Initial Report on CRP-1,
Cape Roberts Project, Antarctica

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INITIAL REPORT ON CRP-1, CAPE ROBERTS PROJECT, ANTARCTICA

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Foreword

This volume is the first of several special issues of Terra Antartica to present the results of the Cape Roberts Project, in which the Antarctic programmes of Australia, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, UK and USA are collaborating to take a series of cores off the Antarctic coast from a drilling rig set on the fast sea-ice to investigate climatic and tectonic history of the region (Barrett & Davey, 1992; International Steering Committee, 1994). Although this first season of drilling was curtailed at a depth of 148 mbsf (metres below sea floor) by an unusual storm-generated ice break-out, the core recovered represents a significant advance for geological understanding in the region, both with new facies and with early Neogene ages from the presumed Paleogene sequence. Down hole conditions were also more difficult than expected and improvements are being sought for the drilling system to deal with these. But not the least of the challenges was for the Cape Roberts Science Team of 50 scientific technical and support staff, meeting in early October for the first time, to process, describe, sample and analyse the core and complete their first report by mid November and within 3 weeks of completion of the drill hole. We thank all of those who took part in the project for their commitment to its success and for achieving this season as much as the Antarctic would allow. We look forward in late 1998 to the next Cape Roberts special issue, the Scientific Report, with a more detailed analysis of the results of the 1997 drilling, and to the next drilling season.

We are grateful for the support of the national Antarctic programmes of Australia, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, New Zealand and the United States for making this project possible, and in accommodating the delays brought about by ice conditions in the Antarctic. We thank Gillian Wratt and Antarctica New Zealand for coordinating the logistics of the project and Jim Cowie as Project Manager for maintaining a difficult operation on a sound and secure footing despite the challenges of the Antarctic environment. We also thank Scott Borg and the US National Science Foundation for making available the Crary Science & Engineering Center at McMurdo Station so that the scientific studies reported here could be carried out immediately after the drilling. Finally we gratefully acknowledge the editorial role taken by Chris Fielding and Woody Wise in helping complete this volume.

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November 1997

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