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Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation

Media Invitation

16 January 2008

Rainfall conference to highlight latest research for better Australian water management

The key to successful Australian water management planning, is accurately mapping and understanding current and past patterns of Australian rainfall so scientists can more clearly predict future rainfall cycles said ANSTO's Dr Henk Heijnis, who will chair ANSTO's first rainfall conference next week.

At the conference, ANSTO and other leading environmental scientists will share their most recent research with fellow researchers, water corporations, key weather bureau staff and government representatives to open discussion on ways to improve water management Australia-wide.

"ANSTO, together with colleagues from Newcastle University and the Australian National University, has been monitoring modern stalagmite formation in caves for the past three years to assess whether the chemistry from drip waters that create them, correlates with rainfall patterns supplied by weather bureau monitoring," said Dr Heijnis. "We will be revealing these and other important results and discuss how they can be used for water management purposes.

"If the stalagmite water drip factor is a mirror of modern rainfall monitoring, by carbon dating older stalagmites we will be able to map rainfall patterns over thousands of years and establish the big picture of past rainfall cycles to ultimately produce better rainfall predictions."

WHEN:	10am – 5pm, Wednesday 23 January 2008
WHERE:	AINSE Theatre, opposite the ANSTO café, adjacent to Gate 19 ANSTO, New Illawarra Road, Lucas Heights
WHAT:	Session 1 (10-11am) – Setting the Scene a) Issues in water resource management – Henk Heijnis (ANSTO) b) Climate: current rainfall variability – Ian Goodwin (Newcastle) Session 2 (11.15 – 12.45) – Current Research and Innovation in Cave Stalagmites Introduction: formation and location - Russell Drysdale (Newcastle) a) Cave monitoring and sampling – Janece McDonald (Newcastle) and Chris Waring (ANSTO) b) Analysing stalagmites in high resolution – Pauline Treble (ANU) c) Stalagmite dating – Ed Hodge (ANSTO) and John Hellstrom (Melbourne) Session 3 (13.30-15.30) - Regional Examples Reconstruction of regional rainfall records and application to water resource Management – Danielle Verdon (SKM Consulting) (will include many examples from Other scientists) Session 4 (15.45 – 17.00) Future sites, work, collaboration, cave access and knowledge – Panel discussion
Journalists RSVP:	Sharon Kelly, Media Relations Manager (02) 9717 9575 or 0400 394 085

For more information please contact ANSTO Media Relations Manager, Sharon Kelly, on (02) 9717 9575 or 0400 394 085

*ANSTO is the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation - the country's national nuclear research and development organisation and the centre of Australian nuclear expertise.