AUSGEO news ISSUE 79 September 2005

Australian Government
Geoscience Australia

ANSIR NATIONAL RESEARCH FACILITY FOR EARTH SOUNDING

ANSIR CONTINUES: 2005 ONWARDS

Good news for Earth Science researchers working in the third (depth) dimension.

The contractual arrangements for ANSIR, Australia's Major National Research Facility (MNRF) in Seismic Imaging, specified under the agreement with the Commonwealth through DEST (Department of Education, Science and Training) expired on 18 June 2005.

The good news is that ANSIR is set to continue into the future with an expanded role as ANSIR – National Research Facility for Earth Sounding.

The success of the facility over its seven year life encouraged both the ANSIR Board and the ANSIR owners, The Australian National University and Geoscience Australia, to agree to continue the facility. There was a strong endorsement of the need for maintaining a capability for seismic imaging across the full range of scales currently supported by ANSIR. In addition, the ANSIR Board recommended to the owners that there was a need to broaden the scope of the contribution made by ANSIR to encompass other techniques in earth sounding that could make use of common data recorders, in particular magnetotelluric methods.

ANSIR will therefore continue its assistance for the strengthening of research and education in the Earth Sciences in Australia, and to provide a national focus and leadership through its work in Earth Sounding, which helps to foster collaboration between individual scientists, institutions and across industry sectors.

ANSIR's owners have agreed to continue under their existing agreement a further two years in the first instance, with an annual review. Management will be through a Steering Committee that will meet twice a year to oversee the development of the facility with advice available from an Access Committee to inform the selection of proposals for the Work Plan. Day to day ANSIR operations will continue to be handled through the ANSIR Executive.

ANSIR will continue to use its current Facility Manager, Terrex Seismic Pty Ltd, to provide reflection services and the Research School of Earth Sciences at ANU will continue to provide portable (short period and broadband) services. Both ANSIR and Terrex Seismic are pleased to continue the facilities management relationship developed during the MNRF years which has delivered regional seismic surveys in an efficient and economical manner. Continuing efforts will be made through appropriate national funding mechanisms to continue to improve ANSIR's capabilities. ANSIR will be striving to secure a component for basic facility support and for operational funds to ensure that maximum effort is provided for elucidating deep Earth structure in the context of the Commonwealth Government's National Research Priorities.

ANSIR provides equipment and training for seismic imaging experiments. The staff of the facility can provide help to researchers with the design and implementation of experiments and facilitate data processing and interpretation. The Director, Professor Brian Kennett and Deputy Director, Dr. Bruce Goleby, maintain active research programs at ANU and Geoscience Australia and are thereby able to provide their experience to prospective applicants for use of the facility.

ANSIR has established a pool of equipment capable of imaging the Earth's interior at a variety of scales using different styles of seismic techniques. ANSIR's equipment is portable and can be moved to any part of the Australian continent. Components of the equipment have been used overseas in international collaborative experiments. The ANSIR equipment can record energy from many types of sources, including earthquakes, explosions and truck-mounted vibrators; it can operate in a wide range of environments, including the remote hot and dusty conditions of the Australian outback, the humid tropics of the north and the freezing conditions of Antarctica.

The resources of ANSIR are available to all researchers. The scientific merit of the proposed research is the main criterion used to determine priority for access, but researchers have to be able to cover the operating costs for their projects.

For further information on ANSIR please visit www.rses.anu.edu.au/seismology/ANSIR/ansir.html or contact Bruce Goleby +61 2 6249 9404 or (email bruce.goleby@ga.gov.au)