Mineralogical Society of Western Australia Inc.

To encourage mineralogical study by amateur and professional alike and, in so doing, discover, document and preserve the Earth's, and in particular Western Australia's, natural history

NEWSLETTER 116
September 2026

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to issue 116 of the MinSocWA Newsletter.

It is a pleasure to produce a newsletter featuring such exceptional and original contributions from our members. Warm thanks to Craig, Stephen, Peter, Murray and Susan & Vernon.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our society AGM on Wednesday, 9 September! Led by our President, James, the meeting saw a great turnout. We thank all members for their time and valuable contributions. You will find here after a summary of the key decisions and insights from the event.

Articles for the fourth quarter Newsletter are due by Friday 4 December. Please make sure to prepare these in time for arrival by the 4th ahead of the Christmas rush 🎄.

Francine Payette
Newsletter Editor

July mini talks

First discovery of crystalline cerussite at the Magellan lead mine (now Rosslyn Hill mine)

Talk presented by Craig Bosel. Photos provided by Craig.

Craig worked as the senior mine geologist at the Magellan lead mining operation back in 2010-2011. It is a world-unique 'laterite lead' deposit near Wiluna, WA. The ore comprises very fine-grained cerussite and anglesite disseminated in sediments, and no coarsely crystalline cerussite had ever been collected previously. As a mineral collector this was a great disappointment to him, as well as a niggling challenge.

Craig gave a short slide presentation on the deposit and mining operation then focussed on the fortuitous day his rock hammer broke into a concealed crystal-lined vug halfway up a pit wall. The cerussite is grey in colour, possibly due to native lead particles within the crystal lattice (not yet proven by analysis). The cerussite lacks the fine aesthetics of reticulated white cerussite from Broken Hill or Tsumeb, but he was a very happy man nonetheless! ‘Sixling twins’ are commonly seen in hand specimen.

The vug was mined out and large cabinet specimens sent to several state museums on the company’s behalf. It is hoped that all WA mining companies will show the same foresight and largesse with future significant mineral finds uncovered in their mining operations, for posterity’s sake.



A typical sixling-twinned cerussite specimen recovered from the vug.





Craig collecting from the small vug on the south wall of the Magellan Pit, 16/9/2010. *Inside the vug (sunglasses for scale).*

***Craig** has been a member of MinSocWA since 2008. His passion for mineral collecting began at just nine years old while living on a North Queensland cattle station. Pursuing this lifelong interest, he studied in New Zealand to become a geologist. Over a 39-year career in the mining industry, Craig worked across Western Australia, New Zealand, Northern Territory, and Queensland at various gold, iron ore, manganese, diamonds, uranium, lead, and nickel operations. Walking around remote mine sites, both above and underground, frequently benefited his mineral collection.*

A special cerussite

Cerussite at The Australian Museum



One of the museum's most celebrated cerussite specimens is a group of long, bladed crystals forming a reticulated pattern. This is the best cerussite specimen with the longest crystals of its type in the world, reaching up to 28.7 cm. Its long, bladed crystals, like miniature swords, form a striking lattice pattern called ‘reticulated’, giving it great aesthetic appeal. This specimen has been an icon of the museum's mineral collection for over 90 years; it was featured on a pre-stamped envelope by Australia Post in 1983 to celebrate the centenary of Broken Hill mineral discoveries.

This specimen is part of the magnificent collection assembled by the management of the BHP Block 14 Mine at Broken Hill after its closure and donated to the Australian Museum in 1933 via its manager, Mr F Voss-Smith. The collection was transported to Sydney by rail in wooden boxes and, despite the long journey and the fragility of the crystals, none of the specimens were damaged. It was one of the finest bequests ever made to the Museum.

Image and text: courtesy of Australian Museum.

Cerussite. BHP Block 14 Mine, Broken Hill, New South Wales, Australia.
Dimensions: 33 x 27 x 12 cm. Collected before 1930. Registered 1933, D32152.
Image: John Fields. © Australian Museum.

The Jade Gorge, UNESCO Itoigawa Global Geopark, Japan

Talk presented by Stephen Turner. Photos by Stephen unless noted otherwise.

In the late 1930s a significant jade locality was recognized within a gorge on the Kotaki River near Itoigawa, Niigata Prefecture, in Japan. Previously, ancient jade artifacts and carvings in Japan were assumed to have originated from China or Myanmar, as historically they were the two main sources for jadeite. Archaeological evidence now pointed to a local source, which had a profound effect on the fields of geology and archaeology. The jade mining and processing date back to at least 5500 years ago, the Jōmon period in Japan. Scientists confirmed that jade implements and artifacts found throughout Japan were sourced from Itoigawa. Whereas jadeite can be found in many localities in Japan, Itoigawa-Omi is the only source of high-quality jade.

The site is now protected as part of the UNESCO Itoigawa Global Geopark. The City of Itoigawa received certification from the Global Geoparks Network in 2009, making it the first Global Geopark in Japan. This Geopark also covers many other localities of geological interest and is part of a unique geological setting, within the 'Fossa Magna', a major terrane-bounding structure which hosts an array of metamorphic rocks (and rare minerals) as well as recent active volcanism, including Mt Fuji.

The Fossa Magna is a significant geological feature in Japan, often referred to as the "Great Crevasse". It is a great rift lowland that traverses the widest portion of Honshu, from the Sea of Japan to the Pacific. This rift is a result of the separation of the Japanese archipelago from the Asian mainland approximately 26 million years ago.

