

2009

[Standards for Submitting Digital Data to Crown Minerals to be enforced from 1st April 2009](#)

3 March 2009 - From 1st April 2009 Crown Minerals will no longer accept data submittals that fail to meet the requirements outlined in the Crown Minerals (Minerals and Coal) Regulations 2007.

[Notice of Area Reserved from Applications For Priority in Time - Offshore Reinga Basin.](#)

6 March 2009 - From March 3rd 2009 the Offshore Reinga Basin is reserved from applications for Priority in Time until further notice.

[Contact Energy begins storing gas in underground Ahuroa reservoir](#)

9 March 2009 - Contact Energy has begun storing gas in its underground Ahuroa gas storage facility in onshore Taranaki in a part of the TAWN gas fields now controlled by Contact's majority owner Origin Energy.

[Origin plans to drill two gas prospects off Auckland in late 2009](#)

9 March 2009 - Origin Energy, which is operator of an enlarged Northland Basin exploration permit, plans to drill two wells offshore to the south west of Auckland towards the end of 2009.

[New Stockton coal processing plant as export demand turns down](#)

9 March 2009 - New Zealand's largest coal exporter Solid Energy is to invest \$100 million in a new coal processing plant at its Stockton opencast mine near Westport as the next step in a long-term investment programme designed to secure a further 20-year life for the mine.

[L&M to drill seven more CSG wells in western Southland this year](#)

11 March 2009 - Wellington-based explorer L&M Petroleum plans to drill at least seven coal seam wells in its Western Southland permits in 2009.

[Oil refinery makes good progress in project to lift capacity by 20%](#)

11 March 2009 - Marsden Point oil refinery owner New Zealand Refining Company plans to complete a 20% expansion of its crude processing capacity by the end of the year.

[Kupe partners erect condensate storage tanks at New Plymouth](#)

11 March 2009 - Construction of the Kupe field gas-condensate project is moving towards completion in the first half of 2009 with the project now 90% complete.

[AWE to use Kan Tan IV semi-sub to drill four wells off Taranaki in 3rd quarter](#)

11 March 2009 - Australian Worldwide Exploration (AWE) will begin a four-well offshore oil and gas exploration programme in the Taranaki basin in the third quarter of 2009 to build on the success of its Tui oil field development.

[First crude flows from offshore Maari oil field](#)

11 March 2009 - First oil has begun flowing from Maari, New Zealand's largest crude oil field Maari, 80 kilometres (km) off Taranaki's south coast.

[Chartwell and Comet Ridge plan coal seam gas merger; more NZ drilling underway](#)

11 March 2009 - The private Australian coal seam gas exploration company Chartwell Energy Pty Ltd involved in New Zealand exploration plans a merger with listed Brisbane CSG company Comet Ridge.

[Macraes underground gold grades higher with depth; record gold sales](#)

11 March 2009 - OceanaGold infill drilling in the deeper Panel 2 section of the Frasers underground mine at Macraes gold mine has continued to find increasing grade with depth in the ore body.

[Reefton mine exceeds expectations again for OceanaGold](#)

11 March 2009 - OceanaGold's Globe Progress gold mine near Reefton on the South Island West Coast more than doubled production of gold during 2008 while near-mine exploration drilling to identify possible high grade reserves is underway.

Ravensdown Fertiliser looks for South Island phosphate rock

11 March 2009 - The major fertiliser producer Ravensdown Fertiliser Co-operative Ltd has begun prospecting in Otago and South Canterbury for a cheaper source of phosphate rock to possibly replace currently expensive imports.

Nautilus finds 10 seafloor mineral deposits north of NZ waters in Tonga

18 March 2009 - The world's largest seafloor massive sulphide explorer Nautilus Minerals has located 10 multi-mineral deposits in Tongan waters just north of New Zealand at the northern end of the 2,500 km long Kermadec-Tonga arc.

New Zealand Energy Quarterly - December 2008 -Issue 05

23 March 2009 - The New Zealand Energy Quarterly provides quarterly statistics and trend data on the supply of major fuel types, electricity generation and its associated greenhouse gas emissions, and liquid fuel prices.

