

\$7.5 Million Boost To Australia's Groundwater Management

The oil and gas industry is being asked to participate in a project to map the availability and location of data to develop a National Deep Groundwater Information System (NDGIS).

The project will combine datasets, knowledge and interpretation tools from the oil and gas industry to provide images of, and characterise, deeper groundwater resources.

The information gathered will be held by the project manager, Geoscience Australia. The completion of the feasibility study will not immediately lead to the commissioning of the full-scale project.

Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator

Penny Wong, has announced a \$480 K study into the feasibility of a national information system on the quantity and quality of deep groundwater resources.

The minister hopes a NDGIS will provide a systematic assessment of the quantity and quality of both fossil and live deep groundwater from the "bottom-up" in sedimentary basins and in basement rocks.

The National Water Commission said the proposal would identify deep aquifers that may have the potential for future development or be used for drought contingency.

It will also provide a systematic evaluation of carbon sequestration sites which require

saline aquifers between 800 m and 1700 m deep.

Senator Wong said costs of deep groundwater exploration drilling, and new groundwater sources could also be identified.

The \$82 MM National Groundwater Action Plan is managed by the National Water Commission and aims to improve groundwater knowledge and management.

The definition of deep groundwater is groundwater found below aquifers normally used for agricultural and industrial uses, nominally 300 m.

Further information on these projects is available from www.nwc.gov.au ■