

# Geo Message

News and events for the geospatial community

October 2024

## 'Economic Impact of Geospatial Services in Australia' Report Launch



On Wednesday, 30th October, we officially launched our 'Economic Impact of Geospatial Services in Australia' Report at Parliament House in Canberra.

Dr. James Johnson, CEO of Geoscience Australia, received the report on behalf of the government, with around 60 people in attendance, including government representatives, key industry leaders, and 9 News.

The report, the first of its kind since 2008, was commissioned by GCA and conducted by a team from ACIL Allen.



It estimates that geospatial technology contributed \$39 billion to Australia's economy in the 2023-2024 financial year, with annual economic output projected to reach as much as \$90 billion by 2033-2034. Beyond economic growth and lifting productivity, geospatial services are recognised for their contributions to national security, emergency response, and consumer well-being.



### Key findings include:

- Current impact (2023-24): \$39 billion in GDP and 12,000 full-time jobs.
- Projected future impact (2033-34): \$90 billion in GDP, and an additional 32,000 full-time jobs.

The full report, which includes a breakdown of the economic impact by state and industry, can be downloaded [HERE](#).

A companion report featuring 65 case studies can be accessed [HERE](#).



# REGIONAL CONFERENCE SERIES

## North Queensland Conference Recap

On Friday, 11th October, we hosted our North Queensland Geospatial Conference in Cairns. Key highlights included learning about the future of the neurodiverse geospatial workforce, as well as the latest in cadastral surveying standards to ensure

accurate and reliable GIS data. We also explored new methods for water management and change detection, and heard key updates from the Surveyors Board of Queensland and The Surveyors' Trust.



## Western Australia – Friday, 8 November

### Registration closing soon

Registration is currently open for the WA Geospatial Conference, taking place on Friday, 8th November at The Maali, Perth Zoo. Throughout the day we'll explore cutting-edge topics like surviving the digital transformation apocalypse, innovations in broadband constellations and PNT systems, cloud technology for geospatial solutions, and the integration of AI with geospatial data. With expert insights into infrastructure monitoring, unsealed road management, and advancements in LiDAR, this event offers something for everyone!



Register [HERE!](#)

## ACT - Thursday 21, November

### Call for abstracts

The last of our regional conferences for 2024 is the ACT Geospatial Conference & Excellence Awards, which will be held at the Mercure Belconnen on Thursday 21 November. Call for abstracts are currently open.

The main topics are:

- How are individuals upskilling in this digital age?
- How can business digitally transform?
- Geospatial data governance and sharing.
- Interaction between industry and government.

Submit your abstract [HERE!](#)



## National Engineering Surveying Certification v2.0 launched

### At the end of September we launched the National Engineering Surveying Certification v2.0.

This significant update introduces a fresh approach to certifying engineering surveyors, reflecting the evolving needs of the industry and enhancing the certification's relevance and accessibility for professionals across the country.

Formerly known as the Engineering Surveying Professional – Australasia Pacific (ESP-AP) Certification, the National Engineering Surveying Certification has been restructured to incorporate new standards and processes, ensuring it continues to set the benchmark for excellence in the field.

Following a comprehensive review by the Certification Committee, Working Group and industry stakeholders, we have implemented a range of enhancements designed to better support both professionals and employers.

#### Key Updates in v2.0 Include:

- **Revised Eligibility Criteria**

The certification now requires a minimum AQF 5 Diploma and revised work experience requirements, making it more accessible to professionals at various career stages.

- **Two-Tier Structure**

The introduction of General and Specialist Certification levels allows for greater flexibility, catering to both core competencies and specialised expertise.

- **Revised Competency Framework**

New mandatory categories such as Data Management and Data Analysis have been added, ensuring alignment with modern industry demands.

- **Digitalised Application Process**

A new, user-friendly digital system streamlines the application process, replacing the previous points system with a more transparent assessment approach.

- **Assessment Interviews**

Candidates will now undergo interviews to provide a comprehensive evaluation of their skills and experience.

- **New Fee Structure**

Certification fees have been revised, with GCA members paying \$550 for new applications and non-members paying \$950. After obtaining initial Certification, candidates can later decide to add Specialist sub-categories and pay the additional fees.