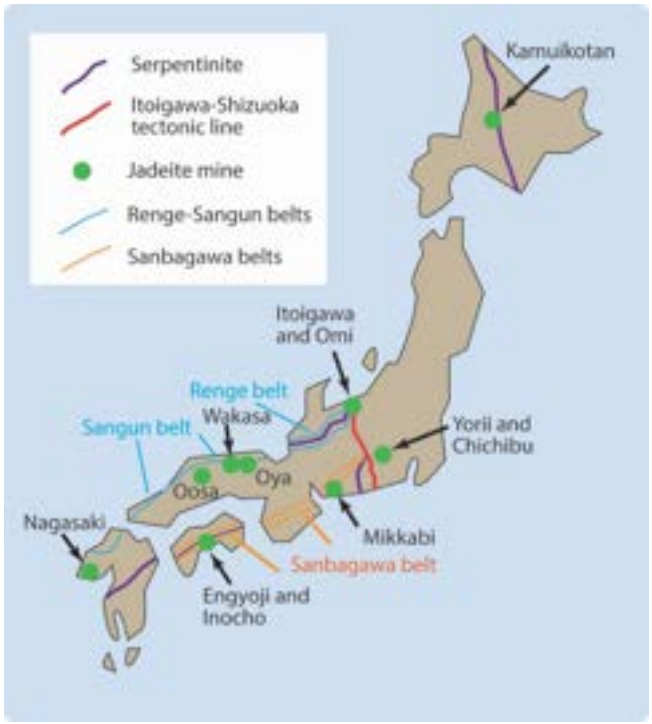
The jade occurrences are part of the Renge Metamorphic Belt mélange, a high pressure / low temperature belt of serpentinite, amphibolite and schist, with pockets of metasomatized rocks (rodingite) which host jadeite deposits.

At the Itoigawa localities jadeite occurs in a wedge of serpentinite at the faulted contact between Permo-Carboniferous limestone and Cretaceous sedimentary rocks.

Jadeite rocks at Kotaki are zoned within albitite – white jadeite, green jadeite, Na-rich calcic amphibole and host serpentinite. Formation of the jadeite is estimated to be ~500 Ma; at the time of the collision of the North American and Eurasian plates.



The Itoigawa-Shizuoka Tectonic Line is an active fault zone forming the western boundary of the 'Fossa Magna". Modified from ggstar.net.



Map modified from Abduriyim et al. (2017), p. 49.



Large boulders of jade, schist, serpentinite, amphibolite and limestone in the Kotaki River gorge.

The white jadeite at Itoigawa is 98% pure. Green, lavender, blue and grey / black jadeite varieties are due to different elements. Testing by Abduriyim et al. (2017) showed the following chromophores:

Green jadeite: Fe, Cr / Lavender jadeite: Ti / Blue jadeite: Ti, Fe / Black jadeite: Graphite (C)

The Itoigawa jadeite is characterized by LILE (large ion lithophile elements) such as Li, B, K, Sr, Ba, and HFSE (high field strength elements) such as Zr and Nb. Associated minerals include albite, titanite, vesuvianite and richterite with late prehnite and analcime in faults.

The geochemical signature indicates the jadeite is formed by subduction-related metasomatism (Morishita et al., 2017) and provides a distinctive fingerprint which differentiates Itoigawa jadeite from Myanmar and elsewhere.

The metamorphic terrane provides the setting for a variety of unusual and exotic minerals, with 80 different minerals and 6 type locality minerals recorded on mindat.org.

Itoigawaite, $SrAl_2Si_2O_7(OH)_2 \cdot H_2O$, a rare strontium-aluminium sorosilicate mineral.

Type Locality: Itoigawa-Ohmi district, Niigata Prefecture, central Japan.



Itoigawaite exhibited at the Mining Museum of Akita University. Image: Wikimedia Commons.

With luck, jade pebbles can still be found in gravels at Oyashirazu Beach, where they were washed out to sea by the Ohmi River.



Stephen's daughter at Oyashirazu Beach.

References

Abduriyim A, Saruwatari K and Katsurada Y, 2017. Japanese Jadeite: History, Characteristics, and Comparison with Other Sources: *Gems & Gemology,* v. 53(1), p. 48–67, http://dx.doi.org/10.5741/GEMS.53.1.48 © 2017 Gemological Institute of America.

Morishita T, Arai S and Ishida Y, 2007. Trace element compositions of jadeite (+omphacite) in jadeitites from the Itoigawa-Ohmi district, Japan: Implications for fluid processes in subduction zones: *Island Arc*, v. 16 (1), p. 40–56, http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1111/j.1440-1738.2007.00557.x

***Stephen** is a MinSocWA member and assistant editor for the Australian Journal of Mineralogy. He has collected minerals since he was a child, after receiving some specimens from his uncle who worked as a surveyor in the Kimberley region. His work as a geologist, principally involved with gold exploration, has taken him all over the world. He started a serious mineral collection while working in Peru which has continued to grow in subsequent years. Since retiring from Newmont in 2023 he has been reducing his overly large collection while focusing on collecting minerals from Western Australia and Japan.*

Itoigawa's jadeite matagamas

Magatamas are curved, comma-shaped beads that appeared in prehistoric Japan from the Final Jōmon period through the Kofun period, approximately 1000 BCE to the 6th century CE.



Jadeite matagamas excavated in the Ukikunden Site in Karatsu City, Saga Prefecture, Japan. Made of jadeite from Itoigawa. Era: 2nd century BC to 1st century BC (Yayoi period). Owned and exhibited: Saga Prefectural Museum.

Image: Wikimedia Commons.

