



The petroleum story – from fossils to fuel

Key facts

- Oil and gas was formed from plants and organic matter, trapped in layers of rock, millions of years ago.
- Western Australia is Australia's major oil and gas producer.
- The Dampier to Bunbury Natural Gas Pipeline is one of the world's longest natural gas pipelines.
- WA has been producing petroleum since 1958.

How petroleum was formed

Crude oil, condensate and natural gas (petroleum) started to form millions of years ago when sand, mud, plants and organic matter in sediment was buried and heated into layers of rock. For example, sandstone, claystone, and shale. Over time the organic matter is converted into petroleum or coal which are called 'fossil fuels'.

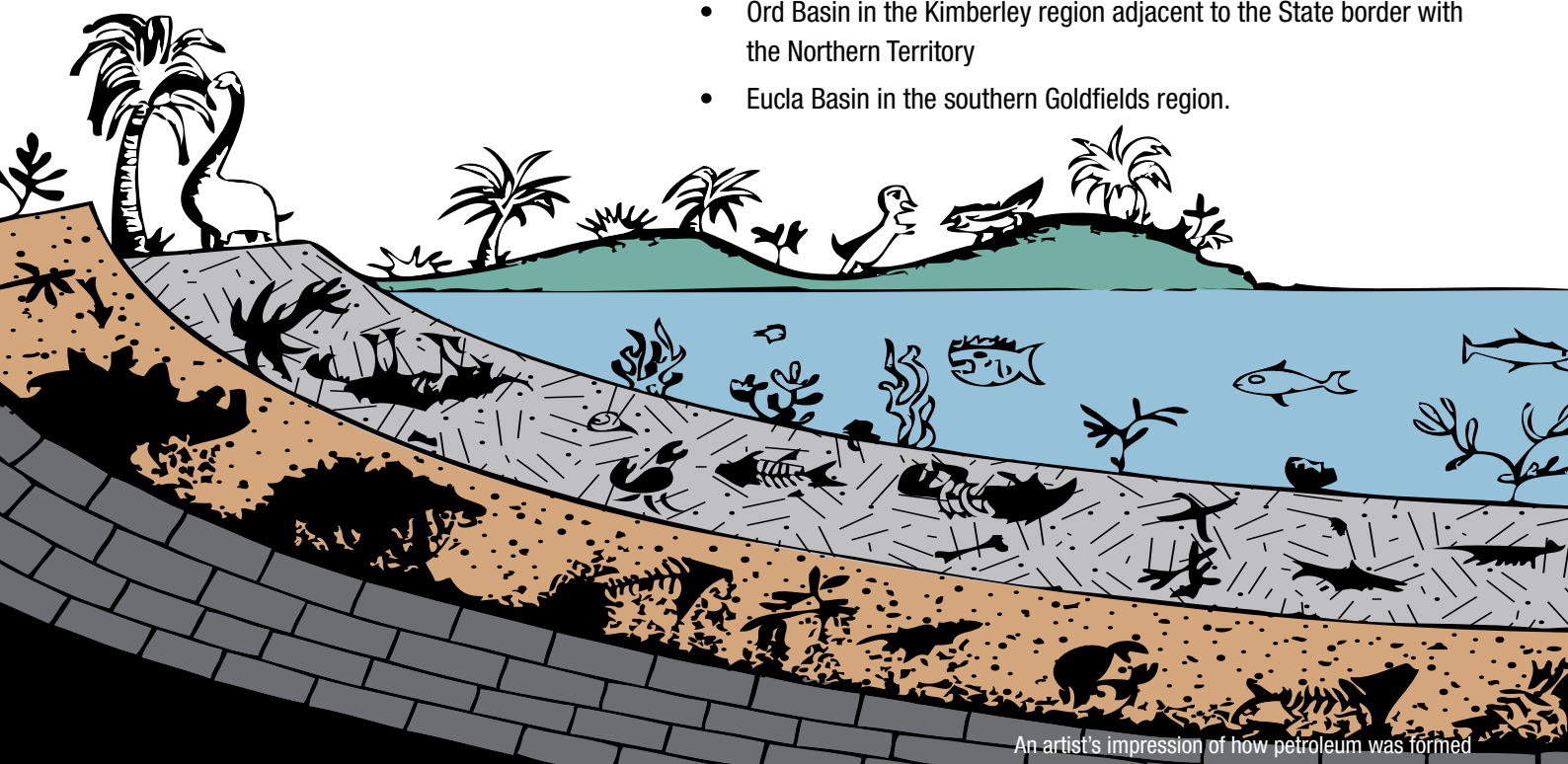
The oil and gas moves up through the rock formations and can become trapped if it reaches a sealed barrier of rock. Only a small number of petroleum traps will become commercial production fields.

