

AGSO CAVES EDUCATIONAL KIT LAUNCH – YARRANGOBILLY CAVES

- Andy Spate

The Australian Geological Survey Organisation (AGSO), together with ACKMA, ASF and the Ian Potter Foundation, have produced an educational kit designed to be distributed by show cave operations. The kit was the brainchild of Jo Ingarfield, manager of Yarrangobilly Caves in New South Wales. It is aimed at upper primary and lower secondary school students – but a lot of others will want the poster.

An extraordinary number of people across all show cave operations, from universities, caving clubs and so on contributed to the kit which was displayed at the AGM at Buchan in June to considerable acclaim from those present.

The kit will be launched at Yarrangobilly on 11 October during Earth Science Week – invitations will be widely circulated and details will be placed on the ACKMA email list. Contact me if you would like to attend and haven't heard any details.

The kit consists of a wonderful, full-colour poster map of Australia showing the distribution of Australian caves (courtesy of ASF) surrounded by a picture from each and every show cave operation across Australia. The map is accompanied by 18 fact sheets on various aspects of cave and karst and by a series of classroom activity sheets including a super little cave to build – small fingers work best. The model comes from the United States Geological Survey. The facts and activities sheets are in black and white and are designed to be photocopied by the school if needed. Blank templates are also provided so that schools or cave operations can develop their own materials specific to the site.

The kits are very moderately priced (kit and poster \$9.90 wholesale; poster alone \$4.40 wholesale –

RRPs are \$16.50 and \$8.80 respectively – all including GST). All areas will receive a letter from AGSO with a special introductory offer of some free kits and posters for sale and display and conditions for purchase of further kits for the wholesale price. One objective of the kit is to provide a resource which can be sold with a reasonable profit and that those profits be used for further interpretative or education work.

The team that produced the kit consisted of Gary Lewis and Kathleen Kemp from AGSO, Jo and myself. But as I say, there were dozens (who are all acknowledged in the kit) of others who contributed in many ways – with images, information, editing and fact checking and with the production in AGSO. The Ian Potter Foundation provided \$10,000 for initial printing. Gary heads up the Geoscience Education Unit at AGSO – the Unit is well worth a visit if you are in Canberra with an hour to spare. I am sure Gary would love to meet any ACKMA members who rock in – and shortly you will be able to see a wonderful polished stalagmite slice from Yarrangobilly. Kathleen comes from the University of Toronto in Canada. She was at AGSO on sabbatical looking at earth science education in Australia but has now returned to wage-slavery. I am sure that she would love to reciprocate the hospitality Australian cave persons extended to her – whenever you are in Toronto!

The Australian cave fraternity owes a very considerable vote of thanks to Jo, Gary and Kathleen for the concept and execution of this project. We hope that you enjoy it and find it useful. Please buy it as well in large quantities so we can build on this aspect of ACKMA's activities.