

Update on 34th International Geological Congress—AUSTRALIA 2012

Australia will be hosting the 34th International Geological Congress (IGC) at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, between 5 and 10 August 2012, on behalf of the Oceania region. The IGC, which is held every four years and attracts thousands of delegates from over a hundred countries is, the pre-eminent global geoscience event.

The 34th IGC will feature a wide-ranging scientific program as well as field trips, a large exhibition, training workshops and an education and outreach program. The Congress will also be the venue for the 2012 meetings of the International Union of Geological Sciences' Commissions, Task Groups and Joint Programs. The IGC will incorporate the second Young Earth Scientists (YES) Roundtable and has the benefit of UNESCO patronage.

The scientific sponsor is the International Union of Geological Sciences and Vale, the world's second largest mining company, is a major sponsor. The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and Events Queensland will also be providing support.

Third Circular now available

The Third Circular includes:

- Early Bird Registration Fee offer and detailed fee structure for the Congress
- a renewed call for abstracts, which should be submitted via the on-line system
- details of the Plenary 'hot topics' and speakers
- a list of Symposia and Keynote Speakers.

The Plenary sessions are:

- The Earth and Man: Living with a Restless Earth
- What does the geological record tell us about past climates in relation to projected climate change?
- Energy in a carbon-constrained world
- Resourcing Tomorrow: meeting the needs of a growing population
- Digital Earth—The information explosion.

Plenary Speakers confirmed to date include: Professor Iain Stewart (the BBC's *How Earth Made Us* series), former Shell chairman Lord Ron Oxburgh and Vale's Executive Director for Exploration, Energy and Projects Management, Eduardo Ledsham.

The Congress represents a once-in-a generation opportunity to showcase Australia's geosciences and to network with high profile



international geoscientists. Interest from overseas is strong. There will be delegations from China and Russia and they will be presenting the results of their recent cooperative deep geophysical probing transects in central and eastern Asia. They were undertaken to provide new insights into the resource potential of this large under-explored region.

Congress program

The 34th IGC will feature a wide-ranging scientific program under the overall theme 'Unearthing our Past and Future—Resourcing Tomorrow' which recognises the crucial contributions of the geosciences in meeting societal needs and sustaining planet Earth. Consistent with Australia's resource-based economy, roughly 40 percent of the scientific program will be of direct interest to the resources and energy sectors. Consequently each day's program will include several symposia on minerals, petroleum and energy.

Other features include field trips across Australia and the region, a large GeoExpo featuring

commercial, government and academic exhibitors (over 40 percent of the premium booths have already been sold), training and professional development workshops, and an education and outreach program.

The 34th IGC is being organised by the Australian Geoscience Council (AGC) the peak body for Australia's major professional and learned societies. These societies are all investing in the IGC which will take the place of a number of their regular meetings in 2012.

Congress registration

Readers are urged to review the Third Circular and take advantage of the 'Early Bird' Registration offer. Readers who wish to register for

the Congress or wish to receive regular updates by email can do so through the Congress website.

For more information

visit www.34igc.org
email ausgeomail@ga.gov.au



Geoscience Australia continues to 'wow' its visitors

Raising awareness of the geosciences and their benefits for the community is a key priority for Geoscience Australia. Through activities and programs generated by the Events and Education Team, the agency is working toward raising awareness and opening people's minds to the world of Earth science by providing them with an unforgettable experience when they visit Geoscience Australia and its Education Centre.

These events, programs and activities help to showcase the amazing work the agency undertakes. The aim of these activities and programs is to create the interest that is needed to encourage a new generation of Australians to understand the Earth sciences and become involved in geoscience. This year's activities focused around two main events; National Science Week (13 to 21 August) and Earth Science Week (9 to 15 October).

National Science Week and Open Day 2011

Geoscience Australia celebrated National Science Week 2011 by holding its annual Open Day on the final day of National Science Week. The agency also participated in other National Science Week activities in the Australian Capital Territory including the Science Trail, The Great Canberra Science Scramble and hosting our own virtual dinosaur (figure 1).

