

The ExxonMobil logo is positioned in the top left corner of the page. It features the word "Exxon" in a white, sans-serif font, followed by "Mobil" in a similar font, with a stylized flame icon above the letter 'i'. The background of the entire page is a photograph of an offshore oil platform at sunset, with the sun low on the horizon over the ocean, casting a golden glow on the water and the sky. The platform's steel structure is silhouetted against the bright sky, and a walkway extends from the platform towards the right side of the frame.

ExxonMobil

CONSULTATION

Bass Strait Operations

Steel Piled Jackets - Decommissioning Update

INFORMATION BULLETIN
November 2023

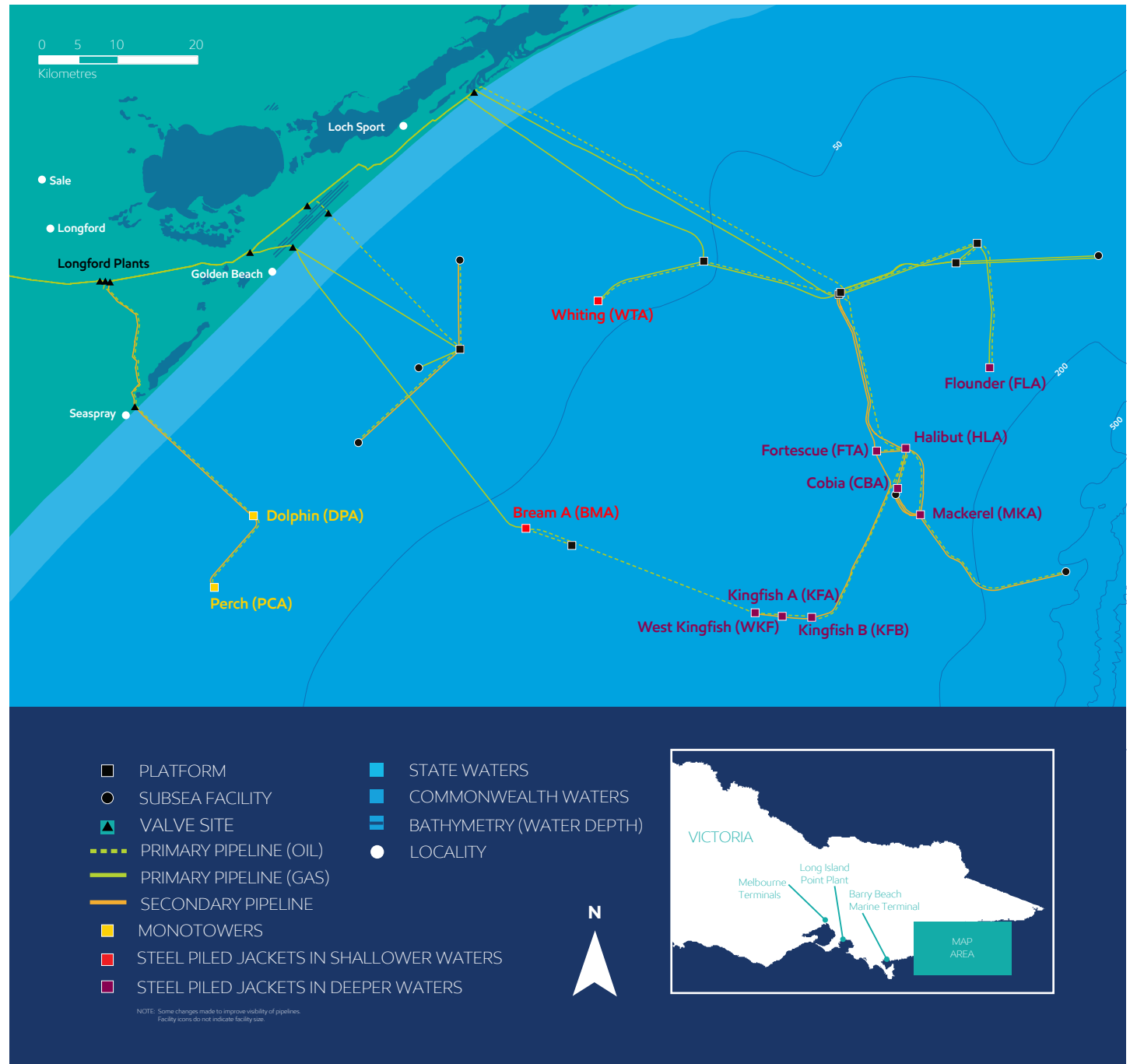
Esso is committed to engaging with the communities where we operate and helping our stakeholders to understand our business.

