



MEDIA RELEASE

‘GEOTOURISM AUSTRALIA’ ESTABLISHED TO IMPLEMENT THE NATIONAL GEOTOURISM STRATEGY

PERTH, 17 APRIL 2024: At its recent 2024 Annual General Meeting, the President of the Australian Geoscience Council (AGC), Dr Sandra Occhipinti announced that the AGC will rebrand the National Geotourism Strategy and the team that supports it as a new AGC entity, Geotourism Australia.

Dr Occhipinti said, ‘three years ago, the AGC launched its National Geotourism Strategy as a unique means of promoting geoscience to the broader Australian community as well as offering significant benefits in regional and rural development’. The AGC is particularly interested in, and supportive of, geotourism opportunities that help provide economic activity for traditional landowners and regional communities alike within identified cultural landscapes.

In Australia, the AGC has embraced the inclusive nature of the geotourism concept and have understood the inter-relationship between natural and cultural heritage. By focusing on the geology and geomorphology (i.e., physical geography) as well as the ecology and cultural history and significance of these geological characteristics, the AGC believes that geotourism adds considerable content value to nature-based tourism inclusive of cultural tourism led by Traditional Owners, thus completing the holistic embrace of ‘A’ (abiotic – climate, sky, landscape, and geology) plus ‘B’ (biotic – flora and fauna) plus ‘C’ (culture) aspects. Based on this proposition, over the past three years, the National Geotourism Strategy has been developed through the dedicated volunteer efforts of over 50 experienced professionals organised into seven working groups, each of which has focused on advancing a key strategic theme.

Dr Jon Hronsky OAM, chair of the Steering Committee that will direct the work of Geotourism Australia, has explained that some of the more significant achievements since the initiation of this strategy include the systematic compilation and documentation of geotrails and geosites, the formal acceptance by government geoscience agencies for the development of GeoRegions including three GeoRegion projects – Ku-ring-gai and Glen Innes Highlands in NSW and Murchison in WA. Dr Hronsky also said that “the development of a prototype Australian Geotourism Discovery Portal, which is intended to be a national-scale, freely available portal into extensive geotourism resources such as geosite and geotrail locations, has proved a significant step forward”.

Dr Hronsky believes “that we are now ready to move beyond strategy development (having largely completed this) and on to our next phase, which is sustainable promotion and development of major geotourism projects.”

Dr Occhipinti reaffirmed that the approved concept is that Geotourism Australia will be an ongoing group under the AGC umbrella, stating that “this is really about providing a positive message to geotourism stakeholders that we are here for the long term.”

Australian Geoscience Council www.agc.org.au The Australian Geoscience Council Inc (AGC) is the peak Council of professional geoscientists in Australia. It represents eight major Australian geoscientific societies with a combined membership of over 8,000 geoscientists.

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