

First trans-Tasman collaborative workshop a resounding success

On 8 and 9 March 2012, Geoscience Australia hosted the Tasman Frontier Petroleum Industry Workshop in Canberra. The workshop focussed on the vast unexplored frontier region extending between eastern Australia, western New Zealand and New Caledonia (figure 1). The aim of the workshop was to deliver up-to-date pre-competitive geoscientific information on this region to the petroleum exploration industry as well as stimulate discussion on the future of

exploration in the region.

The workshop was the first cross-boundary petroleum industry event held collaboratively by the three trans-Tasman jurisdictions, represented by Geoscience Australia, New Zealand's GNS Science (formerly the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences)

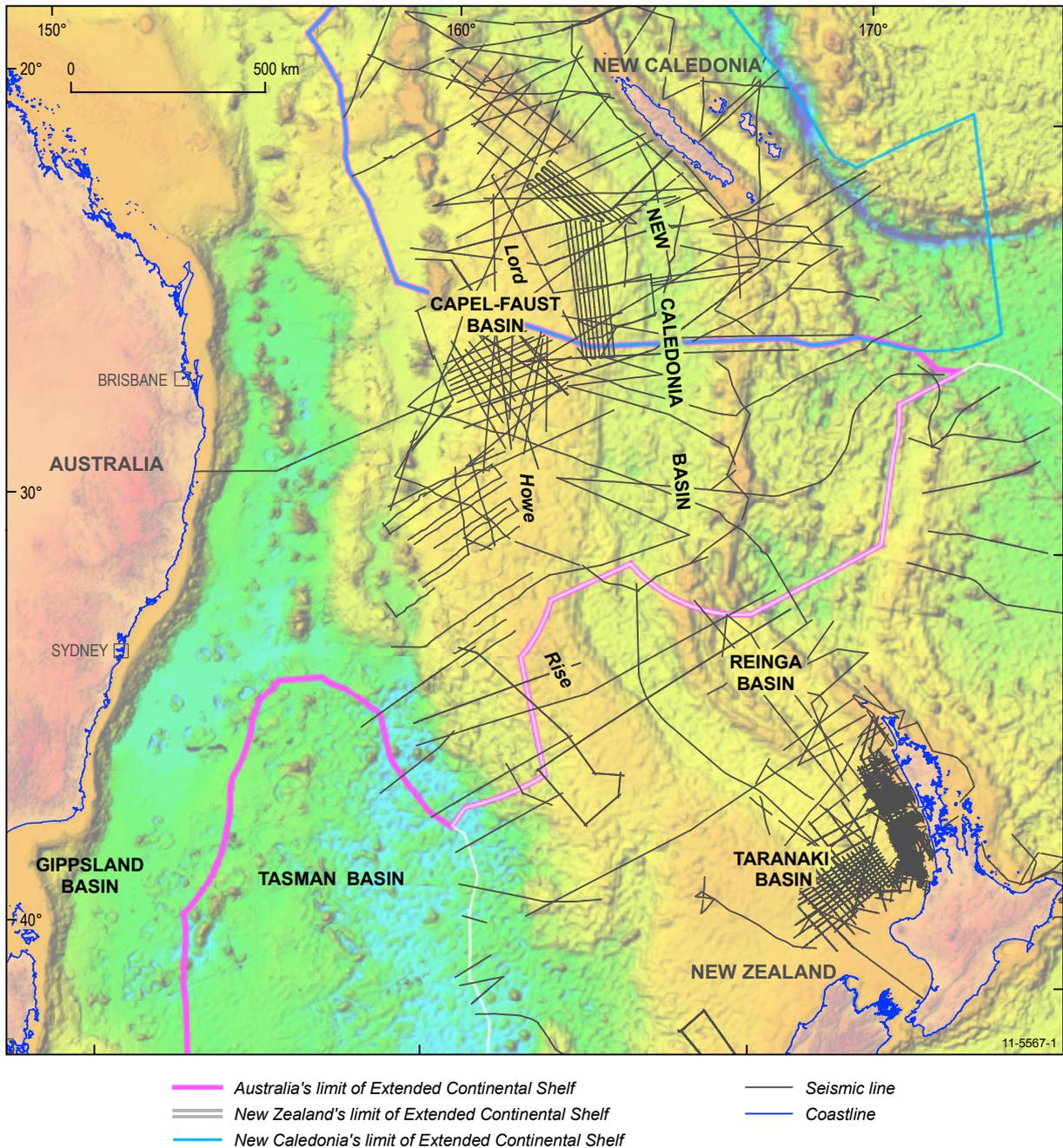


Figure 1. Location of the Tasman Frontier region showing the coverage of reflection seismic data included in the Tasman Frontier Geophysical Database.



and the New Caledonian Department of Industry Mines and Energy (DIMENC). It was attended by over 50 delegates including representatives of 24 exploration-related companies from Europe, China and the United States of America, as well as representatives from government science agencies from Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia and France.

The first day of the workshop showcased the results of Geoscience Australia's recently completed assessment of the Capel and Faust basins in Australia's remote eastern maritime jurisdiction (see *AusGeo News* 99). Assessments of basins in the adjacent New Zealand and New Caledonian territories, including the Reinga Basin and the New Caledonia Trough, were also presented. On the second day, the presentations focused on regional-scale syntheses of tectonic history, stratigraphy and petroleum potential, and overviews of regulatory regimes for exploration within the region.

A highlight of the workshop was the release of the Tasman Frontier Geophysical Database. The database is a first-ever, comprehensive, cross-boundary compilation of all publicly available digital reflection seismic data from the offshore eastern Australian, New Zealand and New Caledonian jurisdictions. It improves data access considerably by offering a single point of access for seismic data from the three countries. The standardised seg-y data format also enables the quick loading of data to interpretation software platforms. Future updates to the product are planned and it may be expanded to include other data types.

The workshop concluded with an engaging open-forum discussion that covered topics such as geological uncertainties, future potential data acquisition and possible regulatory mechanisms for exploration in remote frontier regions. It was apparent that there is a significant

level of industry interest in exploration in the Tasman Frontier region. One outcome is a follow up meeting, planned for late 2012, after delegates have the opportunity to examine and interpret the information contained in the Tasman Frontier Geophysical Database. One of the largest remaining offshore exploration frontiers in the world may finally be coming into the sights of the global explorer.

For further information on the workshop and data products

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Related articles/websites

Tasman Frontier web portal

www.gns.cri.nz/cgi-bin/tasmanfrontier.asp

AusGeo News 99: Integrated assessment of the Capel and Faust basins, offshore eastern Australia

www.ga.gov.au/ausgeonews/ausgeonews201009/capel.jsp