Fieldtrip — Toodyay Day Trip

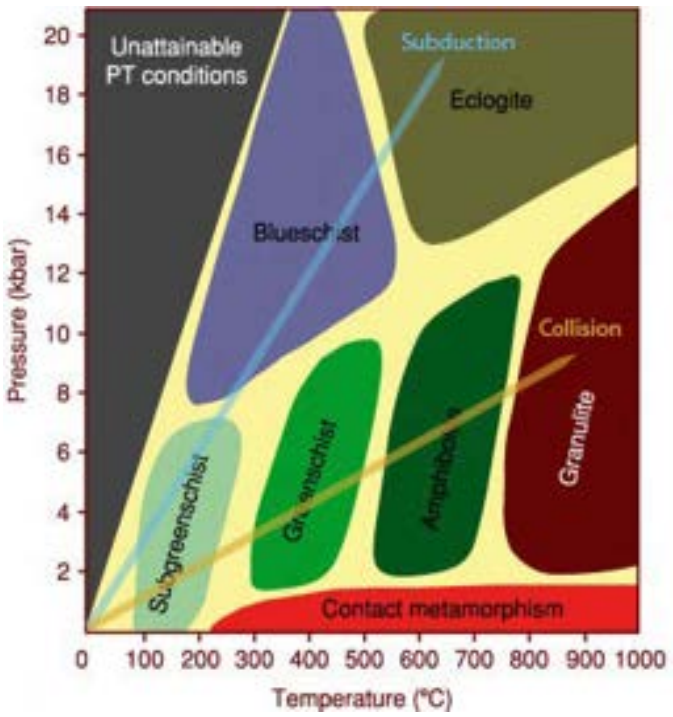
Compiled by Peter Pring.

A group of nine MinSoc members and associates gathered in Toodyay on the morning of Sunday 23rd August for a day of fossicking. We were blessed with perfect weather for the outing, and the everlastings were putting on a good show.



Fossicking at the Toodyay quartz occurrence. Photo by Peter Pring.

The underlying geology of the Toodyay area is dominated by high-grade metamorphic rocks associated with the Jimperding metamorphic belt. Best known of the metamorphic rocks is the Toodyay Quartzite, known commercially as "Toodyay Stone", which is quarried for use in retaining walls and paving. Also present are mica schists and pods of banded iron formation within felsic gneisses. The whole package has been metamorphosed to upper amphibolite facies due to temperatures between 650-700° C and moderate to high pressures between 4.5-12 kbar.



Summary of metamorphic facies showing the relationship of pressure and temperature. Modified from Encyclopedia of Geology, 2005, Vol. 1, Editors: RC Selley, LRM Cocks, IR Plimer, Elsevier Academic.

First stop of the day was a quartz crystal locality on the edge of town, sadly the site had seen recent activity by others who had excavated a considerable hole. On the bright side the recent excavations did mean there was a lot of spoil spread on the surface, and there was plenty of small well-formed clear quartz crystals to be found just by specking, some with chlorite dusted phantom crystals inside. The quartz crystals occur in an area mapped as quartzite, certainly there was plenty of quartzite scattered on the surface of the nearby hill including some with a dusting of fuchsite.



Toodyay quartz crystal with chlorite dusted phantom crystal inside. Photo by Rin Bunn.



Quartz crystals in matrix. Photo by Peter Pring.



Collection of Toodyay quartz crystals. Photo by Rin Bunn.

The group retired to town for lunch, the busy Toodyay bakery saw some patronage. The second stop of the day was down by the Avon River looking for epidote pebbles, there was plenty of colour to be found with a small epidote crystal approximately 3 mm in length spotted in one piece. The provenance of the epidote pebbles is uncertain however the amphibolite units mapped in the area are a likely candidate.



Selection of Avon River epidote pebbles. Photo by Rin Bunn.

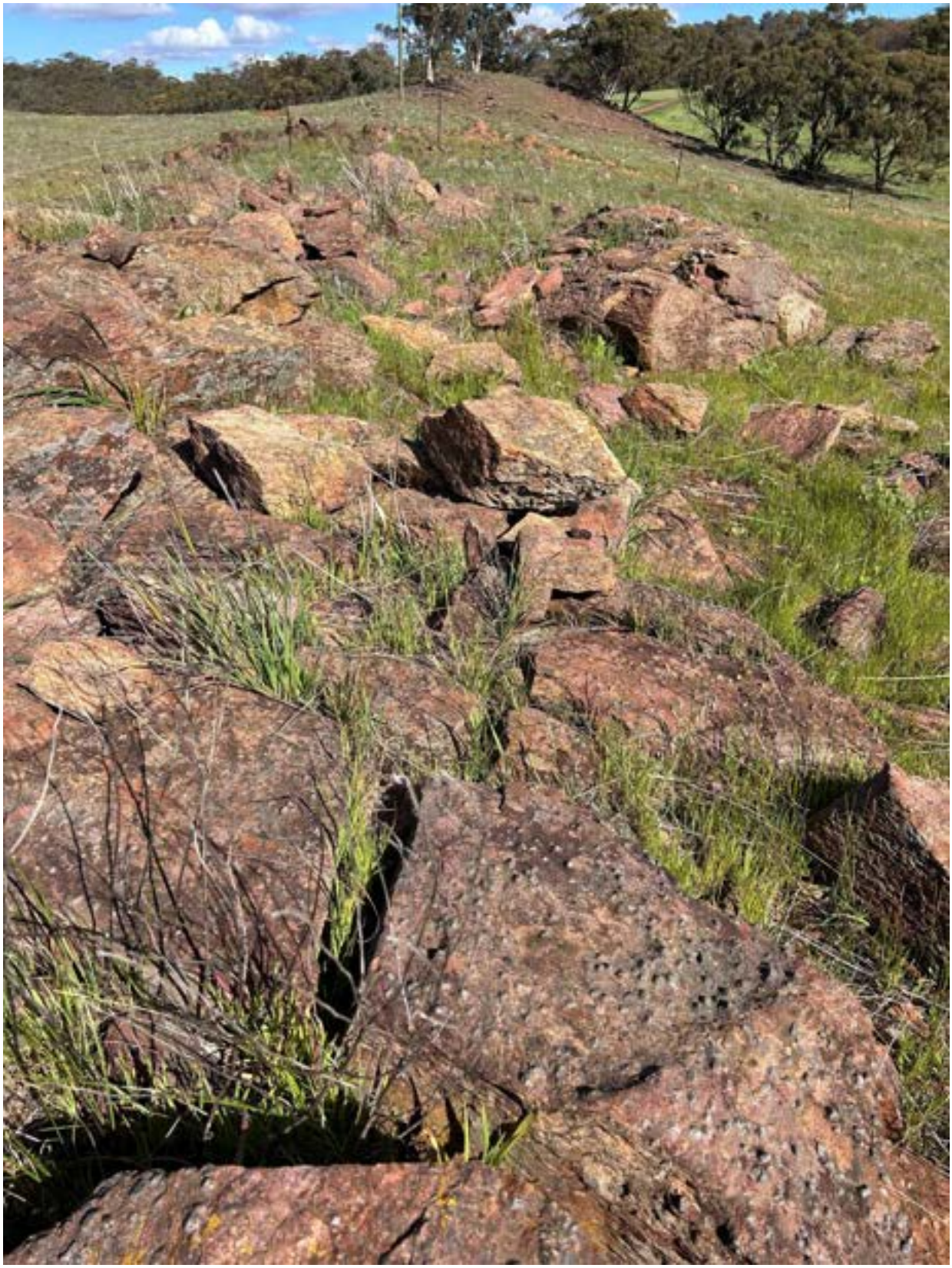
The group parted ways for the return to Perth. A solo mission to an andalusite occurrence locality, was productive with the landowner giving access for a quick reconnaissance of the outcrop and indicating that a future MinSoc visit would be an option. At this location the andalusite forms 12–15 mm porphyroblasts within a mica and hematite schist.



