

DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

REPORT BOOK 91/97

REPORT ON A TRANSIENT ELECTROMAGNETIC  
SURVEY AT NUNDROO SA

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Geophysicist

NOVEMBER 1991

DME 646/75

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# TRANSIENT ELECTROMAGNETIC SURVEY AT NUNDROO SOUTH AUSTRALIA

A R DODDS

**A regional study of the geology in the Nundroo area, S.A. required some knowledge of the electrical properties of the rocks. The SIROTEM survey described in this report provided information on the resistive properties of overburden and bedrock, and on the thickness of the overburden.**

**The results show the water-table at a depth of 12-46 metres with groundwater salinity approximating that of sea-water in most areas. The depth to bedrock varies from 26 to 89 metres. The conductive environment is absent at one location, possibly because of very shallow bedrock precluding the presence of groundwater.**

**The survey penetrated well into bedrock. Any sulphide conductors of other than trivial size and conductivity within 50 metres or more of bedrock surface should have been detected. Five anomalies are identified which could be caused by bedrock conductors. None of them give any indication of being caused by a strong conductor.**

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## INTRODUCTION

At the request of the Regional Geology section of the South Australian Department of Mines and Energy (S.A.D.M.E.) a SIROTEM Transient Electromagnetic (TEM) survey was done over four lines at Nundroo, S.A. The work was done between 23rd. June and 2nd. July, 1987, by N. Dunstan of SADME and A. Simamora, a visiting geophysicist from the Geological Survey of Indonesia, with two assistants.

## SURVEY SPECIFICATIONS

The survey was done with 100 metre square transmitter loops and an in-loop receiver, this configuration being chosen to obviate any problems from super-paramagnetic effects (a non-conductive response caused by magnetic particles in the surface soil). Readings were taken at 50 metre intervals.

One line, parallel to and several hundred metres to the north-east of the road, was surveyed first (Figure 1). Subsequently three additional lines, parallel to the first,

were surveyed to map out a region of low response where basement appears to be shallow.

## PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The results are presented in two formats.

First, the voltage responses are presented as profiles at a logarithmic voltage scale (Figures 2-6). This presentation shows the basic results in a way that gives the maximum sensitivity for anomaly detection while allowing the data for all channels to be contained on one plot.

The data were then processed to compute the apparent resistivity for each station and delay time, the resulting figures being plotted as pseudo-sections (Figures 7-11). This presentation shows how the response varies from channel to channel, and provides a general picture of the basic resistivity pattern.

Thus the apparent resistivity pseudo-sections indicate

the resistivity levels for the area, and show qualitative resistivity variations with depth. This is particularly useful for overburden studies and any geological situation where horizontal layering is involved.

The voltage profiles accentuate lateral variations in response, and are the more sensitive presentation for local anomaly detection.

## TEM INVERSIONS

After the results were plotted in pseudo-section form, readings were selected for inversion. These inversions, carried out at SADME using the AMIRA GRENDL software created by CSIRO, assume a one-dimensional model, i.e. there is no variation in response other than in the z-direction. Thus, so far as possible, the readings to be modelled were selected at the centre of a sequence of laterally unchanging data. In some cases, readings were selected in less ideal surroundings if a location was considered sufficiently critical.

The inversion process is automated but requires the selection of a viable initial model, the number of layers selected being particularly critical. If too many or too few layers are selected the resultant model is bound to be in error. The initial thickness and resistivity of each layer is less critical. Data points can be weighted and model parameters fixed, if so desired.

The inversion results include statistics to help evaluate the reliability of the final model. These include a standard error (SE), which is an indicator of the general quality of the fit, confidence intervals for each final model parameter, which define how well the given parameter is resolved, and a predicted residual error (APRE) which indicates whether the number of layers selected is appropriate. The standard error at each data point is also provided to indicate whether the errors are randomly scattered (noise) or systematic (a bad fit). A study of these and other data gives a good idea as to whether further adjustment is warranted, and what to do to improve the inversion.

The most obvious cause of problems is inhomogeneity in the horizontal direction, which may move the curve away from a layering shape or may just falsify the inversion. Instrument noise or electrical noise may interfere with the inversion, but these would usually put random noise, which can be identified in interpretation, onto the curve. It might reasonably be expected that, while too few layers might cause an insuperable

problem to the inversion, too many layers should be resolvable by the software setting the thickness of a superfluous layer to zero, or making the resistivity the same as an adjoining layer. This is not the case, and the layer is usually left approximately at its initial values, so a better fit can be achieved by removing unnecessary layers.

The inversion results are presented as sections (Figure 12), giving the resistivity and thickness of each layer, and the confidence to be placed in each of these parameters. Also included are the SE and APRE figures, to show, by their proximity to zero, which inversions are the better fit. The APRE figure is regarded as satisfactory if it is close to the SE figure.

## RESULTS

Line 0, running parallel to and a few hundred metres east of the main highway, was the initial line surveyed. The apparent resistivity pseudo-section (Figures 3 and 4) shows conductive material under much of the line, particularly at the north end. A qualitative interpretation of these data yields three layers, with resistive surface and bottom layers sandwiching the conductor. The conductor vanishes at some points on the line, where a purely resistive section occurs.

The inversions are shown in Figure 12. Most of these inversions were done in conductive areas, since these are generally extensive and therefore approach a layered model. Two inversions were done in resistive areas, although it is questionable whether the data are suitable for such processing. However, the statistics indicate that the results are reasonable.

Inversions in conductive areas all indicate the presence of a very conductive layer at a depth of 12 to 46 metres and from 6 to 48 metres thick. The resistivity varies from 0.4 to 3.7 ohm-metres. It is probable that the most conductive value, a 0.4 ohm-metre layer only 6 metres thick, is inaccurate because of equivalence problems which make the resolution of resistivity and thickness difficult to resolve in such cases. It may well be that this layer should be twice as thick and twice as resistive, for instance, which would make the lowest resistivity more realistic at 0.8 ohm-metres.

The conductive layer is interpreted as a saline aquifer with water approximating the salinity of sea-water. Such groundwater is widespread in the areas west of Ceduna, and it is probably true to say that all porous

sediments below the water-table are saturated with highly saline groundwater.

The top layer, above the conductor, is relatively resistive and varies in thickness from 12 to 46 metres. The resistivity is generally poorly defined, but can be taken as over 10 ohm-metres. This layer is interpreted as dry sediments, because it is either above the water-table or impervious.

The layer under the conductor is at a depth of 26 to 89 metres, and again the resistivity is poorly defined. This is interpreted as impervious rock, probably basement.

Three areas, 17100N-17350N, 18250N-18800N and 20900N-22500N are not underlain by conductive zones. For the latter two areas it appears that basement is shallow, and this accounts for the interruption of the saline aquifer. However, the zone from 17100N to 17350N has comparatively very steep boundaries, and it would appear that shallowing of basement, though still possible, is less likely here. The cause may be a change in the constitution of the overburden to more compact and less porous material, possibly caused by a fault.

Three extra lines, one to the west and two to the east of Line 0, were surveyed to map out the latter zone, between 17000N and 17500N. The zone evidently extends with reduced intensity to the east for some 500 metres, but not to the west, towards the road.

The voltage profiles are presented at a horizontal scale of 1:10 000 or 1:25 000, to show the data more compactly. There are a number of interesting features, apart from the variations in overburden conditions discussed above. These features, five in number, are of minor intensity, to the extent that they are not easily seen on the apparent resistivity pseudo-sections. They are, however, clearly evident on the voltage profiles and although they may still be caused by overburden features, have the positive indicators that they are not near-surface, nor are they extensive.

All of the features of interest occur on the southern section of Line 0 and are marked as anomalies A to E on Figure 3. None of them were detailed by surveying additional lines to either side, or by using other loop configurations, so the interpretation that can be done on them is very limited. The most important characteristic of all of the anomalies is that they are clearly evident on more than one channel and more than one station. This indicates that they are genuine conductive features.

