# EARTH RESOURCES REGULATION

2015-16 STATISTICAL REPORT



Acknowledgement of Victoria's Traditional Owners

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victorian Traditional Owners as Victoria's first peoples and pays its respects to their Elders past and present.

We recognise the intrinsic connection of the first peoples to their Country for countless generations and their inherent obligation to maintain and strengthen their distinct cultural rights and responsibilities to care for their Country.

We value Traditional Owners' role in the management of land, water and biodiversity and acknowledge the ongoing contribution this makes to our earth resources.

We have distinct legislative obligations to Traditional Owner groups that are paramount in our responsibilities in managing Victoria's resources.

We support the need for genuine and lasting partnerships with Aboriginal people and communities to understand culture and connections to Country in the way we plan for and regulate our earth resources.

#### Disclaimer

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## 1 Executive summary

In 2015-16, the activity<sup>1</sup> and level of investment in the earth resources industries varied significantly. There was a decrease in petroleum and geothermal sector activity while mining licence expenditure increased by 10%.

In the petroleum sector, activity remained limited to production and injection at the Iona gas storage facility and carbon dioxide production at Boggy Creek, both of which are located in the onshore Otway Basin area.

The total number of MRSDA licences held by Earth Resources Regulation as at 30 June 2016 was 439, a reduction of 6% compared to 2014-15.

The minerals sector continued to reflect the trend of the past five years that shows that there has been a fluctuating mineral commodity market. Production of brown coal decreased by 2%. Gold production volume increased by more than 29% from 198,387 ounces to 249,692 ounces, the highest overall output since 2011-12.

Sales of extractive industry products increased by \$33.5 million in 2015-16, an increase of 4.5%. In contrast, volume extracted fell from 50 million tonnes to 47.3 million tonnes, a decrease of 5.4%.

State revenue (rent, royalty and administrative charges) derived from the earth resources sector totalled \$51.9 million, an increase of \$0.1 million. The amounts collected in relation to rent fell while amounts collected in relation to royalty, fees & charges increased. Mine stability levy revenue remained unchanged.

During 2017, a review process will be conducted to enhance the value of future Statistical Reports to the earth resources industry.

Activity generally refers to production figures, expenditure amounts and tenement administration figures (no. of applications, grants renewals etc).

Earth Resources Regulation 2015-16 Statistical Report

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#### 2 Introduction

The Earth Resources Regulation Branch (ERR) in the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) is responsible for the regulation of the minerals, extractives, petroleum, pipelines, geothermal and carbon storage industries in Victoria and offshore (Victorian) waters. The Branch provides a consistent and transparent tenement management regime, together with monitoring and enforcement that ensure these industries comply with their statutory obligations and meet community expectations.

Earth Resources Regulation administered the following Acts in 2015-16:

- Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990 (MRSDA) (mineral exploration, mining and quarrying);
- Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2010 (OPGGSA) (petroleum exploration and development, greenhouse gas storage and pipelines in the Victorian offshore waters);
- Petroleum Act 1998 (petroleum exploration and development onshore);
- Pipelines Act 2005 (licensing and regulation of high pressure pipelines onshore);
- Geothermal Energy Resources Act 2005 (geothermal energy exploration and development); and
- Greenhouse Gas Geological Sequestration Act 2008 (greenhouse gas storage onshore).

The 2015-16 Statistical Report is a compilation of data as reported by Victoria's earth resources industry to Earth Resources Regulation. The report includes data on production, exploration, expenditure, licensing, revenues and regulatory actions.

All production and expenditure figures are certified by authority holders and submitted to ERR.

Victoria's earth resource industry production includes:

- gas and carbon dioxide from onshore;
- brown coal used almost exclusively for power generation;
- gold;
- antimony;
- industrial minerals including gypsum, feldspar, rutile, zircon, ilmenite and kaolin; and
- extractive materials (rock, sand and clay) used mainly for building and road construction.

# 3 Petroleum, geothermal and pipelines

#### 3.1 Petroleum

Victoria's petroleum exploration is concentrated in the Otway and Gippsland Basins, with activities undertaken onshore and within Victorian offshore waters. Production activity is limited to the Otway Basin.