Newmont Waihi has one of biggest production years at 144,000 oz

27 March 2009 - Newmont Waihi Gold has recorded one of its best gold production years from its Waihi operation with a total yield of 144,000 oz for the 2008 year, well up on 85,000 oz mined in the previous 2007 year.

Eastern to do more drilling for Takitimu coal mine expansion

27 March 2009 - Brisbane-based Eastern Corporation Ltd, which opened its Takitimu sub-bituminous coal mine at Nightcaps in western Southland last year, plans more drilling in 2009 to assist with the next stages of mine planning.

New look application forms available

Please note that several new application forms are now available.

AWE, Mitsui, NZOG and Pan Pacific awarded new offshore Taranaki permit

16 April 2009 - The four partners in the Tui oil field have been awarded a new exploration permit over 80 kilometres (km) southwest of Tui in the offshore Taranaki Basin.

NZ oil production in 2008 a few barrels short of record year

16 April 2009 - Oil production from New Zealand fields in 2008 was just a fraction short of a record year.

Three quarters of Kupe field's value now in liquids, NZOG says

16 April 2009 - Three quarters of the value of the Kupe offshore gas condensate field now lies in the petroleum liquids rather than natural gas, one of the field partners New Zealand Oil & Gas says in its 2008 annual report.

Natural gas prices up 24% to \$6.61 per GJ for Contact Energy

16 April 2009 - Natural gas prices rose by an average of 24% to \$6.61 per gigajoule in the second half of 2008 from \$5.34 per GJ in the same period of 2007, Contact Energy says.

L&M begins major 9-well CSG programme in Southland

16 April 2009 - Wellington-based petroleum explorer L&M Petroleum Ltd plans a major 2009 coal seam gas drilling programme of up to nine wells in the Western Southland Basin of the South Island.

First two Maari oil wells flow over 20,000 barrels a day

16 April 2009 - The first two of the planned five development wells in OMV's Maari oil field off the Taranaki coast are now together flowing naturally at over 20,000 barrels per day. One of the Maari partners Horizon Oil said that the first production well MR3P8 had test flowed without pumping at a rate of over 10,000 barrels of oil per day (bopd) through a choke 26% open.

L&M Coal Seam Gas flows pilot test gas wells at Kaitangata field

20 April 2009 - Christchurch-based private company L&M Coal Seam Gas Ltd has commenced production from its five well pilot drilled in the Kaitangata coal field approximately 50 km south of Dunedin.

Reinga Basin seismic survey completed – results promising

22 April 2009 - The CGG Veritas seismic vessel MV Pacific Titan has completed a 2D seismic survey to assess the oil and gas potential of the unexplored Reinga Basin. The Reinga Basin lies northwest of the northern tip of the North Island and is geologically contiguous with the oil and gas producing Taranaki Basin.

[Solid Energy to open up Kimihia opencast mine near Huntly East](#)

27 April 2009 - Solid Energy intends to develop an opencast pit adjacent to the Huntly East underground mine over the next 6 to 12 months.

[OceanaGold puts Blackwater reef back on exploration agenda](#)

4 May 2009 - Melbourne-based gold miner OceanaGold Corporation has put the historic deep reef Blackwater underground gold mine near Reefton back on its exploration agenda.

[Solid Energy starts Cypress extension at Stockton mine](#)

4 May 2009 - Solid Energy is about to start preliminary works developing the Cypress extension of Stockton opencast coking coal mine in Buller.

[Funding boost to encourage oil and gas exploration](#)

8 May 2009 - Energy and Resources Minister Gerry Brownlee has announced a renewed seismic survey programme to encourage New Zealand oil and gas exploration.

[Budget 2009: Tax exemption encourages oil and gas exploration](#)

14 May 2009 - Energy and Resources Minister Gerry Brownlee and Revenue Minister Peter Dunne have announced positive measures to enhance the development of New Zealand's natural resources.

[Amendment to the Crown Minerals \(Petroleum\) Regulations 2007](#)

18 May 2009 - The amendment was notified in the New Zealand Gazette on 14 May 2009 and will come into force on 12 June 2009.

[AWE planning for 4-5 wells off Taranaki starting October](#)

18 May 2009 - Sydney-based explorer Australian Worldwide Exploration (AWE) is doing advanced planning for a four to five well drilling campaign in the offshore Taranaki Basin which is due to start in October this year.

