

PESA Seeking To Do More In Tasmania

by Chris Boron and Kevin Lanigan

Although Tasmania has the highest number of scientists per capita in Australia, currently it only has a handful of resident PESA members. That notwithstanding, PESA has an interest in increasing its profile in the state, both to provide some extra amenity for local members and to make a contribution to the advancement of earth science education there - as it is doing across the rest of Australia.

This process commenced in March, 2008 with the addition to the PESA Victoria/Tasmania (Vic/Tas) branch committee of a Tasmanian-based member, Chris Boron, who is Petroleum Registrar at Mineral Resources Tasmania.

Following on from this, the PESA Vic/Tas branch recently organised and co-sponsored a joint meeting with the Tasmanian branch of the Geological Society of Australia on 17 July 2008 at the University of Tasmania (UTAS).

PESA Vic/Tas Branch President, Kevin Lanigan, travelled to Hobart for the occasion and briefly outlined to the meeting PESA's desire to combine its resources with other societies such as GSA to become a greater participant in the earth science community in Tasmania, with interests beyond just oil and gas. In particular he spoke of PESA's desire to expand the secondary school Teacher Earth Science Education Programme (TESEP) into Tasmania, and sought ideas and contacts from the attendees.



Left to right; PESA Vic/Tas Branch President Kevin Lanigan, presenter Gareth Cooper, PESA Vic/Tas Branch committee member Chris Boron, GSA Tasmania Division President Nick Direen

The guest speaker for the GSA/PESA meeting was Gareth Cooper from Hot Dry Rocks Pty Ltd, who gave an interesting and informative presentation entitled 'Geothermal Exploration – Risks, Myths and Facts' (see abstract) which was an updated version of the talk that he had given to the PESA Vic/Tas branch meeting in Melbourne in March, 2008.

It was hoped that this non-petroleum topic would demonstrate PESA's broad interest in energy-related geoscience and be of interest to a wide audience. With a good cross-section of earth scientists, UTAS faculty, students, industry and petroleum regulators, the meeting

attendance was well above 50 - which augurs well for planning more joint meetings into the future.

There was very positive feedback from the diverse audience, including 'hard rock' geologists looking forward to further interaction with PESA, as exemplified by geologist Mike Vicary: "I hope that PESA can hold another joint meeting with the Tasmanian GSA in the future. The GSA tries to organise a balanced program of presentations each year; however this is usually quite difficult given the high number of hard rock and economic geologists and members. Hopefully, now that the preliminary contacts have been made, a process can be established through which PESA can promote its activities in Tasmania through the Tas GSA."

Mike also added, "The talk by Gareth was quite timely given the recent interest in geothermal exploration in Tasmania. Although I know little about the topic, I found the presentation to be a very useful overview of the methods used and associated problems. The technical content of the talk was quite appropriate given the diverse nature of the audience."

In his closing comments, GSA Tasmania Branch President, Nick Direen, captured the view of many attendees by endorsing the importance and wisdom of fostering closer ties with groups such as PESA to integrate earth science activities in Tasmania where appropriate and to seek topics of common interest for future meetings. ■



Attendees from Tasmanian branches of PESA and GSA