

## New petroleum acreage open to exploration

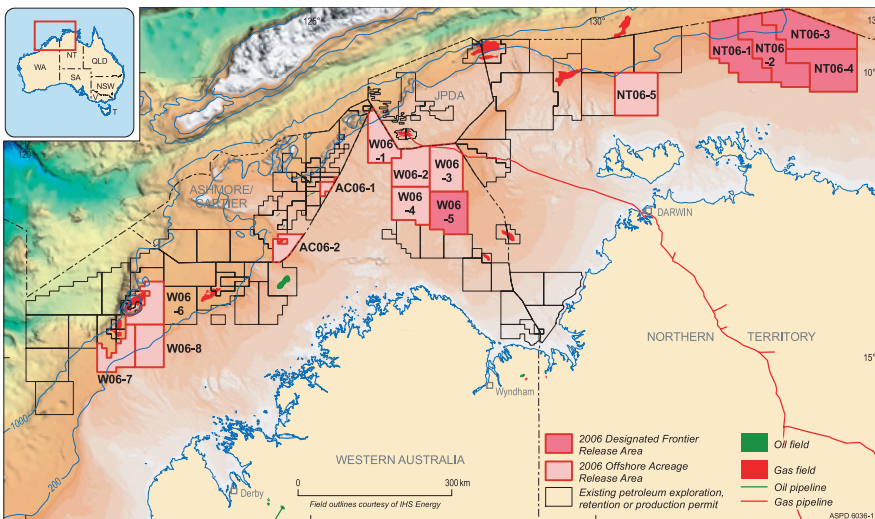
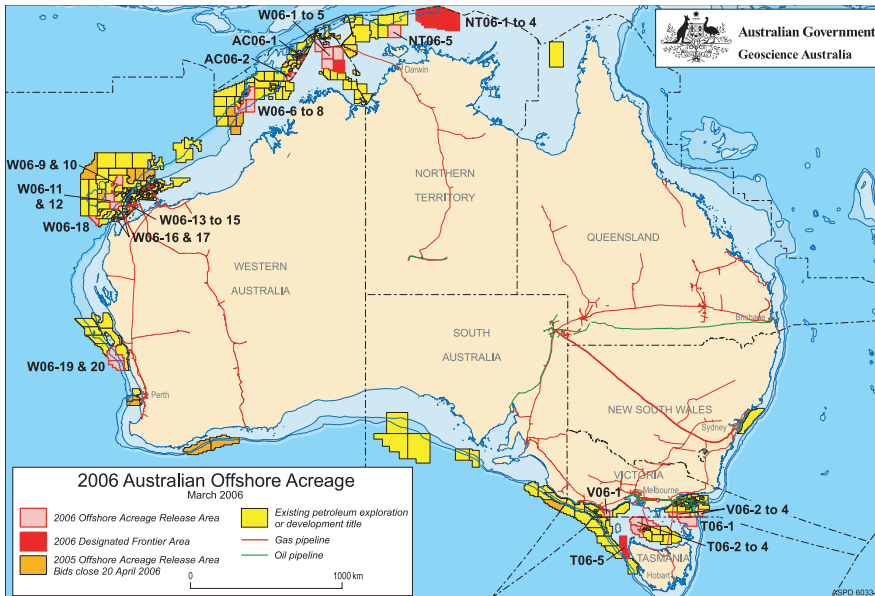
Offshore exploration permits at record high.

