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Access to geoscience information – a survey on GeMPeT

by

Dr Kerry Smith



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Occasional Paper 3	A Directory of geoscience information sources for Western Australia (2 nd edition)	1990	AGIA (WA Branch); Ed. Stephen Lipple
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Access to geoscience information – a survey on GeMPeT

Dr Kerry Smith

ABSTRACT

In 2012, the Western Australian Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP) purchased the GeMPeT Thesaurus database to enable public access to it. At the time of purchase by the DMP the Thesaurus had not been updated for a number of years, and the DMP had no plans to update it. The author, along with professional colleagues from the Australian Geoscience Information Association Inc. (AGIA), wondered about GeMPeT's future and its potential use. Neither the author nor AGIA are responsible for the database, but professional commitment to geoscience information management provided the impetus for a small survey to be undertaken to establish current interest in and use of the Thesaurus. The project was part of a wider enquiry: *Access to Australian geoscientific information – a tragedy of the commons?* (Smith, 2010).

BACKGROUND

The GeMPeT Thesaurus has a noble history and an uncertain future in the context of Australian geoscience information management. As Tellis (2015) reports, GeMPeT began its life some forty years ago, with the establishment of the Australian Mineral Foundation (AMF), the creation of the Australian Earth Sciences Information System (AESIS) and the development of the Australian Thesaurus of Earth Sciences and Related Terms. From its 4th Edition, the Thesaurus was titled the Australian Geoscience, Minerals and Petroleum Thesaurus, and is currently now referred to as the GeMPeT Thesaurus. This change in name was made to indicate better the full scope of the thesaurus vocabulary. Tellis's paper (2015) outlines in some detail the history of the development of the Thesaurus:

- An initial suggestion was made in 1973 at a meeting organised by and held at the AMF that a thesaurus be developed to assist with the organisation and retrieval of geoscience information and in order to provide a controlled vocabulary for indexing purposes;
- The AMF was not proposing an intellectual exercise in providing a classical vocabulary, but rather the compilation of a list of geoscience terms which would reduce the indexing vocabulary to a more manageable list of descriptors when compared to classification schemes such as the Dewey Decimal and the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC), both of which were not amenable to rapid change as new concepts arose;
- To provide some international compatibility with other systems, Tellis (2015) reports that the sources used for the initial listings were taken from the American Geological Institute (AGI) *Glossary of Geology* and the Engineering Joint Council *Thesaurus of Engineering and Scientific Terms*. It was interesting to note that, at the 1986 International Conference on Geoscience Information in Adelaide, the editors of the US based geoscience indexing platform GeoRef made a point to mention that they were surprised to see the degree of commonality in indexing terms used in the Australian geoscience information database AESIS and GeoRef;
- Over two decades and more, the Thesaurus was developed and tested against over 180,000 articles, reports and documents; four editions were published from 1976 - 1996.

In 2001, the ownership and maintenance of the Thesaurus was purchased by a Western Australian research consultancy—Chartered Information Services—who bought the file from the liquidators when the AMF closed its doors. This heralded the change of name to GeMPeT and the Thesaurus was first published

in CDROM form (Edinger & Barker, 1996) and in 2003 was relaunched as a “completely revised thesaurus” (Barker & Edinger, 2009) as “the Geoscience, Minerals and Petroleum Thesaurus (GeMPeT)” (Edinger & Barker, 2003). In 2009 this group offered GeMPeT for sale to AGIA (Barker & Edinger, 2009). AGIA, being a professional body with an interest in geoscience information and not an organisation with premises and staff, realised that it would have difficulty in offering and maintaining the product and in this lead to, in 2012, the offer being finalised when GeMPeT was purchased by the DMP. The Thesaurus is available online on DMP’s website where the following information on GeMPeT is provided:

Geoscience Thesaurus (GeMPeT)

The Geoscience, Minerals and Petroleum Thesaurus (GeMPeT) provides geoscience professionals with a standardized terminology with which to index information assets such as reports, maps, and digital datasets. The need for standardized geoscience taxonomy is more important now than ever as the expansion of online information delivery has highlighted the necessity to use controlled indexing to identify and organize information effectively. GeMPeT is designed to provide geoscience organizations with a ready-made taxonomy for this purpose.

