



# Oil spill emergency off WA coast

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**A national oil spill combat plan has been activated following a crude oil and gas leak incident at a facility off the Kimberley coast in north-west Australia.**

The incident occurred at the West Atlas mobile offshore drilling unit, [located](#) about 250 kilometres north of Truscott, and 690 kilometres west of Darwin, about 5.30am [CST].

Sixty-nine workers were onboard at the time.

No one was injured but the entire unit has been evacuated.

In a statement this afternoon, a spokesman for the owner of the unit, PTTEP Australasia, said the leak is continuing, however, the scale of the leak remains unknown.

"PTTEP has notified authorities as part of its emergency response," spokesman Mike Groves said.

"The Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre (AMOSC) is mobilising aircraft and dispersant to be in Darwin tonight and on-site in the Timor Sea tomorrow to begin aerial spraying of the spill.

"The size of the spill is not known.

"Approximately 40 barrels of oil were discharged from the wellhead in the initial incident - some of it into the sea.

"Since then, condensate has been discharged at pressure dispersed in the gas stream.

"It is not known how much condensate is in the gas."

It is still not clear whether the spill will impact on the Ashmore Reef or the Kimberley coastline.

The Australian Marine Oil Centre, based in Victoria, is flying truckloads of chemicals to the spill site to help break up the oil.

But the Greens say the clean-up efforts are taking too long.



*The oil and gas leak has forced the evacuation of 69 workers from the West Atlas drilling unit. [File]. (ABC TV)*

- [Video: Oil leak in the Timor sea \(7pm TV News NSW\)](#)
- [Map: Broome 6725](#)

The party's marine spokeswoman, Rachel Siewert, says a chemical response to the spill might not get underway until tomorrow morning.

"If this was closer to the Kimberley coast we could be facing a devastating situation," she said.

"We need to get our emergency processes on site and that ... needs to be happening quicker than 24 hours after a spill."

## Calm conditions

Mr Groves said weather in the area is calm with light north-east winds.

"PTTEP is modelling the seaborne course of the discharge.

"It is likely to be carried in a south-westerly direction away from the Australian mainland by prevailing winds and currents."

Earlier, an Australian Maritime Safety Authority spokeswoman, Tracey Jiggins, was quoted on watoday.com.au saying it appeared one of the craft's "plugs had come out".

"It's actually spilling oil as we speak," she said.

The unit was being operated by Seadrill under contract from PTTEP Australasia.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority released a statement saying it was "assisting the company with regard to the spill and Australia's National Plan to Combat Pollution of the Sea by Oil and other Noxious and Hazardous Substances has been activated.

"We are putting contingencies in place including the mobilisation of dispersant aircraft."

Seadrill said it was working with authorities to bring the situation under control.

"Seadrill can confirm that there has been an incident on the Montara Platform offshore, north-west Australia earlier this morning.

"The drilling unit West Atlas is presently working on the Montara Platform for PTTEPA.

"As a safety precaution we have evacuated all personnel onboard and activated our emergency response team.

"No personnel have been injured and we are working closely with our client and the regulatory authorities."

***Additional reporting: Emma Masters***

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