



NOPSEMA's investigation into whale stranding events

Cooperation between the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, relevant South Australian government departments and industry has assisted NOPSEMA in completing its investigation into various whales stranding events that occurred in late 2014 and early 2015.

In December 2014, NOPSEMA was informed of a whale stranding event on Parara Beach in South Australia involving eight sperm whales. In February 2015, NOPSEMA was also alerted by the Department of the Environment to another stranding event involving two beaked whales near Donnington South Australia. Further discussions with the South Australian Museum

confirmed that a third beaked whale had stranded on the York Peninsular in late January 2015. In response to these events, NOPSEMA conducted an investigation to determine if there were any cause-effect links between the stranding events and any petroleum activities occurring in adjacent Commonwealth waters.

Information and advice was sought from relevant state and federal government agencies, the South Australian Museum and the petroleum industry. The South Australian Museum provided information regarding the results of necropsies conducted from some of the stranded whales. Furthermore, companies who were conducting seismic surveys around the time of the stranding events provided NOPSEMA with marine fauna observations, along with the dates and locations of seismic acquisitions.

From the information obtained during the investigation, no evidence was found to suggest there was a likely correlation between offshore petroleum activities undertaken in the region and the standings. The matter will be reconsidered should more information become available. NOPSEMA would like to recognise the collaboration efforts of all parties involved in the investigation process.