

**Submission  
No 28**

**MINERALS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (OFFSHORE DRILLING AND  
ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE PROHIBITION) BILL 2023**

**Organisation:** Save Our Coast

**Date Received:** 30 August 2023



Submission by

# Save Our Coast

## **Inquiry into Minerals Legislation Amendment (Offshore Drilling and Associated Infrastructure Prohibition) Bill 2023**

Save Our Coast is a grassroots community not-for profit organisation dedicated to informing and empowering the community to care for the coastal ecosystem and act on climate. Our main focus is on the threat to the marine ecosystem, climate, local livelihoods and community wellbeing from offshore fossil fuel mining in Petroleum Exploration Permit 11 (PEP11). Communities along the coast have expressed distress and concern at this proposal, and this is echoed by numerous coastal MPs.

We address your term of reference b) d) and e) as follows:

### **(b) whether there are other ways to achieve the intended outcomes of the proposed bill including through the New South Wales Government offshore exploration and mining policy**

As the NSW government does not control the waters where the actual gas extraction will take place, we cannot see an obvious alternative open to the NSW government other than proposed in this bill.

### **(d) environmental impacts of offshore drilling**

The devastating consequences of global warming to all ecosystems, including the offshore NSW marine environment, should be sufficient grounds not to proceed with new oil and gas exploration, especially when NSW government policy is for a rapid transition to renewable energy.

Seismic testing, often carried out as part of the exploration process for offshore oil and gas, is associated with distress and even death in marine wildlife, such as loss of hearing and therefore disruption of communication and normal behavioural patterns in whales, dolphin, turtles, squid, etc.

The devastating consequences of an oil spill on marine wildlife, marine ecosystems, beaches and coastlines is well documented around the world. We note that oil is usually present in gas fields even if oil is not the main target, so the risk of an oil spill exists even when the exploration is for gas.

### **(e) any other related matter**

i) Since 2018, Save Our Coast has conducted more than 13,000 conversations about PEP11 at public events, markets, etc. Of the community members we spoke to, almost all (99.94%) were dismayed by the idea of gas and oil exploration along the NSW Coast. Save Our Coast has also collected more than 80,000 signatures on a petition against offshore gas and oil exploration. State and federal members and candidates of all parties in constituencies along the NSW coast have all reported unprecedented community opposition. It is clear the people of NSW, in particular those living along the coast, do not want offshore exploration off the NSW coast. Democratically elected representatives such as the NSW state legislature should act to reflect the wishes of voters. Supporting and passing this bill would do that.

ii) Damage to the NSW coastal ecosystem not only harms natural eco-systems, but also negatively impacts the state's tourism industry and the quality of life and emotional wellbeing of NSW residents who enjoy the state's beautiful beaches, ocean views and water sports such as surfing. The enjoyment of a clean natural environment has been shown to have important physical and mental health benefits. In contrast, a threat of damage or destruction to one's natural environment has been shown to lead to negative health impacts and psychological distress (a phenomenon Australian philosopher Glenn Albrecht has labelled solastalgia).

iii) This bill aligns with the NSW Offshore Exploration and Mining Policy, which does not support offshore oil and gas exploration in waters off the NSW coast, and therefore should be supported.