[L&M Petroleum confident about economics of coal seam gas in NZ](#)

18 May 2009 - Geoff Loudon, mining investor and chairman of L&M Petroleum, says in New Zealand L&M sees huge advantages in coal seam gas discovery and commercialisation.

[First 900,000 barrels from Maari oil field after third well starts flowing](#)

18 May 2009 - The latest Taranaki offshore oil field at Maari has pumped in excess of 900,000 barrels of oil soon after the start-up of the third of its planned five oil wells.

[Kupe production station close to completion](#)

22 May 2009 - The Kupe gas condensate project construction at its onshore south Taranaki production station is nearing completion.

[OceanaGold finds high grade deeps zone beneath Frasers underground](#)

22 May 2009 - A new zone of high grade gold has been discovered immediately underneath the Panel 2 section of OceanaGold Corporation's Frasers underground mine in the Macraes goldfield in east Otago.

[Pike River expects US\\$120 a tonne coking coal prices](#)

22 May 2009 - Pike River Coal Ltd - soon to begin producing from its West Coast underground mine - expects prices for its premium coking coal to reach over US\$120 per tonne for the next year.

[Solid Energy Ohai mine to close at end of June](#)

5 June 2009 - Solid Energy has confirmed it will close the company's Ohai opencast mine in western Southland at the end of June 2009.

[OceanaGold plans big exploration spend in NZ this year](#)

5 June 2009 - OceanaGold plans to make a major step up in exploration for gold in and around its two New Zealand mines this year.

[L&M starts up Earnsclough alluvial goldmine in central Otago.](#)

12 June 2009 - Private mining and energy company L&M Group has begun work on its Earnsclough alluvial gold mine project across the Clutha River from Alexandra in Central Otago.

Crown Minerals return from encouraging global promotional trip

15 June 2009 - A recent Crown Minerals trip to Europe and South America promoting New Zealand's upcoming offshore petroleum exploration blocks offers has been well received.

Vancouver-based Kent Exploration joins in Reefton gold exploration

26 June 2009 - Vancouver-based exploration company Kent Exploration has joined with another Canadian company, CanAlaska, to take a major interest in a Reefton gold exploration project.

Grey River gold dredge restarts again on north bank

26 June 2009 - The large Grey River alluvial gold dredge, which was extensively refitted in 2008, is now successfully mining gold on the north bank near the town of Blackball.

Newmont Waihi begins drilling Goldwyn prospect in Coromandel

26 June 2009 - The first of four diamond drill holes has been drilled by Newmont Waihi Gold at the Goldwyn epithermal gold prospect in the Coromandel about 16 km north of Waihi.

Maari drilling last two oil wells

26 June 2009 - OMV, operator of the Maari oilfield, has begun drilling the final two oil production wells at the offshore south Taranaki development, after completing three water injection wells.

Kupe now to begin flowing gas in 4th quarter 2009

27 June 2009 - The Kupe gas and condensate field is now expected to come into production in the fourth quarter of 2009 instead of the third quarter.

New National Core Store

29 June 2009 - Crown Minerals have now amalgamated the content of all the regional core stores (Paeroa, Dunedin and Christchurch) with the Wellington Petroleum core store into a new national storage facility in Featherston, Wairarapa.

AWE plans two Tui development wells with Kan Tan-IV rig

29 June 2009 - Sydney-based explorer Australian Worldwide Exploration (AWE) is looking at drilling three or possibly four types of exploration plays during its summer exploration in the Taranaki Basin.

Trans-Orient plans shallow and deeper wells into East Coast shales

29 June 2009 - The Canadian-based explorer Trans-Orient Petroleum Ltd says in its third quarter report that it plans a shallow stratigraphic well in its largest East Coast Basin permit this winter in preparation for a later deeper well into the unconventional Waipawa/Whangai shales.

Core Stores Amalgamated

30 June 2009 - Crown Minerals have opened a new national core and sample storage facility in Featherston, Wairarapa. Opportunities realised through the relocation of the Petroleum core store in response to capacity constraints at the former Wellington facility have meant that all mineral and coal core stored in regional core stores have now also been amalgamated into this single facility.

