

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Senate Estimates
20 October 2010

Question: SR6
Topic: Prospectivity of Sorell Basin (Tasmania)
Proof Hansard Page: E91

Senator Bushby asked:

Senator BUSHBY—Just a final question from the perspective of a Tasmanian senator. With regard to the Sorell Basin, is that one that is being looked at at all by you?

Dr Pigram—It has.

Senator BUSHBY—It has been looked at?

Dr Pigram—It has been looked at.

Senator BUSHBY—What did you decide in terms of its prospectivity?

Dr Pigram—It has been subject to the acreage release process that has been put into the system and put in front of companies as a potential site for a future—

Senator BUSHBY—Is there any interest?

Dr Pigram—I would have to take that on notice, Senator, if I could. I could tell you the outcome of that process.

Senator BUSHBY—Good. Thank you.

Answer:

On 31 August 2010, industry nominations for areas to be included in the 2011 offshore Acreage Release closed. Industry did not submit any nominations for the Sorell Basin.

The Sorell Basin covers an offshore area of about 90,000 km² and has undergone several phases of exploration and appraisal. Three exploration wells have been drilled: Esso Clam -1 (1969), Amoco Cape Sorell -1 (1982) and Jarver -1 (2008). Minor amounts of free oil, recorded as oil shows, occurred between 3087 and 3136m in Cape Sorell -1. No commercial discoveries have been made. One exploration permit is currently held in the basin by Perenco (a UK explorer). Santos relinquished 2 permits in the Sorell basin following the drilling of the Jarver -1 exploration well.

Geoscience Australia, in consultation with the Mineral Resources Tasmania, is continuing to work on pre-competitive studies of the Sorell Basin under the Offshore Energy Security Program. When completed, these studies will underpin the Acreage Release. A release in 2012 is anticipated.