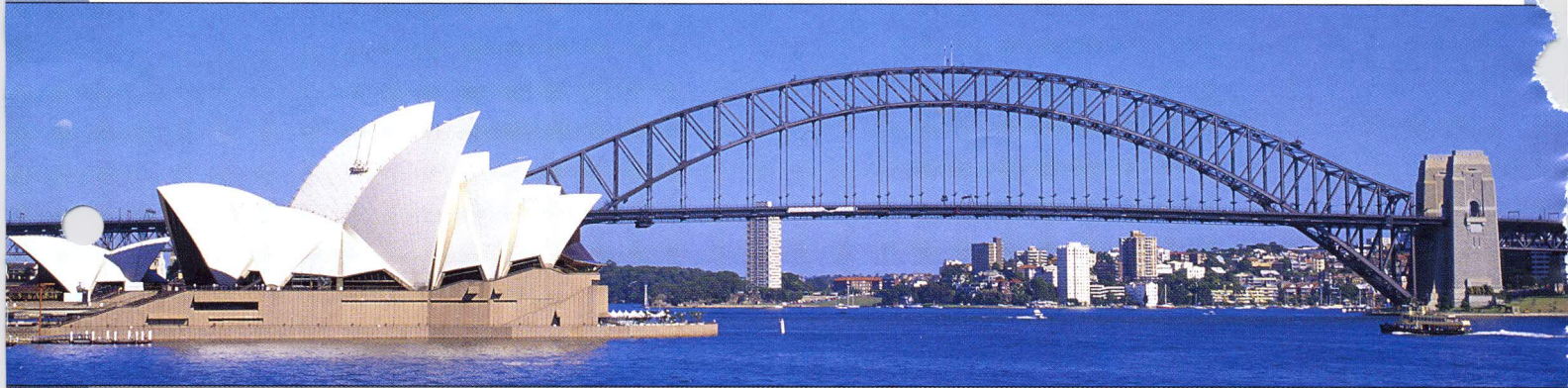


11-16 April 2010

FIG2010 International Surveying Congress



A very sincere "G'day" to all readers of GEOinformatics and a warm, collegiate invitation to travel "Down Under" this year to attend the FIG2010 Congress in Sydney Australia on 11-16 April 2010. This article details the Congress itself and some of the "extra-curricular" activities in which you may wish to indulge during your visit.



Try to imagine an edition of GEOinformatics with over 650 interesting and relevant technical articles, plus your own personal, face-to-face access to each of the authors. Combine this with "editorials" by internationally renowned leaders in geoinformation, providing insight into their visions for the future, and this is equivalent to just the base level of the FIG2010 Congress.

FIG Congresses are like the Olympics for Surveyors: they occur every 4 years and there is a great deal of competition in being chosen to host one. For our Sydney "Olympics" Congress, we have already struck Gold with a record breaking number of technical paper abstracts being received: over 200 more than any previous FIG Congress. This number of submissions has guaranteed that only the best quality papers will be delivered and only current topics will be discussed, ensuring a Congress that is relevant to all delegates.

The Fédération Internationale des Géomètres, FIG, (or International Federation of Surveyors) is the international, non-government organisation whose purpose is to support collaboration for the progress of surveying in all fields and applications. Over 110 countries are now represented on FIG and there are some 250,000 members worldwide.

The work of FIG, highlighted in the congress technical papers, is organised through "Commissions" covering the key surveying disciplines. There are ten Commissions which, under the guidance of their chairs, are responsible for pursuing FIG's professional and technical objectives. The ten Commissions are:

- Commission 1 – Professional Standards & Practice**
- Commission 2 – Professional Education**
- Commission 3 – Spatial Information Management**
- Commission 4 – Hydrography**
- Commission 5 – Positioning & Measurement**

- Commission 6 – Engineering Surveys**
- Commission 7 – Cadastre & Land Management**
- Commission 8 – Spatial Planning & Development**
- Commission 9 – Valuation & the Management of Real Estate**
- Commission 10 - Construction Economics & Management**

I am sure that at least one of these Commissions is relevant to the work you do. There will be technical sessions dedicated to each of these Commissions.

The Congress keynote will be delivered by Professor Tim Flannery, who is one of Australia's leading thinkers as well as an internationally acclaimed scientist, conservationist, author and 2007 Australian of the Year. Consistent with our Congress theme of 'Facing the Challenges', Tim will speak about Climate Change and our profession's role in sustainable development: arguably the greatest challenges facing our world in the 21st Century. Whether you are a Climate Change fanatic or a Global Warming sceptic, I am sure that this Keynote will challenge your beliefs and mobilise your thoughts both personally and politically to face the challenges before it is too late.