Raukumara Basin Offset stacks now available

17 July 2009 - Offset stacks are now available for the Raukumara (RAU07) seismic survey.

NZ offers considerable coal seam gas potential, says Minister

22 July 2009 - The future is bright for the New Zealand coal seam gas, the Minister of Energy and Resources Gerry Brownlee told an inaugural coal seam gas industry briefing in Christchurch.

NZ coal seam gas awaits "sweet spot" finds for major progress

26 July 2009 - Major progress in development of the coal seam gas industry in New Zealand awaited the discovery of 'sweet spots', petroleum exploration consultant Mac Beggs said in a survey of CSG prospects at an inaugural industry briefing in Christchurch.

L&M Coal Seam Gas plans aggressive drilling programme

24 July 2009 - L&M Coal Seam Gas Ltd, the Christchurch-based private company, has an aggressive appraisal programme underway to define an estimated 1200 petajoules of coal seam gas resources in the North and South islands.

Change of closing date for the Northland Block Offer

27 July 2009 - The Minister for Energy, Gerry Brownlee, today announced that the closing date for the Northland Block Offer had changed to Wednesday 18 August 2010.

New Zealand coal production up slightly in 2008

30 July 2009 - Coal production in New Zealand in 2008 was 4.9 million tonnes, up 1.5% from the previous year's output of 4.8 million tonnes.

Pike's first coal production begins; will fetch US\$128 per tonne

30 July 2009 - Pike River Coal's first coking coal now being mined from its new West Coast underground mine will be sold at a price of US\$128 (about NZ\$193) per tonne during the mine's first production year to March 2010.

Comet Ridge plans two deep 1,100 m CSG wells into Paparoa coal measures

31 July 2009 - Comet Ridge, the Brisbane-based coal seam gas explorer, is to begin drilling two deep coal seam gas wells into the Paparoa coal measures near Greymouth.

OMV to drill extra Maari well into M2A sands above Moki reservoir

31 July 2009 - The Maari oil field partners are to go ahead with exploitation of a second oil-bearing zone approximately 50 m above the main Moki formation where development drilling is almost complete.

OceanaGold raises \$30m mainly for exploration at NZ mines

10 August 2009 - OceanaGold has successfully raised A\$24.2 million (approximately NZ\$30.5 million mainly to carry out exploration around its Macraes and Reefton gold mines in New Zealand).

NZ gold production highest in past 30 years

10 August 2009 - Gold production in New Zealand hit its highest level in 2008 since modern gold mining recovered three decades ago in the early 1980s.

Eastern plans Buller and Ohai exploration growth; boosts coal output

10 August 2009 - Brisbane-based coal miner Eastern Corporation Ltd says it is planning further exploration of its Buller coal prospects and is looking at further developments in its Ohai and Orepuki prospects in Western Southland.

NZ exploration spending grows

17 August 2009 - Oil and gas exploration activity grew in New Zealand in 2008 with exploration spending the highest in at least a decade with more wells being drilled offshore than onshore.

NZ's record oil export earnings third behind dairying and meat

18 August 2009 - New Zealand's oil export earnings reached a record high level in 2008 climbing to third behind only dairying and meat exports.

More oil in extended Maari field, partners say

31 August 2009 - The two additional Maari oil field reservoirs now being targeted in offshore south Taranaki are together expected to contain a mean oil-in-place volume of approximately 101 million barrels, Cue Energy Resources says.

Shell investing to make most of Maui's late field life

30 August 2009 - Production from the Maui gas field may end in five to 10 years, Rob Jager country chair of Shell New Zealand said in an interview following the official end of the 30-year Maui gas sales contract.

Use of in-seam mining techniques allow Pike River to see ahead

4 September 2009 - The use of in-seam drilling technology has already proved its worth at Pike River Coal's underground West Coast mine.

Indications of gold deeper on margins of Waihi gold system

4 September 2009 - Prospective gold targets in the near-mine areas of the Waihi district may be located deeper on the edges of the fossil geothermal system, Newmont Waihi Gold's project geologist for near mine exploration, Jackie Hobbins says.

