



Media release

Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee

Inquiry sets path for safe decommissioning of oil and gas infrastructure

End-of-life offshore oil and gas infrastructure should be fully removed unless leaving it in place can be shown to deliver better environmental outcomes, a report tabled in the Legislative Council today has recommended.

The Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee investigated Victoria's oil and gas infrastructure requiring decommissioning over the coming decades, including offshore wells, pipelines, and relevant projects in Commonwealth waters.

The report, containing 38 findings and 24 recommendations, comes as many Bass Strait oil and gas fields approach the end of their productive life.

Committee Chair Ryan Batchelor said the scale of the task ahead is significant and requires coordinated action between governments and industry.

"Decommissioning oil and gas infrastructure in the Bass Strait will be an enormous undertaking over the coming decades. Done well, it presents a major opportunity to protect our environment, support jobs and deliver long-term benefits for Victorian communities," he said.

The Committee recommended independent verification of plugging and abandonment of wells and the ongoing monitoring and rectification of plugged wells and other infrastructure left in situ.

"We are also mindful that Victorian taxpayers should not foot the bill for the costs of decommissioning," Mr Batchelor said.

The Committee called on the Victorian Government to mirror Commonwealth legislation in relation to trailing liability to ensure that companies pay the costs of their own decommissioning.

The report also identifies significant economic opportunities associated with decommissioning, particularly in regional Victoria. Work already underway, including ExxonMobil's decommissioning activities bringing offshore structures to Barry Beach Marine Terminal in South Gippsland, demonstrates the potential for onshore dismantling and recycling to create jobs and support local industries.

Mr Batchelor said these activities could help drive economic growth and support workforce transition in Gippsland, building on decades of experience in the energy sector.

"Decommissioning presents a real opportunity to support jobs, strengthen regional economies and contribute to a circular economy by recovering and reusing materials,"

he said. “With the right planning, it can also help communities transition as the energy sector evolves.”

The report is available at the Committee’s [website](#).

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