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Hon PAUL HOLLOWAY MLC

20/03/2003

SA LEADS THE WAY IN NATIVE TITLE AGREEMENTS

News
Release

South Australia is leading the way in successfully negotiating and concluding access agreements with Native Title claimants and petroleum explorers says the Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Paul Holloway.

At a Parliament House ceremony today, Mr Holloway announced the signing of access agreements over 15 more petroleum exploration licences in the Cooper Basin.

"Native Title agreements in the Cooper Basin now cover 27 exploration licences worth an estimated \$275 million of investment to the state," he said.

"This is another great outcome and I congratulate the native title claimants—the Dieri people, the Yandruwandha/Yawarrawarrka people, the explorers, government officers and all the parties respective legal representatives in achieving this significant result.

It meets the government's objectives of concluding access agreements which are fair to the registered Native Title claimants and sustainable in relation to development."

"The deeds for the agreements cover not just the exploration phase, but also the development of any discoveries should exploration be successful. This is why they're regarded as historic and ground breaking and I believe the SA agreements can be used as a template for the rest of Australia in future Native Title negotiations," Mr Holloway said.

"As with the original agreements, the deeds for these additional 15 exploration licences sustain processes to protect Aboriginal heritage before and during field operations and provide appropriate benefits to the registered native title claimants.

Exploration in the 27 Cooper Basin petroleum exploration licence areas will inevitably achieve additional success leading to more investment in our state," Mr Holloway said.

Further details from: David Blight (Executive Director Minerals and Energy Resources PIRSA) on (08) 8463 4145 or Barry Goldstein (Director Petroleum PIRSA) on (08) 8463 4154.

Background information:

- The latest agreements cover the Cooper Basin Petroleum Exploration License Application (PELA) areas released for competitive work program bidding in 1999 and 2000 known as CO-99 and CO2000 PELA's.
- 27 SA Cooper Basin PELs (Petroleum Exploration Licences) have now moved through the right to negotiate process as required under the Native Title Act 1993. 11 of these were signed in October, 2001 and 1 in September, 2002.
- The work programs for the 27 PELs includes geographical and geophysical studies, approximately 6,400 kilometres of two-dimensional seismic, 320 kilometres of three-dimensional seismic and 182 exploration wells.
- The earliest exploratory drilling efforts in these work programs have already proved successful with Stuart Petroleum and Beach Petroleum finding and producing oil with the first exploration well (Acrasia-1, PEL 90) drilled by new entrants to exploration in the Cooper Basin.
- Beach Petroleum and Cooper Energy also discovered oil with Sellicks-1 in PEL 92 which flowed at a rate of 2000 barrels a day—the highest-ever recorded flow from Permian reservoirs anywhere in the Cooper Basin.