



Controversial industrial pipeline facility proposed for Exmouth Gulf, Ningaloo under renewed scrutiny

For immediate release

2 October 2019, Perth: The Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) today released details of the proposal by the heavy engineering multinational corporation, Subsea 7, to construct a large oil and gas pipeline fabrication facility on the undeveloped shore of Exmouth Gulf, Ningaloo. The project triggered the highest level of environmental assessment available in WA.

Paul Gamblin, Director, Protect Ningaloo, said, “This major industrial facility is completely inappropriate for this outstanding natural treasure. It makes no sense whatsoever to threaten one of Australia’s greatest natural wonders and tourism job factory. If approved, this development could light the fuse for the industrialisation of Exmouth Gulf, Ningaloo’s nursery.”

Ningaloo – Exmouth Gulf is famed for its wildlife encounters – whales, dolphins, dugong, manta rays, highly diverse fish populations and much more – and is a leading generator of jobs in the region. The proposal would be located in an intact, natural area that recent scientific surveys have confirmed is a core part of the globally significant Exmouth Gulf ecosystem and the World Heritage-listed Ningaloo Reef, and its major tourism industry.

“Make no mistake, this is the moment when the future of this magnificent environment will be decided,” Mr Gamblin said. “Ningaloo’s hard-earned reputation for outstanding environmental management and nature-based tourism is being weighed against this unnecessary industrial project”.

To install two 10 kilometre rail lines, extensive swathes of native vegetation would be cleared, hundreds of tonnes of rock would be piled across the untouched beach to form a launch-way jutting more than 300 metres out into the Gulf. Large tugs would drag pipelines and chains across the biodiverse shallows – including fragile corals and sponges - before towing the pipelines through the world-famous Ningaloo World Heritage area and marine park.

“Unless common sense prevails, the humpback whales and calves thrilling tourists these school holidays might return to an Exmouth Gulf well on its way to becoming yet another degraded, industrial precinct.”

[This is the second attempt by the proponent, Subsea 7, to seek environmental approval for the project. The EPA previously rejected Subsea 7’s attempt to change the scale of key aspects of the proposal without undergoing a further assessment.]