Offshore activities concern waters effectively within three nautical miles off the coast, as covered by Victorian legislation. Waters greater than three nautical miles offshore from the coast are Commonwealth waters and are as such covered by Commonwealth legislation and therefore not included in this Report.

The moratorium of onshore drilling activities remained during 2015-16.

#### 3.2 Petroleum tenements

In 2015-16, no Petroleum Exploration Permits, Retention Leases or Production Leases applications were received or granted. There was one each of the following: Petroleum Special Access Authorisation (PSAA); Petroleum Special Drilling Authorisation (PSDA); and Petroleum Access Authority (AA).

Table 1.1 Overview of petroleum tenements current as at 30 June 2016

	Petroleum Exploration Permits	Petroleum Retention Leases	Petroleum Production Licences	Other Tenements (PSAA, PSDA, AA)
Onshore	11	3	13	2
Offshore (Vic)	3	1	1	1

Source: DEDJTR

#### 3.2.1.1 Onshore

No onshore petroleum retention licence or exploration permit applications were received or granted in 2015-16.

Table 1.2 Overview of onshore petroleum exploration permits

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Application Received	1	0	0	0	0
Granted	0	2	2	0	0

Source: DEDJTR

Table 1.3 Overview of onshore petroleum retention licences

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Application Received	0	0	0	0	0
Granted	0	0	0	0	0

# 3.2.1.2 Offshore (Victorian Waters)

No offshore petroleum exploration permits were granted and no applications were received. No applications for offshore petroleum retention and production licences were received nor were any granted.

Table 1.4 Overview of offshore petroleum exploration permits

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Application Received	0	0	2	0	0
Granted	1	0	0	2	0

Source: DEDJTR

Table 1.5 Overview of offshore petroleum retention leases

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Application Received	0	0	0	0	0
Granted	0	0	0	0	0

Source: DEDJTR

Table 1.6 Overview of offshore petroleum production licences

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Application Received	0	0	1	0	0
Granted	0	0	0	1	0

Source: DEDJTR

#### 3.2.1.3 Greenhouse gas storage

There was one application for a Greenhouse Gas Access Permit.

**Table 1.7 Overview of offshore Greenhouse Gas Assessment Permit** 

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Application Received	0	0	0	0	1
Granted	0	0	0	0	0

# 3.2.2 Petroleum exploration and development

No drilling or seismic activities occurred on Onshore Petroleum tenements in Victoria.

#### **3.2.2.1 Drilling**

In the course of 2015-16, one offshore well was drilled.

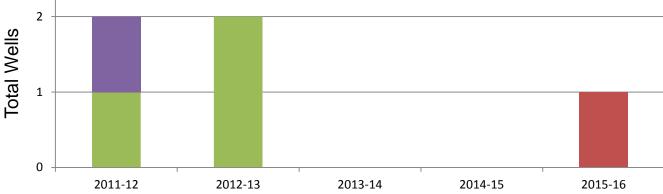
Table 1.8 Number of exploration wells drilled in Victoria

Year	Offshore (Vic) Gippsland	Offshore (Vic) Otway	Onshore Gippsland	Onshore Otway	Onshore Murray	Total wells
2011-12	0	0	1	1	0	2
2012-13	0	0	2	0	0	2
2013-14	0	0	0	0	0	0
2014-15	0	0	0	0	0	0
2015-16	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	0	1	3	1	0	5

Source: DEDJTR

Graph 1.1 Number of exploration wells drilled





#### 3.2.2.2 Production

Production is currently limited to carbon dioxide production at Boggy Creek and gas injection and production at the lona gas storage facility which are both onshore facilities located in the Otway Basin.

Table 1.9: Otway onshore production and injection 2015-16

Field	Condensate (bbl*)	Gas Production (MMscf**)	CO2 Prod. (tonnes)	Gas Injection (MMscf)	Comments
Iona	1,967	16,881	-	9,970	
Boggy Creek	3.7	-	32,991	-	Ex wellhead figures

Source: DEDJTR

\*bbl = barrels \*\*MMscf = million standard cubic feet

#### 3.2.3 Geothermal energy

As at 30 June 2016, there were six current geothermal energy exploration permits. No geothermal energy retention leases or production licences were granted in 2015-16. Geothermal energy activities in Victoria remain limited to exploration.

#### 3.2.4 Geothermal energy tenements

No geothermal energy tenements in 2015-16.

