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Combating oil and resources crisis key issue at Earth Sciences mega-conference

At a time of critical worldwide shortages of oil and resources – and soaring demand from China and India – a major international conference in Perth next month will bring together experts from across the globe to consider more cost-effective, time-efficient and environmentally-friendly ways of finding and extracting urgently needed new discoveries of these commodities.

The 2008 Australian Earth Sciences Convention will be held in Perth from 20 to 24 July 2008. Hosted by the Australian Institute of Geoscientists and the Geological Society of Australia, it is expected to attract over 1000 delegates and will feature more than 135 Australian and international presenters, 450 papers and a wide-ranging program of workshops and field trips.

“With a major focus on mineral and energy exploration, new technologies and potential discoveries in Western Australia, Australia and internationally, this major conference on the international geosciences calendar is being hailed as a must-attend event for mining and energy sector geologists, explorers, executives and investors” said Dr Jon Hronsky, the Convention’s Program Director and Director of the consulting group Western Mining Services.

“The critical role of geoscience in meeting growing demand for energy and resources has never been more important, as the world grapples with rapidly dwindling oil supplies, rising fuel prices, threats to energy security, environmental concerns, the global resources shortage, and the massive resources boom created by the growing economies of China and India.

“The unique thing about this conference is that it brings the commercial and geoscientific arms of the energy and resources sector under one roof. Many of the Convention’s presenters will consider cutting-edge geoscientific research and exploration technology firmly within the context of what it means for commercially *and* environmentally successful exploration and development outcomes—which is exactly what Australia and the world urgently needs in meeting growing demand for energy and resources.

“Importantly, this year’s conference will look at the big policy issues impacting on the energy and resources sector, including Australia’s future energy mix, global warming and climate change, clean coal technology, carbon sequestration, geothermal energy, and uranium production in a global context.”

Effectively several major conferences wrapped into one, the Australian Earth Sciences Convention boasts five streams: *Resources – foundation for our future*, *Geoscience in the service of society*, *The evolution of life and the Solar System*, *Earth’s environments – past, present and future*, and *The dynamic Earth – from crust to core*.

The resources stream will cover a huge range of mining and energy-related topics including:

- cutting-edge exploration technologies
- new discoveries and prospects, including the raft of new minerals and hydrocarbon exploration opportunities in WA, Australia, New Zealand, PNG and other countries
- the psychology of decision-making in mineral exploration as a key to improving return on investment
- Australian junior exploration floats and their implications for IPOs
- initiatives to attract exploration investment

- greenfields prospectivity analysis
- being smarter with data
- long-term mineral exploration and development planning as a key to reducing risk
- mineral exploration's new frontier – the ocean floor
- developments in resource imaging
- the reinterpretation of old mining camps leading to surprising new discoveries
- mining company exploration strategies
- pre-competitive geoscience by government agencies
- CSIRO's multi-million dollar Minerals Down Under research flagship, which aims to assist the Australian minerals industry to realise up to \$1 trillion worth of new resources through cutting-edge research in exploration, mining and processing
- Geoscience Australia's energy security programs which aim to encourage and support exploration for hydrocarbons and other energy resources onshore and offshore Australia, including through the provision of reliable geoscientific data and scientifically-based assessments

Just some of the many resource sector speakers at the Convention will include:

- Chief Geologist of Fortescue Metals, Stewart Robinson, who will speak about creating shareholder value from exploration, at a time when Fortescue's share price has been soaring with its first shipload of iron ore recently setting sail for China
- Managing Director of Integra Mining, Chris Cairns, who will speak on that company's exploration strategy and gold discoveries
- representatives from major resource companies including Rio Tinto, BHP Billiton, ConocoPhillips and Anglo

With the Convention being held in Perth, multiple papers will focus on mineral and energy exploration, new technologies and potential discoveries in Western Australia itself. Just some of the WA-specific topics being covered at the Convention include:

- WA's pre-competitive geoscience program – underpinning exploration
- evaluating the geology and petroleum prospectivity of frontier exploration areas within the offshore North Perth Basin
- the Flying Fox Nickel Deposit, Forrestania Greenstone Belt, WA
- the Canning Basin's oil and gas potential
- the Tropicana Deposit: a new gold province in WA
- using numerical modelling to target undiscovered gold in a brownfields environment (an example from Tarmoola in WA)

Just some of the hundreds of topics to be featured in the Convention's wide-ranging program include asteroid impacts, 3.5 billion year old fossils and what they can tell us about Earth's evolution, Australian infrastructure assets most likely to be affected by tsunamis (and what is being done to mitigate this risk), groundwater exploration in Australia, groundwater contamination in the Himalayas and the United States, food traceability, salinity, geo-tourism, the formation of Earth and the Solar System, NASA's latest missions to Mars, mass extinctions, marine eco-systems, and even the geochemistry of termite mounds!

Further information:

Visit www.iceaustralia.com/aesc2008 to see the full Convention program and the individual programs for each of the Convention's five streams. A brief overview of the program can be found in the Media section of the website.

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