



MEDIA RELEASE

New geothermal mapping project underway

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Geoscience Australia has begun a detailed field survey aimed at providing accurate pre-competitive data on geothermal resources across Australia.

Following an appeal to exploration and mining companies for access to current or terminated drill holes, scientists are taking measurements of temperature gradients down the length of nominated holes, and collecting samples for thermal conductivity measurements.

The project leader for Geoscience Australia's Geothermal Project, Dr Anthony Budd, said the measurements will allow scientists to update the current heat flow and temperature map of Australia and provide explorers with a clearer picture of areas which offer potential for geothermal resources.

Speaking at the Australian Academy of Science today, Dr Budd said that although Australia did not have the conventional volcanic geothermal systems which exist in other parts of the world, the continent did have an abundance of hot rocks buried beneath insulating sediments.

"Through the Onshore Energy Security Program, Geoscience Australia is attempting to locate medium and high-temperature geothermal resources and address one of the key uncertainties facing geothermal explorers," Dr Budd said.

"Companies are actively working towards commercialisation of geothermal technologies in Australia across a range of temperatures and it is important that accurate pre-competitive data is available to sustain the pace of developments," he said.

"Detailed knowledge of ground source heat is vital for companies evaluating the exploration potential for geothermal energy applications including high-temperature resources used for electricity generation or moderate-temperatures for swimming pool and building temperature control and low-temperatures for commercial and domestic air conditioning," Dr Budd said.

The work by Geoscience Australia in conjunction with State agencies to measure heat flow across the continent in a major data acquisition program will help to achieve this objective he said.

"Geothermal energy has the potential to provide Australia with centuries of clean, price-competitive base-load power generation and heat for industrial and domestic applications," Dr Budd said.

"The national survey of drill holes to produce a heat flow and temperature map is further evidence of the valuable contributions being made by industry and governments to develop sustainable alternative energy in Australia," he said.

For more information or to arrange interviews, please contact:
Geoscience Australia 24 hour Media Hotline 1800 882 035