

Editor's desk



This issue of *Preview* features an article by Don Emerson on the 'Conductivities of Broken Hill-style lead ores'. This article is an important contribution to our developing understanding of Australian rock properties, and I know it will be cited for many years to come. We also feature an article by Dave Isles on 'The discovery of Olympic Dam'. Dave shares some insights into the visionary and risk taking culture in the South Australian Geological Survey in the 1970s, a culture that created the right environment for discovery!

As always, our regular commentators do not disappoint. David Denham (*Canberra observed*) reviews the 2017 Federal Budget. Michael Asten (*Education matters*) teams up with Emma Brand to report on the strategic plan being developed by the ASEG Continuing Education Committee. Mike Hatch (*Environmental geophysics*) muses about the solution to familiar problem – the cost-effective recovery of information on

the movement of water through agricultural landscapes. Mick Micenko (*Seismic window*) reflects on the role of the Australian Government in managing fuel prices. Terry Harvey (*Mineral geophysics*) speaks up for old data and Guy Holmes (*Data trends*) introduces us to his new digital classroom. Enjoy!

In late April I was in Europe and participated in the March for Science in London before attending the European Geosciences Union General Assembly in Vienna. A number of marchers carried banners promoting the peer review process so it was a bit of a shock to get to Vienna and to find that the Assembly was buzzing with talk about how the peer review process is being manipulated by some scientists eager to promote their own interests and ideas.



Banners held by demonstrators at the 2017 March for Science in London.

Editors and reviewers of some Copernicus and Wiley journals, very respectable

journals with high impact factors, had been accused of citation stacking. Citation stacking involves applying pressure on authors (via the peer review process, which is usually anonymous) to cite particular papers with a view to improving the citation rating of individuals (H index) or the impact factor of particular journals. The accusations were proven in at least one instance, with one individual found to have used the system to dramatically increase their ranking and the ranking of a number of journals (https://static2.egu.eu/media/filer_public/07/79/07798eae-e4e4-48f2-a9d0-6b8ce0110302/egu-copernicus-report-about-citation-stacking.pdf). At the same time rumours were circulating about the appearance of 'fake' reviewers. A phenomenon highlighted in a recent letter to *Nature* (<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v546/n7656/full/546033a.html>).

The EGU Publications Committee had an open meeting to discuss how the scientific community might address malpractice, particularly as it affected the peer review process. The extent of malpractice revealed at that meeting was shocking to me but then, perhaps, I am a naïve colonial. It could be argued that human nature is such that if a system can be exploited it will be, and scientists are only human. It is clear that if the scientific community is going to maintain credibility then, to borrow a concept from industry, our quality assurance, quality control processes must be carefully and constantly scrutinised.

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