

MinEx CRC bid successful

Breaking new ground for mineral discoveries.

The future of MinEx CRC, a new cooperative research centre, has been secured with a \$50 million Commonwealth grant to support greenfield mineral discoveries through pioneering technology solutions.

The program will leverage a further \$165 million of cash and in-kind funding from CRC participants, bringing the total funding to \$215 million over a 10-year period.

The Geological Survey of South Australia (GSSA) has committed to be part of the CRC, joining Geoscience Australia and other state Geological Surveys. The GSSA will provide \$5 million and a further \$10 million in-kind support for the full funding term in the form of data and surveys, in addition to staffing assistance.

South Australia's Office of Science and Technology has also contributed financially to the MinEx CRC project.

The nominated Chief Scientist for the CRC will be Professor David Giles (University of South Australia), and the CRC will be dual-headquartered in South Australia and Western Australia.

A core part of MinEx CRC's focus will be to extend the capability of coiled tubing drilling pioneered by the Deep Exploration Technologies CRC in South Australia – promising drilling at a fifth the cost of conventional diamond drilling.

By leading cheaper, safer and environmentally friendly exploration tools that collect quantity and quality data from the earth, South Australia can be the showcase for a competitive industry. When combined with a national drilling program, and leading expertise in mapping and modelling, the CRC will build 3D projections of buried mineral assets to help boost the rate of discovering economic mineral deposits.

Background

- In 2015–16, in the midst of the resources downturn, mineral and energy resources contributed approximately 50% of Australia's exports and approximately 10% of gross domestic product. The long-term future of this contribution is at risk if the trend of declining discovery of major, new mineral deposits continues.
- The discovery rate of relatively easily located mineral deposits with a surface expression has been declining and the highly targeted approach by the MinEx CRC will address this challenge to help bring forward a pipeline of discoveries.
- Scientific organisations also joining the CRC include CSIRO, Curtin University, the University of Adelaide, the University of South Australia, the University of Western Australia and the University of Newcastle.
- To date, 34 companies have committed including BHP Billiton, South32, Anglo American, Barrick, Investigator Resources and Minotaur Exploration.

Additional partners are still welcome.

– *Grace Taylor and Rohan Cobcroft*