

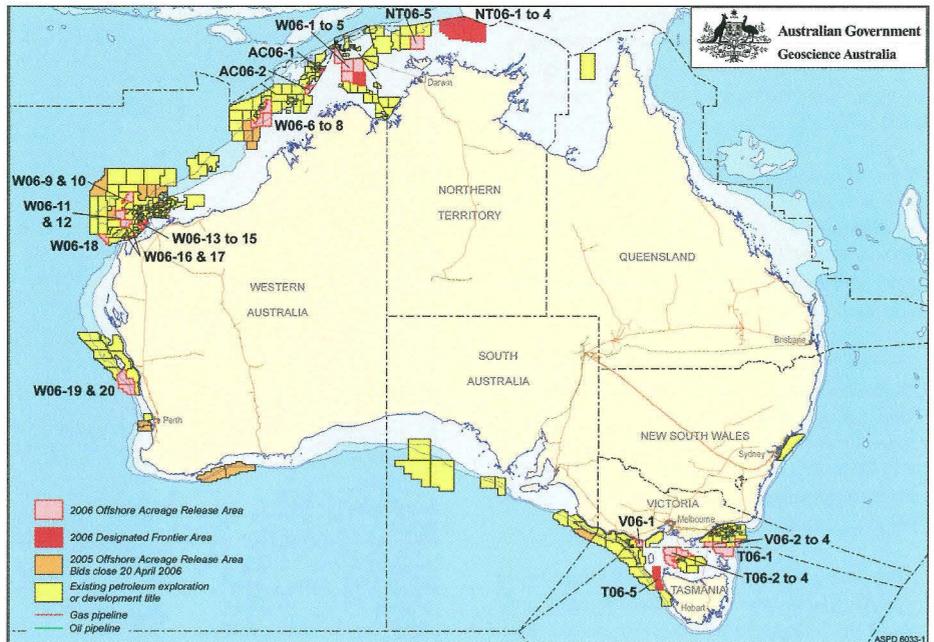
## Government Releases Record Number of Offshore Permits

The number of offshore exploration permits in Australian waters has reached a record total of 190 after Australian Resources Minister, Ian Macfarlane, announced the award of 12 new permits recently, with most of them off the West Australian coast.

Macfarlane claimed the permits would add more than \$270 million of investment to Australia's offshore exploration industry and would offer exciting potential for petroleum discovery.

The twelve new permits are:

- One permit to Shell Development (Australia) Pty Ltd and Chevron Australia Pty Ltd, in the Carnarvon Basin off Western Australia, near the Scarborough gas field;
- Two permits to Octanex NL and Strata Resources NL, in the Southern Exmouth Sub-basin, southwest of the Enfield oil production area;
- One permit to Oilex NL, Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation Limited, Videocon Industries Limited, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, in deep water in the Northern Exmouth Plateau;
- One permit to Gascorp Australia Limited, in the Outer Exmouth Plateau in a deep water extension of Australia's major hydrocarbon producing basin;
- One permit in the Northern Exmouth Plateau, northwest of the Mutineer/Exeter oil field, to Cue Exploration Pty Ltd.
- One permit to Gascorp Australia Limited, in the Northern Exmouth Plateau, north east of the Janz/lo gas discovery;
- Two permits to Westralian Petroleum Limited, Lempika Pty Ltd, and Emphazise Pty Ltd, located within a proven petroleum system in the Perth Basin off Western Australia;
- One permit to Exoil Limited, Gascorp Australia Limited, Moby Oil and Gas Limited, and National Energy Pty Ltd, in the Otway Basin off South Australia; and



A total of 12 new permits have been issued in Australian waters, mostly off the West Australian coast.

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- Two permits to Oil and Gas Pty Ltd, Australian Natural Gas Pty Ltd, and Nations Natural Gas Pty Ltd, in the Bonaparte Basin off the Northern Territory.

Macfarlane said the government has recently introduced exploration tax breaks and boosted the nation's exploration geoscience data with an extra \$134 million. “We are now welcoming new explorers from countries including Scotland and India”, he said.

Meanwhile, the Western Australian government has issued four permits for onshore exploration in the Canning and Officer basins, regions Resources Minister John Bowler said were under-explored and could contain sizeable gas or oil reserves.

He said the four permits have been offered to companies subject to native title and

environmental processes. They were awarded to: Emerald Gas Ltd, Golden Dynasty Resources Ltd and Exceed Energy (Australia) Pty Ltd, all in the Canning Basin; and Uramin Pty Ltd in the Officer Basin.

“The granting of these permits reflects the state government's commitment to increasing WA's petroleum exploration”, Bowler said. “WA is riding high on the resources boom at the moment but it is very important for us to look towards the future during buoyant times such as this.”

“In order to sustain our economic well-being and energy security into the future, it is fundamental to increase exploration. We are fortunate to still have many under-explored regions in WA that are very promising for the petroleum industry.” ■