

2015/2016 Annual Report of the Geotourism Standing Committee of the Geological Society of Australia (GSA)

THE GEOTOURISM STANDING COMMITTEE

- * Chair - Angus M Robinson, Managing Partner, Leisure Solutions®, Sydney
- * Tom Bateman, linkage with the AIG, Perth
- * Michael Comfort, Section Leader, Geoconservation Section, Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Hobart (resigned 3rd March 2016)
- * Bob Conroy, Administrator, Jenolan Caves Trust, Sydney
- * Professor Ross Dowling OAM, Foundation Professor of Tourism and Associate Head, School of Business, Edith Cowan University, Perth
- * Vicki Pow, Canberra (resigned 10th August, 2015)
- * Associate Professor E B Joyce, Earth Sciences School, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne
- * Bruce Leaver, Chairman, Sapphire Coast Tourism, Cobargo, NSW
- * Ian D Lewis, Director, Kanawinka Geopark, Adelaide
- * Professor Suzanne Miller, Director and CEO, Queensland Museum, Brisbane
- * Young Ng, Founder and Chair of the Hong Kong Association for Geoconservation, Sydney
- * David Robson, Associate, Leisure Solutions®, Sydney
- * Geoffrey Sharrock (linkage with The AusIMM), Newcastle
- * David Tucker, Principal, Western River Pty Ltd, Perth
- * Neil Williams, University of Wollongong, Canberra (resigned 14th January, 2016)

Correspondents:

- * Veronica Blazely, Director, Natural Heritage Section, Department Environment, Canberra
- * Patrick McKeever, Chief of the Earth Science Section, UNESCO

The Standing Committee met on four occasions during the year with working groups being established in the areas of

- policy and advocacy
- communication and education
- symposia and seminars, geoheritage
- karst areas, geoparks and geotrails
- national landscapes

SUBMISSION TO THE CHIEF GOVERNMENT GEOLOGISTS COMMITTEE

On 12th January 2016, the GSA President, Dr Graham Carr has made a submission to the Chief Government Geologists Committee, prepared by the Geotourism Standing Committee, and which is intended to inform the Chief Government Geologists Committee of recent geotourism developments in Australia and the potential of the geotourism industry offers for employing geoscientists and becoming an important customer for the goods and services of geological surveys of Australia and their equivalents.

This submission (in full) http://www.leisuresolutions.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Geotourism_Chief-Govt-Geologists_briefing_4-January2016.pdf addressed the following matters which are summarised below.

Geotrails

Recently, it has been realised that a geotrail can deliver geotourism experiences through a journey linked by an area's geology and landscape 'as the basis for providing visitor engagement, learning and enjoyment'.

Geotrails do offer the advantages of

- relating directly to the tourism experience of a journey linking destinations;
- having universal appeal, and do not compete with or impact on land management/access issues; and
- are relatively easy to establish and represent a very cost effective means of enhancing regional development.
- should be constructed around routes currently used by tourists i.e. geotrails should form logical journeys linking accommodation destinations;
- should meld the geological heritage features of a region with a cohesive story; and
- should incorporate and package in the biodiversity and cultural components (including mining heritage) of the region through which the geotrail traverses.

By way of example, through the auspices of the Geotourism Standing Committee, the GSA has recently made a submission dated 25th September 2015 in respect of an EOI for tourism services Uluru and Kata Tjuta National Park within the Red Centre National Landscape. The GSA believes there is a significant opportunity for regional tourism in the earth history story, not only relating to Uluru and Kata Tjuta but using the park as a base for exploring the geoheritage of the greater region. For example, the existing Red Centre Way (embracing the Mereenie Loop) represents an excellent example of a geotrail which can achieve this objective, as well as linking the Region to the various cultural and environmental interpretative facilities located in Alice Springs.

<http://www.slideshare.net/leisuresolutions/global-eco2015-geotourismangusmrobinson>

Western Australia's Mid West Development Commission (MWDC) has recently contacted both the GSA Geotourism Standing Committee and the Geotourism Forum of Ecotourism Australia Ltd, for advice relating to a project which seeks to establish WA's first major geotourism development to be built on a geotrail model, focused on the Murchison sub-region of WA. The MWDC believes that the ancient Murchison geology provides the ideal

platform for unique, nature based tourism experiences of global significance, particularly to the 'experience seeker / dedicated discoverer' market. The Mid West Tourism Development Strategy (2014) concluded that the region's iconic nature based tourist attractions were not developed to their potential and that its visitor appeal was not fully realised. The Strategy identified geotourism in the Murchison sub region as a potential 'game changing' tourism initiative, with capacity to help the region realise its potential as a major tourism destination in its own right.

