



CEO comment



\$134 million in new program funding for Geoscience Australia



Neil Williams – CEO Geoscience Australia

The Prime Minister's Energy Security Initiative, announced on August 14, included the injection of \$134 million in new program funding into Geoscience Australia. This additional funding will enable Geoscience Australia to supply petroleum and mineral exploration companies with new geoscience information necessary to reduce exploration risk and encourage exploration in new frontier areas.

Geoscience Australia's Big New Oil program of pre-competitive seismic data acquisition, enhancement and access will be expanded over the next five years at a cost of \$75 million. This will allow data to be acquired from offshore areas that span up to two million square kilometres, more than three times the area covered by the last program which has proved successful in attracting new exploration to frontier offshore areas such as the Bremer Sub-basin. The improved data will be extensively promoted to the petroleum exploration industry decision-makers in Australia and overseas.

The package includes \$59 million to enable Geoscience Australia to pioneer innovative, integrated geoscientific research to better understand the geological potential of onshore Australia for both minerals and petroleum. This will be done through the application of the latest geophysical imaging and mapping technologies.

This issue reports on the Gawler Minerals Promotion Project which outlines the contribution made by this 5-year project in partnership with Primary Industries and Resources South Australia to increase exploration in South Australia through the development of new integrated understanding of crustal architecture, tectonic evolution and controls on mineralisation. Key outcomes are a coherent model for gold and copper mineralisation in the eastern and central Gawler Craton, and the development of new methods for 'uncovering' frontier provinces.

There are also reports on Geoscience Australia's contributions to research to protect Australia from natural disasters and mitigate their future impacts. Following Cyclone Larry in far North Queensland, Geoscience Australia staff, in collaboration with other agencies, helped with the early assessment of the structural damage to residential and commercial buildings as well as regional and farm-level assessments of the economic impact.

Geoscience Australia's tsunami impact modelling is already contributing to development of emergency management plans. Our research into geological records of tsunamis, which extends the tsunami record by thousands of years, will also provide a means of assessing future risk.

Record nickel prices have prompted a boom in nickel exploration and a timely review of the geological settings and resources of Australia's nickel sulphide deposits placing them in a global context will assist nickel explorers. There is also a report on the compilation of datasets of various metallogenic parameters for the Tasman Fold Belt in Victoria which will greatly assist the exploration industry's search for intrusion-related mineralisation systems, notably gold and base metals.

New products reported on include: new geophysical datasets for Mt Isa, Paterson province, East Arunta and the Bowen-Surat regions; new sources of satellite imagery; and new seabed minerals maps that show known offshore mineral occurrences.

Neil Williams