

17 December 2004

## Casino gas project gets environmental approval

Santos Limited, on behalf of the VIC/P44 joint venture, has announced that the \$200 million Casino development, offshore Victoria, has been granted formal environmental approval by the Commonwealth Government.

Approval was granted under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* by the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage to develop the Casino gas field and associated marine and terrestrial facilities in the Otway Basin, south-west of Port Campbell.

“The approval is an important milestone and means the project remains on track to meet expected initial production in the first quarter of 2006”, Santos’ Managing Director, Mr John Ellice-Flint said today.

The approval does not impose any unexpected conditions that could have affected the development cost or timing.

A copy of the approval and conditions is available on the Department of Environment and Heritage’s website at <http://www.deh.gov.au>

Participants in VIC P/44 are:

Santos Limited (Operator)	50.0%
Peedamullah Petroleum Pty Ltd (wholly-owned subsidiary of AWE)	25.0%
Mittwell Energy Resources Pty Ltd (wholly-owned subsidiary of Mitsui)	25.0%

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

**Media enquiries:**

**Kathryn Mitchell**

**(08) 8218 5260 / 0407 979 982**

**Investor enquiries**

**Mike Hanzalik**

**(08) 8224 7725 / 0439 892 143**

**Santos stock symbols: STO (Australian Stock Exchange), STOSY (NASDAQ ADR)**