

Go FIGure



The 24th FIG Congress was held in Sydney, Australia from 12-16 April, 2010 and drew a record 2100 delegates to the Sydney Convention Centre. The conference theme was “Facing the Challenges – Building the Capacity”™.

Commission 4 endeavoured to deliver on the theme while hosting a total of 9 technical sessions, some joint with other commissions; some included some peer reviewed papers:

- Positioning Techniques for Hydrography
- Vertical Reference Frame
- Hydrographic Surveying in Practice with High Resolution Data
- Hydrographic Capacity Building

- Economic Benefits of Hydrography
- Nautical Charting and Marine Cartography
- Administration of Marine Spaces.
- Measuring and Monitoring the Coastal Zone
- Coastal Zone Issues

The latter two were offered as flash sessions, a new approach to FIG conferences whereby poster sessions are given as short presentations with a limited number of slides.

Notable Speakers

All of the sessions were well attended and in some cases were subject to standing room only. Notable speakers included Cdr. Roderick Nairn, the RAN hydrographer of Australia and chair of Australasian Hydrographic Surveyors Certification Panel (AHSCP), who presented a paper on their hydrographer certification programme. Dean Battilana from the Royal Australian Navy's Hydrographic School presented a paper by CHS's David Dodd entitled Hydrographic Surveying Using the Ellipsoid as the Vertical Reference Surface. The paper, which is co-authored by Mike Gourley of CARIS and Jerry Mills of NOAA, will be the subject matter of a new (2011-2014) joint commission 4/5 working group to be led by Jerry Mills.

On-the-water Demonstrations

For the benefit of hydrographic-types and others interested in getting out on the water for a day, a technical tour was organised by Sydney Ports and co-hosted by Sydney Ports, Newcastle Port Corporation and the Royal Australian Navy. The tour (which was oversubscribed) provided delegates with on-the-water demonstrations of three different multi-beam sonar systems, aboard three different survey vessels plus a tour of Fort Denison (completed in 1855), one of the best known landmarks of Sydney Harbour and site of one of Australia's oldest permanent tide gauge stations (est. 1870). On display was an original Harrison tide recorder (John Harrison invented the first ship's chronometer for determining longitude).

Malaysia 2014

The annual general meeting plus an executive meeting of commission officers were held, the latter included discussions on the development of the 2011-2014 work plan as well as two publications scheduled for release this fall on the Economic Benefits of Hydrography and Port Hydrography. During the FIG Congress, Malaysia was selected as the host for the 2014 Congress, Mr. Teo Chee Hai was elected as the incoming president, Prof. Rudolph Staiger and Ms. Chrissy Potsiou were elected as vice-presidents.

Bright Future

The surveying profession is alive and well in Australia. Australians recognise the role of the surveyor in discovery and opening up the country to settlement as noted by the governor general of New South Wales during the opening ceremonies. For hydrographers, the profession enjoys prominent stature through the advancements the Australians and New Zealanders have made over the past 15 years with the AHSCP in building a credible certification regime for hydrographers with full support from government, industry and academia.

Proceedings from the conference can be [viewed or downloaded from the FIG website](#).