



CEO comment



Geoscience Australia has recently reorganised its structure to better reflect the government’s major strategic foci: supporting the future energy and resource base of the economy; providing geoscience input to a range of environmental issues, such as climate change and its potential impact on the coastal zone, and groundwater; and contributing to community safety through research into natural hazards and their impact on society. Details of the agency’s new structure can be found at: www.ga.gov.au/about-us/organisational-structure.html

This month marks one hundred years since the Australasian Antarctic Expedition 1911–14, led by Dr (later Sir) Douglas Mawson, left Hobart bound for Macquarie Island and East Antarctica. This expedition marked the start of Australia’s long engagement with Antarctica and this issue includes several articles relating to Geoscience Australia’s current research in Antarctica.

Cape Denison was selected by Mawson as the location for his main expedition base. Our article describes the area’s landforms and geology and includes the most recent age determinations for the main rock types. The current reconstructions of the ancient supercontinent Gondwana place this area adjacent to the coast of South Australia prior to rifting and the dismemberment of Gondwana.

There is also an article on the investigation of the impact on marine ecosystems of the break-up of the Mertz Glacier ice shelf following a collision with a massive iceberg in February 2010. The region is one of the ‘biological hotspots’ of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean ecosystem and was the focus of a joint survey in collaboration with the Australian Antarctic Division. The survey will help answer some key questions relating to ocean acidification and change in marine ecosystems as well as the protection of marine biodiversity.

Virtual globes have increased in popularity since the first online offerings in 2004–05. Our article outlines the development of Geoscience Australia’s 3D Data Viewer and its increasing use to provide stakeholders with access to a growing number of the agency’s national and regional datasets.

This issue also includes brief reports on Geoscience Australia’s contributions to a number of important projects including:

- the recently-completed northern Perth Basin seepage survey
- recent field tests to assess the storage capacity of supercritical carbon dioxide within a potential storage reservoir
- the international effort to establish a representative system of marine protected areas in the Southern Ocean around Antarctica
- monitoring recent earthquakes near Bowen in Queensland
- the rapid collection of information to support the investigation of the after-effects of natural disasters
- development of a database with basic location information for 1700 waste management facilities across Australia.

As always we welcome your feedback and encourage you to use the email address at the end of each article.



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