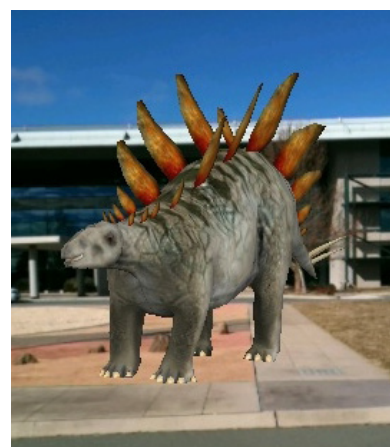


Figure 1. The virtual dinosaur hosted by Geoscience Australia as part of National Science Week.

The 2011 Open Day has been quoted as being our 'best ever' as well as setting a new record with over 3500 visitors during the day. Visitors included the Minister for Resources, Energy and Tourism, the Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP, who acknowledged that Open Day provided a great opportunity for the wider community to gain a better

insight into the important work of Geoscience Australia.

The most popular activity for children (and adults) was the gold panning and sapphire sieving (figure 2) followed by the erupting model volcanoes, pet rock making, the Antarctic experience, rock identification and the 3-D Earth presentation. Tours of the SHRIMP (which provides data on the age of Australian rocks), the Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre, the laboratories and the Geological Timewalk also proved to be very popular on the day with additional tours being scheduled.

This year's Open Day not only set a record for visitors but also for the number of staff volunteers. The success of Open Day would not have been possible without the efforts and contribution of these Geoscience Australia staff.

Earth Science Week 2011

Earth Science Week 2011 was held between 9 and 15 October. This year's activities revolved around the *Geologi* Short Film Competition, the Top Geoshot Photographic Competition and a special Foyer display highlighting Geoscience Australia's research in Antarctica and commemorating 100 years since Mawson's expedition to Antarctica. To mark the launch of the anniversary celebrations, renowned Mawson historian Alasdair McGregor presented a public seminar on Douglas Mawson and the Australasian Antarctic Expedition 1911–14.

This year's Earth Science Week was officially launched by the Minister for Resources, Energy and Tourism, the Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP, at a presentation for the winners of the 2011 *Geologi* Short Film Competition in Canberra.

This year's *Geologi* Competition was themed around 'Geology and you' highlighting the role Earth sciences play in our everyday lives. Entries were received from Western Australia, Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland and the ACT. The winner for the Junior Division (Year 7-10) was *Red Dirt* by St Joseph's Regional College, Port Macquarie NSW, who also wrote some catchy lyrics to accompany their brief geological history of Port Macquarie (figure 3). The Primary Division winner was *Wynyard: Created from Chaos* by Table Cape Primary School, Table Cape, Tasmania, a previous winner of the competition.

The Top Geoshots Photographic Competition received over 180 entries from all over Australia plus one from St Louis in the United States. The Overall Winner, a 'People's Choice' winner plus 10 additional winning entries will feature in a 2012 desktop calendar. All the entries received for this year's competition are on display in the Foyer of Geoscience Australia's building.

Geoscience Australia's Foyer also includes a display to acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the commencement of Mawson's expedition



Figure 2. The sapphire sieving demonstration proved popular with visitors to Open Day.

to Antarctica and the research the agency conducts in the region. The South Australian Museum kindly loaned some artefacts for this display, including clothing and a replica half sledge used by Tim Jarvis in 2007 in his re-enactment of Mawson's journey. The Earth monitoring and geoscience research that Geoscience Australia undertakes in Antarctica contributes toward a greater understanding of the region and its relationship to the world around us.

The Education Centre

The Education Centre is increasingly popular as an excursion venue and has hosted more than 60 000 visitors since it opened in 1999. This year saw a record number of visitors (over 8000) to the Centre, an increase of at least 22 per cent from the previous busiest year (2009).

The Centre is staffed by trained educators, science communicators and geologists and offers structured hands-on activities with a science and



Figure 3. Bryden Sloan-Harris and Samantha Bayly, representing St Joseph's Regional College at Port Macquarie, received the Junior Division *Geologi* Award from the Minister for Resources, Energy and Tourism, the Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP (right), and Dr Chris Pigram, CEO of Geoscience Australia on 11 October.

geography curriculum focus for visiting school groups and special interest groups.