To find out more, or to apply for Certification, click [HERE.](#)

## Maurits van der Vlugt appointed as TASSIC Chair



We are pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Maurits van der Vlugt as the new independent Chair of the Tasmanian Spatial Information Council (TASSIC), as appointed by Minister Nick Duigan, Tasmanian Minister for Parks and Environment. Maurits will begin his three-year term in October, leading the seven-member council. TASSIC draws its members from State and

Local Government, academia, business, and professional associations, with the aim of maximising the use of geospatial information in Tasmania.

Appointed following a national Expressions of Interest process, Maurits succeeds Mr. Alan Smart, who stepped down after completing two three-year terms. He brings a wealth of experience to the role, having worked as a consultant, leader, and practitioner in the industry. He is well-known to GCA members for his involvement with the annual Locate conference, the former SIBA, and as the Chair of the Space, Spatial, and Surveying Diversity Leadership Network (SSSDLN). One of his first priorities will be to lead the development of TASSIC's new Strategic Plan, set to be released in 2025. Congratulations Maurits!

## GCA Members

We encourage all members to log in to the Member Portal and ensure your contact details, including your location, are up to date. This will help us send you personalised emails about events, news, and opportunities happening in your region. The Member Portal can be accessed via the GCA website.

For any membership queries, please contact our Memberships Officer:

[membership@geospatialcouncil.org.au](mailto:membership@geospatialcouncil.org.au)



## Position Magazine

The latest edition of Position magazine will have reached GCA full-financial members' desks by now – but if you're working remotely and can't access it, you can access the digital issue via the member portal.

For instant updates on what's happening in the industry, be sure to follow Position Magazine and Spatial Source online:

 [Position magazine & SpatialSource.com.au](https://www.linkedin.com/company/position-magazine/)

 [www.spatialsource.com.au](http://www.spatialsource.com.au)



## GISP-AP Certification

Following the suspension of the GISP-AP late last year, a Certification Committee has been formed to ensure its prompt relaunch. We are currently in discussions with GISCI in North America and have been collaborating with Survey and Spatial NZ, with the aim of re-introducing the GISP-AP Certification concurrently in the Oceania region early next year. We will first launch the Certification in Australia and New Zealand, and gradually include other pacific nations.

## Surveying and Spatial Scholarships Fundraiser

A campaign has been launched to raise funds for two surveying and spatial scholarships at the University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ). Announcing the campaign launch at the recent GCA Queensland Conference, Phillip Pozzi, Chair of the ISAQ Bicentennial Education Foundation, said there has never been a more urgent need to help students enter the profession and to build the skills the profession so badly needs.

Pozzi said that with students struggling to pay their way through university because of the high cost of living, sky high rent and work pressures, a hand up was desperately needed. He said the Foundation had in its two years of operation established the endowed Clem Jones and Geoff Wright Foundation in partnership with the Clem Jones Foundation and the Springfield City Group. Additionally, it has awarded three Honours Year Research Bursaries to help students with expenses related to their final year projects, and \$8,000 has been donated to the Student Support Fund at UniSQ.

However to continue to fund scholarships and bursaries, the Foundation is seeking the support of the surveying and spatial community. Directors are excited by the challenge to raise \$100,000 by August next year towards

establishing two more endowed scholarships. All gifts to the Foundation are tax-deductible.

Information on how to donate to the Foundation can be found at <https://www.isaqbef.org.au/> or by emailing [admin@isaqbef.org.au](mailto:admin@isaqbef.org.au).

In related news, applications for the Clem Jones and Geoff Wright Scholarship for 2025 are **now open** but be quick! Closing date is 18 November 2024.





# WORKING WEEK 2025

AND

# Locate25 | G

THE NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL CONFERENCE

Call for  
Papers

We are pleased to announce the Call for Papers is now open for Locate25, held alongside FIG Working Week 2025, in Brisbane, from 6-10 April 2025.

By teaming up with the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), the international network for surveying and geospatial experts, we're bringing the world to Brisbane, creating a unique platform for geospatial professionals to connect, learn, and collaborate on a global scale. This international event will feature over 70 technical sessions, interactive workshops, and a comprehensive exhibition, showcasing the latest advancements in geospatial technology.

