



Launch of Australia's National Geotourism Strategy

SYDNEY, 7 April 2021: The President of the Australian Geoscience Council, Professor David Cohen, has announced the release of the Council's National Geotourism Strategy. This will promote and support further development of major geotourism projects in Australia and deliver benefits to regional tourism. Professor Cohen said, "While we have some of the most beautiful cities in the world, there are abundant natural wonders in the geology of our ancient continent that lie just beyond the end of the pavement. Some of these are in existing World Heritage Listed areas and in other GeoRegions." Our tourism sector can provide great access to that geoheritage and extend existing nature-based tourism to provide new options for visitors that draw on our unique geology, landscape, flora and fauna, cultural heritage (including Aboriginal), and mining history.

The Strategy is being guided by a specialist reference group led by former Chair of the Council, Dr Jon Hronsky OAM, who said, "Growth in geotourism offers the potential for employment opportunities in the tourism sector, including expansion of options in regional mining communities". Dr Hronsky also said, "The Council considers geotourism a very effective way of communicating the value of geoscience to the broader Australian community". Improving the profile of the geosciences will help attract more of our top students to become professional geoscientists and support national efforts in protection of the environment, dealing with geological hazards, and discovery of the next generation of metal deposits that will underpin growth in renewable energy and the use of smart materials.

The National Geotourism Strategy has seven strategic goals. These span pathways for identifying and implementing major geotourism projects, to the development of digital platforms to provide information for travellers on geological features in the landscape. The Strategy will link three 'geos' – recognising our **geoheritage** and establishing new **geotrails** that are suitable for various styles of **geotourism**.

Geotourism is booming internationally. "It is imperative that the geoheritage of many of our iconic Australian tourism destinations, particularly in outback regions, is properly translated to new opportunities for domestic and global travellers seeking unique experiences", Professor Cohen said. The Council is committed to seeing the standing of Australian geoscience enhanced by great geotourism offerings – a goal close to the heart of previous Council President, Dr Bill Shaw.

Professor Cohen said that, "The Council believes the Strategy will gain endorsement and support at all levels of government, given the success of such initiatives in other countries" and that "there will be considerable economic, employment and societal benefits, in particular for regional Australia". <https://bit.ly/2PZotcr>

Australian Geoscience Council www.agc.org.au The Australian Geoscience Council Inc (AGC) is the peak Council of professional geoscientists in Australia. It represents nine major Australian geoscientific societies with a combined membership of over 8,000 geoscientists in industry, government, or academia in the fields of geology, geophysics, geochemistry, mineral and energy resources, environmental geoscience, hydrogeology, geomorphology, and geological hazards. **ENDS**

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