

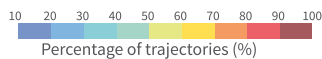
BIG OIL HAS NO FUTURE IN THE BIGHT



THE
WILDERNESS
SOCIETY

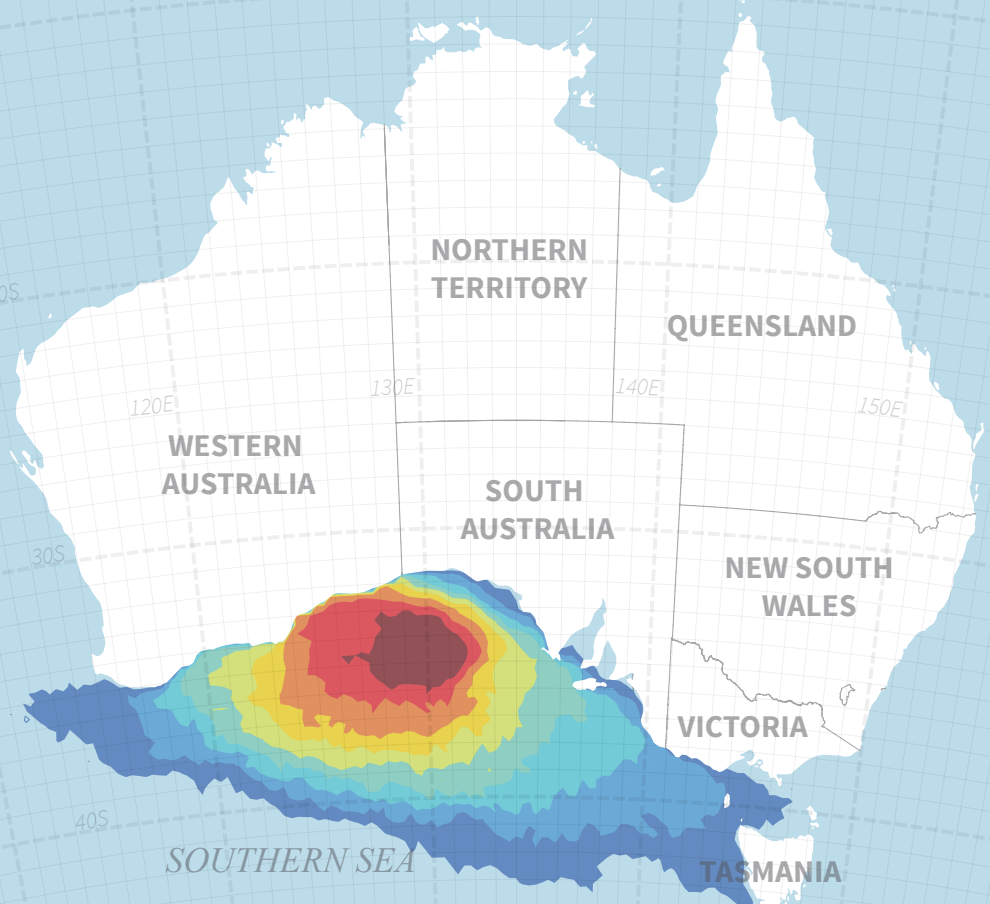
Summer scenario

120 days



Fishery closures probability map for four months after low-flow 87-day spill in summer (oiling over $0.01\text{g}/\text{m}^2$). An area of roughly $213,000\text{km}^2$ would have an 80% chance of being affected.