In Victoria, the Kanawinka 'Geopark' covering the volcanic and karst region of western Victoria and south-east South Australia has now been marketed as a geotrail. Recently, two local government authorities (Mount Gambier and Southern Grampians) agreed to provide limited logistic support for a continuing geotrail arrangement and with added support of local community groups, still retaining the name 'Kanawinka Geopark'.

Geoparks

Geotourism attractions are now being developed around the world primarily as a sustainable development tool for the development of local and regional communities. A major vehicle for such development is through the concept of 'geoparks'. A geopark is a unified area with geological heritage of international significance and where that heritage is being used to promote the sustainable development of the local communities who live there).

Geoparks can choose to evolve through a series of levels from 'aspiring', 'national', 'regional' (e.g. European or Asia-Pacific Regions) to 'global'. There are now hundreds of geoparks around the world. Support to individual geoparks is offered through the Global Geoparks Network Bureau which is currently representing 120 members from 33 countries. The original target of the Global Geoparks Network is establishing 500 geoparks around the world. The number is growing at a rate of about 10 new global geoparks per year

A decision to establish global geoparks as UNESCO sites was taken by Member States at the 38th UNESCO's General Conference, the governing body of the organisation, which met in Paris from 3-18 November 2015. This new branding formalises a relationship with Geoparks first established in 2001. Global Geoparks have become an increasingly important tool for UNESCO to engage Member States and their communities in the Earth Sciences and geological heritage. During the UNESCO's General Conference, Member States also decided to endorse the statutes of a new international programme: the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP). This allows the organisation to more closely reflect the societal challenges of Earth Science today and provides an international status to a former network of sites of geological significance.

In China, there are three levels of geoparks: provincial, national and global geoparks, as well as mining parks. They are all managed by local county or municipal governments under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Land and Resources. Currently, there are over 320 provincial geoparks in China, among which 200 have already gained national status. With 33

of these global geoparks (including Hong Kong Geopark) having acquired global status, China manages by far the largest number of global geoparks in the world.

One option for geopark development in Australia involves the establishment, at the behest of state and territory governments, of geoparks over lands (e.g. national parks) which are already protected whilst automatically removing any land alienation (perceived or otherwise) concerns about geoparks, it provides a mechanism for national parks to acquire enhanced branding attributes.

In NSW, one particular outcome arising from the Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia (SEGRA) 2015 Geotourism Workshop held in October, is interest expressed by senior officers of the Orana Regional Development Authority (RDA) and the NSW Department of Industry - Industry Policy, Economics & Regional Development, whereby a specific project proposal for the development of a geopark over an area embraced by the Warrumbungles National Park is now being mooted. It is proposed that this project would also have support from the local government authority and the Australian National University with its interest in the redevelopment of the Sidings Springs Observatory, and could well be eligible for applying for a major funding grant from an available State Government regional development funding scheme. It is conceivable that the Western Research Institute Ltd in Bathurst may also have a role to play in this regard in scoping out the economic benefits of this proposal.

In North Queensland, the Shire of Etheridge has advised that it wants to explore a case for a major geotourism initiative, a process which will involve close consultation with the Queensland State Government and other stakeholders in the tourism and mining areas. It is understood that this concept has support within higher echelons of the new State Government.

UPDATE: The Chief Executive of the Etheridge Shire Council has subsequently advised that he has gained the support of Savannah Way Ltd for the establishment of a geotrail that starts in Cairns and travels across Northern Australia along the Savannah Way to Broome in Western Australia.

In addition Etheridge Shire Council has signalled its desire for Etheridge Shire to be established as a geopark and to establish local geotrains within the Geopark. He has also advised that each Local Government area along the proposed Savannah Way GeoTrail establish local geotrains, and that a working group of Savannah Way member organisations (chaired by the Chairman of the GSA Geotourism Standing Committee) be established under the auspices of Savannah Way Ltd to work through the geotrail/ geopark recognition process on the basis that each Local Government area be responsible for covering their own costs associated with the establishment of the geopark/trail. It is understood that the Queensland Tourism Minister, the Hon Kate Jones MP, has expressed strong support for this initiative.

