

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio  
Supplementary Budget Estimates  
19 October 2011

**Question:** SR4  
**Topic:** Fatigue in the Petroleum Industry  
**Proof Hansard Page:** 74

**Senator Cameron asked:**

**Senator CAMERON:** I think that it is really good. I had a look at your safety alerts going back to 2005. It is pretty good. One of the ones that gave me some concern apart from the one about failing to avoid a cyclone, and I do not know how you do that too easily was fatigue. This goes back to 2005. There was a report of workers working 22 hours, including travel, and blacking out because of fatigue. Have there been updates on this alert since 2005? Is there any evidence that this issue of fatigue in the industry has been resolved?

**Ms Cutler:** We periodically as part of our routine of inspections look at occupational health issues such as fatigue, noise and other matters. But we have not run, if you like, a specific campaign on fatigue in the two years that I have been CEO.

**Senator CAMERON:** So it is not a problem, then?

**Ms Cutler:** I am not saying that it is not a problem; I am just saying that we have not run a specific campaign on it.

**Senator CAMERON:** I know that it is a bit of time ago now, but that alert alerted me that there was a problem in the industry. Could you take on notice as to what is being done by companies to avoid fatigue and advise whether there are any incidences of workers working 22-hour stretches in the offshore petroleum industry.

**Ms Cutler:** Sure.

**Answer:**

The National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority (NOPSA) inspectors include consultation with Health and Safety Representatives and members of the workforce as a scope item for all offshore inspections. Any health and safety concerns relating to fatigue management would typically be raised during these meetings, and pursued by the OHS inspectors if raised.

NOPSA's inspections have generally found that operators have fatigue management policies and procedures in place as part of their Safety Management Systems. These policies and procedures typically ensure that working hours are no more than 16 hours. These fatigue management systems also address potential fatigue issues around travel and changes in swings and shifts.

Since June 2010, NOPSA has recorded undertaking at least 5 inspections that had a specific focus on the issue of fatigue management. From these inspections, NOPSA is not aware of any incidence involving members of the offshore workforce working 22-hour stretches in the offshore petroleum industry.

A further inspection specifically focussed on fatigue management is scheduled for early 2012.