations in Exmouth Gulf**

Any recommencement of Woodside's heavy lift operations in Exmouth Gulf, as described in the referral, would re-activate the referral and the EPA would consider whether formal assessment is required.

After considering the information gathered during the consideration to date of this referral, and the potential for impacts on marine fauna, the EPA considers that future proposals to carry out heavy lift operations in Exmouth Gulf will require referral under section 38 of the EP Act.

As part of its consideration of future assessments, the EPA will also consider the cumulative impacts on environmental values of shipping and other activities in Exmouth Gulf.