Andalusite in mica schist, plan and section. Photo by Peter Pring.

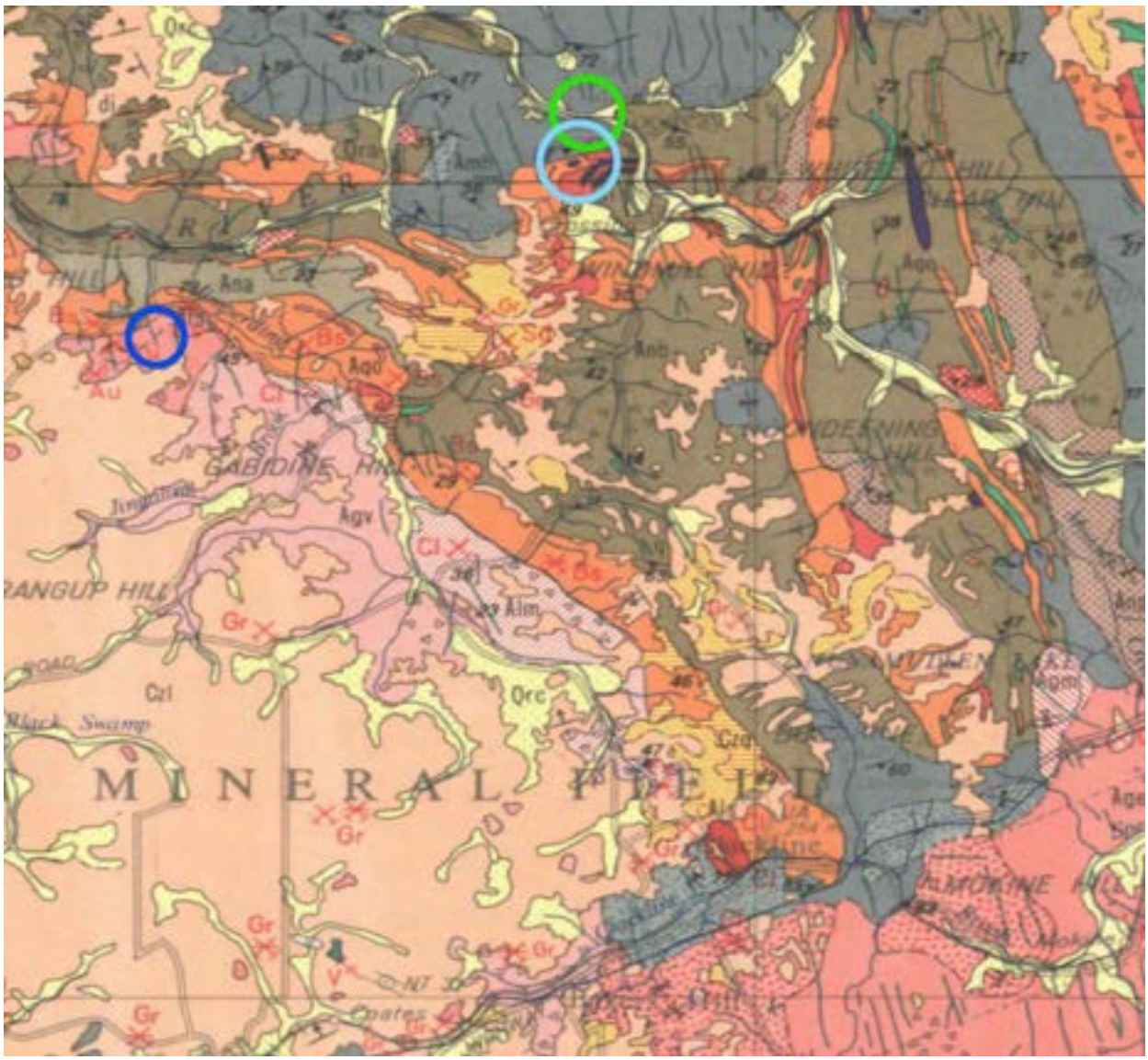


Andalusite porphyroblasts in mica schist, Lovers Lane Toodyay. Photo by Peter Pring.



Andalusite in mica schist outcrop, Lovers Lane Toodyay. Photo by Peter Pring.

