

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

Release of Offshore Petroleum
Exploration Areas Australia
2003



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ISR 2002/153

ISBN 0 642 72265 X (set)

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Purpose of these Guidance Notes

This book sets out information for applicants on what information is required in application bids, the selection criteria used in assessing those applications, permit conditions and administration that apply once a permit has been granted, the bid closing dates for each area, application lodgement details, special notices outlining the rights and interests of other parties in the 2003 release areas and 'quicklook maps' of the release areas.

Successful applicants should continue to refer to the special notices section for minimum liaison requirements.

It has been produced by the Resources Division in the Australian Government Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (ITR), in consultation with relevant Commonwealth agencies as well as the Mines Departments and relevant State agencies in the six States and the Northern Territory.

Material contained in this book is part of the 2003 Offshore Petroleum Acreage Release Package, which is available on CD-ROM or at internet address: www.industry.gov.au/petexp.

The producers of this release package welcome any comments or suggestions you have on its content. Please e-mail your comments to: petroleum.exploration@industry.gov.au.





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Introduction

Offshore petroleum exploration in Australia operates under a work program bidding system. Before applying for an exploration permit, there are three administrative guidelines with which potential applicants should be familiar:

- applications for exploration areas;
- bid assessment criteria;
- permit conditions and administration.

These guidelines set out the processes and requirements when applying for and being granted an exploration permit.

The main points from these guidelines are set out in broad terms in sections 1 to 3 of this book. A full list of legislation, regulations and administrative guidelines setting out operational practices can be found at: www.industry.gov.au/petexp.

Section 4 outlines the closing bid dates for each area, and details for the lodgement of applications.

Section 5 of this book sets out special notices of titleholder obligations as they apply to the rights and interests of others in the areas released for offshore exploration. This section is particularly important because it sets out the general expectations for liaison activity once a permit is granted, as well as highlighting any additional requirements/conditions for specific areas.

References to the 'Joint Authority' in this book refer to the various joint authorities established between the Commonwealth and each State/Northern Territory (NT), consisting of both the responsible Commonwealth Minister and the relevant State/NT Minister (the 'Designated Authority'). Further information on the governmental structure administering offshore petroleum can be found in the section on Petroleum Law in Australia in *An Overview for Investors* ("red book").

Any queries or comments on offshore petroleum exploration in Australia can be e-mailed to: petroleum.exploration@industry.gov.au.

Interested parties are also encouraged to register their contact details (name, title, company, mailing address, phone/fax numbers, e-mail address) at this e-mail address to receive a CD-ROM of future annual acreage releases for offshore petroleum exploration, as well as notification when new editions of the *Australian Petroleum News* are placed on the Departmental internet site. The *Australian Petroleum News* is used to update information in this book.





1. Applying for an Exploration Permit

Application Details

Applications for areas in the 2003 release are invited under the work program bidding system in accordance with section 20 of the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967*. Two copies of the application must be submitted.

Application Content

Applications **must** contain all of the following.

Technical Assessment

The applicant's technical assessment of the petroleum potential of the area should include the concepts underlying its proposed exploration work program, with sufficient detail to support that program. A sound technical assessment would include an assessment of relevant data and support the amount of seismic surveying and the number and conceptual targets of wells to be drilled.

Minimum Guaranteed Work Program (Years 1, 2 and 3)

The applicant's minimum guaranteed proposal (including indicative minimum expenditure) should include exploration wells to be drilled, seismic and other surveying activities (specifying the surveying technique), data evaluation and other work within the permit area, for each year of the first three years of the permit term.

Pre-purchase of existing non-exclusive data cannot form part of the work program (but any interpretation of that data included in the technical assessment will be taken into account in assessing the relative merits of the work program proposed). Such data proposed to be purchased after the award of a permit may form part of the work program provided that this does not disadvantage a competitor who purchased the data prior to bidding.

The minimum guaranteed work program should only comprise exploration work - appraisal work should not normally be included. Guidance on whether a well would be accepted as an exploration well is provided in section 3 below.

Applicants should note it is mandatory that the minimum work program proposed in each year of the term of the exploration permit is stated precisely to avoid any ambiguity. Proposals for work programs that cannot be guaranteed to be undertaken within the first three years of the permit term must not be included.

Secondary Work Program (Years 4, 5 and 6)

The applicant's proposal (including indicative minimum expenditure) should include exploration wells to be drilled, seismic and other surveying activities (specifying the surveying technique), data evaluation and other work within the permit area, for each of the three remaining years of the permit term (the secondary work program).

A secondary work program must be specified. The secondary work program should include substantial operational activities that will significantly advance exploration of the area - appraisal work should not normally be included.

Particulars of the applicant to be provided

- The technical qualifications of the applicant and of its key employees.
- The technical advice available to the applicant.
- The financial resources available to the applicant, including evidence of the applicant's ability to fund the work program proposed, a statement of other exploration commitments over the next 6 years, and a copy of the latest annual and quarterly reports for each applicant company.
- Where relevant, the viability of the consortium lodging the application, including evidence that a satisfactory settlement has been, or can be, reached on the Joint Operating Agreement (a copy of a signed Heads of Agreement will generally suffice).
- The percentage participating interest of each party to the application.
- Details of any permit cancellations or defaults on work program conditions under the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967* of any of the applicant companies over the previous five years, and why the applicant believes the prior failure is irrelevant to the current application, eg participation in the 'good standing' scheme.
- Details of any relationship that a director of an applicant company had with any company that had defaulted over the previous five years.

Other Information

Such other information as the applicant wishes to be taken into account in consideration of the application.

Applicants are asked to clearly state in their work program bid whether acquisition of seismic survey data relates to purchase/licensing of existing seismic data, or whether a new seismic survey will be undertaken as part of the work program.

Fee

Each application must be accompanied by a fee of \$A3,900 (includes GST), payable to the "Commonwealth of Australia" through an Australian bank or bank cheque (electronic funds transfer or credit card facilities are not available). The amount of the fee is prescribed in Regulations under the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967*.

Renewal of Permits

Permit holders wishing to renew their permit must submit their application between six and three months before the permit expires.

Permits granted from this release may be renewed twice only.



2. Criteria for Assessment of Applications

This section sets out the criteria to be followed in assessing applications lodged under section 20 of the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967* for the award of exploration permits.

In their applications for the award of exploration permits, companies will be expected to take into account all relevant information and any special conditions (such as environment protection, defence and fisheries matters) applying in permit areas. Relevant information, access restrictions and details of special conditions known to government at the time of release are included in section 5 of this publication. It is recommended that companies register to receive the *Australian Petroleum News* (by e-mailing their contact details to petroleum.exploration@industry.gov.au) as this publication is used to update this information.

An applicant must first satisfy the Joint Authority of its capacity to undertake its proposed work program, particularly:

- the adequacy of financial resources and technical expertise available to the applicant;
- the likelihood that the applicant will continue to have access to sufficient resources to meet the requirements of the proposed work program as well as other commitments previously entered into in other permit areas;
- the future viability of any consortium lodging an application, including evidence that a satisfactory Joint Operating Agreement has been or can be reached; and
- the applicant's past performance in other petroleum exploration areas in Australia or, if relevant, elsewhere.

Assessment Criteria

The basic objective in awarding any exploration permit is to select the work program bid most likely to achieve the fullest assessment of the petroleum potential within the permit area in the minimum guaranteed period, recognising the essential role of wells in the discovery of petroleum. Work programs proposed in bids must significantly advance the exploration status of the area. Work considered equivalent or inferior to work already carried out will not be regarded as advancing exploration effort. Work program bids will be assessed taking account of the criteria listed below.

The criteria for assessment of applications are as follows:

- the number and timing of exploration wells to be drilled, provided there is an adequate supporting program of geological and geophysical work;
- the amount, type and timing of seismic surveying to be carried out;
- other new surveying, data acquisition and reprocessing to be carried out;
- the amount, type and timing of any purchasing or licensing of existing data:
 - pre-purchase of existing non-exclusive data cannot form part of the work program but any interpretation of that data will be taken into account in assessing the relative merits of the work program proposed;
 - existing non-exclusive data proposed to be purchased after the award of a permit may form part of the work program provided that this does not disadvantage a competitor who purchased the data prior to bidding;
- significant appraisal work over any previous petroleum discoveries within the area; and
- the extent to which the applicant's technical assessment supports the amount of seismic surveying and the number and conceptual targets of wells proposed in the application.

In the event that a winning applicant cannot be chosen on the basis of the minimum guaranteed work program, the amount and timing of work proposed under the secondary work program will be assessed against the above criteria.

Process for Assessing Applications

Applications are expected to be submitted in accordance with Section 1 above, which reflects the Administrative Guideline *Applications for Exploration Areas*. An application will be assessed against the selection criteria by a panel of officials representing the relevant Joint Authority. The panel will prepare a report for the relevant Joint Authority containing recommendations as to the winning bid.

Applications will be assessed on the basis of the information contained in the written applications together with any additional information requested by the Designated Authority, which should also be submitted in writing. Applicants may be invited to attend an interview with the assessment panel and information provided during that interview will also be taken into account.

It should be noted that the composition and timing of the work program proposed in the original application, as part of the competitive bidding process, cannot be amended by the provision of additional information or through the interview process.

In the event that a winning applicant cannot be chosen on the basis of the information contained in the written application and provided during interview, the two or more parties that the Joint Authority considers as equally deserving of the grant of the permit will be invited to submit supplementary written bids as a basis for the selection of a successful applicant.

Consideration of Past Performance

As indicated above, the Joint Authority may take into consideration, amongst other things, the applicant's past performance in other petroleum exploration areas in Australia or, if relevant, elsewhere. This may occur even where the applicant's proposed work program is the highest submitted.

This would particularly apply in the situation where one or more of the applicants were participants in previous permits that had been cancelled because of default in meeting work program commitments and where there was no agreement to maintain good standing. (Further information on good standing arrangements can be found in section 3 below.)

Although any cancellation would be taken into account and the circumstances of the default would be relevant, consideration would generally be given to cancellations occurring in the previous five years.

In the event of consideration being given to prior cancellation and where this would be a significant factor in the decision to offer a permit, the applicant would be given the opportunity to establish that the earlier failure was irrelevant to the current situation and that default would not occur in the current application.

A record will be maintained of companies that have defaulted on work program commitments and have not taken advantage of the good standing arrangements. Information about whether a particular company has defaulted on work program commitments and has not taken advantage of the good standing arrangements may be provided to a Designated Authority.



Refusal to Grant a Permit

Applicants should note that the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967* provides that the Joint Authority may refuse to grant a permit to an applicant. While the Act does not specify the grounds for refusing to grant a permit, they may include:

- the work program proposed is inferior to that of a competing bid;
- the work program bid is inadequate to significantly advance the exploration status of the area;
- the work program bid is not supported by a sound technical assessment;
- the Joint Authority is not satisfied that the applicant possesses the financial or technical capacity to complete the work program bid; or
- the Joint Authority is not satisfied that, on the basis of past performance, the applicant will comply with permit conditions.

Minimum Acceptable Work Program Bids

An exploration permit will not be offered to an applicant unless the applicant can satisfy the Joint Authority of its capacity to undertake its proposed minimum guaranteed work program and that program is considered likely to significantly progress the assessment of the petroleum potential of the permit area.

A secondary work program must be specified. The secondary work program should include substantial operational activities that will significantly advance exploration of the area.

At least one well would normally be expected to be proposed within the six years of the permit term.

