



MEMORANDUM

File Ref: EEZ000011

To: Trans-Tasman Resource Limited Decision-Making Committee

Copy To: Celia Haden, Michael Allan

From: Richard Johnson

Date: 16 March 2017

Subject: Responses to DMC request for advice on drilling operations in the South Taranaki Bight

1. On 23 February 2017, you asked for advice about any drilling operations that had taken place at the four offshore oil and gas facilities in the South Taranaki Bight between 1 July 2013 and 31 December 2016.

2. On 24 February 2017, we wrote to the relevant companies as follows:

“We are part way through the TTRL hearing in its application for a marine consent and marine discharge consent for its proposed seabed mining operation in South Taranaki Bight. A key issue is the extent, nature and effects of the inevitable sediment plume that is part of the activity.

The Decision-making Committee, in trying to understand the issues around the plume, have been keen to establish the position with the existing environment upon which modelling scenarios can be applied. Part of that existing marine environment is the natural levels of suspended sediment from an energetic ocean state, and the contributions from rivers. The DMC has asked if oil and gas drilling operations, as a consented activity, has contributed to the existing environment against which the applicant has modelled its sediment effects. It is probably true that sediment contributions from such a source are very minor, but in pursuing its obligations to use the best available information, it does want to fill this gap in information, with your assistance.

Can you please provide for the DMC a record of the periods (if any) within which consented drilling activity has taken place at any of your fields between 1 July 2013 and 31 December 2016?”

3. On 28 February 2017, we clarified our request to the relevant companies as follows:

“Following on from a question from OMV I accept that some drilling activity may have been during the transition period within which a marine consent was not required. I would take the DMC question to capture all lawful drilling activity so any activity between the nominated dates should be identified if possible. Equally I accept that there will/may be other sources of sediment mobilisation in and around platforms, and support vessels and FPSOs, that contribute (albeit in a minor way) to

background sediment levels. If you are so minded it would be good to identify these for the DMC. At the end of the day I do not think oil and gas operations contribute any significant amount to back ground sediment concentrations but this is an exercise in identifying all relevant information."

4. We have received the following advice:

- a) 1 March 2017, **Origin Energy**: no drilling activity was conducted between 1 July 2013 and 30 December 2016 associated with Origin in the Kupe Field.
- b) 1 March 2017, **AWE**: drilling activities were conducted at three wells between 1 July 2013 and 30 December 2016. Drilling at all three wells was conducted between 9 February 2014 and 19 July 2014. All wells are located in the PMP 38158 field in the locations indicated in the table below:

Well	Latitude	Longitude
Pateke-4H/st1/st2	39° 22' 38.98" S	173° 11' 44.77" E
Oi-1	39° 21' 07.4394" S	173° 20' 00.8931" E
Oi-2	39° 21' 03.59" S	173° 20' 04.64" E

- c) 8 March 2017, **STOS**: drilling activities were conducted between 7 April 2013 and 15 August 2014 at Māui A. STOS indicate approximately 837m³ of cuttings were disposed overboard during this drilling period.
 - d) 16 March 2017, **OMV**: drilling rigs were present in the South Taranaki Bight from August 2013 to February 2014, and from April 2014 to July 2015. They did not provide information on cuttings volumes from drilling activities.
5. In their responses to our request, the operators noted that not all drilling activities result in sediment mobilisation. For example, OMV made the point that some cuttings were recovered and disposed onshore. The operators expressed concern that the DMC may attempt to make a causative link between *any* drilling activity and sediment mobilisation in the South Taranaki Bight. They suggest this relationship should be interpreted with caution.
6. I ask that the DMC note that there are alternative sources, related to oil and gas operations that may contribute to sediment mobilisation other than drilling activity. These sources include:
- a) The movement and dragging of anchors (and anchor chains) attached to platforms and support vessels;
 - b) The use of Remotely Operated Vehicles;

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- c) Maintenance work and replacement of equipment and facilities including lines and pipes both within the water column and on the seabed as provided through s162 EEZ Act rulings.

Signed



Richard Johnson

Manager EEZ applications

Climate, Land & Oceans