Some 2.4 km southeast of this site larger andalusite crystals up to 60 mm have been reported (Fetherston, Stocklmayer and Stocklmayer, 2017. Gemstones of Western Australia).



Locations of the Toodyay quartz crystals (light blue circle), epidote gravel (light green circle) and andalusite in mica schist (dark blue circle) on 1:250,000 geology. Source: DMPE GeoVIEW.WA site.

Rock units shown on the map are summarized below.

orange, Aqo – quartzite, metamorphosed orthoquartzite, often with green chrome muscovite

brown, Anb – quartz-feldspar-biotite gneiss, generally well banded, may contain garnet

red stripes, Alm – muscovite-chlorite phyllitic schist

grey, Am – migmatite – banded and nebulitic, often strongly contorted

green, Aa – amphibolite, hornblende-plagioclase, some cummingtonite-plagioclase rocks

purple, Ai – banded iron formation – includes quartz-magnetite-grunerite assemblages

***Peter** began collecting rocks in his early teens when his family joined the local lapidary club in their Queensland hometown, this led him to study geology at university. During his geology career Peter has been fortunate enough to work in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland, PNG and Canada and has been on study trips around the globe. He regularly drags his own family along to visit geological sites when they travel. Peter likes getting out and about, looking at rocks and collecting some of the interesting ones from the places he visits.*

September AGM

AGM Draft Minutes and Reports

DRAFT MINUTES
26th Annual General Meeting of the
Mineralogical Society of Western Australia Inc
held in the clubrooms of the WA Lapidary and Rockhunting Club,
31 Gladstone Road, Rivervale, on Wednesday, 9 September 2026 at 7.00pm

1. Opening and Welcome: President James Sherborne at 19.17.
2. Present: Allan Hart, Angela Riganti (online), Bruce Groenewald (online), Elias Schreieck, Francine Payette, Frank Doedens, Ida Newton, James Sherborne, Jason Bennett, J.Lynn Sunderland, Judy Paish, Lena Hancock, Manfred Mertinat (online), Murray Thompson, Nicola Italiano, Olga Blay, Peter Pring, Peter Willems, Rob Walker, Steve Law, Stewart Cole, Sue Koepke, Susan Stocklmayer, Tony Ahmat, Vernon Stocklmayer, Vinodaarshini Vigneswaran.
   Kaylah Bibby and Wendy Hampton attended as visitors.
3. Proxies: Mike Freeman (chair), Craig Bosel (Angela Riganti), Kari Pitts (Angela Riganti)
4. Apologies: Sandy Robertson, Paul Scharf, Grant Boxer, Tom Bateman, Craig Bosel, Mike Freeman, Nicolas Hébert, Renee Wee, John Mill, Clive Daw, Nimal Perera.
5. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 25th Annual General Meeting held on 11 September 2025 (emailed). Acceptance of the Minutes to be moved and seconded.
   Moved: James Sherborne. Seconded: Stewart Cole. All in favour.
6. President's Report – James Sherborne's September 2025-September 2026 report attached at end of minutes. Acceptance of the President's report to be moved and seconded.
   Moved: James Sherborne. Seconded: Stewart Cole. All in favour.
7. Treasurer's Report – Vino Vigneswaran's report attached at end of minutes.
   Acceptance of the Treasurer's report to be moved and seconded.
   Moved: Vino Vigneswaran. Seconded: Jason Bennet. All in favour.
8. Election of Patron – James Sherborne moved to accept Mark Creasy as the patron of the Society. Seconded by Murray Thompson. All in favour.
9. Election of Members of the Management Committee:
   All positions to be declared vacant in accordance with the Constitution.
   Returning officer: Stewart Cole

Resolution: that the number of ordinary members to hold office for the next year is set to 7 and that more can be added as necessary throughout the year.
Mover Stewart Cole. Seconded: Murray Thompson. All in favour.

Nominations closed 18 days prior to the AGM. Stewart Cole proceeded to list the nominations received (see table below). All were elected unopposed.

Position	Nominee	Supporter
President	James Sherborne	Angela Riganti
Vice president		
Secretary	Angela Riganti	James Sherborne
Treasurer	Sandy Robertson	James Sherborne
Field trip co-ordinator	Peter Pring	Angela Riganti
Newsletter editor	Francine Payette	Angela Riganti
Membership	Ida Newton	Angela Riganti
Ordinary committee member	John Mill	Angela Riganti
Ordinary committee member	Nicolas Hébert	Angela Riganti
Ordinary committee member	Renee Wee	Angela Riganti
Ordinary committee member	Vinodaarshini Vigneswaran	Angela Riganti

From the floor: President James Sherborne mentioned that Susan Stocklmayer put her name up again to continue with the committee. She was elected unopposed.

Stewart Cole moved that all members of the 2025-2026 Committee be thanked for their hard work. Seconded: Murray Thompson. All in favour.

10. Closing of AGM by President: Closed at 19.40.

President's Report for the period September 2025 to September 2026

Thank you for coming to our 26th AGM.

As you would know, we marked our 25th year as a Society on 28 October last year with a dinner at the Inglewood Hotel. Those who attended the dinner would have received a copy of the Society's history. Thanks to Angela Riganti, Niels Dahl and Vernon Stocklmayer for compiling this valuable document. If you missed the dinner, the history document is available on our website.

Today, the Society's membership is at 111, close to the highest it has ever been. Our financial position is also strong. This puts us in a good position to manage the challenges which we face in the coming year. These challenges include continuing to host WA's premier gemstone and mineral exhibition as well as conducting the joint Seminar. In the meantime, we need to continue conducting our usual business as a society.