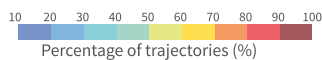
INDIAN OCEAN



OIL SPILL MODELLING

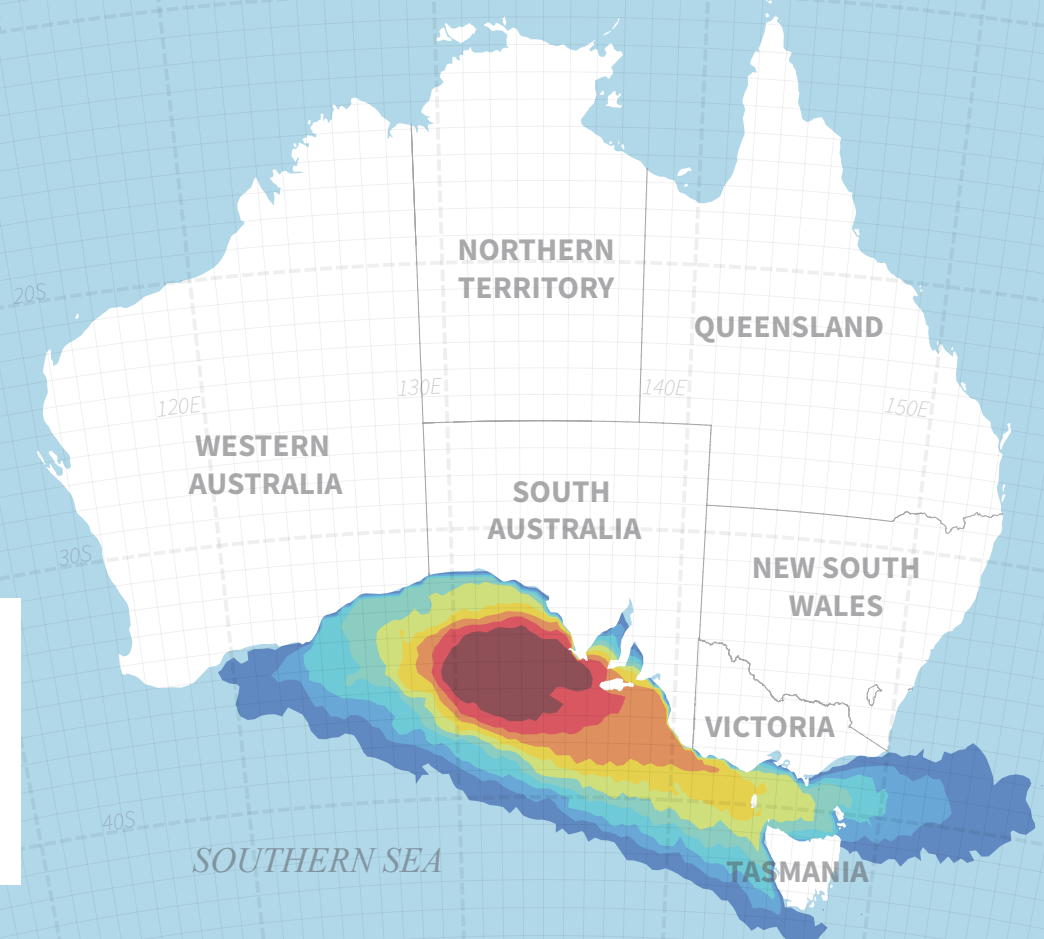
Winter scenario

120 days



Fishery closures probability map for four months after low-flow 87-day spill in winter (oiling over $0.01\text{g}/\text{m}^2$). An area of roughly $265,000\text{km}^2$ would have an 80% chance of being affected.

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SUMMARY

The Great Australian Bight is one of the most pristine ocean environments left on Earth, supporting vibrant coastal communities, jobs and recreational activities. It supports wild fisheries and aquaculture industries worth around \$440 million per annum (2012–13) and regional tourism industries worth around \$1.2 billion per annum (2013–14).

The Bight is a whale hot spot, with globally significant calving and nursery-grounds for the endangered southern right whale. It provides critical habitat for a range of other species: marine mammals, fish, birds, plants, and some of the last remaining colonies of endangered Australian sea lions. Scientists estimate that around 85% of the species that live in the Great Australian Bight are found nowhere else on Earth.

In 2011, the Federal Government started releasing new, offshore oil and petroleum exploration licences in the Commonwealth waters of the Great Australian Bight. BP (then partnered with Statoil), was the first of these permit holders to attempt ultra-deepwater drilling in the area.