The minimum acceptable bid for an area will vary depending on the size of the area and its perceived prospectivity. Generally, it would be expected that the minimum guaranteed work program would include at least a significant amount of new seismic surveying and/or wells. However, where extensive non-exclusive seismic data are available over an area, it would generally be expected that the minimum guaranteed work program would include at least the licensing of a significant amount of those data and/or wells.

The minimum acceptable bid must be credible, coherent and supportable. It should be able to be pursued on a dry hole basis. The early elements of the program should be sufficient to enable the later elements to proceed. If there is no current lead or prospect identified, there must be sufficient phased seismic to enable a lead or prospect to be identified somewhere in the permit area, and be brought to a drillable status.

The above guidance on minimum acceptable bids will also be applied by the Joint Authority when considering applications for five year renewal terms for permits.

Re-Release of Acreage

The re-release of an area will be at the discretion of the Joint Authority. However, it is generally intended that any area that does not attract a successful bid will be re-released about two months after the original closure date for applications for that area. The re-released areas will be open for bidding for about four months. Whenever possible, the closure date for applications for re-released areas will coincide with the next closure date under the annual acreage release process. Areas will only be re-released once.

The re-released areas will be open to all interested bidders under the work program bidding system. The promotion of the re-released areas would be expected to consist of a notice in the relevant government gazette and an article in *Australian Petroleum News* (a newsletter published on the ITR internet site).

3. Permit Conditions and Administration

The conditions applying to a permit granted under sections 22 (initial term) or 32 (renewal term) of the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967* (the PSLA), and the continuing administration of those conditions, will be as follows.

- (a) The permittee will be required to undertake within the permit boundary each component of the minimum guaranteed work program in the designated year or earlier and failure to do so may result in cancellation of the permit.

The minimum guaranteed work program cannot be reduced once the permit has been awarded. Exploration activity in excess of the minimum guaranteed work program is permitted.

Surrender of the permit in good standing may only be agreed prior to the beginning of the fourth permit year if the total three year minimum guaranteed work program is completed.

- (b) No earlier than six months and no later than three months before the end of the third year of the permit term, the permittee may submit a revised secondary work program covering the remaining years of the permit term for consideration by the Joint Authority and agreement on a mutually acceptable work program.

If agreement cannot be reached on a mutually acceptable work program, the permit may be surrendered in good standing or continue in force subject to the original secondary work program.

- (c) On commencement of the fourth permit year the secondary work program (as revised, if agreed by the Joint Authority) becomes guaranteed on a year by year basis and each component must be undertaken within the permit boundary in the designated year or earlier. Failure to do so may result in cancellation of the permit.

The permittee may renegotiate the secondary work program on an annual basis by providing substantial and compelling evidence that the work program should be varied on technical grounds prior to entry into any of the remaining years of the secondary term.

Surrender of the permit in good standing during the secondary work program may only be agreed in a permit year if the work guaranteed for that year has been completed.

If a permit holder fails to complete a final year work program, the permit holder will not have complied with the conditions of the permit.

- (d) Permittees may apply at any time for a variation or suspension of permit conditions (eg work program commitments) on the grounds of *force majeure*. *Force majeure* refers to an event or effect that cannot be reasonably anticipated or controlled via experience or care. Commercial circumstances that are common risks in the industry would not normally be considered as a basis for *force majeure*. Factors such as changes in oil prices, difficulty in attracting farm-ins, avoidable delays in contracting a rig or vessel, disappointing drilling results, poor quality seismic data or the failure to prove up a prospect would not normally be considered as *force majeure*. Such factors may influence the perceived commercial viability of an activity, but should not prevent the explorer from adhering to its bid commitment.

When applying for a suspension of permit conditions, permittees may also apply for an extension of the permit term.

- (e) Where a permittee has been unable to prove up a prospect to meet a drilling commitment, the permittee may apply for a variation and suspension of permit conditions to commit to sufficient new seismic surveying (additional to the current work program) to prove up a prospect to meet that drilling commitment. Only where a permittee has demonstrated a significant attempt to meet its work program commitments would a suspension be considered and then only for a maximum of 12 months.





- (f) The American Petroleum Institute's well classification is used as a general guide to determine whether a well has sufficient exploration component to meet a work program commitment.

The first appraisal well in a permit on the extension of a discovery made in an adjacent permit will be accepted as an exploration well. Similarly, a well drilled on the unproven extension of an accumulation from an adjacent permit will be accepted as an exploration well.

- (g) Permittees may seek at any time to have an alternative work activity credited as meeting a work program commitment. Whether an alternative work activity meets a work program commitment will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with the criteria for approval being to ensure that the alternative work activity is a similar, or superior, technique and meets or exceeds the objective of the original work commitment.
- (h) Non-exclusive seismic data purchased by a permittee may be counted against a pre-existing work program commitment to the extent that the survey met in part, or in full, the original work program commitment and was recorded after the date on which the permit was granted/renewed.
- (i) Permittees will be required to comply with the provisions of the PSLA, the Regulations and Directions issued under the PSLA, and with any special conditions associated with the permit area.

Permit Cancellation

Permit holders are expected to maintain permits in good standing and ensure that all obligations under the PSLA, Directions and permit conditions, including any special conditions associated with the permit area, are met within the due time frame. Failure to undertake each component of the minimum guaranteed work program or secondary work program in the designated year or earlier may result in cancellation of the permit.

Where the Joint Authority believes cancellation of the permit is the appropriate course of action, the permit holder will be served notice of intention to cancel the permit in accordance with section 105 of the PSLA. Generally, permit holders will be given five weeks within which to submit matters they wish to be considered and taken into account by the Joint Authority in reaching its final decision on permit cancellation.

Arrangements are available for companies that have a permit cancelled to maintain good standing (refer to 'Arrangements to Maintain Good Standing' below).

Permit Surrender

Once a permit holder applies to the relevant Designated Authority for consent to surrender the permit, the Designated Authority will consider the application in the context of the requirements of section 104 of the PSLA before giving or refusing consent to surrender the permit. The Designated Authority's consent to surrender will be conditional on the surrender taking effect in the permit year in which the consent is given. Otherwise additional rental payments and work program commitments will be incurred.

In considering whether the permit holder has complied with the conditions to which the permit is subject and the provisions of Part III of the PSLA and of the Regulations, account will be taken of all relevant requirements, particularly:

- the status of the permit (including fees and monies due) and whether all due work program commitments have been completed;
- the reporting requirements contained in the Directions given to the permit holder and whether all reports and data have been lodged (for example, reports on specified activities, quarterly reports, annual reports);

- the action taken by the permit holder to ensure that the permit area is clear of all debris resulting from operations and that all wells have been plugged or closed.

To facilitate consideration of applications for consent to surrender, it is expected that permit holders will ensure that the permit is in good standing (ie has fully complied with the conditions of the permit) and that any outstanding reports and data are lodged with the application.

Arrangements to Maintain Good Standing

A company that is in default of its work program conditions in a petroleum exploration permit but wants to maintain its good standing can have access to the following arrangements provided it satisfies government that it has made a significant attempt to assess the petroleum potential of the permit area. A significant attempt to assess the petroleum potential of the permit area would require at least the completion of seismic surveying commitments. The Joint Authority may also refer to whether the defaulting company has completed work in excess of the second highest bid for the permit area.

Where a work program condition has not been complied with, the permit will normally be cancelled. However, the defaulting company or companies can maintain their 'good standing' by entering into an agreement with the Joint Authority to undertake work in re-released acreage as outlined below. In the case of joint ventures, the net value of the commitments will be divided on the basis of each party's equity in the title. The defaulting company must also provide to government all documentary information relating to the cancelled permit, which will then become 'open file' data.

Any defaulting company wishing to take advantage of these arrangements must make a public statement about its undertaking at the time of cancellation or determination of their permit, or as may be agreed with the Joint Authority.

Defaulting companies seeking to maintain 'good standing' will be able to bid for re-released areas in any Commonwealth offshore area and, if successful, will be granted a permit. Details of the re-release of acreage are provided in the *Guideline Bid Assessment Criteria*. A defaulting permittee would have to obtain sufficient permits to commit all the offsetting expenditures in re-released areas. This would normally be expected to be in the two re-releases immediately following the cancellation of the permit.

To maintain 'good standing', the defaulting companies will be required to spend the full amount of the agreed value of any outstanding commitments on the acquisition and interpretation of new geophysical and geochemical data and/or drilling (excluding permit administration) activities in the minimum guaranteed period (ie the first three years) of the new permit or permits obtained from the re-released areas. Expenditures in permits obtained from the normal acreage releases do not count towards meeting outstanding commitments.

Any unspent monies remaining at the end of the first three years of the permit terms (and these would be expected to be only a very small proportion of the total owing) would have to be spent on studies of the offshore Australian region for the benefit of the wider petroleum exploration industry. The timeframe and nature of the studies would be determined in consultation with governments and industry.

A defaulting company that maintains 'good standing' through these arrangements will not have its past performance in the cancelled or determined permit taken into account in the consideration of future applications for vacant acreage.

The Joint Authority and the defaulting companies will agree on the monetary value of the outstanding work commitments. Independent expert advice will be sought where there is dispute about the agreed value. The defaulting permittees will be liable for the cost of obtaining such advice. Companies may be required to provide audited accounts demonstrating that the required expenditure commitments have been met.



4. Closing Dates, lodgement of applications and availability of data

Closing Dates

Applications must be lodged by 4.00pm on the relevant dates below. Late applications will not be considered.

First Round	Thursday, 25 September 2003 Areas T03-4, V03-1, NT03-1 to 7 and W03-7 to 15
Second Round	Thursday, 25 March 2004 Areas S03-1 to 2, T03-1 to 3, V03-2 to 4, AC03-1 to 3 and W03-1 to 6.

Lodgement of Applications

Applications, together with supporting data, should be submitted in duplicate to the relevant State/Territory Department address listed below:

South Australia

Director Petroleum Group
Office of Minerals and Energy Resources
Department of Primary Industries &
Resources
Level 7, 101 Grenfell Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Victoria

Tender Box
Department of Primary Industries
Ground Floor, 240 Victoria Parade
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002
ATTENTION: Senior Petroleum Titles
Officer, Minerals and Petroleum Regulation

Western Australia

Director Petroleum Division
Department of Industry and Resources
Level 11, Mineral House
100 Plain Street
EAST PERTH WA 6004
ATTENTION: Petroleum
Applications Receiving Officer

Tasmania

Director of Mines
Mineral Resources Tasmania
30 Gordons Hill Road
ROSNY PARK TAS 7018
ATTENTION: Petroleum Registrar,
Industrial Minerals & Land Management

Northern Territory and Territory of Ashmore/Cartier Islands

Director of Energy
Department of Business, Industry and Resource
Development
4th Floor, Centrepont Building
48-50 Smith Street, The Mall
DARWIN NT 0800
ATTENTION: Petroleum Registrar

The following special instructions should be observed:

- two copies of the application and supporting data, together with a fee of \$A3,900 (includes GST) payable to the "Commonwealth of Australia" through an Australian Bank or by bank cheque, should be enclosed in an envelope or package (electronic funds transfer or credit card facilities are not available);
- the application should then be sealed and clearly marked as "Application for Area Commercial-in-Confidence";
- this envelope or package should then be enclosed in a plain covering envelope or package and delivered by hand or posted to the address above. It is the responsibility of the applicant to confirm receipt.

