

## **Welcome Address, SSSI President, FIG 2010 Opening Ceremony, Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April, 1008 Hours.**

Good morning.

Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, Governor of NSW, The Honourable Tony Kelly MLC, Minister for Planning, Minister for Infrastructure and Minister for Lands, Mr Warwick Watkins, CEO of LPMA, Surveyor General and Registrar General of NSW, Mr Tim Flannery, Former Australian of the Year, Prof Stig Enemark, President of FIG, Mr Paul Harcombe, FIG 2010 Congress Director, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute, it is my great pleasure to welcome you all to Sydney and to Australia for this wonderful event, the 24<sup>th</sup> FIG international Congress. It has been 16 years since FIG held it's conference in Melbourne, and we are excited to be hosting in 2010 in Sydney.

Michael Giudici has very real regret that he is not able to deliver this address to you in person today, however he is grateful that I am able to greet you in his place.

The Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute came into being in 2009 with the joining together of the Institution of Surveyors Australia and the Spatial Sciences Institute. We recognised a number of synergies and community benefits in our joining together, to ensure the building of capacity within the profession within our region.

Michael had intended to commence by greeting you in all the major world languages, however as I am giving the welcome, we shall omit that component.

If we dwell for a moment on the twin themes of this Congress – Facing the Challenges, Building the Capacity. Certainly we must identify and accept the challenges as we find them and then acknowledge them, as the first step in resolution and capacity building and perhaps it is incumbent upon more of us to learn our neighbours languages? The increased productivity and collaboration from fluent communication should be an obvious part of the capacity solution.

Whilst most Europeans, Asians and Africans speak several languages, I would suggest that we Australians are severely lacking in this capacity, and yet we are situated in a region where our technical and administrative expertise is increasingly required. For us to extend our influence and contribute more effectively to our international obligations, we should be addressing the cultural and linguistic aspects of our region from within our technical and professional training courses.

Ladies and gentlemen, in this truly international gathering of the surveying, spatial sciences and land administration community, we have been given a unique opportunity to consider our true challenges, and to engage our minds as to the solutions. To meet, network, discuss, analyse, propose and collaboratively develop future work programs is the work of this week. The international challenges are well documented and are frequently summarised as; climate change, disaster and emergency management, effective land administration and good

governance, and there is no doubt that the FIG has been robustly engaged in these spaces over the last four years. The interaction with the World Bank, UNHCR, and the United Nations more generally is a testament to the leadership of Stig Enemaak, and Stig will summarise the organisation's achievements in due course.

However are there not also internal challenges? The challenge to be united as a surveying community, to seek to influence governments and agencies with one voice, to more fully engage the private sector, the education sector? And ultimately to do this for the relief of poverty, the reduction in conflict, the economic enhancement of societies around the world. Our profession is operating in the fundamental layer that underpins the fabric of society – the land and water and air we occupy and use to survive. And we must engage with these challenges from a solid moral and ethical standpoint.

During this week, where the FIG will be changing the guard so to speak, I urge all delegates to keep these notions at the forefront of their thinking, so that the organisational leaders that we elect will have clear objectives to implement over the next four years.

But you have not come to Australia just to work hard. Your motivation must surely also have been to experience the famous Australian welcoming spirit, and to partake in as many social and relaxation activities as you can squeeze in. Fortunately the organising committee has anticipated your every need, and there are multiple opportunities for you to indulge all your senses.

It is fitting at this point to thank our many sponsors, including our principle sponsors, our exhibitors, our volunteers and of course, congratulate our organising committee for creating the conditions for a truly successful congress.

The number of technical, plenary and keynote presentations is without precedent for the FIG, and the technical exhibition is fully subscribed, so I exhort you to maximise your attendance, indulge yourself in new interest areas, meet as many new people as possible, and soak up the fantastic convivial atmosphere here in Sydney. Thank you for your endorsement of FIG by your attendance, and for that consequent vote for the future of this great organisation.

The SSSI is truly proud to be the host organisation for FIG 2010. Have a great week!

Jonathan Saxon on behalf of

Michael Giudici

President SSSI