Eight new offshore petroleum exploration permits in the Western Australia and Tasmania adjacent areas have been granted. The permits will be jointly administered by the Australian Government and the respective State Governments.

All permits were awarded under the work program bidding system for an initial term of six years with a maximum of two renewals each of five years. The permits result from bids for offshore petroleum acreage in the bidding round that closed either 30 September 2004 or 31 March 2005.

The work program commitments for the awarded permits are valued at more than A$160 million over the next six years. Each component of the program must be completed in the designated year or earlier.

Two of the Western Australia permits are located over Designated Frontier Areas, which allow an immediate uplift to 150 per cent for exploration expenditure deductions against petroleum resource rent tax.

Six of the eight permits result from the 2004 acreage release with the remaining two resulting from re-release of 2003 acreage.

Details of the latest offshore exploration permits awarded are set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permit</th>
<th>Basin</th>
<th>Area No</th>
<th>Date Granted</th>
<th>Successful Applicant(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WA-362-P</td>
<td>Carnarvon</td>
<td>W03-5</td>
<td>22nd June 05</td>
<td>Octanex NL, Strata Resources NL and Gascorp Australia Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA-363-P</td>
<td>Carnarvon</td>
<td>W03-6</td>
<td>22nd June 05</td>
<td>Octanex NL, Strata Resources NL and Gascorp Australia Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA-364-P</td>
<td>Carnarvon</td>
<td>W04-2</td>
<td>28 June 05</td>
<td>Chevron Australia Pty Ltd and Shell Development (Aust) Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA-365-P</td>
<td>Carnarvon</td>
<td>W04-3</td>
<td>28 June 05</td>
<td>Chevron Australia Pty Ltd and Shell Development (Aust) Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA-366-P</td>
<td>Carnarvon</td>
<td>W04-4</td>
<td>28 June 05</td>
<td>Chevron Australia Pty Ltd and Shell Development (Aust) Pty Ltd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Permit T/40P (released as T04-1) in the Otway Basin has been awarded to Santos Offshore Pty Ltd. The company proposed a guaranteed work program of 800 km of new 2D seismic surveying, seismic reprocessing and studies, at an estimated cost of $4 million. The secondary work program consists of acquiring new 3D seismic, studies and one well at an estimated total cost of $18.7 million. The permit was granted on 23 June 2005. There were no other bids for the area.

Permit T/41P (released as T04-2) in the Bass Basin has been awarded to 3D Oil Pty Ltd. The company proposed a guaranteed work program of 200 km of 2D seismic reprocessing, 2200 km of new 2D seismic surveying and studies, at an estimated cost of $4.36 million. The secondary work program consists of recording and processing 3D seismic data, studies and one well, estimated to cost $11.6 million. The permit was granted on 20 June 2005. There were no other bids for the area.

Permit WA-362-P (re-release area W03-5) has been awarded to Octanex NL, Strata Resources NL, and Gascorp Australia Ltd. The companies proposed a primary work program of studies, 2D seismic reprocessing and 1100 km of new 2D seismic surveying at an estimated cost of $2.2 million. The secondary program consists of seismic interpretation, studies, and one well, estimated to cost $18.6 million. The permit was granted on 22nd June 2005. There were no other bids for the area.

Permit WA-363-P (re-release area W03-6) has been awarded to Octanex NL, Strata Resources NL, and Gascorp Australia Ltd. The companies proposed a primary work program of studies, 2D seismic reprocessing and 1100 km of new 2D seismic surveying at an estimated cost of $2.2 million. The secondary program consists of seismic interpretation, studies, and one well, estimated to cost $18.6 million. The permit was granted on 22nd June 2005. There were no other bids for the area.

Permit WA-364-P (released as W04-2, a Designated Frontier Area) has been awarded to Chevron Texaco Australia Pty Ltd and Shell Development (Australia) Pty Ltd. The companies proposed a guaranteed work program of studies, and 2D seismic reprocessing, and 1010 km2 of new 3D seismic surveying and 1011 km of 2D at an estimated cost of $6.8 million. The secondary program consists of studies and one well at an estimated cost of $15.3 million. The permit was granted on 28 June 2005. There were no other bids for this area.

Permit WA-365-P (released as W04-3) has been awarded to Chevron Texaco Australia Pty Ltd and Shell Development (Australia) Pty Ltd. The companies proposed a guaranteed work program of studies, and 2D seismic reprocessing, 2511 km2 of new 3D seismic surveying and two wells, estimated to cost $44.80 million. The secondary work program consists of studies at an estimated cost of $450 000. The permit was granted on 28 June 2005. There was one other bid for this area.
Permit WA-366-P (released as W04-4, a Designated Frontier Area) has been awarded to Chevron Texaco Australia Pty Ltd and Shell Development (Australia) Pty Ltd. The companies proposed a guaranteed work program studies, 2D seismic reprocessing and 1010 km 2D seismic surveying at an estimated cost of $1.5 million. The secondary work program costs of studies and 2000km 2D seismic surveying estimated to cost $2.5 million. The permit was granted on 28 June 2005. There were no other bids for this area.