Availability of Data

Refer to *An Overview for Investors* ("red book"), section on Petroleum and Geoscience Datasets, as well as the Products and Services section of this acreage release package for further information on data availability.

Copies of basic exploration data pertaining to the blocks comprising this release may also be purchased from the relevant State/Territory Department at the above addresses.

It is recommended that companies interested in bidding for areas register their contact details on the petroleum exploration CD-ROM and e-mail distribution list (e-mail: petroleum.exploration@industry.gov.au). This ensures you will be notified of important updates to information for potential explorers as well as information on current issues in the governance of the Australian offshore petroleum sector.

Limited Renewal of Permits

An amendment was made to the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967* during 2002 which changed the conditions for the renewal of exploration permits.

Permits granted from acreage offered for bidding after 1 January 2003 may be renewed twice only. This applies to all areas in the 2003 offshore petroleum exploration acreage release.



5. Special Notices Concerning Titleholder Obligations and the Rights and Interests of Others

Overview

Petroleum legislation requires that offshore operations be carried out in a manner that does not unduly interfere with other rights and interests. There is also a need to comply with other requirements and standards set by Australian law. All titleholders need to have due regard for matters such as:

- environment protection;
- navigation and maritime safety;
- fishing activities;
- defence activities;
- submarine cables;
- insurance; and
- Native Title rights and interests.

In addition to the general advice and requirements that apply to all release areas, there are also notices giving recommendations and requirements for specific areas. The attention of potential applicants is drawn to all the issues set out below, as they have been raised in consultations with others who have rights and interests in these marine areas. The requirements for specific areas may result in conditions being included in an exploration title document.

Notices for All Areas

Environment Protection

Australian governments require petroleum companies to conduct their activities in a manner that meets a high standard of environmental protection. Of particular importance to the offshore petroleum exploration industry are the requirements of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and the Environment Regulations of the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967* (PSLA). Under these two Acts, there are four main environmental approvals that may be required for petroleum industry activities. These are:

- an Environment Plan under the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) (Management of Environment) Regulations 1999* (Environment Regulations);
 - this is required for every operational (fieldwork) activity;
- approval under Chapter 4 of the EPBC Act to undertake an activity that may potentially affect a matter of National Environmental Significance (NES);
 - the most important matters of NES to offshore areas are Commonwealth marine areas, World Heritage areas, threatened species and migratory species;
- approval under Chapter 5, Division 3, of the EPBC Act to undertake activities that may interfere with cetaceans (eg whales);
 - this is only required at locations and times that cetaceans are likely to be present;
- approval under Chapter 5, Division 4, of the EPBC Act to carry out activities in a Commonwealth Marine Reserve;
 - this category is not relevant to any of the areas in the 2003 release.

Further information on these approvals is provided below and in the accompanying publication *An Overview for Investors* ("red book").

Information on the EPBC Act is available on the internet at www.ea.gov.au/epbc. The site also has information on referrals and decisions under the EPBC Act that may be of assistance in deciding whether to refer an intended action. A printed summary of the EPBC Act is also available in *An Overview of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*, published in October 1999 by Environment Australia.

Environment Plan under PSLA

An Environment Plan must be in force (under Section 2 of the Environment Regulations) before an operator carries out any activity in a permit area. Environment Plans are to be submitted to the relevant Designated Authority, who has 28 days to accept or refuse the Plan or request the operator to modify and resubmit the Plan. An accepted Environment Plan will establish the legally binding environment management conditions that must be met by the operator of an offshore petroleum activity. Division 2.3 of the Environment Regulations sets out the required contents of an Environment Plan. A Guideline on the preparation and submission of an Environment Plan can also be accessed at www.industry.gov.au/petexp.

National Environmental Significance and the EPBC

Companies proposing to undertake petroleum exploration or development activities are obliged, under the EPBC Act, to consider whether those activities are likely to have a significant impact on a matter of NES. The EPBC Act places the onus on the proponent for ensuring an activity either does not affect a matter of NES, or is approved by the Commonwealth Environment Minister before proceeding.

Environment Australia has made an interactive database available for further information on matters of national environmental significance (including Ramsar wetlands, endangered species, World Heritage areas) at www.ea.gov.au/epbc/interactivemap. Potential bidders are encouraged to consult this database with respect to a permit area before finalising their work program bids.

If a proponent is unsure whether approval is required, the proposed activity can be referred to the Environment Minister for clarification as to whether it would be a 'controlled action' for the purposes of the EPBC Act. In the first instance, preliminary advice can be obtained from the Assistant Secretary, Environment Assessment and Approvals Branch, Environment Australia (ph: +61 2 6274 1444). Published guidelines on significance are available from the Environment Australia Community Information Unit on 1800 803 772 (free call within Australia only) or e-mail: ciu@ea.gov.au.

Cetaceans and the EPBC

Under the EPBC Act there is a requirement to obtain a permit for any activity impacting upon cetaceans, incidentally or otherwise, in Commonwealth waters. Cetaceans include whales, dolphins and porpoises. Given potential interaction between seismic surveys and cetaceans, Environment Australia will carefully assess proposed activities in recognised whale migration and aggregation areas to determine if a cetacean permit is required. Guidelines on the interaction between offshore seismic operations and larger cetaceans, that were developed by Environment Australia in consultation with the petroleum industry, will assist explorers in addressing their obligations. Further information can be obtained from the Environment Australia website: www.ea.gov.au/epbc/permits/cetaceans/index.html and also www.ea.gov.au/epbc/assessmentsapprovals/guidelines/seismic.



Register of the National Estate

Under the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975*, the Register of the National Estate is Australia's national inventory of places of significant natural and cultural (historic and indigenous) heritage. Activities associated with exploration activity, that could have a significant impact on birdlife and marine values, should be referred to the Australian Heritage Commission prior to the commencement of exploration activities. Further information can be obtained from the Australian Heritage Commission website: www.ahc.gov.au/register/index.html.

Information on indigenous heritage and values can be obtained from website: www.ahc.gov.au/infoces/publications/indigenousheritage/index.html.

Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976

This Act provides for the protection of historic shipwrecks and relics in waters under Commonwealth responsibility. The Act seeks to control actions which may result in damage, interference, removal or destruction of an historic shipwreck or associated relic. Permits are required to undertake any activities that will have a direct impact on a historic shipwreck. Further information about the Act can be obtained from the Environment Australia website: www.ea.gov.au/heritage/awh/shipwrecks/index.html.

A number of areas in the 2003 release are in the vicinity of sensitive marine regions and may be subject to special requirements as described below in the Notices for Specific Areas.

Navigation

To ensure that navigational safety requirements are met, successful applicants will be required to maintain close contact with the Rescue Co-ordination Centre (RCC) at the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) well in advance of the commencement of, and during, seismic surveys and drilling operations in order that navigational warnings can be issued. This is especially important for operations in any permits granted over areas located on or near major shipping routes, for example areas VO3- 2 to 4. For further information, see below in the Notices for Specific Areas.

AMSA contacts:

Telephone: +61 2 6230 6811 (24 hrs/365days)
Emergency: 1800 641 792 (Free call within Australia only)
Facsimile: +61 2 6230 6868 (24 hrs/365days)
E-mail: rccaus@amsa.gov.au (24 hrs/365days)
Website: www.amsa.gov.au

Fishing Activities

All companies awarded exploration permits will be required to initiate contact with Commonwealth and/or State fisheries management agencies and local fishing bodies concerning their exploration operations. This contact should be initiated at the earliest possible stage prior to commencing operations. In the first instance, it is suggested that contact be made with the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) for the latest information on appropriate contacts within relevant Management Advisory Committees or fishing organisations. AFMA can be contacted at:

Australian Fisheries Management Authority
PO Box 7051
Canberra BC ACT 2610
Telephone: +61 2 6272 5029
Facsimile: +61 2 6272 5175

Additional contact details, including contacts for specific fisheries can be found at: www.afma.gov.au/contacts.php.

General information on commercial fisheries managed by the Commonwealth Government can be accessed at: www.afma.gov.au/fisheries/default.php. Related links, including to State Government fisheries agencies, can be found at: www.afma.gov.au/links.php.

Another useful source of fisheries information is an atlas, *Marine Matters*, published by the Bureau of Rural Sciences (BRS). Copies can be downloaded by following the links from www.affa.gov.au/content/publications.cfm. Printed copies can be ordered from BRS:

Telephone: 1800 244 129 (Free call within Australia only)

Facsimile: 1800 244 130 (Free call within Australia only)

E-mail: sales@brs.gov.au.

As a number of the 2003 release areas coincide with commercial fishing zones, they are subject to special requirements as described below in the Notices for Specific Areas.

Defence Requirements

For all release areas, successful applicants will be required to notify the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) Hydrographic Office of any suspended well heads or proposed infrastructure developments. This will enable, respectively, the update of relevant navigational charts and the issue of appropriate navigational warnings. Contact details are provided below.

Some of the areas in the 2003 release coincide with military restricted airspace. When activated by a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM), the restricted airspace can operate down to low altitudes including, at times, to sea level. Successful applicants will be required to liaise with the Department of Defence during the planning phase of operations and to provide information on the proposed location of any drilling rigs for inclusion on the register of structures database that is maintained by the Royal Australian Air Force Aeronautical Information Service (RAAF AIS). For contact details, please see below.

In addition, some of the 2003 release areas coincide with defence practice areas. Successful applicants are advised that the Minister for Defence has the authority, under the *Defence Force Regulations 1952*, to order the evacuation of a defence practice area at short notice. Access to affected permit areas may also be restricted. As training exercises can take place at any time and may involve the use of live fire, permit holders should consult regularly with the Department of Defence to minimise their own risk. Details of release areas that coincide with defence practice areas are provided below in the Notices for Specific Areas.

Locations of restricted areas, including maps, are listed in Annual Australian Notices to Airmen (NOTAM) and Australian Annual Notice to Mariners publications, which are available from the RAAF AIS website (*Designated Airspace Handbook*) and the RAN Hydrographic Office website (available under 'Annual Notices') respectively (see addresses below).

The following Defence contacts will be able to advise of planned Defence activities in specific areas:

RAN Hydrographic Office

Nautical Assessment Officer

Hydrographic Office, RAN

Locked Bag 8801

South Coast Mail Centre

WOLLONGONG NSW 2500

Telephone: +61 2 4221 8590

Facsimile: +61 2 4221 8599

E-mail: hydro.ntm@defence.gov.au

Website: www.hydro.gov.au/



RAAF Aeronautical Information Service

RAAF AIS
VBM-M-2
Victoria Barracks
St Kilda Rd
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006
Attention: Business Manager
Email: raaf.ais@defence.gov.au

The form for the notification of structures (Vertical Obstruction Report Form) can be found on the RAAF AIS website: www.raafais.gov.au/products.

RAN

Chief Staff Officer (Operations)
Maritime Headquarters
Royal Australian Navy
Potts Point
SYDNEY NSW 2011
Telephone: +61 2 9359 4301

Air Force

Plans Air Traffic Control
RAAF Base
GLENBROOK NSW 2773
Telephone: +61 2 4737 7057

General Defence contact

Project Officer Land Use Assessment
Capital Infrastructure
BP-1-B104
Department of Defence
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Telephone: +61 2 6266 8190
Facsimile: +61 2 6266 8192

Submarine Cables

Permit holders can contact an information number 1800 652 388 (free call within Australia) to obtain cable position information. At the time of publication, area W03-15 is the only area in the 2003 release that is known to be near a submarine cable.

