



GSA Functions and Member Offering

June 2009

The GSA was established in 1952 as a learned society to promote, advance and support Earth Sciences in Australia. Since then, the GSA has developed substantially. Demographically, the overwhelming majority of the membership works in minerals, followed by Tertiary and Consulting – this profile differs to most international Geological Societies and possibly reflects the closer working relationships between industry and government institutions in Australia as well as our rich mineral reserves. <http://www.gsa.org.au/membership/profile.html>

The GSA recognises diversity of membership as one of the GSA's strengths and the description 'broad church' is a common one. This 'broad church' encompasses members working in Industry, Minerals, Petroleum, State Surveys, Consulting, Tertiary and Secondary institutions, Engineering and the Environment.

There is wide difference in the activities undertaken in different states and regions by the Divisions and Specialist Groups. This reflects local interests and energy. The GSA nurtures member enthusiasm through business office support and member services.

Member Activities

As the membership is diverse, no one single group takes advantage of all the GSA's support mechanisms, just as different members access and value different member services, examples of activities include:

- Monthly or bi-monthly meetings with a speaker (most Divisions)
- Annual symposia and/or conferences: Selwyn Symposium (Victorian event), SA Explorers, St Barbara's Day and Sprigg Symposia, Queensland Queens Birthday Long weekend Field trip, and the recent King Island Field Trip organised by the Tasmanian Division are a few examples.
- Biennial Specialist group meetings and conferences: Specialist Group in Geochemistry, Mineralogy and Petrology (4-day meeting with field trips + abstract papers – December 2007 in Dunedin and Kangaroo Island in November 2009) and Tectonics & Structural Geology Biennial meeting (July 2007 was the extremely successful 'Deformation in the Desert' and the upcoming Meeting in Port Macquarie in February 2010).
- Student Sponsorships & prizes i.e. the NSW Division annual prize for the best Earth Science student at a NSW University to acknowledge and encourage students.
- School nights and education events happening in different states; that may include speakers, show-bags and booths, GSA marketing materials and promotional items.
- Specialist Groups and Divisions produce regular newsletters: eg, the Victoria Division, <http://www.gsa.org.au/divisions/vic.html> , the Economic Geology Group <http://sgeg.gsa.org.au/news.html> , the Earth Science History Group

<http://www.gsa.org.au/specialgroups/eshg.html> or the Specialist Group in Volcanology <http://www.gsa.org.au/specialgroups/lava.html>

- Members produce publications, CDs and maps about their regions: Qld Rocks and Landscape Series, ACT Geology, Geology of Victoria, SA walking tracks to name just a few out of the 200+ publications. Specialist Groups also publish, be it memoirs, books, field guides or abstracts, eg: the comprehensive Australian Sedimentologists Field Guides. The Association of Australasian Palaeontologists (AAP) Memoirs Series is an extremely popular, going series subscribed to internationally.

Member Services

No one Division, Specialist Group or member accesses the full range of services developed for GSA members. In no particular order, services include (but are not limited to):

Australian Journal of Earth Sciences: The *Australian Journal of Earth Sciences* (AJES) is the official journal of the Geological Society of Australia, supplied as part of the membership offering. Eight issues are published per year and contain peer-reviewed papers covering all fields of Earth Science. AJES has an ISI Impact Factor of 1.210. 90% of the membership receive AJES, AJES also attracts institutional subscriptions, 2% receive *Alcheringa* instead of AJES & 8% do not receive a journal (student, retired or associates only can nominate not to receive a journal).

The Australian Geologist; The GSA produces a quarterly member magazine: *The Australian Geologist (TAG)* distributed to all members. We source and collate content, edit, and design to produce *TAG* x 4 times per year, including advertising and content development (eg: features and special reports). Our research tells us that *TAG* is a highly valued member magazine – regular member contributions reinforce this perspective.

Geoz: *Geoz*, is the GSA's electronic bulletin, produced 8 times per year. *Geoz* includes latest news, online links, event calendar and a reliable member communication too. The GSA manages the collation, editing, layout and distribution of *Geoz*.

GeoCal: *GeoCal* is a wall-planner/calendar distributed with the December issue of *TAG*. *GeoCal* captures GSA meeting and convention dates.

Publications: The GSA provides assistance with production, management, promotion, selling, distribution and inventory control of publications produced by GSA members under the GSA brand. Liaison with state and federal libraries, bookshops, government sales outlets and Agencies (museums, bookshops and Copyright Agency) and distribution of Legal Deposits is part of the management. Publications include: Special Publications series, Abstracts Series, Division and Specialist Group publications field guides & books, AAP Memoir Series, *Alcheringa*, plus maps and CD's. The GSA business office manages the majority of sales, invoicing and receipting as well as taxation compliance.