It has been a challenging year for the committee, with a high turnover of members. Thanks to Mike Wort and Wendy Hampton who had earlier stepped down from the committee. Susan Stocklmayer was in two minds whether to continue but with some persuasion she will put her name up again to continue with the committee. She does a great job of keeping us grounded to our purpose. Vino Vigneswaran has stepped down as treasurer due to pressures of work and family but remains on the committee.

One of the things I admire about our Society is the willingness of its members to accept tasks when called on. Thanks to Ida Newton, Renee Wee and Francine Payette for taking on the duties of membership officer, social media editor and newsletter editor, respectively. Peter Pring has come on board officially as field trip coordinator, after testing the waters guiding trips to Mukinbudin. Sandy Robinson has nominated for the treasurer's position this year, and she has already put in a great deal of work in closing our accounts for the year. We are very fortunate to have someone with her specialist bookkeeping skills in this position. I congratulate all our new office bearers for their success so far in their positions.

We have not found a vice president, even though I know from experience that it is the most grandly titled, yet for all that, undemanding office on the committee. We have also not found a replacement for Angela, who has continued to perform her tasks despite considerable pressure from family and work. She does an amazing job as our secretary.

Nic Hébert has picked up the baton from Peter Willems as Chairman of PGMS and is doing an incredible job.

John Mill rounds out the committee. He organised our Christmas picnic. He was integral to our second mineral market outside of the Lapidary Club in Belmont in April, which not only returned a profit to the Society, but also attracted more visitors than the previous year. These small markets help build our profile in the broader community. Thanks also to J Lynn Sunderland for contributing her time and donations to the market as well as to John's family for their support.

I also thank the many members who are not on the committee but contributed to helping the Society achieve its goals. Craig Bosel once again was our quizmaster and arranged our third annual quiz night, which is always a great night out. His two lovely daughters gave up their evenings to help. Craig also gave a short talk for our July meeting.

My sister, Mary Sherborne, has volunteered for catering for our meetings. Niels, Susan, Allan Hart and Ida have often provided catering for us in the past.

Bruce Groenewald and Jason Bennett conducted a very well attended activity at Gemmo House based on pXRF analysis. This was the first time we have jointly held an activity with the Gemmological Association of WA. I look forward to more collaborations with them in the future.

Speakers who contributed by giving talks were Grant Boxer, Robert Madden, Angela Riganti, Bruce Groenewald, Francine Payette and Steve Turner. Please don't hesitate to volunteer if you are inclined to give a talk or know someone who would be suitable and willing to do so.

I would also like to thank Susan, Angela and Allan Hart for providing articles for our newsletter.

Many other members have helped with the events and activities, from helping with setting and cleaning up to donating specimens.

On the subject of the general membership, Clive Daw celebrated his 90th birthday yesterday. Clive is still one of our most active and enthusiastic members, especially known for his work in the discovery of new minerals and as a micro-mounter. To list all of the fields in which he has had an influence would take more time than I have. He is an example to us all.

Finally, I would like to thank Mark Creasy, our patron, for his continued support.

Field Trips

The Society conducted three field trips in the past year. Mike Freeman led a tour of the Bunbury basalts in November. Thanks to Mike and Hanson Australia for providing access to the Gelorup Quarry. In April, a reconnaissance group investigated the Dowerin chrysoberyl deposit (this will almost certainly lead to more broadly-based visits in the future). Just last month, some members found quartz crystals and epidote pebbles on our Toodyay visit.

We are very fortunate to have such an active field trip organiser as Peter Pring, who seems to have a gift for talking tenement holders and farmers into giving us access.

PGMS

Last year saw our fifth Perth Gemstone and Mineral Show (PGMS). Once again, it was the highlight of the year, bringing together every aspect of the mineral industry in WA. We are also on the cusp of claiming a place on the international circuit of gem and mineral shows for dealers to attend. Doing so would not only bring prestige and revenue but also give us access to specialists and mineral specimens that we would otherwise miss.

Last year's show was the fifth record breaking show in a row. Bigger than ever with more vendors, more visitors, more interstate and overseas guests. The Charity Rocks auction also raised a record of over $17,000, some of which was donated to the Society.

All of this involved a great deal of hard work from the PGMS committee and the many volunteers who contributed their time and energy. Peter Willems, Nic Hébert, Vino Vigneswaran, J Lynn Sunderland, Nicola Italiano, John Mill, Luke Maxwell, Norton Kalleske, Jason Bennett, Mitch Elphick and Kylie Matonia.

I wish to acknowledge the many sponsors and particularly our patron, Mark Creasy for his ongoing support of the show, both financially and in providing exhibits from his personal collection.

PGMS is not only our gift to the mineral community of WA, but it is also a means towards achieving our Society's objectives. Because of that, the coordinator of our stand at the show is very important. Thanks to Niels for his efforts last year. Niels has decided not to continue as coordinator this year, so we urgently need someone to take on this task.

Joint Seminar

Preparations for the Mineralogical Societies joint seminar has begun with Murray Thompson heading up this committee. A venue has already been selected, planning for the field trip is well under way, and

sponsors being lined up. There's every sign that this seminar will be as successful as the last one we hosted in 2019. But we will be needing more people to volunteer for tasks as we get closer to the first day of the Seminar, scheduled for September 2027.

Closing

Don't forget all committee members can be contacted, and committee meetings are open to any member who may wish to present a special request. You can find our contact details in both the monthly Bulletin and the Quarterly newsletter, speak to us at our meetings or at events and activities. At least one committee member is always in attendance at our events.

