

## 2018 Independent Review Summary

The purpose of this document is to inform the community of outcomes of AuScope’s 2018 Independent Review of current programs, namely collective program observations and recommendations made by reviewers.

### Background

In July 2018, AuScope commissioned an independent review of its eight programs to establish collective and individual program strengths, weaknesses and opportunities upon which to build.

It forms the first milestone in AuScope’s active community-driven, strategic investment planning process that will culminate in an investment plan for new infrastructure to support geoscience research in late 2019.

AuScope directors appointed four professorial panellists from Australian universities including Neil Williams from Australian National University, Anya Reading and Matt King from The University of Tasmania, and Peter Betts from Monash University to undertake the review with each of AuScope’s program leaders over a two day period.

### Overview

The AuScope program has provided high-impact investment into geoscience infrastructure over the past decade. The current program has some weaknesses relating to project succession planning, diversity, community governance and focus on academic research that should be straightforward to address.

There are a number of opportunities that should be pursued by AuScope in coming years relating to leadership, community building and collaboration.

## Observations

Collective observations of AuScope program from reviewers include:

- AuScope programs have been highly successful and have produced significant impact across the geoscience sector over the past decade.
- Investment has driven innovative scientific research and supported scientific investigation in government and industry.
- AuScope currently has ongoing funding so is well positioned to drive future collaboration across the discipline, nationally and internationally.
- Focus of program funding should be on academic research needs and shift away from direct government and industry support.
- Current AuScope researchers should not develop the comprehensive strategic plan for the next phase of investment in isolation – this needs to be a community-wide activity and should be driven in part by researchers new to AuScope.
- There are significant omissions from the current infrastructure suite including, but not limited to: groundwater resources and hydrogeology, geoscience environmental management, geomechanics, climate related earth science.
- The next generation of geoscientists (early to mid-career researchers) are poorly represented in the AuScope program management structure.

## Recommendations

Program-wide recommendations from reviewers include:

- Big data users are more collaborative than small, long tail data users. AuScope should foster higher levels of collaborative data use amongst small and long tail data users.
- AuScope must strive to deliver findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable (FAIR) data across all projects.

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- Leadership diversity could be improved. Project selection criteria must be changed to require high quality, community minded and diverse leadership and staffing.
- Succession plans including early to mid-career researchers must be included in annual project plans.
- Community governance models would improve current projects.
- Long-lived time series datasets have high value, but appropriate levels of QA/QC need to be funded across life of project to maximise this value.

## Contact

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