Event management: registrations, promotion, sponsorship and related finances: The business office supports Divisional or Specialist Group activities by acting as the

banker. The banker role includes: processing registrations (credit cards, cheques, cash & EFT's), issuing tax receipts or tax invoices, collecting funds from event sponsors, managing GST compliance and payments. We also link this information to GSA member records to assist with future promotional opportunities by being able to segment the GSA member database.

This level of work has increased due to the increase in receipting and tax requirements. Historically, a lot of events have attracted cash-paying delegates or cheques, the income trail is now more professional. The support the office provides to Divisions and Specialist Groups organising events has been growing in demand – again not everyone accesses these services, but the introduction of processing online payments for GSA events is likely to see demand increase.

The *Australian Earth Sciences Convention* is the GSA's biennial international conference attracting over 700 delegates from Australia and around the world. The Business Office is extremely active in the organising committee, with the Executive Director holding a key committee position. The office assists with many facets of the Convention, including; development and management of website and promotional material, development of sponsorship materials and packages, assistance with communications to prospective delegates and our membership and much more. The GSA also exhibits at the Convention and provides a place for members and all delegates to discuss ideas and issues and get in touch with our latest activities.

Media: The GSA's media work has grown since the highly successful media strategy employed for the AESC 2008 – we are continuing to invest and build on this strength as part of our promotion of the Earth Sciences to the wider community.

The GSA develops and manages media campaigns for events and publications (eg: Selwyn Symposia, ACT geology, AESC, hot topics etc), as well as the recently launched *Earth Science Showcase*. The *Earth Science Showcase* is a vehicle to promote Earth Science and careers in Earth Science to the Australian public and most importantly students. <http://www.gsa.org.au/resources/media.html>

Website hosting: The development of websites for Specialist Groups, including ongoing administration and management, as well as hosting and linking to the main GSA site has proven to be very popular with some members and groups. More Specialist Groups are taking advantage of this: refer to hotlink; www.sggmp.gsa.org.au

Marketing: Manage the design, advertising and promotion of events and publications developed by Divisions, Specialist Groups and the Federal Executive Committee.

Promotional material: Develop, produce and supply promotional materials and giveaways for student/career nights, conferences, school teacher events, geology bbq's and other on-campus activities (caps, brochures and t-shirts etc).

New Member kits: All new members receive new member kits introducing them to the GSA. The kit includes the bookshop list and order form, calendar, recent TAG, Register of Members, GSAMerica order form for *Geology* at discounted rates, Groundwater Short Courses booklet and registration form as well as promotional material for upcoming GSA events.

Data management & Reporting

The GSA maintains a comprehensive database, incorporating standard membership contact details, but also captures financial information including publications purchased, event registrations, as well as committee involvement. We maintain and distribute member mailing data and statistics for newsletters and emails, regularly scheduled for Division newsletters and on-request for Specialist Groups (hard copy and electronic). The Business Office also assists with financial reporting, audit preparation and investment fund management.

Education and Outreach Activities

The GSA produces materials for Teachers including the popular Fact-ites series. Fact-ites are written in plain English with descriptions, explanations, facts and activities suitable for middle school students. Fact-ites can be supplied in hard copy or provided as pdf format for printing or copying. Quizzicles are online interactive geoscience puzzles and quizzes for middle school students. Quizzicles complement Fact-ites. <http://www.gsa.org.au/resources/education.html> .

The GSA supports Earth Science education through attendance at CONASTA and state science teacher conferences, delivering conference papers, workshops and supporting teacher professional development with a view to enabling confidence in the teaching of Earth Science at middle school.

The GSA works closely with other organisations – whether at a local level in South Australia or Queensland on joint events or with the Geological Society of America through the sharing of Education resources and participation in Outreach activities. The GSA is an active partner in the Geological Society of America's EarthCaching <http://www.earthcache.org/> and EarthTrek programs. <http://goearthtrek.com/index.html>

GSA Website

The GSA website caters for members and non-members accessing Earth Science information at different levels: students (tertiary and middle school), educators, early careerists, established Earth Scientists and the general public all benefit from the diversity of resources, links and networks freely available on the GSA website.

Students and educators utilise the links to Earth Science courses and institutions, as well as surveys, museums and geoscience career information. Parents access the website to foster young enquiring minds; and professionals access the website to see the latest news or find a talk or paper.

The calendar of events, listing national and international conferences, or local divisional talks aid geoscientists to stay connected with their community and continue to learn about new science and methodologies ensuring they stay informed with the latest thinking and research. The Study of Earth Science doesn't stop when members graduate and the GSA aids members and non-members to continue to learn and inform.

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