

Geotourism

Geotourism for geoscientists

The Australian Geoscience Council Convention (AGCC) 2018 in Adelaide delivered several activities to whet the appetite of geoscientist delegates. The pre-conference workshop, co-convened by Ross Dowling OAM and Angus M Robinson, included supporting presentations by SA Geotourism Sub-committee representatives, Ian D Lewis and Patrick James, with additional contributions from Bronwyn Witham and Lauren Swann. Topics discussed included geotrail development, mining heritage, developments in Canada, and the rationale for seeking support to establish a national geotourism strategy. Delegates were also delighted to receive an impromptu presentation from renowned geoscience communicator, Iain Stewart, who was attending AGCC as one of the invited keynote speakers.

On the second day of the conference, GSA President Caroline Tiddy conceived and organised a full-day plenary session that included a series of contributions based on the theme of 'Big Issues and Ideas'. The 'Geoscience education and new modes of communication' segment included a keynote presentation by Ross Dowling on interpreting geology for non-specialists through geotourism.

Geotourism was revisited on the following day through two well-attended sessions, featuring firstly an informative keynote address about the development of geoparks and geotourism based on the experience in Malaysia and the Asia Pacific Region delivered by Ibrahim Komoo, Senior Vice President of the Global Geopark Network and formerly President of the Geological Society of Malaysia. Ron Boyd from Newcastle University also provided an overview of the recently completed Port Macquarie Coastal Geotrail in NSW.

Presentations from Geotourism Standing Committee members included Ross Dowling ('Essential elements of geotourism interpretation'), Alan Briggs ('Findings from a study of Aboriginal cultural association with geosites and geotourism in the Gunduwa Conservation Region of WA'), Ian D Lewis ('Developing geotrails for a large continent'), Ken Moule ('Geotourism and the digital age') and Angus M Robinson ('Opportunities for geotourism development in Australia'). These were supported by Patrick James ('Virtual reality making outback and armchair geotourism real in SA'), Bronwyn Witham ('What do non-geologists think of geotourism'), and Lauren Swann ('Discovering geological stories in every postcode through online, self-guided field trips').

A highlight of the day was the launch by Chris Yeats, Executive Director of the Geological Survey of NSW, of the second edition of the NSW Geotourism Map. The publication of this map by Cartoscope Pty Ltd was made possible by generous major sponsorship from the NRMA, the Australian Geoscience Council, the NSW Government (through the auspices of the Geological Survey), the Australian Institute of Geoscientists, the Sydney Mineral Exploration Discussion Group, and McElroy Bryan and Associates. Other sponsors included the GSA, GSA NSW Division, Leisure Solutions®, National Parks and Wildlife Service of NSW, Carey's Cave, Age of Fishes Museum, and 12 local government organisations. Chris reported that 120 000 copies of the map are being distributed throughout visitor information centres, schools and the NRMA. The long-standing effort of Standing Committee member David Robson in ensuring the success of this project is acknowledged with much appreciation. The additional support of the AGC in distributing copies of the map at AGCC has been most helpful in raising awareness of this initiative among attending geoscientists.

In late September, geoscientists were among a large group of natural heritage specialists who met in Coonababran to attend the 2018 Linnean Society of NSW Natural History Field Symposium, with the theme of 'Volcanoes of northwest New South Wales: exploring relationships among geology, flora, fauna and fire'. This event was splendidly organised by one of the Society's members, Ian Percival, who also serves as a member of the Geotourism Standing Committee as a representative of the Geological Heritage Standing Committee.

One of the speakers at the Symposium, Simone Meakin, Manager, Publications & Outreach of the Geological Survey of NSW, discussed the topic 'Geotales and Geotrails: Collaborative geotourism initiatives and implications for the Warrumbungles Region'. Simone pointed out that the development of the Port Macquarie Coastal Geotrail was inspired by the Linnean Society of NSW Field Symposium on 'Geotourism, Geodiversity and Geoheritage in Australia'. Convened in Port Macquarie in September 2010, the event initially involved geologists of both the Geological Survey of NSW and the GSA.

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ANGUS M ROBINSON

Chair, Geotourism Standing Committee



AGCC Pre-conference Geotourism Workshop delegates. L-R (standing): Angus M Robinson, Tony Cormack, Chris Folkes, Bronwyn Witham, Iain Stewart, Lauren Swann, Pat James, Ralph Bottrill, Ross Dowling. L-R (kneeling): Ian D Lewis, Chris Pavich. Image courtesy Wendy Dowling