



**ACTUAL AND EXPECTED
PRIVATE MINERAL EXPLORATION AUSTRALIA**

EMBARGO: 11:30AM (CANBERRA TIME) MON 20 SEPT 1999

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- For further information about these and related statistics, contact Maureen Geer on Darwin 08 8943 2171, or Client Services in any ABS office as shown on the back cover of this publication.

NOTES

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

ISSUE (Quarter)

RELEASE DATE

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CHANGES IN THIS ISSUE

New seasonal adjustment factors resulting from the annual seasonal reanalysis have been introduced in this issue. All tables with seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are affected.

This issue contains some revisions to the March quarter 1999 data.



W. McLennan
Australian Statistician



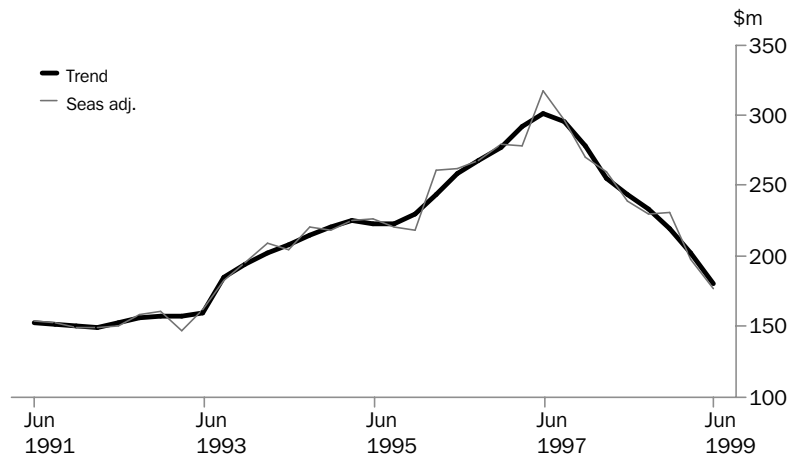
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

MINERAL EXPLORATION EXPENDITURE (OTHER THAN FOR PETROLEUM)

TREND ESTIMATES

The trend estimate for mineral exploration expenditure fell by 10% in the June quarter 1999. This was the eighth consecutive quarter to show a decline.

Between the March quarter and the June quarter 1999, the trend estimate fell \$21m to \$181m. The June quarter estimate was 40% lower than the peak of \$302m reached in the June quarter 1997.



STATES AND TERRITORIES

The trend estimate for mineral exploration expenditure fell for all States except South Australia (which was unchanged), and Queensland and the Northern Territory (where small increases occurred). The most significant fall in absolute terms was in Western Australia where the trend estimate fell by \$21m (down 17%).

METRES DRILLED

The trend estimate for total metres drilled for exploration fell by 7% in the June quarter and was 25% lower than the corresponding June quarter of 1998.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

1998-99 ESTIMATES

Following a number of years of general growth, annual exploration expenditure has fallen in each of the last two financial years. Expenditure for 1998-99 was \$838m, which was 21% (\$229m) lower than 1997-98 when reported expenditure was \$1,067m. The 1998-99 expenditure was the lowest annual expenditure since the \$793m reported in the 1993-94 financial year.

Gold was the major contributor to the decrease with expenditure on gold exploration falling 25% (\$162m) over the year to \$486m in 1998-99. The fall for gold represented over 70% of the total decrease for the year.

Exploration in Western Australia has fallen from \$660m in 1997-98 to \$523m in 1998-99, a fall of 21%. Cut backs in gold exploration was the major cause, with expenditure falling 26% over the year from \$459m in 1997-98 to \$342m.

JUNE QUARTER

In seasonally adjusted terms, there was a fall in exploration expenditure of 10% (\$21m) to \$177m in the June quarter 1999.