This year the Centre has hosted a number of special programs including the National Youth Science Forum, a Teachers Summer School, a Teacher Earth Science Education Program (TESEP) workshop, an Australian Catholic University Pre-service Teacher visit, U3A Group from Sydney University (environmental applications of GIS) and The Science Experience (ACT)—Year 9/10 special activities visit as well as hosting several international visitors.

Feedback to date has been extremely positive and often teachers comment that they had not been to Geoscience Australia before but will certainly ensure that the Centre is included on their itinerary for future visits. The Centre is continually looking for new ways to present programs and recently acquired a SMART Board which will allow the use of new technologies and greater interaction during school visits.

The Education Centre also hosted its first Geoscience Australia Graduate Program participant in 2011. Tegan Kelly spent four weeks assisting the Education Centre with school visits and creating a new booklet that highlights the significant rock and fossil specimens around the Geological Timewalk in the grounds of Geoscience Australia.

Classroom Resources

This year the Program commenced the review and updating of the series of Teacher Education Resource Booklets. These booklets are a valuable teaching resource and will be aligned to suit the new national science curriculum and the draft geography curriculum. Current topics include Tsunami, Earthquakes, Volcanoes, Landslides and the Australian Coast. All of these booklets will soon be freely available to download from the Education website.

Future directions

There is wide recognition of the need to develop a culture where the sciences are recognised as relevant to everyday life. Consequently, governments, business, academia and public institutions need to work together with science organisations and agencies to provide a coherent approach to communicating science and its benefits.

Geoscience Australia is contributing to Australian Government initiatives, such as Inspiring Australia, and closely working with other science organisations, such as Questacon and CSIRO Discovery. Geoscience Australia is working to ensure that its education programs and resources reach the widest possible audience.

For more information

email ausgeomail@ga.gov.au



NAPE Expo 2012	22 to 24 February 2012
American Association of Professional Landmen GBR Convention Center, Houston, Texas, USA Contact: NAPE, 4100 Fossil Creek Boulevard, Fort Worth, Texas 76137 USA	p +1 817 306 7171 f +1 817 847 7703 e info@napeexpo.com www.napeexpo.com
22nd International Geophysical Conference and Exhibition	26 to 29 February 2012
Australian Society of Exploration Geophysicists Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Brisbane, Queensland Contact: arinex Pty Limited, Level 5, 79 Adelaide Street Brisbane, QLD 4000	p +61 7 3226 2800 f +61 2 9267 5443 e asege2012@arinex.com.au www.asege2012.com.au/
PDAC 2012 International Convention, Trade Show and Investors Exchange	4 to 7 March 2012
Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, Canada Contact: PDAC, 135 King Street East, Toronto, Ontario M5C 1G6	p +1 416 362 1969 f +1 416 362 0101 e info@pdac.ca www.pdac.ca/
Tasman Frontier Petroleum Industry Workshop and Data Release	8 and 9 March 2012
Geoscience Australia, GNS Science (New Zealand) and Geological Survey of New Caledonia Geoscience Australia, Canberra, ACT Contact: Riko Hashimoto, Geoscience Australia, GPO Box 378, Canberra ACT 2601	p +61 2 6249 9141 e riko.hashimoto@ga.gov.au www.ga.gov.au/energy/projects/eastern-frontiers.html
AGES—Annual Geoscience Exploration Seminar	26 to 28 March 2012
Northern Territory Geological Survey Alice Springs Convention Centre Contact: Northern Territory Geological Survey, GPO Box 3000, Darwin NT 0800	p +61 8 8999 5313 f +61 8 8999 6824 e ages@nt.gov.au www.nt.gov.au/d/Minerals_Energy/Geoscience/
Disaster and Emergency Management Conference	16 to 18 April 2012
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Brisbane, Queensland Contact: Tracey Toovey, Association Secretariat, Australian & New Zealand Disaster and Emergency Management Conference	p +61 7 5502 2068 e conference@anzdmc.com.au www.anzdmc.com.au http://bit.ly/oExEnZ

For more information on Geoscience Australia's involvement in the above events email: ausgeomail@ga.gov.au