This information bulletin has been developed as part of Esso's commitment to keep relevant persons and other stakeholders informed of decommissioning activities in Bass Strait and to provide them with sufficient information about the nature and scale of the activity, as well as its potential environmental risks and impacts, so that they can make an informed decision as to whether their functions, interests or activities are affected.

About Esso Australia

Esso Australia Resources Pty Ltd (Esso) is a wholly owned subsidiary of ExxonMobil Australia Pty Ltd. Esso is the operator of the assets in Bass Strait that are part of the Gippsland Basin Joint Venture between Esso and Woodside Energy (Bass Strait) Pty Ltd (Woodside Energy) and the Kipper Unit Joint Venture (Esso, Woodside Energy, and MEPAU A Pty Ltd). These assets comprise 19 platforms with approximately 400 wells, six subsea facilities and more than 800 kilometres of subsea pipelines.

As operator of some of Australia's most mature oil and gas fields, Esso Australia is committed to decommissioning our Bass Strait offshore facilities safely and effectively. This includes working together with government, community and non-government organisation stakeholders to determine options for decommissioning non-producing infrastructure that balance environmental impacts and benefits with the needs of the community and requirements of regulatory authorities and communicate with them throughout the process until it is completed.



↑ Cover: Perch Platform

→ Map of activity location for Campaign #1 steel piled jackets

Steel Piled Jacket decommissioning options

In accordance with Section 572 (3) of the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006*, Esso Australia is required to fully remove all structures, equipment and other property no longer in use, or will be used, for operations. This obligation is subject to other provisions of the Act, regulations, directions and other applicable laws, which allow variations to full removal if the variations meet acceptance criteria.

As such, Esso has evaluated a range of decommissioning options for the steel piled jacket platforms and their associated infrastructure including deep piles, which extend up to hundreds of metres below the seabed and well conductors, which are steel and concrete pipes set into the seabed to provide a stable foundation for the well. This evaluation has included full removal of the platforms and the associated infrastructure as required by the Act.

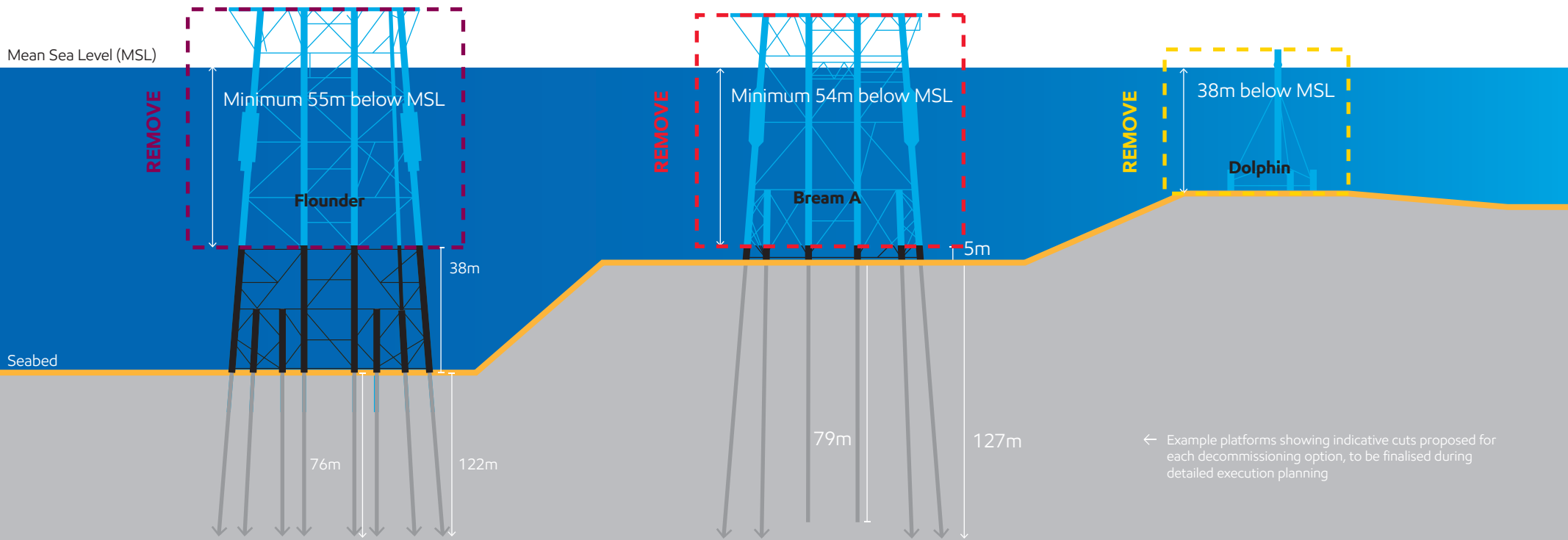
Assessment for environmental impacts and risks that may arise, as well as technical, safety and socio-economic aspects have been considered in these evaluations. These evaluations were, and continue to be, informed by ongoing relevant persons and other stakeholder consultation, along with scientific and technical studies. The evaluation highlighted the options which most effectively balance the retention of the extensive ecosystems that have developed on and around the platforms since their installation with the needs of communities, government and non-government stakeholders. These options are:

