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NATIVE TITLE AGREEMENT FOR OFFICER BASIN

News
Release

The State Government has reached agreement with registered Native Title groups and explorers enabling petroleum exploration and development to be carried out in a new area of the Officer Basin.

Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Paul Holloway said an access agreement had been signed allowing for exploration under the terms of the Officer Basin Petroleum Exploration Licence Application No. 139 (PELA 139).

"This is a terrific outcome for South Australia and I congratulate the Antakirinja people, the Yankunytjatjara/Antakirinja people, the explorers, the government officers and all of the parties' respective legal representatives."

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

"This welcome result builds on the foundation created from agreements reached in relation to twenty-seven Cooper Basin PELAs between October 2001 and March this year covering all phases of activity, from exploration through to the development of any discoveries."

"A number of oil discoveries have already been developed in the Cooper Basin area covered by these agreements."

"This exploration success and subsequent development is welcomed by all parties and has boosted company revenues, added royalties paid to the state and led to the first production payments to the registered Native title claimants with respect to Cooper Basin agreements."

"The agreement reached on PELA 139 similarly covers exploration through to the development of any discoveries and all parties are hopeful of success."

"This access agreement also sustains the means to protect Aboriginal heritage before and during field operations and provide appropriate benefits to the registered native title claimants."

"Twenty-eight South Australian PELAs have now moved through the right-to-negotiate process as required under the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993."

"This is encouraging for the resolution of additional Native Title access agreements for exploration in South Australia in particular and more generally across Australia."

"It's worth noting that the Native Title access agreements achieved for petroleum exploration and development are additional to the ILUA's for minerals exploration just concluded in the State," Mr Holloway said.

"The work programs for this new Officer Basin PELA (No. 139) includes geological and geophysical studies, two-dimensional (2D) seismic surveys and at least one exploration well."

"The applicants have indicated that subject to studies to be concluded in the first year of the licence, up to 1000 km of 2D seismic surveying would be appropriate prior to selecting their first drilling location."

"The Officer Basin is relatively unexplored and has potential for both oil and gas accumulations," Mr Holloway said.

"While petroleum exploration in the Officer Basin has to date been limited to a total of 7 exploration wells and 7,430 km of 2D seismic, all the ingredients for potential petroleum accumulations are recognized."

"Petroleum exploration investment in South Australia continues to provide much welcomed returns to the community, including the payment of royalties (based on sales from petroleum production) to the State and employment in the State."