

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio  
Supplementary Budget Senate Estimates  
21 October 2009

**Question:** SR-8  
**Topic:** Potential drilling incidents  
**Proof Hansard Page:** E84-E85

**Senator Siewert asked:**

**Senator SIEWERT**—In terms of the Timor Sea in general and oil and gas exploration and production in the Timor Sea, it has been suggested to me in the past that there have been several other potential incidents that never in fact eventuated because there was good contingency planning in place. Have those sorts of incidents ever been reported to the department?

**Mr Hartwell**—Certainly not to our knowledge on that one. We are not aware of it in the way that you have phrased the question, in terms of a whole range of incidents or possible incidents.

**Senator SIEWERT**—I have been told of two potential incidents. As I said, because of good contingency planning et cetera, it never turned into an incident.

**Mr Hartwell**—Therefore it may not have been reported to us in that context.

**Senator SIEWERT**—The reason I am asking about whether it has been raised with you is because, as I understand it, of different geology in the area. There has been some potential because it is different to other petroleum bearing or producing areas. That has resulted in needing to take a different approach to drilling. Has that ever been raised with the department?

**Mr Squire**—Not to our knowledge.

**Senator SIEWERT**—Could you take it on notice just in case there is—not to your knowledge—some history?

**Mr Hartwell**—Yes

**Answer:**

The Department has been made aware of an incident in 2000 when during a drilling operation a well intersected an unanticipated high pressure zone. While the intersection did not lead to an uncontrolled hydrocarbon release, action was required to bring the well under control. Upon the well being brought under control, drilling operations continued in accordance with the original drilling plan.