

Editor's desk



The festive season is upon us and the *Preview* Editorial Team is 'presenting' you with another bumper issue of *Preview*. News and commentary, most particularly news of student projects completed in Australia in 2016, is supplemented by two marvellous features written by two of the 'grand old men' of our profession. Opal, the queen of gems, gets the Don Emerson treatment and John Stanley describes the history of the development of optically pumped magnetometers in Australia – history that is also his story. The recent deaths of Lin Parry and Professor David Boyd (an obituary for Lin Parry appears in this issue and an obituary for David Boyd will appear in the next issue) have made me realise how fortunate we are to have so many older members of our profession staying active and engaging with younger members at ASEG meetings as well as through the pages of *Preview*. I would particularly like to thank Roger Henderson, the Chair of the ASEG History Committee, for facilitating this engagement. Roger is one of the unsung heroes of the ASEG in this regard.

As it is that time of year, I would also like to thank the *Preview* Editorial Team. They do a great job, month after month, of sourcing news and commentary on your behalf. The best present you could give them is your feedback – don't be shy about emailing anyone on the team about anything that takes your fancy! In addition, I would like to thank the *Preview* Production Editor Helen Pavlatos. Helen was on extended sick

leave in the period leading up to the publication of this issue of *Preview* and I, for one, was anxiously awaiting news of her recovery.

To complicate matters from the *Preview* perspective, as Helen was returning to work I was jetting halfway round the world to attend a European Union (EU) COST Action meeting in Israel. COST stands for European Cooperation in Science and Technology. This remarkable program was established over 40 years ago to actively support and promote cooperation in science and technology. Funding (over 40 million euros per year) is allocated for networking activities such as meetings (e.g. travel, subsistence and local organiser support), conferences, workshops, short-term scientific exchanges, training schools, publications and dissemination activities. COST does not fund research itself, the focus is on bringing researchers together in order to build trust and to facilitate integration by helping researchers develop a common language – literally and figuratively! English is the *lingua franca* – which is

very convenient for those of us who are native English speakers – and ironic as Brexit looms. Fortunately, from my perspective, COST Action groups can and do occasionally invite participants from outside the EU.

The meeting that I attended was a gathering of scientists interested in mapping the movement of water, solutes and sediments across landscapes and within the regolith. Unfortunately none of them were familiar with the very real advances that CRC AMET and CRC LEME had made in this regard. Nor were they familiar with more recent work that had been carried out to improve the processing of EM data. It would seem that although the COST Action program is actively breaking down silos within Europe, there is more work to be done in terms of breaking down barriers that exist between Europe and the rest of the world!

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The Editor dipping her fingers into the murky waters of the Jordan River. Scientists monitoring the health of this river, which is shrinking and heavily polluted, are handicapped because it is a political boundary. Working from either side they can only carry instruments out to the mid-line before returning to their respective banks.