

Groundwater funding flows to Geoscience Australia

Geoscience Australia will participate in a project funded under the National Water Commission's Raising National Water Standards Programme. The project, Water for Australia's Arid Zone – Identifying and Assessing Australia's Palaeovalley Groundwater Resources, will receive funding of \$4.935 million over a five-year period (2008–2012). It will directly address the gaps in our fundamental knowledge and management practices which currently limit the use of palaeovalley aquifers, a potentially significant but poorly understood groundwater resource in many areas of Australia's arid interior. In particular, this project will:

- Enhance our knowledge of the groundwater resources of arid and semi-arid Australia
- Improve methodologies for determining the characteristics, volumes and sustainability of groundwater resources in palaeovalley aquifers
- Evaluate the application of non-conventional and conventional groundwater assessment methods to delineating palaeovalley groundwater resources. This will improve our understanding of groundwater resources for remote communities, such as indigenous townships, as well as potential future mining and agricultural developments
- Develop a conceptual and spatial framework of key palaeovalley system types and associated groundwater scenarios in arid and semi-arid regions
- Develop a national strategy to delineate and manage arid-zone palaeovalley resources in respective geologic provinces or regions
- Provide guidelines to state agencies, other water managers and remote communities for the sustainable management and use of palaeovalley resources and associated groundwater-dependant ecosystems.



This project is being led by Geoscience Australia in collaboration with various geological and water resource agencies from South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. The consortium also includes a mining and exploration industry partner, Newmont Australia.

The Water for Australia's Arid Zone project will also collaborate with, and build on research carried out by, Geoscience Australia's Onshore Energy Security Program.

For more information

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International Year of Planet Earth

The General Assembly of the United Nations has proclaimed 2008 as the International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE). The IYPE is being preceded by a preparatory year in 2007 with a wrap-up year in 2009.

The aim of the IYPE is to demonstrate how the earth sciences can assist future generations meet the challenges involved in ensuring a safer, healthier and more prosperous world. The initiative seeks to raise awareness of the role and contribution of the earth sciences to society through science and outreach programs.

The IYPE science program is concentrating on 'big issues' and the complex interactions of Earth systems in determining its long-term sustainability. For example, Geoscience Australia is collaborating with similar organisations from more than 40 countries to embark on one of the most ambitious geological mapping programs ever undertaken: OneGeology is a major international initiative that is fast-tracking



moves towards international data exchange which will provide internet access to the most up-to-date geological data at a scale of 1:1 million.

IYPE will be a dominant theme at geoscience conferences throughout 2008. The 33rd International Geological Congress to be held in Oslo in 2008 includes themes

related to IYPE and will aim to showcase the earth sciences as the foundation for sustainable development. The Australian Earth Sciences Convention to be held in Perth in July 2008 will also focus on the key themes of IYPE. The Convention will be jointly hosted by the Geological Society of Australia and the Australian Institute of Geoscientists. The Inaugural Global Geotourism Conference, also to be held in Perth, will follow the Convention.

The IYPE outreach program includes educational activities at every level. The IYPE Global Launch Event on February 12 and 13 at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris aims to bring together students from around the world. Up to 350 students will be invited to attend the event following their participation in the IYPE Student Contest. The creativity and perception of the selected students will provide new perspectives on the major themes of the IYPE. The National Committees in Australia and New Zealand will each select students to take part in the event.

Outreach activities in Australia include a special edition coin set to commemorate IYPE released by the Royal Australian Mint on 22 November 2007. The Australian Bureau of Statistics Year Book 2008, which will be launched as part of Australia Day 2008 celebrations, will also have an IYPE theme. The Australian Science Teachers Association has also chosen "Planet of Earth - Planet of Change" as the theme for their 2008 National Science Week Teacher Resource Book.

SPOT the changes in our data

To assist users of the Geoscience Australia website to find the best available data as well as minimise the amount of time required to find and access information, Geoscience Australia has developed a formal method of managing its geospatial and geoscientific data holdings. Known as Single Point of Truth (SPOT), the methodology will apply consistency to data, and enhance Geoscience Australia's reputation both as a source of high quality information and advocate of best practice information-management.

So far SPOT has been applied to the Gazetteer of Australia. The remaining major data themes will be receiving the SPOT treatment over the next three years. They will include Bathymetry, Elevation, Located Sample Data, Drillholes, Geochemistry, Geochronology, Exposure and Marine Surveys. These are scheduled to be completed during 2008.

If you wish to view the SPOT methodology, it is available through the Geoscience Australia Sales Centre or downloadable from the web as a pdf.

For more information

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Ms Janine Murphy, CEO Royal Australian Mint and Dr Ian Lambert, Geoscience Australia and Member of the Australian National IYPE Committee following the release of the 2008 Special Edition IYPE Coins at the Royal Australian Mint, Canberra.



Geoscience Australia Sales Centre

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methodology
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