



2020 Queensland exploration program

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Minister's foreword

Queensland is a resources powerhouse.

In just eight years we developed an unprecedented \$70 billion onshore gas industry which is now our second largest commodity export.

The world's steel industry continues to look to our Bowen Basin for its vast supply of metallurgical coal and we are the world's largest seaborne metallurgical coal exporter.

As well as traditional minerals like zinc, nickel, bauxite, lead and copper, we have projects underway to develop cobalt and vanadium resources used in wind turbines and batteries—which are crucial to the renewable energy boom.

Combined with an excellent resource base, modern transport infrastructure, a trained workforce and a supportive governance structure make Queensland the ideal place to invest.

Our next Queensland exploration program brings the next wave of resources investment and it gives advance notice to landholders about potential resources activity in their areas.

As we continue to move to a renewable energy future, we know that gas is the vital transitional fuel. The new program includes petroleum and gas exploration opportunities covering 12 areas totaling 6 804 km² across the Bowen and Surat basins, including more land earmarked specifically for domestic only use.

The program will also see the release of two coal exploration opportunities in the resource-rich Bowen Basin.

Of course, we continue the hunt for the much-needed new-age minerals, which are feeding the world's thirst for technology, by welcoming applications for minerals exploration.

Exploration is the lifeblood of our resources sector and continued government support for private investment will help identify new deposits to ensure the long-term success of the industry.

The Honourable Dr Anthony Lynham

Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy

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1. Introduction

The 2020 Queensland exploration program (QEP) builds on the success of previous exploration programs, providing a release schedule of exploration opportunities for petroleum and gas, and coal across the State in 2020.

By releasing a forward schedule of exploration opportunities, resource companies are able to plan their investment and exploration activities.

In addition, the QEP includes an extensive communication and engagement program to help other interested parties be aware of, and prepare for, exploration and mining activities in their areas.

This document provides information on the areas that will be made available for exploration via a competitive tender process - including when and how to submit a tender, as well as the land access and native title requirements in Queensland.

The Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy (DNRME) implements the program and provides information about the competitive tendering process and the rights and obligations of stakeholders and explorers.

Additional information about the QEP, the tendering process and resource exploration in general is available at www.dnrme.qld.gov.au/resources-tenders.

2. Selection of tender areas

The selection of tender areas is based on a range of factors. The tender areas included in the QEP were selected following an Expressions of Interest (EOI) process conducted between 5 February 2019 and 16 August 2019. During this process, resource companies were able to submit EOIs to DNRME nominating areas for future exploration. The EOIs received were then shortlisted and reviewed for inclusion in the QEP.

The shortlisting process involved assessing potential exploration areas against a range of social, environmental and economic factors, including:

- environmental, regional and state planning interests (e.g. priority living areas and national parks)
- commercial and market considerations (e.g. if multiple EOIs were received over the same area (competitive tension), proximity to markets and supporting infrastructure)
- overlapping tenure (e.g. where a resource tenure already exists over an EOI area)
- the area's prospectivity
- the state's current geological knowledge
- government strategic direction.

Other factors such as the overall development of each basin or resource area, the existing demand for the resource, Queensland's supply of the resource, and the expected demand from Queensland's current and potential consumers were also considered.

Whilst not all of the EOIs have been included in this QEP, where appropriate, these areas will be considered in the development of a future land release program. Feedback on the areas not included in this QEP will be provided to the relevant EOI submitters.

Future land releases may include tender areas for minerals (other than coal) exploration—in response to industry interest or to release areas of strategic value.

Applications for exploration permits for minerals (other than coal) continue to be accepted directly for available land via [MyMinesOnline](#).

3. Release schedule

The release schedule in Table 1 identifies the competitive tender processes for petroleum and gas, and coal exploration tender areas, and indicative timing of each tender process.

Prospective tenderers and other interested parties should also subscribe to the DNRME resources tenders [mailing list](#) to receive an alert when these tenders open on [QTenders](#).

Table 1: QEP release schedule

| Tender release | Commodity | Call for tender | Tender close | Tender outcome |
|----------------|--|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
| CLR2020-1 | Coal (2 tender areas) | March 2020 | May 2020 | August 2020 |
| PLR2020-1 | Petroleum and gas (12 tender areas) | April 2020 | June 2020 | September 2020 |

Maps showing the location of the areas included in the tender releases, and information on individual tender areas, are in Section 4 and Section 5 of this document. The maps also include relevant geological basins (the basin boundaries shown are indicative only).

