

Tui's First Environmental Hiccup



Tar balls found on a Taranaki beach were found to have come from the FPSO Umuroa.

Australian Worldwide Exploration (AWE) had some unfortunate news in late October, when the Taranaki Regional Council had informally advised AWE that oil recovered from a New Zealand beach is the same oil produced from the Tui oil field.

AWE had identified an incident which occurred on the floating production storage and offloading vessel (FPSO) *Umuroa* in late October, which could be related to the oil which has been found on the Taranaki coast, the company stated.

AWE supplied a sample of Tui crude to the Maritime New Zealand authority for analysis and comparison with degraded oil that washed up on a Taranaki beach in the form of tar balls, with the results identifying that AWE operated FPSO was responsible and began a clean-up immediately.

"The clean-up of oil along a section of the Taranaki coast has been completed. While Maritime New Zealand is conducting further tests, the Tui Joint Venture accepts that the source of the degraded oil was a discharge of oil-contaminated water from the FPSO *Umuroa*. Immediate measures have been taken to guard against any repeat of this incident", AWE said in a statement. Adding that, "production operations have continued uninterrupted since the incident. The integrity of the production wells and facilities is not in question."

AWE reports that it is co-operating fully with Maritime New Zealand and the clean-up costs will be met in full. These costs are not expected to be material. A decision on whether or not there will be any further action lies with Maritime New Zealand. ■