GeMPeT has three types of relationships applied to each term:

- Hierarchical relationships, linking terms to other terms expressing more general broader and more specific (narrower) concepts.
- Associative relationships, which link terms to similar terms (related terms) where the relationship between the terms is non-hierarchical.
- Equivalence relationships, which link ‘non-preferred’ terms to synonyms or quasi-synonyms which act as ‘preferred’ terms. Non-preferred terms are in italics.

GeMPeT does not include geographic, species, product or registered trade names. A selection of mineral names is included; however, the list is in no way exhaustive. Organizations using GeMPeT should include additional names of this type as necessary. The updating of GeMPeT is an ongoing process that requires time and resources. If you would like to submit a term that is not currently included in GeMPeT, please email publications@dmp.wa.gov.au with the term, a brief definition of the term and justification for its inclusion. (Government of Western Australia Department of Mines and Petroleum, 2016)

There is no doubt that the Thesaurus provided much needed cataloguing and indexing assistance to the many Australian geoscience librarians in its earlier days, this author being one such person. The use and dependence on the later product GeMPeT was discussed at a number of AGIA National Committee meetings when AGIA was approached to purchase it. Now that the product is managed by DMP, some staff at this organisation conveyed to AGIA a desire to learn about its acceptance and use. So the need for a preliminary survey on knowledge about the Thesaurus in its current form, and the use of it, was deemed necessary.

THE SURVEY

The survey was pilot-tested amongst members of the AGIA National Committee before being distributed (Appendix 1). It was sent to all known geoscience government agencies in Australia, members of the Government Geoscience Information Committee (GGIC) and Australian university libraries where a geoscience collection could be identified. In early 2014, 38 surveys with a covering letter inviting participation were emailed as shown in Table 1 below. The survey was also emailed to the 42 members of AGIA at that time with only 3 responses received and these have been analysed under the “Company” responses noted in Table 1 as each respondent replied from their employee perspective. The distribution of, and returned responses are shown in Table 1, with a total of 11 responses received:

Table 1. GeMPeT survey distribution and responses

STATE	UNIVERSITY Sent/responded	GEOSCIENCE AGENCY Sent/responded	COMPANY Sent/responded	GGIC Sent/responded	OTHER (CSIRO) Sent/responded
ACT	2/0	3/2	0	1/0	0
NSW	7/2	1/0	0	1/0	0
NT	0	1/1	0	1/0	0
QLD	2/0	1/1	0/1	1/0	0
SA	2/0	1/0	0	1/0	0
TAS	1/0	1/1	0	1/0	0
VIC	2/0	1/0	0	1/0	0
WA	3/0	1/1	0/2	1/0	1/0
TOTAL	19/2	10/6	0/3	8/0	1/0

As can be seen in Appendix 1, the Survey questions included general enquiries into subscriptions to geoscience bibliographic database, as well as more specific questions about GeMPeT itself and its value to the respondent. A brief description of the content of a number of these databases is outlined in Appendix 2.

SURVEY RESULTS

The analysis of the replies is presented below.

Question 1: *Does your information service subscribe to/use any electronic bibliographic databases in the geosciences (e.g. GeoRef, AESIS, GEOBASE, GeoScienceWorld)?* Ten of the 11 respondents replied YES to this Question.

Question 2 further probed the specifics of the geoscience bibliographic databases used and sought respondents to list them. Answers revealed use of several as outlined in Table 2 below which also contains an extra column with a link to the database website, if known, with summary information on these databases outlined in Appendix 2. The first three bibliographic databases listed (GeoRef, GeoscienceWorld and GEOBASE) are well known in the geoscience information sector and are subscription based, as are most of the other databases listed.

Table 2. Geoscience databases used

DATABASES USED	NO OF USERS	DATABASE LINK
GeoRef	6 1 (free content)	http://www.americangeosciences.org/georef/georef-information-services
GeoScienceWorld	5 1 (free content)	http://geoscienceworld.org/
GEOBASE	4	https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/engineering-village/content/geobase
Scopus	1	https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus
OnePetro	1	https://www.onepetro.org/
GeMPeT	1	http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Geoscience-Thesaurus-GeMPet-1564.aspx
PPEDIA	1	
AESIS	2 1(not in use any more)	https://www.informit.org/index-product-details/AESIS
AusGeoRef	3	http://www.ga.gov.au/data-pubs/library/ausgeoref
Petroleum Abstracts	1	https://www.pa.utulsa.edu/
Others – including State geoscience agency databases	1	

Question 3 focused on those respondents (in fact only one) who did not answer Question 2. Question 3a queried the engagement in indexing/cataloguing/metadata creation for geoscience information, to which the response was YES. Question 3b sought information on what thesaurus/index was used for vocabulary control for this indexing work, to which there was no response.