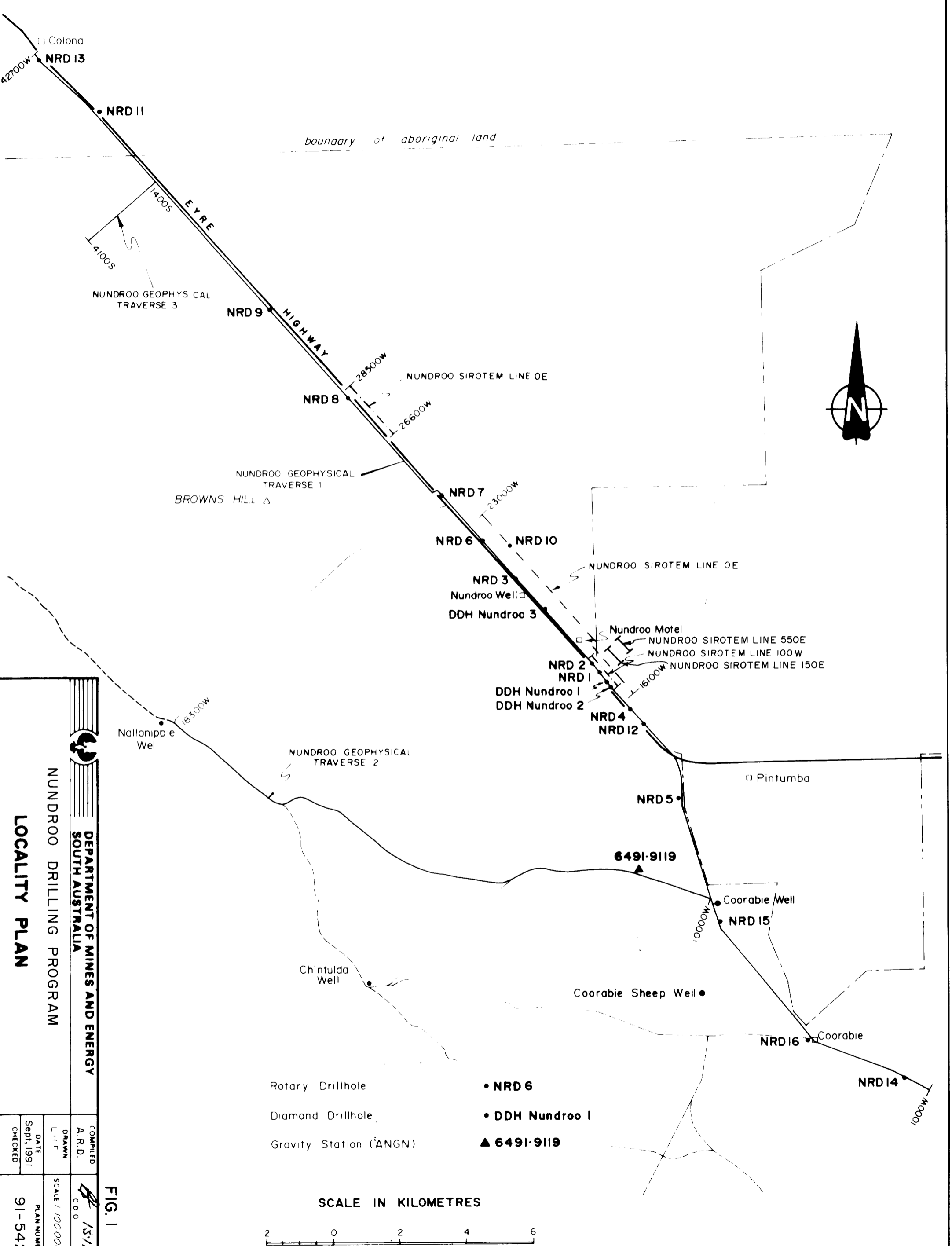
Two of these anomalies, A and E, were selected for further interpretation through the decay curve analysis (Figures 13 & 14). Both late time curves fit a power law decay, with time constants of 3.7 and 2.6 respectively. The former approximates a thin layer response (theoretically 4.0) while the latter is close to that of a uniform half-space (theoretically 2.5). The exponential fits, which would indicate a finite conductor, are much less convincing, but are still credible considering that a certain amount of signal from the conductive overburden is superimposed on the anomalous response. The time constants, at 2.7 and 2.9 ms respectively, are high enough to be interesting, bearing in mind that the rule-of-thumb cutoff level for possible economic mineralization is 2.0 ms.

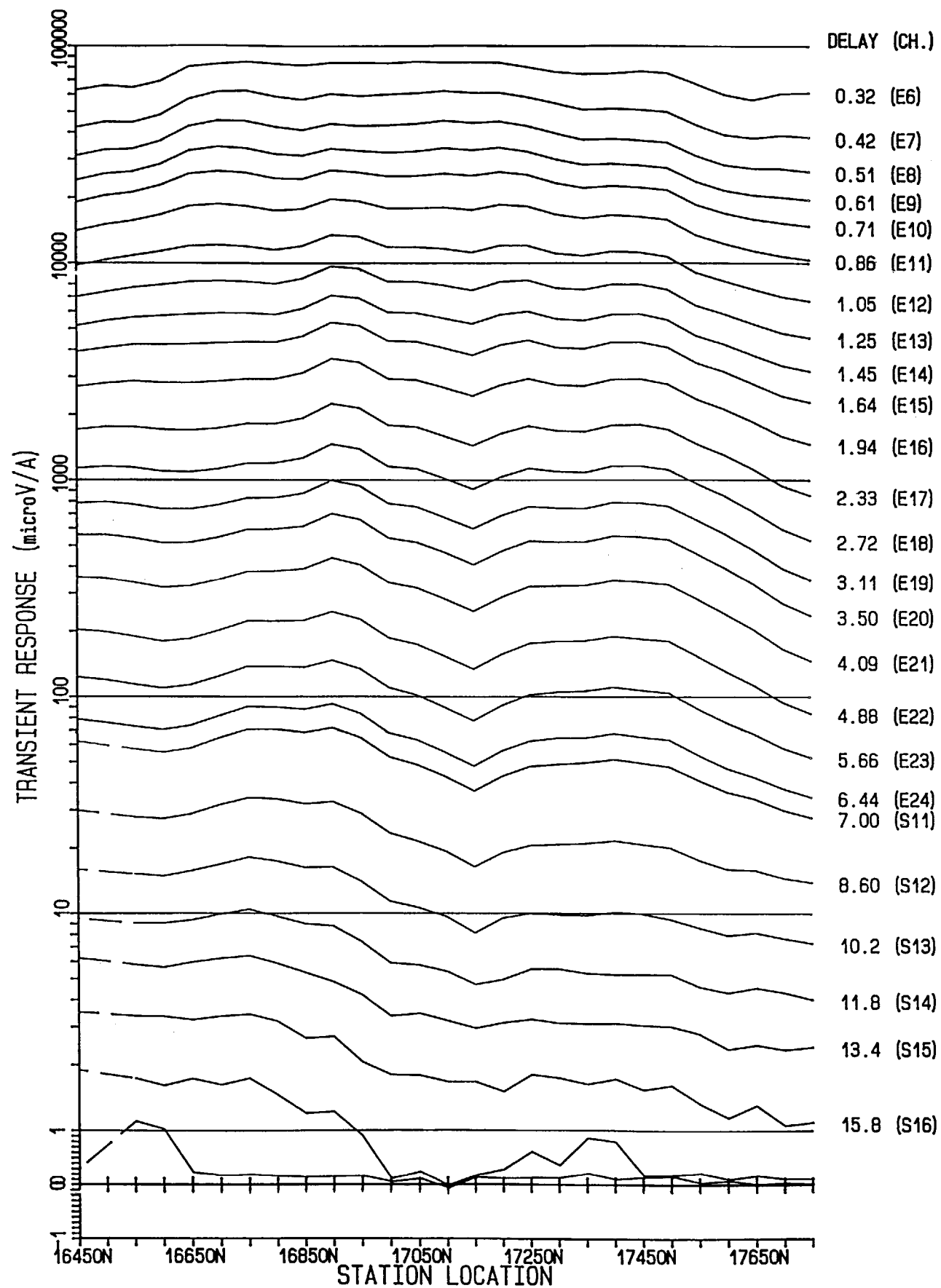
## SUMMARY

The SIROTEM survey at Nundroo indicated extensive and variable conductive response. The lateral extent of the major conductor was sufficient to allow inversion of the data, in most instances, assuming a one-dimensional model (horizontal layering). As a result of this modelling, most of the conductivity is interpreted as saline groundwater in the overburden layer, the response varying as the depth to bedrock, which controls the thickness of water bearing sediments. Where the conductive layer is not present, the bedrock is generally closer to surface than the water-table. The groundwater salinity is interpreted as being between 10 000 and 100 000 mg/l, or of the same order as that of sea-water. The depth to the water table is 12 to 46 metres, and to basement is up to 89 metres.