James Sherborne
President Mineralogical Society of WA Inc., Australia 2025-26
Presented 9 September 2026

Treasurer report – MinSocWA Profit & Loss report 1/7/2025 - 30/6/2026			
Income	**Credit**	**Debit**	**Profit**
Membership	$3,675.00		
Books	$200.00		
Sundry & Donations	$480.45		
Expenses			
Bank fees		$20.13	
Square fees		$1.12	
Sundry Costs		$2,216.17	
Insurance		$3,546.35	-$1,428.32
Mineral Market			
Min Market Inc	$1,511.16		
Min Market Exp		$1,039.80	$471.36
25th anniversary			
Anniversary Dinner	$820.00		
Anniversary Expenses		$1,643.28	-$823.28
PGMS 2025			
Sponsorship	$59,500.00		
Auction	$21,820.00		
Auction Donations-other than MinSoc	-$14,139.75		
Tables, Booths	$53,631.71		
Door	$10,440.50		
PGMS Sundry	$86.15	$740.16	
St John Ambulance		$2,717.00	
Core Security		$6,349.59	
Square fees		$257.98	
PGMS Advertising		$19,625.90	
Conv Hire pd 24-25 yr		$15,765.75	
Convention Hire		$45,846.08	
PGMS Costs		$37,962.91	$2,073.24
	$138,025.22	**$137,732.22**	**$293.00**
PGMS Presales 2026	$18,350.00		
Convention Hire for 2026		$17,421.25	$928.75
	$156,375.22	$155,153.47	$1,221.75
Bank Acct balance at 30-06-26	**$42,275.54**		
Term deposit CBA - 20/09/2026 (3.5%pa)	**$43,002.15 ($1,237.33)**		

September Talk

Economic gemmology

Presented by Murray Thompson, BSc, FGAA. Images by Murray unless noted otherwise.

On Wednesday 9th September, following the official annual reports and business of the AGM, member Murray Thompson presented a talk entitled “Economic gemmology”.

The presentation delivered a brief history and development of five pegmatites in WA: Poona, near Cue in the Murchison goldfields; Pilgangoora, close to Port Hedland; Wonder Well, also known as Riverina, near Menzies; Spargoville, south of Coolgardie; and the Sinclair Mine near Norseman. The Poona, Wonder Well and Spargoville sites have a history of exploratory and mining development from the early 20th century and are from where emerald and tourmaline have been the major minerals of interest. The Sinclair and Pilgangoora pegmatites, which have had relatively recent development, cover economically significant LCT pegmatites, and are sources of several ornamental materials.

Three of the five sites are currently being worked or are under reinvestigations.

A standout from the talk was the many images of crystals and cut gemstones that have been or are in private collections.

Emeralds were first discovered at Poona in 1912. These workings are no longer in commercial operation, although the area remains a popular collecting place where small green beryl crystals can be found in the old spoil heaps. The headgear of the Aga Khan deep mine, erected as recently as 1975, locates the position of the former underground workings. Featured also was a 4cm emerald specimen in black mica matrix, albeit clearly fractured. A cabochon emerald of 11.69 ct, representative of the colour and quality of emerald from this site was also shown.



Emerald crystals with biotite schist. Poona, WA.



Aga Khan deep mine. Poona, WA.

The open pit at the Pilgangoora pegmatite produces large crystals of spodumene. Decorative materials featuring white spodumene and purple lepidolite were shown as polished spheres of many sizes. The stages involved in producing the spheres require intensive craftsmanship.

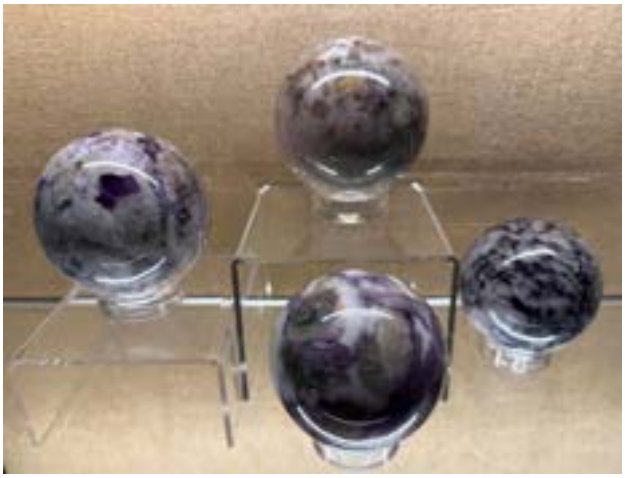


Pilgangoora open pit operations.



75 mm core preforms of spodumene and lepidolite plus feldspar and minor quartz from Pilgangoora.

Completed spheres of Pilgangoora ore.



Wonder Well near Menzies, discovered in the mid-1970s, was the second emerald mine featured. The open pit mine is under current ownership and is being worked, but permission to visit may be granted to special groups of mineral collectors. Emeralds at this mine site, as with Poona, are generally within black schistose host rocks with some crystals found within a quartz matrix. Images showed the pit and the hand sorting of emerald material.



A section of the sorting area next to the main workings, Wonder Well. Image S and V Stocklmayer.

A large 484 ct crystal of emerald collected from a mine dump in 1985 was a bonanza find. Murray informed us about the cutting of this crystal once the decision had been made to explore its gem potential. The resulting finished stones were shown. An unusual find at Wonder Well was a large non-gem quality phenakite crystal; this was shown together with a few facetted phenakite gems.



A 484 ct emerald crystal recovered from a spoil dump at Wonder Well in 1985.

A 1.88 ct faceted emerald from the crystal recovered in 1985, Wonder Well.



The fourth mine site visited was the Sinclair Mine near Norseman. Discovered relatively recently (late 2016) this LCT pegmatite (lithium, caesium, tantalum pegmatite) mine is now closed but remains of interest as a site of geological significance, and permissions to visit have been granted to specialist groups. Petalite was featured as very large crystals in wall rock and other minerals included botryoidal

lepidolite mica, pink beryl and cleavelandite. Pegmatite rock material that includes petalite and lepidolite and some of pollucite (caesium mineral) was shown as cabochons, ornamental slabs and other polished specimens. These specimens make unusual mineral ornamental items.



Mine visit with a backdrop of large petalite crystals, Sinclair Mine.

