

Use it or lose it, say Ministers

Steve Rotherham
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COMPANIES holding oil and gas fields in Western Australia risk losing rights to petroleum leases if they don't commit to moving forward with developments, WA Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development Eric Ripper told the APPEA 2008 Conference in Perth this morning.

Eighteen petroleum retention leases in state and federal jurisdictions off the Western Australian coast are set to expire this year. Ripper said if companies holding these leases don't commit to development programs "there could be opportunities for other investors to take those over".

Federal Resources and Energy Minister Martin Ferguson told reporters on the conference sidelines that his government supported this stance.

"Our retention lease review is currently underway and I expect to receive the results in the foreseeable future," he said.

"We as a government have a responsibility to make sure our resources are not stranded. We've got to make sure that if the leases are commercially viable that we bring them on now rather than sitting on opportunities."

The Greater Gorgon Area partners' West Tryal Rocks field is receiving particular scrutiny, with ammonia producer Burrup Fertilisers lobbying to have the field developed as a source of feedstock for its operations.



Martin Ferguson
addressing APPEA
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