



# CEO comment



Neil Williams – CEO Geoscience Australia



Following the swearing in of the new Australian Government this month Geoscience Australia is now part of the new Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism which has been excised from the former Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources. The new Minister is The Hon. Martin Ferguson, AM MP who will be a member of the Cabinet. Secretary of the new department is Dr Peter Boxall who was previously the Secretary of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, and before that, the Department of Finance and Administration.

Early indications are that Geoscience Australia will continue to provide 'Geoscience research and information services including geodesy, mapping, remote sensing and land information co-ordination'.

This issue includes details of some major milestones for the Onshore Energy Security Program. I am happy to report that the flying component of the Australia-wide airborne geophysical tie-line survey (AWAGS 2) has been completed and the final processed data should be with Geoscience Australia in March 2008. In other news from the Program, gravity data over parts of the Cooper Basin are now available, and the airborne electromagnetic survey of the Paterson Province in Western Australia is approximately one-third complete.

There is also an article on the acquisition and processing of deep seismic data from the Mt Isa-Georgetown-Charters Towers region of northern Queensland. Geoscience Australia's involvement in this major collaboration with the Geological Survey of Queensland was also part of our Onshore Energy Security Program.

The Proterozoic Wealth Project, which will assist mineral explorers in area selection, is also reported on in this issue. Since most of our world-class mineral deposits are from the Proterozoic Eon, the Project has developed models for the tectonic evolution of the Australian Proterozoic to predict where undiscovered mineral wealth may lay beneath the surface.

This issue also includes a report on the marine survey of a section of the coast off New South Wales which discovered many remarkable seabed features. The survey also gathered baseline data that will assist Geoscience Australia assess those areas of the continental shelf prone to underwater landslides which could potentially generate tsunamis.

There is also an article on the National Exposure Information System (NEXIS) which includes information on buildings, people, businesses, employment, and infrastructure that could be affected by

natural hazards. This project is part of Geoscience Australia's contribution to research to protect Australia from natural hazards in the urban landscape and mitigate their future impacts.

There is also a review of expenditure on mineral exploration in Australia which reached record levels during 2006-07. Spending for the year reached a total of \$1714.6 million, an increase of 38 percent from 2005-06.

New products reported on include high-resolution magnetic data over areas of the offshore Canning Basin, including areas in the 2007 Acreage Release, as well as new geophysical datasets covering areas in Queensland (Mt Isa and the Cooper Basin) and Western Australia (offshore and onshore areas in the Canning Basin). A new physical dataset of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park seabed will help scientists, natural resource managers, and the community to better understand the nature and layout of seabed habitats.

Finally, I wish to thank all our readers for your continuing support and extend best wishes for the festive season and the New Year.

*Neil Williams*