

MEDIA RELEASE

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Rock stars head for Brisbane

Popular *BBC* presenter Iain Stewart and former Shell Chairman Lord Ron Oxburgh will be among the “rock stars” headlining at the 34th International Geological Congress (IGC) in Brisbane from 5 to 10 August this year.

Hosted by the Australian Geoscience Council, the 34th IGC will see the world’s leading geoscientists discuss societal and industry issues including climate change, geohazards, human health, mineral supplies and the future energy mix.

The 34th IGC President, Dr Neil Williams, said the IGC Organisation Committee was delighted to welcome geosciences’ biggest names to speak at this year’s event.

“We have received extremely positive feedback from the geoscience community about the calibre of this year’s presenters,” Dr Williams said.

Professor Iain Stewart, who presents *BBC*’s ‘How the Earth Made Us’ series and is a chair in Geoscience Communication at Plymouth University in the UK, will discuss society learning to live with geological hazards, such as earthquakes and floods.

Renowned geologist and geophysicist, Lord Ron Oxburgh, will discuss the future of energy in a carbon-constrained world at the IGC.

As President of the Carbon Capture and Storage Association, Lord Oxburgh is recognised for his work as a public advocate for the need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and develop alternative energy sources.

Lord Oxburgh is former Chief Scientific Adviser to the UK’s Ministry of Defence and a former head of the Department of Earth Sciences at Cambridge University. He also served as Chairman of Shell Transport and Trading Company until its merger with Royal Dutch Petroleum in 2005.

“As a thought leader in both the academic and business worlds, Lord Oxburgh will give a thought provoking presentation about the need to develop alternative energy sources, drawing upon his experience as Chairman of global oil giant Shell from 2004 to 2005,” Dr Williams said.

“Iain Stewart’s participation in the event has also generated a huge amount of interest, given his experience as a television presenter. Delegates are eager to learn more about his encounters with earthquakes, volcanos, avalanches and other geohazards and the way they impact society.

“The program will fuel discussion around some of the most important issues facing our society.

“We will put a spotlight on the role of geology in a range of issues and industries – the future of mining and energy, town planning in proximity to natural hazards, climate change and the digital revolution.

“Geoscientists have differing opinions on issues and it will be fascinating to see these viewpoints come together in each interactive session.

“The sessions will be entertaining, controversial and in some instances hotly debated – ultimately, they are about learning and expanding our horizons.

Dr Williams said another highlight of the program would be China’s Minister of Land and Resources, Mr Xu Shaoshi, joining the debate at the first Plenary Session of the IGC to present China’s perspective on future resource demand.

“The first session, **Resourcing Tomorrow**, will be an informative discussion about the future of mineral resources and the sustainability of our society,” he said.

“China has a huge demand for resources, so we are all looking forward to hearing Minister Xu Shaoshi provide insight into the issues this presents from a government perspective.

“It will be interesting to see the implications this session has for the mining and resources industries.”

The Plenary Program reflects the overall theme of the Congress, ***Unearthing our Past and Future – Resourcing Tomorrow***, which recognises the crucial contributions of the geosciences in meeting societal needs and sustaining planet Earth.

Plenary Program topics include:

- ***Resourcing tomorrow: Meeting the needs of a growing population***, featuring Minister Xu Shaoshi, Marcio Luis Silva Godoy and Steve Gorelick
- ***Energy in a carbon-constrained world***, featuring Lord Ron Oxburgh, Scott Tinker and Sally Benson
- ***The Earth and man: Living with a restless Earth***, featuring Iain Stewart and Renato Solidum
- ***What does the geological record tell us about the Earth’s past climates in relation to projected climate change?*** Featuring Tim Naish and Will Steffen
- ***Digital Earth: The information explosion***, featuring Thomas Cudahy, Kristine Asch and Ken Gledhill.

The IGC will feature presentations by 3,232 speakers, including 13 Plenary speakers, making it the largest scientific congress ever staged in Queensland.

The IGC was first held in 1878, and is the oldest and most prestigious gathering of geoscientists from industry, governments, academia, research organisations and professional societies globally.

The scientific sponsor of the IGC is the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), the largest and most active non-governmental scientific organisations in the world.

For more information about the IGC visit www.34igc.org.

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