

# ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF GEOTOURISM AND GEOPARKS IN CHINA

Global Eco Asia-Pacific Conference 2017, Adelaide  
27 -29 November, 2017

Dr Young Ng MH  
Geotourism Standing Committee, Geological Society of Australia



# OUTLINE

1. Background
2. Definitions of geotourism & geoparks
3. Geotourism & geoparks in China
4. Economic impacts
5. Challenges & Conclusions



# 1. BACKGROUND

Tourism in China, 2015/2016 compared (NTA, 2017)

## Outbound tourists

- 122 million, +4.3%
- Total spending USD 110/AUD 144 billion, +12%
- Only 1% visited Australia in 2016



## Domestic travel

- 444 million people, +11%
- Total spending USD 597/ AUD 784 billion, +14%











# TOURIST DESTINATIONS

- Always shortage of **good, accessible** destinations
- Branding is important = quality assurance
- Tourism destinations: domestic, overseas
- Attractions: thematic, recreational, cultural, historical and natural
- Major domestic natural attractions – 3,000 natural sites, protected or managed
- Geoparks – National and UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Global Geoparks, National Mining Parks





## 2. GEOTOURISM & GEOPARKS

What is it?

### Geotourism

'Geotourism as tourism which focuses on an area's geology and landscape as the basis for providing visitor engagement, learning and enjoyment' (GSA 2015).

### Geoparks

'Single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development' (GGN 2017).

# GEOTOURISM POTENTIALS

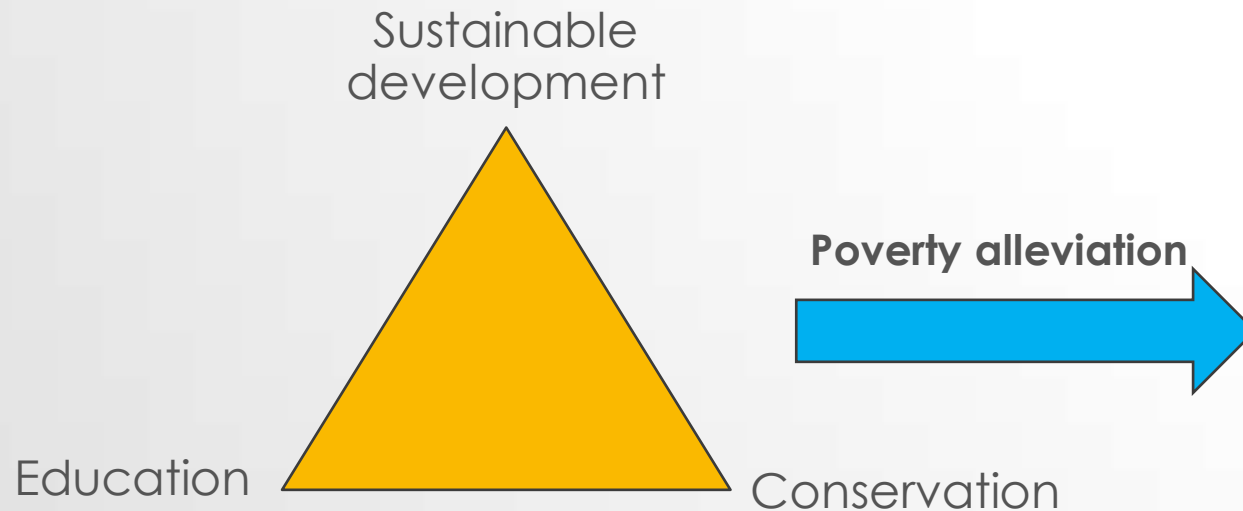
- Geoparks – national geoparks: 204 (35 with global status)
- National Mining Parks: 72
- Geoscience related museums (coal, energy, fossil etc): 75
- Geoparks and National Mining Parks museums: 278
- Geotrails – 680 in geoparks





