

CEO comment



Dr Chris Pigram – CEO Geoscience Australia



This issue of *AusGeo News* features several articles relating to Geoscience Australia's programs to provide pre-competitive information to significantly reduce risk in exploration and support development of Australia's onshore and offshore energy resources. There is also an article describing how a project investigating groundwater resources in Australia's arid areas has left a lasting legacy for two remote communities.

This issue reports on the new insights into the geological evolution and petroleum prospectivity of the Capel and Faust Basins. These deepwater basins, located 800 kilometres off the east coast of Australia, have previously seen little scientific or petroleum exploration effort. The assessment, carried out as part of Geoscience Australia's Offshore Energy Security Program, has significantly advanced current knowledge of the area and will guide future scientific and resource exploration in this vast frontier region.

The new fifth edition Magnetic Anomaly Map of Australia was released by Geoscience Australia on 1 July. Results from the Australia-wide airborne geophysical survey, a major output from Geoscience Australia's Onshore Energy Security Program, have been incorporated into the new map. As our article reports, the new edition includes an estimated 27 million line-kilometres of survey data which is eight million line kilometres more than the previous edition. Information from the new map and associated grid database provides insights into the distribution of magnetically susceptible minerals within the Earth's crust.

There is also a brief report on the most extensive airborne electromagnetic survey ever undertaken in Australia (the Frome survey) which will cover almost 10 per cent of South Australia's total area. Other reports covering products from the Gawler Craton and Curnamona Province in South Australia, include:

- Key results from seismic and magnetotelluric surveys which suggest that these regions have a high potential for uranium and other mineralisation
- New mineral maps using satellite imagery which can be easily integrated with other datasets, such as geology and regolith maps, in a GIS

- Geochronology results which will inform interpretation of the recently acquired seismic lines.

There is also a report on the installation of Winner's Bore on the Nyirripi to Kintore back-road in the southwest of the Northern Territory. These two Aboriginal communities are separated by a vast expanse of inhospitable desert and vehicle breakdowns along the road were particularly hazardous. A drilling program in the area by the Palaeovalley Groundwater Project, led by Geoscience Australia, found fresh groundwater. The installation of a hand pump at Winner's Bore is a lasting and durable legacy of the Project.

As usual we always appreciate your feedback and encourage you to use the online rating mechanism with each article.

Introducing the new CEO

The appointment of Dr Chris Pigram as CEO of Geoscience Australia was announced by Mr Drew Clarke, Secretary of the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism, on 17 June 2010. Mr Clark said Dr Pigram's appointment was 'the culmination of a long and successful career in Geoscience Australia' and that it was 'especially pleasing to have a candidate of his experience and standing to take on the leadership role'.

Dr Pigram trained as a geologist and has over 30 years experience in a wide range of geological research and mapping. He has been a senior research manager since 1993 and has led Geoscience Australia's marine and petroleum geoscience and minerals geoscience programs. Prior to his appointment as CEO, he was Deputy CEO and Chief of the Geospatial and Earth Monitoring Division.

Dr Pigram has worked extensively in Australia as well as southeast Asia and the western Pacific. He has authored or co-authored over 90 publications covering tectonics, petroleum, basin analysis and marine geoscience. He is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (2001) and participated in the APS Senior Leadership program - Leading Australia's Future in Asia in 2004.

After graduating with a BSc (Hons) in applied geology from the University of New South Wales in 1974 he joined the then Bureau of Mineral Resources, Geology and Geophysics (BMR), and was seconded to the Papua New Guinea Geological Survey. In 1978 he joined a BMR-led Australian aid project carrying out geological mapping in Indonesia. After returning to Australia in 1984 he joined the BMR's Marine Program and subsequently obtained a PhD in marine geoscience from the Australian National University. He became Chief of the Petroleum and Marine Division in 1993.

Dr Pigram was part of a working group that developed Australia's Marine Science and Technology Plan following the development of Australia's Oceans Policy in 1996. He also served on the National Committee for Earth Sciences that prepared a Strategic Plan for the Earth Sciences in Australia in 2003 under the auspices of the Australian Academy of Science. He is also a former member of the Australian Academy of Science's Solid Earth Sciences Committee.

He is a past Chairman of the Australian Committee for the Ocean Drilling Program (ODP) after serving as the PACRIM Consortium ODP Council Member from 1996 to 1998. He is the Australian Government representative on the Australian New Zealand Land Information Council.

Dr Pigram has been the Geoscience Australia Board Member for a number of Cooperative Research Centres. He has also been a member of university advisory committees at the Australian National University's Research School of Earth Sciences and the Centre for Ore Deposits Research at the University of Tasmania.



Geoscience Australia's new CEO Dr Chris Pigram following his appointment in June 2010



Chief of Minerals Division in the Australian Geological Survey Organisation (Geoscience Australia's predecessor) in 2000.



During fieldwork in Papua New Guinea in the 1970s, pointing out a soft sediment deformation in Cretaceous aged rocks in the Wahgi Valley.