

# AUSTRALIAN PETROLEUM NEWS

DECEMBER 2001

We at ITR cordially wish you a safe and happy time over the Christmas/New Year season. Thank you for your input and feedback over the past year, and we look forward to continuing to work with you in 2002 to improve and promote exploration and development in the Australian offshore petroleum industry.

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## Award of Offshore Exploration Permits from the 2000 Acreage Release in the Queensland & Western Australia adjacent areas

Details of the latest offshore exploration permits awarded from the 2000 acreage releases are set out below. All bids received to date for areas from the 2000 acreage release have now completed the assessment and granting of title process.

<u>Area No</u>	<u>Basin</u>	<u>Permit No</u>	<u>Date Granted</u>	<u>Successful Applicant(s)</u>
Q00-1	Carpentaria	Q/23P	13 Dec 2001	Gulf Energy Pty Ltd
W00-1	Bonaparte	WA-316-P	6 Dec 2001	West Oil NL
W00-26	Bonaparte	WA-317-P	13 Dec 2001	Drillsearch Energy Limited
W00-27	Bonaparte	WA-318-P	13 Dec 2001	Drillsearch Energy Limited
W00-30	Bonaparte	WA-319-P	13 Dec 2001	Drillsearch Energy Limited

Permit Q/23P (Gulf Energy Pty Ltd) has a guaranteed work program for the first three years involving seismic surveying, seismic reprocessing and geological and geophysical studies, estimated at A\$1.5 million. The secondary work program proposes seismic surveying, geological and geophysical studies and two wells, estimated at A\$11.475 million.

Permit WA-316-P (West Oil NL) has a guaranteed work program for the first three years involving seismic reprocessing geological and geophysical studies and one well, estimated at A\$6.35 million. The secondary work program proposes seismic surveying, studies and one well, estimated at A\$10.65 million.

Permits WA-317-P, WA-318-P and WA-319-P (Drillsearch Energy Limited) each have a guaranteed work program for the first three years involving seismic surveying and geological and geophysical studies, estimated at A\$1.98 million. The secondary work programs all propose seismic surveying, geological and geophysical studies and two wells, estimated at A\$16.85 million each.

The permits are awarded for a term of six years under the work program bidding system, and each component of the programs must be completed in the designated year or earlier.

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## Areas currently available for bidding

<b>Areas</b>	<b>Bid Closing Date</b>
2000/2001 Re-release areas W00-24, W00-53, NT01-2 to 5,	11 April 2002

AC01-1, W01-1, 10, 11 & 14

2001 Release areas  
(2nd bidding round)

W01-2 to 9, W01-16 to 26,  
V01-1 to 4, S01-1 to 3, T01-1 to 3

11 April 2002

The policy to re-release areas not successfully bid on was adopted to enable permit holders to maintain their good standing after a permit is cancelled. However, the re-released areas are open to all interested bidders under the work program bidding system.

Further information on these areas can be found on our website at:

<http://www.isr.gov.au/resources/petroleum.html> or you can have a CD-ROM sent to you by e-mailing your request to: [petroleum.exploration@isr.gov.au](mailto:petroleum.exploration@isr.gov.au) .

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## Australian Booth at NAPE Conference

ITR and Geoscience Australia, along with representatives from the Western Australia and Victorian State Governments, will co-host a booth at NAPE (North American Petroleum Expo) being held in Houston, USA on 30-31 January 2002.

We invite you to visit us at Booth 1848 in the International Area next to the Lounge, and to hear our presentation on Tuesday, 29 January 2002. If you have particular questions about Australian exploration opportunities - whether geotechnical issues concerning the 2001 or upcoming 2002 acreage releases, or about the regulatory and fiscal regime - we will be happy to discuss any of these issues with you.

While in Houston we have also set aside some time on Monday 28 January or Friday, 1 February to meet with individual companies. If you would like a short presentation on Australian opportunities in-house and a more detailed discussion of the investment environment please let us know by e-mailing your request to [petroleum.exploration@isr.gov.au](mailto:petroleum.exploration@isr.gov.au) beforehand or contact John Brush or Marita Bradshaw at the NAPE booth.

Please don't miss this opportunity to gain an insight into Australia's vibrant exploration scene.

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## Amendments to Regulations under the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967*

On 20 December 2001 Executive Council considered, and assented to, the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Amendment (Application of Criminal Code) Regulations 2001. These Amendment Regulations were gazetted on 21 December 2001 and take immediate effect.

