

Proposal Released For Offshore Exploration Acreage

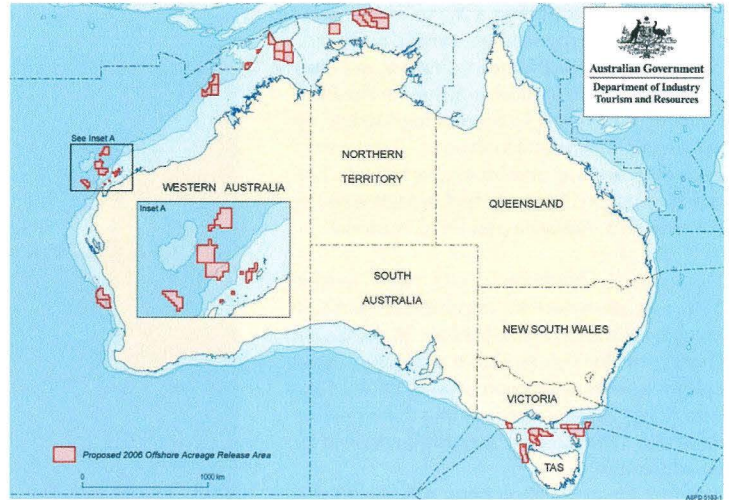
The Australian Government's Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources has advised the petroleum industry of the offshore exploration acreage that is proposed for release in 2006.

The advice will allow industry greater lead time to assess areas and will facilitate acquisition of speculative seismic data. While the proposed areas have not been finalised and are subject to change, it is highly unlikely that any additional areas will be added.

Department Minister Macfarlane will announce the final areas on May 8th, 2006 to correspond with the APPEA annual conference, which will be held on the Gold Coast in Queensland. In the meantime, an award has been made of seven new offshore petroleum exploration permits

in the Victoria, Western Australia, Northern Territory and Territory of Ashmore and Cartier Islands adjacent areas. The permits will be jointly administered by the Australian Government and respective State Governments.

All permits were awarded under the work program bidding system for an initial term of



Permit	Basin	Area No	Date Granted	Successful Applicants
VIC/P62	Otway	V04-2	13 September 05	Trident Energy Ltd
WA-368-P	Perth	W04-17	01 August 05	Nexus Energy Aust NL
NT/P69	Bonaparte	NT04-2	10 October 05	ConocoPhillips Aust Exploration Pty Ltd and Santos Offshore Pty Ltd
NT/P70	Northern Bonaparte	NT04-3	10 October 05	Australian Oil and Gas Corp
AC/P35	Bonaparte	AC/04-2	18 October 05	Natural Gas Corp Pty Ltd, Auralandia NL and Gascorp Inc
AC/P36	Northern Browse	AC/04-3	18 October 05	Finder Exploration Pty Ltd
AC/P37	Northern Browse	AC/04-4	18 October 05	Finder Exploration Pty Ltd

six year with a maximum of two renewals, each of five years. The permits resulted from bids for offshore petroleum acreage in the round that closed on March 31st 2005.

Work program commitments for the awarded permits are valued at more than AUS\$180 million throughout the next six years. Each component of the program must be completed in the designated year or earlier.

The Northern Territory permit is located over a designated frontier area, which allows an immediate uplift to 150% for exploration expenditure deductions against petroleum resource rent tax (PRRT). ■