



May 2011

President's Report

The past year has been an extremely hectic, but very successful, one for our Institute.

In addition to the normal day-to-day operational activities of running the AIG and responding to queries and crises as they arise, we have also put significant effort into tasks that have a strategic focus.

We are a rapidly growing professional organisation with a manifestly diversifying geoscience membership base in an increasingly synergistic world where distance is becoming less relevant and technology increasingly important to how we work and live.

Our current strong growth rate attests to our success as a professional Institute (in fact, in percentage terms we are one of the fastest growing professional organisations in Australia); and my belief is that the fundamental basis for our success is our relevance to our members.

I'm a pragmatist. I'm also an unashamed meritocrat. I believe our Institute will continue to flourish only as long as it deserves the support of its members, as long as it continues to remain relevant to them; and history is littered with organisations that have fallen by the way-side because they have become stuck in a paradigm as the world has changed around them.

Our biggest challenge is therefore to continue to remain relevant to our members, and I believe as a Council looking to the future we need to focus on two things:

- 1) Continuing to improve and expand upon the services we currently provide which help our members to directly – in a hands-on, real-world, practical sense – undertake their day-to-day professional activities and
- 2) Watching the future (social, political, economic and technological changes and trends), filtering the noise to identify the one or two key issues that have the potential to impact most on our members' professional activities and preparing plans to manage these issues before they eventuate; and of course feeding the outcomes of this process back into point 1) above.

Within the above context we have focussed many of our activities this past year on embedding a vision and strategic framework that will carry us to 2020. For example:

- We re-vamped our website, not only to give it a more modern look but also to increase its functionality in preparation for it becoming the primary means of communicating with and providing core services to our members.
- We continued to be active in representing the interests of our members to government, but as part of this core function, and in preparation for a more proactive role, also strengthened our external relations strategy to establish

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more proactive and formalised public reporting, media releases and radio interviews.

Some of the areas in which we made representations to government on your behalf included:

- Reciprocal recognition for Australian geoscientists working in Canada
- The resource exploration rebate
- Exploration of market failure in the mineral sector
- The benefits of Flow Through Shares
- The Minerals Resources Rent Tax

I should add that preparing these submissions took a significant effort and it was pleasing to see that many non-Councillors were willing to contribute. In this respect I would particularly like to thank Jon Hronsky and Richard Schodde, without whose efforts and impetus many of our submissions would have been less well developed than they were.

- We recommitted to our geoscience surveys, which not only provide valuable information on employment and benchmark salary trends to members but also the hard data we use to identify the key issues of our members and to back up our position statements to government.
- We engaged Penny Buchan on a part time basis through our Secretariat in Perth to assist with the management of AIG business, but importantly Penny's role will also include monitoring industry trends, networking with industry groups, identifying up-coming issues and helping us develop submissions and prepare Institute platforms on specific professional issues.
- We strengthened our commitment to geoscience education, by:
 - Providing continued professional development opportunities for members in the form of conferences, seminars and short courses, including increased use of digital media via our website
 - Expanding our sponsorship of TESEP, a project that promotes the development of curriculum materials and teaching resources and provides in-service training for high school geoscience teachers
 - Expanding our Bursary Program, which this year awarded a record \$27,000 to 18 successful applicants, coincidentally including our 100th bursary.

Our Bursary Program is an investment in the future and its success depends largely on generous donations by individuals and private and public organisations. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Bursary Sponsors, Independence Group NL, Cryptodome Pty Ltd, Digirock Pty Ltd, Gnostic Exploration Services Pty Ltd, Geoconferences (WA) Inc, Sydney Mineral Exploration Discussion Group (SMEDG), Kagara Limited, Office of Mineral and Energy PIRSA, Symposium, Terra Search Pty Ltd, The Macquarie Arc Conference and AIG State Branches, for their ongoing commitment to young geoscientists and thereby to the future of the geoscience industry.

- We continued to strengthen our relationships with kindred associations, in particular the GSA and AusIMM, but also more recently the International Association of Hydrogeologists, and have continued to look for opportunities

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to undertake joint activities and provide combined representations on matters that collectively affect our members.

- And we modernised a number of functional aspects that have long term implications for our operations, namely:
 - Consolidating our financial management into a centralised accounting framework with credit card facilities and sub-reporting capabilities for Branches, and also rationalising our banking and investment arrangements
 - Trialling and later adopting BaseCamp, a web-based project management and collaboration tool, as our primary mechanism for the storage, management and distribution of AIG related matters to Councillors.

In conclusion, 2010/2011 has been an eventful and successful year for the AIG. We have a clearly articulated vision and all the capabilities we need to implement our strategies. Taking forward the attributes that have made us successful in the past and embracing new challenges and opportunities will ensure that we fulfil our responsibilities to our members and the broader geosciences community.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all Councillors for their individual and collective contributions, which have culminated in a successful year. My special thanks go to Greg Corbett who is retiring from Council this year after a solid commitment over the past 19 years and which included stints as President and Chairman of the Ethics Committee. Greg's contributions have been outstanding and his experience will be missed.

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