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New research supports seismic surveys

Research by the world leading Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) has shown marine seismic surveys used in oil and gas exploration are not affecting the abundance or behaviour of commercially valuable fishes.

APPEA Chief Executive Andrew McConville said the industry has always treated its responsibilities of protecting Australia's flora and fauna with the utmost importance and this is further proof.

"We don't deal in ideology, the oil and gas industry has science on its side. The AIMS research backs up what we have said all along, Australia's oil and gas industry is world class, highly regulated and committed to protecting our marine environment," Mr McConville said.

"This world first research, published in the renowned Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, used dedicated seismic vessels to measure the impacts of the survey's noise in an ocean environment, with the eight-month experiment conducted within a 2500 square kilometre fishery management zone near the Pilbara coast.

"It involved using multiple acoustic sensors, tagging 387 red emperor fish and deploying more than 600 underwater cameras to track and measure fish behaviour before and after the seismic process."

"After decades of research, there is no conclusive evidence that this crucial activity has any harmful impacts on marine species or fisheries.

"The AIMS research backs up independent studies by the CSIRO and Geoscience Australia into seismic surveys in the Bass Strait and Gippsland regions, respectively, have also found no clear negative effects of seismic surveys on scallops, fish or catch rates."

Mr McConville said Australia's oil and gas industry is committed to preserving our marine environment, supporting marine industries and responsibly managing all offshore operations.

"Our industry is investing millions in research and environmental protection measures to safeguard Australia's marine environment," he said.

"We also strongly support the stringent environmental regulations governing seismic surveys and the role of NOPSEMA to ensure compliance.

"Seismic surveys are crucial for new oil and gas projects that create thousands of jobs and bring millions of investment dollars to our regions.

"Based on the considerable scientific evidence presented, there should be no hesitation from policy makers, including the Greens, in embracing this important technology."

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