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Miners race to find NT gas



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Local News



 RACE IS ON: Empire Energy told the ASX today of its plans to focus on NT gas exploration. Picture: Empire Energy.

Junior miner Empire Energy has received NT Government consent to join Santos and Origin Energy in the race to find gas in the Beetaloo.

The company announced to the Australian Stock Exchange today it has received Ministerial consent for its EP187 2D seismic program in the NT.

"We expect final work program approvals to follow soon," the company said.

Empire Energy wants to drill two wells 85km south-west of Borroloola.

"We have established a solid foundation for growth in the McArthur and Beetaloo Basins."

Empire is headquartered in Sydney, and has gas and oil interests in the USA.

The company holds almost 60,000 square kilometres of "highly prospective exploration tenements" in the McArthur and Beetaloo basins.

Santos and Origin have already won NT Government approval and have begun drilling their tenements in the Beetaloo in a bid to beat the wet season.

Empire says work undertaken since 2010 demonstrates that the Eastern depositional Trough of the McArthur Basin, of which the company holds around 80 per cent has enormous conventional and unconventional hydrocarbon potential.

"The Beetaloo sub-Basin, in which Empire holds a substantial position, has world class hydrocarbon volumes in place and is on the verge of a major ramp up in industry activity to appraise substantial discoveries already made by major Australian oil and gas operators."

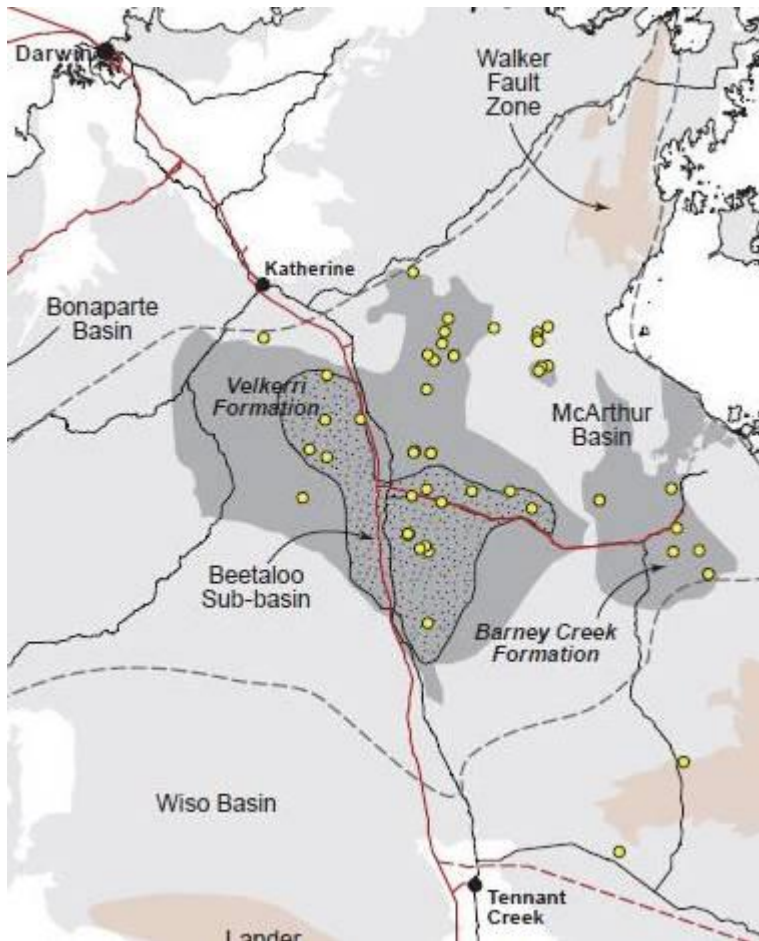
Empire today announced it had sold its Kansas oil and gas assets for US\$19.25 million to further reduce its debt so it is better financially placed to focus "on the core Northern Territory assets".

"Empire is one of the most active companies in the Beetaloo and McArthur Basins since the lifting of the moratorium in April 2018 and subsequent implementation of the regulatory framework allowing development of the basins," the company announced.

"Empire has received Ministerial approval for the EP187 seismic EMP and expects to receive final work program approvals imminently.

"Empire is expected to be the first company other than major operators Santos and Origin to recommence on ground activities in these basins since the lifting of the moratorium. Government approvals for drilling operations are proceeding well."

The company said it was expected to have all the necessary approvals to start drilling by start of next year's dry season.



GAS RICHES: The Northern Territory is believed to be home to one of the richest shale gas fields in the world. Map: NT Government.

With seismic acquisition in our EP187 tenement in the Northern Territory expected to commence soon, and substantial news flow from our neighbours in the Beetaloo Basin anticipated, we have established a solid foundation for growth in the McArthur and Beetaloo Basins."

Empire Energy wants to drill two wells 85km south-west of Borroloola.

Santos and Origin Energy has already won approval to continue exploring for shale gas now the Northern Territory's moratorium has been lifted. Empire Energy has applied from NT Government approval to drilling the exploratory wells, noting none of the wells are to be fracked.

A drilling camp will be located along the Carpentaria Highway with a capacity to accommodate 30 people.

As part of the company's application, it disclosed any waste from the operation, including chemical drums, would be disposed of in approved facilities in Katherine or Darwin.

Other waste from the drilling process would first be evaporated off and trucked to approved disposal facilities outside of the NT.

The company wants to check to check seismic results to "select drilling locations for development wells".

More reading:

[The battle for Beetaloo](#)

In a letter to shareholders earlier in the year, Empire chairman Paul Espie said Empire was one of the most active companies in the Beetaloo and McArthur Basins since the lifting of the moratorium in April 2018 and subsequent implementation of the regulatory framework allowing development of the basins.

The company has also said the exploration work of the three companies was likely to "further increase interest from major oil and gas companies globally, as well as the large LNG consumers in north Asia".

"Empire has received Ministerial approval for the EP187 seismic EMP and expects to receive final work program approvals imminently.

Empire is expected to be the first company other than major operators Santos and Origin to recommence on ground activities in these basins since the lifting of the moratorium. Government approvals for drilling operations are proceeding well. Empire anticipates it will have all necessary approvals to commence exploration drilling by the commencement of the 2020 dry season (early Q2 2020). Activity by major operators continues to build with significant news flow expected in the coming months.

<https://www.katherinetimes.com.au/story/6412540/miners-race-to-find-nt-gas/>