It was BP's deepwater exploration drilling rig that blew out in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, clearly demonstrating what an oil spill disaster looks like. In that disaster 11 people lost their lives, 4.9 million barrels of oil spewed into the oceans, countless animals were killed, and tourism and fishing industries were decimated.

The proposed drilling areas in the Bight are in much rougher, deeper and riskier waters than the Gulf of Mexico. Oil spill modelling commissioned by The Wilderness Society demonstrated that an oil spill in the wild waters of the Bight would similarly devastate marine life, fisheries, coastal communities and seriously tarnish the clean, pristine image of Australia's Southern Ocean and beaches.

Despite numerous attempts, BP's drilling plans never met the regulatory requirements for approval, and community opposition and concern about drilling in the Bight has

grown rapidly over the past 18 months. The Wilderness Society spent years requesting the release of worst-case oil spill modelling and oil spill response plans, from both BP and the regulator. In late 2016, BP finally released some of its oil spill modelling findings—demonstrating an even more catastrophic worst-case oil spill scenario than that modelled by The Wilderness Society's independent analysis. It is now clear that the environmental, social and economic impacts and risks presented by deepwater drilling in the Bight are unacceptable.

Shortly after the release of its worst case oil spill findings, BP announced its withdrawal from the Bight entirely.

But other oil companies have publicly stated that they intend to continue their plans to drill the Bight. Statoil, which has recently taken over two of BP's original exploration permit areas, and Chevron now suggest that they plan to commence their own exploratory drilling programs as early as 2018.

In addition to the unacceptable environmental risks of these drilling proposals, opening up a new offshore oil frontier runs completely counter to the Paris Climate Agreement. Research shows we can burn at most 49% of existing global oil reserves to stay within the Paris Climate Agreement's temperature goals.

We call on all our governments to fulfil their obligations to protect our environment and their communities.

Given the extraordinary values of the Bight, the imperative to dramatically reduce climate pollution, and the information produced during BP's failed bid to drill in the region, governments must seriously review the acceptability of oil and gas exploration in the Great Australian Bight. It is our view that the community and the corporate interests involved would be best served by a proactive approach by government to reject outright all oil and gas development in the Great Australian Bight.

A GLOBAL MARINE TREASURE

The Great Australian Bight is an extraordinary ocean and coastal environment of global conservation significance. Extending from the central and western portions of southern Australia, the giant Bunda Cliffs of the iconic Nullarbor Plain are the world's longest uninterrupted sea cliffs. With no land mass or established oil and gas industry between these cliffs and Antarctica, the Bight is one of the last remaining intact ocean wilderness areas on Earth.

Thanks to major nutrient upwelling events along the continental shelf, this unique part of the world supports high numbers of pelagic fish and provides critical habitat and migration pathways for many iconic, threatened and protected marine mammals. The region is estimated to contain around 85% endemic species (those found nowhere else in the world)—more than the Great Barrier Reef. Many of these species are listed as threatened and recent research has found hundreds of species entirely new to science.

One of the most iconic and threatened species found in the Bight is the southern right whale. The Head of the Bight is Australia's largest breeding ground for these incredible animals and lies within the Great Australian Bight Marine Reserve. Up to 40% of the Australian southern right whale population visit this area. Research is still underway to better understand this species, and the knowledge gathered to date suggests particularly serious risks from oil development.

Other significant species found in the region include Australian sea lions, great white sharks, albatrosses, unique coral and shellfish, and an array of turtle and whale species. The marine reserve networks, in both state and Commonwealth waters throughout the Bight, are critical and connect with the protected areas of the Nullarbor—creating a land and sea conservation estate of global importance.

