



**Queensland  
Government**

Ref: bnj00184

Office of the Premier  
and Minister for Trade

4 February 2004

Mr Graham Pope  
Chairman, Queensland Branch  
Australian Institute of Geoscientists  
PO Box 217  
**PADDINGTON QLD 4064**

Dear Mr Pope

Thank you for your letter of 26 January 2004, concerning Geoscience unemployment and the downturn in resource investment in Queensland. The Premier has noted your comments and has asked me to reply

The downturn in exploration in the global resources industry is not restricted to Queensland. There are a range of reasons, such as:

- The rationalisation of the global mining industry which has resulted in companies doing away with in-house exploration and contracting out to smaller specialised companies e.g., MIM/XStrata;
- The historically low prices being paid for base metals over the last five years;
- The difficulty in obtaining investment funds from the market during the 'dot-com' frenzy;
- The complex legal issues surrounding Native Title have played a part in delaying access to land for exploration, but Native Title is not the major impediment as some sections of the industry have alleged.

The Beattie Government identified the provision of pre-competitive geoscience data and access to land as priority areas for action.

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**Access to Land**

The Beattie Government, in consultation with the Queensland Resources Council (QRC) and the Queensland Indigenous Working Group (QIWG), developed a set of conditions known as the Native Title Protection Conditions (NTPC's).

The NTPC's provide for expedited access to land for explorers who adopt the process, which is designed to reduce the time it takes to obtain an access agreement to the relevant land and to reduce costs.

As well as the NTPC's, explorers have a choice of going down the path of adopting an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA), of which there are 21 in Queensland. Of these 21 ILUA's, twelve have been registered with the National Native Title Tribunal, with the remainder to be registered this year.

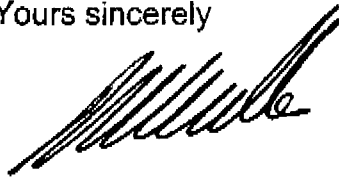
**Geo-Scientific Data Provision**

Geological Survey Queensland, a Division of the Department of Natural Resources & Mines, will seek funding for the implementation of the Queensland Discovery Initiative, a four-year special initiative program of pre-competitive geoscience data acquisition to be undertaken with the cooperation of Geoscience Australia as part of the Mineral Exploration Action Agenda (MEAA).

In April 2003, the Minister for Natural Resources & Mines launched the Queensland Digital Exploration Reports System (QDEX). QDEX is a simple and effective alternative for lodging, searching and retrieving company reports over the Internet. 35,000 company exploration reports will be available on QDEX. Systematic scanning of reports commenced more than 12 months ago and will be completed within two years.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to write to the Premier. I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



**Rob Whiddon**  
**Chief of Staff**