



PRESS RELEASE

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EXMOUTH LOCALS ANGRY AT INDUSTRIAL PLANS FOR HERON POINT

A proposal by Subsea 7 to build a 435-hectare pipe assembly facility for the offshore oil and gas industry, is being planned for pristine Heron Point, on the shores of Exmouth Gulf. News of this has been met with dismay and anger by the local community.

Heron Point and the nearby Bay of Rest have been a favourite playground for Exmouth locals for generations. Because of its proximity to the mangrove systems at the bottom of the Gulf, the area is a popular destination for recreational fishers and it's a magnet for tourism. The Gulf supports commercial sportfishing operators as well as the Exmouth's commercial prawn fishery. The importance of the area as a fisheries nursery and humpback whale rest area is well known to scientists and conservationists, and there is widespread alarm across the whole Exmouth community that plans such as the Subsea 7 proposal are being quietly pushed through by the Shire.

On Tuesday 10 October, the Shire of Exmouth will meet to take the first step to open the way for this proposal. It plans to make changes to land use at Exmouth Station with the specific purpose of expediting the project for the proponent.

In the absence of an elected Council, this means the most significant industrial development ever contemplated for the west side of Exmouth Gulf could be made possible by an appointee rather than elected representatives of the local community.

In the wake of adverse findings at the CCC last year, the Shire CEO was sacked and the Council resigned. Commissioner Ian Fletcher was installed during a transition period to restore good governance.

Cape Conservation Group President Denise Fitch said today, 'This is a big industrial development in a very sensitive area. It will have a major impact on our lifestyle and an even bigger impact on the environment. I think Subsea 7 and their backers have under-estimated just how important that part of the Gulf is to locals. The idea that the first critical decision about this proposal might be made a few days before we have a democratically elected Council is the most concerning aspect of all. What's the hurry here? Haven't we learnt anything from recent history?'

Local sportfishing operator Brett Wolf said, "Subsea7 have everything to gain if this project is approved and Exmouth gains pretty much nothing, except an invasion of industry into our pristine gulf waters."

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Cetacean researcher John Totterdell said “The Exmouth Gulf is a significant marine habitat on a number of fronts. The western gulf is critical during the humpback whale mating and calving season. Industrial activity of this nature and on this scale is not compatible in a marine location of such ecological significance”.

The mooted facility will fabricate gas pipelines. It will require the construction of a 350-metre breakwater from which 10 km lengths of pipe will be towed by tugs through the Gulf and then through World Heritage listed Ningaloo Marine Park.

‘This proposal needs a lot more scrutiny than it’s had up until now,’ said CCG President Denise Fitch. ‘The more we find out the worse it looks.’