“Protection of the whales and their habitat in the Great Australian Bight Marine Park is important for the global conservation of the species. It is one of the best places in the world to see southern right whales.” — DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE



VIBRANT COASTAL COMMUNITIES

The waters of the Great Australian Bight support our coastal communities and industries. South Australia has made significant progress in establishing many of its coastal regions as successful tourism destinations over the past decade. Much of it is based on the natural values of the marine environment—from recreational fishing to whale and dolphin watching, surfing and diving. Kangaroo Island, located within the waters of the Bight, is one of Australia's best known and loved tourism destinations.

These community and economic values face unacceptable impacts from oil spill risks should deepwater drilling be approved in the Bight.

Employment from the tourism industry throughout the Great Australian Bight is estimated to be worth \$1.2 billion annually, and directly and indirectly accounts for over 10,000 full-time equivalent jobs.

The Great Australian Bight also supports nationally significant wild catch and aquaculture fishing industries. These businesses are the economic driver of regional centres such as Port Lincoln. The fisheries are some of the most valuable in Australia. In 2012–13, the total volume of production of South Australia's commercial wild fisheries was worth an estimated \$199 million per year and the aquaculture industry was estimated to be worth \$243 million per year.

Community concern and opposition to oil drilling in the Bight continues to grow as new proponents move to take BP's place. Holdfast Bay Council has now become the fifth local council (joining Kangaroo Island, Victor Harbor, Yankalilla and Yorke Peninsula) to formally state clear concerns about these projects, opposition to specific

drilling programs or advocate moratoriums on all drilling in the Bight.

What happens in the Bight, however, is also important to coastal communities across the entire southern coast of Australia because currents from the region move across much of Western Australia, Victoria and Tasmania.

"Holdfast Bay includes a long coastline of attractive sandy beaches and is a premier tourist destination in South Australia. Its traders and businesses rely to a large extent on tourism. If the beaches were polluted by oil or even if there was a small oil spill elsewhere on the coast, it would drastically reduce visitor numbers and this would have severe repercussions on the livelihoods of traders in Jetty Rd Glenelg and Brighton, with knock-on effects to local businesses. Fishing, both recreational and industrial, would also be affected. South Australia's fishing and aquaculture production in 2010–11 was valued at \$425.5 million with the region accounting for 97% of production. The region's tourist industry contributed to the economy a combined \$1.2 billion in 2013–14 and accounts for nearly 10,000 full time equivalent jobs. For local residents, our coastal way of life—swimming, fishing from the jetty and walking along the beach with our dogs—could be severely impacted for years. The Senate recently released a report on oil and gas exploration in the Bight. The inquiry showed the significant threat that drilling in the Great Australian Bight represents. Evidence given to the committee sets out the potentially catastrophic consequences of an oil spill in the Bight. South Australia would suffer irreversible consequences to its coastal environment plus severe long term economic damage. The results of the report have not triggered any action from the government which is relying on possible economic gains whilst ignoring the risks." — HOLDFAST BAY COUNCIL, COUNCIL MEETING 11 JULY 2017



BIG OIL THREATENING OUR BIGHT

In October 2016, BP (then partnered with Statoil) withdrew its plans to undertake a four well deepwater drilling program in the Great Australian Bight. This occurred in the midst of rapidly growing public concern and opposition to exploration drilling off the coast of South Australia, numerous failed bids by the company to meet regulatory approval requirements, a senate inquiry into the matter which ultimately failed to reach agreement and the release of BP's damning findings for its worst case oil spill modelling.

Despite BP's withdrawal and the increasingly clear demonstrated risks, other big international oil companies continue to plan for drilling in the Great Australian Bight.

While BP had been the contemporary "frontier" explorer, multinational oil companies Chevron and Statoil are now planning to progress deepwater drilling programs commencing as early as 2018. Statoil recently took over two of BP's original exploration permits. Bight Petroleum, Karoon Gas and Santos also hold exploration permits in the Bight.

In May 2017, the Senate Inquiry into Oil and Gas Exploration and Production in the Great Australian Bight failed to reach consensus or make any majority recommendations to the government.