# 3. GEOTOURISM & GEOPARKS IN CHINA

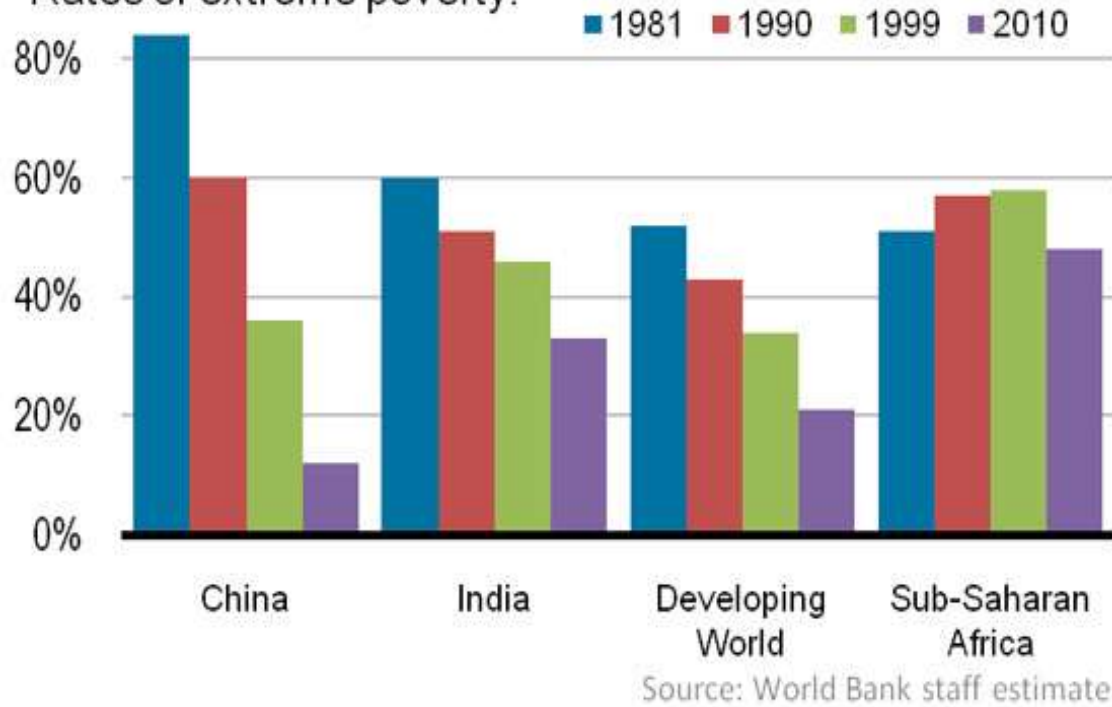
- Geotourism and geoparks in China = poverty alleviation
- Geoparks are venues of geotourism activities
- Geotourism supports geoparks to achieve the objectives of conservation, education and sustainable development



