



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Resources**  
**Energy and Tourism**

## **AUSTRALIAN PETROLEUM NEWS**

DECEMBER 2009

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### **Proposed Areas: 2010 Offshore Petroleum Exploration Acreage Release**

The 2010 Acreage Release area nomination process is now complete. There was substantial interest and participation across all sectors of the industry. Thank you to all organisations involved in this process.

A map outlining areas short listed for inclusion in the 2010 Acreage Release can be found at the end of this edition of *Australian Petroleum News*. Please note that the proposed areas have not been finalised and are still subject to change.

It is anticipated that the Minister for Resources and Energy, the Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP, will announce the *2010 Offshore Petroleum Exploration Acreage Release* at the annual Australian Petroleum Producers and Explorers Association conference in Brisbane, Queensland (16 to 19 May 2010).

Following the Minister's announcement, the dedicated 2010 acreage release data package will be available from Geoscience Australia.

Please note, nomination of an area (and potential short listing) does not guarantee its inclusion in the 2010 Acreage Release.

All nominations are subjected to a rigorous assessment process by the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism and Geoscience Australia. This assessment takes into account interest in previous releases in proposed areas; whether there is a new geoscientific story or a new market development that might generate the interest of potential bidders; any adverse impact on bidding for current offshore petroleum exploration acreage release areas; and international boundary negotiations.

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## **Acreage Re-release: 2009 Round 1**

Bidding on the first round of the *2009 Offshore Petroleum Exploration Acreage Release* closed on 3 December 2009. Nine areas did not receive bids (V09-1 to 3, S09-7, W09-3 and W09-13 to 16).

Six of these areas will be re-released at the discretion of the relevant Joint Authorities. Bidding on re-release areas will close on 29 April 2010, in line with second round bidding for this release.

- **V09-1 to 3**
- **S09-7**
- **W09-3 and W09-13**

Re-released areas are open to all interested bidders under the work program bidding system. The areas are also open for bidding by any company who wishes to fulfil its obligations under a good standing arrangement after cancellation or expiry in default of an exploration permit.

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## **Summary of Areas Currently Available for Bidding**

<b>Release/round</b>	<b>Areas</b>	<b>Bid Closing Date</b>
2009 Acreage Release second closing round [13 areas]	V09-4 S09-1 to 6 W09-6 to 8 W09-17 to 19	Thursday, 29 April 2010
Re-release of 2009 areas (from first closing round) [6 areas]	V09-1 to 3 S09-7 W09-3 and W09-13	Thursday, 29 April 2010

Further information on these areas and application requirements can be found by visiting this website: [www.ret.gov.au/petexp](http://www.ret.gov.au/petexp) or by requesting the free *2009 Offshore Petroleum Exploration Acreage Release* package by e-mail: [petroleum.exploration@ret.gov.au](mailto:petroleum.exploration@ret.gov.au).

Pre-competitive geological data associated with release areas may be available and industry is invited to contact Geoscience Australia, who offer free, secure access to the latest seismic and geological data supporting the 2009 Acreage Release. For bookings please email: [biu@ga.gov.au](mailto:biu@ga.gov.au) or visit: [http://www.ga.gov.au/oceans/oar\\_DataRoom.jsp](http://www.ga.gov.au/oceans/oar_DataRoom.jsp)

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## **Geoscience Australia News: Data Supporting 2009 Acreage Release Areas**

The results of a 2007 geological sampling survey in the Bight Basin are presented in Geoscience Australia Record 2009/24, *Bight Basin Geological Sampling and Seepage Survey, R/V Southern Surveyor SS01/2007*. This report may be relevant to industry consideration of the current release areas in the Ceduna Sub-basin (S09-1 to S09-6).

A highlight of the Bight Basin survey was the collection of Cenomanian-Turonian organic-rich rocks from the north western edge of the Ceduna Sub-basin. Geochemical analyses have characterised these samples as world-class, oil-prone, marine potential source rocks.