Table 1.10 Overview of geothermal exploration permits

Description	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Application Received	0	0	0	0	0
Granted	0	0	0	0	0

# 3.3 Pipelines

In 2015-16, no new pipeline licence applications were received. However, three pipeline licences were granted (arising from applications made in 2014-15). There were a total of eight alterations to pipeline routes registered, with three classified as minor alterations and five classified as significant alterations.

Table 1.11 Onshore pipeline licences applications received and granted

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Application Received	0	0	2	3	0
Granted	1	0	1	0	3

Source: DEDJTR

Table 1.12 Offshore pipeline licences applications received and granted (Victorian waters)

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Application Received	0	0	0	0	0
Granted	0	0	0	0	0

Source: DEDJTR

Table 1.13 Pipeline licences current as at 30 June 2016

Tenement	Number of licences
Onshore	217
Offshore (Vic)	13

Source: DEDJTR

Table 1.14 Onshore pipeline licence alterations of route registered

Type of Alteration of Route	Number of registrations				
Minor	3				
Significant	5				
Total	8				

## 4 Minerals

## 4.1 Mineral tenements

The number of exploration and mining licences held by ERR fell compared to 2014-15. The number of current retention and prospecting licences increased in comparison to 2014-15.

As in the previous year, the majority of the applications for new licences under the MRSDA were made for exploration licences.

Table 2.1 Licences current as at 30 June

Tenement Type	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Exploration Licences	326	311	271	247	211
Mining Licences	208	212	191	171	170
Prospecting Licences	1	13	31	41	47
Retention Licences	0	1	1	8	11
Totals	535	537	494	467	439
Change year-on- year (%)	2.9	0.4	-8.0	-5.5	-6.0

Source: DEDJTR

Graph 2.1 Licences current as at 30 June

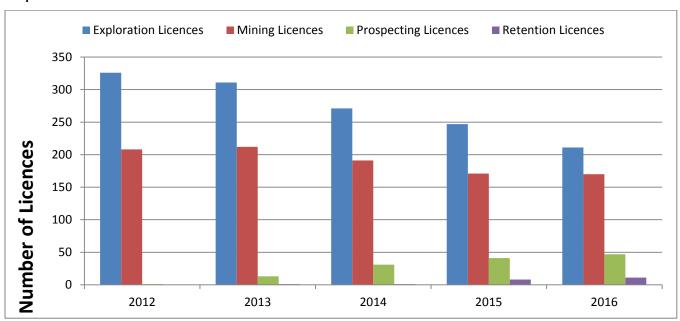


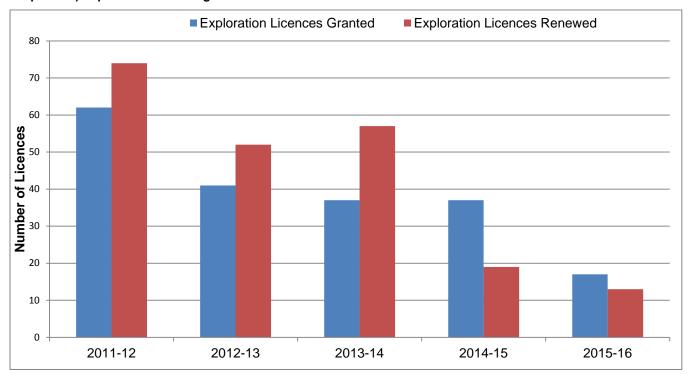
Table 2.2 New licence applications and licence renewals in 2015-16

	Received	Granted / Renewed	Withdrawn	Refused
Exploration Licence Applications	24	17	3	0
Renewal Exploration Licence Applications	27	13	0	0
Sub Total Exploration Licence Applications	51	30	3	0
Mining Licence Applications	3	2	1	0
Renewal Mining Licence Applications	18	10	0	0
Sub Total Mining Licence Applications	21	12	1	0
Prospecting Licence Applications	11	12	1	0
Retention Licence Applications	5	3	2	0
Total	88	57	7	0