*Jenny Maher*

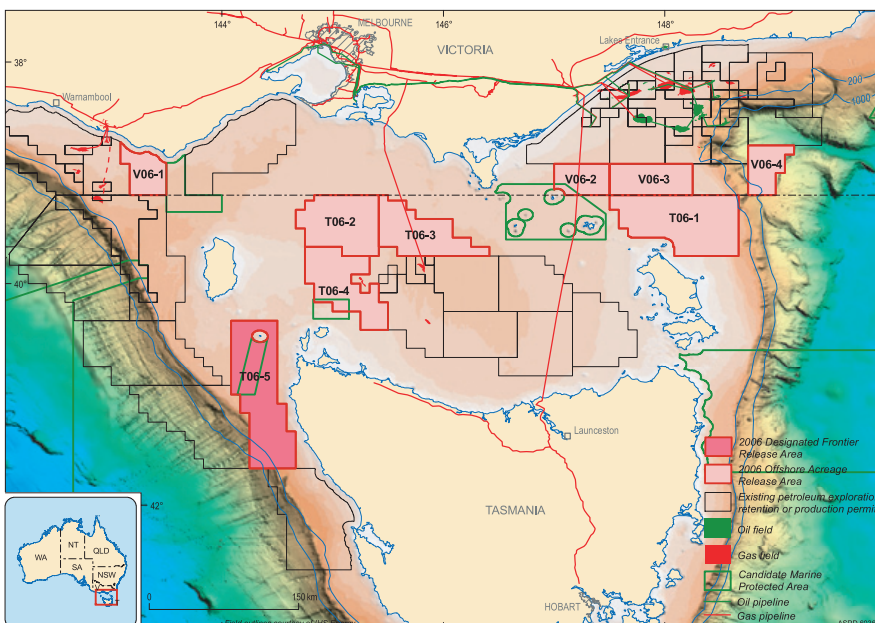
Each year the Australian Government releases new opportunities for offshore petroleum exploration. This annual release of offshore acreage is part of Australia's Offshore Petroleum Strategy, and all areas are available through a work program bidding system.

The 2006 release was announced on 8 May by the Hon. Ian Macfarlane, Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, at the annual Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA) conference. Thirty-six new exploration areas, located in nine of Australian's offshore sedimentary basins, were released (figure 1).

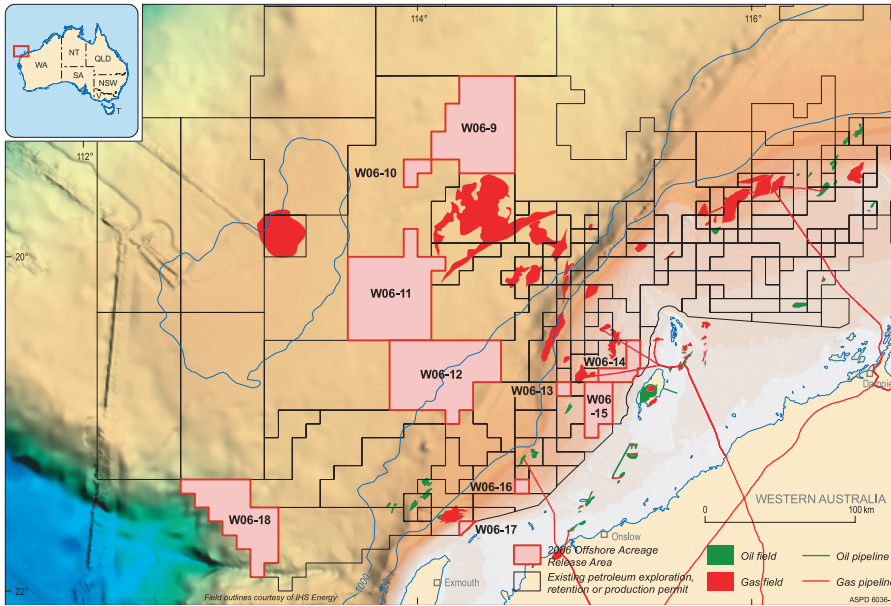
◀ **Figure 1.** Overview of Australia's offshore petroleum exploration areas, showing the 2006 release areas.