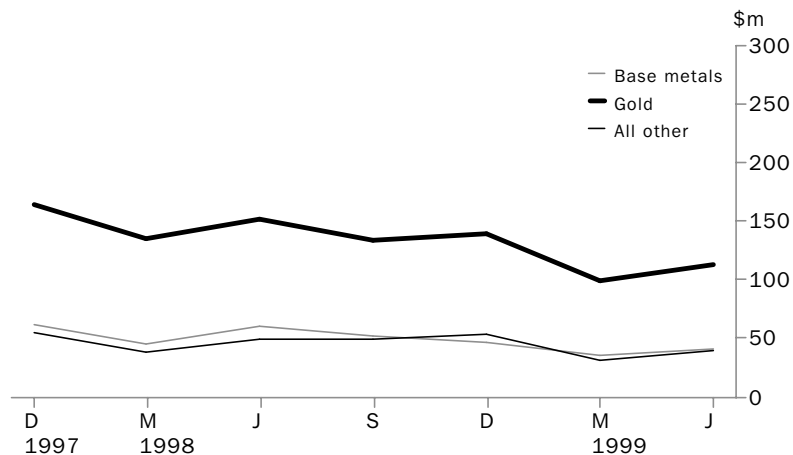
In original terms, mineral exploration expenditure reported for the June quarter was \$195m. This was 17% (\$28m) higher than the March quarter 1999 but 26% (\$68m) lower than the \$263m reported for the June quarter 1998.

Expenditure on production leases fell by 9% to \$42m (down \$4m) from the March quarter 1999, while expenditure on "all other areas" rose 26% (\$32m) to \$153m.

Exploration on "all other areas" represented approximately 80% of total reported expenditure in the June quarter, about the same proportion as reported in the June quarter 1998.

Following overall falls in the previous quarter, exploration expenditure increased for all major minerals in the June quarter 1999. Expenditure on gold exploration was \$113m, up 13% (\$13m) from the March quarter. However, compared with the June quarter of 1998, gold exploration has fallen by 26% (down \$39m). This reflects a general downturn in exploration for gold and other base metals caused by declining metal prices in recent times.

MINERAL EXPLORATION EXPENDITURE, *Original Series*



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

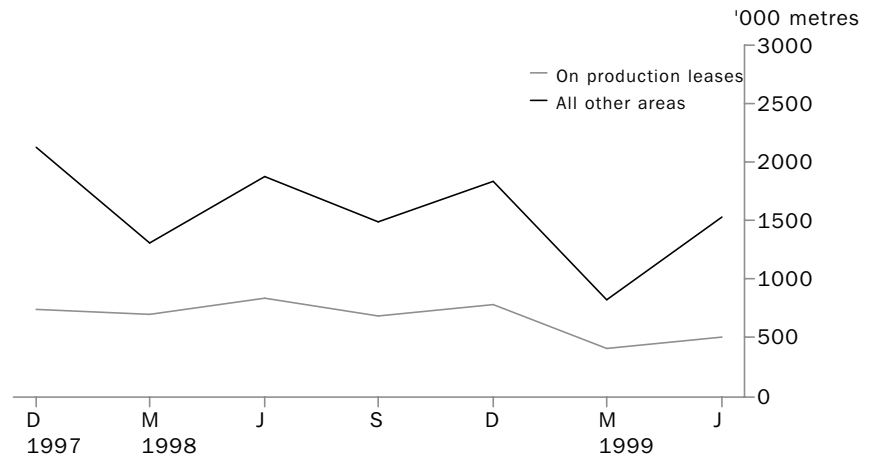
METRES DRILLED

The seasonally adjusted estimate of 1.9 million metres for the June quarter 1999 was 22% higher than for the March quarter 1999 but 25% lower than the corresponding June quarter 1998.

In original terms, 2.1 million metres were drilled for exploration in the June quarter 1999, an increase of 64%. The proportion of drilling on "all other areas" increased to 75% of the total in the June quarter. This compares with 67% in the March quarter and 69% in the corresponding June quarter 1998.

During the year ended June 1999 a reported total of 8.1 million metres were drilled. This was a fall of 28% from the previous year, and the lowest annual total reported since 1992-93.