- **Cut the jacket and associated infrastructure to a minimum of 55m below Mean Sea Level** for eight steel piled jackets in deeper water
- **Cut the jacket and associated infrastructure as close as practicable to the seabed** (minimising seabed disturbance) for two steel piled jackets in shallower water
- **Full removal** for the two monotowers, as these facilities have a gravity design base without deep set foundations.

A detailed evaluation and assessment of these proposed options were presented in an Environment Plan (EP) that was submitted to NOPSEMA in April 2023. The submitted EP is available to view on the [NOPSEMA website](#).

Esso is currently updating this EP in response to NOPSEMA comments, with resubmission planned by the end of the first quarter of 2024. The proposed options will also be submitted to other relevant regulatory bodies including the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water as part of permits required under the *Sea Dumping Act 1981*.

This information bulletin is the third bulletin issued in relation to decommissioning of the steel piled jackets and provides information on the proposed key updates to the submitted EP, so that relevant persons and interested stakeholders can make an informed decision as to whether their functions, interests or activities are affected. Previous bulletins can be accessed [here](#).



← Example platforms showing indicative cuts proposed for each decommissioning option, to be finalised during detailed execution planning

Key Updates to the EP

→ ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Esso continues to undertake studies to further understand the marine species utilising the jackets as habitat and the potential impacts of decommissioning options on these communities. The following studies have now been completed and the results will be incorporated into the EP update.

Following the initial comprehensive offshore environmental survey undertaken in February – March 2021 (summer), a second survey was undertaken in August – September 2022 (winter) to investigate any seasonal or temporal (over time) variability in the species richness and abundance of marine communities observed on and around the steel piled jacket structures. The results of these surveys confirmed the presence of a markedly different marine ecosystem existing on the jacket structures, as compared with the surrounding seafloor and a nearby natural reef. Over 60 species of fish were noted on and around the jackets during the latest survey, as well as Australian fur seals, crustaceans such as lobsters and crabs, sharks, sponges and

anemones. Little seasonal variation was seen in species richness associated with the jackets, while the abundance of fish was observed to vary across the two seasons, which may be due to seasonal changes in species or their prey and/or the dynamic nature of the Bass Strait environment.

Further visual data is proposed for collection in an offshore environmental survey due to commence in late 2023, using camera systems which are baited to attract fish into their field of view. These techniques can survey a higher number of more mobile (pelagic) predatory species, such as those targeted by fisheries, than the observational techniques used in previous remotely operated vehicle (ROV) surveys.

In addition to the past offshore surveys, Esso has engaged researchers to investigate the data collected to further assess the contribution the marine communities observed on the steel piled jackets may be making to the wider Bass Strait ecosystem.





A study was undertaken to assess the contribution of: selected jackets; a nearby natural reef; and sandy seafloor locations, to the production of fish in Bass Strait – a ‘productivity study’. Three of the more abundant fish species which have been observed around the jackets were studied, two fishery targeted species (reef ocean perch and jackass morwong) and one common reef species (butterfly perch). Overall, the productivity study indicated that fish production on and around the jackets is high relative to a nearby natural reef, sandy seafloor and in comparison with other artificial reefs and habitat studies in other parts of the world.

A second study has also been undertaken to assess the degree of ecological connectivity between the jackets and natural reef areas in the Bass Strait area – a ‘connectivity study’. Connectivity is the movement of organisms and genes between areas and is a key process for sustaining and replenishing marine populations and communities across an area. The connectivity study considered if the jackets are likely to be acting

as sources, destinations or ‘stepping-stones’ linking populations of marine biota across the area via dispersal of larvae. Five species, three fish and two benthic invertebrate species, were considered in the study, which used a model of waves, tides and currents in the area along with key reproductive characteristics of the species to simulate the dispersal of larvae across the Bass Strait area. The study found that natural reefs, rather than the jackets, were the main stepping-stones, local sources, and destination habitats for all study species.

NOPSEMA have requested further information in relation to the long-term degradation of any jacket material left in place. Esso, in conjunction with specialist environmental scientists, are assessing the fate and effects of steel degradation products to further understand the potential extent and likelihood of risk to marine receptors and movement through the food web. The results from this study will be incorporated into the updated EP prior to resubmission.