In response to Question 4: *If you have listed the Australian Earth Sciences (AESIS) database (no longer updated though its archive is still accessible through INFORMIT) in your response to Q.2, are you aware that the thesaurus used for this database was the Australian Geoscience Minerals & Petroleum Thesaurus, now GeMPeT?* Five responded YES and none responded NO.

This knowledge of GeMPeT was further examined in Question 5: *If you use the AESIS database, do you find the indexing terms used by GeMPeT useful?* To which 2 responded YES, one of whom stated that AESIS was rarely used by staff at that organization, and the other added that while s/he did not use AESIS, s/he still found GeMPeT useful. Five of the 11 respondents used GeMPeT for indexing purposes in their information work as asked in Question 6 (a), and 4 did not, with one respondent adding that they used to use it. Question 6(b) referred respondents who did not use the GeMPeT Thesaurus to Question 11.

Question 7 then asked those who do use GeMPeT if they find it easy to use, to which 4 replied that it was easy to use and one replied that it was not.

Question 8(a) sought information from those respondents who used GeMPeT, on the features liked best about GeMPeT. The responses provided are verbatim:

- We are still using the last AMF Thesaurus and not the GeMPeT version;
- I use GeMPeT through our catalogue which makes it easy to apply the needed subjects/headings; usually I use the print edition and find the quick referencing at the bottom of each page very helpful; in general I just find it easy to use;

- Well laid out; easy to use; hierarchical and KWIC indexes very useful; good coverage of terms;
- Specific to Geoscience; created in WA; Australia specific; inexpensive; better than nothing for a small special library.

Question 8 (b) sought description of the features of GeMPeT that the respondents found difficult to use and the one respondent who made comment stated:

- Difficulty applying GeMPeT in EDRMS¹ - we only have a small selection of controlled terms from GeMPeT available to use in our bibliographic database (due to global infrastructure restrictions), so we must manually add terms in notes to capture the full breadth of subjects when cataloguing.

Question 9 sought comments on user feedback for the Thesaurus: *In its early history, GeMPeT/the Australian Geoscience Minerals & Petroleum Thesaurus had a facility for users to submit suggestions for the thesaurus and its structure. Do you have any such suggestions to make?* One respondent commented: We did when we used it, and 2 respondents stated NO.

Question 10 sought further suggestions, to which one respondent replied: Some of our industry clients would like to add/change terms used.

For those who answered NO to Questions 1 (subscription to geoscience bibliographic databases) and 6(b) (those who did not use the GeMPeT Thesaurus), Question 11 asked if they were aware of GeMPeT? Four respondents replied YES, and 2 replied NO. For those who answered YES to Question 11, Question 12 asked them to explain why they do not use this Thesaurus. The replies were:

- Geoscience Australia indexes Australian geoscience literature for inclusion in GeoRef (and its Australian subset, AusGeoRef) produced by the American Geosciences Institute. As GeoRef is an international database, the American Geosciences Institute requires all contributors to use the same thesaurus.
- After the demise of the AMF, the Australian Stratigraphic Units Database (ASUD) continued to use the AMF thesaurus in the absence of any other Australian geoscience thesaurus, but when the GeoScience Australia Library began doing indexing for GeoRef, and we were obliged to use their (AGI) thesaurus, it seemed sensible for ASUD to switch to this thesaurus too, in spite of its Americanisms and limitations. At that time I was not aware that the GeMPeT Thesaurus still existed, or was accessible in any way besides the old hardcopy versions.
- We have in early 2014 obtained a commercial agreement to use the Western Australian commons data (WAPIMS)² in the training courses and online help for our commercial software development. We have a need for definitions and thesaurii for use with our global customer base, especially those where English is a secondary language.
- Have had no need as the original thesaurus contains enough terms for our need.