Taranaki methanol production up 63% in first half of 2009

11 September 2009 - Downstream use of natural gas for methanol increased substantially in the first half of 2009 with Methanex using its restarted Motunui plant for its first full half year to the end of June 2009.

Maari output near 40,000 bbls a day as Manaia-1 extension hits oil

11 September 2009 - Production of crude oil from the offshore Maari oil field has reached close to 40,000 barrels a day, substantially above the expected production capacity.

L&M Petroleum finds 7 m of coal with high gas potential at Mt Linton-2

10 September 2006 - L&M Petroleum has encountered 6.8 metres of Beaumont Formation coal in its Mt Linton-2 coal seam gas well in western Southland just west of Ohai.

Contact's gas prices for power generation rise 25% in past year

10 September 2009 - Contact Energy's gas costs per unit for power generation increased by 25% in the year to 30 June 2009, the company said in its report for the year.

Aggregates industry developing quarry planning guidelines

14 September 2009 - The aggregate industry is developing national planning for how new and existing quarries are going to be consented in future, the president of the Aggregate and Quarry Association, James Boyce says.

Frasers underground gold mine 'unsung success'

14 September 2009 - The Frasers underground mine at Macraes gold mine in east Otago is an unsung success story in the New Zealand mining scene, two of the people involved with the mine, Cam Wylie and Anthony Jones, told the AusIMM minerals conference in Queenstown.

Todd awarded large permit west and south of Maari oil field

28 September 2009 - Todd Exploration Ltd has been awarded a new 100% owned offshore exploration permit, PEP 51313, located to the west and south of the Maari oil field in offshore south Taranaki Basin.

L&M Petroleum looking at combining with L&M CSG

25 September 2009 - Stock exchange-listed L&M Petroleum Ltd is looking at acquiring all or part of associated private company L&M Coal Seam Gas Ltd – the largest individual CSG permit holder in New Zealand.

Solid Energy to investigate briquetting of lignite at Maitua

25 September 2009 - Solid Energy is investigating building a lignite briquetting plant at Maitua as the next step in developing its large-scale lignite resources in eastern Southland.

New Stockton mining alliance between Downer and Solid Energy

28 September 2009 - Solid Energy and mining operator Downer EDI Mining NZ have agreed to a joint mining alliance agreement for New Zealand's largest export coking coal mine at Stockton, near Westport.

Todd drilling three Mangahewa gas wells as part of \$100m campaign

28 September 2009 - Todd Energy, the leading NZ-owned oil and gas producer, spudded the onshore Mangahewa 4 well on 1 August, which is the first of a three well campaign in its 100% owned Mangahewa gas condensate field.

Solid Energy and Ravensdown plan Southland lignite-to-fertiliser plant

28 September 2009 - Plans for a \$1.5 billion coal-to-fertiliser plant in Eastern Southland based on the area's huge lignite resources have been announced by energy producer Solid Energy and agricultural fertiliser supplier Ravensdown.

Maari partners switch to begin drilling M2A production well

28 September 2009 - The Maari oilfield expansion drill plan has been switched to commence drilling of the M2A production well into the sands that lie approximately 50 m above the now-flowing Moki reservoir in the offshore Taranaki field.

Contact now has 5.6 PJ of gas stored underground at Ahuroa

30 September 2009 - Contact Energy has now injected 5.6 petajoules (PJ) of gas into its Ahuroa underground gas storage facility in onshore Taranaki since it began storing the gas in December 2008.

TAG Oil to adsorb Trans-Orient in merger

30 September 2009 - Two Canadian-based companies operating in New Zealand, TAG Oil and Trans-Orient Petroleum, have announced they are to merge, with TAG as the surviving entity.

Greymouth Petroleum adds Tiger Rig to fleet

1 October 2009 - Greymouth Petroleum has imported a lightweight mobile rig to add to its rig fleet.

Todd Energy to build \$65 million LPG plant in Taranaki

2 October 2009 - Todd Energy has announced it is to build a \$65 million LPG plant in Taranaki to extract the butane-propane fuel from the natural gas stream of the Mangahewa and Pohokura gas fields.