➔ **POST DECOMMISSIONING SURVEYS**

Following the activities undertaken to remove sections of the steel piled jackets (or in the case of the monotowers removal of the entire structure, an 'as-left' survey will be undertaken. ROVs will be used to record visual footage to confirm that the steel piled jackets have been removed in accordance with the end state/s approved by the regulators.

Post decommissioning environmental surveys will confirm the steel piled jackets have been decommissioned in accordance with the agreed end states and provide information as to any impacts that may have occurred as a result of decommissioning on the marine environment. Surveys will also confirm that lower jacket sections remaining in place continue to

provide habitat for marine ecosystems that have developed around the jackets, once the upper sections have been removed.

Esso is proposing the survey framework shown in the table below to be undertaken following decommissioning of the steel piled jacket platforms. If the post decommissioning surveys provide information that suggests unexpected environmental impacts have occurred, or the jackets remaining in place are not continuing to provide habitat for marine ecosystems, further investigation will be undertaken and potential mitigation actions considered, up to and including removal of the remaining lower sections, as part of future decommissioning campaigns.

Survey	Objective	Approximate timing
As-left survey	Confirm jackets have been decommissioned in accordance with agreed end states.	Within 6 months of completion of decommissioning activities.
Environmental Survey #1	Assess any impacts on the environment as a result of decommissioning activities.	Within 12 months of completion of decommissioning activities.
Environmental Survey #2	Confirm jacket sections remaining in place continue to provide habitat for marine species.	5 years after completion of decommissioning activities
Further environmental survey/s	Adaptive monitoring program, with scope evaluated based on results of previous environmental surveys	Will be determined based on results of previous surveys.



➔ **MANAGEMENT OF REMOVED SECTIONS**

Esso is continuing to evaluate the most appropriate recycling and disposal options for the removed sections of the steel piled jacket platforms to best meet environmental and stakeholder needs. For deeper water platforms, the placement of some upper sections of jacket onto the seabed adjacent to the lower section of the jacket remaining in place was a potential option put forward in the submitted EP. Following further evaluation,

including discussions with potential decommissioning contractors, it is considered there is inadequate definition of this option to allow for a detailed assessment of environmental impacts and risks to meet the requirements of regulatory authorities. As such, this option is no longer being considered for the Campaign 1 steel piled jackets and all removed sections will be transported onshore along with the topsides for recycling and disposal.

Marine ecosystems established at the base of the platform on the Kingfish A jacket ➔



→ POST DECOMMISSIONING LIABILITY ARRANGEMENTS

Esso is continuing to develop a framework for managing claims relating to infrastructure remaining in place for the period after Bass Strait operations are no longer producing, which is many years into the future. Until this time, existing Esso processes will continue to address any such claims.

It is likely a future framework will be based on schemes in place in other parts of the world, in particular the UK Fisheries Legacy Trust Fund (FLTC), which is an independent company funded (along with other sources) by payments made by operators who have received permits

to leave oil and gas infrastructure in place. The UK FLTC ensures users of the sea, particularly commercial fishers, are provided with detailed information about offshore oil and gas hazards, including funding the provision of onboard units which give an audible and visual warning when a vessel approaches infrastructure.

Esso will continue to engage directly with fishing stakeholders to determine the most appropriate framework for addressing claims relating to infrastructure remaining in place.



Consultation

Esso is committed to ongoing engagement with the communities where we operate. Your functions, interests and activities may mean you, your business or your organisation are a relevant person for these activities. Your participation and input will help Esso to better understand the potential impacts and risks that may arise from the decommissioning activities. As such, we are seeking your feedback by 15 January 2024.

Please note that your feedback and our response will be included in our EP for the proposed activities, which will be submitted to NOPSEMA for acceptance in accordance with the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2009*.

Please let us know if your feedback is sensitive or if you do not wish to have your feedback included in the EP, and we will make this known to NOPSEMA upon submission of the EP in order for this information to remain confidential to NOPSEMA. Esso will communicate any material changes to the proposed decommissioning activity to you as a relevant person as they arise.

If you would like to comment on the proposed decommissioning activities outlined in this information bulletin, or would like additional information, please contact us.



How to contact us

For more information, visit our Consultation Hub using the QR Code below, or contact our Consultation team at:

T: +61 3 9261 0000

E: consultation@exxonmobil.com

W: www.exxonmobil.com.au



Scan to access the
Consultation Hub and
Esso Consultation Questionnaire

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Acknowledgement of traditional owners



Esso Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country, the Gunaikurnai Peoples, and the land and sea upon which our operations are located.

We recognise the Gunaikurnai Peoples' continuing connection to land, sea, culture and community, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.