

I am a Geographer ...



Lara Bowlt

Graduate Geologist

I think my childhood experiences of camping and exploring in the African bush, and seeing the interrelationships between people and the environment spurred me on to study Geography. This interest, coupled with an enthusiastic teacher, meant that Geography was my favourite and best subject at school. I studied Geography at Vermont Secondary College and then completed my Bachelor of Science Advanced (Honours) at Monash University. Amongst other units at university, I studied three Geography-specific units: *The global challenge*, *Natural hazards and human vulnerability*, and *Geographical analysis*.

I work for a small gold exploration company based in the Central Desert of the Northern Territory. During the field season, April to November, I work a two-week fieldwork/ two-week office work (Perth-based) roster. Our team aims to make a gold discovery in a region which is one of the final frontiers for gold discovery and where we believe further world-class deposits remain to be found. A day in the office often involves prospect generation and desktop mapping/ basement interpretation, while on-ground mapping, rock sampling and drilling is conducted in the field.

My Geography skills are put to use on a daily basis. I use GIS software (MapInfo) to view, interpret and create maps. This software relies on multiple datasets including geophysics, satellite imagery, historic geological and topographic maps, geochemical datasets and tenement/ sacred site boundaries. Using MapInfo helps me to look at the spatial associations between different key features to determine which areas may be prospective for gold. For example, there appears to be a spatial association between elevated gold and particular stratigraphic (rock layering) units. I also use navigational skills when mapping and access bushfire and weather databases prior to fieldwork to assess risks. I am currently being introduced to social and environmental regulations that guide our work programs. I work in a small team with four other geologists, two environmental advisors and a tenement manager.

Geographers working as “economic” geologists can specialise in the fields of exploration geology (like me), mine geology, or academia and research. I love my job as I get to work outdoors and visit remote and beautiful parts of Australia, a privilege granted to very few people.