The theme for next year's event is Collaboration, Innovation, and Resilience: Championing a Digital Generation. FIG Working Week 2025 + Locate25 will therefore include multi-disciplinary sessions across all ten FIG technical commissions, task forces, networks, and permanent institutions. Conference discussions will address the foundational issues across Political, Economic, Social, and Technological trends shaping our future. We encourage submissions of cross-disciplinary nature that reflect the evolving landscape of the sector.

We invite abstracts for peer-review and non peer-review / regular papers across all areas of geospatial/surveying/hydrography/construction/valuation and more. Topics will include (but not limited to):

- **Geospatial and the SDGs:** How the industry contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Climate Compass:** Addressing the climate imperative and building resilience through industry solutions.
- **International Trends & the Future Geospatial Information Ecosystem:** Exploring technological advancements and the global implications for geospatial practices.
- **Evolutionary Diversity and Inclusion:** Fostering a new generation of professionals and ensuring inclusivity across the industry.

**Submission deadline:**

Peer-review abstracts and full paper: 1 December

Regular/Non peer-review abstracts: 19 December

For more information and submission guidelines, click [HERE](#).

# Business News

## Survey all the latest news

Are you staying up to date with geospatial matters around Australia and across the world? Make sure you're subscribed to the Spatial Source newsletter, Australia's free weekly round-up of news, views and interviews.

Join thousands of other well-informed geospatial professionals by clicking [HERE](#) to sign up.



## New Report: Ports Australia – State of Trade 2024

Ports Australia is proud to launch the inaugural State of Trade report, providing a snapshot of the important role ports play in Australia's prosperity, development and security. You can read the full report [HERE](#).



# Ports Australia

## New Report: State of the Surveying Workforce in QLD

The Surveyors' Trust has released a new report that provides an in-depth analysis of the state of the surveying workforce in Queensland, providing lessons and guidance for the wider surveying community nationwide.

You can read it [HERE](#).



## Industry Events

### FOSS4G SotM Oceania 2024

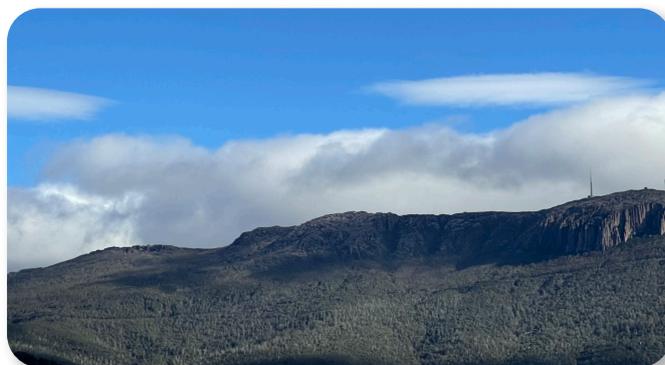
Register [HERE](#)

**When: 5-8 November**

**Where: Hobart**

The Free and Open-Source Software for Geospatial and State of the Map Oceania Conference (FOSS4G SotM Oceania) is coming to Hobart from 5–8 November!

This event is a celebration of all things open geospatial, bringing together enthusiasts, professionals, and experts to connect, learn, and share.



Whether you're deep into geospatial technology or just starting out, this event has something for everyone! We'd love to see you there, so come along and invite your friends.



Unlock New Opportunities at the Grow with Monitoring Event

**Date:** 15 November  
**Venue:** Civil Contractors Federation, 1 South Road, Thebarton, SA, 5031 3 GCA CPD Points  
**Time:** 8.30am - 12pm (Followed by BBQ lunch)



Register [HERE](#)

Murray Regional Group & Surveying Heritage Group Seminar



**Date:** 18 November  
**Venue:** Lake Hume Resort, 1 Ray Welsh Dr, Lake Hume Village NSW 2640 CPD: 4.5 SP, 0.5 CAD  
**Time:** 12:00pm - 6:00pm

Register [HERE](#)



