

Scientists welcome 130 000-year record for climate study

Australian scientists have welcomed the success of a five-year Greenland ice core drilling project that is expected to reveal a record of more than 130 000 years and provide an insight into future global climate.

CSIRO's Dr David Etheridge, one of several Australian scientists involved in the North Greenland Eemian Ice Drilling (NEEM) project, says drilling reached bedrock at a depth of 2537 metres in late July. He explains that the record spans from the present back through the last 'interglacial' period, called the Eemian – a time when climate was warmer than today and the sea level was five metres higher.

Air samples trapped in the ice core are central to the scientific analysis. As a result of human activity, present-day greenhouse gas concentrations are higher than those observed for the past 800 000 years or more.

The Centre of Ice and Climate at the Niels Bohr Institute, University of Copenhagen, is leading the project. Dr Etheridge and colleague Dr Mauro Rubino joined the drilling project (<http://neem.ku.dk/>) last year. Australian Antarctic Division glaciologist, Dr Mark Curran, and Australian medico, Dr Liz Elliott, have also participated over the past two years.



Credit: David Etheridge

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