Australia's National Landscape Programme

In Australia a somewhat equivalent land use to geoparks is the Australian National Landscape (ANL) Programme. This government initiative has been led until recently by a partnership of Parks Australia and Tourism Australia, but embracing strong local development of strategies and activities. The programme represents a national long term strategic approach to tourism and conservation which aims to highlight the value of our remarkable natural and cultural environments as tourism assets, improving the quality of visitor experiences in those regions, and in turn, increasing support for their conservation. There are now 16 designated National Landscapes in Australia. With its integrative focus on landscapes as a whole, the development of geotourism within each landscape aligns with the core focus and sustainable development of each landscape region.

Designated Australian National Landscapes are similar to geoparks in that they

- have very similar goals relating to local development, education and experiential tourism (i.e. 'geotourism'); and
- share the concept of delineating boundaries defined by visitor experiences and are not based on any existing land management boundaries.

However, designated national landscapes do not focus on fostering geoconservation, but have a broader 'natural heritage' remit. Moreover, the potential exists for individual National Landscapes to seek geopark branding should there be a view that the global branding would enhance the geoscience attractiveness of these areas for international visitors and/or enhance regional development opportunities for state/territory governments.

Conclusions

Geotourism offers another benefit by raising public interest in geoscience, particularly as a means of encouraging young people to see that a career path based on a geoscience qualification can open up a wider range of future employment opportunities. Based on the anecdotal observations of travellers enjoying a quality geotourism experience 'in the field', it is now being recognised that the educative (and 'excitement') value greatly augments the more traditional experiences such as offered by special exhibitions and by natural history museums.

The concept of geotrails has been promoted this year through two major geotourism workshops which formed part of the SEGRA 2015 and Global Eco 2015 conferences.

Recommendations

The Chief Government Geologists Committee (CGGC) acknowledges the importance and differences inherent in geotrails, geoparks and Australia's National Landscape Programme in the delivery of geotourism initiatives.

In the near future, the GSA Geotourism Standing Committee has identified that in some jurisdictions, there may be a move to gazette existing protected areas e.g. national parks,

world heritage areas and the like as geoparks following a process of wide consultation with community groups, NGOs and government agencies. It is therefore recommended that the CGGC endorses in principal the relevance of geotrails and geoparks as key delivery mechanisms of geotourism in circumstances where they are deemed by Australian governments to be appropriate and necessary to support government development imperatives.

Subsequently Dr Bill Shaw, President of the Australian Geoscience Council (AGC), advised constituent members that “the AGC is pleased to offer our congratulations and further support for this excellent initiative. We consider it will be worthwhile also supporting and publicising this through the media outlets of our various Member organisations as much as possible.” With the support of Standing Committee members (and AGC Past President) Dr Neil Williams, Dr Shaw has also confirmed the awarding of a financial grant from the AGC to the Standing Committee to assist it in facilitating geotourism development.

It is understood that the Chief Government Geologists Committee will be formally considering this submission at its annual meeting in May.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE GEOTOURISM STANDING COMMITTEE DURING 2015/2016

1. Further Engagement with the Australian National Landscapes Programme and Chinese UNESCO Global Geoparks

National Landscapes

Engagement with the Australian National Landscape Programme has continued.

Subsequently, as part of the ‘Seeing the Results’ phase of the Programme, Parks Australia (and Tourism Australia) have stepped back from a central coordination role, and instead have offered limited funding to the peak industry association, Ecotourism Australia Ltd (EA) to enable it to administer the programme and co-ordinate the development of a transition plan for the programme to become financially sustainable. However, it is now understood that the Programme will be formally discontinued after 30th June this year.

Nevertheless, in September 2015, both the Red Centre and the Blue Mountains/Jenolan Caves National Landscapes featured as the selected tour destinations for delegates attending the international convention of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) in Melbourne. These tours were co-led by the Geotourism Standing Committee Chair, and in the Red Centre with GSA Governing Councillor Christine Edgoose, and in the Blue Mountains, Dr Ian Percival, Chair of the GSA NSW Division Geoheritage Sub Committee. The petroleum geologists visiting the Red Centre were able to inspect the source and reservoir rocks of the Mereenie Sandstone of the Amadeus Basin, and those visiting the Blue Mountains, to see some heritage sites associated with Australia’s early oil shale and coal mining industry.