It remains of serious concern that the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management

Authority (NOPSEMA) still holds sole responsibility for the assessment and approval of offshore oil drilling projects in Commonwealth waters of the Bight. Transparency remains a concern, as does the regulator's appropriateness to assess the acceptability of impacts in the context of rapidly growing community concern and opposition to these projects.

The Great Australian Bight is a pristine marine area and provides critical (in some cases globally important) habitat for threatened and migratory whale, sea lion, fish and bird species. It is the wrong place for oil drilling.

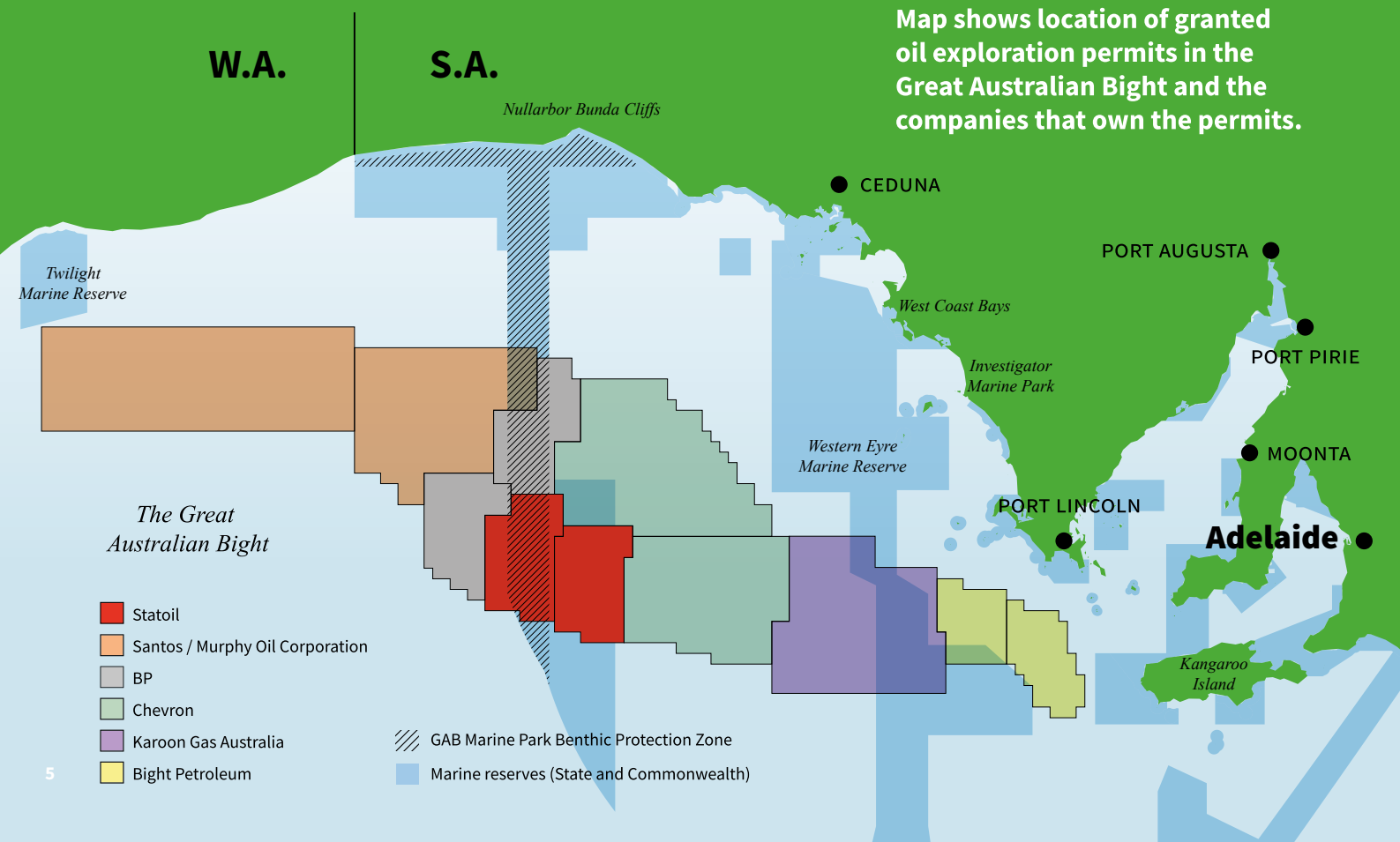
Worse, our governments don't appear to fully appreciate the scale of the impacts and risks associated with opening up a new basin here. A large spill in this region could have catastrophic impacts in states across southern Australia, damaging not only our marine life, but our coasts and tourism and fishing industries too.

