

Junior explorers dominate New South Wales exploration scene

Perhaps it's the very high price of oil, or the focus on 'clean' gas from coal seam methane, or the acreage availability. Perhaps its the ease of application combined with the favourable reviews on the prospectivity of sedimentary basins by NSW Department of Primary Industries' Petroleum GeoScience Group. Whatever the reason, NSW will shortly set new records on applications for exploration licenses, prospecting authorities.

When all applications are granted the number of Petroleum Exploration Licenses will reach an all time high of 38. There will also be five Petroleum Production Licenses, six Special Prospecting Authorities, two Petroleum Assessment Leases. The cumulative work commitments of these licences will exceed \$40 million in exploration expenditures.

This boom in exploration will culminate in the drilling of 40 coal seam methane and six deep conventional exploratory wells plus the

acquisition of at least 650 km of high resolution 2D seismic. The boom will also see a further six thousand-line kilometres of airborne geochemical survey flown plus the collection and analysis of at least a thousand soil samples for the detection and nature of hydrocarbons.

There are currently 22 junior explorers undertaking the search for coal seam methane, coalmine methane and conventional petroleum. Everything points to a positive future for exploration in NSW. ■