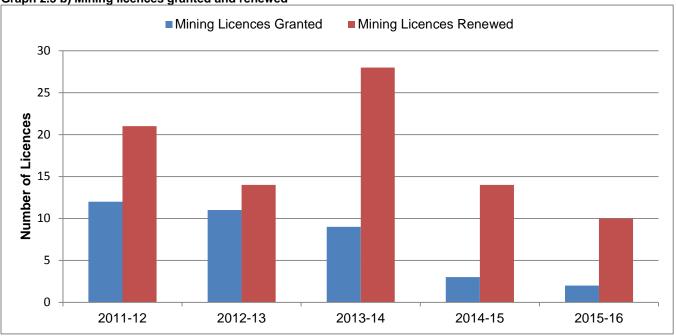
Table 2.3 Licences granted and renewed

Year	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Exploration Licences Granted	62	41	37	37	17
Exploration Licences Renewed	74	52	57	19	13
Subtotal Exploration Licences Granted and Renewed	136	93	94	56	30
Mining Licences Granted	12	11	9	3	2
Mining Licences Renewed	21	14	28	14	10
Sub Total Mining Licences Granted and Renewed	33	25	37	17	12
Prospecting Licences Granted	1	12	18	13	12
Retention Licences Granted	0	0	1	7	3
Total Licences	170	130	150	93	57

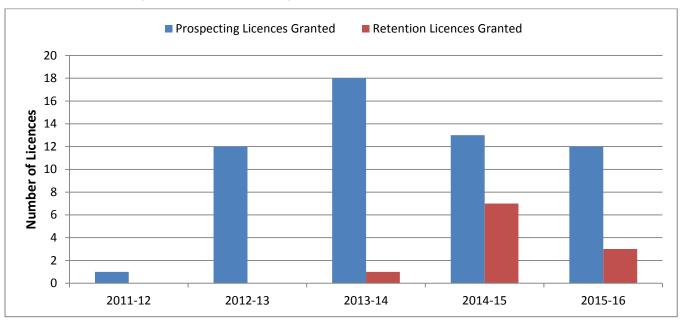
Graph 2.3 a) Exploration licences granted and renewed



Graph 2.3 b) Mining licences granted and renewed



Graph 2.3 c) Prospecting\* and retention licences granted



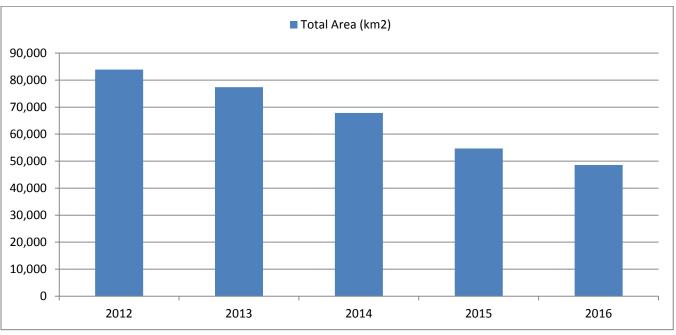
The total area covered by exploration licences (current and in application) on 30 June 2016 was 48,569km<sup>2</sup>. This was a reduction of 11% in comparison to the 2015 figure.

Table 2.4 Total area covered by exploration licences (current and in application as at 30 June 2016)

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total area (km²)	83,900	77,366	67,833*	54,698*	48,569

Source: DEDJTR

Graph 2.4 a) Total area of Victoria covered by mineral exploration licences



<sup>\*</sup> A prospecting licence cannot be renewed.

<sup>\*</sup>Figures for 2014 and 2015 have been revised due to calculation errors.

## 4.2 Mineral exploration and mining expenditure

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data shows an increase of 26 per cent in Victorian exploration expenditure in 2015-16, compared to 2014-15. ERR data on mineral exploration shows that the amount spent on exploration increased from \$32.3 million to \$38.0 million (17% increase). MRSDA data shows that expenditure on mining has increased 10% from \$622.3 million to \$685.6 million.