METRES DRILLED, Original Series



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

PETROLEUM EXPLORATION EXPENDITURE

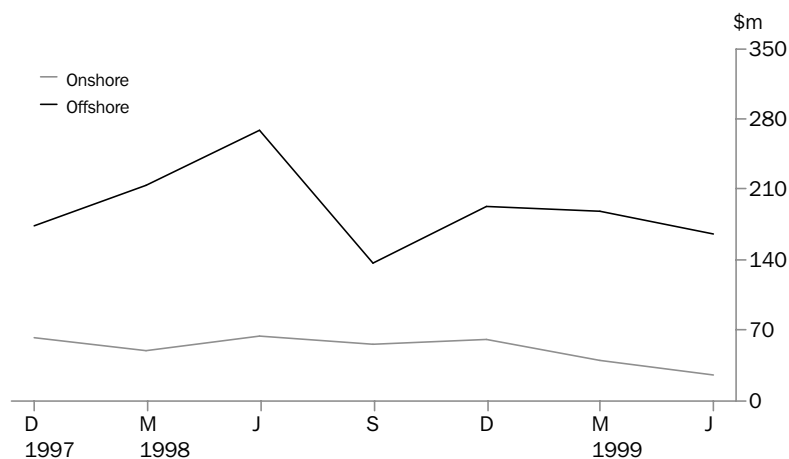
OVERVIEW

Total expenditure on petroleum exploration was \$191m in the June quarter 1999, 16% lower than the March quarter and 43% lower than the June quarter of 1998.

Total onshore exploration expenditure fell by 37% (\$15m) to \$25m in the June quarter, with offshore expenditure falling 12% (\$23m) during the period to \$166m.

Exploration expenditure in the June quarter 1999 was significantly lower (down 43% from \$334m) than the expenditure reported in the corresponding June quarter of 1998. The largest fall between these two periods was in offshore drilling expenditure, falling \$111m (53%) to \$97m.

During the year ended June 1999, reported expenditure on petroleum exploration totalled \$868m, a fall of 12% (\$114m) from the previous year. Almost 80% (\$685m) of this was spent on offshore areas of Australia.



REGIONAL DATA

With the exception of the Northern Territory (which includes the Ashmore and Cartier Islands), where expenditure increased by 97% to \$35m from the March quarter, all regions recorded falls in exploration expenditure in the June quarter 1999.

PRIVATE EXPLORATION, Actual and Expected Expenditure

Period	MINERAL EXPLORATION .			PETROLEUM ONSHORE ...			PETROLEUM OFFSHORE ...		
	Actual	Expected(a)	Actual as a proportion of expected	Actual	Expected(a)	Actual as a proportion of expected	Actual	Expected(a)	Actual as a proportion of expected
	\$m	\$m	%	\$m	\$m	%	\$m	\$m	%
1996-1997	1 148.6	808.9	142.0	251.9	206.2	122.2	601.0	446.6	134.6
1997-1998	1 066.8	901.3	118.4	232.3	145.0	160.2	748.9	773.7	96.8
1998-1999	837.8	602.9	138.9	182.3	144.2	126.4	685.4	540.1	126.9
6 months ended June 1998	483.1	387.6	124.6	115.0	61.7	186.6	483.5	427.9	113.0
6 months ended December 1998	475.5	299.5	158.7	117.5	71.6	164.2	330.7	246.5	134.1
6 months ended June 1999	362.3	303.4	119.4	64.8	72.6	89.2	354.8	293.6	120.8
6 months ended December 1999	n.y.a.	252.8	n.y.a.	n.y.a.	86.0	n.y.a.	n.y.a.	241.8	n.y.a.

n.y.a. not yet available

(a) As reported in previous collections. Refer to Explanatory Notes paragraph 13.

