



## Media Release

15 September 2009  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### AMSA clean-up update

Whilst the majority of the clean-up remains focused in the vicinity of the Montara wellhead platform, a change in wind direction over the past few days had seen a shift of light, patchy sheen closer to Cartier Islet. Visual observations this morning, however have found that the amount of sheen appears to have decreased around Cartier.

While the sheen is not considered to be harmful if it comes into contact with the shoreline, it can still be of concern to birdlife in the area.

AMSA is continuing to monitor the situation and is working closely with environmental specialists.

Oil when spilled at sea, will normally break up and be dissipated or scattered into the marine environment over time. Dissipation does not occur immediately. The time this takes depends on a series of factors, including the amount and type of oil, the weather conditions and whether the oil stays at sea or is washed ashore. Sometimes the process is quick and on other occasions it can be slow, especially in sheltered and calm areas of water.<sup>1</sup>

Due to the incredibly calm weather conditions, AMSA's priority remains to disperse as much fresh oil as possible to minimise the amount escaping from the immediate vicinity of the platform.

The *Lady Gerda* continues to look for oil patches to disperse around the vicinity of the Montara wellhead platform. The amount of oil has substantially decreased over recent days and it has become difficult to find patches of fresh oil large enough to either apply dispersant to or to contain and collect with on-scene boom and skimming equipment. See graph here:  
[http://www.amsa.gov.au/Marine\\_Environment\\_Protection/Montara\\_Well\\_Head\\_Platform/Media/Dispersant-table.pdf](http://www.amsa.gov.au/Marine_Environment_Protection/Montara_Well_Head_Platform/Media/Dispersant-table.pdf)

Isolated stringy patches of an unconfirmed substance have been sighted about 20km from Troughten Island towards the Montara platform. The *Lady Valisia* is enroute to the location to retrieve samples of the substance to confirm its nature.

Observation flights with trained observers on board will be conducted again today in an effort to closely monitor the situation. Additionally, surface vessels are being asked to provide visual reports back to AMSA with regard to sightings of sheen and wildlife in the area.

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<sup>1</sup> ITOPF is a not-for-profit organisation established on behalf of the world's shipowners to promote an effective response to marine spills of oil, chemicals and other hazardous substances. <http://www.itopf.com/>