

LINDSAY INGALL MEMORIAL AWARD, SYDNEY, 23 MAY 2024, PRESENTATION TO THE FAMILY OF R.M.S. (BOB) WHITE

Mike Smith, HonMASEG, HonMSMEDG, DFGSA, FAIG, Past-President ASEG/AIG/AGC

The Lindsay Ingall Memorial Award recognises an Australian resident for the promotion of geophysics within the non-geophysical community, including geologists, geochemists, engineers, managers, politicians, the media or the general public. The award commemorates the life of the late Lindsay Ingall for his capacity to cross geoscience boundaries, his ability to relate technically and effectively with other professionals, regardless of their own understanding of the principles of geophysics, and for his enduring commitment to assist geoscientists across Australia. It is awarded to an individual who has actively promoted geophysics to the wider community.

The award in 2024 is made to R. M. S. (Bob) White, a Sydney-based ASEG member who is well known to mineral industry geophysicists and the broader geological and corporate community as a passionate advocate and promoter of geophysics and the resources industry. It is with great regret that we acknowledge that Bob passed away at his home in Terrey Hills on 24th August 2023.

I will not recount the full details of Bob's illustrious career, as these are very well documented in the obituary written by Steve Collins and published in Preview on 25 October 2023 under the title "VALE: Robert (Bob) M S White 1948-2023". I would be confident that most of you will have read that account and be familiar with Bob's professional career.

Tonight, we reflect on and honour a very specific attribute of Bob's scientific contribution, one that was often hidden from colleagues due to Bob's modest demeanour and laid-back style of operation, which served to hide a brilliant analytical mind and a stimulating conversationalist on the philosophy of mineral exploration.

In particular, he promoted an honest and realistic understanding of the capability of common geophysical technologies to assist drill target definition for resource projects. His detailed knowledge of a wide range of geophysical methods was always communicated in straight-forward and clear language.

Bob has been acknowledged as an expert communicator in his field, as is well established in six eloquent testimonials which were supplied in support of the award nomination by the following senior NSW geologists: Russell Meares, John Horsburgh,

Kim Stanton-Cook, Tully Richards, Max Rangott and Damon Bird, all eminent practitioners of mining geology, exploration management and corporate directorship.

The actual citation for the ASEG Award as prepared by Steve Collins, Andrew Sloot and myself has also been published recently in ASEG's Preview Magazine, and I do not propose to read that document to you.

What was not published were the interesting opinions of those six experts.

In order to demonstrate why the ASEG Awards Committee unanimously endorsed the proposal for Bob to be given this recognition, I will provide some direct quotes from those testimonials:

Russell Meares OAM wrote:

“I have known Bob for more than 35 years - he has always impressed me with his engaging and laconic personality, his knowledge of both geology and geophysics, and his readiness to share that knowledge with others. Bob had the ability to explain geophysical concepts and the important role of geophysics in mineral exploration in simple terms which was very helpful and somewhat unique.”

John Horsburgh, Company Chairman, related:

Bob had the ability to present survey results in a form that project geologists could readily work with. His technical reports were concise and to the point, but his 3D inversion usually spoke for themselves. In a nutshell, his understanding and knowledge of ore deposit geology, coupled with his vast experience in the exploration industry, added considerable weight to his target recommendations. I found Bob's approach to be both pragmatic and professional”

Kim Stanton-Cook, Geologist and retired Managing Director, has advised that:

Bob was always a team player encouraging the younger geologists in their interest in geophysics. At Getty, Bob hired and mentored two graduate geophysicst, who have since gone on to carve out succesful careers. Bob ran geophysical surveys for Getty in the Lachlan Fold Belt, the Mount Isa Inlier and in the Yilgarn. One memorable visit by Bob to the Crystal Creek project north of Mount Isa with about ten geologists all bashing rocks – Bob was the only one to find any mineralisation.

Kim reviewed Bob's contributions to the ASEG Executive, his consulting services through Toorong Resources, his development of geophysical software

and his lead role in developing a new technique (with Steve Collins, Keith Leslie and Andrew Slood) the Heterodyne Method, potentially capable of distinguishing sulphide mineralisation from the always responsive graphitic shales, which would be a great help to base metal explorers.

