



New South Wales

**MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES**

MEDIA RELEASE

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RECORD EXPLORATION INVESTMENT FIGURES FOR NSW

NSW has reached a record level of investment in the search for new mineral resources, according to figures just released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Minister for Mineral Resources, Ian Macdonald, today

The figures for Australian mineral exploration expenditure for 2005-2006 show that private mineral exploration expenditure for NSW rose 55 per cent over the previous year to \$114 million.

"The minerals industry is a large contributor to the economies of our vibrant rural and regional communities," Mr Macdonald said

"This record figure can be attributed to the Government's support for exploration investment through the Government's Exploration NSW initiative and the improved minerals market.

"It is part of a new direction the Government is taking in mineral exploration.

"The \$30m seven-year Exploration NSW initiative has generated increased exploration interest in NSW setting the scene for an exploration and development boom.

"In its first six years, the \$28.5 million invested by this Government has seen over \$500 million worth of private sector exploration, \$1.8 billion in royalties to the State and \$50 billion in mineral production,

"Private exploration investment in NSW has gone from \$51m in 2003/04 to \$114m in the past year."

Mr Macdonald said while the NSW figure covers all mineral commodities, the higher result represents increased exploration for coal, copper, gold and zinc.

"Major metal mining companies are attracted to the opportunities offered by NSW and it is encouraging to see the world's largest gold producer Newmont has made a new gold discovery near Blayney in association with an active NSW junior explorer Alkane Resources," he said.

"The Government's New Frontiers initiative will promote further exploration by providing valuable new information on the mineral potential of under-explored areas.

"New Frontiers comprises a two year budget enhancement of \$8m to continue the Government's exploration promotion program

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"New Frontiers will focus on New Energy and New Dimensions, which reflect the Government's commitment to boost exploration investment for both minerals and petroleum - especially gas - in the State's under-explored regions.

Additional points:

- Coal exploration has doubled in the past 12 months from \$28m to \$56m
- Copper exploration has more than doubled from \$8.4m to \$19.5m
- Recent discoveries -Newmont & Alkane have located encouraging gold mineralisation at Moorilda near Blayney.
- Newmont has committed to spend \$5m in a major program of drilling to outline the resource potential.
- A recent drilling by Straits Resources at Girilambone near Nyngan has located extensive new copper mineralisation.
- Straits Resources has announced that it will open a new gold mine at Hillgrove in the New England region

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