Permit WA-367-P (released as W04-5) has been awarded to Chevron Texaco Australia Pty Ltd and Shell Development (Australia) Pty Ltd. The companies proposed a guaranteed work program of studies, 2D seismic reprocessing, and 3011 km of new 2D seismic surveying, at an estimated cost of $3.8 million. The secondary work program consists of studies, and 1000 km2 of new 3D seismic surveying estimated to cost $5.55 million. The permit was granted on 28 June 2005. There were no other bids for this area.

Under the work program bidding system for the award of exploration permits in Australia’s offshore areas, applicants are required to nominate a guaranteed minimum ‘dry hole’ exploration program for each of the first three years of the permit term and a ‘secondary’ program for the remaining three years.

Final Call for Nominations of Areas for the 2006 Offshore Acreage Release

The Commonwealth and State/NT governments are now calling for nominations from interested parties for vacant offshore areas to be considered for release in 2006.

Nominations are treated as "Commercial-in-Confidence", should be in writing, and be forwarded by 31 August 2005 to the relevant State/NT Department or the General Manager, Offshore Resources Branch, at the address below.

While expressing interest does not guarantee inclusion in the release, all nominations are considered seriously and are subjected to a rigorous phase of assessment and shortlisting.

In considering which areas to release, we look at whether there is a new geoscientific story, or a new market development, that might generate the interest of potential bidders. We also look at synergies with other industry activities such as drilling programs, speculative survey proposals, the Geoscience Australia research agenda and the Australian Offshore Petroleum Strategy.

The shortlisted areas proposed for release will be advised to industry around November/December, through the Australian Petroleum News.
## Summary of Areas Currently Available for Bidding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Release/round</th>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Bid Closing Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2005 Acreage Release, First Closing Round  
[15 areas] | S05-1, W05-1, 2, 3 & 4, W05-14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 & 20, AC05-1, NT05-1 & 2. | Thursday, 20 October 2005 |
| 2005 Acreage Release, Second Closing Round  
[14 areas] | S05-2, W05-5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13, W05-21, 22, 23 & 24 | Thursday, 20 April 2006 |
| Re-release of 2004 areas  
(from second close of bidding round)  
[8 Areas] | W04-1, 15 & 16, AC04-1, NT04-1, T04-3, 4 & 5* | Thursday, 20 October 2005  
Friday, 21 October 2005 |

*As 20 October 2005 is a public holiday in Hobart, the closing date for bids for these three areas has been put back to Friday, 21 October 2005.

All applications must be lodged by 4pm on the relevant closing date. Details of where to lodge bids can be found on the DITR Website [Guidance Notes for Applicants](#).

Further information on these areas and application requirements can be found by visiting this website: [www.industry.gov.au/petexp](http://www.industry.gov.au/petexp) or by requesting a free CD-ROM by e-mail: petroleum.exploration@industry.gov.au. Please specify whether you are interested in the 2005 or the 2004 Acreage Release CD-ROM.

## Promotion of 2005 Australian Offshore Acreage

Representatives from the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources and Geoscience Australia will be available to discuss the 2005 Australian offshore acreage at the following meetings and conference:

**AAPG (international)  
Paris, France  
11-14 September 2005**

Please visit the Australian booth at the AAPG event.

The delegation also intends to visit Europe in conjunction with AAPG international in Paris in mid September this year.

We would be happy to organise private meetings with companies in conjunction with all of these events. E-mail: petroleum.exploration@industry.gov.au
Finding Petroleum Related Information on the DITR Website

The website of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources encompasses a wealth of information related to the regulation and administration of the Australia’s offshore petroleum sector. Access to the information can be done by using the following short cuts:

- **www.industry.gov.au/petexp** for the current Annual Offshore Acreage Release and the two proceeding releases packages; a list of areas that are currently available for bidding, the current and previous editions of the *Australian Petroleum News* and Departmental contact details for offshore petroleum exploration.


Other information on petroleum development, the Australian Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Industry and Gas to Liquids (GTL) can be found by following the Resources and Energy link from the Departmental front page, [www.industry.gov.au](http://www.industry.gov.au) or alternatively use the search facility using key words.

