

WE VISITED FOR YOU

Shallow Survey 2003

Following her increased interest for the Australasian region, Hydro international visited the Shallow Survey 2003 Conference, held from 17th to 20th November 2003 in Sydney, Australia. Over two hundred hydrographic specialists and people in one or other way involved in hydrography gathered together to listen to papers on aspects specific to hydrographic surveying in shallow to very shallow waters.

It was the Third International Conference on high-resolution surveys in shallow water, which itself proved the value and specific interest of this type of conference. The first Shallow Survey Conference was held in Sydney in 1999, followed by a second in Portsmouth, New Hampshire in 2001. One may wonder what is so special about surveying in shallow waters. Various papers dealt with deep-water work, but the link with shallow water work was always made clear.

Looking over the abstracts of the conference papers another conclusion emerges. More and more scientific disciplines come across hydrographic surveying and needed support for their studies and activities. There were papers dealing with Biological Validation, classification of shallow seabed habitats, the ecological role for biological communities, coastal management, diamond mining, etc. Also the naval/defence people recognise the importance of hydrography, as evidenced in the official opening speech by VADM Chris Ritchie, AO, RAN and the keynote address, presented by Dr D. Nandagopal, Director Systems Sciences Laboratory, DSTO. Participants were provided in their conference bags with an excellent booklet containing Programme and Abstracts of papers and more information. The layout of this booklet was very convenient and helpful.

Much attention was also paid to the common dataset, a collection of data originating from a variety of acoustical, optical and other sensors. The collection and processing of the Sydney dataset provides a focus when considering how different techniques perform, which systems should be used in which situations, how things can be done better and how the most valuable information can be extracted.

The Exhibition

As usual this conference also included an exhibition. A total of eighteen companies and organisations showed their products. The interest for the exhibition was greater than expected, resulting in a somewhat isolated space for some of the exhibitors. Nevertheless, participant interest for them was more than sufficient. During coffee and lunch breaks (served in and very close to the exhibition hall) ample time was available to visit the stands. Space allocated to the exhibition could be larger next time, as the place was sometimes pretty crowded.

Miscellaneous

Some statistics: there were in total 230 participants and eighteen exhibitors. This was more than expected, probably due to the back-to-back organised Hydro 2003 Conference in Christchurch New Zealand. Many participants and companies met each other again in Christchurch, about which a separate "We Visited for You" column is published. The conference venue, L'Aqua, situated along the waterfront of Cockle Bay, was beautiful. The ice-breaker reception on Monday, and in particular the conference dinner during a harbour tour onboard a "Captain Cook cruiser" provided an excellent opportunity to establish and/or renew contacts and to begin/finalise business.

Finally, congratulations to Dr Phil Chapple and his colleague organising committee members for the way in which this Shallow Survey Conference was organised.

Source: Cor Don, Member Editorial Board Hydro international