OFFSHORE MINERALS ACT 1994

If your project involves the exploration and mining of minerals in Commonwealth waters, you must obtain an Offshore Mineral Licence.

1. What approvals do I need?
Five different licences allow offshore mineral exploration and mining activities.
- Exploration licences
- Retention licences
- Mining licences
- Works licences
- Special purpose consents.

Exploration licences allow the holder to explore and recover mineral samples from an approved area. Licences are valid for 4 years and can be renewed.

The exploration licence does not automatically provide the right to mining and retention licences. Licence holders are assessed on their merits when applying for a mining or retention licence.

The Offshore Minerals Act 1994 does not regulate oil and gas activities. Oil and gas activities conducted in Australian waters are regulated under the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006 (OPGGSA). Further information on oil and gas regulation is available here.

2. Who provides approvals?

Activity within the first 3 nautical miles of Australian territorial waters is administered by the States and Territories.

3. How do I get Commonwealth approval?
Guidelines for applicants are available on the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science website.

4. More information
Commonwealth
For more information on offshore minerals in Australia, email offshore.minerals@industry.gov.au

Major Projects Facilitation Agency
If you would like assistance to identify the regulatory obligations for your project, please visit our Online Tool or contact us:
Phone: 02 6243 7121
Email: contact@mpfa.gov.au