



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Committee on Environment and Planning

21 November 2023

### MEDIA RELEASE

#### Wading into the muddy waters of offshore petroleum

The Legislative Committee on Environment and Planning has tabled its report into the Minerals Legislation Amendment (Offshore Drilling and Associated Infrastructure Prohibition) Bill 2023, which was referred to the Committee on 29 June 2023. The Bill was introduced to Parliament by Mr Rory Amon MP, Member for Pittwater, and sought to amend three Acts to prohibit offshore activities in NSW including drilling for petroleum.

The Bill was introduced in the context of strong community concern about Petroleum Exploration Permit (PEP-11). The Committee heard from various advocacy groups and members of the public who raised concerns about the environmental risks associated with offshore drilling and the importance of protecting NSW's coastlines. Mr Clayton Barr MP, Chair of the Committee, expressed his appreciation towards the inquiry participants.

"The Committee is incredibly grateful for the community's active engagement in this inquiry and understands the concerns that have been raised," said Mr Barr. "The Committee would like to sincerely thank everyone that took the time to participate in this inquiry, your insights have been incredibly insightful and have greatly helped to inform the report."

"We all support protecting our coastline and marine life and ecosystems. NSW Government's 'Offshore exploration and mining' policy does not support petroleum exploration and mining. This position would be weighed into account when considering applications for potential petroleum projects in our State's waters."

The inquiry looked into a range of issues, particularly whether the Bill raises any potential constitutional issues and unintended consequences, and its report sets out its findings and proposed recommendations.

The Committee heard from legal experts and has found that aspects of the proposed legislation may be constitutionally invalid and have unintended consequences. The report makes 10 findings and 2 recommendations. These include that the Legislative Assembly not pass the Bill and that the NSW Government work with the Commonwealth to review environmental assessment standards that apply to offshore petroleum and mineral activities.

"The focus of this inquiry has been to examine the environmental impacts of offshore drilling and also identify risks with passing the legislation. The inquiry has revealed that the legal framework regulating offshore activities in the state is complex and there are serious risks that could result in negative consequences for the State."

"Amendments to the Bill were also considered. However, the majority of the Committee is of the view that amendments would undermine a core purpose of the Bill. Therefore, the Committee has recommended that the Bill not pass."

The Committee started this inquiry in July 2023, and received 49 submissions from a diverse range of stakeholders. It also heard from 18 witnesses including representatives from 11 organisations at a public hearing in October 2023. The report can be found on the Committee's [webpage](#).

**Media Contact: Mr Clayton Barr MP, Chair**

**(02) 4991 1466**

**[environmentplanning@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:environmentplanning@parliament.nsw.gov.au)**

