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JKMRC team wins ABARE award

THE University of Queensland's Julius Kruttschnitt Mineral Research Centre has won the 1999 annual Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) Commodity Innovation Award for mining, announced at the recent Outlook 99 conference in Canberra.

ABARE is the Australian Government's official commodity economics forecaster.

This is the second time the award has been offered and the second time a Queensland-based organisation has won, following the success of Queensland Nickel Resources Pty Ltd last year.

Leading Australian mining identities including Normandy Mining's Executive Chairman Robert Champion de Cresigny, North Ltd Managing Director Campbell Anderson and Rio Tinto Board and Executive Managing Director Barry Cusack sat on the ABARE panel which acknowledged the JKMRC's industry leadership through this award.

JKMRC Director Professor Tim Napier-Munn accepted the award on behalf of the Centre.

The award was made for the Centre's innovative approach to applied research for the mineral industry and its demonstrated success in



Displaying the ABARE Commodity Innovation Award for Mining, from left, are P9 Project leader Professor J-P Franzidis, JKMRC Director Professor Tim Napier-Munn and leading flotation engineer Dr Emmy Manlapig.

achieving technology transfer through commercialisation and other mechanisms.

A particular example cited in the nomination was the AMIRA P9 mineral processing project work in flotation.

Professor Napier-Munn said the JKMRRC's work in this area was a high profile component of the world's longest running and arguably most successful mineral processing research project.

Brokered by the Australian Mineral Industries Research Association (AMIRA), the P9 project has run continuously since 1962, spreading its sponsorship base from a handful of Australian mining companies to 38 organisations – around Australia and the world – including giants such as BHP, De Beers, MIM, Rio Tinto and WMC.

Techniques developed by the P9 project have been used by mining companies throughout the world to improve mineral processing efficiency.

The ABARE award acknowledges the professional approach the researchers have taken in their relationship with industry, using models based on solving problems at sponsoring company sites through applied research.

Much of this process has involved postgraduate students, many of whom graduate to senior professional positions in the mining industry.

The current JKMRRC P9 flotation module began in the early 1990s through the work of noted flotation engineer and researcher Dr Emmy Manlapig.

P9 project leader Professor J-P Franzidis – also a leading flotation specialist – said the ABARE award vindicated Dr Manlapig's vision for research with significant industrial and economic relevance for Australia and its trading partners.

He said that the work had quickly developed a powerful methodology for designing and optimising flotation plants that was now finding application in industry.

"BHP have used the results from P9 in the design of their flotation plant at the Cannington Mine, and a flotation cell manufacturer has used project knowledge to design new machines," Professor Franzidis said.

He said the award was particularly timely given that the achievements of the current P9L extension will be presented to the project's sponsors at an international progress review meeting in Brisbane during May.

Research collaborators from the University of Cape Town will also be at the meeting.

Professor Napier-Munn paid tribute to the staff and students of the JKMRC whose work led to the award.

He also acknowledged the role of the Centre's founding Director, Professor Alban Lynch, who established the applied research methodology in the early days of the JKMRC.

"The energy and talent of postgraduate students, including many from overseas, has been an important element in the Centre's success," he said.

"The advantages afforded by the AMIRA collaborative research model encourage the kind of successful technology transfer which this award recognises, and the active support of the industry has been critical."

For more information contact:

Professor Tim Napier-Munn on +61 7 3365 5806

Professor J-P Franzidis on +61 7 3365 5893

Media inquiries: Mr David Goeldner: +61 7 3365 5888

Email: d.goeldner@mailbox.uq.edu.au