Further details on the tender areas will be provided in the call for tender document which is made available via [QTenders](#) when the competitive tender process is opened.

Note: The tender areas included in each release may vary from the areas identified in this document.

4. Coal exploration tender releases

Queensland has a rich endowment of high-quality coal resources, with just under 63 billion tonnes of thermal and metallurgical raw coal *in situ*.

Queensland also has some of the highest quality thermal coal resources in the world, with specific properties suitable for the high efficiency, low emission (HELE) coal-fired power stations being built around the world.

Metallurgical coal is essential to the steel-making process, used either for coke production (coking coal) or for direct injection into the blast furnace (pulverised coal injection or PCI). Currently, Queensland is the world's largest seaborne exporter of metallurgical coal, and demand over the coming years is expected to continue to grow.

4.1 CLR 2020-1 tender release

CLR2020-1 includes two tender areas in the Bowen Basin. The Bowen Basin has a vast supply of metallurgical and thermal coal and the region is well supported by infrastructure (including electrified rail links from the coalfields to port facilities) to allow efficient production and transport of coal.

Figure 1: Coal exploration tender areas—CLR2020-1 tender release

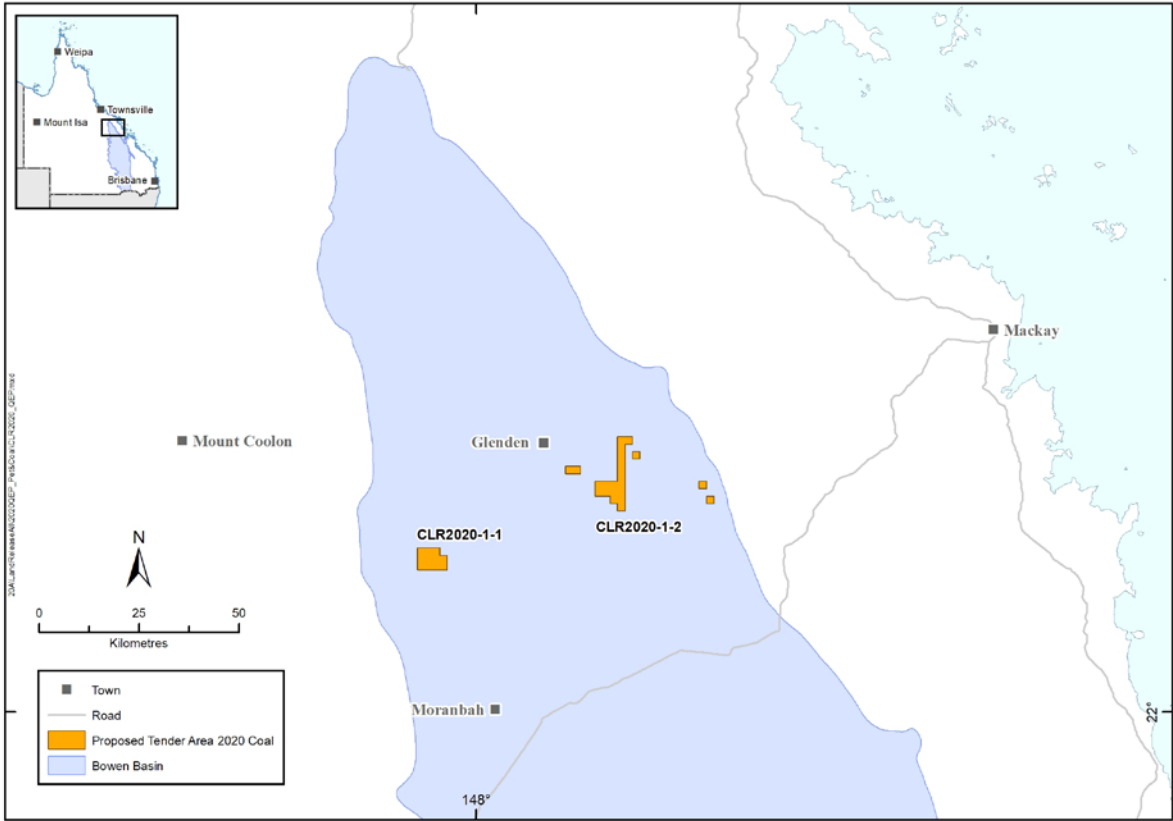


Table 2: CLR2020-1 tender release

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------|---|
| CLR2020-1-1 | Size | 35 km ² (11 sub-blocks) |
| | Location | 40 km north-west of Moranbah |
| | Basin | Bowen Basin |
| | Commodity | Metallurgical coal |
| CLR2020-1-2 | Size | 73 km ² (23 sub-blocks) – 5 separate areas |
| | Location | 60 km north-east of Moranbah |
| | Basin | Bowen Basin |
| | Commodity | Metallurgical and thermal coal |

5. Petroleum and gas exploration tender releases

The Queensland gas sector has grown rapidly over the past decade. Today, gas is crucial for the industrial and manufacturing sectors, as both an energy source and a production feedstock, and is important to the growth of Queensland's economy.

