

## **Launch of Australian Mint 2008: IYPE Coin set**

Dr Ian Lambert  
Geoscience Australia

The Earth is made up of many interacting, evolving and dynamic systems.

Studies of our planet, its systems, processes and composition are the realm of “Earth scientists”, or “geoscientists”.

In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2008 the International Year of Planet Earth.

The International Year has the overarching theme of ‘Earth Science for Society’. It aims to bring together the international knowledge base of geoscience and demonstrate new and exciting ways in which Earth scientists can help meet the challenges we face in ensuring a safer, healthier and more prosperous world.

The global launch of the Year is at UNESCO in Paris in February 2008, and there is a process in train to select two Australian geoscience students to attend this event.

An important part of the Year is explaining how geoscience inputs are fundamental – for example in:

- improving our management of the land, water, energy and mineral resources,
- minimising loss of life and property from natural disasters, and
- protecting and sustaining our quality of life.

By collaborating and coordinating the collective international geoscience knowledge base, we Earth scientists aim to increase our ability to make effective and holistic decisions that will help meet societal needs while sustaining Planet Earth.

Let me mention a few of the key roles being played by geoscientists in this regard:

- Underpinning the search for new mineral and energy resources which will be necessary for our future;

- Unlocking promising new energy resources such as geothermal;
- Advancing understanding and mitigation of the impacts of catastrophic natural hazards – such as earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides and floods;
- Gaining a better knowledge of groundwater resources and in how to manage salinity;
- Addressing issues arising from building bigger cities, which include underground infrastructure, and supplies of water and construction materials;
- Providing information on natural climate change as a basis for mitigating the impacts of human-induced changes.

The impressive coin year sets being launched by the Mint this evening are a very fitting commemoration of the International Year of Planet Earth. These magnificently rendered coins evoke the concept of “the Earth in our hands”. They depict a number of the issues I have alluded to – from water to geohazards and sustainable use of resources – which are being embraced by geoscientists, and vitally important to all.

I am confident these beautiful year set coins will be highly sought after.