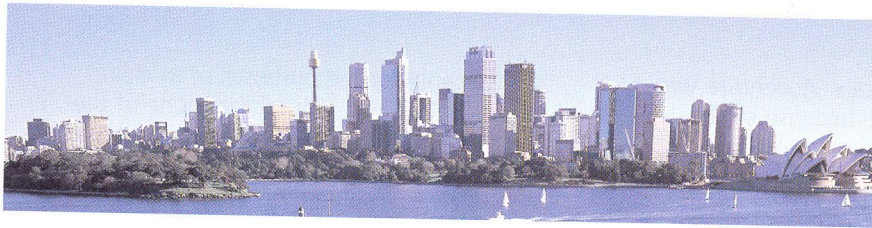




A big "G'day" awaits in Sydney



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Surveyors should be packing their bags in April for the four-yearly FIG Congress. This year, a big welcome awaits in Australia explains **Mark T Gordon**, Assistant Congress Director.

A very sincere "G'day" to all readers of Geomatics World and a warm, collegiate invitation to travel "Down Under" in 2010 to attend the FIG2010 Congress in Sydney Australia on 11-16 April.

It is very rare for a FIG Congress to provide you with the wonderful opportunity to visit the Southern Hemisphere. Registrations are open now on the Congress website www.fig2010.com. This website contains complete details of the Congress and all associated activities.

FIG Congresses are like the Olympics for Surveyors: they occur every four 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 837 technical paper abstracts being received: over 200 more than any previous FIG Congress. This number of submissions will guarantee 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.

Young ambassadors

For four years, our Young Ambassadors – in their distinctive red polo shirts – have been travelling the globe encouraging you to venture to our island continent for this magnificent event. Our Congress is a joint venture between the Surveying & Spatial Sciences Institute (SSSI) and the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG). National associations such as SSSI provide a forum for surveyors to protect and promote their interests nationally. Organisations like FIG provide this at the international level by becoming involved in international trends and issues.

The Fédération Internationale des Géomètres, FIG, (or International Federation of Surveyors) is the international, non-government organisation whose purpose is to support international collaboration for the progress of surveying in all fields and applications. FIG was founded in 1878 in Paris as a federation of national associations and is the only international body that represents all surveying disciplines. The mission statement of FIG is to ensure that the disciplines of surveying and all who

practice them meet the needs of the markets and communities they serve. Over 110 countries are now represented on FIG and there are some 250,000 members worldwide.

The technical work of FIG is led by 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 them.

Challenging keynotes and plenaries

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.



FIG young ambassador Kate Fairlie in front of Sydney's iconic Opera House.

"FIG Congresses are like the Olympics for Surveyors. . ."

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 they work 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 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.

Also consistent with our congress theme, one of the key features of FIG2010 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.

Tours and trips

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. Another tour, for the refined surveyor, examines the use of spatial technology in the famous Barossa Valley wine region of South Australia: and of course there will be time to sample the very best the region has to offer!

Two-day history study

A pre-congress two day History Workshop has also been arranged for those with an interest in both Australian and worldwide 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.

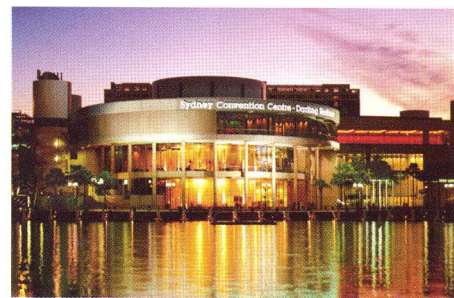
The local Institution of Surveyors has recognised how difficult it is for delegates to concentrate on technical papers and tours for a whole five days, and has organised a little distraction on day four of the Congress: golf at the magnificent Lakes Golf Course. An extra special discount has been organised 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.

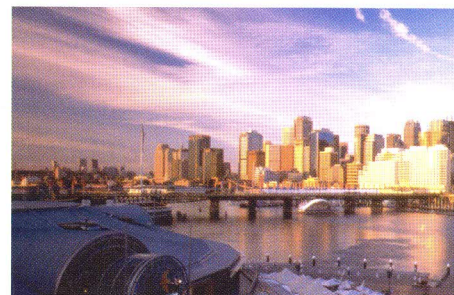
There is a whole range of accommodation options available in Sydney, from sharing a tent on Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour to luxurious five star hotels close to the Congress venue in Darling Harbour. A new Youth Hostel has just opened in the historic 'Rocks' area of the city, with magnificent harbour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

Finally, 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. Congresses provide the perfect opportunity for people to publicise their research, voice their opinion and to obtain support for their ideas whilst also being able to challenge and influence the direction of the global community.

This is your Congress: you owe it to yourself to attend and we look forward to seeing you "down under".



Above: The Sydney Convention Centre where the congress will take place.



... and the view you'll get from the terrace of the Sydney Convention Centre.

The Congress website
www.fig2010.com
 has all the details.
 See you at the Congress!