ISNSW 57th Annual Golf Day

**Date:** 19 November  
**Venue:** Pennant Hills Golf Course

[Register now to secure your spot!](#)

Positioning & Measurement and Engineering Workshop



**Date:** 22 November  
**Where:** New Zealand  
 6 CPD Points

Register [HERE](#)

**Brisbane, Australia 6-10 April**

**WORKING WEEK 2025**

**Collaboration, Innovation and Resilience**  
Championing a Digital Generation

Join us in Australia for FIG Working Week 2025, where you'll gain unparalleled access to the international surveying and geospatial community. This event offers a platform to exchange experiences and stay at the forefront of the industry, covering topics such as innovation, resilience, and sustainability.

**Why attend?**

- Learn and share globally
- Network across related professions
- Make an impact on your career
- Enjoy undisturbed face-to-face time

Find out more here  
[www.fig.net/fig2025/](http://www.fig.net/fig2025/)

Co-Location Partner: Queensland AUSTRALIA  
Event Partner: brisbane australia  
Organized by: FIG Geospatial Council of Australia

FIG2025 / Locate25

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**When: 6-10 April 2025**

**Where: Brisbane**

**Venue: Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre**

## Geospatial Council of Australia Upcoming Events

### WA Geospatial Conference & Awards

**Date: 8 November**

**Conference Time: 8:30am – 5:00pm**

**Dinner Time: 6:30pm - late**

**Venue: The Maali, PerthZoo**

Register [HERE](#)

This event is proudly supported by:

MAJOR EVENT PARTNERS:

**APAC Geospatial**  
Remote sensing of the real world

**C.R.Kennedy**  
GEOSPATIAL SOLUTIONS

**1spatial**  
YOUR WORLD SMARTER

**THE SURVEYORS' TRUST**

**sphere drones**

**Map Gear**

**HEXAGON**

### Webinar: Latest innovations in GNSS

**Date: 12 November**

**Time: 3:00pm – 4:00pm (AEST)**

**Venue: Online**

Register [HERE](#)



## ACT YEP Geospatial Social Evening

Date: 13 November  
Time: 4:30pm – 5:30pm  
Venue: Geoscience Australia

Register [HERE](#)



## Hydrographic Seminar Mackay

Date: 13 November  
Time: 2:00pm – 5:00pm (AEDT)  
Venue: Mackay Marina Village

Register [HERE](#)

## Geospatial Office Visit: Transport NSW, TECCH

Date: 14 November  
Time: 2:00pm – 3:30pm (AEST)  
Venue: Transport for NSW,  
Macquarie Park Canberra

Register [HERE](#)



## ACT Geospatial Conference & Excellence Awards

**Date:** 21 November  
**Time:** 9:00am – 7:30pm (ACDT)  
**Venue:** 59 Cameron Avenue

Register [HERE](#)

This event is proudly supported by:

MAJOR PARTNERS:



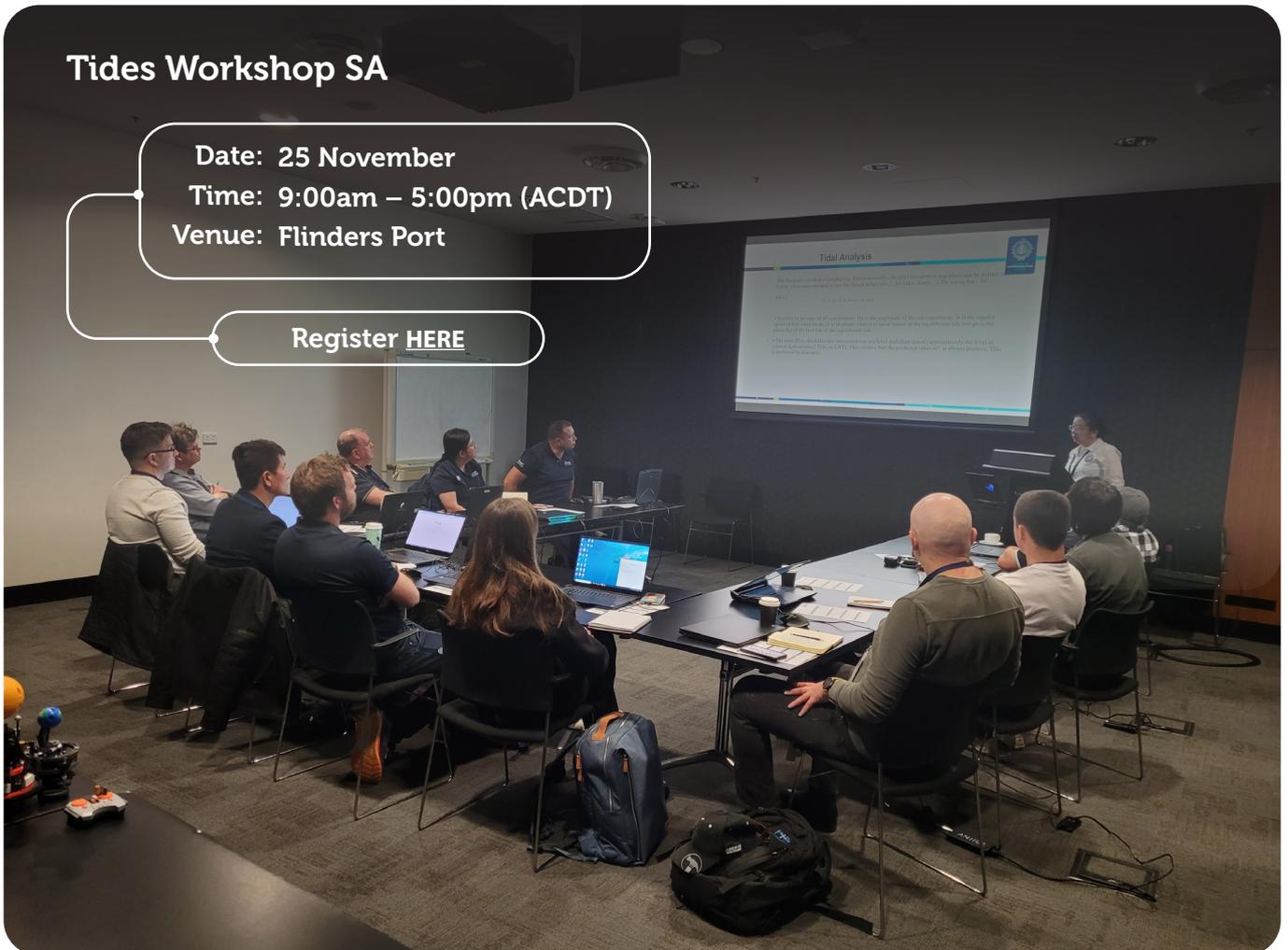
EVENT SUPPORTER:



## Tides Workshop SA

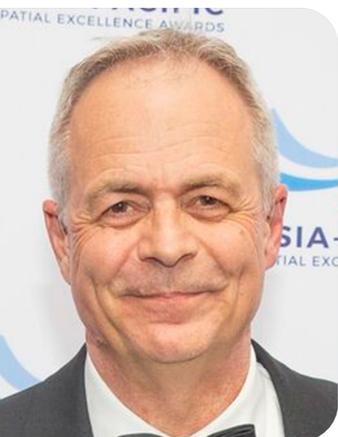
**Date:** 25 November  
**Time:** 9:00am – 5:00pm (ACDT)  
**Venue:** Flinders Port

Register [HERE](#)



# Q&A

## MEET THE MEMBERS



**Maurits van der Vlugt,**  
**Director, Mercury**  
**Project Solutions**  
**Non-Executive Director,**  
**Advier Australia**  
**Independent Chair,**  
**Tasmanian Spatial**  
**Information Council**  
**(TASSIC)**

**Chair, Space Spatial and Surveying**  
**Diversity Leadership Network**  
**(SSSDLN)**

### **How and why did you join the GCA?**

The companies I've worked for in the past (Social Change Online, SKM/Jacobs, NGIS) were all founding SIBA members, and as such, I've been very involved since 2001. When we started Mercury Project Solutions in 2010, we also joined SIBA, and since the merger, I've been a GCA individual member.