Global gas demand is forecast to grow over the next 25 years as countries around the world shift towards a lower carbon emissions future. Gas will play a critical role as a flexible transition fuel to a cleaner energy future.

Under this QEP, tender areas will be released for petroleum and gas exploration to support both domestic supply and the liquefied natural gas (LNG) export industry.

Projected supply and demand in Australia's east coast gas market is finely balanced. As part of the Queensland Government's commitment to unlocking additional gas supply for the domestic market, some tender areas will be released subject to an Australian market supply condition. This condition ensures that any gas produced from those areas is supplied exclusively to the domestic market.

5.1 PLR2020-1 tender release

PLR2020-1 includes 12 tender areas across the Bowen and Surat basins. The tender areas provide opportunities for CSG and other unconventional gas, and for conventional oil and gas exploration. The areas are also supported by a network of regional centres and existing infrastructure, providing access to labour and essential services.

The Bowen and Surat basins are serviced and connected by established energy infrastructure (including pipelines, compression and processing facilities) with access to both the east coast domestic and export gas markets.

Figure 2: Petroleum and gas exploration tender areas—PLR2020-1 tender release

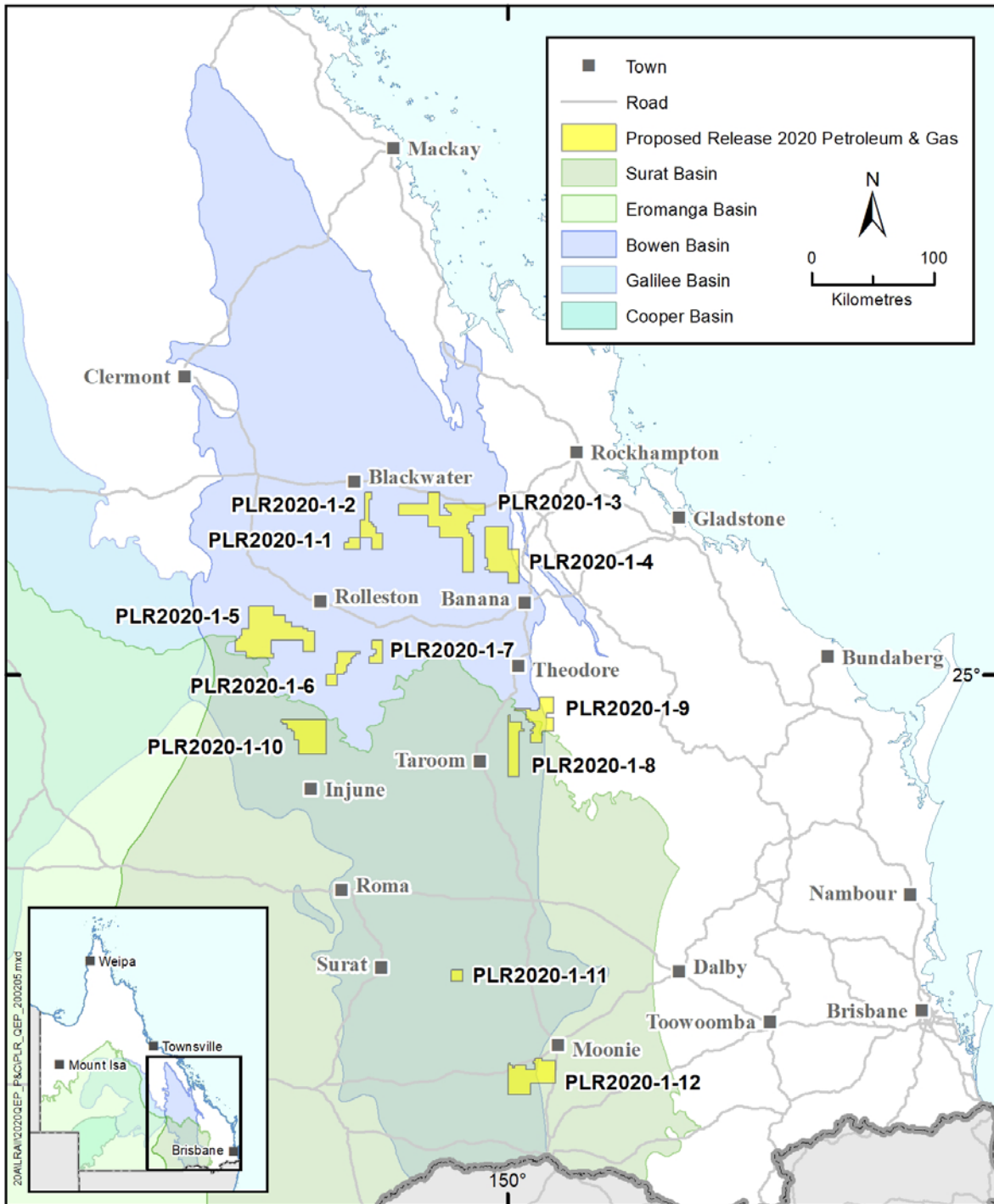


Table 3: PLR2020-1 tender release

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------|---|
| PLR2020-1-1 | Size | 97 km ² (31 sub-blocks) |
| | Location | 52 km north-east of Rolleston |
| | Basin | Bowen Basin |
| | Commodity | Coal seam gas |
| PLR2020-1-2 | Size | 338 km ² (108 sub-blocks) |
| | Location | 40 km south of Blackwater |
| | Basin | Bowen Basin |
| | Commodity | Coal seam gas |
| PLR2020-1-3 | Size | 1366 km ² (436 sub-blocks) |
| | Location | 80 km south-east of Blackwater |
| | Basin | Bowen Basin |
| | Commodity | Coal seam gas |
| PLR2020-1-4 | Size | 841 km ² (269 sub-blocks) |
| | Location | 40 km north-west of Banana |
| | Basin | Bowen Basin |
