

Inpex acquires interests in Australia permits

TOKYO, May 15 (Reuters) - Inpex Holdings Inc <1605.T>, Japan's biggest oil and gas explorer, said on Thursday its wholly owned subsidiary had acquired interests in two exploration permits in offshore Western Australia.

The two permit areas, WA-410-P and WA-411-P, are located in the Browse Basin, about 200 km (125 miles) off Western Australia. They are adjacent to its majority-owned Ichthys project, which is set to start production of liquefied natural gas (LNG) as early as the second half of 2013, Inpex said.

In the WA-410-P block, Inpex will own a 20 percent stake and Chevron will own 50 percent. Santos Ltd, which will be the operator, will own the remaining 30 percent.

In the WA-411-P block, Inpex will own 26.6064 percent, Santos 63.6299 percent and Beach Petroleum Ltd, 9.7637 percent. (Reporting by Chikafumi Hodo and Osamu Tsukimori)