Maari partners hit substantial new oil zone

5 October 2009 - The Maari oil field partners have found a substantial second zone of oil and successfully drilled a horizontal production well through the reservoir containing an estimated 30-40 million barrels of oil-in-place.

OceanaGold extends high grade Panel 2 Deeps zone at Frasers

12 October 2009 - More higher grade gold ore has been located beneath the floor of the Frasers underground mine at Macraes goldfield in the Panel 2 Deeps.

New joint ventures at Rise & Shine and Ophir gold prospects

12 October 2009 - Two Central Otago gold prospects, Rise & Shine and Ophir, containing both hard rock reefs and native gold in gravels are now subject of new joint venture arrangements and exploration.

Kea awarded onshore Northland permit around Kaipara Harbour

16 October 2009 - Private New Zealand company Kea Petroleum Ltd has been awarded an exploration permit over an area surrounding Kaipara Harbour just north of Auckland.

AWE granted new permit immediately north of New Plymouth

16 October 2009 - Australian Worldwide Exploration has been granted a new Taranaki permit, PEP 51558, which lies close offshore from New Plymouth city.

Westech and NZOG ready to drilling Albacore-1 well

27 October 2009 - Westech Energy expects to begin drilling its Albacore-1 offshore north Taranaki well in November with New Zealand Oil & Gas as a 40% partner.

L&M CSG books 173 PJ of coal seam gas at Ohai

Privately held energy company, L&M Coal Seam Gas Ltd has booked an initial resource of 173 petajoules (PJ) at its Ohai permit in western Southland - the country's first independently verified coal seam gas resource.

Offshore oil and gas exploration season starts

2 November 2009 - Energy and Resources Minister Gerry Brownlee announced the MV Bergen Resolution has been contracted by Crown Minerals for an offshore seismic survey this summer.

Comet Ridge plans aerial geophysics over Buller, Waikato permits

3 November 2009 - Brisbane-based coal seam gas explorer Comet Ridge is to conduct regional aeromagnetic surveys in its Buller and Waikato permits in late 2009 specifically designed to high-grade the most prospective areas for coal seam gas deposits.

Cue Energy lists on New Zealand stock exchange

3 November 2009 - Melbourne-based oil and gas company Cue Energy Resources Ltd, 27% owned by Todd Energy, has publically listed on the NZX New Zealand share market following up the success of the Maari oil field.

[Kupe project construction completed and commissioning begins](#)

3 November 2009 - Construction has been completed for the Kupe gas condensate project's onshore production station in south Taranaki and commissioning of the system is now beginning using pipeline gas.

[Offshore Northland Supplementary Data Now Available](#)

10 November 2009 - A supplementary data pack is now available for the Northland Block Offer. The data was acquired in March 2009 by CGGVeritas as part of a seismic survey over the Reinga Basin, which is contiguous to the Northland Basin.

[Eastern looks to further expand Takitimu coal mine as demand grows](#)

6 November 2009 - Brisbane-based coal company Eastern Corporation Ltd expects to continue increasing output from its sub-bituminous Takitimu open cut mine in the Ohai/Nightcaps area of western Southland.

[Solid Energy says firming in coking coal prices will be positive](#)

6 November 2009 - A firming in coal prices in recent months will be positive for Solid Energy, the energy producer's chairman John Palmer told the company's annual meeting in Wellington.

[Unlocking New Zealand's Petroleum Potential](#)

18 November 2009 - Energy and Resources Minister Gerry Brownlee today announced the Government's Action Plan for unlocking and maximising New Zealand's petroleum potential, with a specific focus on exploration of New Zealand's offshore deepwater basins.

[Crown Minerals Openfile Metallic Minerals Geochemical Database now available](#)

25 November 2009 - Crown Minerals has established a mineral exploration database compiling much of the historical and recent open file geochemical data collected in New Zealand for the past several decades.

[Compilation of Petroleum PVT Reports now available](#)

25 November 2009 - A 2078-page pdf compilation of PVT reports for openfile oil and gas samples in Taranaki and other New Zealand basins has recently been completed by Richard Sykes of GNS Science. Petroleum Report PR4043 can now be downloaded from Crown Minerals' online technical database.

