

It is our honour to have Regis Neroni for the member spotlight this month. He is the lead geophysicist at Fortescue Metals Group.

"The ASEG Early Achievement Award, which acknowledges significant contributions to the profession at an early stage in a person's career, was presented at the AEGC Perth in 2019 to Regis Neroni from the WA Branch, for his outstanding contributions to the ASEG through conference and branch-related activities, and through mentoring, community engagement and development and application of new technology within his professional career.

The Award includes a \$2,000 contribution to the recipient in recognition of their achievement. Regis indicated that he wished to donate these funds toward a travel grant to assist a Geoscience Student or Early career professional to attend the next AEGC conference, being held in Brisbane from 15-20 September 2021."

1. For how long have you been a geophysicist?

I graduated in 2006 with a French Maîtrise degree in Geosciences, Environment and Risks from Strasbourg University in France. But my first job in geophysics was actually as a guide at Strasbourg's Earth magnetism and seismology museum which I did throughout university to support my studies. My career in the mineral exploration industry started when I met Mike Hatch at Adelaide University who introduced me to Zonge Engineering and Research Organisation.



On a NanoTEM survey in the Kimberley, WA

2. What do you like most about being a geophysicist?

The variety. Being a geophysicist is definitely not boring! We often get sent at the forefront of exploration programs and have the privilege to visit amazing remote parts of the world before vehicle access tracks or semi-permanent camps are put in. One day you might be doing some work from a fancy hotel room, and the next you are carrying expensive and sensitive gear up and down creeks in the jungle somewhere... We get to play with a lot of cool toys and techniques, and get the opportunity to apply our skills across many fields of practice e.g., hydrogeology, geotechnical, environment, UXO, etc. I even recall once doing a GPR survey looking for buried cow carcasses!



Induced Polarisation crew in Eritrea

3. What is your best interview tip?

Be yourself. There is no point pretending to be someone else to get a job and then realising it's not a good fit for you...

4. What's one thing that we wouldn't know about you?

My short Australian career almost ended in 2009 when the GFC hit. I was then on a sponsorship professional visa which I lost with my full-time employment and as a result got deported. I lived in Fiji for a few months before coming back to Australia as a broke backpacker and got a job as a tour guide in Arkaroola, South Australia. Shortly after, Kim Frankcombe and Bill Peters offered me a job with Southern Geoscience Consultants for which I moved to Perth. I have lived in Perth ever since where I since became an Australian citizen.



On an exploration project in the Philippines

5. What are you reading at the moment?

"Paper Safe" by Gregory Smith. Quite a clever tale of how bureaucracy triumphed in safety management. I am really enjoying the read after having spent over a decade with major mining companies. My favourite section so far is about the "handrail conundrum", enough said...

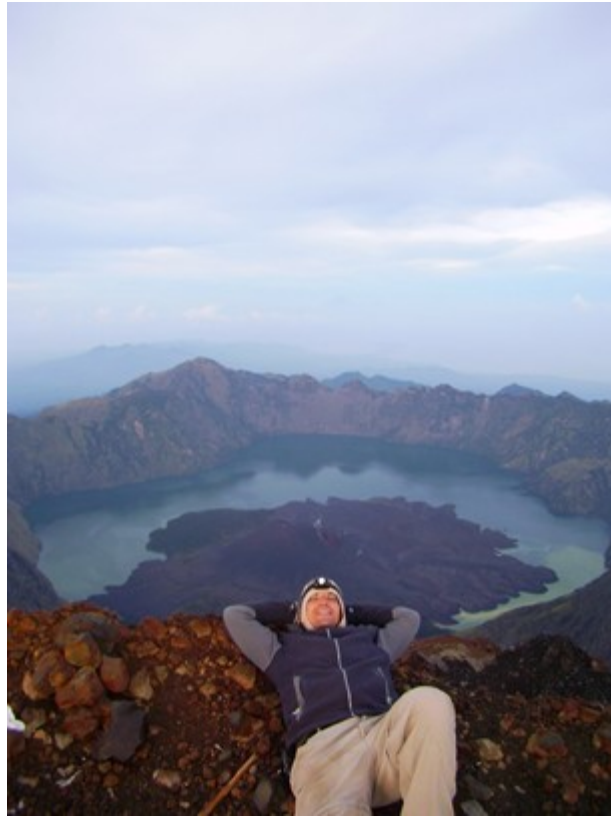
6. What made you decide to be a geophysicist?

My two favourite subjects in high school were always physics and geology. When it was time to apply for universities, I typed "physics + geology + university" in my search engine. That was the first time I heard about geophysics and I was sold. Only two universities were teaching geophysics in France, I applied for the one in Strasbourg and got in. Simple but true...

7. Your funniest or worst field memory?

On a remote Induced Polarisation camping job in the Great Sandy Desert, Western Australia. Two field assistants did an overnight 14h round trip to Newman to buy

some aluminium foil to build the transmitting electrodes required to finish a long and challenging survey. They came back with 50 rolls of cling wrap...



On top of Gunung Rinjani, Lombok, Indonesia

8. How come you decided to donate the cash component of your recent ASEG award?

I remember being in France a bit over 15 years ago and reading an email from Graham Heinson saying that I was accepted for an internship in the geophysics department at Adelaide University. I come from a modest background and my family could not afford such a trip, so I was going to decline the opportunity. The father of my girlfriend at the time pulled me aside and told me he would lend me the money to go to Australia. He explained to me he had a tough childhood, that he was not able to do what he really wanted growing up, and that money should never be an obstacle to anyone's dreams. After the life-changing internship, I decided to "pause" my studies and work with Zonge to reimburse him as quickly as possible. I would not be here answering these questions if it were not for his generosity. Therefore, I immediately thought it would be natural and the right decision for me to pay it forward too and maybe have the chance to also impact on someone's life. The only grim note is that my friend's dad passed away rapidly from a very aggressive brain

tumour a year after I arrived in Australia, and I never had the chance to thank him in person...



At Mount Everest base camp, in Tibet

Any young professional or geoscience student who is keen to attend the conference and wishes to seek such financial support is invited to directly contact Regis (rneroni@fmgl.com.au) to submit an Expression of Interest. ASEG membership is not a prerequisite but would be considered an advantage.

*Expressions of Interest must be received before **Wednesday 14 July 2021.***