

Opening Statement, Sue McCarrey, Chief Executive Officer

Senate Estimates, October 2025

I welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee today.

Since our last appearance in February, NOPSEMA has continued to deliver on its key responsibilities as the independent regulator of offshore safety, environment and well integrity, while also furthering a significant program of digital reform.

This work is being driven through Project CORE, our new digital platform transformation that will overhaul and enhance how titleholders interact with us. CORE will consolidate multiple regulatory processes into a single-touch portal, making it easier for industry to lodge environment plans, safety cases and compliance reports, while giving NOPSEMA better visibility of data and trends.

We have recently begun important stakeholder engagement to help inform the platform design. The feedback we receive will be essential to ensure CORE supports both regulatory excellence and industry efficiency. Once in place, Project CORE will foster widespread productivity gains across the entire breadth of NOPSEMA's engagement with titleholders.

Alongside this transformation, we have implemented the recent safety and other measures amendments to the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act, which came into force in June this year. We have provided updated guidance and held information sessions to help industry understand and meet their obligations under the new requirements.

In 2025 so far, NOPSEMA has accepted 21 environment plans, 63 safety cases and 42 well operations management plans. In the first half of 2025, we conducted 82 offshore inspections. We also have 23 environment plans under assessment.

In addition to these activities, we have seen increased activity in offshore decommissioning. Our compliance and inspection programs are increasingly focused on ensuring decommissioning is conducted safely and responsibly. Importantly, our key performance indicators show improvements since the introduction of NOPSEMA's Decommissioning Compliance Strategy, demonstrating that industry performance in this area is lifting.

We are also guided by our five National Priorities – structural integrity, addressing redundant wells, psychosocial health, control of work and finally, leadership and management. These priorities have been determined based on risk and evidence and they are central in focusing our compliance and enforcement activities. In 2024-25, this has led to targeted regulatory action across environment, safety and well integrity, including the issuing of Improvement Notices, Directions and Prohibition Notices where required.

Another way we are working to foster positive change is through industry education, such as our Better Practice Forums. We received positive feedback on our last forum, "Environmental submissions – collaboration and innovation", which was staged in April 2025.

I want to reassure the Committee that while we modernise how we operate, our day-to-day regulatory performance has not and will not diminish.

Looking forward, our focus is on ensuring that NOPSEMA delivers digital efficiencies for titleholders, strengthens regulatory oversight and ultimately provides confidence to the Australian community through the safe and responsible management of offshore energy resources.

With that, I welcome questions from the Committee.