

## Minerals geophysics



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### Hierarchy or anarchy?

One of the things that has intrigued me over my working career in mineral exploration is the strikingly different ways that an organisation's structure can impact on the way that entity operates, particularly with respect to the flow of ideas. At one end of the spectrum is the traditional rigid hierarchy where the organisational structure is strictly maintained; at the other extreme is the new-age free-for-all where the organisational structure counts for little – a virtual anarchy!

This set me thinking about what might be the best approach for mineral exploration. Our industry is by no means normal – we are not an industry of single processes and set ways of doing things – so some lateral thinking may be called for. Ideas are our lifeblood.

The strictly hierarchical approach ensures that ideas and procedures come from the top down. Don't question your superiors and do what you're told. Experience and knowledge obviously reside in the upper echelons, and these will dictate how things are done. Making use of all that experience and knowledge makes sense; it may have been hard-earned, incorporating lessons learned from past mistakes. But rigid adherence to an hierarchical structure can mean that fresh ideas and novel approaches may be stifled.

The anarchistic approach allows an unfettered free flow of ideas and approaches. We live in technically exciting times, where the dissemination

of information is greater than ever – all ideas are on the table. Who's to say that one idea is any better than another? Old approaches have been tried and found wanting – time for something new and different. But is an uncritical approach the right answer? Is new necessarily better? Without structure there will be operational inefficiencies. Mistakes may be repeated again and again.

Not surprisingly, to my way of thinking, the optimum approach lies somewhere in the middle: strong encouragement of new ideas that have been evaluated by knowledge and experience. The young geologist can point to descriptions of a new geophysical technique or processing procedure and rightly say, 'Why aren't we using this?'. There may be very good reasons why we aren't, but let's at least thoroughly evaluate the suggestion and explain the reasoning, then everyone benefits.

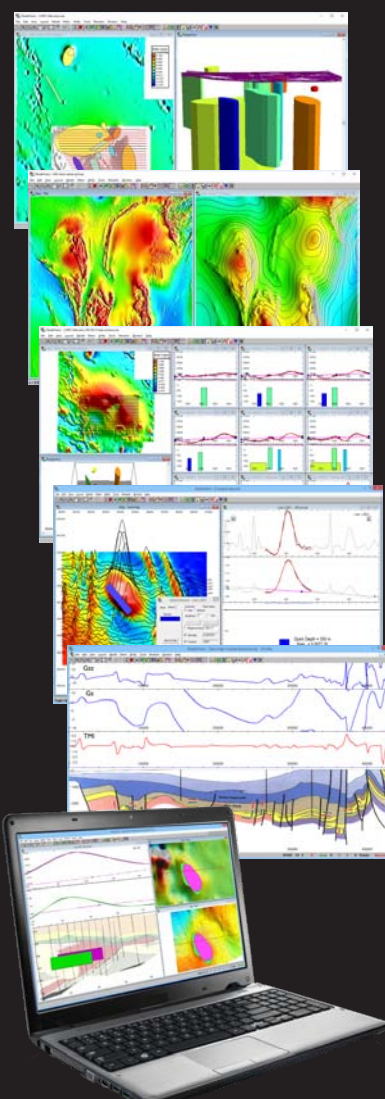
So, bring on the suggestions, questions and comments, no matter how far out there they are. And, old hands, don't despair – there will always be the need for knowledge and experience.

Which brings me to the Frank Arnott Award winners featured in this issue of *Preview*. Theo's introduction sets the scene, followed by the University of Adelaide and Team Macquarie summaries of their submissions. If ever there was an award which championed innovative techniques, this is it.

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