| | Commodity | Coal seam gas and/or unconventional gas |
| PLR2020-1-5 | Size | 1414 km ² (454 sub-blocks) |
| | Location | 40 km south-west of Rolleston |
| | Basin | Bowen Basin |
| | Commodity | Coal seam gas and/or conventional gas |
| PLR2020-1-6 | Size | 270 km ² (87 sub-blocks) |
| | Location | 50 km south-east of Rolleston |
| | Basin | Bowen Basin |
| | Commodity | Coal seam gas |

| | | |
|--------------|------------------|--|
| PLR2020-1-7 | Size | 149 km ² (48 sub-blocks) |
| | Location | 60 km south-east of Rolleston |
| | Basin | Bowen Basin |
| | Commodity | Coal seam gas |
| PLR2020-1-8 | Size | 396 km ² (128 sub-blocks) |
| | Location | 25 km north-east of Taroom |
| | Basin | Bowen and Surat basins |
| | Commodity | Coal seam gas |
| PLR2020-1-9 | Size | 486 km ² (157 sub-blocks) |
| | Location | 44 km south-east of Theodore |
| | Basin | Bowen and Surat basins |
| | Commodity | Coal seam gas |
| PLR2020-1-10 | Size | 668 km ² (216 sub-blocks) |
| | Location | 45 km north of Injune |
| | Basin | Bowen and Surat basins |
| | Commodity | Conventional and/or unconventional gas |
| PLR2020-1-11 | Size | 76 km ² (25 sub-blocks) |
| | Location | 55 km east of Surat |
| | Basin | Bowen and Surat basins |
| | Commodity | Unconventional gas |
| PLR2020-1-12 | Size | 703 km ² (232 sub-blocks) |
| | Location | 30 km south-west of Moonie |
| | Basin | Bowen and Surat basins |
| | Commodity | Unconventional gas |

6. Community engagement

Following the positive response to early engagement with stakeholders during previous exploration programs, the QEP will continue with a similar approach. DNRME will provide directly affected stakeholders and other key stakeholders with advanced notice of competitive tendering processes for exploration tender areas.

DNRME officers have informed directly affected stakeholders, including native title representatives, local governments and key community groups of the 14 exploration tender areas, including landholders' rights and explorers' obligations.

DNRME also engaged with the GasFields Commission Queensland and peak body groups representing the resources industry, agriculture, environment, native title and local governments. (See Table 4.)