### **Where did your interest in geospatial technologies come from?**

When I was a child, my father travelled frequently and kept a box of maps in his study, collected from his trips. I loved rummaging through them, imagining what those far-off places looked like. That early fascination led me to pursue a Master's degree in Human Geography at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands, where I majored in Computer Science. The rest is history!

### **What role do surveying/ geospatial technologies play in your working life?**

They have obviously been an integral part ever since I started my career after leaving university. Either directly, when doing geospatial consulting, or indirectly, when I was doing demographic modelling and transport planning. As geographers, we will always ask 'why' and 'where' in the same breath, giving us a unique and invaluable perspective.

What are the key benefits that you believe geospatial technologies bring to Australian business and society?

I'm going to be a little controversial here. All your readers will know the key benefits, but I do think we overhype and overblow them. I see surveying and geospatial technologies as

the lifeblood that 'just makes things work'. Land administration, construction, urban and transport planning, agribusiness, health, infrastructure, and climate adaptation, all rely on geospatial technologies. But most of it is invisible to the vast majority of users. Until things break of course. So, I think there are very few direct benefits to business and society; most are derived or at arm's length. That doesn't make what we do any less important, but it poses challenges in telling our story and selling the business case.

### **How does the GCA help its members to innovate and succeed?**

Good question. SIBA originally had a strong advocacy role, ensuring the value of geospatial was continuously front of mind in business and government. This function eroded in SIBA's final years. I'm looking forward to GCA picking up this role and returning it to its former glory.

For individuals, GCA aims to provide a wide range of professional development activities, continuing from its SSSI



base. Given our members' wide range of (sub-) disciplines, this can be a thankless task. I am also delighted to see GCA actively supporting and promoting diversity and inclusion in our industry. We are still a very white, male and older demographic, especially among our leaders. This must change, not only to address skill and succession challenges, but also because research shows inclusive and diverse organisations are more profitable, innovate better, and have dramatically higher staff retention rates.

**What does the future of geospatial hold?**

Where's my crystal ball? I'm willing to look perhaps 3-5 years ahead and can see three (emerging) trends.

AI/ML is in my view the biggest one, enabling the rapid processing of exponentially growing data streams and the democratisation of spatial analysis, where end-users will increasingly interact with the data directly without relying on the geospatial expert. By the way, fear not for your jobs! In the 25 years of geospatial consulting, I have consistently heard geospatial analysts complain they're spending 80% of their time on mundane tasks making maps for others instead of more exciting and challenging work. AI will enable them to transition rather than make them redundant.

The second, partly related trend, is the integration of space and spatial. Rapidly advancing space capabilities (sovereign and otherwise) lead to an increasing need for what's called downstream processing and analysis, which is where our industry comes in. This has great potential, and I'm looking forward to seeing GCA play a pivotal role in exploiting these opportunities for our members.

Finally, we can't ignore the so-called spatial digital twins, which are in my view at an inflection point. We've developed some great technology and showcases in this field. Their ongoing success will depend on how well they add and incorporate user value.

**What are some notable awards or significant milestones in your career related to geospatial technologies?**

Quite early on, in my early thirties, there was a moment when I noticed an emerging generation of young Turks who were

already much better and faster at the hands-on technical stuff (driving GIS, coding) than I was. With some pain in my heart, I left such tasks to them and pivoted to more business-oriented roles such as business analysis, project management and consulting. I never looked back, though it still helps having a basic understanding of the hands-on work. One of the crowning moments in my career was in 2022 when I received both the NSW spatial professional of the year award and the SIBA|GITA Chair's award. There are few things better than being recognised by one's peers.

**What do you do outside of your work in the industry (family, hobbies, interests, sports, pets etc)**

I'm a very passionate and competitive bridge player (the card game). I'm writing this from Buenos Aires where I'm competing in the World Bridge Games, representing Australia on the Australian mixed team, playing with my wife, and only last month we played a major international tournament in Delhi, India.



The Geospatial Council of Australia is very keen to gather feedback on GeoMessage and the value it delivers to our Members. Please let us know what you would like to see in our next edition by emailing any feedback or comments to [comms@geospatialcouncil.org.au](mailto:comms@geospatialcouncil.org.au)