

Dr. David Borthwick
Montara Inquiry
P.O. Box 1564
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16th December 2009

**RE: Submission to The Commission of Inquiry – Montara Well Head Platform
Uncontrolled Hydrocarbon Release**

I share the grave concern, along with with many other Australians, regarding the significant environmental damage that has occurred as a result of the enormous amount of raw hydrocarbons that would have entered Australian waters for the period that the Montara Well Head Platform was leaking uncontrollably.

As a recreational scuba diver I have seen firsthand the diversity and amazing beauty of the underwater ecosystem. From the surface the ocean can be seen to be misleadingly empty, however underneath there are thousands of unique plants and animals all living in harmony. The introduction of thousands and thousands of tonnes of hydrocarbons as well as the dispersant chemicals applied to the slick will have devastating and lasting effects on a wonderful and precious part of our country's territory.

It is also very serious that initial efforts to prevent the spill when it was first detected were not escalated to the level of seriousness and level of resources that were necessary. Ultimately the Commission should examine carefully the role of Commonwealth and State authorities played in adopting a stand-off and wait to see if the Platform Operator was able to stop the leak.

This incident, when coupled with the recent gas fire on Varanus Island shows the dangerous environmental impacts that the petroleum industry can have when things go wrong – and of course things do go wrong from time to time.

I therefore strongly believe there should be no further expansion of the petroleum industry on the North-West shelf of Australia's Kimberley region until such time as:

1. A network of marine parks with large sanctuaries is established in the Kimberley region to serve as protection from events like the West Atlas oil spill (Term of Reference 10);
2. It can be shown that proposals for expansion of the North-West petroleum industry are fully compliant with binding national climate change policies and targets (Term of Reference 11);

3. Faster response time mechanisms and improved oil spill procedures are developed and adopted – with strong independent compliance enforcement. (Term of Reference 8)

Yours Sincerely,

Glen Preema