The survey concluded with Question 13: an invitation to all respondents to please add any further comments they would like to make regarding the GeMPeT Thesaurus. The responses were:

- The dilemma with GeMPeT strikes me as not dissimilar to the debate of many years ago regarding use of LCSH³ vs LASH⁴ in Australian libraries. Country-specific

¹ EDRMS – electronic document and records management system

² WAPIMS: WA Petroleum & Geothermal Information Management System <https://wapims.dmp.wa.gov.au/wapims>

³ LCSH – Library of Congress Subject Headings <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects.html>

vocabularies will always be more satisfactory to users within that country, but require significant maintenance to keep up-to-date.

- GeMPeT will continue to have value for a number of purposes, but the Australian geoscience information community need not focus on it exclusively. Many in that community have contributed to the development of international standards and systems such as GeoSciML⁵, and our input could also help to shape other thesauri.
- Like the early GeMPeT, the AGI⁶ welcomes suggestions for new terms, synonyms or relations between terms for inclusion/revision of the GeoRef thesaurus. Geoscience Australia would welcome input from the Australian geoscience community on terms from GeMPeT (or any other source) which they believe would be of value if included in the GeoRef thesaurus.
- At the moment there is uncertainty about how GeMPeT will integrate with various electronic document records management systems (these are often being used in lieu of specialist library management software). As more organisations move to platforms such as SharePoint it would be great if GeMPeT had a plugin which could be imported.
- A facility for submitting suggestions for controlled terms would be good in the future.
- The Australian Stratigraphic Units Database (ASUD) used and contributed to the AMF thesaurus for many years, so our existing keyword pick list is largely based on AMF thesaurus terms (although sadly, it includes uncontrolled terms added by other GA staff too).
- I am delighted to see the GeMPeT Thesaurus available again, through GSWA⁷, and will give serious consideration to going back to using this Australian thesaurus as a reference for adding new terms to GA's⁸ internal bibliographic database GAREFS (used as a part of ASUD), although given the existing use of the AGI thesaurus elsewhere in GA (the library), I may have a fight on my hands, and we may have to go to a default position of using the AGI thesaurus, except where no suitable term is available, in which case we could suggest one from the GeMPeT Thesaurus, both internally and to AGI.
- Although I don't suppose turning a thesaurus into a glossary is an option, I think something that would make it easier to justify maintaining and using GeMPeT, would be to make any Definitions/Scope notes available, as well as just the thesaurus terms. The Thesaurus terms could then be incorporated (with acknowledgement) in various geoscience data sets and database pick lists (e.g. GeoScience Australia has a database of publications by its own staff, currently called GEOCAT, that has an 'invented' keyword list).
- Within the technical writing team at Paradigm, we have a scientific objective to develop a thesaurii as a standard, to provide online help and training manuals with consistent language to our customers regardless of country or which Paradigm product they are using. We expect to promote GeMPeT to the other divisions of Paradigm as it matches the Petroleum and Geothermal Information (WAPIMS) online well repository we use for the training courses for the Geolog product.
 - o <http://www.paradigmgeo.com/>
 - o <http://www.pdgm.com/products/geolog/>
 - o <http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/4187.aspx>

⁴ LASH –List of Australian Subject Headings

⁵ GeoSciML - an XML-based data transfer standard for the exchange of digital geoscientific information

⁶ AGI – American Geosciences Institute

⁷ GSWA - Geological Survey of Western Australia, a component of the DMP

⁸ GA – Geoscience Australia

- A great little thesaurus that covers the majority of terms required in our indexing. It is our primary indexing source and is only supplemented occasionally with LCSH terms and an occasional new heading or see reference we may input locally to account for new terms e.g. Fracking
- I find GeMPeT a very useful indexing tool for geoscience specific literature. It gives an opportunity for in-depth indexing additionally to more general index or subject terms
- Have never honestly taken the time to examine GeMPeT closely and updating the entire collection to reflect any changes in terms used is too costly and time consuming for little or no benefit.
- via email: We still use a copy of the original AMF thesaurus terms in our statutory report lodgement system so that industry can catalogue their reports at lodgement online. We have never updated any of the terms used and have just thrown this in the too hard basket. Some customers have requested additional terms but mostly these people just do not understand the concept of a thesaurus for provision of standard terms.