The tour to Jenolan Caves included a distinguished dinner address by the compelling and charismatic David Hay, recently the cultural initiatives officer and tour guide at Jenolan. In his

address, David brought to life the visit of Charles Darwin to the Blue Mountains in 1836, citing Darwin's observations about the geological history of the Blue Mountains and the role of the platypus in forming evolutionary theory, noting that platypus can be sighted in the Blue Lake at Jenolan Caves. David's fascinating address, which was inspired by a GSA Earth Sciences History Group cohort (comprising Dr David Branagan, Dr Ian Percival, Dr John Pickett and Angus M Robinson) can be viewed at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/outgu8w>

The Geotourism Standing Committee Chair and Christine Edgoose have subsequently collaborated to write a geotourism feature on the 'Big Red Centre' national landscape which will be published in the March issue of the *GEOExPro* magazine for petroleum geologists around the world. The Editor of this publication has agreed to publish a follow-up article on a West Australian national landscape in 2017.

Other Standing Committee members are directly involved in the former Australian National Landscapes Program. Professor Ross Dowling is the Chair of the Steering Committee for the *Great South West Edge* National Landscape in WA (in which the 2016 SEGRA conference will be held later in the year), and Bruce Leaver plays a key role in the tourism management of *Australia's Coastal Wilderness* Landscape in NSW/Victoria. In addition, Committee members A/Professor Bernie Joyce and Ian Lewis are working with a Melbourne-based recent geoscience graduate to develop a GeoTreat supported 'geotrail' overview of the Great Ocean Road National Landscape. The support of the Adelaide Branch of The AusIMM has been sought in seeking geological input for a proposed GeoTreat coverage of the Kangaroo Island National Landscape.

The Geotourism Standing Committee Chair has been active in identifying Australian Government (small and major grant respectively) funding opportunities for national landscape directed projects particularly, through the auspices of the 'Inspiring Australia' programme of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science and the 'Stronger Regions' programme of the Department of Regional Development and Infrastructure.

Collaboration with the Geological Society of China

With assistance of Dr Young Ng, the Geotourism Standing Committee has continued to facilitate preliminary overtures from interested Global Geopark managers in China aimed at developing bi-lateral collaboration arrangements between China and Australia's National Landscapes regions.

During the year, efforts have been directed at identifying a suitable geoscience-focused professional grouping in China i.e. The Geological Society of China (GSC) which could be encouraged to develop a broader co-operation arrangement with the Geotourism Standing Committee of the GSA on the basis that such an agreement might well be endorsed by the respective national governments.

A Memorandum of Co-operation between the two societies has now been agreed to, and scheduled to be executed at the AESC 2016 with the following representatives of the GSC,

* Professor Chen Anze (Delegation Leader)

Research Fellow, Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences

Founder, Institute of Tourism Earthsciences and Geoparks, Geological Society of China

* Professor Wang Xiaolie
Director, General, Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences
Vice President, China Geological Survey

* Professor Wu Zhenhan
Vice President, Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences

* Professor Xu Tao
Director, Institute of Tourism Earthscience
China University of Geosciences

It is proposed that any co-operation agreement could embrace areas of activity which could include

- growing and enhancing the level of best practice nature-based tourism in both China and Australia;
- progressing protection, conservation and presentation of natural and mixed protected areas, geoparks (in China and in Australia, where approved by governments), national parks and reserves (in Australia), Australian national landscapes and areas on the World Heritage List (as defined in the World Heritage Convention 1972) areas (both countries);
- exploring opportunities to promote geotourism through mechanisms such as geotrails and national mining parks;
- raising the profile of China and Australia as world-leading nature-based tourism destinations;
- exploring other co-operative projects such as participation in conferences; and
- fostering the development of 'sister park' relationships between China and Australia.

2. Conferences/Symposia

In October, the Geotourism Standing Committee co-hosted a **Geotourism Workshop at the Sustainable Economic Regional Australia (SEGRA 2015) conference in Bathurst**. Significantly, the Mayoral Welcome reception for SEGRA 2015 was held in the Australian Fossil & Mineral Museum, now the home of the internationally renowned Somerville Collection. SEGRA was well attended by representatives of state, regional development and local government, all keen to discuss and identify opportunities to enhance regional development in Australia.

The geotourism workshop focused this year on 'Geotrails – creating new journeys for geotourism', a concept which seeks to develop an extended journey that follows a logical sequence and connects otherwise unrelated towns, districts and attraction through thematic interpretation based upon geological and landscape features. The opening presentation addressed the development of a formative Red Centre Geotrail of which Uluru is now a global iconic attraction. Dan Cove, formerly Operations Manager of Jenolan Caves, and then the Chair of the Geotourism Forum of the workshop co-host (Ecotourism Australia) explained how geotrails can offer genuine potential for both adding new dimensions to a regional visitor experience and as a tool for encouraging extended travel time within a region.

