



Save the Nature of the Kimberley

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More oil spills likely, say experts Federal government may have been negligent

Oil and gas industry insiders believe the West Atlas oil and gas disaster could be repeated at other wells. They say that the West Atlas disaster following a blow-out probably came about because the rig was not equipped with a blow-out protector, according to Environs Kimberley Director Martin Pritchard.

“Oil industry people have contacted us with serious concerns about the West Atlas oil spill. They say that a blow-out protector on the rig could have prevented the oil slick from spreading; it is now threatening the Kimberley coast,” Mr Pritchard said.

“If this is the case, either the regulator, the Federal Department of Resources under Minister Martin Ferguson, failed to impose conditions on the oil company PTTEP to install a blow-out protector, or the oil company ignored directives to install one,” said Mr Pritchard.

“If no blow-out protector was installed on West Atlas, there are questions about other rigs that will be working off the Kimberley coast. Minister Ferguson must come clean and tell us if his department had put a condition of a blow-out protector on this rig or whether the company has flouted any conditions,” said Mr Pritchard.

Woodside is currently seeking approval from the Federal government to put an oil rig over Scott Reef, off the Kimberley coast, for its Browse Basin project.

“If Woodside is permitted to put a rig on Scott Reef and an oil spill happens there, it would mean the death of a reef that supports 720 species of fish, 300 species of coral, migratory sea-birds, whales, dolphins and nesting turtles,” Mr Pritchard said.

“We need to protect these globally significant marine areas in the Kimberley, not threaten them with oil spills and destructive industries like Woodside’s proposed LNG hub at James Price Point,” said Mr Pritchard.

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LATEST PHOTOS OF THE WEST ATLAS OIL SPILL AVILABLE ON REQUEST

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