ConocoPhillips

Otway Exploration Drilling Program

What we heard during the public comment period

ConocoPhillips Australia is continuing to plan and prepare for exploration activities in the Otway Basin with the aim of identifying commercially viable natural gas reserves to help meet Australia's energy needs and enable the global energy transition.

The importance of the public comment period

When preparing an Environment Plan (EP), feedback from relevant persons and community involvement is important and helps to ensure that environmental values and sensitivities are understood and impacts and risks have been identified and addressed.

Before any activity starts, ConocoPhillips Australia must demonstrate to the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environment Management Authority (NOPSEMA) how the proposed Otway Exploration Drilling Program meets the objectives of Australia's robust environment regulations.

NOPSEMA's public comment period provided an opportunity for the public to review the EP and technical supporting reports and raise issues about environmental management matters that have not yet been considered in the EP for the proposed activity.

What we heard

The public comments provided important information and insight for the EP. This is a summary of what we heard.

33 days
(16 Nov - 18 Dec 2023)
EP available for formal public comment

11 440
Public comment submissions received via NOPSEMA

11 378
Submissions received through petitions

62
Individualised submissions received

How public comments were taken into account in the EP

The public comments provided important information and insight for the EP. This is how the EP changed based on what we heard.

44 **Updates or amendments to the EP were made, some involving multiple changes throughout the EP.**

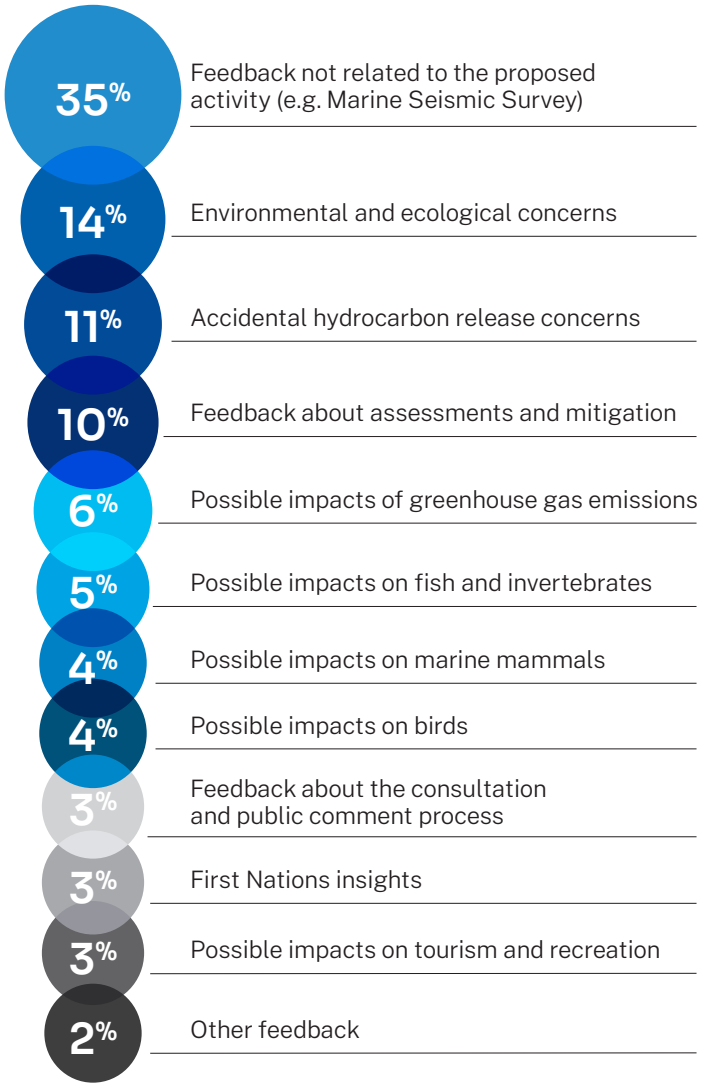
05 **Environmental Performance Standards were enhanced.**

02 **Control Measures were improved.**

Did you know?

By the time public comment concluded, the EP had been available for review for a total of 110 days.

Key feedback themes that we heard through public comment



What's next?

ConocoPhillips Australia has prepared a report responding to the public comments received, updated the EP and resubmitted it to NOPSEMA to commence assessment. NOPSEMA has published the Titleholder's Report on public comment along with the resubmitted EP and commenced its assessment process. ConocoPhillips Australia will continue to communicate with relevant persons, organisations, and authorities and provide updates of any changes or new information as it becomes available.

Contact Us

If you would like more information, you can contact us in any of the following ways:

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ConocoPhillips

Case study: Enhancing environmental performance through consultation

During development of the Otway Exploration Drilling Program Environment Plan (EP), ConocoPhillips Australia heard that the Victorian and Tasmanian coastlines were critical habitat for many species of marine fauna, including whales and seabirds, and set about putting in place measures to ensure marine fauna is protected in line with the conservation management plans published by the Australian Government.

ConocoPhillips Australia committed to 18 control measures in the initial EP, which included a Whale Management Plan (WMP) and a Light Management Plan.

During the public comment period, ConocoPhillips Australia heard that additional measures should be considered to protect marine fauna. To address this concern, ConocoPhillips Australia first reviewed the EP to ensure that the scope of the impact and risk assessments were commensurate to the magnitude of impacts and nature and scale of the proposed activity. This showed that the impact and risk assessments were appropriate and sufficient, but the control measure in place (WMP) only managed potential impacts and risks for whales.

ConocoPhillips Australia expanded the scope of the WMP to a Fauna Management Plan (FMP) to ensure the protection of a range of species that could be encountered. Some of the additional changes included in the FMP are:

- Controls for other species, including marine turtles, seals, dolphins and birds.
- Protections for flocks of rafting birds.
- Changes to an Environmental Performance Standard for the FMP to explicitly include consultation with relevant state government department specialists.

The feedback from relevant persons consultation and public comment has improved the environmental performance and management of proposed activities in the offshore environment, providing enhanced protections for a range of marine fauna.