Five anomalies were selected as possible bedrock conductors. Two of these were further assessed with decay curve analysis, which indicated the probability of their being caused by horizontally extensive sources, probably overburden, but the possibility of a finite, and perhaps more conductive, bedrock conductor. The time constants, based on the assumption of a finite target, are sufficiently high to be economically interesting.

A R DODDS  
GEOPHYSICIST





### SURVEY SPECIFICATIONS

SURVEY DATE : NOV/87  
 CONFIGURATION : 100M SQUARE TX. LOOP,  
 IN LOOP RECEIVER  
 READING INT. : 50 METRES  
 NO. OF STACKS : 256  
 INSTRUMENT : SIROTEM MK II #1321  
 CURRENT : 5.8 AMPS  
 OPERATOR : N. DUNSTAN

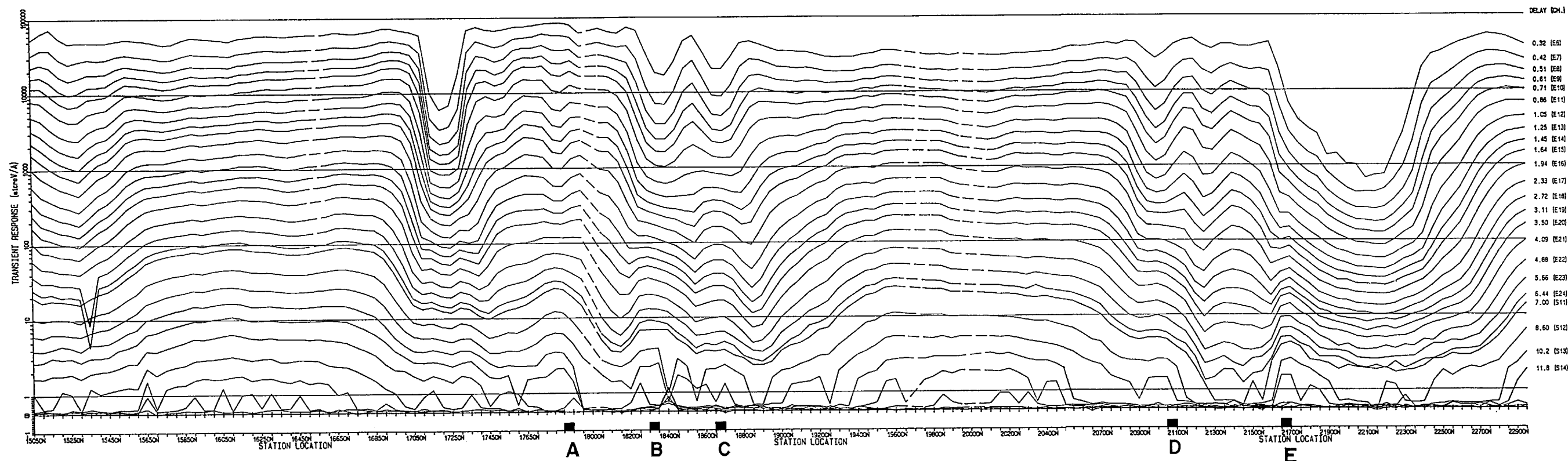
### PLOT SPECIFICATIONS

HORIZONTAL SCALE - 1:10000  
 VERTICAL SCALE - LOGARITHMIC  
 4CM. PER DECADE  
 LINEAR BETWEEN  
 -1 AND +1

TIME DELAYS IN MILLISECONDS  
 E - EARLY TIME WINDOW  
 S - STANDARD TIME WINDOW

FIG. 2

	DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY SOUTH AUSTRALIA		COMPILED A.R.D.	15/11/91 C.D.O. DATE
	NUNDROO DRILLING PROGRAM		DRAWN J. Gray	SCALE 1:10000
	SIROTEM PROFILE LINE 100W		DATE Sept, 1991	PLAN NUMBER 91-543
			CHECKED	



# SURVEY SPECIFICATIONS

SURVEY DATE : NOV/87  
 CONFIGURATION : 100M SQUARE TX. LOOP,  
 IN LOOP RECEIVER  
 READING INT. : 50 METRES  
 NO. OF STACKS : 256  
 INSTRUMENT : SIROTEM MK II #1321  
 CURRENT : 5.8 AMPS  
 OPERATOR : N. DUNSTAN

# PLOT SPECIFICATIONS

HORIZONTAL SCALE - AS SHOWN  
 VERTICAL SCALE - LOGARITHMIC  
 4CM. PER DECADE  
 LINEAR BETWEEN  
 -1 AND +1


TIME DELAYS IN MILLISECONDS  
 E - EARLY TIME WINDOW  
 S - STANDARD TIME WINDOW

■ A-E.....ANOMALIES

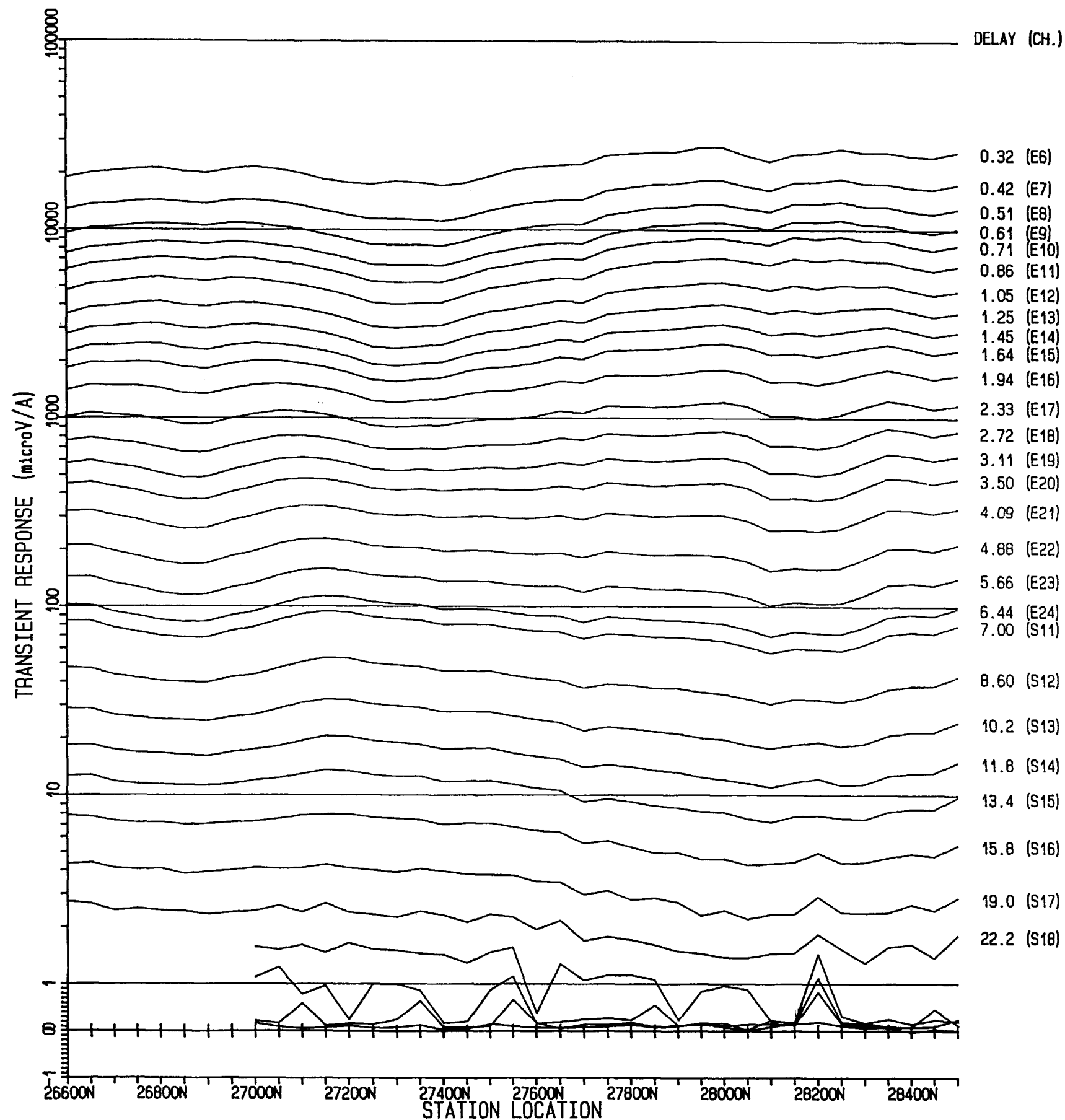
SCALE

METRES 400 0 400 800 1200 METRES

FIG. 3

 DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY SOUTH AUSTRALIA	COMPILED A.R.D.	13/11/91 DATE
	DRAWN J. Gray	SCALE As shown
	DATE Sept, 1991	PLAN NUMBER 91-544
	CHECKED	