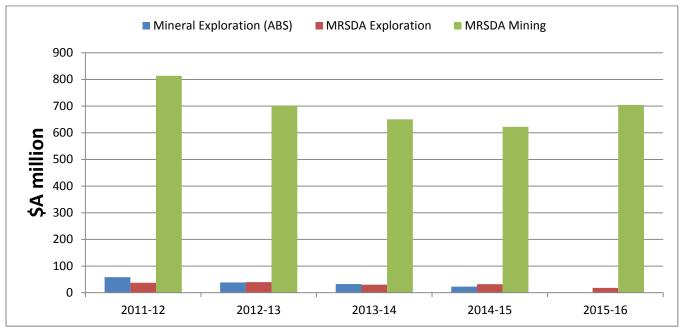
Table 2.5 Expenditure on mineral exploration and mining development (\$A million)

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Mineral Exploration (ABS) <sup>1</sup>	58.5	38.6	32.6	22.9	28.9
MRSDA Exploration <sup>2</sup>	37.8	39.7	30.5	32.3	38.0
MRSDA Mining <sup>3</sup>	813.8	701.2	650.3	622.3	685.6

Source: Figures collated from activity reports forwarded to DEDJTR required by the MRSDA, and ABS, Actual and Expected Private Mineral Exploration (Catalogue No. 8412.0)

By sector, exploration in gold mining and heavy mineral sands accounted for over two-thirds of all exploration expenditure.

Graph 2.5 a) Expenditure on mineral exploration and mining



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The ABS reports quarterly on private mineral exploration expenditure for all Australian states and the Northern Territory (NT). Victorian mineral exploration and mining expenditure is also reported in accordance with the requirement of the MRSDA. The ABS exploration expenditure statistics can vary significantly from expenditure reported under the MRSDA. The difference between these two exploration expenditure data sets is mainly due to the difference in methodologies for data collection, and the inclusion of the exploration expenditure on mining licences in the MRSDA figure. The ABS statistics are a valid basis for comparison of Victorian expenditure with that of other states/NT. However, the MRSDA figures provide greater detail.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Change of metric - expenditure on Exploration and Retention Licences with an Expenditure Reporting Period that ends within the Financial Year

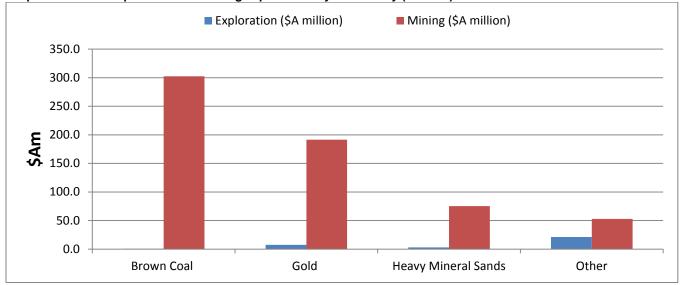
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>The MRSDA mining expenditure figure covers all expenditure on mining and prospecting licences (including capital and operating expenses), less any specified exploration expenditure on mining and prospecting licences.

Table 2.6 Expenditure on mineral exploration and mining by commodity\*

Sector	Exploration (\$A million)	As % of total	Mining (\$A million)	As % of total	
Brown Coal	0.37	2.0	339.36	48.2	
Gold	6.49	35.7	289.19	41.1	
Heavy Mineral Sands	5.81	32.0	22.43	3.2	
Other**	5.49	30.2	53.20	7.6	
Total	18.15	100.0	704.19	100.0	

Source: DEDJTR

Graph 2.6 Mineral exploration and mining expenditure by commodity (MRSDA) 2015-16



Source: DEDJTR

# 4.3 Mineral production

Brown coal production continues to be dominated by electricity generation companies in the Latrobe Valley: Hazelwood Power Corporation, AGL and Energy Australia. The Maddingley Brown Coal company produces a small amount of coal in Bacchus Marsh for fuel and soil conditioning. Alcoa Australia ceased mining coal at Anglesea in August 2015.

Brown coal production decreased by 1.2 million tonnes in 2015-16 (or 2%) compared to 2014-15.

Gold production increased from 198,387 ounces to 256,653 ounces (29.4% increase).

<sup>\*</sup>Notes: Expenditures are allocated to commodity according to the primary nominated mineral commodity on the licence. Brown coal includes all coal types.

<sup>\*\* &</sup>quot;Other" includes cases where there is more than one primary mineral.