Damon Bird, Company Director, explained:

Bob was indisputably a skilled teacher of geophysics, as much as being a consultant geophysicist. Bob possessed an invaluable ability to be able to explain in readily understandable language to non-geophysicists, both geologists and landowners, applications and pros and cons of different geophysical techniques.

His capacity to communicate complex geophysical principles to non-geophysicists significantly contributed to the application of geophysical techniques to testing geological hypotheses on a wide variety of mineral exploration projects. Importantly, many geologists in the early stages of their careers owe their understanding of applied geophysics to having had the opportunity to work with Bob.

Tully Richards, Chief Geologist, recalls that:

Bob White was one of the first geophysicists I met with when I took a graduate role at Hargrave Resources NL. I fondly remember Bob taking the time and showing the patience to explain “real world” geophysics to a young graduate. Initially, Bob was a good teacher, and over time, he became a great mate.

Max Rangott, Founder and Principal of RMEPL Geological Consultants in Orange NSW, wrote:

Bob was a no-nonsense geophysicist, which belied his very comprehensive understanding of geophysical techniques and their applications and their relevance. His technical communications were clear, concise and to the point. During the late 80s, Bob helped me a lot with interpretations and modelling of target aeromagnetic anomalies, and in designing follow-up ground surveys and interpreting the data from them, with much of that advice given on-site in the field. On later exploration programs, he provided much needed advice on setting up Induced Polarisation and Electromagnetic surveys, analysing the data to recommend targets for drilling, and backing that up with concise documentation.

Max also described his own personal acquaintance with Lindsay Ingall, for whom the award is named, and he has stated - “reflecting on those conversations now, I realise that Lindsay and Bob had a lot of strengths in common”.

These geologists verify Bob's exceptional cross-discipline communication skills. Clearly Bob White's life-long career in articulating the appropriate use of exploration geophysics makes him most deserving of this important ASEG Award.

Mike then introduced Dr Ted Tyne, Honorary Member of the ASEG and the most recent Sydney-based President of the ASEG, who is well known as a knowledgeable practising geophysicist, a former Director of the NSW Geological Survey (2002-2006), the Director of SA Mineral Resources (PIRSA 2005-2011); and Executive Director SA Mineral Resources (2011-2017).

Mike called upon Ted to come forward and make the formal presentation of the framed certificate to the attending members of Bob's family.



L to R: Andrew Slood, Russell Meares, Ted Tyne, Tom White, Janie White, Sally White and Mike Smith

Who was Lindsay Ingall? Having served on various geoscience committees with Lindsay Ingall, I can advise that Lindsay graduated in geology and geophysics from the University of Sydney, and commenced his career with the Zinc Corporation in Broken Hill. He then worked for the Bureau of Mineral Resources (now Geoscience Australia) in Canberra. A major assignment was management of the Geophysical Observatory on Heard Island maintaining Australia's magnetic observatory and assisting as the team dog handler. He spent significant time in the Canadian Arctic on oil exploration projects. He is most remembered as the founder and chief executive officer of the geophysical service company Wongela Geophysical Pty Ltd – which provided contract data acquisition throughout Australia and southeast Asia. The first complete gravity map of Australia is among Lindsay's great achievements. He played a key role in the creation of the ASEG in 1970, was one of the signatories to the ASEG's constitution, and served two terms as ASEG President. He then worked with others to establish the Australian Institute of Geoscientists (AIG) as the professional institute representing

geoscientists from all fields of practice. Lindsay was one of the founding AIG councillors in 1981, and was an AIG Councillor from 1981 to 1999. He served as AIG President in 1989/90, and as the long-term Honorary Treasurer 1990-96 and Chairman of the AIG Membership Committee from 1996-99. He had great communication skills, which contributed to his capacity to relate technically and effectively with other professionals, regardless of their own understanding of the principles of geophysics. He passed away at his home on 21 May 1999 whilst working on the affairs of the AIG.