NUNDROO DRILLING PROGRAM  
 SIROTEM PROFILE LINE OE  
 15050N - 22900N



### SURVEY SPECIFICATIONS


SURVEY DATE : NOV/87  
 CONFIGURATION : 100M SQUARE TX. LOOP,  
 IN LOOP RECEIVER  
 READING INT. : 50 METRES  
 NO. OF STACKS : 256  
 INSTRUMENT : SIROTEM MK II #1321  
 CURRENT : 5.8 AMPS  
 OPERATOR : N. DUNSTAN

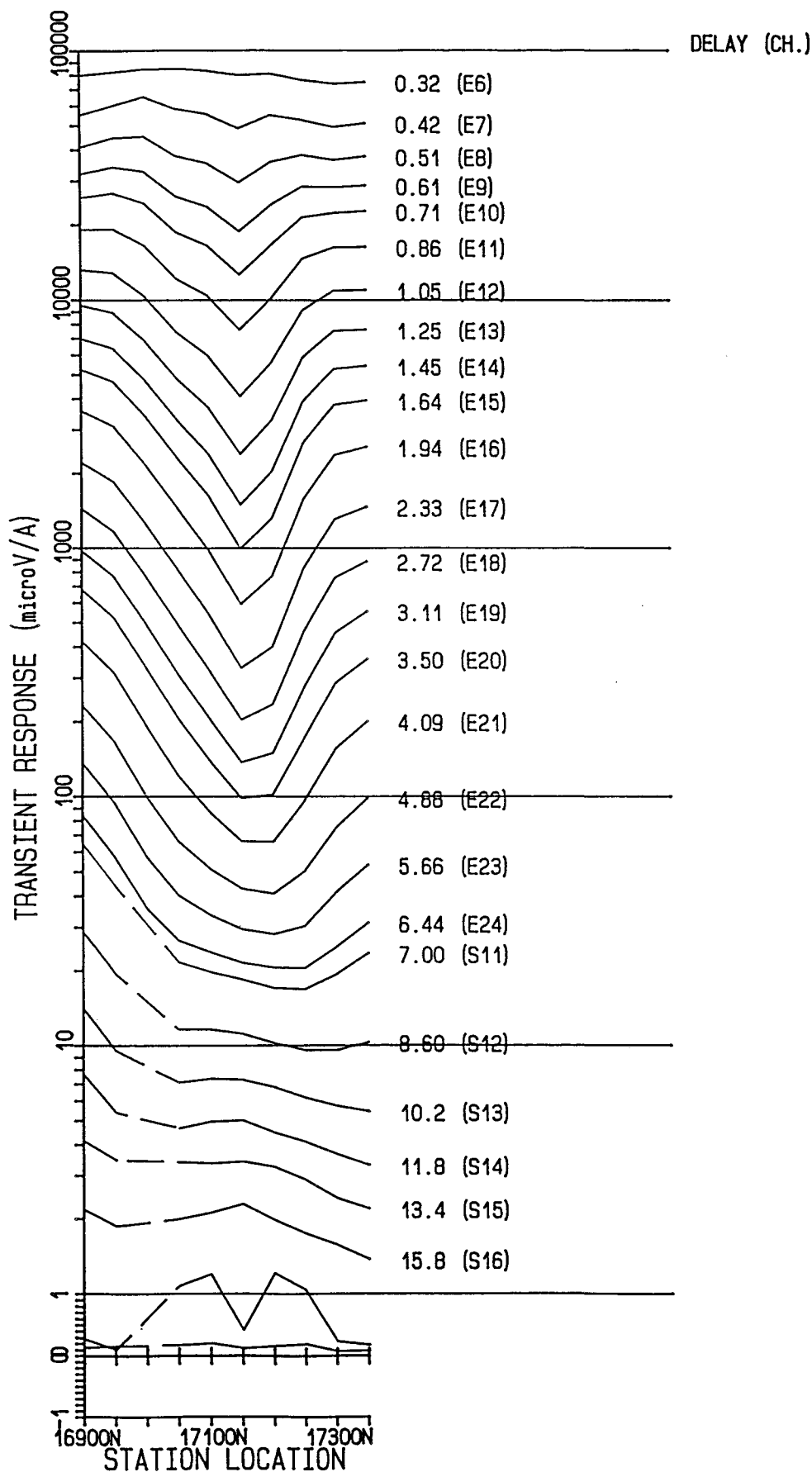
### PLOT SPECIFICATIONS

HORIZONTAL SCALE - 1:10000  
 VERTICAL SCALE - LOGARITHMIC  
 4CM. PER DECADE  
 LINEAR BETWEEN  
 -1 AND +1

TIME DELAYS IN MILLISECONDS  
 E - EARLY TIME WINDOW  
 S - STANDARD TIME WINDOW

FIG. 4

	DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY SOUTH AUSTRALIA		COMPILED A.R.D.	13/11/91 C.D.O. DATE
	NUNDROO DRILLING PROGRAM		DRAWN J. Gray	SCALE 1:10000
	SIROTEM PROFILE LINE OE 26600N - 28500N		DATE Sept, 1991	PLAN NUMBER 91-545
			CHECKED	



#### SURVEY SPECIFICATIONS

SURVEY DATE : NOV/87  
 CONFIGURATION : 100M SQUARE TX. LOOP,  
 IN LOOP RECEIVER  
 READING INT. : 50 METRES  
 NO. OF STACKS : 256  
 INSTRUMENT : SIROTEM MK II #1321  
 CURRENT : 6.0 AMPS  
 OPERATOR : N. DUNSTAN

#### PLOT SPECIFICATIONS

HORIZONTAL SCALE - 1:10000  
 VERTICAL SCALE - LOGARITHMIC  
 4CM. PER DECADE  
 LINEAR BETWEEN  
 -1 AND +1

TIME DELAYS IN MILLISECONDS  
 E - EARLY TIME WINDOW  
 S - STANDARD TIME WINDOW

FIG. 5



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 SOUTH AUSTRALIA

NUNDROO DRILLING PROGRAM

SIROTEM PROFILE LINE 150E

COMPILED  
 A. R. D.