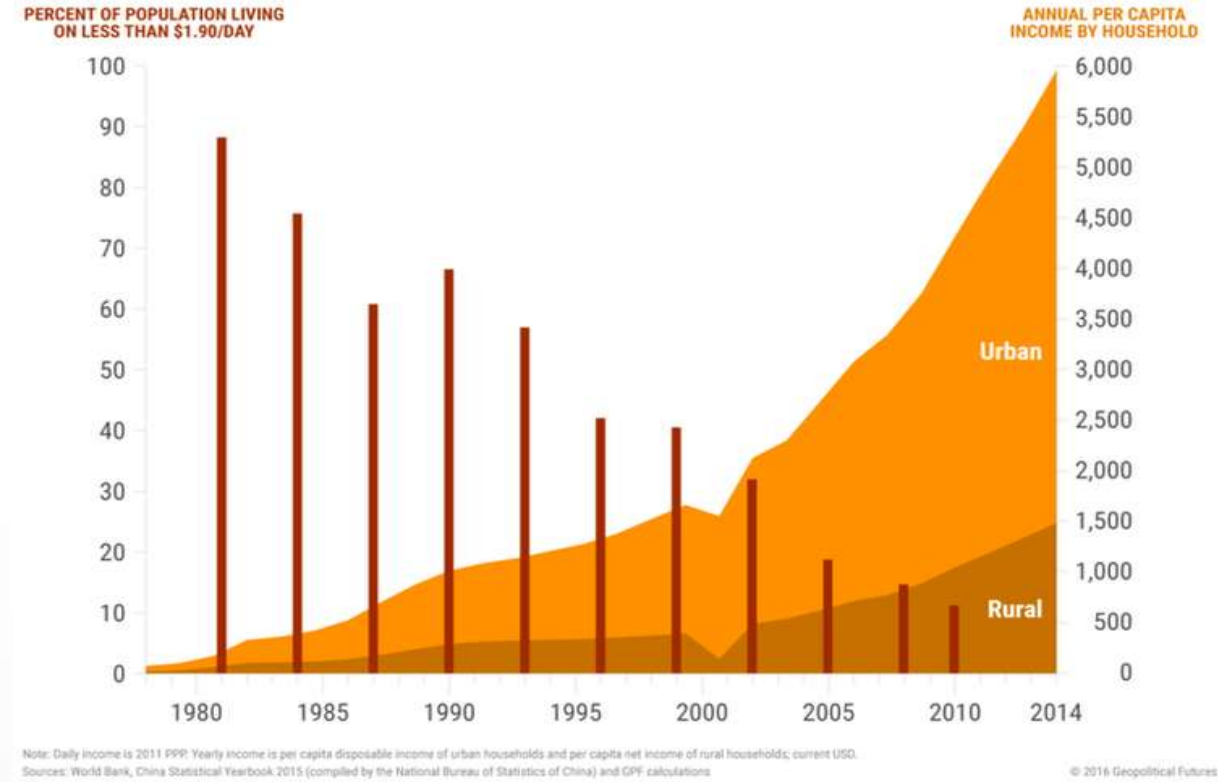


# Evolution of Poverty

Rates of extreme poverty.



