

**Rare-Earths Processing and Use by The Technology Information Branch**  
(Australian Patent Office, Canberra, 1985) pp. iii + 32.

This is the first of a series of strategic reports to be produced by the Australian Patent Office. It is noted in the introduction that the "strategic information which can be obtained from patents includes such insights as which technology areas are the subject of innovative activity, what countries are predominant, the companies involved and the extent of their involvement".

The report is based on data obtained from the Derwent File (World Patents Index), which covers published applications for patents issued in twenty-four leading countries, and European and PCT Patents and Research Disclosures for the period from 1970 to 1980, and the Derwent (World Patents Index — Latest) File for the period 1981 to 1984.

Information in the report shows the number of inventions concerned with the production and use of compounds of rare-earth metals from 1974 to 1984. It contains material obtained from patent applications, a glossary of terms related to the production, transport and the uses to which such rare-earths are put in manufacturing processes.

This report is a useful analysis of the material supplied by applicants for patents in one particular area of economic activity and it demonstrates the fact that a Patent Office can provide much more than a list of patents which have been registered. It is to be hoped that this exercise will be repeated by the Technology Information Branch in a number of other areas of economic activity, as it presents information which is very difficult to obtain from alternative sources.

**A.L. Loughheed**  
University of Queensland