Table 4: Key peak body groups engaged as part of the QEP

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Resources | Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association Association of Mining and Exploration Companies Queensland Resources Council Queensland Exploration Council |
| Agriculture | AgForce Queensland Queensland Farmers' Federation |
| Environment | Environmental Defenders Office Regional natural resource management groups |
| Native title | Queensland South Native Title Services North Queensland Land Council |
| Local government | Local Government Association of Queensland |
| Independent statutory bodies | GasFields Commission Queensland Land Access Ombudsman |

DNRME will continue to inform directly-affected stakeholders and key peak body groups by providing:

- notification of the opening of tender processes (gazettal of each 'call for tenders')
- information on outcomes of each tender process, including who has been appointed as the preferred tenderer for each exploration tender area (if applicable).

At each point of contact with DNRME, directly-affected stakeholders and peak body groups will be given the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification.

The broader community also has access to information about proposed exploration activities. Details of the QEP and tender processes will be published at www.dnrme.qld.gov.au/resources-tenders.



7. Land access and native title requirements

Resources projects are dependent on a strong social license to operate. Regulatory frameworks govern access to land by resource projects and ensure that the rights of landholders and native title representatives are considered at each stage of the resource development process.

7.1 Land access laws

Queensland's land access laws provide a balance between economic development and landholder rights.

These laws mean that a resource authority holder, and its staff or agents, cannot generally enter private land to undertake advanced activities unless they have entered into one of the following: a Conduct and Compensation Agreement, a Deferral Agreement, or an Opt-Out Agreement with the affected landholder.

Resource companies conducting exploration activities must also comply with the conditions of the Land Access Code 2016, which provides best practice guidelines for communication between resource companies and landholders, and imposes mandatory conditions on resource companies conducting activities on land.

These mandatory conditions relate to key concerns landholders have regarding induction into the landholder's specific land access conditions, access points, use of roads and tracks, activities conducted around livestock and property, weeds and declared pests, camps, items brought onto land and gates, grids and fences.

For more information about land access, refer to the publication: [A guide to land access in Queensland](#)

A Land Access Ombudsman was also established in 2018 as an independent, impartial body to help landholders and resource companies resolve alleged breaches of conduct and compensation agreements and make good agreements.

The GasFields Commission Queensland is an independent statutory body that facilitates stakeholder connections as well as engaging with and informing the community about aspects of Queensland's petroleum and gas industry.

7.2 Native title

Australian law recognises that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders have rights and interests in land under their traditional laws and customs.

The Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993* sets out processes that must be followed for any 'future act' on land or water that would affect native title rights and interests. Applications for most resource authorities are considered future acts and are subject to these native title processes. Applicants must address the Native Title requirements before grant of a resource authority.

For more information about native title processes, visit www.business.qld.gov.au and search for native title.

8. Competitive tendering process

The competitive tendering process is a fair and transparent approach for allocating exploration authorities to individuals or companies that are most capable of exploring and developing the resources in an identified tender area.

Petroleum and gas and coal exploration areas are required by legislation to be released through a competitive tender process.

Information on competitive tendering is available at: www.dnrme.qld.gov.au/resources-tenders.

Tender bids must be submitted to DNRME via the [QTenders](#) website.

The competitive tendering process begins with the publication of a gazette notice stating that a call for tenders has commenced and specifying the tender areas that will be included in the process.

The gazette notice is accompanied by a tender document that sets out details of the tender and the evaluation criteria used to assess submissions. Generally, the evaluation criteria relate to the:

- appropriateness of the tenderer's proposed exploration work program
- tenderer's technical and financial capability to deliver the proposed work program
- tenderer's history of, and commitment to, compliance with relevant resources, environmental, health, safety, cultural heritage and native title requirements
- tenderer's proposed community consultation approach.

Other evaluation criteria may also be included in the tender document and used in the assessment process.

Each tender submission is assessed against the evaluation criteria and ranked accordingly.

The assessment process is supported by an independent probity advisor, technical and financial assessments, and environmental compliance assessments by the Department of Environment and Science.

