The Northern Territory Government had not issued a production licence for a new oil field in over 32 years until today.

Minister for Mines and Energy, Willem Westra Van Holthe, has signed off on a production licence for Central Petroleum’s Surprise Field oil project, valued at $25 million.

Mr Westra van Holthe said that that today was a milestone in the Territory’s history.

“Central Petroleum has today been offered a 25 year licence to start the production phase of their operation. This is regional development in action,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“This is all part of the Country Liberal Government’s plan to open up regional parts of the Territory; to turn our resources into wealth for all Territorians.

“Onshore oil and gas has huge potential in the Territory. This is the kind of industry that builds lasting infrastructure and can be used to benefit the local economy.”

Managing Director of Central Petroleum, Richard Cottee, said the production licence was an important milestone not only for Central Petroleum but also for the Territory and the Traditional Owners.

“We look forward to increasing involvement in the Northern Territory and will endeavour to have a positive impact on the lives of the Traditional Owners on whose land our facilities are being built,” Mr Cottee said.

“We are hopeful that all of the facilities required for the long term production of Surprise will be fully operational by the week of 10th March 2014.

“We believe that this milestone heralds the start of an exciting new chapter in the development of what should be a substantial oil and gas industry for the Northern Territory.

“Central thanks the Minister and his department together with the Central Land Council and the Traditional Owners they represent for the thorough and constructive approach they took in approving this first onshore licence in 30 years.”

The Surprise Field discovery is located to the West of Alice Springs, near Kintore.

Media Contact:
Jack Cranwell 0428 574 943