Native Title Rights and Interests

Two of the 2003 release areas have been identified as having registered native title claims within them (V03-1 and 2). However, applicants should be aware that Aboriginal representative organisations may have interests in other release areas, and that some release areas are within the same region as places containing indigenous heritage values, particularly those that are closer to shore (eg W03-13 to 15, V03-1 to 2 and T03-1 to 4). It is recommended that successful applicants liaise closely with State Heritage agencies, native title representative bodies and registered claimants on proposed exploration activities.

Contact details for native title representative bodies can be found at: www.atsic.gov.au/programs/social_and_cultural/native_title/NTRB/ntrb_addresses.asp

Further details on indigenous heritage values can be obtained from www.ahc.gov.au/infores/publications/indigenousheritage/index.html.

Insurance

Under section 97A of the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967*, successful applicants are required to maintain adequate insurance against expenses or liabilities in relation to activities pursuant to the exploration permit, including the expenses of complying with directions with respect to remedying the effects of the escape of petroleum.

Further Notices

Any further Special Notices and related issues will be advised in *Australian Petroleum News*, which can be accessed at www.industry.gov.au/petexp.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to register their e-mail, address and contact details with the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (ITR), Exploration Section (details can be e-mailed to: petroleum.exploration@industry.gov.au). The mailing list is not used for any purpose other than disseminating petroleum information from ITR, such as the annual offshore petroleum acreage release package, the awarding of permits, changes to guidelines or legislation, and advice on when new editions of *Australian Petroleum News* are posted on the Internet. There is no charge for this service.

Notices for Specific Areas

Special Notices – Areas off Victoria

V03-1, 2, 3 and 4


The large **Southern Shark Fishery** (SSF) extends across release areas V03-1 to 4. Fishing interests have concerns that seismic activities may impact upon shark movements and on behaviour during the summer migration of breeding stock to pupping grounds. Accordingly, successful applicants will need to liaise with the Southern Shark Fishery Management Advisory Committee at an early stage when planning operational activities, particularly with regard to the timing of seismic operations. Contact details for the Management Advisory Committee can be obtained from the AFMA website (as set out above under 'Notices for All Areas').

These release areas also coincide with the **Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery**. Successful applicants will need to be mindful of fishing industry concerns about possible impact of exploration activities on scallops and are advised to liaise with the Management Advisory Committee at an early stage prior to commencing exploration activities. Contact details for the Committee can be obtained from the AFMA website (as set out above under 'Notices for All Areas').

As the dredging operations in the scallop fishery can be adversely affected by material left on the seabed, successful applicants will be requested to advise the location of any suspended wellheads to AFMA. This is in addition to the requirement to advise well locations to the RAN Hydrographic Office.

V03-1 and 2

Release areas V03-1 and 2 are affected by overlying **military restricted airspace** (R358) which, when activated by a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM), can operate down to sea level. Successful applicants will be required to liaise with the Department of Defence during the planning phase of operations and to provide information on the proposed location of any drilling rigs for inclusion on the register of structures database that is maintained by the Royal Australian Air Force Aeronautical Information Service (RAAF AIS). Contact details are set out above under 'Notices for All Areas'.



Native title claim VC97/004 by the Gunai/Kurnai People extends into areas V03-1 and 2. A map showing the boundary of the claim can be viewed at www.nntt.gov.au.

V03-2, 3 and 4

Release area V03-3 is traversed by a major shipping route and is close to the eastern end of a defined Traffic Separation Scheme. In addition, release areas V03-2 and 4 lie close to the shipping route. Successful applicants will need to maintain close contact with the Rescue Co-ordination Centre (RCC) at the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) well in advance of the commencement of, and during, any seismic surveys or drilling operations in order that navigational warnings can be issued. AMSA contact details are set out above under 'Notices for All Areas'.

Details, including a map, of the Traffic Separation Scheme can be obtained from www.amsa.gov.au/amsa/mn/mn2001/mn1301.htm.

Special Notices – Areas off Tasmania

T03-1, 2, 3 and 4

The Tasmanian release areas, and in particular release areas T03-1 to 3, coincide with important fishing grounds within the large **Southern Shark Fishery** (SSF). Fishing interests have concerns that seismic activities may impact upon shark movements and on behaviour during the summer migration of breeding stock to pupping grounds. Accordingly, successful applicants will need to liaise with the Southern Shark Fishery Management Advisory Committee at an early stage when planning operational activities, particularly with regard to the timing of seismic operations. Contact details for the Management Advisory Committee can be obtained from the AFMA website (as set out above under 'Notices for All Areas').

Release areas T03-1 to 4 also coincide with the **Rock Lobster and Giant Crab Fisheries**, managed by the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment. Successful applicants will need to be mindful of fishing industry concerns about possible impact of exploration activities, and are advised to liaise with the Tasmanian Fishing Industry Council and the Wild Fisheries Management Branch of the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, at an early stage prior to commencing exploration activities. Contact details for these bodies can be obtained through the AFMA 'links' website (as set out above under 'Notices for All Areas'). In addition, contact details for the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association are:

Telephone: +61 3 6376 1805

Facsimile: +61 3 6376 1805

E-mail: info@tasrocklobster.com.au

Website: www.tasrocklobster.com.au

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Inc, on behalf of Tasmania's aboriginal community, has indicated interests such as traditional fishing rights and ancestral grave sites in these areas. Contact details for the Centre are:

Telephone: +61 3 6234 8311

Facsimile: +61 3 6231 1348

T03-1, 2 and 3

Release areas T03-1 to 3 also coincide with the **Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery**. Successful applicants will need to be mindful of fishing industry concerns about possible impact of exploration activities on scallops and are advised to liaise with the Management Advisory Committee at an early stage prior to commencing exploration activities. Contact details for the Committee can be obtained from the AFMA website (as set out above under 'Notices for All Areas').

As the dredging operations in the fishery can be adversely affected by material left on the seabed, successful applicants will be requested to advise the location of any suspended wellheads to AFMA. This is in addition to the requirement to advise well locations to the RAN Hydrographic Office.

Special Notices – Areas off South Australia

S03-1 and 2

The large **Southern Shark Fishery** (SSF) extends across release areas S03-1 and 2. Fishing interests have concerns that seismic activities may impact upon shark movements and on behaviour during the summer migration of breeding stock to pupping grounds. Accordingly, successful applicants will need to liaise with the Southern Shark Fishery Management Advisory Committee at an early stage when planning operational activities, particularly with regard to the timing of seismic operations. Contact details for the Management Advisory Committee can be obtained from the AFMA website (as set out above under 'Notices for All Areas').

Release areas S03-1 to 2 coincide with the **Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery**, managed by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority. Successful applicants will need to be mindful of fishing industry concerns about possible impact of exploration activities on southern bluefin tuna and are advised to liaise with the Southern Bluefin Tuna Management Advisory Committee and the Tuna Boat Owners Association at an early stage prior to commencing exploration activities. Contact details for the Committee can be obtained from the AFMA website (as set out above under 'Notices for All Areas'). Contact details for the Tuna Boat Owners Association are:

Mr Brian Jeffriess
98 Broadmeadow Drive
Flagstaff Hill SA 5159
Telephone: +61 8 8373 2507
Facsimile: +61 8 8373 2508
E-mail: austuna@bigpond.com.au

Areas S03-1 to 2 also coincide with the **Northern Zone Rock Lobster State Fishery**, managed by the South Australian Department of Primary Industries and Resources. Successful applicants will need to be mindful of fishing industry concerns about possible impact of exploration activities, and are advised to liaise with the Rock Lobster Fisheries Management Committee at an early stage prior to commencing exploration activities. Contact details for this Committee are:

Telephone: +61 8 8272 7766
Facsimile: +61 8 8272 7767
E-mail: redwards@gazebo.os.com.au
Website: www.rocklobster.org.au

Special Notices – Areas off Western Australia

W03-3, 7, 10, 11, 12 and 13

Release areas W03-3, 7 and 10 to 13 coincide with **military restricted airspace** areas (R811, R852, R853, R854, R859, R860, R861, R862 and R870). When activated by a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM), the restricted airspace can operate down to sea level. Successful applicants will be required to liaise with the Department of Defence during the planning phase of operations and to provide information on the proposed location of any drilling rigs for inclusion on the register of structures database that is maintained by the Royal Australian Air Force Aeronautical Information Service (RAAF AIS). Contact details are set out above under 'Notices for All Areas'.



W03-3, 10 and 13

Release areas W03-3, 10 and 13 also coincide with **military firing ranges** (R811, R861A, R861B, R862A, R862B, R854B, R870A and R870B). Successful applicants will be required to liaise closely with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) in planning the timing of exploration activities. Contact details are set out above under 'Notices for All Areas'.

Applicants should also be aware that the possibility of **unexploded ordnance** exists in the area. This carries with it an associated risk of detonation.

W03-1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11

As detailed below, a number of areas in the Western Australia Adjacent Area lie in the general vicinity of **Marine Areas, Parks or Reserves** that encompass important marine habitats. Successful applicants will need to consider whether any exploration activities that have potential to impact upon these designated conservation areas should be referred under the EPBC Act. Referrals may be subject to a high level of environmental scrutiny.

- W03-1 to 3 are in the vicinity of **Scott, Seringapatnam and Ashmore Reefs**. These are sensitive marine environments providing habitat for several cetacean, fish and bird species listed in the EPBC Act.
- W03-7 is within 50km of the **Montebello Islands**, an area with a range of marine habitats supporting a rich and diverse range of marine fauna.
- W03-8 to 9 comes to within 50km of the **Dampier Archipelago and associated Marine Area** which contain a wide range of marine habitats and a diverse range of marine fauna species.
- W03-10 to 11 are as close as 80km to the **Ningaloo Marine Park**, which protects a range of rare species including the Whale Shark and the Humpback Whale, which are both listed as vulnerable and migratory species under the EPBC Act.

W03-12

Release area W03-12 comes to within 5km of **Barrow Island Marine Area** which contains important breeding habitat for a range of threatened species listed under the EPBC Act. Barrow Island is also proposed for listing as habitat critical to the survival of Hawksbill, Flatback and Green turtles. While Barrow Island has for some time been an important oil production area, successful applicants should be aware that any proposed exploration activities that they refer under the EPBC Act will be subject to a high level of environmental scrutiny.

W03-13

W03-13 is in the vicinity of the western boundary of the important **Ningaloo Marine Park**, which is managed as an IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) category II reserve. Accordingly, successful applicants are advised to submit referrals under the EPBC Act for any exploration activity that has potential to impact upon the Park. All such referrals will be subject to a high level of environmental scrutiny. Applicants should also be aware that vessels involved in petroleum exploration activities may not be allowed to enter the Park, even for activities incidental to exploration. This may have implications for the activities of support vessels, or the ability to manoeuvre seismic vessels and their streamers at the end of a survey leg.

W03-14

This area comes to within 15km of the **Houtman Abrolhos Marine Area** which contains unique coral reefs and is one of the most significant breeding areas in the world for seabirds. Successful applicants are advised to submit referrals under the EPBC Act for any exploration activity that has potential to impact upon the Marine Area. All referrals will be subject to a high level of environmental scrutiny.

W03-15

Release area W03-15 in the Perth Basin overlaps the Lancelin Defence Training Area **live firing range** (R146A) and coincides with **military restricted airspace** areas (R148 and R160). When activated by a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM), the restricted airspace can operate down to low altitudes including, at times, sea level. Successful applicants will be required to liaise with the Department of Defence during the planning phase of operations and to provide information on the proposed location of any drilling rigs for inclusion on the register of structures database that is maintained by the RAAF AIS.