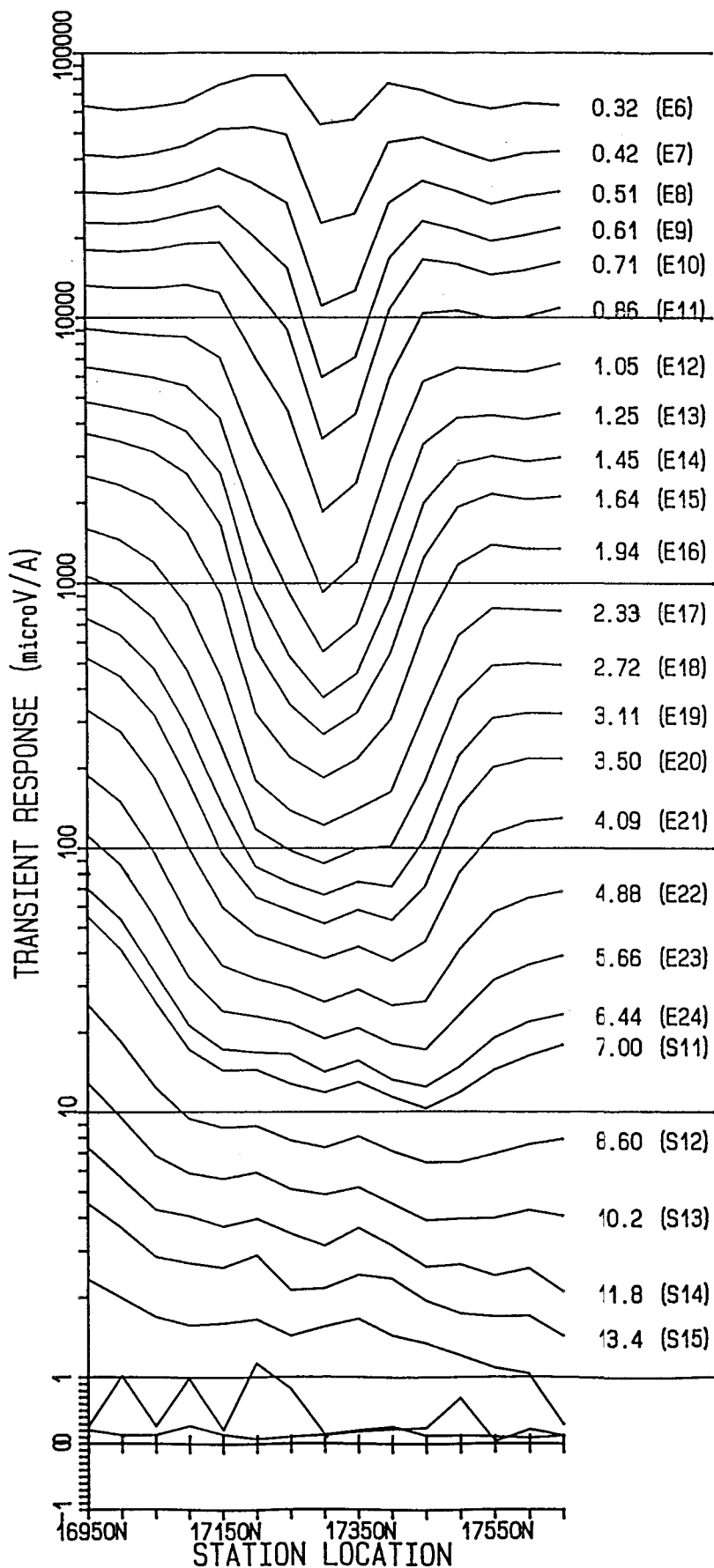
13.11.91  
 C.D.O. DATE

DRAWN  
 J. Gray

SCALE 1:10000

DATE  
 Sept, 1991  
 CHECKED

PLAN NUMBER  
 S 22481



### SURVEY SPECIFICATIONS

SURVEY DATE : NOV/87  
 CONFIGURATION : 100M SQUARE TX. LOOP,  
 IN LOOP RECEIVER  
 READING INT. : 50 METRES  
 NO. OF STACKS : 256  
 INSTRUMENT : SIROTEM MK II #1321  
 CURRENT : 5.8 AMPS  
 OPERATOR : N. DUNSTAN

### PLOT SPECIFICATIONS

HORIZONTAL SCALE - 1:10000  
 VERTICAL SCALE - LOGARITHMIC  
 4CM. PER DECADE  
 LINEAR BETWEEN  
 -1 AND +1

TIME DELAYS IN MILLISECONDS  
 E - EARLY TIME WINDOW  
 S - STANDARD TIME WINDOW

FIG. 6



DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY  
 SOUTH AUSTRALIA

NUNDROO DRILLING PROGRAM  
 SIROTEM PROFILE LINE 550E

COMPILED  
 A.R.D.

