

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Resources



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SEARCH FOR NEW GAS HEATING UP TO HELP RECOVERY

As Victorians turn up their gas heaters during the winter chill, the search for new gas off the state's south west coast will be stepping up with the awarding of two new gas exploration permits.

Minister for Resources Jaclyn Symes today announced that permits have been granted to Beach Energy and Bridgeport Energy to explore for gas in state waters near Portland and Port Campbell, where an existing productive industry helps two million Victorian households heat their water, food and homes.

If initial exploration is successful, up to \$85 million could flow into the economy, contributing to further investment in the region and new local jobs. The benefits will be magnified if the new exploration leads to additional gas supply.

Exploration involves geological studies to search for offshore gas deposits, including a range of desktop and field activities which are subject to strict environmental controls.

These offshore gas resources can be accessed from onshore without any disturbance of the marine environment.

Beach Energy and Bridgeport Energy are also required to work closely with the commercial fishing industry, local communities and government bodies along the south-west coast as they conduct their exploration programs.

The new permits are on the doorstep of an existing offshore gas industry including Beach Energy's existing Halladale-Speculant facility and their highly promising Enterprise exploration project. The area also hosts Lochard Energy's Iona Gas Plant, which is integral to ensure consistent and reliable supply during the colder months.

The new exploration permits are further good news for local jobs and investment in the south-west following the recent confirmation of the restart of the onshore conventional gas industry in 2021.

The Victorian Gas Program has recently identified potentially significant onshore conventional gas resources particularly in the Otway Basin. Onshore unconventional gas including fracking is permanently banned in Victoria.

Any new gas found will be prioritised for domestic use, boosting the state's energy supply and security.

Gas will continue to play an important role in supporting Victoria's transition to a cleaner energy future, in line with the Government's commitment to net zero emissions by 2050.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Resources Jaclyn Symes

"We're encouraging safe and sensible gas exploration that brings jobs and investment to our regions as well as additional supply for homes and businesses to keep the lights on and their houses warm."

"This industry interest backs the extensive geoscience of the Victorian Gas Program, showing there's a good chance of boosting local gas supply while maintaining protection of our precious natural environment."