Oil and gas in Western Australia

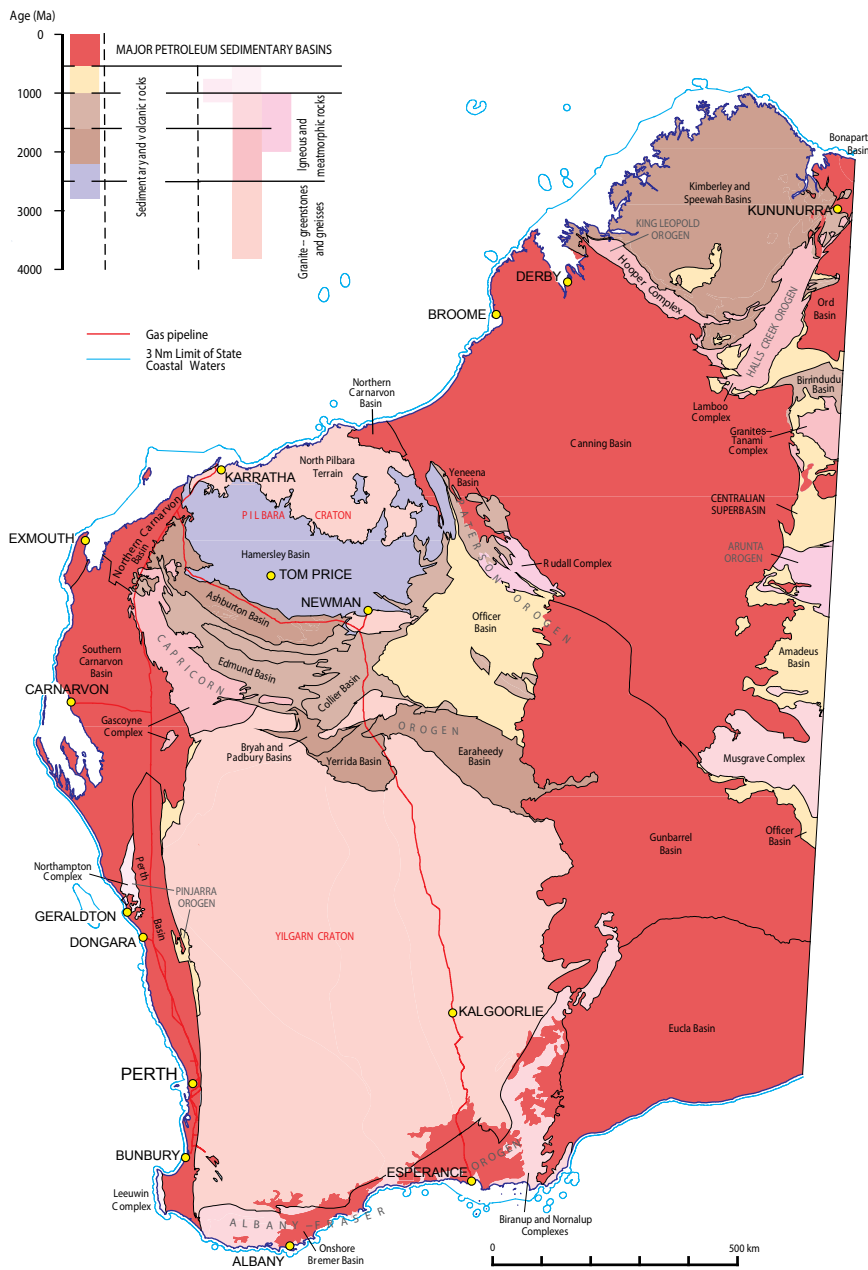
Western Australia is the nation's fastest growing economy and oil and gas production plays a major part by providing royalties to the State. Oil and gas are produced for both the domestic and international markets.

There are eight basins with petroleum potential in Western Australia. They are the:

- Carnarvon Basin in the Gascoyne region and off the Pilbara coast
- Perth Basin in the South West and Mid West of Western Australia
- Bonaparte Basin off the Kimberley coast
- Browse Basin off the Kimberley coast
- Canning Basin in the North West, Pilbara and central regions
- Officer Basin in the central desert
- Ord Basin in the Kimberley region adjacent to the State border with the Northern Territory
- Eucla Basin in the southern Goldfields region.



An artist's impression of how petroleum was formed



Major petroleum sedimentary basins

In the 1960s, Western Australia's first commercial oil and gas supplies came from Barrow Island in the Carnarvon Basin located off the Pilbara coast. Natural gas was also discovered and produced near Dongara in the Perth Basin - one of the most important areas for exploration.

The Canning Basin, in the State's north, has been producing oil since the early 1980s. The region is highly prospective for oil and gas – prompting a significant increase in petroleum exploration during the last 10 years. Despite the high cost of operating in remote locations, exploration companies have identified significant potential for oil production and commercial shale and tight gas operations.

The use of petroleum products

Petroleum products are found in nearly everything we use today.



More information

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www.dmp.wa.gov.au/NTALA

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