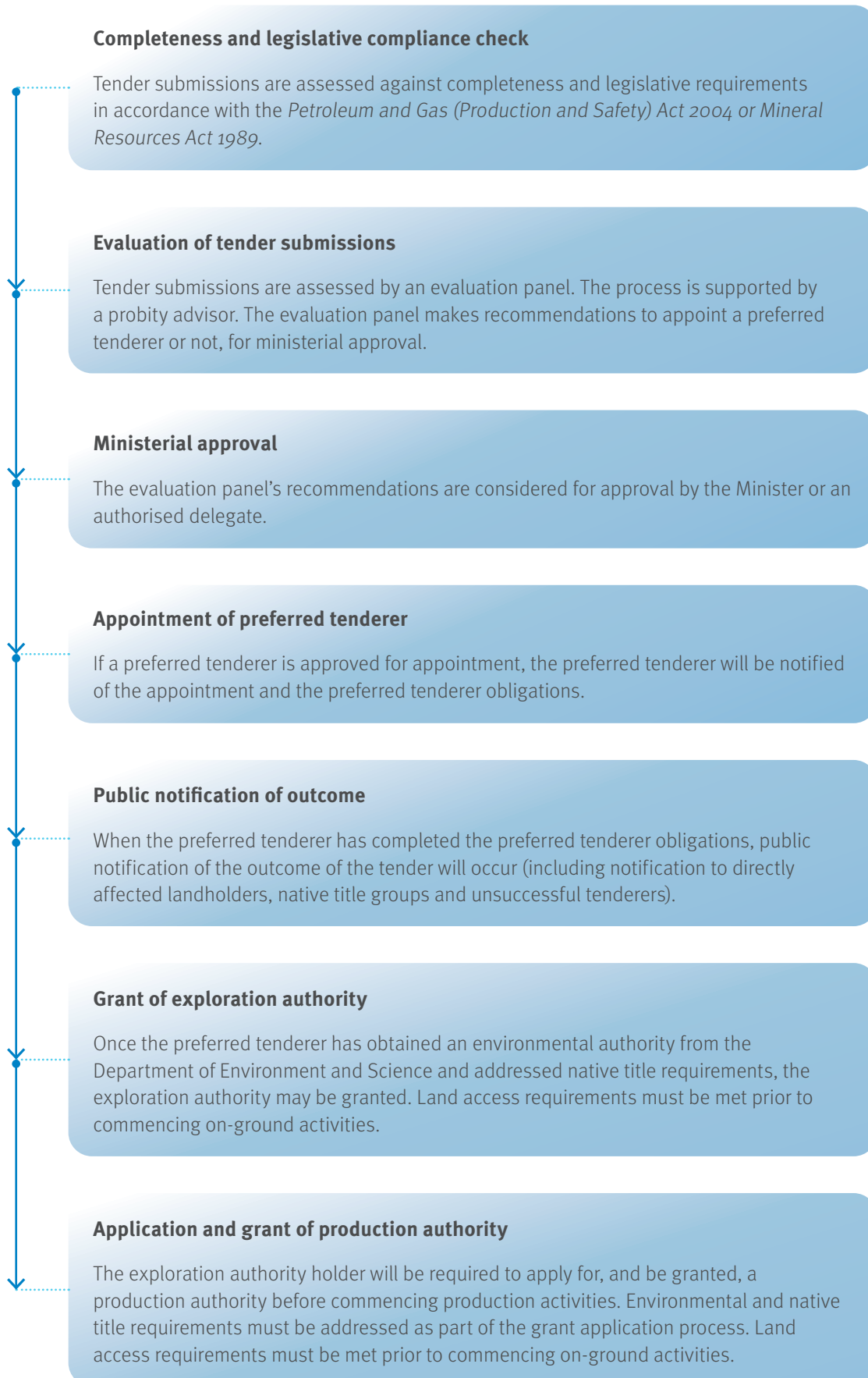
When the evaluation process is complete, a tenderer may be appointed as the preferred tenderer for a tender area, subject to certain conditions. It is also possible that a preferred tenderer may not be appointed due to, for example, the inability of a tenderer to satisfactorily meet the tender conditions.

Preferred tenderers then have the exclusive right to apply for an exploration authority over the awarded tender area. The preferred tenderer must meet further environmental, native title and any other approval requirements before they can be granted an exploration authority.

Once an exploration authority has been granted, the preferred tenderer must complete land access requirements and, depending on any applicable land use constraints, meet other approval requirements prior to commencing on-ground exploration activities.

An outline of the competitive tendering assessment process is provided in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Competitive tendering assessment process



9. Expression of interest process

DNRME has an EOI process for industry to nominate areas in Queensland to be released for exploration. EOIs are an important component to the development of the exploration program.

To receive information on a future EOI process, subscribe to the resources tenders [mailing list](#).

The following information is generally required to lodge an EOI submission:

- details of the area
- rationale for interest in the area
- technical or geological reasoning
- commercial or business reasoning
- other relevant information.

All information submitted as part of an EOI will be treated as commercial-in-confidence.

