



This issue of *AusGeo News* features a wide range of articles covering emergency management issues for natural hazards. It also includes features on Australia's uranium resources and mineral exploration, recent marine surveys in the Coral Sea region, and information on new products.

The article on natural hazard risks in Perth reports on the results of a major four-year study conducted by Geoscience Australia in collaboration with federal, state and local government agencies. This was the most rigorous natural hazard risk assessment ever undertaken for Perth, and some of the conclusions were unexpected. Another article discusses the remapping of the Karijini National Park area in Western Australia as the first product of a pilot mapping program focussing on emergency management information requirements.

As we enter the bushfire season, I am pleased to report that the Sentinel bushfire monitoring system now has a permanent home at Geoscience Australia after nearly three years as an R&D demonstrator project. Sentinel is an internet based mapping tool designed to provide timely information on the location of bushfires to emergency service managers throughout Australia. Two other articles highlight the importance of post-disaster data collection and Geoscience Australia's role in developing and piloting post-disaster surveys. These studies improve our knowledge base of the costs and major factors that influence a community's vulnerability and risk to hazard events. Geoscience Australia is also doing fundamental research that will contribute to a better understanding of the potential for major earthquakes and tsunamis. There is also an article on geodetic measurements of permanent ground displacements from last year's Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami which show clear indications of where stress has been released along the Sumatran coastline.

Australia's rich endowment in uranium resources is assessed in a feature that points out the importance and dominance of the giant Olympic Dam deposit. This article also highlights the importance of uranium-rich felsic igneous rocks as sources of uranium for ores deposited by low-temperature hydrothermal processes in other rock types. Another article draws attention to the recent survey of global non-ferrous mineral (excluding iron ore, coal) exploration budgets by the Metals Economics Group of Canada that shows that Australia's share of world mineral exploration budgets has fallen to a new low despite increased levels of exploration both in Australia and globally. Australia's competitive position in world mineral exploration and the impediments to expansion of mineral exploration in Australia have been the focus of the Minerals Exploration Action Agenda.

There is also a report on the marine survey conducted early this year over the Mellish Rise and the Kenn Plateau in the Coral Sea off Queensland. The region

is geologically complex with the basement rocks being a mixture of continental and younger basaltic (sea-mount type) rocks. The information obtained from these studies will add to our understanding of the breakup and seafloor spreading history of the Southwest Pacific. In related news, Geoscience Australia has just released a new high-quality national bathymetric grid covering 41 million square kilometres of the Australian region (and surrounds). This new dataset should be particularly useful to decision-makers managing Australia's marine environment.

It is a great honour for our organisation that three of our current projects were recognised at the 2005 Australian Safer Communities Awards ceremony held at Parliament House on December 1. The Cities Project Perth, the Collaborative 100 000 Scale Mapping Pilot for Emergency Management and the Scenario Modelling for the Assessment of National Catastrophic Disaster Capability projects, received 'Highly Commended' awards in the Pre-Disaster Category (National Significance). As outlined above, this issue includes reports on the first two of these projects.

Finally, I extend to all readers of *AusGeo News* best wishes for the festive season and the new year.



Comment

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