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A GOOD HEALTH REPORT CARD FOR THE AUSTRALIAN PETROLEUM INDUSTRY

25 August 2023

AIP and its member companies welcome the very encouraging results of the industry's 16th *Health Watch* Report released today by Monash University, and the Study's final analysis after more than 40 years of operation and investigation.

Overall, the *Health Watch* Study has consistently shown that petroleum industry employees have better health than the general Australian community and are less likely to die from cancer and from heart, respiratory and digestive diseases.

Since 1980, AIP has sponsored the independent *Health Watch* Study to monitor the health of petroleum industry employees, demonstrating the very longstanding commitment of the industry to their health and wellbeing. This internationally recognised research covers over 20,000 past and present employees during their time in the industry and tracks them when they leave or retire to examine death and cancer rates.

The *Health Watch* reports provide a detailed analysis of cancer risk and causes of death by industry sector and job, and then compares these findings to the data for the overall Australian community. As a result, the Study provides valuable insights into the influences on employee health, such as the relationship between the incidence of various cancers and working in the industry, and the measurable effects of smoking and drinking. The findings of the Study also assisted the petroleum industry to develop workplace policies and programs that are providing ongoing safe and healthy working environments.

The latest Report builds on the results of the preceding fifteen reports in demonstrating that the chance of developing most types of cancer (cancer incidence) is no different for men and women in this industry compared with other Australians. Where cancers and deaths do occur, the overall death rates for men and women in the petroleum industry workforce are much lower than the national rates, and significantly lower for men in all major disease categories.

Importantly, the chances of dying or of getting cancer or heart disease are very similar no matter where *Health Watch* members worked, including upstream production sites and downstream refineries, terminals, and distribution sites. There is also no evidence of increased mortality or cancer incidence the longer employees worked in the industry. In terms of key lifestyle factors influencing employee health, the 16th Report shows that smoking has a powerful influence on ill health and mortality, and that quitting smoking noticeably reduces the risks. It is estimated that smoking has played a part in close to half the deaths among *Health Watch* members who smoke.

The latest *Health Watch* Report and final analysis was undertaken by the Monash Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health (MonCOEH), a leading international centre for health and epidemiological research at Monash University who have conducted the Study since 2005.

AIP thanks the thousands of employees who voluntarily participated in *Health Watch* for decades. This has enhanced scientific, workplace and community understanding and helped to provide healthier and safer working environments for future industry employees.

Media Details:

The 16th *Health Watch* Report can be downloaded from <https://aip.com.au/programs/health-watch>. Inquiries can be directed to aip@aip.com.au and healthwatch@monash.edu.

BACKGROUND

Summary of Health Watch Results & Final Analysis

Compared to the general Australian population members of *Health Watch* have:

- lower overall death rates for men and women (around 20% and 30% lower respectively);
- lower death rates for men in most major disease categories, including heart disease (27% lower), cancer (10% lower), respiratory disease (27% lower), diseases of the digestive system (29% lower) and external causes such as accidents (29% lower);
- the same chance overall of developing most types of cancer;
- lower death rates for women in the industry compared to that of Australian women generally, but there is only a comparatively small number of women in the study population;
- for men, lower rates of lung cancer (16% lower), liver cancer, and cancers of the lip, oral cavity and pharynx, leukaemia, pancreas and similar rates for most other cancers including bladder and kidney cancer, and cancers of the colon and stomach;
- a significantly reduced risk of overall leukaemia, including lower rates than nationally for all subgroups of leukaemia including a type known to be associated with benzene exposure, called Acute Myeloid Leukaemia;
- higher rates of melanoma and prostate cancer, but deaths from these cancers are the same as that for the general population; the report suggests that workplace factors or exposures in the petroleum industry are not a likely explanation for these elevated cancer rates;
- higher rates of mesothelioma, likely to be associated with asbestos exposure in the 1950s and 1960s and could also be from asbestos exposure outside the petroleum industry.

The mortality of male employees does not differ between workers at various workplaces in the industry (e.g. refineries, fuel terminals, airports and upstream production sites) and compares favourably with the rates in all Australian men.

Smoking has played a part in around 43% of deaths and the overall death and cancer rates were lower for moderate drinkers (1-7 drinks per week) compared to those who drank more than 21 drinks per week (more than 3 drinks per day).

About AIP

The Australian Institute of Petroleum (AIP) was established in 1976 as the peak industry body representing Australia's downstream petroleum industry. AIP's mission is to promote and assist in the development of a sustainable, internationally competitive petroleum products industry, operating efficiently, economically and safely, and in harmony with the environment and community standards.

AIP provides a wide range of factual information and industry data to assist policy makers, analysts, and the community in understanding the key market and industry factors influencing Australia's downstream petroleum sector. AIP is also represented on key government-industry advisory bodies and statutory committees, and also sponsors or manages important industry environmental and health programs. The Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre (AMOSC) is a wholly owned AIP subsidiary.

AIP's core member companies are involved in refining and marketing of petroleum products and include BP Australia Pty Ltd, Ampol Australia Limited, Mobil Oil Australia Pty Ltd & Viva Energy Australia Pty Ltd. AIP's associate members comprise an additional 28 major companies engaged in the petroleum industry or seeking access to services provided by AIP or AMOSC, including companies participating in the *Health Watch* study for decades (e.g. Chevron, Santos, Shell and Woodside).

More information is available from www.aip.com.au.