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# NEWS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, 18 May 2010

### **“RARE” S.A. MINERAL DISCOVERY GAINS ITS PLACE ON THE WORLD GEOLOGICAL STAGE**

The global significance of a rare South Australian mineral discovery has been unveiled in its home state for the first time - gaining its rightful Australian recognition as the only mineral of its kind in the world.

Twenty one years after its initial discovery in a limestone pit at the Penrice mine in the heart of the Barossa Valley, a unique sample of Angastonite was presented to the South Australian Museum by Penrice's Quarry and Mineral General Manager, Mr Darrin Wright.

It was also announced that Penrice, the owner of the mine, and the SA Museum were working on plans to build a permanent display for the piece of Angastonite.

Angastonite is already being recognised in other parts of the world, with geologists continuing to marvel at the discovery of the new mineral, which has been appropriately named after Angaston – the Barossa Valley town near which it was found.

A scientific paper on the rare find has been published in the respected *Mineralogical Magazine* in the United Kingdom, while a weblink ([www.mindat.org/min-35972.html](http://www.mindat.org/min-35972.html)) contains more geological information on the find.

The original “discovery” was made at the mine in 1989 by local resident, Mr Vince Peisley, who is a geologist by profession, and at the time was a member of a local gems and minerals club that organised volunteer tours of the mine.

Mr Peisley sent pieces of the Angastonite to other experts who classified it as rare.

However, adding to the intrigue and mystique of its unearthing, the significance of the mineral was not officially recognized on the global stage until recently after an investigation by an Australian doctor based at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada.

Dr Stuart Mills, formerly from Melbourne University, has spent the past few years working on the then-unknown mineral – featured by its snow white crusts - which has turned out to be “new to science”.

“A discovery of this significance is incredibly rare in the global geological fraternity. It is akin to finding a new species of mammal or lizard,” said Dr Allan Pring, SA Museum's Head of the Department of Mineralogy.

“This is why the eyes of the geological world have been on Angaston and this extraordinary find,” he said.

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**FIELD PUBLIC RELATIONS PTY LTD ABN 74 008 222 311**

231 South Road, MILE END SA 5031

Ph: 08 8234 9555 Fax: 08 8234 9566

admin@fieldpr.com.au

“That’s what makes our profession so exciting – that something like this can be locked away for more than 20 years without its true scientific value being known.

“The area where this new species was found has long been mined, and it is unlikely more will be found.

“There are currently less than 40 known specimens of this species.

“It occurs in a dark brown phosphatic rock in white seams and cavities lined with angastonite crystal druzies and minor glassy minyulite crystals.”

Penrice Mine Quality/Environment Manager, Mr Randy Klemm, said news that the discovery had led to a “world-first” had surprised everyone at the mine.

“I think we were all in a bit of shock when news filtered through that world geological experts had formally declared the Angastonite as a ‘rare mineral’,” Mr Klemm said.

“It’s not worth much from a monetary sense, but it’s priceless from a scientific and historic sense,” he said.

“Since being identified, we’ve had enquiries from around the world – it’s been amazing how fast word has spread.”

### **About Penrice**

Penrice is the only manufacturer of soda ash in Australia and a significant producer and distributor of sodium bicarbonate in international markets, exporting to 28 countries.

Its Chemicals business, based at Osborne, South Australia, supplies two key chemical ranges:

- Soda ash is sold in the Australian market as a vital ingredient in products ranging from glass containers (especially wine and beer bottles), flat glass for building and construction, washing powder and the mining industry.
- Sodium bicarbonate is a specialty chemical used in a variety of applications as diverse as food, pharmaceuticals, medical, personal care products and stock feed. The Company focuses on a premium range of high-quality products which suit the most demanding applications.

The Group’s Quarry & Mineral business is based at the Penrice mine at Angaston South Australia. While the mine supplies a vital ingredient into the chemical process at Osborne, it is also a significant supplier of aggregates and other materials to a variety of end-uses, such as cement & lime, civil & construction, roads, landfill, glass, mineral processing, agriculture, stockfeed and landscaping.

Penrice is an ASX listed public company, which has operated successfully since the 1930’s.

The Company directly employs over 300 people and is a major South Australian employer and a vital link in the Australian glass industry and other prominent downstream industries in Australia, such as the building industry and the wine industry.

### **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

**Guy Roberts**  
**Managing Director &**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Penrice Soda Holdings**  
**(08) 8402 7242**

**Sean Whittington**  
**Field Public Relations**  
**(08) 8234 9555**  
**(0412) 591 520**