Some of our politicians are standing up for the community and our existing industries. As are local councils. It is critical that the communities and businesses that may be impacted by plans to turn the Bight into a destructive oil drilling site speak up now.

"If this iconic area is allowed to become a massive oil field, Australia's unique treasury of marine life and the tourism that depends on it will be undermined."

— DR SYLVIA A EARLE, OCEAN ELDER

Map shows location of granted oil exploration permits in the Great Australian Bight and the companies that own the permits.



**“WE ARE MORE THAN JUST SOME
GROUP. WE ARE A MOVEMENT.”**

— LINDA IRWIN



THE RISK OF AN OIL SPILL DISASTER

The risks associated with an oil spill originating from the rough, ultradeep waters of the Great Australian Bight are entirely unacceptable. The Government started releasing exploration permits in the Bight more than half a decade ago. But it is only recently that any real information about the true nature of the impacts and risks associated with drilling projects in the Bight has been made available to regulators, the community and the community's elected representatives.

Oil company proponents are proposing deepwater drilling at water depths of up to 2.5km, and depths of up to 3km into the sea bed, in the Bight's extraordinarily rough, unpredictable and remote seas.

BP's environmental assessment process, for the first contemporary deepwater drilling proposal in the Bight, brought to light the unacceptable oil spill risks associated with drilling in the region.

The Deepwater Horizon well blowout in the Gulf of Mexico, in which oil and gas spilled into the Gulf for 87 days, serves as a reminder that oil spill catastrophes can and do happen.

Specific information is now available about the potential impacts of an oil spill from a well blowout in the Bight.

Independent oil spill modelling

During most of its environmental assessment process, BP refused to publicly release worst case oil spill modelling. The Wilderness Society commissioned independent, expert oil spill modelling to enable the community to understand and consider oil spill risks associated with drilling in the Bight.

Conducted by oceanographer and oil spill modelling expert Laurent C. M. Lebreton, MSc., the modelling shows that the trajectories of an oil slick and particles from a well blowout in the Bight have the potential to impact vast areas of Australia's southern waters and coastline.

If a blowout and spill were to occur in summer, aside from the direct and severe impact in near water, the oil would very likely impact the shores of Western Australia. Simulations show oil contamination could reach as far as Albany and Denmark. Under these conditions, the model predicts that within four months, an area of roughly 213,000km² would have an 80% chance of having surface oil thickness above levels likely to trigger the closure of fisheries.

If a blowout and spill were to occur in winter, the oil would very likely impact the Eyre Peninsula, Kangaroo Island, and Spencer Gulf in South Australia, with simulations showing oil could impact much of the Victorian and Tasmanian coastline, right through the Bass Strait towards New Zealand. Under these conditions, the model predicts that within four months an area of roughly 265,000km² would

have an 80% chance of having surface oil thickness above levels likely to trigger the closure of fisheries.

Oil spill impacts would devastate marine life, fisheries and coastal communities and seriously tarnish the clean, pristine image of Australia's Southern Ocean and beaches.

BP's own worst case oil spill modelling findings

BP did, eventually, release the findings of its own worst case oil spill modelling. These findings demonstrated a worst case spill impact scenario of even greater magnitude than the modelling commissioned by The Wilderness Society.