It will be a condition of permit for this area that no exploration or development activities will be permitted within the Lancelin Defence Training Area without prior approval from the Department of Defence. Successful applicants will be required to consult closely with the Royal Australian Navy if proposing to enter into the Lancelin Defence Training Area. Contact details are set out above under 'Notices for All Areas'.

Also, a **submarine cable** lies quite close to area W03-15. Before undertaking any exploration activity that has potential to damage the cable, permit holders should telephone 1800 652 388 (free call within Australia) to obtain information on the precise location of the cable.

W03-13, 14 and 15

Release areas W03-13 to 15 also coincide with the **Rock Lobster Fishery**, managed by the Western Australia Department of Fisheries. Successful applicants will need to be mindful of fishing industry concerns about possible impact of exploration activities and are advised to liaise with the Western Australia Rock Lobster Council and the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council at an early stage prior to commencing exploration activities. Contact details for these Councils can be obtained from the Western Australia Department of Fisheries:

Telephone: +61 8 9482 7375

E-mail: commaware@fish.wa.gov.au

Website: www.fish.wa.gov.au.

Special Notices – Areas off Northern Territory

NT03-5, 6 and 7

Release areas NT03- 5 to 7 coincide with **Defence Practice Areas** and the **Northern Australia Exercise Area** (R202, R228, R2255). These areas are important for ensuring operational preparedness of naval and air forces and are used for a wide range of training activities, including gunnery and missile firings, and major multi-national exercises. Applicants are advised that training schedules are variable and may change at short notice. Access to affected permit areas may also be restricted. They should also be aware that all sea and air craft can be ordered to evacuate the practice areas at short notice. Successful applicants will be required to liaise closely with the Air Force and Navy on timing and location of any proposed operations and during the planning phase for any proposed permanent structures.

Potential applicants should also note that, as the practice area is used for live firings, **unexploded ordnance** may exist on the sea floor. This carries with it an associated risk of detonation.

The release areas also coincide with **military restricted airspace** areas (R202). When activated by a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM), the restricted airspace can operate down to sea level. Successful applicants will be required to liaise with the Department of Defence during the planning phase of operations and to provide information on the proposed location of any drilling rigs for inclusion on the register of structures database that is maintained by the Royal Australian Airforce Aeronautical Information Service (RAAF AIS).

Contact details for the various Defence activities are set out above under 'Notices for All Areas'.



NT03-3 and 7

These areas overlap the **Northern Prawn Fishery**, with that part of the fishery within NT03-7 attracting the highest level of fishing activity. The fishing season is determined each year by AFMA and comprises one or more periods between the months of April and December. Details are available on the AFMA website.

Successful applicants will be required to consult with representatives of the Northern Prawn Fishery Management Advisory Committee at an early stage in planning operational activities. Contact details for the committee can be obtained from AFMA (as set out above under 'Notices for All Areas').

As the bottom trawling operations in the fishery can be adversely affected by material left on the seabed, successful applicants will be requested to advise the location of any suspended wellheads to AFMA. This is in addition to the requirement to advise locations to the Navy Hydrographic Office.

Special Notices – Territory of Ashmore and Cartier Islands

None

ATTACHMENT A

APPLICATION FOR PETROLEUM EXPLORATION PERMIT OVER AREA NO

I/We, of

..... of

..... of

hereby make application for the grant of a petroleum exploration permit in respect of the blocks described hereunder.

DESCRIPTION OF BLOCKS

The reference hereunder is to the name of the map sheet of the 1:1 000 000 series and to the number of graticular sections shown thereon. Area

Map Sheet blocks numbered

Assessed to contain blocks.

Details in support of the application and the application fee of \$ are attached.

Dated this day of 20.....

.....

.....

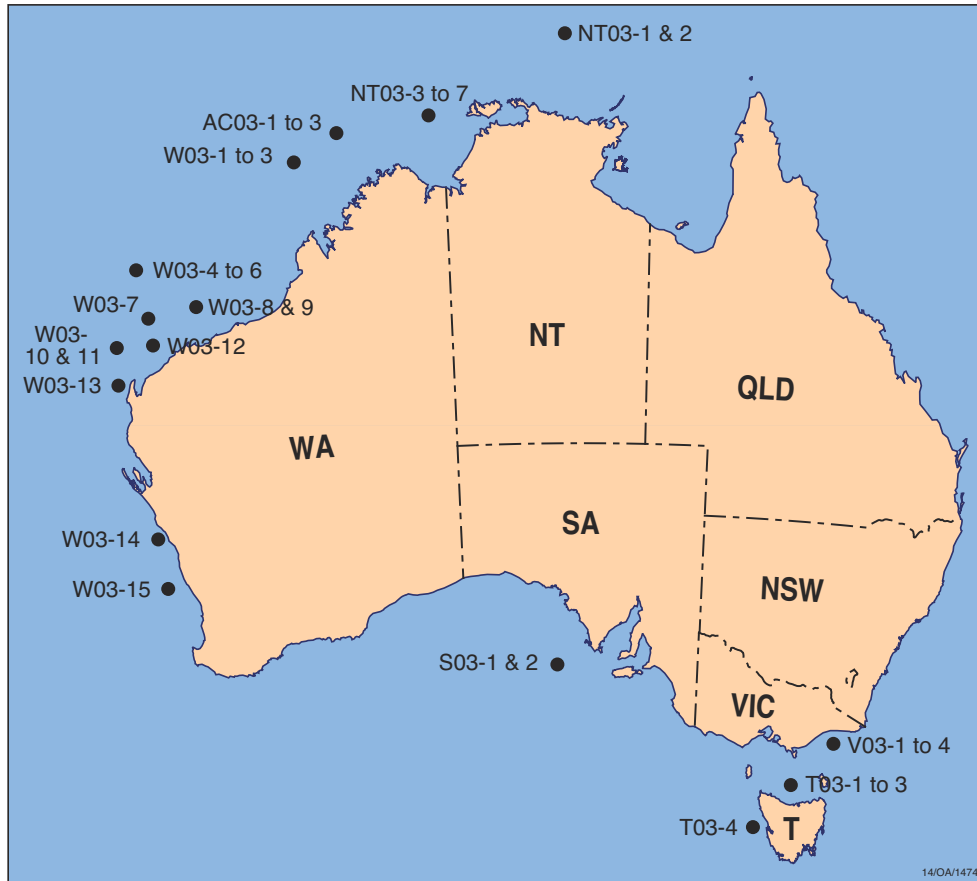
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Signature of Applicant(s)

Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967 of the Commonwealth of Australia



2003 Release Areas

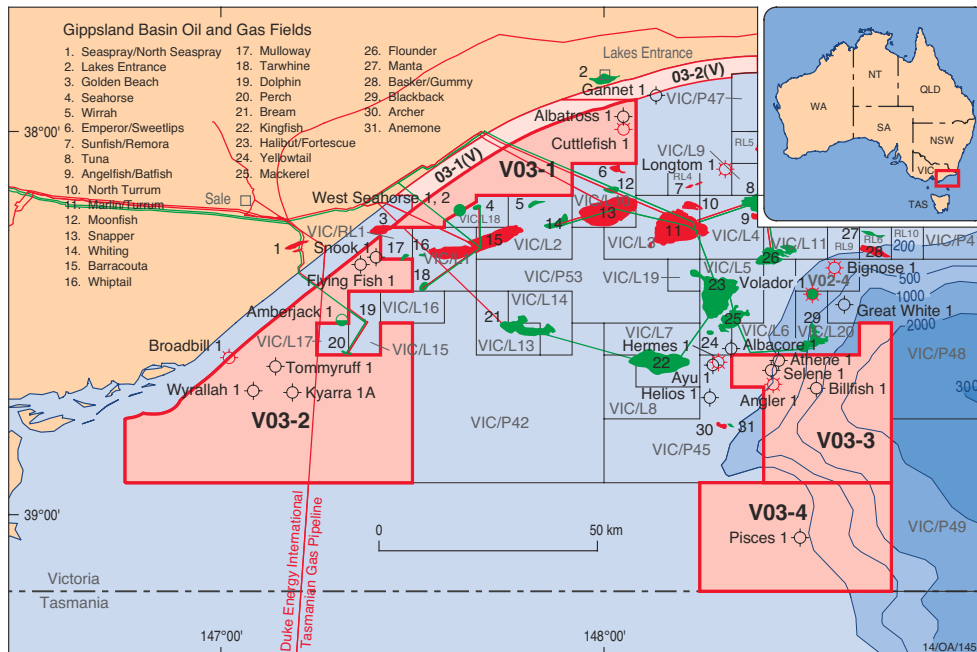


Areas V03-1, V03-2, V03-3 and V03-4

Gippsland Basin Victoria

(Bids close 25 September 2003 for V03-1)

(Bids close 25 March 2004 for V03-2, 3 & 4)

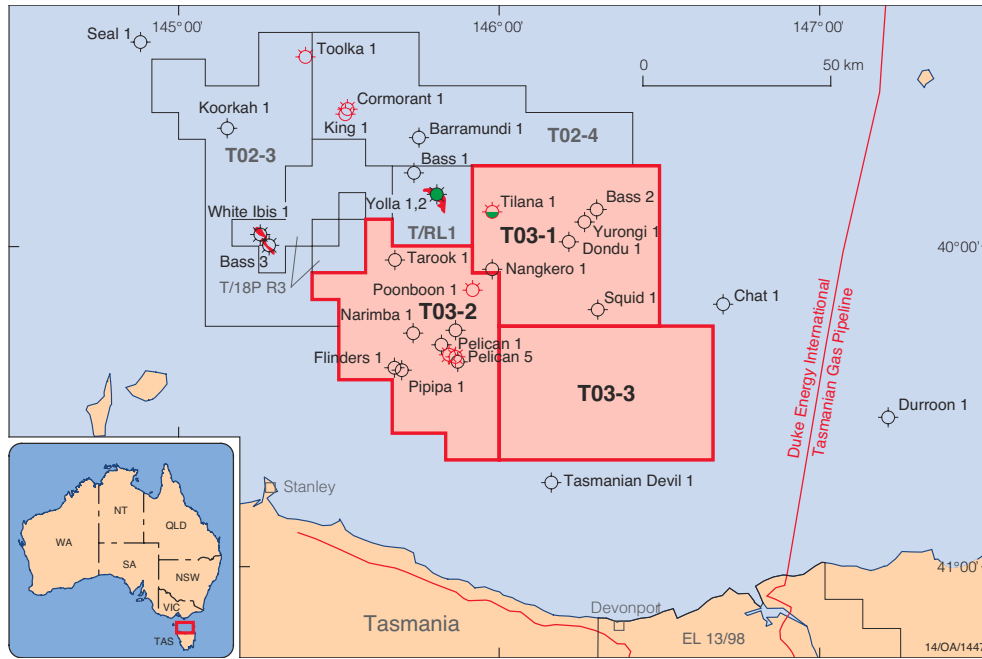


- Located in a world-class petroleum province with remaining reserves estimated at 600 million barrels of oil and 5 trillion cubic feet of gas.
- Adjacent to giant producing fields and proximal to existing infrastructure and an expanding gas market.
- Proven petroleum systems with a variety of untested play types including potential in deeper stratigraphic levels.
- 13,500 km of 2D seismic coverage (plus 3D) and good well control.
- Adjacent to State acreage release areas (coastal waters).
- Special Notices apply, refer to Guidance Notes.

