

Seven New Coalbed Methane Permits Awarded

Interest in New Zealand's coal bed methane potential is on the increase with seven new coalbed methane exploration permits being granted during August, taking the total number of New Zealand petroleum exploration permits issued for coalbed methane operations to 21.

Coal producer Solid Energy (NZ) Ltd acquired four of the recent permits, three on the West Coast and one in Taranaki. All permits are 100% owned.

Solid Energy's new West Coast permits are: PEP 38520, a 25 km² area over its Spring Creek mine area north of Greymouth; PEP 38516, a 92 km² area north of Lake Brunner inland from Greymouth; and PEP 38519, a 103 km² area around and underneath the town of Westport. Solid Energy has also been awarded a coalbed methane permit PEP 38614 over a 2315 km² area of the Mokau, Waitawhena and Ohura-Tangarakau coal fields in northern Taranaki.

A South Island-based company, newly involved in petroleum exploration, B2G Energy Ltd has been awarded PEP 38224 over a 10 km² area of the Roxburgh lignite field in Central Otago. The directors are geologists and engineers Guy Grocott, George Hooper and Bruce Riddolls.

The company currently developing the Pike River coal field inland from Greymouth, Pike River Coal Co. Ltd, has been awarded PEP 38517, a 34 km² area over the field. ■