DISCUSSION

There was not an overwhelming response to the survey and the responses that were received do indicate an interest in GeMPeT even though there are other international database facilities that have come into play since the heady days of the AMF, AESIS and the original Australian Geoscience, Minerals and Petroleum Thesaurus. Nevertheless the question must be asked: what about the interest, or lack of it, in GeMPeT from the non-respondents? The lack of response from university libraries (2 replies to the 19 surveys sent) is particularly disappointing. It should also be noted that while 6 of the 10 government geoscience agencies responded, there was no response from New South Wales, South Australia or Victoria. These last two observations indicate a need for further enquiry into the information service provision of these entities to their geoscience communities and earlier enquiries for another project by the author revealed that there seemed little contact for geoscience information in the Victorian geoscience government agency.

If the AusGeoRef database contains most if not all of the earlier content of the AESIS database, and Geoscience Australia (as the contributors to AusGeoRef) is no longer using the GeMPeT Thesaurus, is the future of the latter worth contemplating? AusGeoRef is driven by the requirements of the parent database GeoRef and the use of the GeoRef thesaurus is required.

But what about other users? Those in-house information providers who need an authoritative thesaurus to cover their indexing and abstracting of material not covered by the services provided by other hosts, including the state and national geoscience agencies. They too could use the GeoRef thesaurus. Additionally there were only 3 responses from what could be considered company environments and the feedback received from other respondents indicates an interest in GeMPeT particularly as it is seen to relate to Australian geoscience.

The responses to Question 8 included the features best liked from GeMPeT.

The mention of the “small special library” reveals a section of users yet to be tested, notwithstanding the 3 (and only 3) responses from AGIA members and listed as “company” because of their work approach to their replies. In the days of the AMF it was certainly a section that relied heavily on the AMF and all of its information services including the thesaurus they developed.

However, as one respondent observed:

- The dilemma with GeMPeT strikes me as not dissimilar to the debate of many years ago regarding use of LCSH vs LASH in Australian libraries. Country-specific

- vocabularies will always be more satisfactory to users within that country, but require significant maintenance to keep up-to-date. And
- GeMPeT will continue to have value for a number of purposes, but the Australian geoscience information community need not focus on it exclusively. Many in that community have contributed to the development of international standards and systems such as GeoSciML, and our input could also help to shape other thesauri.

CONCLUSION

This survey considered only the use of GeMPeT and did not delve into the intricacies of its content coverage, management, database updates (if any) and user feedback issues. As a Geoscience Australia respondent suggested: like the early GeMPeT, the AGI welcomes suggestions for new terms, synonyms or relations between terms for inclusion/revision of the GeoRef thesaurus. Geoscience Australia would welcome input from the Australian geoscience community on terms from GeMPeT (or any other source) which they believe would be of value if included in the GeoRef thesaurus. So where does this leave GeMPeT? Is it worth putting time and effort into GeMPeT, setting up a consultative user forum and other initiatives?

The final decision on such matters rests with GeMPeT's current owner, the Western Australian Department of Mines and Petroleum. Would more people use GeMPeT if it were more up-to-date? Would more people use GeMPeT if there was better and more public user representation in its continuation? There is now a note on the GeMPeT site that was not present when the site was visited at the commencement of this project:

The updating of GeMPeT is an ongoing process that requires time and resources. If you would like to submit a term that is not currently included in GeMPeT, please email publications@dmp.wa.gov.au with the term, a brief definition of the term and justification for its inclusion. (Government of Western Australia Department of Mines and Petroleum, 2016)

These questions, and possibly many more would need to be the content of future discussions on the product, if the interest was there.

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APPENDIX 1 – SURVEY INSTRUMENT



GEOSCIENCE INFORMATION RESEARCH PROJECT:

Access to Australian geoscientific information – a tragedy of the commons?

GeMPeT <http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/14776.aspx>

Dear geoscience information colleague

The attached survey is an attempt to gain a clearer picture of one aspect of access to and the provision of geoscience information in Australia. More particularly AGIA <http://agia.org.au/> is interested to see if there is an interest in and/or need for the former Australian Geoscience Minerals & Petroleum Thesaurus, now GeMPeT. Depending on the feedback we get, some updating of the thesaurus may be investigated, although it is not intended to embark on a full revision. I have attached MSWord and pdf formats to assist in your response.