In his presentation, Ian D Lewis, Director of the Kanawinka Geopark/Geotrail, illustrated how the geopark promotes rural tourism and landscape care for the many volcanoes, famous caves and coastline features across the area of Western Victoria and South-Eastern South Australia, encouraging visitors to select from a number of highway trails through the region via accommodation hubs. Ken Moule, Chief Technical Officer of Global GBM, showed how the contribution of technology to the tourism experience, opened the way for a new regional initiative 'around map enabled' mobile apps to economically promote attractions and enhance the visitor experience.

Dr Neil Williams, now a honorary professorial fellow at The University of Wollongong, put the case that the successful development of geotourism across Australia is dependent on quality information on the nation's geology, and how best to bring together geoscience and tourism expertise in support of further geotourism development across regional Australia. The final speaker, Phil Smart, President and Founder, Gondwana Coast Fossil Walk Inc. illustrated how, that in recent years, the geotourism potential of the Ulladulla rock platforms had been developed by his team of volunteers into a successful tourist attraction. Phil also described the extensive work that had been carried out in establishing the Ulladulla Geological Time Walk, which was successively launched in December.

Geotrials were discussed at the **Geotourism Workshop forming part of the Global Eco Conference of Ecotourism Australia** held at Rottnest Island on 19th November, 2015. To supplement various presentations by representatives of the GSA Geotourism Standing Committee (including Professor Ross Dowling), Dr Ivor Roberts and Michael Freeman of the WA Department of Mines and Petroleum, referring specifically to the Rottnest Island geological setting explored links between geotourism and ecotourism, focusing on how geotourism can expand the visitor's experiences in natural areas, allowing for enhanced revisiting through the increased depth of understanding of how the features formed through geological times to arrive at their present forms. Alan Briggs from Murdoch University referred to research being undertaken which considers the process for establishing a community led geopark, initiated by the community, for the community. Albert Teo, Deputy Chair, Asian Ecotourism Network, illustrated how geotourism was being incorporated in strategies plan to take his companies Borneo Eco Tours and Sukau Rainforest Lodge to 'National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World' status.

In a keynote address to the main conference, Dr Young Ng provided information about how geoparks in China have considerably contributed to public interest in geology and have boosted visitation to regional areas of the country. The convening of the Global Eco Geotourism Workshop has resulted in government officials from South Australia, Western Australia and Norfolk Island all expressing interest in reviewing how the application of geotourism can stimulate regional development and tourism visitation. Global Eco 2016 will be held in Hobart in 21-23 November 2016 and is most likely to include another geotourism workshop.

With the assistance of Ian D Lewis, discussions have now been initiated with officials of the South Australian Government with a geotourism roundtable planned to follow AESC 2016, and to involve Professor Patrick McKeever whilst he is present in Australia. Arrangements are also being made with the Australian Department of Environment to hold a further roundtable in Canberra to discuss and agree on administrative procedures to be managed by the Australian Government in the event that

a State or Territory Government seeks the approval of the Australian Government to advance any future UNESCO Global Geopark application.

Under the leadership of A/Professor Bernie Joyce, the Geotourism and Geological Heritage Standing Committees have been collaborating to convene a **two day symposium on geotourism and geoheritage at AESC 2016** in Adelaide.

3. Queensland Division Geotourism Activities

In May this year, the GSA Queensland Division and (supported by the Geotourism Standing Committee represented by Professor Suzanne Miller) launched a new application 'Geotourism Brisbane' which chronicles Brisbane's building stones as part of a self-guided walking tour originally developed for the International Geological Congress in 2012. The tour has recently been extended and built into a mobile app which presents a GPS linked map with hot-links to the history of each building and details of the building stones used along with both recent and historical photographs. The App was configured through the Global GBM Enterprise Mobility suite (with much appreciation to Ken Moule, Chief Technical Officer of Global GBM) from content provided by the GSA and is available for free download from the Google and Apple Stores.

<https://play.google.com/store/search?q=geotourism%20brisbane&c=apps&hl=en>
<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/geotourism-brisbane/id938540304?mt=8>

4. New South Wales Division Geotourism Activities

The interpretation of geotrails can be assisted through the production of hard-copy maps. Following the publication of the first edition of the **Geotourism Map of NSW** produced by Cartoscope Pty Ltd in 2013 with the valued technical input of McElroy Bryan Geological Services (and supported by the GSA), the company has now decided to update the map's information. The first edition of this state map was an outstanding success and very few of the 100,000 printed copies remain. In particular, this double sided A0 size map has proved to be a very popular hand-out state-wide through regional visitor centres, educational institutions, geoscience organisations, and with the wider community.

