

Media Release

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Australian Miners Unearth New Business Intelligence Strategies

28 September 2011, Perth: The growth of Australia's mining sector could reach new heights if it were to follow the lead of some of the world's most progressive resource companies and adopt an uninhibited view of current Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology, according to one of Australia's top spatial experts.

Speaking at the GIS in Mining and Exploration Conference 2011 in Perth today, Esri Australia's W.A. Business Manager Tom Gardner said, for GIS, the emerging trend within the sector is its use in areas of mine operations that are considered non-traditional.

"For decades resource companies have used GIS in exploration, tenure, environmental and heritage management," Mr Gardner said.

"However an increasing number of mines are using the technology in areas such as health and safety, asset management, emergency management and operational mine management, to deliver significant productivity, efficiency and safety gains.

"In the context of the current mining boom it is more important than ever for miners to develop their capabilities by identifying and implementing GIS-driven strategies that will help to expedite the location and extraction of new resources."

A recent industry report found the Australian mining sector has grown at a rate of eight per cent per year since 2006, and has already generated around \$176 billion over the last financial year.

Western Australia is home to forty-four per cent of the nation's mining businesses, which generate up to 80 per cent of the state's GDP.

Mr Gardner said implementing GIS across the mine would bring local resources organisations into line with other world-leaders within the sector.

“Unlike the majority of businesses in Australia, the challenge for the mining sector is to meet demand rather than explore cost savings,” Mr Gardner said.

“In this environment the capability delivered through GIS becomes a means to avoiding inefficiency so as to maximise mine output.

“With employees, assets and activities to manage across large areas and sometimes multiple sites, the need for a single point of truth that visualises what is occurring across a mine is crucial to being able to identify bottlenecks and monitor risk and safety issues.

“GIS collates and integrates disparate data into a common picture which provides that single point of truth for decision-makers.

“For example, on GIS-driven digital mapping applications, users can see where employees are and what task they are performing or what clearance or qualifications they might have.

“This could be crucial in an emergency situation where you need to know who is at risk, who is available to manage the problem, or even what assets are at their disposal.

“Additionally the information could be used in workforce planning as a means of identifying mobile or transferrable resources.”

The GIS in Mining and Exploration Conference 2011 brought together GIS professionals, mining companies, government representatives and university delegates to network and share ideas about GIS technology and challenges in the mining sector.

Mr Gardner said Esri Australia, which was founded in Perth more than 34 years ago, had a long history of partnering with mining organisations.

“It’s an exciting time for GIS – the growth the technology is experiencing within the mining sector is delivering innovations many would have considered a mere pipe dream.”

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About Esri Australia

Esri Australia has a 33 year history of providing location intelligence and data mapping solutions that help organisations make smart business decisions. The combination of local expertise and world-leading Esri GIS technology has helped thousands of government departments and commercial organisations to turn their data, information and knowledge into collective insight to reveal opportunity.

About GIS

Geographic Information Systems are a key piece of technology used in thousands of organisations Australia-wide from the military and government, to the insurance and mining sector. Australia's GIS industry currently stands at over \$2.1 billion and more than 300,000 organisations across the world use Esri GIS.