Plenary speakers from the international scene include Daniel Fitzpatrick, the UN's land rights adviser for tsunami-affected Indonesia, who is currently finalising the UN's Guidelines on Addressing Land Issues after Natural Disasters. His presentation will focus on land systems that are vulnerable to natural disasters due to poor land use planning and weak land administration systems. Santiago Borrero, Secretary General of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, will concentrate on the key challenges being faced in Latin America as it works towards building Spatially-enabled Government. Paul Munro-Faure, Chief of the land Tenure & Management unit of the Food & Agriculture Organisation, is yet another internationally renowned speaker who will detail the crucial role played by Good Land Governance in the work of the FAO.

And where would a “spatially-enabled” Congress be without Google? Ed Parsons, Google’s Geospatial Technologist for Europe, Middle East and Africa, will outline his vision for organising the spatial component of the world’s information systems using tools such as Google Earth and Google Maps.

A surprise concept being trialled at this congress is the introduction of after lunch sessions led by the major spatial thinkers of our generation, providing their vision of the future of our geospatial technologies and the role of our profession in providing our unique contribution to society. These sessions will inspire and challenge you, and should not be missed. They do, indeed, emphasise the value of international Congresses: providing delegates with direct access to those who influence our profession and its place in society.

Also consistent with our Congress theme, one of the key features of the FIG2010 Congress will be the Workshop on ‘Small Island Developing States and the Millennium Development Goals’. This Workshop is being held specifically due to the location of the Congress on the doorstep of the Asia/Pacific Region and will focus on the issues confronting island nations as they face critical land governance issues.

The Congress will also include a special Forum for Chief Executive Officers of National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies, giving them the opportunity to network and discuss organisational trends and policy issues.

Australia is a long way from almost anywhere, which is why the Congress organisers have put a lot of effort into making this event a “working holiday” for you, with the opportunity for some memorable experiences before, during and after the Congress.

Congresses are just as much about the experience as they are about education. The Congress organisers have worked hard to ensure that your experiences “down under” are memorable ones. In the week prior to the Congress, our Young Ambassadors have arranged pre-Congress tours to the very heart of our island nation. One of these tours, for the adventurous surveyor, commences at Alice Springs and commemorates the 150th Anniversary of the raising of the Union Jack over the geographical centre of Australia, and includes a helicopter ride to the top of Central Mount Stuart. Catch details of this and other “Young Surveyor” tours on the Congress website at www.fig2010.com.

A pre-Congress two day History Workshop has also been arranged for those with an interest in both Australian and world-wide Surveying history.

During the Congress, technical tours include a float-on-a-boat to Fort Denison in the middle of the magnificent Sydney Harbour; watching ‘Big Brother’ watching you at the impressive Transport Management Centre, fighting bushfires at the emergency operations centre of the Rural Fire Service and a tour of the SNAP (Satellite Navigation And Positioning) laboratory at the University of New South Wales.

The local Institution of Surveyors has recognised how difficult it is for delegates to concentrate on technical papers and tours for a whole 5 days, and has organised a little distraction on day 4 of the Congress: golf at the magnificent, world class, Lakes Golf Course. An extra special discount has been organised for delegates but due to limited numbers on this exclusive diversion, you’ll have to be quick to book!

An attractive feature of this Congress is “at cost” optional tours for delegates and their families: because our professional congress organiser Arinex is also a travel agent, there is absolutely no Congress mark-up on tours. Arinex will also staff the registration desk each day to help delegates organise last minute tours and activities. Planned activities include a BridgeClimb along the top of the arch of the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge, a guided tour of the famous Sydney Opera House and a coffee cruise on the waterways of Sydney Harbour. More adventurous diversions for those delegates and their families include a Hunter Valley Wine Tour, a trip to the world heritage area of the Great Barrier Reef and a journey into the “aboriginal dreamtime” of the Red Centre of Australia.

There is a whole range of accommodation options available in Sydney, from sharing a tent on Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour to luxurious 5 star hotels close to the Congress venue in Darling Harbour. A new Youth Hostel has just opened in the historic ‘Rocks’ area of the city, with magnificent harbour views that cannot be beaten for the price.

This is your Congress: you owe it to yourself to attend and we look forward to seeing you “down under”. Registrations are open now on the Congress website www.fig2010.com. This website contains complete details of the Congress and all associated activities.

See you at the Congress!

Mark T Gordon
Assistant Congress Director (Administration)
FIG2010 Congress