You do not have to be a member of AGIA to complete the survey. The survey has been forwarded to AGIA members, state geoscience agencies and many University libraries where there is an obvious geoscience information coverage. Please forward this document onto a colleague if you feel they may be able to contribute to our collection of background experiences on GeMPeT, and they have not already received the document.

The data acquired will also contribute to the wider enquiry of the project: *Access to Australian geoscientific information – a tragedy of the commons?* An Information Sheet on this project is also attached.

Can you please return this survey to me kerrylib@westnet.com.au as an email attachment, BY MONDAY 31 MARCH 2014. Please let me know if you are unable to email me your response and I will advise you of a postal address.

With many thanks in anticipation of your response

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Smith".

Dr Kerry Smith, FALIA
Project Leader
Associate Professor (Retired)
Life member of AGIA, Member of ALIA, GSIS, ASA, IFLA
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GEOSCIENCE INFORMATION RESEARCH PROJECT:

Access to Australian geoscientific information – a tragedy of the commons?

SURVEY ON GeMPeT <http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/14776.aspx>

YOUR ORGANISATION'S NAME:

POSTAL ADDRESS:

CONTACT PERSON: Name:

Email:

Q. 1 Does your information service subscribe to/use any electronic bibliographic databases in the geosciences (e.g. GeoRef, AESIS, GEOBASE, GeoScienceWorld) ? YES/NO

Q. 2 If you answered YES to Question 1, please list the geoscience bibliographic databases that you subscribe to/use:

Please now proceed to Q. 4

Q. 3 If you answered NO to Question 1:

(a) Is your information service engaged in indexing/cataloguing/metadata creation for geoscience information? YES/NO

(b) If you answered YES to Question 3(a): what thesaurus/i do you use for vocabulary control for this indexing work? Please list:

Please now go to Question 11



Q. 4 If you have listed the Australian Earth Sciences (AESIS) database (no longer updated though its archive is still accessible through INFORMIT) in your response to Q.2, are you aware that the thesaurus used for this database was the Australian Geoscience Minerals & Petroleum Thesaurus, now GeMPeT? YES/NO

Q. 5 If you use the AESIS database, do you find the indexing terms used by GeMPeT useful? YES/NO

Q. 6 (a) Do you use GeMPeT for indexing purposes in your information work? YES/NO.

Q. 6 (b) If you do not use the GeMPeT thesaurus, please go to Question 11, below.

Q. 7 If you answered YES to Question 6(a), do you find GeMPeT easy to use? YES/NO

Q. 8 (a) If you answered YES to Question 7, please describe the features you like best about GeMPeT:

Q. 8 (b) If you answered NO to Question 7, please describe the features of GeMPeT that you find difficult to use:

Q. 9 In its early history, GeMPeT / the Australian Geoscience Minerals & Petroleum Thesaurus had a facility for users to submit suggestions for the thesaurus and its structure. Do you have any such suggestions to make? YES/NO

Q. 10 If you answered YES to Question 9, what suggestions do you have:

Please now go to Question 13.



If you answered "NO" to Question 1:

Q.11 Are you aware of GeMPeT? YES/NO

Q. 12 If you answered YES to Question 11, please explain why you don't use this thesaurus:

Q. 13 ALL TO ANSWER: Please add any further comments you would like to make regarding the GeMPeT thesaurus:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY

Please return your completed survey to
Dr Kerry Smith, Project Leader
kerrylib@westnet.com.au
BY 31 MARCH 2014

APPENDIX 2 – SUMMARY OF THE CONTENT OF GEOSCIENCE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DATABASES USED BY THE RESPONDENTS

AESIS

The Australian Earth Sciences Information System was purchased by RMIT Publishing and is available via their Informit suite of databases.

Please note AESIS is no longer updated. AESIS will remain available on Informit as an archive database.

Recognised as Australia's National Geoscience, Minerals and Petroleum Reference Database, AESIS was developed by the Australian Mineral Foundation (AMF) in cooperation with Geoscience Australia (formerly Bureau of Mineral Resources, Geology and Geophysics (BMR) and later Australian Geological Survey Organisation (AGSO)), CSIRO, State Departments of Mines and Geological Surveys, the National Library of Australia, the Australian Geoscience Information Association, and many companies. AESIS was coordinated by the Australian Mineral Foundation until the AMF closed at the end of 2001.

At that time, AESIS was the world's largest reference database covering both published and unpublished Australian geoscience, minerals and petroleum literature.

