

Haddon Forrester King Medal for Dr Neil Williams



The former chief executive officer of Geoscience Australia, Dr Neil Williams PSM, FTSE, has been awarded the Australian Academy of Science's Haddon Forrester King Medal in recognition of a long and distinguished geoscience career. Dr Williams contributed to Australia's submission for the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in 2008, resulting in 2.56 million square kilometres being added to the country's jurisdiction.

The Haddon Forrester King Medal is awarded every two years to acknowledge original and sustained contributions to the Earth sciences in Australia, particularly relating to the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of mineral deposits including hydrocarbons.

When Dr Williams joined the public service in 1991 he brought with him a wealth of knowledge of the minerals industry and economic geology. He assumed leadership of Geoscience Australia's predecessor the Australian Geological Survey Organisation in 1995; eventually becoming the agency's longest serving Chief Executive.

Key achievements under Dr Williams' stewardship included:

- Acquisition of vast amounts of airborne geophysical (magnetics and radiometrics) and gravity data that meant by the early 2000s Australia had the world's first complete national coverage of airborne magnetic and gravity maps.
- Australia's submission to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in 2008 which resulted in 2.56 million square kilometres being added to Australia's marine jurisdiction.
- Leadership in establishing the National Geoscience Agreement with the states and the Northern Territory which has become a highly productive partnership supporting resource exploration.
- Stimulation of petroleum exploration investment in offshore Australia, with particular success demonstrating the petroleum prospectivity of the Browse Basin off Western Australia and the Bight Basin on Australia's southern margin.

[Dr Williams' contribution to his profession](#) and public service has been previously acknowledged in several significant ways. In 1996 he was elected to the position of Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering. In 2006 he was awarded the Public Service Medal for outstanding service in the provision of geoscientific advice to government, geoscience services, industry and the public.

Image: Former Geoscience Australia Chief Executive Officer, Dr Neil Williams PSM FTSE. Image courtesy: Geoscience Australia.