## INCOME AND POVERTY IN CHINA

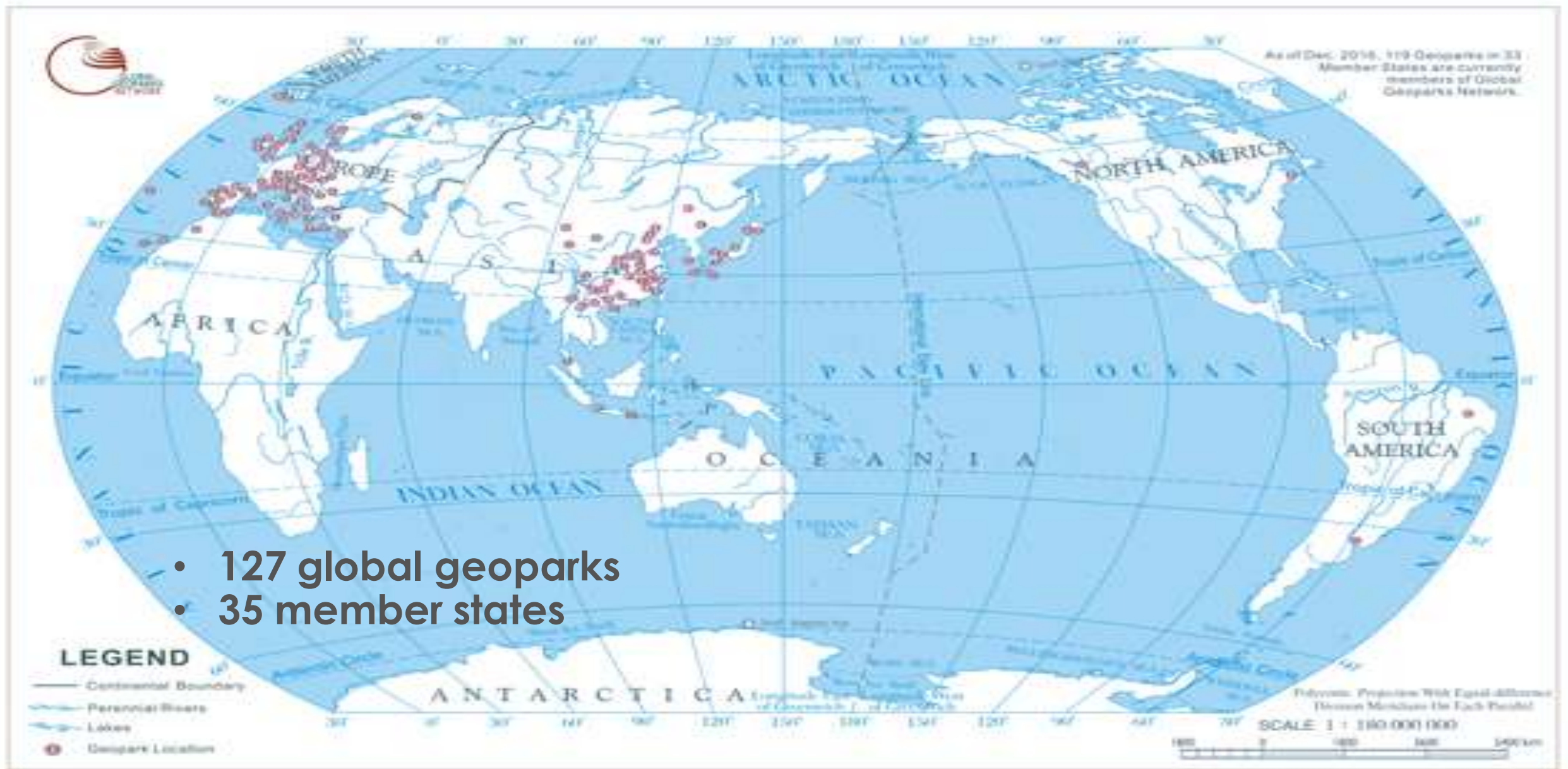


## Extreme poverty (Living on <USD 1.9 per day)

- 1978: 250 million people
- 2017: **43 million people** (Concentrated Contiguous Destitute Areas CCDA: 680 counties)
- 1978 – 2017 (39 years): - 80%



# Distribution of GGN Members



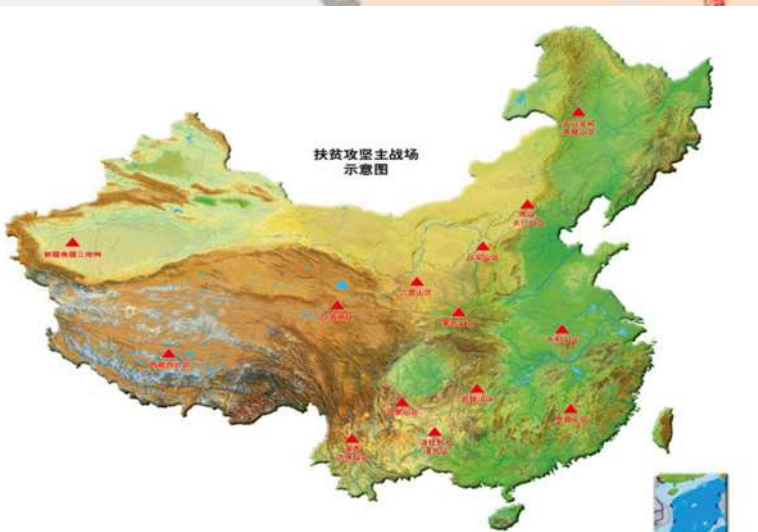




# 中国国家地质公园分布图

## 204 national geoparks

(CGN, Sept 2017)





## 世界地质公园网络中国成员分布图

# 35 global geoparks

(GGN Sept 2017)





# GROWTH OF NATIONAL GEOPARKS IN CHINA



# 4. ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- Tourist number
- New business opportunities
- Job creation
- Revenue generation



# TOURIST NUMBER

- Since 2000, **1.42 billion** visitors (MLR 2017)
- Continue to grow at 5 – 7% per year





# NEW JOB & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

- Number of hotels, motels, hostels and farm stay within geoparks: 23,500 (MLR 2017)
- Travel agents, guides, event organisers and operators, transportation, shops, restaurants & café, accommodation, infrastructure construction companies, museum design, printing, local food and souvenir manufacturers
- Environmental survey, planning and conservation professionals (geoscientists, ecologists etc.), research opportunities



