

Oil and Gas

May 2012

The Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA) Annual Conference was held in Adelaide on Monday 14 May 2012. During the Conference, three significant announcements regarding the future of the Australian oil and gas industry and the unconventional gas sector in South Australia were made.

First, Federal Minister for Resources and Energy Martin Ferguson announced the 2012 Offshore Petroleum Exploration Acreage Release, comprising 27 areas across nine basins in Commonwealth waters off Western Australia, the Northern Territory, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. The acreage made available was based on data and analysis undertaken by Geoscience Australia in their 2012 Australian Gas Resource Assessment, which was also released on 14 May. The Assessment is a national prospectus for energy resources, and is available [here](#).

Maps and further information on the acreage release are available at www.petroleum-acreage.gov.au. This website also provides an introduction to the legislative framework and investment environment for companies interested in becoming involved in the Australian offshore petroleum exploration industry.

Second, South Australian Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy Tom Koutsantonis released a draft roadmap aimed at maximising the potential of South Australia's unconventional gas resources in an environmentally sustainable way. Unconventional gas resources exist in petroleum accumulations that are pervasive throughout a large area and that are not significantly affected by hydrodynamic influences (also called "continuous-type deposits"). Examples include coal seam gas, shale gas, and oil shale deposits.

The roadmap, the first of its kind in Australia, is designed to provide key stakeholders with necessary information about the future of the sector in South Australia. There are currently more than twenty companies and joint ventures exploring unconventional gas plays in South Australia.

The release of the draft roadmap follows the South Australian Roundtable for Unconventional Gas, which was convened in October 2010. Since then, some 86 organisations and sector stakeholder groups have participated in the Roundtable. The draft roadmap is available [here](#), and is open for public comment until Friday 27 July 2012. Stakeholders wishing to engage in the Roundtable are encouraged to contact the South Australian Department of Manufacturing, Innovation, Trade Resources and Energy.

Third, the APPEA announced the funding and development of a new spill response system, a Subsea First Response Toolkit (SFRT), to be in place by early 2013. The SFRT will increase the Australian oil and gas industry's capacity to rapidly respond to an offshore well incident.

The SFRT will be funded by a consortium of 12 oil and gas companies operating in Australian waters, and contracted through the industry-funded Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre (AMOSOC). The APPEA's press release is available [here](#).