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WWF-Australia

Tel: +61 2 9281 5515
Fax: +61 2 9281 1060

Level 13
235 Jones St
Ultimo NSW 2007

enquiries@wwf.org.au
www.wwf.org.au

Media release

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Shell needs to come clean on Barrow Island LNG

Oil and gas giant Shell is failing to inform stakeholders and dodging its commitment to improve operations in areas of high environmental importance by staying silent on the Gorgon project's move to Barrow Island, WWF revealed today.

Despite a commitment in 2003 to protect the environment, Shell - a 25 per cent owner of the Gorgon project - has not entered the debate on the decision to locate the project on Barrow Island, a class-A nature reserve and a World Conservation Union (IUCN) Protected Area.

Shell has made a public commitment on its website to "improve the way we operate in IUCN Category I-IV protected areas, and areas of high biodiversity value" and stated it would "work with IUCN and others to help safeguard protected areas."

"Shell is a major player in Gorgon but has not entered the debate up to now," said Greg Bourne, CEO, WWF-Australia.

"Shell needs to come clean about how it intends to reconcile the Gorgon processing facility on Barrow Island – home to many species threatened with extinction - with its public positions on biodiversity protection."

Shell's website further claims the company's involvement in the development on Barrow Island is limited to providing an 'aviation fuelling facility'¹, which WWF disputes.

"Shell neglects to mention to the public and its stakeholders worldwide that it will be responsible for jeopardising Barrow Island's globally important environmental values. This is at best disingenuous. Shell cannot hide behind its partnership with Chevron and ExxonMobil," said Mr Bourne.

"As a partner in the development of the Gorgon LNG project with a public commitment to operate responsibly in protected areas, Shell should be pushing for the relocation of the Gorgon plant onto the mainland."

The Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority – a statutory body - has repeatedly recommended that the Gorgon processing facility not be built on Barrow Island on the grounds that it poses an unacceptable risk to the island's threatened species, a view supported by WWF and other conservation groups.

"There is an obvious clash between Gorgon's potential harm to Barrow Island's rare and endangered wildlife and Shell's positioning as one of the more environmentally responsible global oil and gas giants," said Mr Bourne.

"We ask Shell to do the responsible thing - lead by example and call on the other joint venture partners to agree to relocate the project to a mainland location."

¹http://www.shell.com/home/content/responsible_energy/environment/biodiversity/protected_areas/protected_areas_21042008.html

Note to editors:

Barrow Island is one of Australia's oldest and most important protected areas. The WA Conservation Commission, also a statutory authority, is formally responsible for WA's protected areas, like Barrow Island, and has recommended that the Gorgon project not be located on Barrow. The area to be dredged where the deepwater port and shopping channel was to be a marine park before Gorgon was proposed.

For more information:

Jonathon Larkin, Media Officer, WWF-Australia, 0410 221 410, 02 8202 1616, Rachael Hoy, National Media Manager, WWF-Australia. 0407 204 594, 02 8202 1242.