# JOB CREATION



- Geopark managers & administrative staff: 20,500 (MLR 2017)
- Geopark frontline staff (full-time & part-time): 464,000
- Indirect positions created by associated activities and events of geopark and geotourism: 2.6 million





## 象鼻石 Elephant's Trunk Rock

花岗岩巨石受节理切割裂解后的残余部分，在流水、冰雪的侵蚀和雕凿下形成状若大象举鼻的景观。“象鼻”根部为两组节理交汇处。

"Elephant's Trunk Rock" remains after the granite boulder is cut by the joints, looking like an elephant lifting its trunk. It suffers strong weathering along its joints and erosion by running water, snow and ice. The root of the "Elephant's



- ①  
花岗岩块受节理切割。  
The granite boulder is cut by its joints.



- ②  
花岗岩块沿两组节理强烈风化，并受到流水、冰雪等侵蚀。  
The granite boulder suffers strong weathering along two sets of joints and erosion by running water, snow and ice.



- ③  
残余部分形成状若大象举鼻的景观。  
The remains look like an elephant lifting its trunk.

海拔：1212米  
Altitude: 1212m



Tianzhusan Global Geopark  
Anhui Province, China 中国·安徽天柱山世界地质公园





# REVENUE GENERATION

- Total tourism revenue CNY 596 billion (USD 90/ AUD 118 billion) since 2000 (MLR 2017)
- Each geopark in China generates an average of USD 440/ AUD 580 million over a period of 17 years, or an average of USD 26 million/ AUD 34 million per year.
- Therefore, a Chinese geopark is estimated to worth:

**USD 26 million/AUD 34 million per year**

- Unlike mining, this is a sustainable source of income as long as the geopark is well-managed and the geological heritages are well-protected.

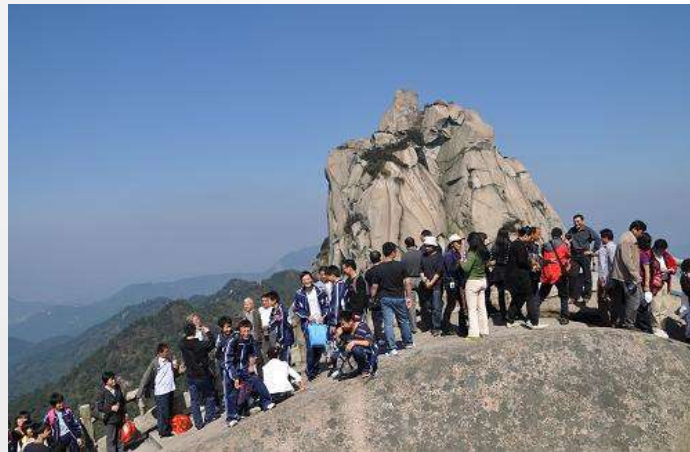


# 5. CHALLENGES & CONCLUSIONS



# CHALLENGES

- High demands for infrastructure and tourism facilities
- Visitor management
- Environment and heritage protection
- Recruiting young people to work in remote parks





# CONCLUSIONS

- Geotourism and geopark approach adopted in China is proven to be economically effective in improving the livelihood of people in poor and remote areas
- Perfectly match with the national poverty alleviation strategies and policies + the recent 'Belt & Road Initiative'
- Foreseeable improvement in the remote, poor areas particularly in Central, NW and SW regions of China
- Opening up tremendous business and academic research opportunities
- Utilizing and revitalising existing geo-resources (geology, natural & cultural landscapes)

Each Chinese geopark generates:

- USD 26 million/AUD 34 million per year
- Creating 15,000 direct and indirect jobs

Can these geotourism and geopark experiences in China be shared with communities in some of the areas in Australia or countries in the Asia-Pacific region?

# GEOTOURISM WORKSHOP

On Wednesday 29 November, 2017

‘Chinese Geotourism and Geoparks: selected cases’

You are welcome to join.



# THANK YOU!

Dr Young Ng

Geological Society of Australia

Email: [2901792603@qq.com](mailto:2901792603@qq.com)

# Guizhou Sinan Wujiang Karst National Geopark

