



Save the Nature of the Kimberley

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Media Release

September 14, 2009

Environs Kimberley flies over oil spill – “Like a scene from a disaster movie”

Environs Kimberley Director Martin Pritchard flew over the West Atlas oil spill over the weekend. The flight from Broome headed to the oil spill before heading off 30km due east and turning around to refuel at Truscott.

“Seeing it first hand was a real shock, it was like something from a disaster movie. The rig was billowing smoke and there was a sheen of oil from horizon to horizon. We followed the oil for 30km due east and all you could see from the cockpit was oil covering the sea, when we turned around the slick was heading in an easterly and northerly direction towards Indonesia” Mr Pritchard said.

“What we realized when we got to the rig was that the slick appeared to be heading in a southerly direction which is a change to the north-easterly direction of the last three weeks. This is a real worry if it’s now heading for the Kimberley coast” said Mr Pritchard.

“We’re very concerned that the Federal government is scaling back its efforts particularly if the oil slick is now heading towards the Kimberley.

“We are particularly concerned because from what we saw there is still a massive amount of oil coming from the well and we are not at all confident in the Federal Minister for Resources Martin Ferguson’s assessment that less oil is coming out. The government have admitted they don’t know what the flow rate is so how can they know less oil is coming out? The photos we have show a huge slick coming from the well” said Mr Pritchard.

The Kimberley coast is one of the world’s most intact large tropical marine ecosystems with a coral reef province of global significance. The seas in the area are known as a ‘marine superhighway’ because of the amount of dolphins, whales, turtles, seabirds and fish found there.

Environs Kimberley is calling for marine sanctuaries to protect Kimberley marine areas from threats posed by the oil and gas industry.

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For comment from marine science experts with concerns about the effect of the spill on marine life contact John Carey on 0400 450399.

PHOTOS BELOW COURTESY ENVIRONS KIMBERLEY

West Atlas Oil Rig September 12 2009 – still spilling oil and gas (photo Environs Kimberley)



West Atlas Oil Rig September 12 2009 – still spilling oil and gas (photo Environs Kimberley)



West Atlas Oil Rig and West Triton Rescue Rig September 12 2009 (photo Environs Kimberley)



Oil from horizon to horizon 30km due east of the oil rig September 12 2009 (photo Environs Kimberley)