The Amendment Regulations primarily harmonise existing Regulations with the Commonwealth's *Criminal Code*. If action had not been taken to amend the Regulations then, following application of the Criminal Code to all existing Commonwealth legislation on 15 December 2001, the interpretation of existing criminal offence provisions might have changed.

The most typical change made to the offence provisions was to remove 'global' provisions (eg ones that said that a certain class of offences were strict liability offences) and to replace these provisions with individual statements under each relevant offence provision (eg that the offence was one of strict liability).

Aside from the many mechanistic changes that were made for harmonisation purposes there were a small number of changes made which involved minor policy changes. One particular problem that had to be addressed for harmonisation purposes was to ensure that offence provisions were framed so that there is no doubt about what the law requires. In this context, requirements for industry operators to do certain things “as soon as possible” or “as soon as practicable”, without any specified maximum timeframe, were unacceptable. These deficiencies have been addressed in the Amendment Regulations. Industry operators will still be required to do what is required “as soon as practicable” (or similar) but the Amendment Regulations provide maximum timeframes for the action to take place. See next item.

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## Changes to Reporting Requirements for Accidents, Incidents and Other Matters

For the reason set out in the above item on the amendments to the Regulations under the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967*, there are now limits on the timeframes for reporting accidents, incidents and a small number of other matters. The new provisions are summarised below.

### **Petroleum (Submerged Lands) (Management of Environment) Regulations 1999:**

- operator to give notice (orally or in writing) to the Designated Authority of a reportable incident as soon as practicable but within 2 hours of the incident, or of its detection by the operator (previous subregulations 26(1) and 26(2); amended subregulation 26(1) now refers);
- operator to give a written report of a reportable incident to the Designated Authority as soon as practicable but within 3 days of the incident, or of its detection by the operator, unless the Designated Authority specifies, in writing and within that period, another period (previous subregulation 26(3); amended subregulation 26(4) now refers); and
- operator to notify the Designated Authority of certain details of the appointment of an agent within 7 days (amended subregulation 32(1) refers).

### **Petroleum (Submerged Lands) (Management of Safety of Offshore Facilities) Regulations 1996:**

- operator to give an inspector initial notice (oral or written) of a significant accident or incident as soon as practicable but within 2 hours of the incident, or of its detection by the operator (previous subregulation 31(1); new subregulation 31(1A) now refers);
- operator to give an inspector a report in writing of a significant accident or incident as soon as practicable but within 3 days of the accident or incident, or of its detection by the operator, unless the Designated Authority specifies, in writing and within that period, another period (previous subregulation 31(2); new subregulations 31(2) and (2A) now refer);
- operator to submit to an inspector a summary in writing of deaths and injuries on a facility as soon as practicable but not later than 15 days after the end of each month (amended subregulation 31(4) refers).

In each of the above cases, it will be a defence to a prosecution if the defendant has a reasonable excuse.

The Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Amendment (Application of Criminal Code) Regulations 2001 (No. 1) 2001 No. 346 can be viewed on the Scaleplus website: <http://scaleplus.law.gov.au> under the 'numrul' database of Commonwealth law. We will place a copy of the Amendment Regulations on our own website as soon as possible.

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## Advertising in the 2002 Acreage Release Package

Our acreage release CD-ROM is now mailed to over 700 people in the industry, both domestically and internationally (including USA, Canada, Japan, Korea, China, India, Europe and the UK).

Support industries, such as seismic companies, are able to advertise their products & services that are applicable to the areas in the release package. We encourage potential bidders to visit the 'Products & Services' section of the CD-ROM to ensure you garner all the information and activities available for the various areas.

Companies interested in placing advertising in the acreage release package should register their interest (no obligation) by e-mail to: [petroleum.exploration@isr.gov.au](mailto:petroleum.exploration@isr.gov.au) . Advertising is placed on the CD-ROM, and can be hotlinked back to your company home page. The cost for this advertising is A\$2,200 including 10% GST (for the equivalent of up to 4 pages). Expressions of interest should be received by the end of December, with pdfs of your advertising to be forwarded to the e-mail address above by 15 February 2002.

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## Are you on our distribution list?

If you or your colleagues would like to receive future annual Offshore Petroleum Exploration Acreage Releases on CD-ROM and/or 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 CD-ROM. This distribution list is not used for purposes other than notifying registered parties of relevant petroleum issues, as indicated above.

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