The second edition will update the localities together with photos and text information. As with the previous map, the described near 100 localities are publically accessible and give overview details of geotourism interest. The new edition will also give more information on the type and amount of minerals from a mining site.

As with the previous edition, the map will be freely available and financial sponsorship for another print run of at least 50,000 copies is currently being sought. As was the case for the first edition, both gold and silver sponsor logos with contact web address, will be listed on the back of the folded A0 map representing an excellent opportunity for promoting sponsors to a very broad, community-based audience. Standing Committee member David Robson is assisting Cartoscope in securing sponsors for this project.

Dave Robson is also facilitating a collaborative venture being directed at Centennial Parklands (and involving the three major botanical gardens in Sydney) with the additional collaboration of the Geological Survey of NSW, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and the Department of

Earth and Planetary Sciences of Macquarie University aimed at developing a **Sydney Basin Geotrail** to be launched for the 2017 Sydney Science Festival.

Standing Committee members Angus M Robinson, Dr Young Ng and Geoffrey Sharrock have submitted a poster presentation at the 6th Annual Mined Land Rehab Conference to be held in Singleton in early April. The Geotourism Standing Committee Chair has also been invited to join an 'expert panel' to lead discussions about the future of the Hunter Valley region. The poster presentation entitled 'Proposed Hunter Valley National Mining Park – A Vision Beyond Mine Site Rehabilitation' proposes the establishment of the largest national mining park in the world be established – a fitting celebration of the significant role that mining has played for Australia's development – first undertaken by Europeans with coal mining in Australia commencing near Nobbys Head in Newcastle in the 1790s.

Created and promoted by the NSW State Government, the authors propose that this iconic 'park' could embrace the region including mining and mining purposes lands from the Port of Newcastle and the Lower Hunter, Cessnock through to the Upper Hunter, and be nurtured within a regional, collaborative, multi-land use strategy which will provide for specified development within rehabilitated mined areas with the following uses:

- native flora and fauna habitat conservation – all connected through existing and proposed corridors;
- 'soft adventure' recreation;
- coal mining heritage sites, geosites and geotrails;
- areas set aside for renewable energy generation (solar arrays, wind farms, biomass production) and embracing light industrial sites for industry services and 'value adding' manufacturing;
- innovative, 'value add' manufacturing; and
- engagement with the six strategic hubs of the Strategic Aboriginal Culture and Enterprise Scheme of the Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation.

As one key outcome, it is proposed that the strategy delivers a geotourism destination of global significance which would incorporate as well the outstanding wine tourism and other natural heritage attributes of the Hunter Valley.

5. Geopark/Geotrail Proposals

As a result of the work of the Geotourism Standing Committee (as reported in the Chief Government Geologists Committee submission), active proposals are now being developed by government agencies in Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales with discussions recently initiated with government officials in South Australia.

6. Publicity and Promotion

Membership of the LinkedIn Discussion group '**Australian Geotourism Development**' now totals 246 members and continues to grow at a rate of some 20% per annum. A repository for the posting of geotourism industry information is now available at

<http://www.leisuresolutions.com.au/index.php/geotourism-industry-groups/>

Regular articles promoting geotourism are now regularly appearing in the publications of the GSA and The AusIMM.

It is also hoped that as a result of recent discussions held with representatives of the West Australia Division late last year in Fremantle, a higher level of focus will be directed at assisting in promoting geotourism development in West Australia – the convening of the SEGRA 2016 event at Albany under the leadership of Professor Ross Dowling does provide an ideal opportunity for Division engagement. Already, David Tucker (assisted by David Robson) has offered support to geologists in Kalgoorlie wishing to enhance the geotourism experience in the WA goldfields.

Angus M Robinson FAusIMM (CP)

Chair, Geotourism Standing Committee

31st March, 2016

Attendance at Standing Committee Meetings:

Member	12th May 2015	11th August 2015	10th November 2015	9th February 2016
Angus M Robinson	X	X	X	X
Tom Bateman	X	X	X	
Michael Comfort	X		X	
Bob Conroy		X		
Ross Dowling		X	X	X
Bernie Joyce	X	X	X	X
Bruce Leaver	X	X		X
Ian D Lewis	X	X	X	X
Suzanne Miller	X	X		X
Young Ng				X
Vicki Pow				
David Robson	X		X	X
Geoffrey Sharrock			X	X
David Tucker	X	X		X
Neil Williams		X	X	
Monica Yeung				X