In 2003 AESIS was acquired by the South Australian Branch of the Australian Geoscience Information Association which now holds copyright to the database.

Coverage

AESIS covered Australian-generated published and unpublished documented materials over the full range of the geosciences, minerals and petroleum and related areas. From 1979 AESIS also covered material published on continental Australia by non-Australian sources. AESIS commenced in 1976, but coverage goes back to 1975 and much earlier, especially for open-file reports and theses. Retrospective coverage for published material was also undertaken through special projects for the GSA, ASEG, AusIMM, Geoscience Australia and the various Australian Royal Societies. With approximately 200,000 references AESIS continues to be a valuable source to over 30 years contribution to geoscience literature by Australian authors.

Source documents

Material reviewed for inclusion in AESIS was taken from many sources including over 600 journal titles, monographs in series, books, conference papers and proceedings, technical reports, maps, theses, and unpublished and open-file reports predominantly from the State Geological Surveys and Department of Mines and Geoscience Australia (Informit, 2016).

AusGeoRef

A cooperative venture between Geoscience Australia and the American Geological Institute, AusGeoRef is a subset of the GeoRef database published by the American Geological Institute. AusGeoRef is regularly updated with references to Australian geoscience literature provided by Geoscience Australia. AusGeoRef now includes more than 170,000 bibliographic references on Australia - with more than 74,000 references incorporated from the former Australian Earth Sciences Information Service (AESIS), which ceased updating in 2001. The references are drawn from the journal literature, meeting proceedings and abstracts, books, reports and maps. The database is updated on a weekly basis.

References contain complete bibliographic information and URLs for documents published on the web and includes thorough indexing based on the controlled vocabulary found in the GeoRef Thesaurus. Specific geographic locations are listed as place names along with latitude and longitude" (Geoscience Australia, 2016)

GeoRef

The GeoRef database, established by the American Geosciences Institute in 1966, provides access to the geoscience literature of the world. GeoRef is the most comprehensive database in the

geosciences and continues to grow by more than 100,000 references a year. The database contains over 3.5 million references to geoscience journal articles, books, maps, conference papers, reports and theses. Access to this vast amount of information is obtained through searching on the web, online, or on GeoRef CDs. (American Geosciences Institute, 2016)

Both GeoRef and AusGeoRef use the GeoRef thesaurus as their indexing tool.

GEOBASE

A database of indexed research literature unequalled in its coverage of the international geoscience literature: Earth sciences, ecology, geology, human and physical geography, environmental sciences, oceanography, geomechanics, alternative energy sources, pollution, waste management and nature conservation. The content crosses subject, language and cultural boundaries, providing a unique research tool to users. GEOBASE covers 3+ million abstract records of multidisciplinary content enabling comprehensive geological evaluation of any desired region. This includes geological structure and relation to natural resources as well as linking resource management, transport, and regional and urban planning. (Elsevier, 2016a)

GeoScienceWorld

Making earth science research information more accessible and easier to use with updated search and a clean design for its 46 eJournals from 28 publishers. It is based in the United States of America and is a comprehensive Internet resource for research across the geosciences, built on a database of peer-reviewed journals and integrated with GeoRef. It is a not for profit organization with the following founding organisations: American Association of Petroleum Geologists, American Geosciences Institute, Geological Society of America, Geological Society of London, Mineralogical Society of America, Society for Sedimentary Geology, and the Society of Exploration Geophysicists. (GeoScienceWorld, 2016)

OnePetro

An online library of technical literature for the oil and gas exploration and production (E&P) industry. With contributions from 18 publishing partners and providing access to over 160,000 items, OnePetro.org is the definitive resource on upstream oil and gas. Access to OnePetro is available to the general public and full-text articles and technical content can be obtained online through individual purchase or subscription. (OnePetro, 2016)

Petroleum Abstracts

Petroleum Abstracts is the world's leading information source for published scientific and technical knowledge related to oil and gas exploration and production. (Petroleum Abstracts – The University of Tulsa, 2016)

Scopus

Scopus is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature: scientific journals, books and conference proceedings. Delivering a comprehensive overview of the world's research output in the fields of science, technology, medicine, social sciences, and arts and humanities, Scopus features smart tools to track, analyse and visualize research. (Elsevier, 2016b)