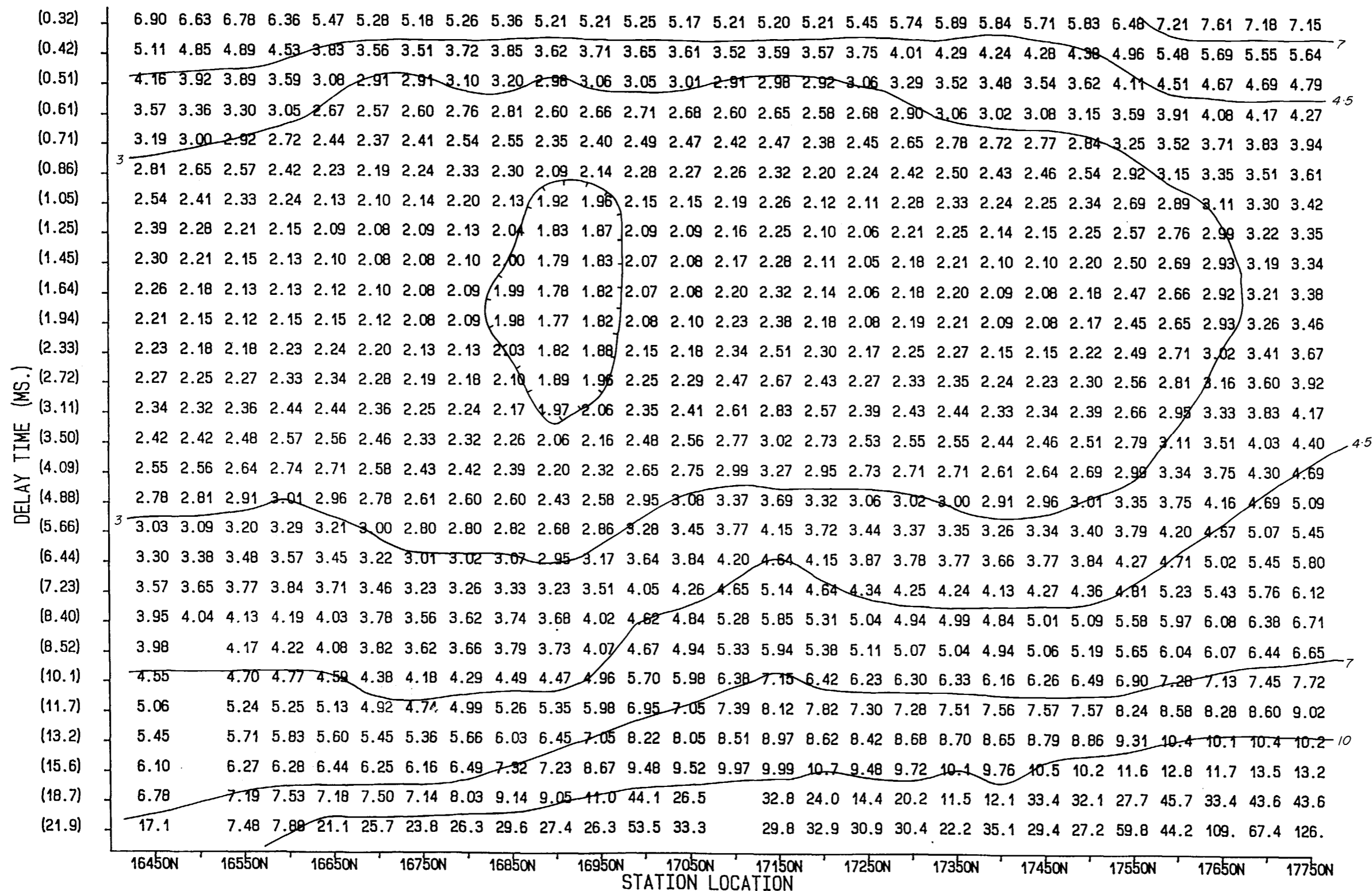
13/11/91  
 C.D.O. DATE

DRAWN  
 J. Gray

SCALE 1:10000

DATE  
 Sept, 1991  
 CHECKED

PLAN NUMBER  
 S 22482




UNITS: OHM-METRES

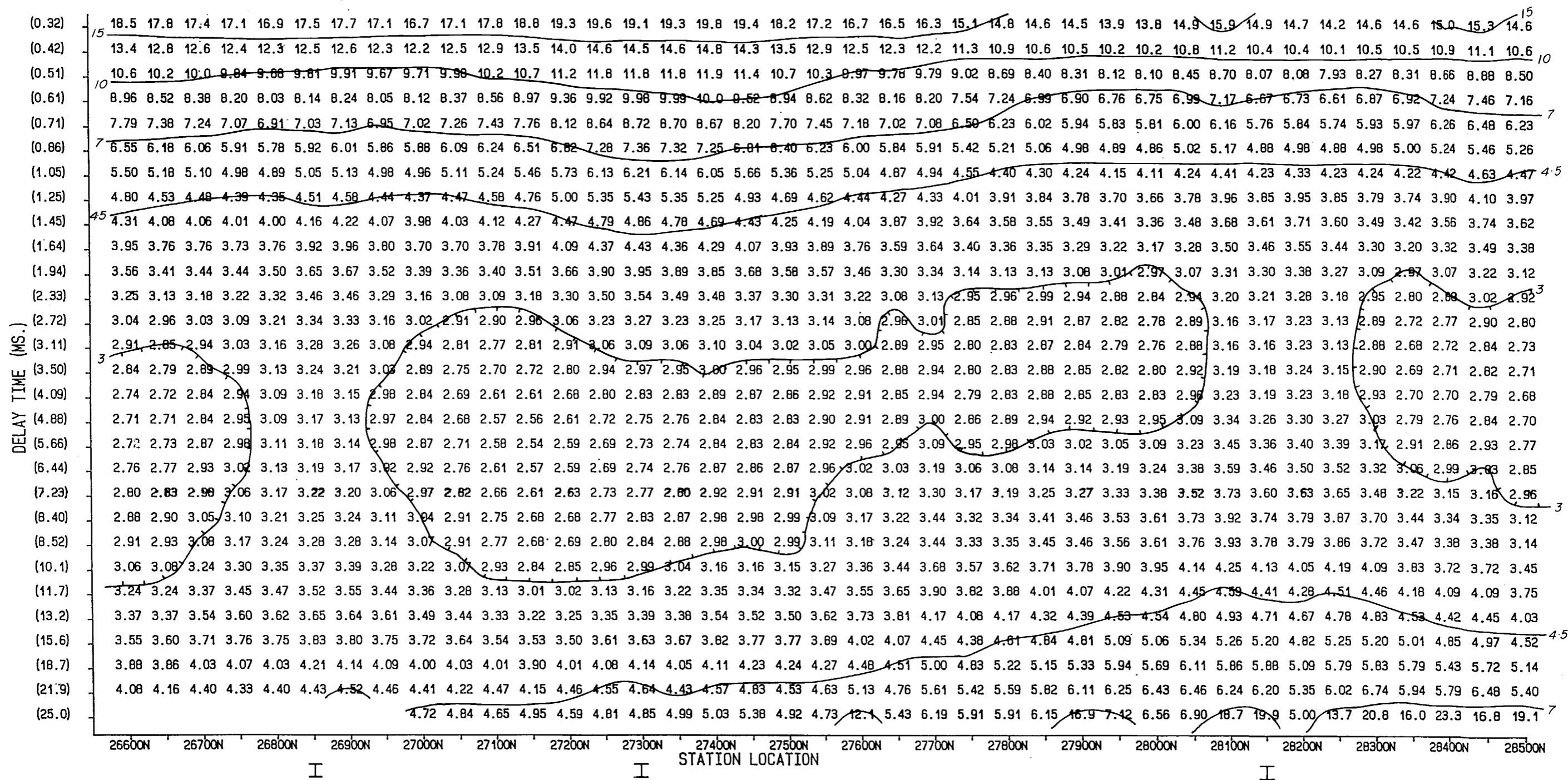
SURVEY SPECIFICATIONS	
INSTRUMENT:	SIROTEM
CONFIGURATION	100M SQ. TRANSMITTER LOOP
READING INTERVAL	50M
SURVEY DATE	NOV/87
MAP	FOWLER, S.A.

Contour interval: (1, 1.5, 2, 3, 4.5, 7) x 10<sup>n</sup>

FIG. 7

	DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY SOUTH AUSTRALIA		COMPILED A.R.D.	13/11/91
	NUNDROO DRILLING PROGRAM		DRAWN J. Gray	SCALE 1:5000
	SIROTEM SURVEY 100W		DATE Sept, 1991	PLAN NUMBER
	APPARENT RESISTIVITY PSEUDO-SECTION		CHECKED	91-546





I .....Data sets that have been inverted

Contour interval: (1, 1.5, 2, 3, 4.5, 7) x 10<sup>n</sup>


UNITS: OHM-METRES

SURVEY SPECIFICATIONS	
INSTRUMENT:	SIROTEM
CONFIGURATION	100M SQ. TRANSMITTER LOOP
READING INTERVAL	50M
SURVEY DATE	NOV/87
MAP	FOWLER, S.A.

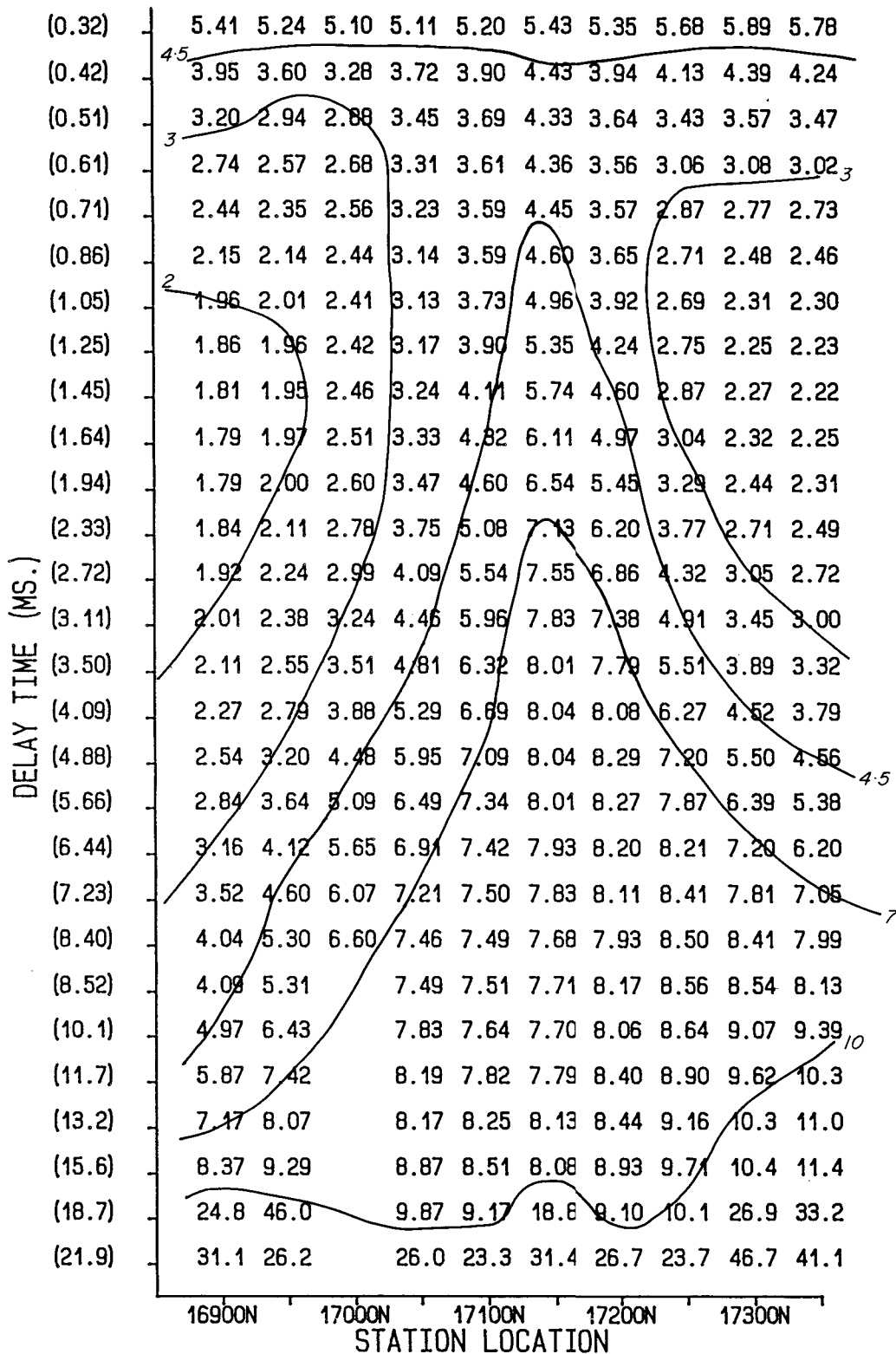
SCALE

METRES 100 0 100 200 300 METRES

FIG. 9

 DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY SOUTH AUSTRALIA	COMPILED A.R.D.	13/11/91
	DRAWN J. Gray	SCALE: As shown
	DATE Sept, 1991	PLAN NUMBER 91-548
	CHECKED	

NUNDROO DRILLING PROGRAM  
SIROTEM SURVEY OE, 26600N - 28500N  
APPARENT RESISTIVITY PSEUDO-SECTION



UNITS: OHM-METRES

SURVEY SPECIFICATIONS	
INSTRUMENT: SIROTEM	
CONFIGURATION 100M SQ. TRANSMITTER IN-LOOP RECEIVER	
READING INTERVAL	50M
SURVEY DATE	NOV/87
MAP	FOWLER, S.A.