This Record provides details of the samples collected during the survey, and focuses on the organic geochemical and biostratigraphic analysis of these rocks. The Record is presented in CD-ROM format and is available from the Geoscience Australia Sales Centre at: [www.ga.gov.au/sales](http://www.ga.gov.au/sales)

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## **Promotion of Australian Offshore Petroleum Exploration Acreage**

Representatives from Geoscience Australia will be available at NAPE to discuss technical aspects of the Australian offshore petroleum exploration acreage releases.

Representatives of the Exploration team in the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism and Geoscience Australia will be available at the 2010 APPEA and Good Oil conferences to discuss Australian exploration policy and technical matters.

**NAPE Expo    Houston, Texas, USA            11 - 12 February 2010**  
(North American Prospect Expo)

**APPEA    Brisbane, QLD, Australia            16 - 19 May 2010**  
(Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association Annual Conference)

**RIU Good Oil    Fremantle, WA, Australia    7 - 8 September 2010**  
(Resource Information Unit)

Please visit the Australian booth if you are at these events. We would also be happy to organise private meetings with companies in conjunction with these events or in Canberra, Australia at any time. Please contact the Manager - Exploration by e-mail: [petroleum.exploration@ret.gov.au](mailto:petroleum.exploration@ret.gov.au)

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## Montara Wellhead Platform – Commission of Inquiry

On 5 November 2009, the Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP, Minister for Resources and Energy, announced a Commission of Inquiry (the Inquiry) into the uncontrolled release of oil and gas from the Montara Wellhead Platform in the Timor Sea.

The Inquiry was established under Part 9.10A of the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* and has powers similar to a Royal Commission. Mr David Borthwick AO PSM will be the Commissioner conducting the Inquiry.

The Inquiry is seeking submissions from interested parties by **22 December 2009**. Any person or organisation may make a submission. At this time, a decision has not been made on the scope of hearings or about what aspects of the Terms of Reference might be involved.

Information about the Inquiry, including the Terms of Reference and an issues paper to assist in the preparation of submissions, is available from the Commission of inquiry's website at: [www.montarainquiry.gov.au](http://www.montarainquiry.gov.au), or by calling +61 2 6213 7777.

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## Consolidation of Regulations

The work on consolidation of regulations under the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006* (the Act) has achieved some significant milestones in safety regulation over the past year.

The Management of Safety on Offshore Facilities Regulations, the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations and the Diving Safety Regulations\* have been combined into a new *Offshore Petroleum (Safety) Regulations 2009*. The *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) (Pipeline) Regulations 2001* have also been amended to remove the need for pipeline safety management plans, as these will now be 'facilities' as part of the new safety regulations. Changes have also been made to the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Safety Levies) Act 2006*, to remove the pipeline safety management plan levy and increase the unit value of the levy by a small percentage.

**These changes will come into operation on 1 January 2010.**

Other changes include amendments to the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) (Management of Environment) Regulations 1999* to make them consistent with the Act. The regulations will be renamed the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage (Environment) Regulations 2009* and will incorporate greenhouse gas activities. The new regulations will be made available as soon as possible.

Copies of the amendments will be available on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments as soon as they are registered.

\*Full titles: *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) (Management of Safety on Offshore Facilities) Regulations 1996*; *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) (Occupational Health and Safety) Regulations 1993*; and *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) (Diving Safety) Regulations 2002*.

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## Australian Petroleum Statistics

The September 2009 issue of *Australian Petroleum Statistics* (APS) is now available. It contains statistics on petroleum production, refining, consumption, stocks, imports and exports.

APS was previously only available by subscription but is now free of charge. The publication may be found at: [www.ret.gov.au/resources/fuels/aps/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.ret.gov.au/resources/fuels/aps/Pages/default.aspx) This website also contains archived issues of APS.

Further information on APS can be obtained by contacting Ms Teresa Peczalski by Phone +61 2 6213 7797 or e-mail: [psims@ret.gov.au](mailto:psims@ret.gov.au)

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If you or your colleagues would like to receive future annual Offshore Petroleum Exploration Acreage Release publications and be notified when new editions of this newsletter are issued, simply forward your address, phone/fax and e-mail details to the e-mail address below.

**There is no charge for this service or the acreage release package.** This distribution list is not used for purposes other than notifying registered parties of relevant petroleum issues.

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