



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Minister Burke decision risks investment and competitiveness

The Federal Environment Minister's decision to refer Bight Petroleum's proposed three-dimensional marine seismic survey in the Bight Basin for a full federal environmental assessment under the EPBC Act is a reversal of previous Federal Government commitments to get rid of regulatory duplication and reduce green tape.

"This is a deeply concerning development for oil and gas exploration," said APPEA Chief Executive David Byers.

"The oil and gas industry submits about 30 seismic surveys for a referral every year.

"Seismic surveys are already subject to robust and extensive environmental assessment approval procedures under the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act* and regulations administered by NOPSEMA (the Federal Government's National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority).

"This is the first time the government has decided a seismic survey was a controlled action and therefore required a full assessment process under the EPBC.

"This flies in the face of more than four decades of experience and peer-reviewed research that show no evidence that sound from modern oil and gas exploration activities causes injury to marine species, harm to ecological communities or behavioural effects that would affect the viability of any marine animal population.

"The marine exploration sector has also gone to great lengths to introduce international best-practice environmental safeguards around its activities.

"Minister Burke's move comes in a week in which the Productivity Commission articulated the critical need for greater regulatory efficiency and specifically recommended the Commonwealth should accredit NOPSEMA to undertake environmental assessments and approvals under the EPBC Act.

"His announcement calls into question the Federal Government's commitment to regulatory reform.

"Rather than delivering any environmental benefit, Minister Burke's intervention will simply duplicate bureaucratic processes, increase project delays and attach significantly more risk to future Australian investment.

"The consequences of trading short-term political advantage for clear regulatory processes are significant and should be of great concern to parties far beyond the oil and gas industry".

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The Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association represents the upstream oil and gas industry in Australia. APPEA member companies produce around 98 per cent of Australia's oil and gas.