FIG. 10

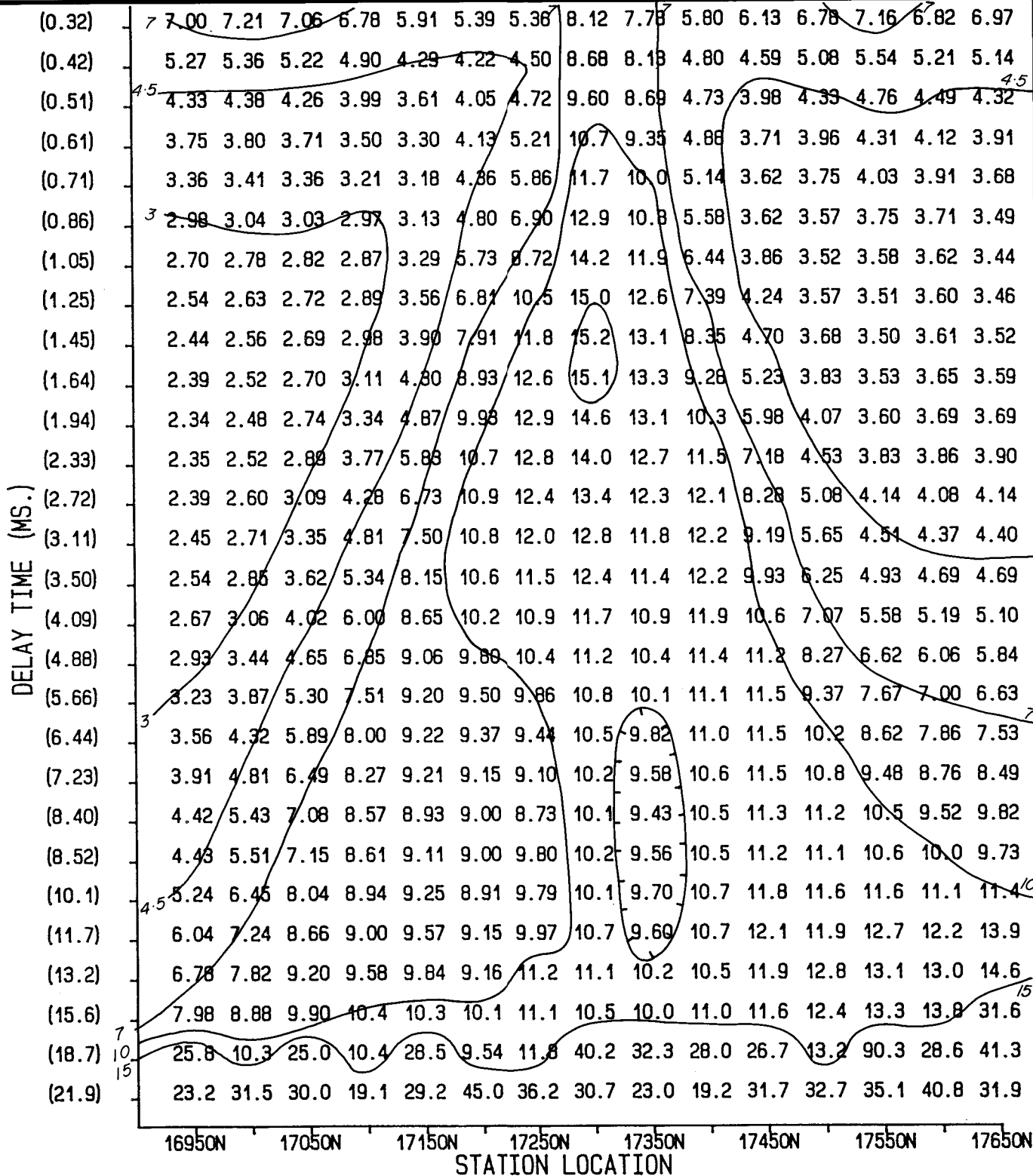
DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

NUNDROO DRILLING PROGRAM

SIROTEM SURVEY 150E

APPARENT RESISTIVITY PSEUDO-SECTION

COMPILED A.R.D.	<i>B</i> 13/1/91 C.D.O. DATE
DRAWN J. Gray	SCALE 1:5000
DATE Sept, 1991	PLAN NUMBER S 22483
CHECKED	




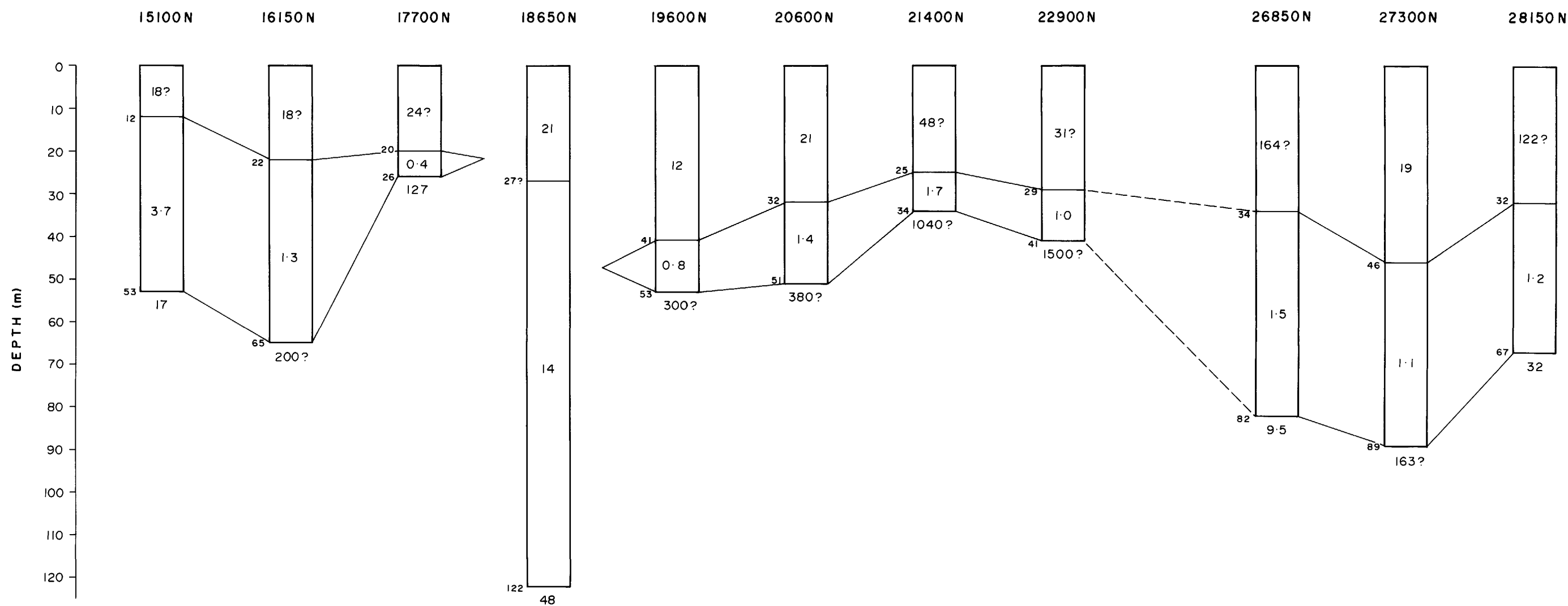
SURVEY SPECIFICATIONS	
INSTRUMENT:	SIROTEM
CONFIGURATION	100M SQ. TRANSMITTER IN-LOOP RECEIVER
READING INTERVAL	50M
SURVEY DATE	NOV/87
MAP	FOWLER, S.A.

UNITS: OHM-METRES

Contour interval: (1, 1.5, 2, 3, 4.5, 7) x 10<sup>n</sup>

FIG. II

 <p>DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY SOUTH AUSTRALIA</p> <p>NUNDROO DRILLING PROGRAM</p> <p>SIROTEM SURVEY 550E</p> <p>APPARENT RESISTIVITY PSEUDO-SECTION</p>	COMPILED A.R.D.	13/11/91 C.D.O. DATE
	DRAWN J. Gray	SCALE 1:5000
	DATE Sept, 1991	PLAN NUMBER S 22484
	CHECKED	



APRE	13.1	5.4	6.1	7.9	12.8	14.4	17.4	14.6	5.5	4.8	3.6
S.E. (%)	6.5	4.2	5.9	5.7	9.8	10.6	15.1	12.1	4.1	4.6	2.8

Layer resistivities in ohm-metres

Depths in metres

Horizontal distances are arbitrary

FIG. 12

		DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY SOUTH AUSTRALIA		COMPILED A.R.D.	13-11-91 C.D.O. DATE
		NUNDROO DRILLING PROGRAM <b>LINE O</b> RESISTIVITY SECTIONS INVERTED FROM SIROTEM SOUNDINGS		DRAWN J. Gray	SCALE
				DATE Sept, 1991	PLAN NUMBER 91-549
				CHECKED	