Areas T03-1, T03-2 and T03-3

Bass Basin Tasmania

(Bids close 25 March 2004)

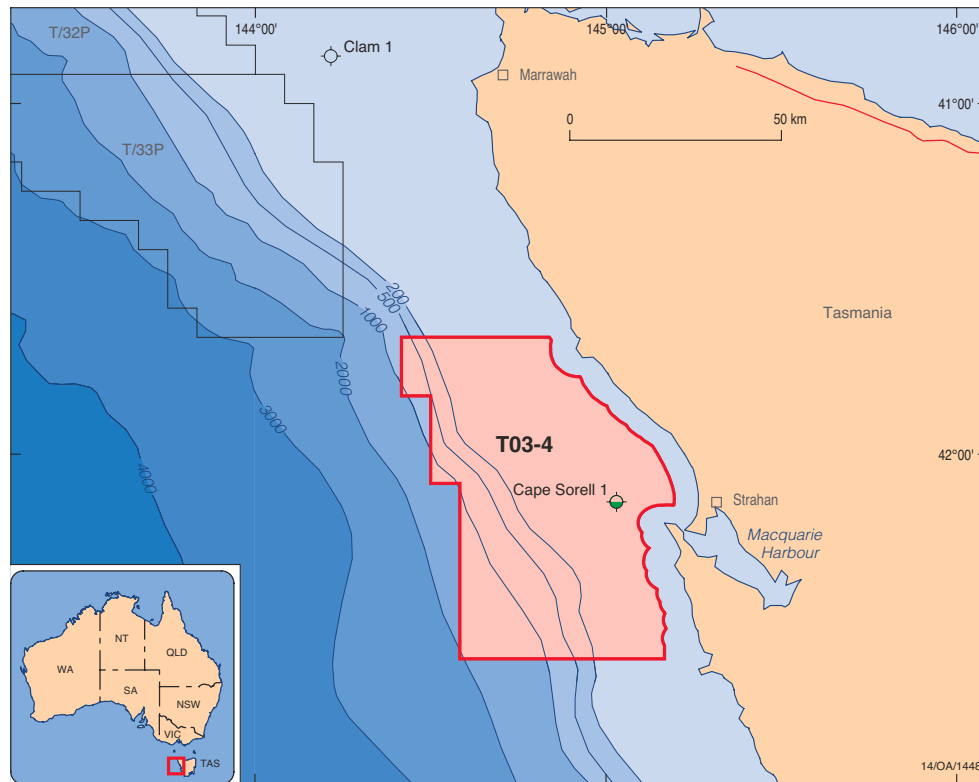


- Cretaceous-Tertiary rift basin containing proven hydrocarbon reserves yet only moderately explored.
- Release Area T03-2 includes the Pelican gas field, with Areas T03-1 and T03-2 adjacent to the commercial Yolla gas-condensate field.
- Recent work has identified possible palaeo-oil columns or migration pathways at Tilana-1, Yurongi-1 and Squid-1 (Area T03-1).
- Multiple large fault block plays undrilled in all release areas.
- Situated close to southeast Australian gas markets.
- Shallow water depths less than 75 m.
- Special Notices apply, refer to Guidance Notes.

Area T03-4

Sorell Basin Tasmania

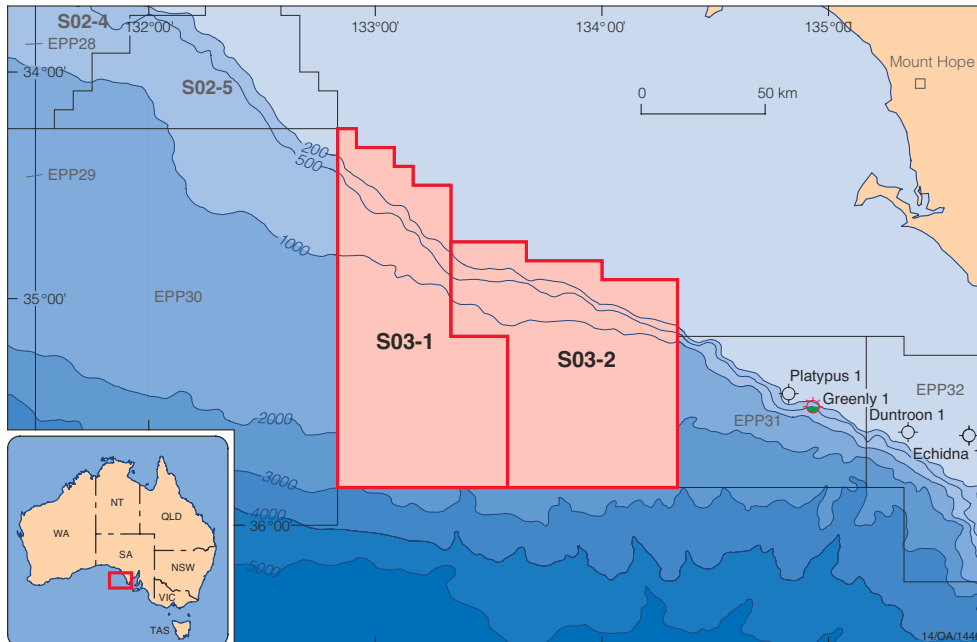
(Bids close 25 September 2003)



- One of the least explored of the southeast Australian marginal basins.
- Similar geological history to the producing Otway and Gippsland Basins.
- Oil shows and seismic anomaly within acreage.
- Large structural and stratigraphic trap potential.
- Abundant Upper Cretaceous and Palaeogene reservoir sands.
- Thick Upper Cretaceous depocentre under continental slope provides down-dip kitchen area.
- Special Notices apply, refer to Guidance Notes.

Areas S03-1 and S03-2 Ceduna Sub-basin, Bight Basin South Australia

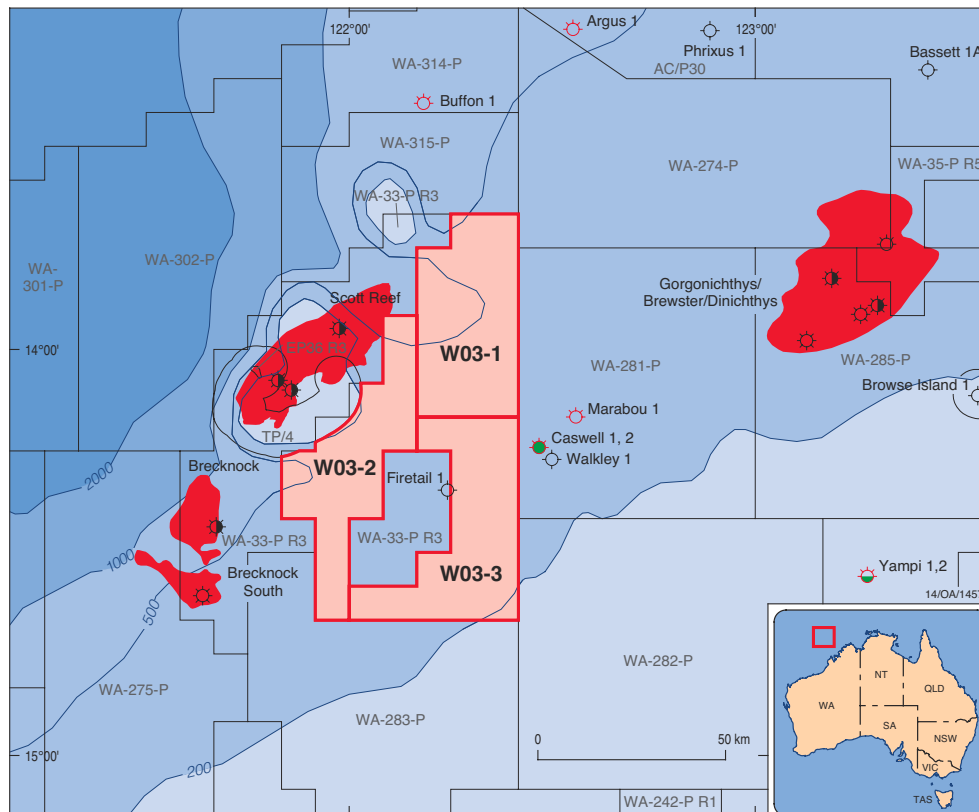
(Bids close 25 March 2004)



- Large unexplored frontier areas overlying thick Mesozoic depocentre.
- Large range of structural and stratigraphic plays in Late Cretaceous marine and deltaic successions.
- Adjacent to two current exploration permits.
- Water depths range from 200 to 3000 metres.
- Special Notices apply, refer to Guidance Notes.

Areas W03-1, W03-2 and W03-3 Caswell Sub-basin, Browse Basin Western Australia

(Bids close 25 March 2004)

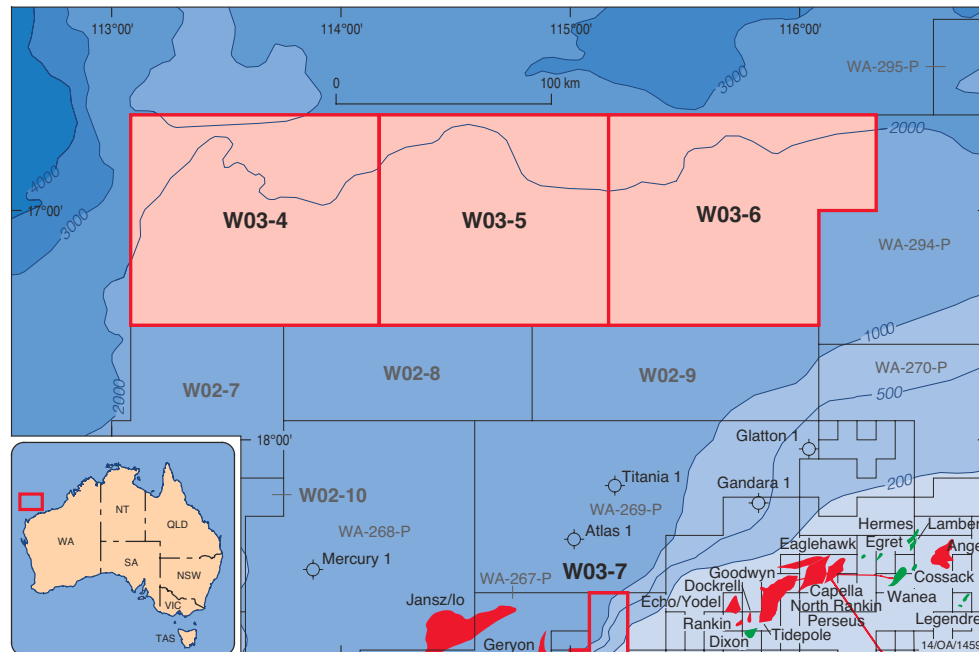


- Adjacent to giant Scott Reef and Brecknock gas fields.
- Minor oil accumulation in nearby Caswell-1, 2 wells.
- Early Cretaceous and Early-Middle Jurassic source rocks.
- Triassic horsts with Jurassic-Lower Cretaceous drapes.
- Early and Late Cretaceous submarine fan sands.
- Relatively shallow water depths 200-600m.
- Special Notices apply, refer to Guidance Notes.