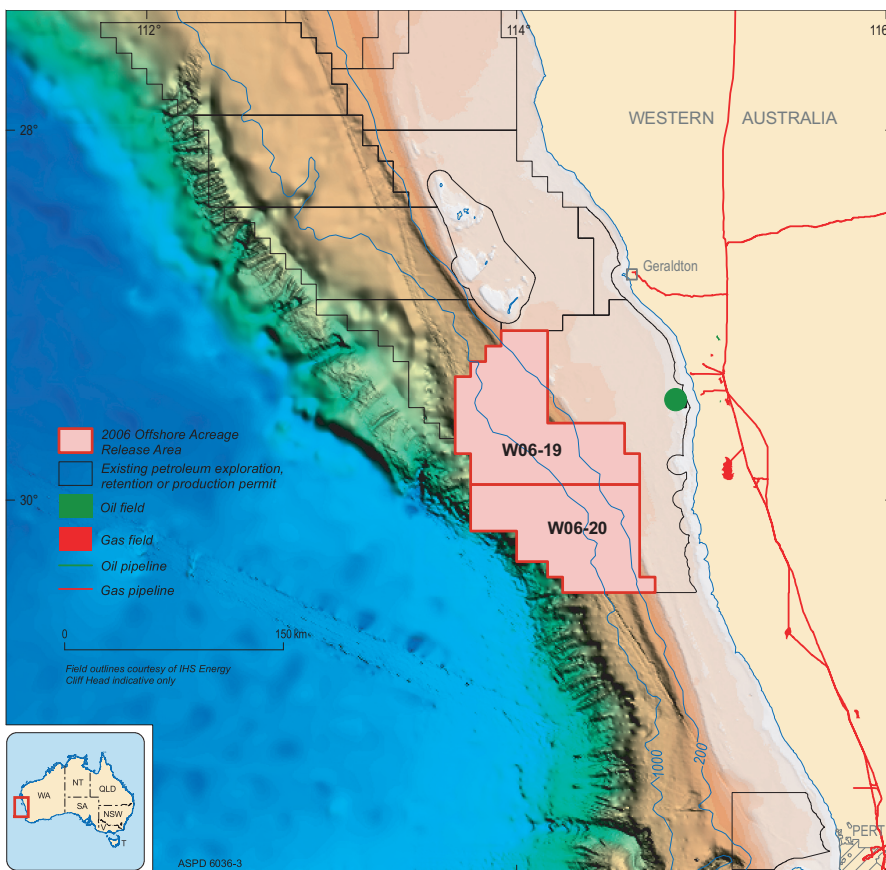
◀ **Figure 2.** 2006 offshore release areas in northern Australia.



◀ **Figure 3.** 2006 offshore release areas in southeastern Australia.



▲ **Figure 4.** 2006 offshore release areas in the Carnarvon Basin.




▲ **Figure 5.** 2006 offshore release areas in the Perth Basin.

The areas on offer include:

- large shallow water frontier areas in the Northern Arafura Basin (figure 2)
- large deepwater frontier areas in the South Eastern Terrace of the Gippsland Basin and in the Northern Sorell Basin (figure 3)
- moderate sized to smaller blocks in the midst of large gas accumulations in the Browse and Carnarvon basins (figures 2 and 4)
- moderate sized blocks under various water depths in the immature to sub-mature basins of the Southern Carnarvon and Perth basins (figures 4 and 5)
- small blocks in the mature oil-rich Barrow and Exmouth sub-basins of the Carnarvon Basin (figure 4) and
- shallow water blocks over the Bonaparte Basin (figure 2) and the Eastern Otway, Gippsland and Bass basins (figure 3).

All areas are available for bidding through a work program bidding system. Closing dates for the release areas are 9 November 2006 and 10 May 2007, depending on the size and relative exploration maturity of the areas.

**Geoscience Australia has a number of products that could help explorers review potential acreage. For more information about these products or about the release, phone Jenny Maher on +61 2 6249 9111 (email [jenny.maher@ga.gov.au](mailto:jenny.maher@ga.gov.au)) or visit the Geoscience Australia website.**

**Information on the 2006 release can also be obtained from the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources website** 

**Related websites**

Current release areas:  
[www.industry.gov.au/petexp](http://www.industry.gov.au/petexp)  
Data supporting the 2006 release areas:  
[www.ga.gov.au/oceans/ss\\_Acreage.jsp](http://www.ga.gov.au/oceans/ss_Acreage.jsp)