

**7th International Conference on Geomorphology (ANZIAG),
Melbourne, VIC, 6–11 July, 2009**

It is a tradition more than a quarter of a century old that the world's geomorphologists gather at a wide-scale international congress every four years to present their most recent findings to each other. For twenty years now the International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG/AIG) coordinates the organization of such events and the Association selects the conference venue based on the evaluation of national bids. In 2005, at the Zaragoza Conference the decision was made that the Australian and New Zealand Geomorphology Group Inc. (ANZGG) would host the next meeting in the second most populous city of Australia, the capital of Victoria state, Melbourne, which is – in spite of its size – also one of the most habitable cities of the continent.

The Organizing Committee, led by Associate Professor Brian FINLAYSON, and the convention bureau Tour Host, responsible for the technical organization, immediately started work – as it was made evident by internet news (on the IAG/AIG website www.geomorph.org), frequent messages and circulars sent. Although many potential participants were scared by the long flight (24 hours at least from Europe), the organizers have eventually managed to recruit a decent number (more than 650) of geomorphologists from 52 countries, including numerous young scientists at the beginning of their career. Recently, they are particularly favoured by IAG/AIG as grants for participation and field training courses are available for them after selection. Australia proved to be not only a distant but an expensive place for a conference. The brand new Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) was not at all cheap to hire and thus the registration fee was not really adjusted to the resources of participants arriving from developing countries. To find affordable accommodation and meals in the CBD of Melbourne was not easy either. Taken as a whole, however, no complaint is due concerning the organization of the event.

It is true that no one regards the above circumstances crucial for the success of the conference, the scientific program is more decisive. The attraction of the program lay in its diversity, which is also characteristic of Australian geomorphology. Among the traditional branches of geomorphology, as it is logical on the driest inhabited continent, eolian processes received particular attention. The plenary lecture by IAG/AIG President Andrew GOUDIE also enumerated the main fields of research in arid geomorphology. In addition, as matter of fact, dozens of papers dealt with coasts, rivers, glacial, periglacial, tectonic and karst geomorphology as well as mass movements and geomorphological mapping and quite a number of oral and poster presentations touched upon biogeomorphological, volcanic, weathering and tropical issues. Sessions of special topic included techniques in geochronology, the role of fire in geomorphic evolution, the functioning of small catchments, landscape connectivity, planetary geomorphology, the geomorphology of Gondwana, laser scanning of topography and tsunamis. The sessions organized by the

various Working Groups (their number amounts to 20 at present) were welcome additions to the scientific program. It was a novel tendency to observe that the geomorphological implications of global climate change were excessively studied. Unfortunately, the time span of each oral presentation (except for plenary papers) was limited to 15 minutes and this did not allow profound discussion. Among the plenary papers (with no discussion planned of course) the most successful and best illustrated was presented by Monique FORT (Paris) on the environmental problems of the Himalayas. Her satellite images were particularly impressive on the extra large screens of the Convention Centre. The posters of equally variable topic and spectacular design were exhibited in a spacious corridor – making us forget that we had to pay 20 Australian dollars for showing them. Many of us missed the List of Participants and the Abstracts which were only published on CD for environmental protection considerations. It was not easy to find the papers most interesting for us and to get an idea in advance on their contents.

For the days prior to the conference four field trips were planned. The most comprehensive led us to Western Victoria, where Bernie JOYCE (Melbourne) showed us a series of volcanoes of different types and surprisingly young age as well as sea stacks and archways, a karst plateau, a lake region and at one pleistocene site we could receive information on the Australian megafauna, which became extinct some ten thousand years ago. The bus field trips of Wednesday took the participants to a drained swamp area, to coastal landforms, to the suburbs of Melbourne and into the vineyards of the Yarra Valley. At the same time, a trip was organized for bikers and paddlers along the Yarra River. Those who were particularly interested in the Australian Outback (and could afford it) started for a long journey after the conference to see the Lake Eyre Basin or the tropical rivers and coasts of the Cape York Peninsula.

The IAG/AIG elected new Honorary Members in recognition of their life-work: Takasuke SUZUKI (Japan), John CHAPPEL (Australia), Olav SLAYMAKER (Canada) and Paul WILLIAMS (New Zealand) – great figures of the discipline, mostly well known in Hungary too – were presented with the walking stick that accompanies this award. The 34 representatives of the Association's Scientific Members (member countries) with a voting right elected Michael CROZIER (New Zealand), a renowned researcher of landslides, as the new IAG/AIG President, while Morgan de DAPPER has kept his position as Secretary. The next Regional Conference (in 2011) will be held in Addis Ababa, organized by the Italian and the Ethiopian group of geomorphologists, while the venue of the 8th International Conference on Geomorphology in 2013 will be Paris

We congratulate on the organizers "down under" in the hope that the French colleagues would manage to host an equally successful and remarkable meeting – perhaps at lower expenses and with slightly more inclusive services for the participants.

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