MINERAL EXPLORATION (Other than for Petroleum), Expenditure and Metres Drilled

Period	EXPENDITURE.....					METRES DRILLED.....				
	<i>On production leases</i>	<i>On all other areas</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Seasonally adjusted</i>	<i>Trend estimate</i>	<i>On production leases</i>	<i>On all other areas</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Seasonally adjusted</i>	<i>Trend estimate</i>
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	'000 m	'000 m	'000 m	'000 m	'000 m
1996-1997	306.1	842.4	1 148.6	..	..	4 453	8 378	12 831	..	..
1997-1998	253.2	813.6	1 066.8	..	..	3 365	7 843	11 209	..	..
1998-1999	199.1	638.7	837.8	..	..	2 404	5 697	8 101	..	..
1997										
September	83.3	218.5	301.8	296.6	296.3	1 072	2 524	3 596	3 275	3 224
December	64.6	217.4	282.0	270.9	278.2	751	2 127	2 878	2 821	2 893
1998										
March	52.0	168.4	220.4	260.6	256.0	699	1 308	2 007	2 494	2 553
June	53.3	209.3	262.6	239.2	243.5	843	1 885	2 728	2 528	2 392
September	51.5	184.3	235.9	230.7	234.0	690	1 494	2 183	1 984	2 280
December	60.0	179.7	239.6	231.5	220.3	786	1 833	2 619	2 582	2 117
1999										
March	r 46.0	r121.3	r 167.3	197.8	202.0	r 412	r835	r1 247	1 549	1 930
June	41.7	153.3	195.0	177.1	180.8	517	1 534	2 051	1 896	1 798

MINERAL EXPLORATION (other than for Petroleum), Expenditure by State and Territory

	New South Wales	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania	Northern Territory	Australia
Period	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
ORIGINAL								
1996-1997	94.1	51.8	160.7	35.1	691.7	26.0	88.9	1 148.6
1997-1998	88.2	43.1	133.2	45.0	660.4	20.7	75.9	1 066.8
1998-1999	65.6	37.0	93.8	41.9	523.1	11.9	64.5	837.8
1997								
September	23.3	9.5	41.9	12.5	182.7	9.7	22.1	301.8
December	26.1	13.4	41.7	11.4	162.3	3.8	23.4	282.0
1998								
March	20.8	10.6	21.5	9.2	142.0	3.7	12.6	220.4
June	18.0	9.6	28.2	12.0	173.4	3.5	17.8	262.6
September	14.2	9.0	22.2	12.6	154.1	2.4	21.2	235.9
December	18.4	11.0	25.0	8.9	157.3	3.0	16.0	239.6
1999								
March	15.6	10.3	20.2	7.6	r102.3	r3.8	7.6	r167.3
June	17.4	6.7	26.4	12.8	109.4	2.6	19.6	195.0
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED								
1997								
September	24.9	10.1	41.7	13.0	176.7	10.8	19.4	296.6
December	25.9	11.9	37.3	10.8	159.9	3.8	21.3	270.9
1998								
March	21.9	11.2	27.7	11.3	166.2	3.8	18.5	260.6
June	16.3	9.8	25.4	10.2	157.9	3.1	16.5	239.2
September	15.3	9.6	22.2	13.2	149.1	2.7	18.6	230.7
December	18.2	9.7	22.5	8.5	155.1	3.0	14.5	231.5
1999								
March	16.5	10.9	25.9	9.4	119.9	4.0	11.2	197.8
June	15.7	6.8	23.7	10.8	99.5	2.4	18.2	177.1
TREND								
1997								
September	26.4	11.5	40.5	12.3	177.1	8.3	20.2	296.3
December	24.7	11.4	36.0	11.6	168.7	6.1	19.7	278.2
1998								
March	21.1	10.8	29.8	11.1	160.6	3.7	18.9	256.0
June	17.8	10.2	24.7	11.2	158.9	2.7	18.0	243.5
September	16.2	9.9	22.8	10.9	155.0	3.0	16.2	234.0
December	16.5	9.9	23.3	10.1	142.6	3.1	14.8	220.3
1999								
March	16.7	9.4	24.1	9.7	124.5	3.2	14.4	202.0
June	16.3	8.4	24.6	9.7	103.8	3.0	15.0	180.8