Table 2.7 Mineral production over time\*

Year	Brown Coal	Gold	Antimony	Zircon	Rutile	Ilmenite	Feldspar	Gypsum	Kaolin and fine clay
2011-12	69,124	211,201	5,007	187,538	261,744	42,814	95,310	630,258	80,202
2012-13	59,854	225,776	4,558	86,243	140,842	67,067	61,578	499,681	204,164
2013-14	58,001	225,168	5,336	128,064	243,355	563,371	44,254	454,526	167,333
2014-15	60,957	198,387	3,684	77,162	85,983	383,369	40,232	335,374	152,047
2015-16	59,757	256,653	5,945	52,026	90,318	57,763	30,730	448,334	136,354
Change year-on- year (%)	-2.0	29.4	61.4	-32.6	5.0	-84.9	-23.7	33.7	-21.2

Source: DEDJTR, statutory returns under the MRSDA.

Table 2.8 Mineral production sales values (A\$ million)

Mineral	2014- 15	2015-16	Change year-on-year (%)
Brown Coal*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gold	286.9	411.4**	43.4
Antimony	37.8	30.6	-19.0
Heavy Mineral Sands (Zircon, Rutile, Ilmenite)	185.1	175.9	-5.0
Industrial Minerals (Feldspar, Gypsum, Kaolin & fine clay)	10.2	10.0	-2.0
Others (including silver, peat and quartz)	0.1	0.6	500.0
Total (excl. brown coal)	520.1	641.2	18.7

Source: DEDJTR, statutory returns under the MRSDA.

<sup>\*</sup>Gold reported in ounces, brown coal in thousand tonnes, gypsum in cubic meters, and the remainder in tonnes.

<sup>\*</sup>No unit value is assigned to brown coal for the purposes of determining its production value. Brown coal is almost entirely used for electricity production and is largely an internal transfer within mining/generation entities. As such, there is no available market price for brown coal.

<sup>\*\*</sup>The average price of gold for 2015-16 was used multiplied by production amount.

Graph 2.8 Gold production (ounces) by year

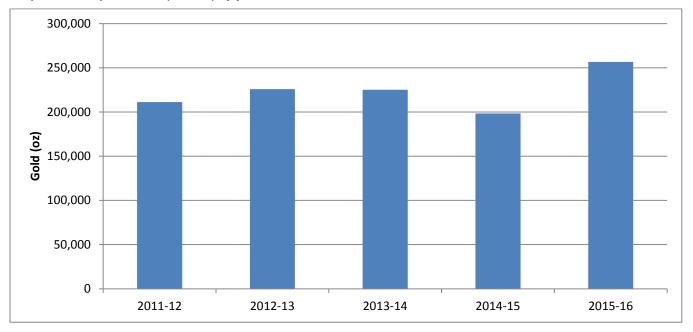


Table 2.9 Brown coal production ('000 tonnes) by year

Year	Maddingley Brown Coal Co. Bacchus Marsh	Alcoa Anglesea	Loy Yang	Yallourn	Hazelwood	Annual Total
2011-12	21	1,022	30,237	17,404	20,440	69,124
2012-13	18	913	28,921	12,885	17,118	59,854
2013-14	19	1,034	26,967	13,494	16,487	58,001
2014-15	19	-	27,624	17,171	16,144	60,957
2015-16	23	-	27,066	17,979	14,689	59,757

Source: DEDJTR, statutory returns under the MRSDA.

# 5 Extractive industry

Extractive industries produce the raw material necessary for the construction industry, which is vital to Victoria's development, as well as contributing to the agricultural industry via soil additives. The industry operates quarries that produce predominantly hard rock, clay, sand and gravel.

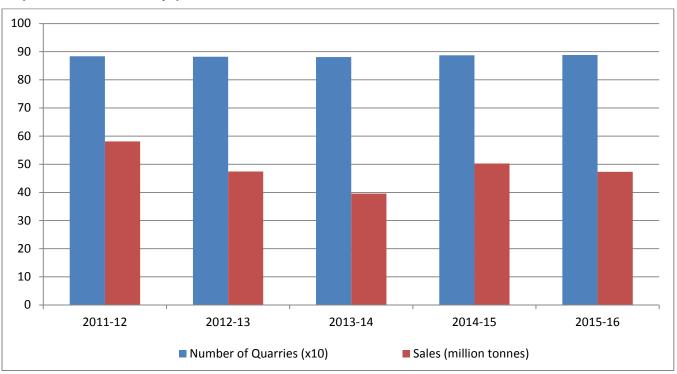
As at 30 June 2016, there were 888 current work authorities for quarries granted under the MRSDA in Victoria. The total number of quarries has remained stable over the last decade.

