



MEDIA RELEASE

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WORLD'S LARGEST MINERAL EXPLORATION COLLABORATION LAUNCHES

MinEx CRC, a \$218 million research collaboration aimed at developing technologies to increase the discovery of new mineral deposits, will be launched today in Adelaide by the Hon Dan van Holst Pellekaan MP, Minister for Energy and Mining.

The MinEx Cooperative Research Centre (MinEx CRC) has secured \$50 million in Federal Government CRC funding, as well as strong industry and research backing. Participants include 34 partners from the Mining Equipment, Technology and Services (METS) sector and major miners BHP, South32, Anglo American and Barrick committing \$165 million (cash and in-kind) over the next 10 years.

Research organisations supporting 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, together with Geoscience Australia, and all the Geological Surveys in Australia, with significant contributions from New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia.

MinEx CRC Chairman Chris Pigram said the launch of the research organisation was driven by the declining discovery of new mineral deposits – a major threat to Australia's economy.

"There are few, if any, major new mineral deposits that are exposed at the earth's surface yet to be found in Australia, and as a result, mineral exploration is moving from Australia to less well explored countries," Mr Pigram said.

"Today is an exciting day for Australia's mining and resources sector, as we begin meeting the technical challenge of finding deposits in a more cost-effective way."

Australia's share of global mineral exploration has reduced from about 25 per cent in the 1990s to 12.5 per cent currently. The increased cost of drilling, which has led to less exploration over the last 20 years, is something the new CRC will be addressing.

MinEx CRC CEO Andrew Bailey said Australia has the chance to reverse this trend.

"We will develop new exploration tools and new ways to deploy them, that will recognise the fundamental importance of collecting data from the subsurface," he said.

“Lowering the cost of drilling, while gathering critical exploration data, means we can drill more holes and discover more deposits.

“Cheaper, safer and more efficient drilling technologies have the potential to increase our chance of finding new deposits, and decrease the cost of developing them – providing Australia with a more competitive and sustainable mining industry.”

Mr van Holst Pellekaan said the SA Government had provided \$5 million funding to MinEx CRC, and a further \$10 million in kind through the SA Geological Survey.

“Innovation in exploration is key to developing our vast mineral resource wealth in South Australia and across the nation,” Mr van Holst Pellekaan said. “The MinEx CRC will break new ground to discover new mineral deposits by harnessing the expertise that resides within our state geological surveys.”

MinEx CRC is focusing on the development of technologies that:

1. Unlock the potential of mineral deposits that are located under deep rock cover.
2. Improve the productivity of drilling while at the same time collecting data. This will drive down the time and cost of deposit “drill-outs” and bring forward production.

Additionally, MinEx CRC is implementing a National Drilling Initiative (NDI), a world-first collaboration of Government Geological Surveys, researchers and industry that will undertake drilling in under-explored areas of potential mineral wealth.

For the METS sector, this drilling initiative provides the opportunity to access world-class technology in a collaborative R&D environment.

Part of MinEx CRC’s focus is to extend the capability of Coiled Tubing (CT) drilling so that it can drill deeper, is steerable and delivers the highest quality sampling.

CT technology for deep rock exploration, developed by Deep Exploration Technologies CRC in recent years, promises drilling at 20 per cent of the cost of conventional diamond drilling and has the potential to drive a revolution in mineral exploration.

The CRC is dual headquartered in Western Australia and South Australia.

MinEx CRC was launched in conjunction with the Australian Geoscience Council Convention and Geoscience Australia’s Earth Science Week 2018.

Further information is available on the [MinEx CRC website](#).



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