Opening Ceremony

The Congress officially began with a 'Welcome to Country' by members of the Cadigal tribe which included a reference to the 'songlines' that connect the Aboriginal people to the land and to each other. These ancient connections provided an apt introduction to a conference focusing on a profession that is as old as time itself.

In his opening address, FIG President Professor Stig Enemark said that addressing the land development issues of the small island developing states is of particular importance to this Congress and will be the subject of a special seminar which will take place later in the week.

FIG 2010 is the largest FIG conference ever held, Enemark said, with more than 860 papers from more than 100 countries.

Marie Bashit, the Governor of New South Wales, spoke about the importance of surveyors ‘the modest and often unsung heroes’ in Australia’s history.

Her talk ended with the unveiling of a new statue, of colonial surveyor James Meehan, which will be placed in an unoccupied cupola of the New South Wales Department of Lands building. The statue is on display in the Exhibition Hall.

In his address to the 1500 attendees, keynote speaker Professor Tim Flannery urged the surveying profession to take a leading role in raising awareness among ordinary Australians about the importance of action on climate change.

‘You are not only the custodians of information in this area; you are the people who can explain what it means.’

Welcome Reception

The recently refurbished Sydney Town Hall provided a magnificent venue for the Welcome Reception, the first major event of our Congress, on Sunday evening.

With thanks to our sponsors Intergraph, Position Partners and the Intergovernmental Committee on Surveying and Mapping; this event was an excellent opportunity to showcase our profession to a full capacity grand hall. The haunting sounds of the majestic organ provided an ideal backdrop for the commencement of a week of learning, networking and camaraderie during the Congress.

General Assembly

Representatives from 47 member associations, along with associates and interested parties, attended the General Assembly on Sunday and heard FIG President Stig Enemark declare FIG 2010 the biggest FIG Congress ever.

During the meeting the following new members were recognised: the Cyprus Association of Valuers and Property Consultants, the Nepal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the Geodetic Association of Herzegovina-Bosnia.

The total number of FIG Member Associations stands at 100. The change in member association for Australia from the Institution of Surveyors Australia to the Surveying & Spatial Sciences Institute was also recorded.

Seven new affiliate members were also admitted.

The General Assembly also presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the Danish Association of Chartered Surveyors DDL, for its continuous support.

Three Honorary Members were appointed: Professor Pedro Carvemo (Spain), Professor Paul van der Molen (Netherlands) and Mr Helge Orsén (Norway).

The three candidates for President 2011-14 (Ian Greensway, Matthew Higgins and Teo Chee-Hai) and Vice President (Dalal Alnaggar, Chrysey Potsiou and Rudolf Stajger) made presentations to the General Assembly. Voting for President and Vice President, as well as the 2014 Congress Host (Kuala Lumpur or Istanbul) will take place at the General Assembly meeting on Friday.

Exhibition

The exhibition was opened with the cutting of the ribbon by FIG President Stig Enemark, followed by a surge of activity as attendees explored the venue.

There was strong interest in the stands of our major sponsors, Titanium Sponsor Leica Geosystems, Platinum Sponsors ESRI and Trimble. The Surveyors Lounge, sponsored by the University of New South Wales, will undoubtedly become a popular space as the week progresses and delegates seek a little quiet time with their RITA 'Surveying the road to success' stress release cars.

The exhibition is well on its way to becoming a high point of the Congress.

Don’t forget to visit GPSat Systems Australia, which is responsible for the GNSS Broadcasting (GPS + GLONASS) facility exhibition, making it possible for all equipment demonstrations to take place within the hall.

Plenary Session 1

Increased global recognition of the International Federation of Surveyors as the highest level is one of the key achievements of the past four years, said FIG President Stig Enemark at the opening plenary session of the FIG 2010 conference on 12 April.

The organisation has been successfully promoting its global profile through partnerships with UN organisations, focused on the Millennium Development Goals including UN-HABITAT, FAO and the World Bank, said Enemark.

Surveyors have a critical role to play in the global agenda, he said, particularly with regard to the pressing issues of poverty eradication and urban population growth, he said.

‘No development will take place without having a spatial dimension … and no development will happen without the footprint of the surveyor.’

Young Surveyors

Did you also know that this is the first Congress appearance of our Young Surveyors Network? With the goal of bringing a path between young and experienced colleagues, the youthful and energetic ambassadors are the voice of the future for our profession.

Keep an eye open for their activities and technical sessions during the week – you can expect to hear some compelling thoughts.