BP's modelling found that a major spill from an uncontained well blow-out would be guaranteed to impact the South Australian coast and that an oil spill from its exploration permit areas could hit Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln within just fifteen days, and Adelaide within twenty days. It further found that a spill in the Bight posed significant risks beyond South Australia, to coastal communities as far afield as NSW, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia.

Even this modelling still didn't fully assess the risks or impacts of a spill to fisheries, which could be closed if affected by much lower concentrations of oil. BP's results are for oil concentrations that will harm coastline wildlife such as seals and sea lions (100 grams per square metre), which is 10 times the concentration that will impact marine life in the sea (10g/m²) and 10,000 times the concentration that could require the closure of fisheries (US standard 0.01g/m²). Impacts forcing the closure of fisheries will spread further and faster.

BP's oil spill response plan

BP's oil spill response 'plan' also demonstrates how unprepared Australian and state governments would be to successfully deal with a significant oil spill in the rough and treacherous waters of the Bight.

BP's own documents admit that physically containing an oil spill using booms and skimmers would not be effective in the Bight's rough waters, and that spill response efforts would need to rely heavily on the use of toxic oil dispersants. These dispersants would likely have significant long term impacts on marine life.

Further, BP identified an extraordinary lack of access to trained, organised response personnel in the coastal communities at risk, in the event of a spill. Its documents identify just 122 workers to clean oiled wildlife for 1,200km of coast, despite the experience of the Gulf of Mexico spill disaster, which demonstrated the need for thousands of marine vessels and aircraft and tens of thousands of personnel and National Guard troops to be deployed in response to a major oil spill.



DISASTER IN THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN BIGHT?

The Gulf of Mexico oil spill took 87 days to plug, despite this disaster occurring in one of the most established oil fields in the world (with considerable resources in the region to deploy in response to the spill).

- The spill covered 180,000km² —twice the size of Tasmania.
- 4.9 million barrels (779,100,000 litres) of oil was pumped into the ocean.
- The explosion killed 11 workers on the rig and injured 17 more.
- More than 900 bottlenose dolphins have been found dead or stranded in the oil spill area.
- The oil spill has likely harmed or killed more than one million birds from over 102 species; approximately 6,165 sea turtles; and up to 25,900 marine mammals.
- The cost of the oil spill is estimated to be more than USD \$90 billion. BP has been ordered to pay USD \$20.8 billion in penalties for the spill.
- BP spent USD \$90 million in advertising during the first three months of the spill trying to win public favour—while greatly underestimating how much oil was spilling into the Gulf to reduce its fines.
- The oil spill has cost the Gulf Coast tourist industry USD \$23 billion in lost revenue, and directly resulted in 12,000 people in New Orleans becoming unemployed.

“Do you want to get up in the morning and walk down the beach and see dead whales, dead prawns and dead fish and dead seals and penguins? ... So we’re going to have to help them because we’ve got to be their main speaker, talk for those guys, help them out...”— BUNNA LAWRIE, MIRNING TRADITIONAL OWNER AND WHALE DREAMER



A MAJOR CLIMATE THREAT

“The Great Australian Bight whale nursery is a completely inappropriate place for risky deep sea oil drilling, especially as we hurtle towards catastrophic climate change. Actively pushing to expand the fossil fuel industry is the height of irresponsibility and not an option if we are to have any chance of providing our children with a liveable climate.”

— PETER OWEN, AUSTRALIAN ENVIRONMENTALIST OF THE YEAR

Burning fossil fuels for our energy needs is the single most significant driver of global warming. Recent research conducted by University College London clearly demonstrates that, to prevent more than 2°C global warming, we cannot extract and burn *most of the world’s known fossil fuel (coal, oil and gas) reserves.*

The research identifies that, of known reserves in the OECD Pacific Region — which includes Australia — 49% of existing oil reserves, 51% of existing gas reserves and 95% of existing coal reserves must not be extracted and burnt. These figures make it clear that, in order to act consistently with the current science, we are already at the stage where existing reserves cannot be burnt. Globally, there are already more known oil reserves than can be burnt without risking dangerous climate change impacts.