Areas W03-4, W03-5 and W03-6

Northern Exmouth Plateau, Carnarvon Basin Western Australia

(Bids close 25 March 2004)

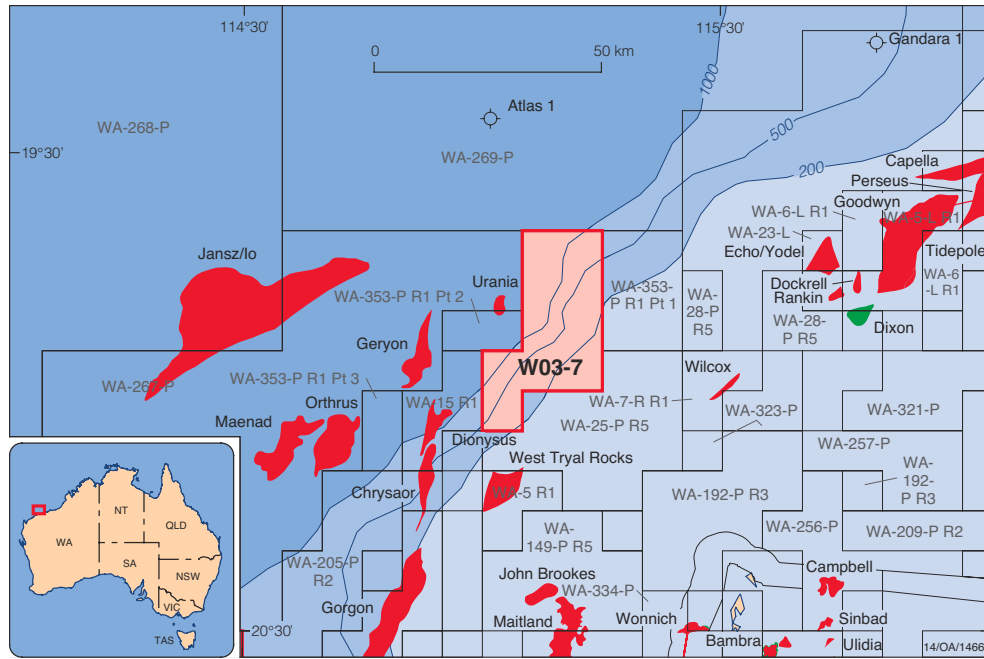


- Deep water extension to Australia's major hydrocarbon producing basin.
- Province of giant gas accumulations.
- Evidence of liquid hydrocarbons.
- Large undrilled structures observed on seismic data in release areas.
- Large frontier release areas.

Area W03-7

Rankin Platform, Carnarvon Basin Western Australia

(Bids close 25 September 2003)

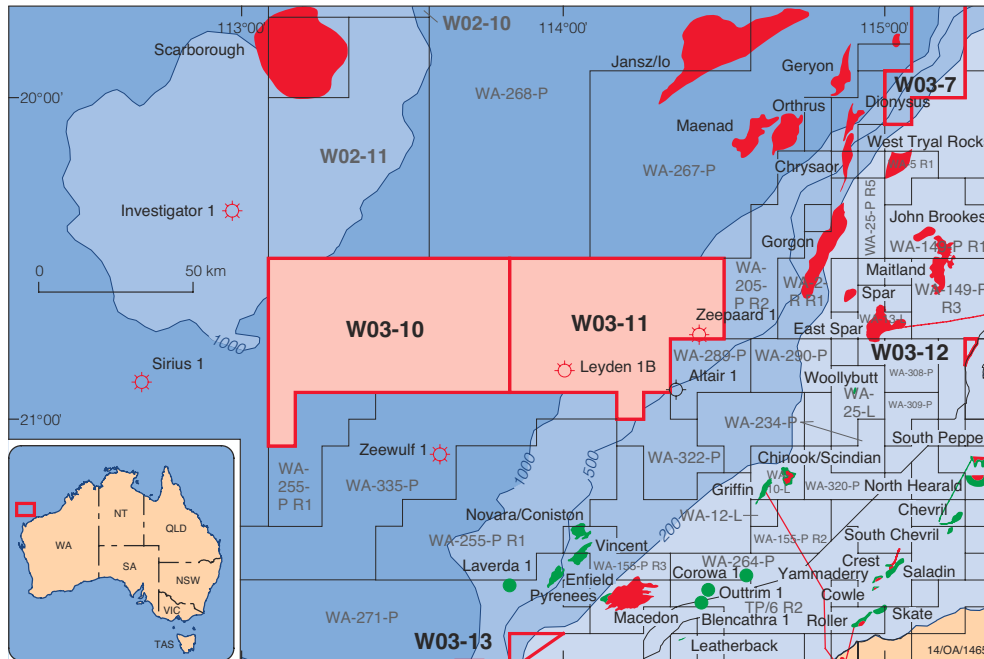


- Surrounded by recently discovered giant gas accumulations.
- Traditional proven Triassic plays.
- New but proven Upper Jurassic plays.
- Special Notices apply, refer to Guidance Notes.

Areas W03-10 and W03-11

Southern Exmouth Plateau, Carnarvon Basin Western Australia

(Bids close 25 September 2003)

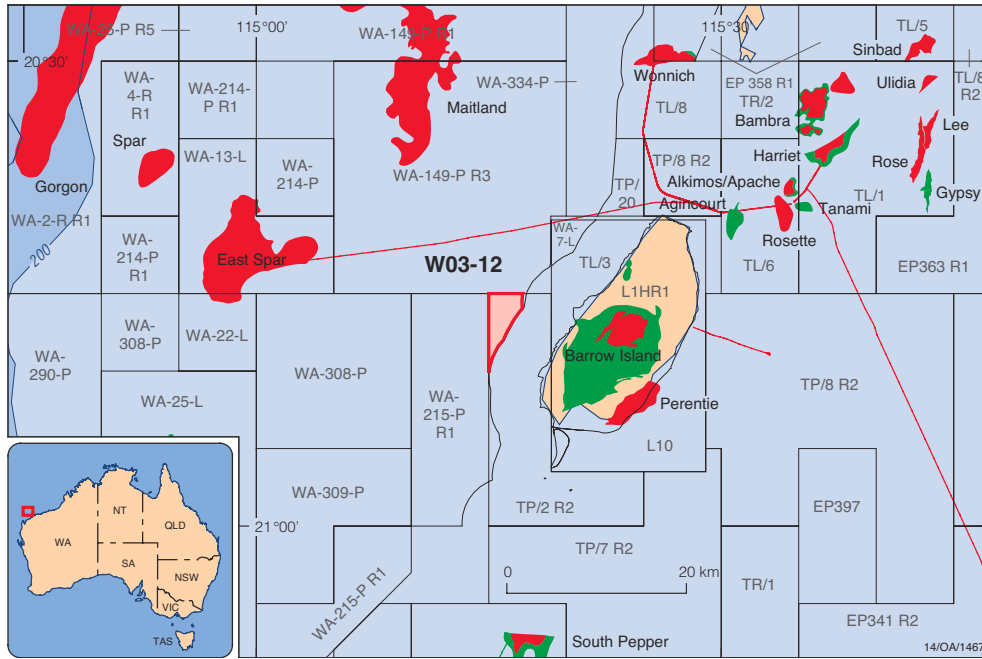


- Close to recently discovered giant gas accumulations.
- Traditional Mungaroo and Barrow plays.
- Traditional Triassic and Cretaceous plays, plus newly proven Late Jurassic plays.
- Special Notices apply, refer to Guidance Notes.

Area W03-12

Barrow Sub-basin, Carnarvon Basin Western Australia

(Bids close 25 September 2003)

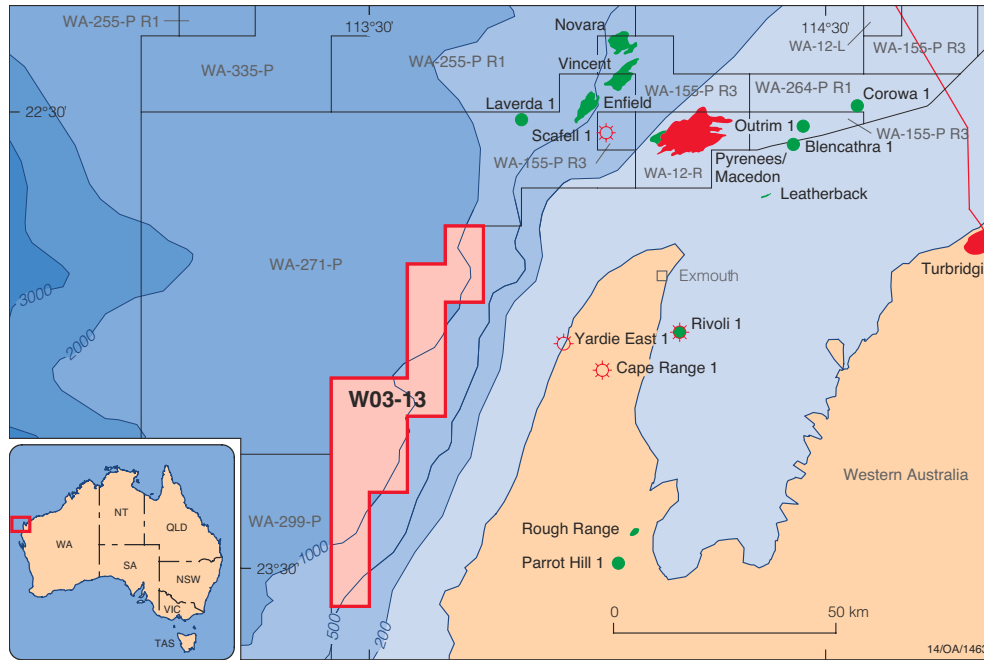


- Centrally located in Barrow Sub-basin oil patch.
- Shallow water (<50m).
- Close to infrastructure on Barrow Island.
- Adjacent to State acreage release areas (onshore and coastal waters).
- Special Notices apply, refer to Guidance Notes.

Area W03-13

Exmouth Sub-basin, Carnarvon Basin Western Australia

(Bids close 25 September 2003)

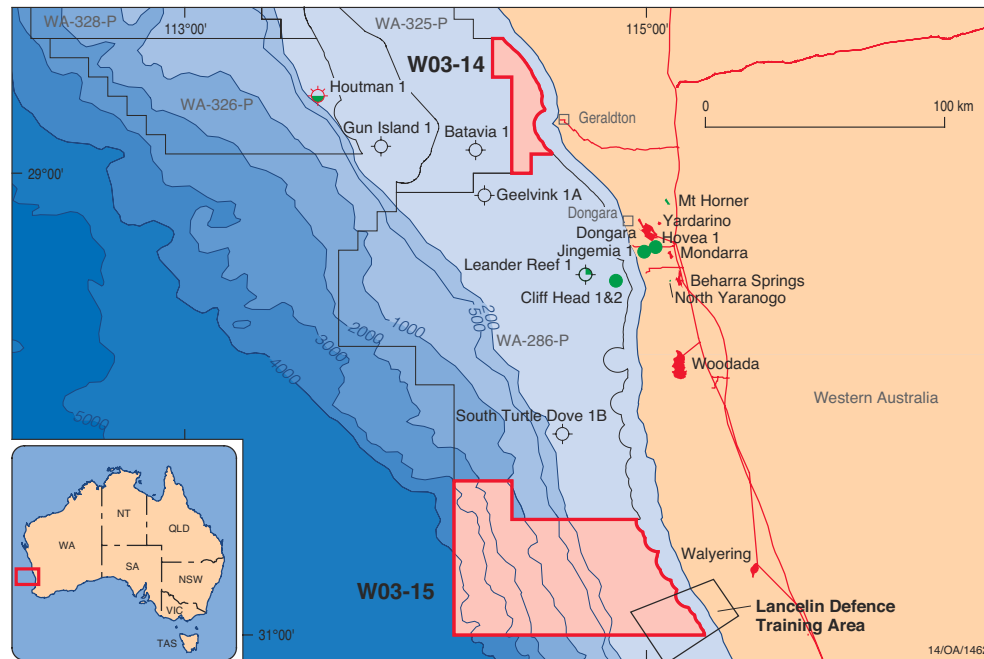


- Close to recent oil discoveries in this sub-basin.
- Pre-unconformity exploration play to the recent oil discoveries.
- Opportunity for other exploration plays.
- No substantial exploration in the last two decades in the release area.
- Special Notices apply, refer to Guidance Notes.

