The Canberra Setting

The Commonwealth of Australia was formed by the federation of the Australian states in 1901. Canberra was founded as the national capital in 1913, and the Commonwealth Parliament moved to Canberra from Melbourne in 1927. With that move came Canberra University College, as part of the University of Melbourne. The Geology Department of this book was founded as part of Canberra University College.

In 1946, the Commonwealth Government founded The Australian National University as an institute of advanced studies to initially comprise four research schools. One of these, the Research School of Physical Sciences (RSPhysS), had a department of geophysics, to which in 1952 John C. Jaeger was appointed Foundation Professor. This department some years later expanded to a Department of Geophysics and Geochemistry and, in 1973, it became a research school in its own right: the Research School of Earth Sciences (RSES).

Canberra University College became part of the ANU—the School of General Studies—in 1960. Elsewhere in Canberra at that time professional geological activity grew with the Bureau of Mineral Resources (BMR), Geology and Geophysics, which was also established in 1946. The BMR geophysics branch, initially in Melbourne, moved to Canberra in 1966. In the activity described in this book, professional contacts with geologists and geophysicists from RSPhysS/RSES and BMR (later the Australian Geological Survey Organisation/AGSO; then Geoscience Australia/GA) were frequent and valued. In particular, several BMR personnel undertook higher degrees at the ANU, and many graduates of the Geology Department found challenging and satisfying careers with BMR/AGSO/GA.