Cabochons of pollucite from Sinclair Mine.



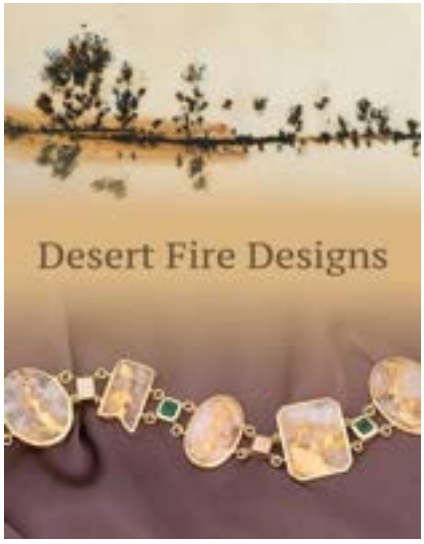
The final site of interest was an LCT pegmatite in the Spargoville* area south of Coolgardie. This pegmatite is well-known as a site where tourmaline is sometimes found. The colours include blue, “watermelon” and parti-coloured blue and pink zoned crystals. Specially featured were several images showing the cutting stages involved in producing fine facetted gems. Some large citrine crystals have also been found in pegmatites of this area.



Craftsman at work.

* Spargoville will be covered in the next issue of MinSoc Newsletter. Don’t miss it!

Murray concluded his presentation with a descriptive account of the manufacture of a gold custom-made chain bracelet featuring polished plaques of native gold-in-matrix from the Beta Hunt mine and insets of facetted emeralds from Menzies.



The presentation of images featuring several of the special finds of crystal specimens and cut gems was from information that is ordinarily difficult to glean within the mining and prospecting fraternity unless you are part of that fraternity. We were treated to an array of colourful gem rocks and materials together with a backdrop of WA bush and mining scenery.

Thank you, Murray

Submitted by Susan and Vernon Stocklmayer

***Murray** has over 50 years of experience in gemmology and geology. He began his career in Adelaide, studying gemmology and store management before moving to Kalgoorlie to facet emeralds and prospect for gold. After returning to Adelaide to open a gem-cutting business, he won a prestigious Churchill Fellowship in 1987, studying international gem fashioning and display across several continents.*

Murray later relocated to Perth, earning a geology degree and working as an exploration geologist until 2017. Throughout this time, he continued faceting local Western Australian materials. Today, he runs Desert Fire Designs in suburban Perth, a wholesale and retail workshop and showroom open to the public by appointment.

Australian Journal of Mineralogy

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Upcoming events

Perth Gem & Mineral Show 2026



The 6th edition of the iconic PGMS is back!

PGMS 2026 will be held on 6-7-8 November, at the Perth Convention & Exhibition Center (Pavillion 6).

Key Activities & Highlights

- Exhibits & Dealers: Browse raw mineral specimens, rare crystals, fossils, gemstones, custom jewellery, lapidary supplies, and unique lapidary materials like cut slabs and cabochons from national and international vendors.
- Seminars & Guest Speakers: Attend discussion-based talks spanning Friday, Saturday, and Sunday featuring industry professionals, academics, and craftspeople.
- Interactive & Educational Displays: Experience interactive geoscience exhibits, UV-reactive mineral displays, workshops, and a special focus on Western Australia's rich mineral heritage.
- Ore Giveaways: Participate in specimen and ore giveaways provided by industrial and mining sponsors such as the Geological Survey of Western Australia (GSWA) and Sandfire Resources.
- Sundowner & Charity Auction: Network with fellow enthusiasts, geologists, and collectors at the separately ticketed exclusive Sundowner evening on Saturday, November 7 (5:30 PM–9:30 PM), which includes a charity auction, drinks, and nibbles.

Visit PGMS webpage for more details.

Joint Mineralogical Societies of Australasia Seminar 2027

Theme: Mineralogy in the 21st century

Hosted by the Mineralogical Society of Western Australia, the 49th Joint Mineralogical Societies of Australasia Seminar will take place in Perth from 16-17 September 2027.

Other activities will take place before, during and on the weekend after the seminar, and will be advertised as they are confirmed.

A field trip to the Eastern Goldfields is planned from 20–25 September.

Help us spread the word by downloading and circulating the promotional flyer.

Welcome to new members

We have welcomed the following new member since June 2026: Valentina Taranovic

At the close of June 2026, 15 members either let their memberships lapse or asked to be removed from our mailing list, this brings our membership to a total of 113.

All members are asked to ensure that their contact details are up to date. If your details change, please let us know so that you continue to receive all MinSocWA communications – membership@minsocwa.org.au

COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2026/2027

President	James Sherborne	president@minsocwa.org.au
Vice President		
Secretary	Angela Riganti	secretary@minsocwa.org.au
Treasurer	Sandy Robertson	treasurer@minsocwa.org.au
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Committee Member	Vinodaarshini Vigneswaran	vvinodaarshini@yahoo.com
49th Joint Seminar	Murray Thompson	seminar@minsocwa.org.au
PGMS Secretary	Nicola Italiano	contact@perthgemmineralshow.com

Patron - *Mark Creasy*

MinSocWA meetings

Meetings of the Mineralogical Society of Western Australia Incorporated are usually held at **7.30 pm on the second Wednesday of every odd month**[1] at:

WA Lapidary & Rock Hunting Club rooms 31 Gladstone Road, Rivervale (corner of Newey Street)

The venue will be open from 6.30 pm for refreshments and socializing.

[1] Note the January meeting is at a different date.

MinSocWA LINKS

Web	http://www.minsocwa.org.au
Facebook Group	https://www.facebook.com/groups/minsocwa
Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/MINSOCWA
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/MINSOCWA
YouTube Channel	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0S2TFVFIBLU-2zlEzE5VNA