MINERAL EXPLORATION (other than for Petroleum), Expenditure by Mineral Sought

	<i>Copper, silver-lead- zinc, nickel and cobalt</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Iron ore</i>	<i>Mineral sands</i>	<i>Tin, tungsten, scheelite and wolfram</i>	<i>Uranium</i>	<i>Coal</i>	<i>Construction materials</i>	<i>Diamonds</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
JUNE QUARTER 1999											
New South Wales	4.6	5.2	—	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	4.9	n.p.	—	0.2	17.4
Victoria	n.p.	5.7	—	0.7	—	—	—	—	n.p.	n.p.	6.7
Queensland	10.3	9.4	n.p.	n.p.	—	n.p.	6.0	n.p.	n.p.	0.3	26.4
South Australia	6.0	4.4	n.p.	n.p.	—	0.5	—	n.p.	0.1	n.p.	12.8
Western Australia	15.5	75.4	8.1	1.6	—	0.6	n.p.	n.p.	7.4	0.7	109.4
Tasmania	1.1	0.6	—	—	—	—	n.p.	—	—	n.p.	2.6
Northern Territory	n.p.	11.9	—	n.p.	—	1.9	—	n.p.	1.4	n.p.	19.6
Australia	42.0	112.7	8.1	5.0	n.p.	3.1	11.1	n.p.	9.0	3.9	195.0
AUSTRALIA											
1996–1997	206.8	728.3	25.8	13.9	0.6	13.0	70.5	0.9	59.3	29.4	1 148.6
1997–1998	227.1	648.4	30.0	14.0	0.1	22.2	64.8	1.1	42.8	16.3	1 066.8
1998–1999	176.9	486.1	41.5	19.0	0.2	15.4	39.9	0.7	40.9	17.2	837.8
September 1997	57.6	196.7	4.0	3.2	—	4.9	19.1	n.p.	12.4	n.p.	301.8
December 1997	62.7	163.9	6.3	2.9	0.1	6.2	21.3	0.3	13.1	5.3	282.0
March 1998	45.9	136.1	7.1	3.5	n.p.	5.1	12.5	n.p.	7.4	n.p.	220.4
June 1998	60.9	151.7	12.6	4.5	n.p.	6.0	11.9	n.p.	9.9	5.1	262.6
September 1998	52.0	134.3	12.6	3.6	n.p.	7.4	9.6	n.p.	13.1	3.0	235.9
December 1998	46.4	139.8	13.7	5.8	—	3.6	9.4	0.2	15.3	5.5	239.6
March 1999	36.5	112.7	7.2	4.6	n.p.	1.4	9.8	n.p.	3.6	4.7	167.3
June 1999	42.0	112.7	8.1	5.0	n.p.	3.1	11.1	n.p.	9.0	3.9	195.0
n.p. not available for publication						— nil or rounded to zero					

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PETROLEUM EXPLORATION EXPENDITURE

Period	ONSHORE.....			OFFSHORE.....			TOTAL EXPENDITURE.....		
	<i>Drilling</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Drilling</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>On production leases</i>	<i>On all other leases</i>	<i>Total</i>
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
1996-1997	179.6	72.3	251.9	412.0	189.1	601.0	137.7	715.3	853.0
1997-1998	174.1	58.2	232.3	501.2	247.6	748.9	68.8	912.4	981.2
1998-1999	111.7	70.5	182.3	428.5	257.0	685.4	105.6	762.1	867.7
1997									
September	38.4	15.2	53.6	64.3	26.2	90.6	10.8	133.4	144.2
December	48.0	15.6	63.6	90.1	84.8	174.9	8.2	230.3	238.5
1998									
March	38.4	11.9	50.3	139.4	74.6	214.0	22.5	241.8	264.3
June	49.2	15.5	64.8	207.5	62.0	269.5	27.3	306.9	334.2
September	34.3	21.7	56.0	81.6	55.7	137.3	24.3	169.0	193.3
December	44.7	16.9	61.6	123.0	70.4	193.3	35.1	219.8	254.9
1999									
March	20.8	18.9	39.7	r127.0	r 61.8	r188.9	24.6	r203.9	r228.5
June	12.0	13.1	25.1	96.9	69.0	165.9	21.6	169.4	191.0