In light of these figures, new reserves cannot be exploited if we are to limit dangerous global warming to the internationally agreed maximum of 2°C — let alone limit global warming to 1.5°C as agreed at the Paris Climate Agreement.

Opening a new fossil fuel basin like this now, after the Paris Climate Agreement, flies in the face of our global commitments to do our part to prevent dangerous climate change.

TOGETHER, LET'S PROTECT THE BIGHT

The Great Australian Bight is one of the most pristine ocean environments left on Earth.

The decision whether or not to allow oil drilling here has significant and far reaching implications. The cumulative impacts of industrialisation of the Bight for frontier oil and petroleum development, and any oil spill occurring here, would have nationally and perhaps even globally significant impacts on threatened and migratory species, including the southern right whale. The impacts of any oil spill disaster could be far-reaching beyond the Bight itself and impact communities and industries across southern Australia.

The Great Australian Bight is an entirely inappropriate place for oil drilling. The risk of oil spills and the impacts of industrialisation on marine species' habitats and migratory pathways are unacceptably high. In addition, seeking to open up a high cost new fossil fuel basin flies in the face of responsible climate action.

Governments must work to protect our oceans, marine life and communities that rely on a clean and abundant marine environment. Now is the time for us to work together to insist upon it.

We call on all governments to fulfil their obligations to protect our environment and their communities. Politicians encouraging Big Oil companies to carry out risky deep sea drilling in the Bight are completely out of step with the communities they are elected to represent.

Many of those governments closest to the grassroots of

their communities, local councils, are already standing up against risky oil drilling in the Bight.

We urge state governments, whose communities carry the risks of oil drilling, to stand up for their communities; they must acknowledge that the risks are unacceptable, our inability to deal with the potential magnitude of an oil spill disaster and oppose drilling proposals on our behalf.

We call on our Federal Government to prevent any oil drilling or further exploration in the Great Australian Bight. Any deepwater oil drilling in this region will present unacceptable impacts on our marine environment and unacceptable risks to our coastal communities. It must recognise that we now have far more information available to us than when exploration permits were granted in the Bight, and we now know that this is an environmentally and socially inappropriate place for new oil drilling.

All exploration permits in the Great Australian Bight must be urgently reviewed before any other oil companies spend time and money on drilling plans that cannot be responsibly approved.

Our governments should no longer encourage irresponsibility on the part of oil companies, but instead work to facilitate their exit from the Great Australian Bight.

We urge communities across southern Australia—our local businesses, our tourism and fishing industries, our community groups, our schools and our local councils to come together to protect the Great Australian Bight from reckless, risky oil and gas drilling.





Statement of Concern

The Great Australian Bight is home to a unique and extraordinary array of marine life. Whales, sea lions, birds, turtles, fish and sponge gardens all depend on its pristine waters. The Indigenous people of the Nullarbor and Western Eyre Peninsula have been its custodians for tens of thousands of years — and remain so today. We have formed this Alliance to stop Big Oil companies drilling in the Bight.

An oil spill disaster in the Great Australian Bight would be devastating. In the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, the United States was subjected to one of the world's worst oil spills. The clean up still continues today. But the loss of life and livelihoods, the horrific fate of tens of thousands of oil coated fish, birds and mammals, cannot be recovered.

This must never happen to the Bight where clean and healthy waters support people's lifestyles and local industries right across southern Australia.

Coastal communities — from Western Australia's southern coastlines, across the coasts and peninsulas of South Australia and Victoria, to the beaches of Tasmania — value and rely on our clean oceans, beaches, islands, reefs and fisheries.

We need to support them and protect our environment and our fishing and tourism industries.

Together, we will call for the protection of the Great Australian Bight and we will oppose plans by Big Oil companies who would risk this pristine ocean for an oil field.

To join the Great Australian Bight Alliance and stand together, visit www.fightforthebight.org.au