



**SPILL NOT LIKELY TO FOUL COAST**

115 words

24 February 2015 Dominion Post DOMPOS

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English

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Oil from a small spill off the Taranaki coast on Friday is unlikely to end up on the shore, Maritime New Zealand says. It is investigating a spill from the floating oil storage facility Raroa, the third at the site in less than five years. The Raroa, a converted oil tanker, has been operating in the Maari Field, about 80 kilometres off the coast, for OMV since 2008. OMV New Zealand managing director Peter Zeilinger said the spill occurred when a transfer hose developed a leak while oil was being moved from the Raroa to the Nectar tanker. He said less than two barrels (300 litres) entered the sea.

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# Oil breaking up Sea conditions are reducing the chance of tar balls washing...

625 words

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English

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Oil breaking up Sea conditions are reducing the chance of tar balls washing ashore after a split pipe at an offshore platform caused 250 litres of oil to spill into the sea, says a Maritime spokeswoman. The slick has spread 10km from the Raroa platform site off the Taranaki coast since Friday. The spill happened when oil company OMV was transferring oil from Raroa to the oil tanker Nectar. Maritime New Zealand earlier said the oil could turn up as tar balls if it hit the coast. But after a flight over the spill area yesterday, that now seemed unlikely, said Maritime spokeswoman Sophie Hazelhurst. She said there were no concerns for local wildlife. “The environment’s ... doing a really good job of breaking it up,” she said. “The conditions ... are quite dynamic.” She said “trajectory modelling” software indicated any oil was still a few days from reaching the shore, if it made landfall at all. The spill happened about 70km from the coast.

It was very unlikely any beaches would have to be closed, Ms Hazelhurst said, and too early to say what, if any, punishment OMV would receive. “The key point at this stage is looking at what the cause was and making sure it’s rectified before they resume operations.” Jean Kahui of Frack Free Kapiti said her organisation was concerned about the “disgusting” spill and said it raised wider concerns about offshore oil operations. Crash site checks A scene examination at the site of a helicopter crash near Queenstown, which killed two men and led to the country’s largest aircraft grounding, will wrap up today. James Louis Patterson Gardner, 18, of Queenstown, and Stephen Anthony Nicholson Combe, 42, of Wanaka, were found dead at the wreckage of the Robinson R44 they had been flying in remote bush in the Lochy Valley area, in the Eyre Mountains southwest of Queenstown, around 90 minutes after the chopper was reported overdue on Thursday. Transport Accident Investigation Commission investigators expected to complete their examination of the crash scene yesterday, a spokesman said. “In addition to examining and retrieving the wreckage from the accident site the two investigators will have gathered documentary evidence and completed nine interviews of company representatives and other witnesses,” he said. The incident sparked the grounding of 80 Robinson R44s using the same rotor blade type involved in the fatal crash. Labour press role Labour leader Andrew Little has filled the last big role in his leadership office, announcing former Herald journalist and NZ Woman’s Weekly editor Sarah Stuart as his chief press secretary. Labour announced the full team yesterday after appointing Ms Stuart, whose former roles include deputy editor of the Herald on Sunday and managing editor of NZME.’s regional titles. She was editor of the NZ Woman’s Weekly from the end of 2010 to 2013. Ms Stuart will take on the role of director of media and communications — combining the work of a chief press secretary for Mr Little with a wider communications strategy oversight for Labour. In the past, the two roles were done by different people but Labour’s smaller caucus means it now had less funding for staff. The full leadership team includes chief of staff Matt McCarten and political director Neale Jones. Martin Taylor, formerly of Aged Care, is the new director of research and policy. Correction In a graphic titled “Areas for transport focus” in yesterday’s Herald, the colour code was wrong. The red bars should have shown the number of comments from respondents wanting more focus from Auckland Transport on specified transport areas while the blue bars should have indicated the number wanting less focus.

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