PETROLEUM EXPLORATION, By Region

<i>Period</i>	<i>New South Wales</i>	<i>Victoria</i>	<i>Queensland</i>	<i>South Australia</i>	<i>Western Australia(a)</i>	<i>Tasmania</i>	<i>Northern Territory/ Ashmore and Cartier Islands</i>	<i>Zone of Cooperation Area A(b)</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>\$m</i>	<i>\$m</i>	<i>\$m</i>	<i>\$m</i>	<i>\$m</i>	<i>\$m</i>	<i>\$m</i>	<i>\$m</i>	<i>\$m</i>
1996-1997	n.p.	45.8	134.5	n.p.	444.1	n.p.	41.5	72.5	853.0
1997-1998	0.2	34.5	107.1	n.p.	464.0	n.p.	n.p.	61.9	981.2
1998-1999	0.1	32.6	65.9	n.p.	530.8	n.p.	132.0	32.3	867.7
1997									
September	n.p.	6.0	46.4	n.p.	46.8	n.p.	7.4	n.p.	144.2
December	n.p.	8.3	29.0	n.p.	106.9	n.p.	28.0	45.7	238.5
1998									
March	0.1	10.4	11.9	n.p.	165.0	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	264.3
June	n.p.	9.9	19.8	n.p.	145.2	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	334.2
September	n.p.	4.0	17.2	n.p.	90.9	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	193.3
December	n.p.	n.p.	19.1	n.p.	148.5	n.p.	36.7	n.p.	254.9
1999									
March	n.p.	15.6	15.3	11.1	r164.1	n.p.	17.9	r4.3	r228.5
June	n.p.	7.2	14.3	n.p.	127.2	n.p.	35.2	0.8	191.0

(a) Includes expenditure on Western Australian leases in the Zone of Cooperation Area B. (b) Refer to Explanatory Notes paragraph 14.

— nil or rounded to zero, including null cells

n.p. not available for publication

EXPLANATORY NOTES

INTRODUCTION	<p>1 This publication contains annual and quarterly statistics of private sector exploration for minerals (other than oil shale) and petroleum in Australia.</p>
SOURCE	<p>2 Data are collected and compiled from exploration censuses conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).</p>
SCOPE AND COVERAGE	<p>3 All exploration activity is included, regardless of the main activity of the explorer. Details of exploration are collected from all private enterprises known to be engaged in exploration, in Australia (including Australian waters) and incurring expenditure of more than \$20,000 per year.</p>
SEASONAL ADJUSTMENT	<p>4 Seasonal adjustment is a means of removing the estimated effects of normal seasonal variation from the series so that the effects of other influences can be more clearly recognised.</p> <p>5 Seasonal adjustment does not remove from the series the effect of irregular or non-seasonal influences. Particular care should be taken in interpreting quarterly movements in the adjusted figures in this publication.</p> <p>6 Irregular influences that are highly volatile can make it difficult to interpret the series even after adjustment for seasonal variation.</p> <p>7 Seasonal factors are reviewed and revised annually to take account of each additional year's original data. The nature of the seasonal adjustment process is such that the magnitude of some revisions resulting from the re-analysis may be quite significant, especially for data for more recent quarters. For this reason, additional care should be exercised when interpreting movements in seasonally adjusted data for recent quarters.</p>
TREND ESTIMATES	<p>8 The trend estimates are derived by applying a 7-term Henderson moving average to the seasonally adjusted series. The 7-term Henderson average (like all Henderson averages) is symmetric but, as the end of a time series is approached, asymmetric forms of the average are applied. Unlike the weights of the standard 7-term Henderson moving average, the weights employed here have been tailored to suit particular characteristics of the individual series. While the asymmetric weights enable trend estimates for recent quarters to be produced, it does result in revisions to the estimates for the most recent three quarters as additional observations become available. There may also be revisions because of changes in the original data and as a result of the re-estimation of the seasonal factors. For further information, see <i>Information Paper: A Guide to Interpreting Time Series—Monitoring Trends, an Overview</i> (Cat. no. 1348.0) or contact the Assistant Director, Time Series Analysis on Canberra (02) 6252 6345.</p>
CLASSIFICATIONS	<p>9 The following categories are used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Production lease/Other, where a production lease is an area on which production or development is actually taking place.▪ Onshore/Offshore, where offshore includes all operations in a marine area under the <i>Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967</i> or under any Acts administered by State and Territory Governments.▪ Drilling/Other, where <i>drilling expenditure</i> includes cost of access (roads, vessel hire, etc.) to the drilling site and site preparation etc., and <i>other expenditure</i> includes costs of surveys, report writing, map preparation and all other activities attributable to exploration.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

