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Page 1 of 2

Future leaders to mine industry

RENATO CASTELLO

THE University of Adelaide will host a major summer school for a hand-picked group of Australia's future mining leaders in a major coup for the institution and a boost for the state's reputation as a centre of mining excellence.

The university beat off stiff opposition to secure the inaugural National Exploration Undercover School (NExUS) – an intensive three-week course to 30 senior graduates, postgraduates and early career professionals.

The course, sponsored by the Minerals Council of Australia, runs from November 27 to December 17 and involves a combination of classroom and field setting topics, including visits to mining operations in the Adelaide Hills and Yorke Peninsula.

Students will also attend the 13th South Australian Exploration and Mining Conference on December 2 at the Adelaide Convention Centre, which is being run by local resources industry bodies and state branches of national bodies.

Conference chairman Kevin Wills said more than 600 delegates were expected at the conference, which will hear from 22 speakers from a broad range of mining companies and government about the state of play in mineral exploration.

Among speakers will be OZ Minerals' chief executive Andrew Cole and BHP Billiton Olympic Dam's principal metallurgist Kathy Ehrig.

Mr Wills said there was confidence coming back into the sector.

"I think they are improving, I wouldn't say they are back to where they were five or six years ago," he said.

"A lot of the talks will be about the exploration projects. I think one of the key things this year (is) there's a number of new discoveries that might not have had all the headlines but which might end up being mining operations."

NExUS course convener, Professor Graham Heinson, said it brings together "superstar" students from across Australia. "The idea was we would look for the future leaders, the people who would make a dif-

ference ... bring them together, mentor them and make an alumni," the university's geophysics professor said.

"Having them in the one place means we have some of the great industry people to talk to them and advise them.

"Hopefully people will see careers in a different way and it also gives industry a chance to come and meet the students."

Lachlan Furness, 22, of Blackwood and Jack Maughan, 22, of Woodville, were among three Adelaide university students selected to take part in the course.

Mr Furness, who studied a Bachelor of Science majoring in geology, said he was "extremely happy" to have been selected. "It's all about the experience," he said.

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GRAHAM HEINSON



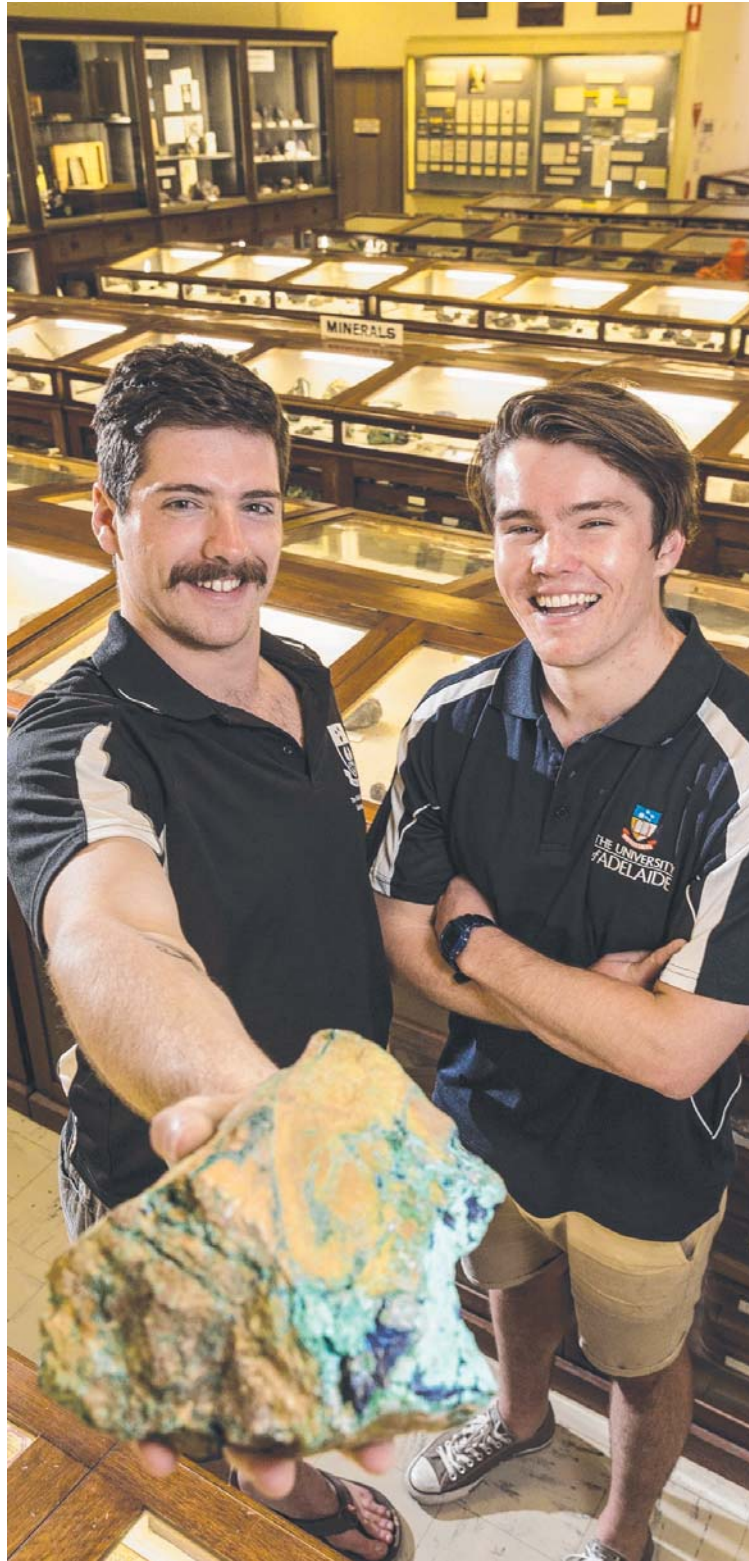
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HAPPY: Jack Maughan and Lachlan Furness will take part in the course. Picture: MIKE BURTON