

EABSIII Programme For School Students And Teachers



A programme of geoscience activities for school students and their teachers was run on the middle day of EABSIII, Tuesday 16 September 2008. The aim of this was to provide the students with new ideas and knowledge in geoscience, and promote geosciences as a university subject and later as a career. This was conceived by the EABSIII organising committee as an outreach activity, designed to complement existing PESA Tertiary education facilitation (occurring through student scholarships, travel grants and subsidised conference and workshop attendances, etc). PESA is already sponsoring the TESEP initiative that is aimed at geoscience education of high school teachers, but PESA so far has had limited impact with the school students themselves.

The programme appears to have been a great success, based on feedback from students and teachers. 116 students (years 10-12) from seven schools in the Sydney region attended, with nine teachers. The schools were: Wenona School, Kirrawee High School, Pymble Ladies' College, St Paul's High School, Newtown High School of the Performing Arts, St George Christian School and Hawkesbury High School.

The students and teachers attended the plenary talks in the morning session, which covered 'emerging issues – energy & environment'. This mix of talks on natural gas, carbon capture and storage, renewable energy, hot rocks and the carbon trading scheme provided a suitable introduction to some future directions of the petroleum industry. They were even exposed to a couple of Barry Goldstein jokes (enough to put them off a geoscience career?).

After morning tea with the delegates, and a peruse of the give-aways in the exhibition, the students were then exposed to a lesson on petroleum geology by Stephen Wood, before launching into a series of hands-on activities (rocks in hand specimen, microscopy, oil properties, and buoyancy). A geoscience trivia quiz rounded off the morning, with prizes for the three best teams (cash going to the school). It would be fair to say that we were somewhat disappointed by the students' general lack of knowledge in this area (isn't it obvious what the name of the band from Athens, Georgia, USA who purportedly met while they were undergraduate geology students is?) ... answer below).

After lunch the students were provided four stories about geoscience careers, and what it is like to be a geologist. The very varied speakers (Marita Bradshaw, Rob Willink, Karen Higgins and Scott Keenan) provided nicely contrasting viewpoints and were able to field several questions.

The students were provided with goody bags chock full of useful giveaways, including geological timescale bookmarks and grainsize cards (thanks to Geoscience Australia), a large petroleum permit map (thanks to Encom Petroleum Information), a drink bottle (thanks to Origin Energy) and other information from CSIRO, APPEA, Macquarie University and Geoscience Australia (and of course a back issue of *PESA News!*).

My thanks to the following helpers on the day: Marita Bradshaw (Geoscience Australia), Adriana Dutkiewicz (Sydney University), Scott Keenan (Orion Petroleum), Richard Kempton



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Given the success of this venture, I hope this experiment gets repeated elsewhere by PESA when the opportunity arises. Today's school students are the industry's potential employees of the future (maybe only four to five years away). ■

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