Table 3.1 Status of extractive industry work authorities\* as at 30 June 2016

Tenement	Application**	Current	
Work Authority	31	888	

Source: DEDJTR

Graph 3.1 Extractive industry quarries 2011-12 to 2015-16



Source: DEDJTR

Sales of quarry products fluctuate based on the demand from the domestic building and construction sector. The increase in demand is explained by the increase in active quarries and the initiation of major infrastructure projects.

A total of 535 quarries reported production in 2015-16 with the total sales volume being 47 million tonnes. In 2014-15, the number of producing quarries was 554<sup>2</sup> with a total sales volume of 50 million tonnes.

Volume sales of extractive industry products in 2015-16 decreased by around 2.7 million tonnes or 5.4% in comparison to 2014-15. Sales value increased by \$33.5 million or 4.5% as compared to 2014-15.

<sup>\*</sup>A Work Authority is granted under the MRSDA.

<sup>\*\*</sup>This is when an applicant has paid a Work Authority application fee or a Work Plan fee.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Figure corrected from 2014-15 Statistical Report. Earth Resources Regulation 2015-16 Statistical Report

Table 3.2 Victorian extractive industries sales by rock type 2015-16

Product Group	Product Type	Sales Volume	Sales Value
Froduct Group	Froduct Type	(million tonnes)	(\$Am)
Hard Rock	BASALT	18.19	307.31
	GNEISS	0.005	0.000
	GRANITE	5.04	95.42
	HORNFELS	3.31	59.30
	QUARTZITE	0.05	0.66
	RHYODACITE	1.59	35.83
	SCHIST	0.21	3.67
	SLATE	0.00	0.64
	TRACHYTE	0.02	0.48
Hard Rock Total		28.41	503.30
Soft Rock	CLAY & CLAY SHALE	1.33	3.67
	LIMESTONE	1.62	30.30
	SAND & GRAVEL	12.51	207.21
	SEDIMENTARY*	2.55	26.81
	SCORIA	0.59	11.01
	SOIL	0.03	0.41
	TUFF	0.25	2.76
Soft Rock Total		18.89	282.17
Other/Aggregates		0.00	0.00
GRAND TOTAL		47.30	785.47

Source: DEDJTR, statutory returns under the MRSDA.

<sup>\*</sup>Sedimentary (usually rippable rocks including sandstone, shale, siltstone, chert, mudstone, claystone).

# 6 Revenue and bonds

#### 6.1 Revenue

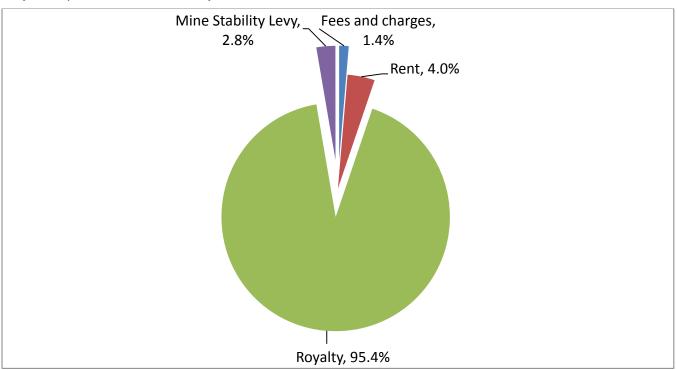
In 2015-16, a total of \$51.9 million was collected from industry in royalties, rentals, levies, fees and charges under the Acts administered by the department. This compares with \$51.8 million collected in 2014-15.

Table 4.1 Mineral, extractive and petroleum revenue 2015-16

Revenue Stream	Revenue (\$A million)
Fees and charges	0.7
Rent	2.0
Royalty	47.8
Mine Stability Levy	1.4
Total	51.9