Geoscience Australia News

Data Supporting New Acreage Areas

*Bremer Sub-basin Seismic Interpretations Now Available*

Geoscience Australia is now making available preliminary interpretations of seismic data from the Bremer Sub-basin study. Interpretations are provided for 2 seismic surveys: Geoscience Australia’s Southwest Frontiers Marine Seismic Survey (S280) acquired in October and November 2004; and Esso Australia Pty Ltd Bremer Marine Seismic Survey (R74A) that was reprocessed by Fugro MCS in 2001, to which Geoscience Australia holds the licensing rights. Interpretations cover the extents of the 2005 Bremer Sub-basin Acreage Release Areas W05-23 and W05-24. This is a preliminary data release from work in progress, and is intended to assist explorers assessing the Bremer Sub-basin acreage release areas. Interpretations include major and minor faults, and a set of 7 key horizons for both seismic data sets (see Figure 1 at end of this newsletter). The horizons are provided as ASCII files using the Geoquest 2d_ci7m_gf_ifdf format. Copies of both seismic surveys and the preliminary interpretations are available at the cost-of-transfer through the Geoscience Australia Data Repository ausgeodata@ga.gov.au or Phone: +61 2 6249 9222. Final results from the Bremer Sub-basin study will be provided at Geoscience Australia’s Frontiers Basins Workshop, 13 - 14 October 2005.
For further information, please contact Dr Barry Bradshaw, Geoscience Australia. Phone: +61 2 6249 9035, Fax: +61 2 6249 9980, E-mail: Barry.Bradshaw@ga.gov.au

*Geoscience Australia’s Frontiers Basins Workshop, - 13 - 14 October 2005*

Geoscience Australia is holding a Frontiers Basins Workshop on the 13 & 14 October in Canberra. Data acquired through the new petroleum initiative will be made available at this workshop, including interpretation results of the new seismic data acquired from the South West Margin, including the Bremer Sub-basin, and results for the hydrocarbon seeps studies. For more information on this workshop contact: Jenny Maher, Geoscience Australia. Phone: +61 2 6249 9896, Fax: +61 2 6249 9980, E-mail: Jenny.Maher@ga.gov.au

*New Products & Publications*

The Oils of Western Australia II report summarises the findings of a collaborative research program between Geoscience Australia and GeoMark Research undertaken on the petroleum geochemistry of crude oils and condensates discovered within the basins of Western Australia and the Papuan Basin, Papua New Guinea up until March 2000.

To make informed decisions regarding Australia’s petroleum resources, it is important to understand the relationship between the liquid hydrocarbons within and between basins. This Study has geochemically characterised the liquid hydrocarbon accumulations of western Australian basins and the Papuan Basin into genetically related families. From a total of 316 samples, 33 oil/condensate families were identified in the western Australian basins; Bonaparte (10), Browse (2), Canning (4), Carnarvon (11) and Perth (6), as well as some vagrant and contaminated samples. Three oil/condensate families were recognised in the Papuan Basin. The geographic distribution of each oil/condensate family is mapped within each basin/sub-basin. Using the geochemical characteristics of each family, the nature of their source facies, thermal maturity level and degree of preservation has been determined.

This Study used a set of standardised geochemical protocols that include bulk geochemical (API gravity, elemental analysis of nickel, vanadium and sulphur), molecular (gas chromatography of the whole-oil and gas chromatography-mass spectrometry of the saturated and aromatic hydrocarbons) and bulk stable carbon isotopic analyses. $n$-Alkane-specific $^{13}$C isotopic analyses were carried out on only a selected set of oils and condensates. Statistical analyses were performed on these data using the Pirouette software provided by Infometrix. In addition to this report, the geochemical data acquired for the crude oils and condensates in this Study are provided in an accompanying Microsoft Access2000™ database. These data may be viewed spatially and plotted on x–y cross-plots in the charting application included in the ESRI Australia GIS ArcView3.2™ geo-referencing package that also accompanies this report.

The Oils of Western Australia II study including the interpreted report, Access database and the GIS package will be available in September 2005. For more information on accessing this study contact: Stephen Brown, GeoMark Research, Inc. Phone: +1 281 856 9333, E-mail sbrown@geomarkresearch.com
Staff Changes

There have been recent staff changes at Geoscience Australia. Dr Paul Williamson is now heading up the Innovations and Specialist Studies Group and Dr John Bradshaw has taken on the leadership of the Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Advice Group.

Australian Petroleum Statistics

The June 2005 issue of *Australian Petroleum Statistics* is now available, containing statistics on petroleum production, refining, consumption, stocks, imports and exports. This issue also contains the comparison of OECD petrol and diesel prices for the March 2005 quarter. Subscriptions cost $270/year or $27 per issue. Copies can be obtained by contacting Ms Rae Fisher. Phone: +61 2 6213 7967, E-mail: rae.fisher@industry.gov.au. Archived issues are now also available electronically.

Are you on our distribution list?

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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.

This occasional newsletter was prepared by the Resources Division, Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, Canberra, Australia.

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ITR 2005/096
Figure 1: Interpreted seismic line s280-21, from the central part of the Bremer Sub-basin.