Areas W03-14 and W03-15

Perth Basin Western Australia

(Bids close 25 September 2003)

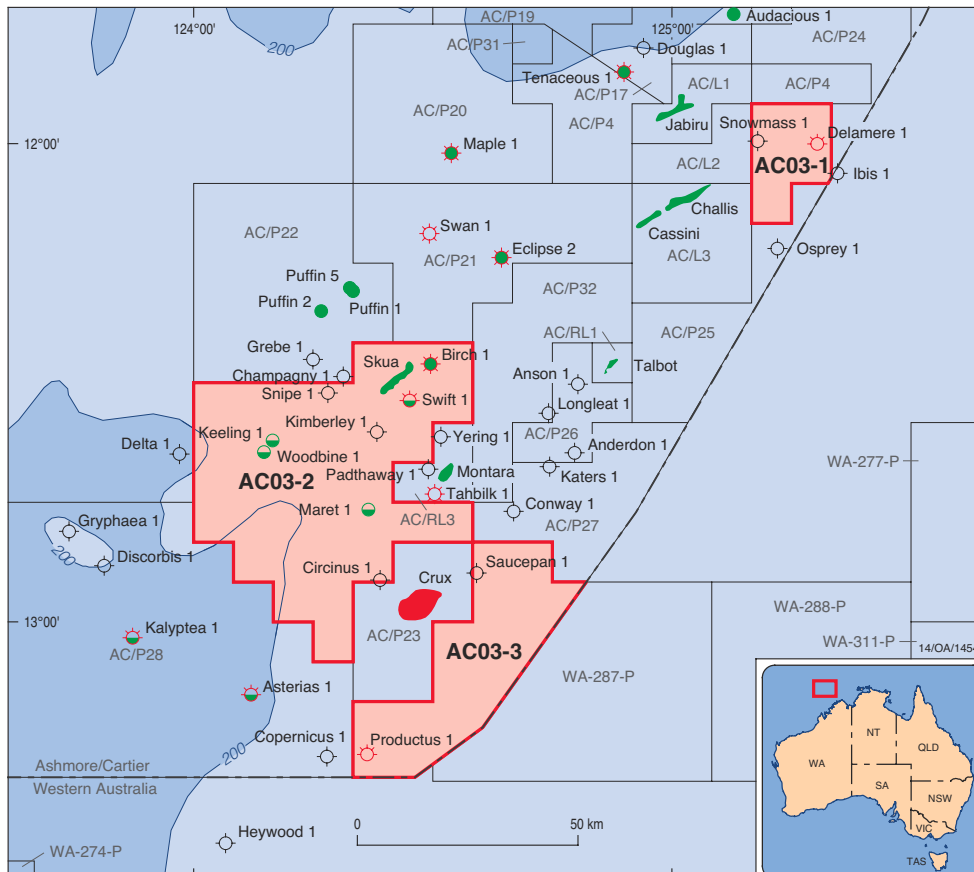


- Close by significant new oil discoveries both on and offshore.
- Close to established onshore gas pipeline network.
- A variety of proven petroleum systems and play types.
- Close to established onshore gas pipeline and other infrastructure.
- Adjacent to State acreage release areas (onshore and coastal waters).
- Special Notices apply, refer to Guidance Notes.

Areas AC03-1, AC03-2 and AC03-3

Vulcan Sub-basin, Bonaparte & Northern Browse Basins Territory of Ashmore & Cartier Islands

(Bids close 25 March 2004)

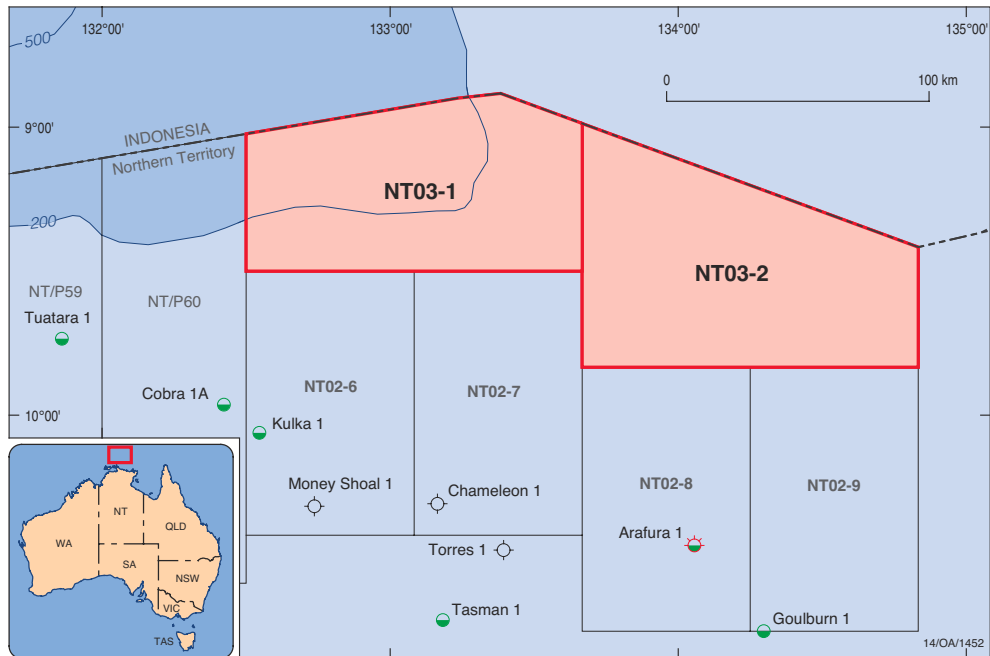


- Three areas in petroleum producing region.
- Area AC03-3 contains the (decommissioned) Skua oil field.
- Infrastructure in place in adjoining permits.
- Potential for additional structural and stratigraphic trapping styles.
- Good exploration data with seismic and well ties.
- Water depth mainly in 70 to 120m range.
- Proven source/reservoir/seal, potential for additional migration into shallow sequences.

Areas NT03-1 and NT03-2

Arafura Basin Northern Territory

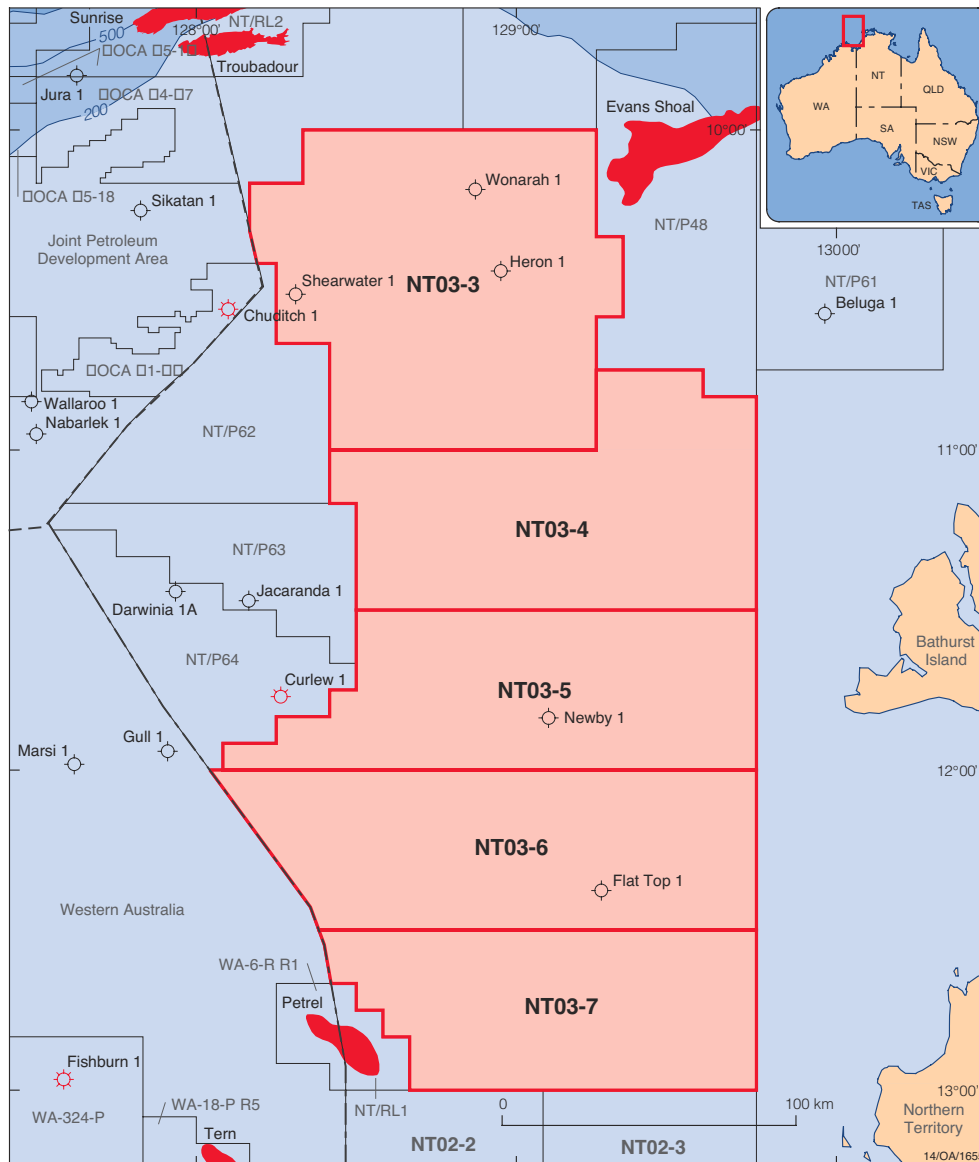
(Bids close 25 September 2003)



- Thick, untested Palaeozoic section north of the Goulburn Graben.
- Several oil shows in Ordovician-Jurassic units within graben.
- Numerous bitumen strandings, ALF and SAR slicks in region.
- Mature Palaeozoic source units.
- Vuggy Ordovician dolostones and Jurassic sandstone reservoirs.
- Large undrilled frontier release areas.
- Shallow water depths (60 to 150 metres).

Areas NT03-3, NT03-4, NT03-5, NT03-6 and NT03-7 Eastern Bonaparte Basin Northern Territory

(Bids close 25 September 2003)



- Proven Palaeozoic oil and gas province.
- Areas adjacent to potentially commercial gas fields.
- Over 25,000km of new seismic acquired in the last five years.
- Various styles of structural and stratigraphic traps.
- Shallow water depths (30 to 100 metres).
- Special Notices apply, refer to Guidance Notes.