Source: DEDJTR

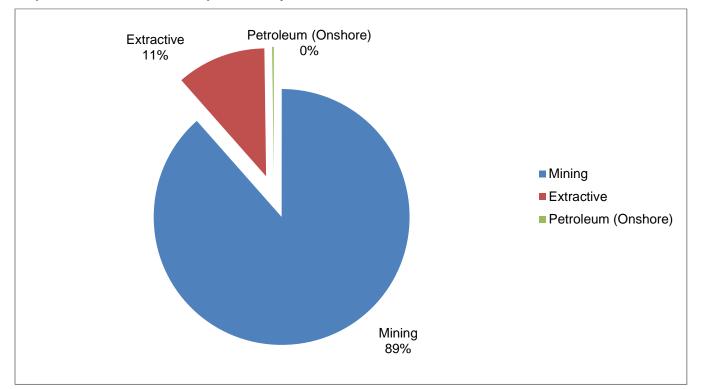
Graph 4.1 a) Mineral, extractive and petroleum revenue 2015-16



Source: DEDJTR

Table 4.2 Minerals, extractive and petroleum royalties 2015-16

Sector	Royalties (\$A million)	
Mining	42.3	
Extractive	5.4	
Petroleum	0.1	
Total	47.8	



Graph 4.2 Mineral, extractive and petroleum royalties 2015-16

# 6.2 Rehabilitation bonds

The sum of rehabilitation bonds held by DEDJTR in 2015-16 was \$330 million, an increase of \$89.5 million compared to 2014-15.

Table 4.3 Value of rehabilitation bonds by authority type (\$A million)

Year	Exploration Licence	Mining Licence	Prospecting Licence	Retention Licence	Extractive Industry Work	Total
2011-12	2.5	156.9	0	N/A	Authority 80.9	240.3
2012-13	2.4	158.3	0.025	N/A	81.0	241.7
2013-14	2.1	183.4	0.091	0.010	90.9	276.5
2014-15	1.9	153.0	0.138	0.050	85.8	241.0
2015-16	2.0	239.6	0.2	0.1	88.6	330.5

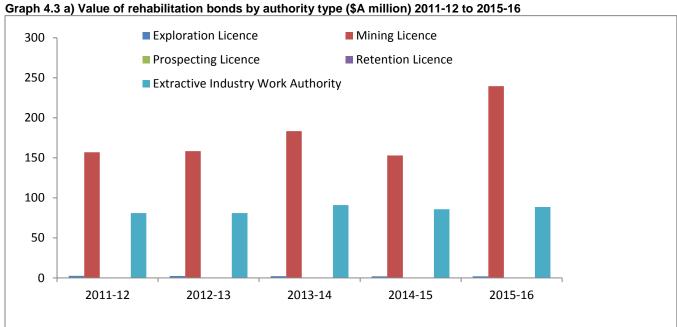


Table 4.4 Rehabilitation bond reviews over time

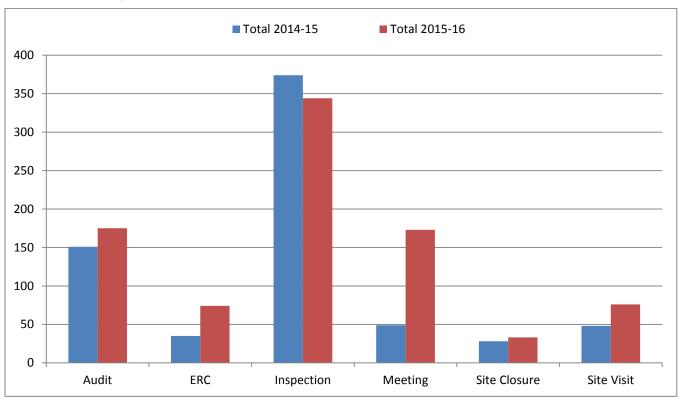
Year	Number of Bonds Reviewed	Result of Review - Increase	Result of Review  No Change	Result of Review - Decrease or Release
2011-12	216	19	193	4
2012-13	258	37	220	1
2013-14	214	66	139	9
2014-15	106	54	10	42
2015-16	100	48	6	46

# 7 Monitoring, compliance and enforcement

ERR undertakes a monitoring and compliance program to ensure that authority holders are compliant with their obligations and meet community expectations. DEDJTR monitoring, compliance and enforcement activities under the MRSDA are summarised in the table below.

The Branch has made an effort to increase its monitoring and compliance activity by increasing the amount of audits, inspections, meetings and attendances at Environmental Review Committees (ERC). This has assisted ERR in better communicating with and addressing stakeholder concerns or feedback.

Graph 5.1 Monitoring, compliance and enforcement activities 2015-16



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