[NZOG builds up in-house technical team](#)

19 November 2009 - Wellington-based explorer New Zealand Oil & Gas, which expects to spend at least \$30 million in offshore drilling over the summer, has built up a strong in-house exploration team, chief executive David Salisbury told the company's annual meeting.

[Crown Minerals office hours over the Holiday Period](#)

3 December 2009 - The Crown Minerals office and Business Services Centre will be closed from 5:00pm Thursday 24 December 2009 until 8:30am Tuesday 5 January 2010.

[Major airborne surveys to aid quests for coal seam gas and iron sands](#)

4 December 2009 - A large international survey group has begun surveys using two fixed wing aircraft in New Zealand on a multi client basis.

[Tui field produces 25 million barrels of oil](#)

4 December 2009 - The Tui oil field has produced its 25 millionth barrel of oil or half of its estimated 50 million barrel original reserves in little more than two years of operation.

[Contact drilling three gas injection wells into Ahuroa storage field](#)

4 December 2009 - The first of three additional gas injection wells has begun drilling at Contact Energy's Ahuroa underground natural gas storage facility near Stratford, Contact said.

[Westech to drill Pliocene turbidite play at Albacore-1 off Taranaki](#)

6 December 2009 - One of the three plays being targeted by the Albacore-1 well being drilled by Westech Energy New Zealand offshore north Taranaki over the next few weeks is a series of early Pliocene aged turbidite fans.

Trans-Orient plans second stage of Boar Hill-1 oil-shale well

7 December 2009 - Trans-Orient Petroleum Ltd plans to drill the second stage of its Boar Hill-1 well in southern Hawkes Bay to penetrate fractured oil-shale source rocks plus drill three shallow test wells into the century-old Waitangi Hill oil discovery north of Gisborne.

Greymouth's Kowhai gas discovery has reserves of 134 PJ

7 December 2009 - The Greymouth Petroleum group estimates its new Kowhai gas condensate field in onshore north Taranaki contains reserves of 134 petajoules (PJ) of gas and 3.2 million barrels of condensate.

L&M Petroleum plans summer seismic over conventional permits

7 December 2009 - Wellington-based explorer L&M Petroleum Ltd intends to aggressively pursue both conventional petroleum and coal seam gas opportunities after the intended merger with its associated private company L&M Coal Seam Gas Ltd.

New entrant Octanex granted permit between Maari and Maui

7 December 2009 - Melbourne-based petroleum explorer Octanex NL plans to focus initially on four structures in its new acreage, 1,613 sq km PEP 51906.

Comet Ridge suspends Macdonald 5C as future pressure CSG well

15 December 2009 - Brisbane-based coal seam gas explorer Comet Ridge Ltd has suspended its deep Macdonald 5C appraisal core well inland from Greymouth as a future pressure observation well.

First gas flows from Kupe field onshore

16 December 2009 - Commissioning of the Kupe gas condensate project has begun with the offshore wells being opened at the field platform and the first gas and liquids being piped ashore to the gas processing plant near Hawera.

NZ methane hydrates development may soon be achievable

16 December 2009 - A gas industry using frozen gas hydrates below the seabed off the East Coast could be developed in the near future thanks to rapid global technical developments.

NZ deepwater basins best potential for big oil discoveries, petroleum scientist says

21 December 2009 - New Zealand's many deepwater basins have the best potential for big oil discoveries, frontier basins petroleum scientist Chris Uruski says.

Maari oil field has now produced 4.5 million barrels

22 December 2009 - The Maari oil field in offshore Taranaki produced 4.5 million barrels of oil by 30 October, one of the junior Maari partners Horizon Oil says.

Greymouth awarded mining permit for historic Moturoa field

19 December 2009 - A mining permit for the historic Moturoa oilfield in and around the port area of New Plymouth city has been awarded to the joint venture between Greymouth Petroleum and Ngati Te Whiti Hapu joint venture.

Albacore-1 well dry

21 December 2009 - The Albacore-1 well drilled in offshore north Taranaki has been found to be non-commercial with only traces of hydrocarbons found.

Refinery expansion opens as industry faces storm

22 December 2009 - The Marsden Point refinery company New Zealand Refining Company Ltd says it has successfully commissioned its \$200 million expansion that has significantly increased output from the plant.