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Distal footprints: uncovering new mineral resources

In a move that could revolutionise the way we search for resources in Australia, a team of the nation's best scientists have been charged with improving the diminishing success rates of minerals exploration.

Focusing on the potentially lucrative Capricorn region of Western Australia, a \$19 million project underway with CSIRO, Curtin University, The University of Western Australia and the Geological Survey of Western Australia seeks to develop a new way of discovering mineral deposits in the area.

The challenge

Searching for underground resources is complex and expensive. Australia in particular has a unique geological make-up with a blanket of cover built up over millions of years making it difficult to detect deposits and therefore develop new mine sites.

Although there are potentially huge mineral deposits under its thick surface, the Capricorn region is a poorly explored and poorly understood area. By bringing together some of the best scientists in Australia, the project will tackle some of the technical risks and help industry to unlock this vast potential resource.

The solution

The *Distal Footprints* project will help address the fundamental limitations to mineral discovery in Australia.

The project will deliver new data, interpretations, understanding and

technologies to help discover mineral wealth in regions that until now have been difficult to explore.

This ground-breaking approach to exploration aims to expand the search area used to identify the markers that point to large mineral deposits.

Distal Footprints are signatures we might expect to find around an ore deposit from distances of up to several tens if not hundreds of kilometres.

The outcome

The research from the Distal Footprints project will be used to arm industry with the information they need to discover if resources are nearby, and in what direction and how deep they are.

The new capability will increase exploration certainty in Australia making it an attractive destination for investment, ensuring that the resources sector remains globally competitive.

The project is supported by funding awarded under the Federal Government's Science and Industry Endowment Fund (SIEF), as well as contributions from the WA Government's Minerals Research Institute of Western Australia, industry, the Geological Survey of Western

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Australia and the National Resource Sciences Precinct (NRSP) foundation research partners.

The project is one of the first to be conducted under the auspices of the NRSP.

The National Resource Sciences Precinct (NRSP) is a CSIRO, Curtin University and The University of Western Australia collaboration connecting the world's best researchers with industry and government to tackle some of the most complex challenges facing the resources industry.

For more information, please visit nrsp.com.au or email info@nrsp.com.au



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