DEFINITIONS

- MINERALS 10** In the broad sense these comprise metallic minerals, construction materials, gemstones, other non-metallic minerals and petroleum (oil or gas).
- EXPLORATION 11** This includes the search for new ore occurrences or undiscovered oil or gas, and/or appraisal intended to delineate or greatly extend the limits of known deposits of minerals or oil or gas reservoirs by geological, geophysical, geochemical, drilling or other methods. This includes construction of shafts and adits primarily for exploration purposes but excludes activity of a developmental or production nature. Exploration for water is excluded.
- EXPLORATION EXPENDITURE 12** This covers all expenditure on exploration activity in Australia. It includes expenditure on aerial surveys (including Landsat photographs), general surveys, report writing, map preparation and other activities indirectly attributable to exploration. Cash bids for offshore petroleum exploration permits are also included.
- EXPECTED EXPENDITURE 13** This refers to expected expenditure on exploration as reported by private enterprise explorers who were included in the previous census. Events such as new discoveries, unexpected weather conditions, government policy changes and unforeseen changes in economic conditions may cause actual expenditures to differ from those previously expected. The differences between actual and expected expenditure can be seen in table 1.
- ZONE OF COOPERATION (ZOC) 14** Is an agreement between Australia and the Republic of Indonesia on an area between the Indonesian Province of East Timor and Northern Australia. The ZOC is divided into three areas: A, B and C. Area A is controlled by a joint authority and all petroleum operations in this area are carried out through production sharing contracts. Area B is controlled by Australian authorities but the Republic of Indonesia must be notified of any changes to tenements in the area and be paid 10% of gross Resource Rent Tax collected by Australia from corporations producing petroleum. Area C is controlled by the Republic of Indonesia but Australia must be notified of any changes to tenements in the area and be paid 10% of Contractors Income Tax collected by the Republic of Indonesia from corporations producing petroleum.
- ASHMORE AND CARTIER ISLANDS 15** Tenements in the Ashmore and Cartier Islands are administered by the Northern Territory Department of Mines and Energy. Therefore all petroleum exploration expenditure in this area has been included with Northern Territory data.
- RELATED PUBLICATIONS 16** Users may also wish to refer to the following priced publications which are available on request:
- *Australian Business Expectations* (Cat. no. 5250.0)
 - *Australian Mining Industry* (Cat. no. 8414.0)
 - *Mining, Electricity and Gas Operations, Australia, Preliminary* (Cat. no. 8401.0)
 - *Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure, Australia* (Cat. no. 5625.0)
- 17** Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products* (Cat. no. 1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Release Advice* (Cat. no. 1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Release Advice are available from any ABS office.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

RELATED PUBLICATIONS <i>continued</i>	18 Publications showing the details of wells and metres drilled in petroleum exploration are available from the Petroleum Resources Program of the Australian Geological Survey Organisation.
EFFECTS OF ROUNDING	19 Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between the sums of the component items and their totals.
SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES	n.a. not available n.p. not available for publication but included in totals where applicable n.y.a. not yet available r figure or series revised since previous issue . . not applicable — nil or rounded to zero

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