

UNCOVER uncovered: a vision for multisector collaboration to dramatically improve mineral exploration in under cover Australia

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UNCOVER is a common vision to dramatically improve mineral exploration success in undercover Australia. UNCOVER originated from the Australian Academy of Science (the Academy) on the premise that excellent **science** was required to solve the undercover exploration challenge and that this challenge was of immense national interest. The Academy dedicated its 2010 Theo Murphy High Flyers Think Tank to the important national issue of the decline in mineral exploration success.

The Initiative has harnessed the collective efforts of the mineral exploration industry and the services sector (METS), the State and Northern Territory geological surveys together with Geoscience Australia, CSIRO, as well as the Universities towards reaching the UNCOVER vision. After wide consultation, UNCOVER released the document *Searching The Deep Earth: A vision for exploration geoscience in Australia*. This vision was launched by the Federal Resources Minister in 2012.

Following an UNCOVER Summit in 2014 it became apparent that a Roadmap for undercover exploration was required. This work was commissioned under the management of AMIRA International, which involved numerous consultative workshops and meetings across Australia over the past 4 years.

- Roadmap 1, launched in mid-2015 by the Federal Resources Minister, set out the necessary priorities and the dependencies of a comprehensive body of work to achieve the UNCOVER vision.
- Roadmap 2, launched in August 2017, outlines the range of projects needed to fulfil these priority activities, their costings and timeframes. It includes recognition of the research needed, technology requiring development, new data to be acquired and existing data to be compiled and integrated. The Roadmap also outlines the human capability needed to reach the goals. It is an ambitious plan requiring more than a decade to realise and many hundreds of millions of dollars to deliver.

The UNCOVER vision has now been broadly accepted; it forms the core of the exploration geoscience component of the National Mineral Exploration Strategy, which was recently released by the Resources Ministers at the June 2017 COAG Energy Council. The UNCOVER themes have been used by several geological surveys to structure their minerals-related teams. Most of the pre-competitive minerals work programmes of Geoscience Australia and the geological surveys are focussed on the highest and high priority activities identified in the Roadmap 1. A most significant impact of the Roadmap 2 is the high level of visibility of a well-articulated and rigorous ‘Plan’ by key decision makers.

It is up to us in the minerals business to deliver on this plan.

References:

UNCOVER Website: <http://www.uncoverminerals.org.au/>

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<http://www.publish.csiro.au/PV/pdf/PVv2014n172newsp24>

Roadmap 1:

<http://www.amirainternational.com/WEB/site.asp?section=activities&page=ExplorationUnderCover>

COAG Energy Council (2017) National Mineral Exploration Strategy:

<http://www.coagenergycouncil.gov.au/publications/national-mineral-exploration-strategy-december-2012>

Roadmap 2: <http://www.amirainternational.com/web/sites/p1162a/index.asp>