



BUSINESSNEWS

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Matt Lamont
Managing director
DownUnder GeoSolutions

Photo: Attila Cszar

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"Will we get back on track?"

Federal Budget 2015



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 MAJOR PROJECTS
 OIL & GAS

22,130sqm Exploration target for Polarcus and DownUnder

DownUnder to exploit its analytical

The Roebuck Basin has become a new area of interest for the state's petroleum explorers, creating some positive stories amid falling oil prices.

Matt McKenzie

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DESPITE the low oil price, Perth-based DownUnder GeoSolutions is determined to pursue what it considers to be its competitive advantage and go ahead with a new exploration venture in the Roebuck Basin.

DownUnder, which is in the high tech end of the geology and geophysics services part of the sector, is one of few companies among its peers that claims a level of protection from downsizing during the downturn.

Co-founder and managing director Matt Lamont said one reason for this was that well drilling and seismic acquisition were an order of magnitude more expensive than data analysis.

Additionally, some companies took the opportunity to reprocess seismic data instead of funding large exploration initiatives, he said.

That meant that although some arms of DownUnder might feel pressure, other units of the business would still be in demand.

Cost competitiveness would also help, as 'Bruce', the company's supercomputer, the largest of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere.

"We're about 10 per cent of the computer cost of a lot of our competitors," Mr Lamont said.

"We have got a close relationship with Intel and we use all

Key takeaways

Lower oil prices will affect exploration companies.

DownUnder engaged in production and exploration project.

Improved technology and lower costs a key part of strategy.

their processors, which is what Bruce is made of."

He added that DownUnder had made technological changes to improve spectrum width for the data, which improves competitiveness.

"(Additionally) we're very slim, we've got a very small executive team," Mr Lamont said.

The company employs 200 people and has seven offices internationally.

The nature of seismic data means it can be transmitted and processed anywhere in the world, making the global market very competitive.

Emerging geophysical analysis players can be found in several Asean nations.

Across the energy sector, companies have been clamping down on exploration expenditure in bids to cut costs.

This is true of the big players



INNOVATION: Matt Lamont says while parts of DownUnder's high tech services may feel pressure, others will still be in demand. Photo: Attila Cszar

as much as anyone else, with the high stakes involved in offshore exploration projects meaning they are often shuffled to the bottom of the 'to do' list.

The effect will flow through the industry and could cause some in the data analysis business to reduce offerings or retreat from local operations

Roebuck

Nonetheless, more exploration spending is undertaken in Western Australia than any other state, and reduced drill rig costs, a natural result of reduced exploration interest at the bottom of the commodity price cycle, might spur further interest in exploration.

One of the past year's pleasant surprises for the local energy

“ We’re about 10 per cent of the computer cost of a lot of our competitors - Matt Lamont

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edge, courtesy of 'Bruce' almighty



sound explosions to gather geological data, to search the area with a fine-tooth comb.

DownUnder will then process the data with 'Bruce'.

Mr Lamont will no doubt hope that the search proves as fruitful as the company's

involvement in the Apache Corporation's Julimar exploration.

Apache last year announced it would sell the fields to Woodside as part of its exit from Australia.

"The biggest and most successful (project) we've been involved with is the

Julimar/Brunello development, which is now going into Wheatstone," Mr Lamont said. "Our technology worked really well in there."

More online:
bit.ly/oil_find

Project Award



PERMAcast
wins multi-
million dollar
Wheatstone
contract

Since expanding their core capabilities in 2008, PERMAcast have continued to strengthen their position within WA by focussing on the supply of customised products designed to meet exact specifications for their clients across the mining & resource, Infrastructure and oil & gas sectors.

The recent award of a multi-million dollar precast package for the ISBL and OSBL Concrete and Civil Works for the Wheatstone project by Laing O'Rourke, after a long and consultative tender process, once again demonstrates their ability to respond accurately to critical design specifications and initiate engineering efficiencies within the manufacturing methodologies, which ultimately provide cost benefits for a project.

PERMAcast Sales & Marketing Manager Rasmus Sorensen says that the award of such a massive precast package is testimony to PERMAcast's overall capacity.

"Not only does this project require a large scale modern precast manufacturing and storage facility but this project is also technically very challenging and for that reason we are even more pleased that a reputable multi-national

company such as Laing O'Rourke has chosen PERMAcast for supply of these products.

We have a history now as Western Australia's leading supplier of precast and prestressed concrete products for the state's most prestigious infrastructure, oil & gas and resource projects and our clients draw confidence from our proven ability to deliver technically challenging products on time and to specification.

I am certain that our robust business management systems and highly skilled team of in house engineers played a pivotal role in PERMAcast's success in securing this package, and we are now very much looking forward to working closely with Laing O'Rourke in delivering another major project success story."

This project, combined with PERMAcast's current project portfolio, propels them forward in a highly competitive business environment. Underpinned by their Quality Management Systems and commitment to Safety, it is clear why the company is widely recognised as Western Australia's leading pre-caster of choice.

industry was Carnarvon Petroleum's discovery of oil at its Phoenix South well in August.

The find, which sent shares in the company soaring almost 190 per cent on the day of the announcement, was mooted as the biggest such discovery in Australia for almost three decades.

It has fed increased interest in the area, recently culminating in a deal between Dubai-based seismic contractor Polarcus and DownUnder for exploration of the Roebuck Basin.

Producers such as BHP Billiton, JX Nippon and Apache Corporation have signed on to buy the results of the survey.

The 3D survey and analysis work will be 25 per cent funded by DownUnder.

Polarcus senior vice-president Christian Fenwick said the Phoenix find had drawn attention to the region.

"The presence of oil in that particular area (the Roebuck basin) has resulted in an uptick of interest, and as there was a scarcity of modern seismic data, we saw the opportunity to propose an extensive 3D seismic survey, our Capreolus 3D project," Mr Fenwick told Business News.

"At 22,130 square kilometres in size, this is now the largest single 3D project ever surveyed offshore Australia; that will provide exploration companies with basin-wide high quality data to help them search for new prospects."

Polarcus will use so-called acquisition ships, which tow huge lines that create

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