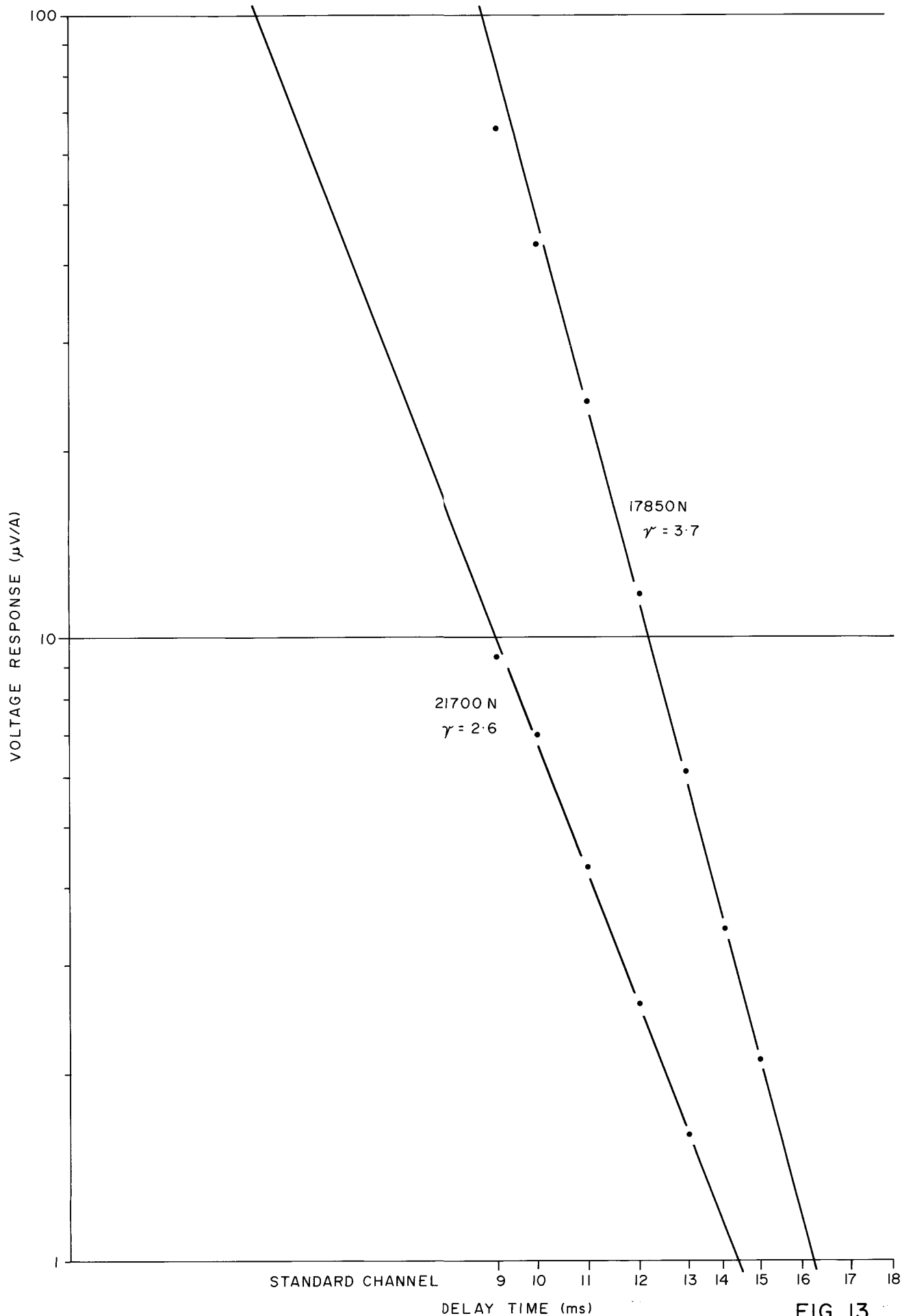


FIG. 13



DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY  
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COMPILED  
A.R.D.

C.D.O. 13/11/91  
DATE

NUNDROO DRILLING PROGRAM

DRAWN  
J. Gray

SCALE

DECAY CURVE ANALYSIS - POWER LAW DECAY  
LINE OE, STATIONS 17850N AND 21700N

DATE  
Sept, 1991  
CHECKED

PLAN NUMBER  
S 22485

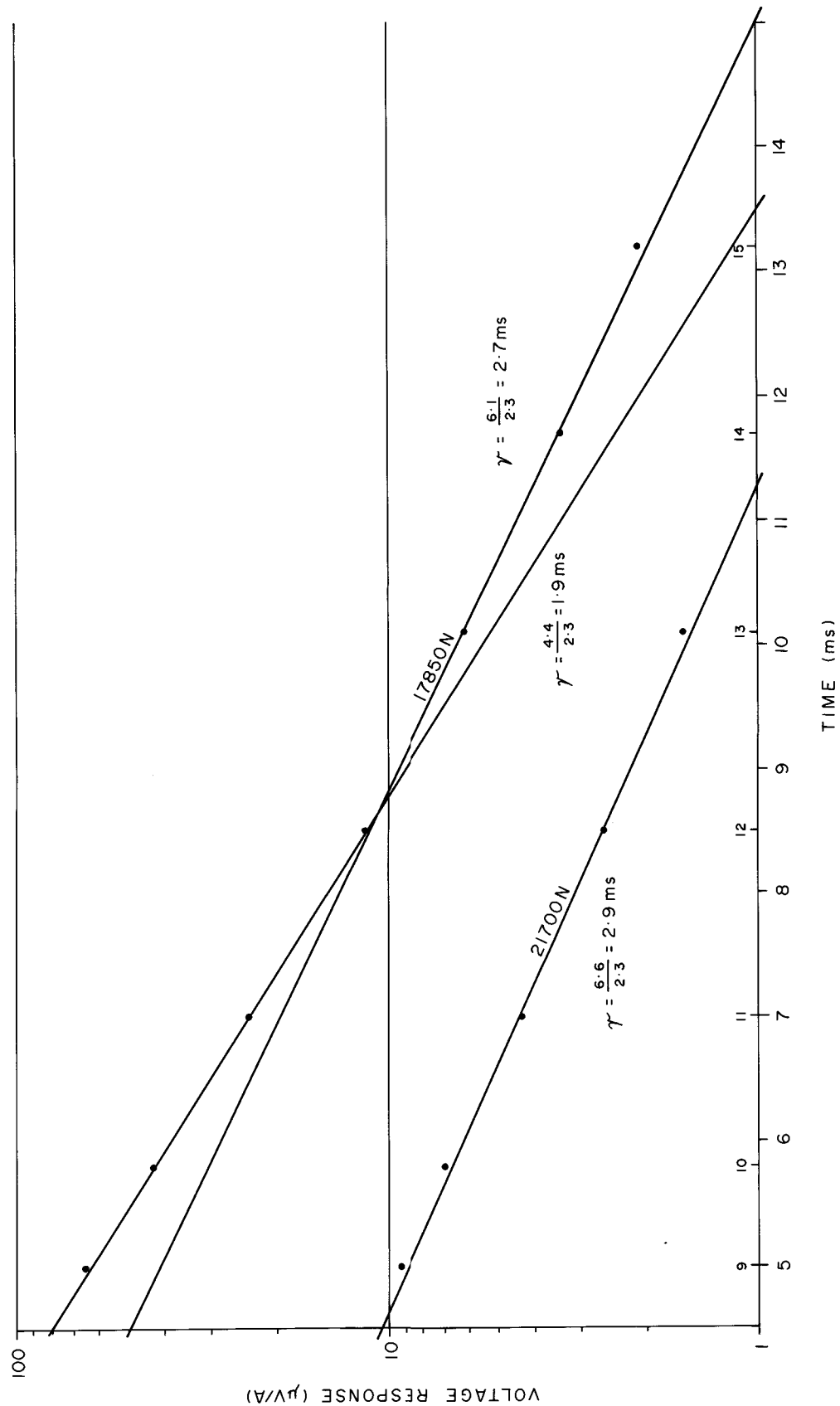


FIG. 14



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SOUTH AUSTRALIA

NUNDROO DRILLING PROGRAM

DECAY CURVE ANALYSIS - EXPONENTIAL DECAY  
LINE OE, STATIONS 17850N AND 21700N

COMPILED  
A.R.D.

13/11/91  
C.D.O. DATE

DRAWN  
J. Gray

SCALE

DATE  
Sept, 1991

CHECKED

PLAN NUMBER  
S22486