

Explorers Negotiate With Aboriginals

By Hon Stephen Baker MP

A group of explorers has been given approval to enter into negotiations with Anangu Pitjantjatjara (AP) and Maralinga Tjarutja (MT) for permission to undertake a proposed \$9 million petroleum exploration program on Aboriginal lands in the north west of the State.

Both the AP and MT have welcomed the opportunity to begin negotiations with the explorers.

First Sourcenergy and its Australian partners, Traditional Oil, J.F. Allender, and Oakman have applied for a Petroleum Exploration Licence covering an area of 24,397 square kilometres in the Officer Basin extending into both AP and MT lands. The proposed five-year exploration program involves a number of seismic surveys and the drilling of four wells.

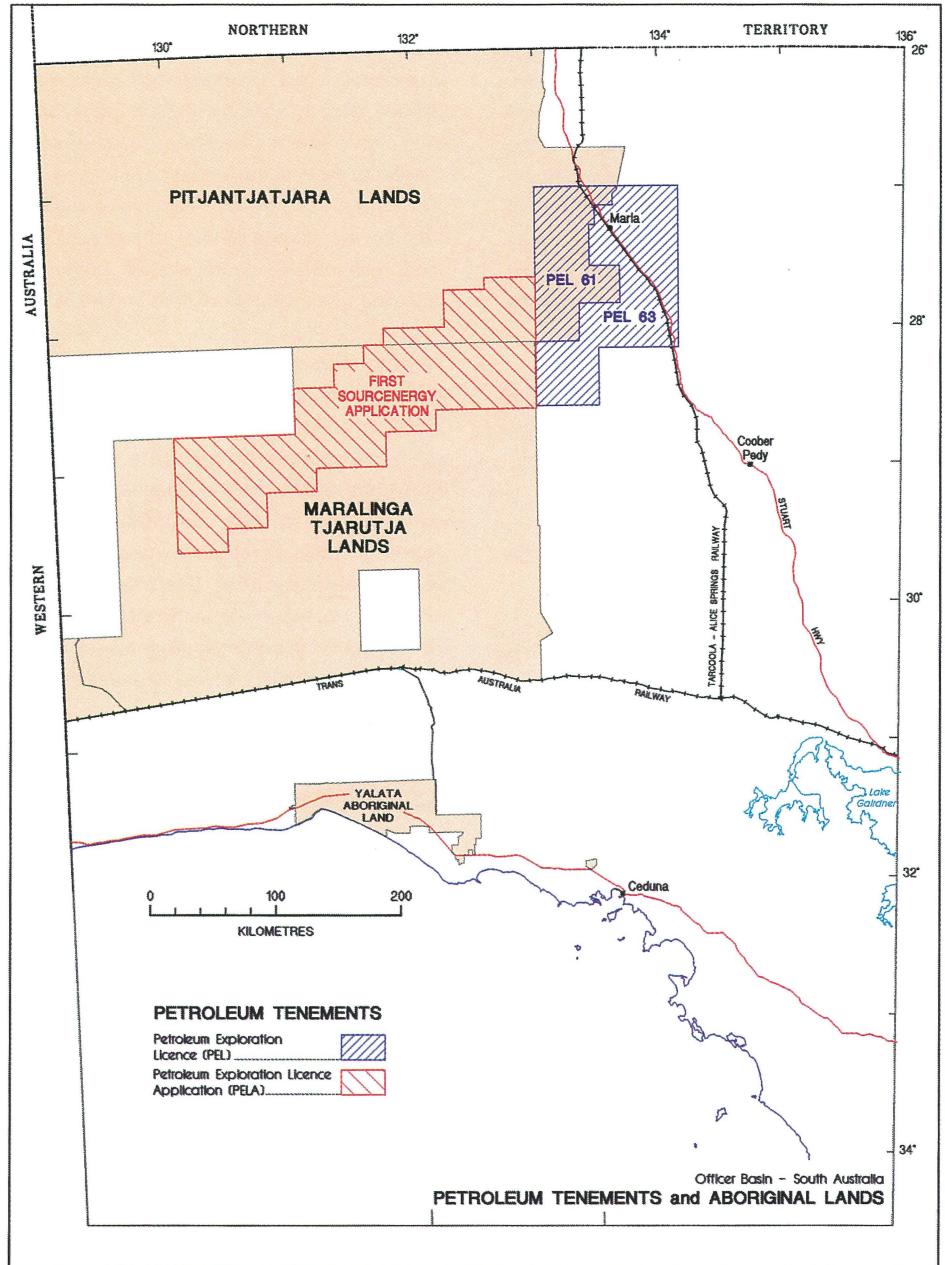
Minister for Mines Stephen Baker announced today that he has given approval for the joint venture, led by First Sourcenergy, to apply to AP and MT for permission to carry out petroleum exploration within the Pitjantjatjara and Maralinga Lands.

AP Director Puntju Thompson said oil and gas production could provide significant economic benefits to AP members. "AP has a long record of co-operation with oil explorers and the South Australian Department of Mines and Energy in the Officer Basin and anticipates that the forthcoming negotiations will proceed smoothly in accordance with the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act," Mr Thompson said.

The Administrator of MT, Dr Archie Barton, said the MT had a long history of successful agreements with mineral and petroleum explorers in the Officer Basin and the Gawler Craton. "The application will be considered pursuant to the mining provisions of the MT Land Rights Act and past agreements will be used as a model for this proposal," Dr Barton said.

First Sourcenergy is a subsidiary of the Michigan-based Geostar Corporation which has geophysical contracting and exploration interests in North America. First Sourcenergy has recently opened an Adelaide office to manage its operations throughout Australia.

"Previous agreements between AP and



petroleum explorers provide a useful basis for discussions and we are hopeful that these negotiations can be successfully completed to allow petroleum exploration licences to be issued early in the new year," Mr Baker said.

Aeromagnetic and seismic surveys, undertaken in the Officer Basin as part of the South Australian Exploration Initiative, have

assisted in attracting the interest of First Sourcenergy and partners.

"The Cooper, Officer, Otway, Arrowie, Stansbury, Murray and Eromanga Basins are all attracting interest and I am optimistic that new discoveries can be made that will boost economic growth and add to our energy self-sufficiency," Mr Baker said.