

# RESOURCES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Mines and Petroleum



## Mineral Exploration

To discover world-class deposits of metalliferous and industrial minerals in a positive investment setting



### Introduction

Western Australia is one of the world's most productive and diversified mineral regions. The State hosts over 1000 operating mine sites (open pit, underground mines and quarries) with over 50 different mineral commodities in commercial production.

Increasing amounts are being spent on mineral exploration in the State but Western Australia still remains largely under-explored, especially in large areas covered by soil and other regolith materials. It is expected that many new and significant mineral discoveries will be made in the State's 2.5 million square kilometre land mass using new exploration techniques that are currently being developed.

Other major selling points for mineral exploration in Western Australia include its pro-development government policies, low sovereign risk and the availability of a wealth of pre-competitive, geoscientific data.

### World-class production

Western Australia's mineral production record is quite impressive. From just US\$9.4 million in 1964, the value of mineral output has increased exponentially over the years, reaching around US\$39 billion in 2008. Today, the State continues to build on its mineral endowment with new discoveries still being made.

### Proportion of world trade

Western Australia ranks highly in the supply of many mineral commodities to world markets.

WA share of world mineral production (2008)	
Tantalum	53%
Garnet	45%
Zircon	23%
Alumina	20%
Iron ore	19%
Rutile	17%
Nickel	15%
Ilmenite	14%
Diamonds	9%
Gold	6%
Salt	4%

### Variety of minerals

The range of minerals and geological settings found in Western Australia are quite amazing. More than 50 different commodities are currently in commercial production in various parts of the State. There are four principal mineral regions in Western Australia spread across an area about 2500 km long and 1500 km wide. The regions are the Kimberley, Pilbara, Yilgarn (mainly the Eastern Goldfields and Murchison District) and the South West.

## Prospectivity

While many world-class mineral discoveries have been made since the colonisation of Western Australia in 1829, geoscientists remain confident that many mineral deposits are waiting to be found as large areas of Western Australia remain under-explored. Even in established mineral-rich areas such as the Eastern Goldfields, the potential for new discoveries is considerable, particularly at depths greater than 300 metres.

## Geological information

The Geological Survey of Western Australia (GSWA), a division of the Department of Mines and Petroleum, has a vast amount of geological and geophysical information available for explorers. Much of this information can be accessed by contacting specialists within GSWA or through the Department's website—[www.dmp.wa.gov.au](http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au)

## Leading-edge research

In addition to the extensive map coverage and geological records held by GSWA, energetic groups of research professionals also operate at several cooperative research centres (CRCs) in Perth. Such programs involve considerable input from Government, industry and academic organisations, with the work of specialist CRC geoscientists covering topics such as tectonic analysis and predictive geology for deeply soil-covered areas.

## Range of existing explorers

Most of the world's leading resource companies are involved in mineral exploration in Western Australia, including BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto, Barrick Gold, Newmont

and AngloGold. There are also many mid-sized and junior exploration and mining companies, and a strong contingent of individual prospectors.

## Industry groups

Western Australia hosts a wide range of industry groups that support the interests of mineral explorers. These include the Perth-based Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, the Western Australian Chamber of Minerals and Energy, the Amalgamated Prospectors and Leaseholders Association and the Australian Drilling Industry Association.

## Infrastructure

Western Australia has excellent infrastructure to service the mineral exploration industry. It has many drilling contractors, analytical laboratories and geophysical survey specialists, as well as dozens of well-serviced towns, water supplies, large gas pipeline systems, airports, railways and shipping outlets available.

## Community

Western Australian people are excellent supporters of the resources industry. In fact, the exploration/mining industry accounts for direct and indirect employment of almost 300 000 jobs — 26% of Western Australia's total labour force.

## Many good reasons to invest in Western Australia

- World-class mineral resources;
- A wealth of information is freely available for explorers (maps, drill core and geological, geochemical and geophysical data available via the website);
- Unrivalled potential for major new mineral discoveries;
- A proven track record in successful resources development;
- Proximity to expanding mineral markets in Asia and a shared time zone;
- Low sovereign risk; and
- A world-competitive investment environment.

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