
34th International Geological Congress (IGC) Brisbane, Australia, 5-10 August 2012

Forensic Geoscience: Criminal and Environmental Monday 6 August 2012

The 34th International Geological Congress was held in Brisbane, Australia, on 5-10 August 2012. Some interesting facts and statistics for this event are as follows:

- There were 6012 participants;
- 112 countries were represented;
- 3712 oral papers were presented by 3232 authors;
- 1439 scientific posters were displayed;

The 34th IGC was the largest and most complex international scientific meeting ever held in Brisbane and the first to occupy every single meeting room at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

IFG was formally represented at IGC 2012 by the following IFG committee members:

- Dr Laurance Donnelly (IUGS-IFG Chair and Wardell Armstrong International);
- Prof Rob Fitzpatrick (IUGS-IFG Vice-Chair and CSIRO);
- Commander Mark Harrison (IUGS-IFG Law Enforcement Adviser and Australian Federal Police);
- Mr James Robertson (IUGS-IFG Officer for Australia and University of Canberra);
- Prof Shari Forbes (IUGS-IFG Officer for Canada and the Pacific and the University of Sydney); and
- Dr Jennifer McKinley (IUGS-IFG Communications officer and Queens University Belfast).

For the first time IGC included a session on forensic geology, entitled: 'Forensic Geoscience: Criminal and Environmental'. This was organised by Rob Fitzpatrick and co-convened by Laurance Donnelly and Dallas Mildenhall. It was held on Monday 6 August 2012 at 13:00-15:30.

A total of 9 papers were given on subjects including search, conventional geological trace evidence, palynology, diamonds and environmental forensics. The presentations given in the Forensic Geology session were as follows:

- **KEYNOTE: Donnelly, L. J. and Webb J.** Recent advances in search and the geological (trace) evidence aspects of forensic geology for police and law enforcement investigations
- **Roberston, J.** Forensic geoscience - a reintroduced 'species' for forensic science laboratories
- **Harrison, M.** Key aspects related to land searches for shallow burial items
- **McKinley, J.** Spatial sampling approached in forensic geoscience: critique, challenges and case studies
- **Mildenhall, D.** Forensic palynology – its value to criminal investigations
- **Bottrill, R.** Some recent case studies in forensic geology in Tasmania
- **Fitzpatrick, R.** Forensic geoscience examinations using advanced laboratory source and synchrotron X-ray diffraction techniques
- **Flowers, G. C.** Catahoula Basin, Louisiana Floodplain or Lake in 1812?
- **Oliveira, E.** The Diamond DNA project.

The forensic geology session was extremely popular with the lecture theatre full to capacity, attended by in excess of 125 delegates. Many of the attendees stood in the Isles and outside the lecture theater to listen to the speakers.

The forensic geology session was attended by academics and researchers, students, consultants and serving police officers with the Australian Federal Police and the Brazilian Federal Police.

The keynote was prepared by Laurance Donnelly and Jodi Webb (FBI) who provided an overview of the state of the art techniques and methods now available to geologists, the police and law enforcement agencies.

This IGC forensic geology session drew attention to the growing interests and developments in forensic geology throughout the world.

Questions and discussions seemed to focus on; the requirements for the production of guidance documents and protocols, greater integration and cross-fertilization of related forensic disciplines, the need for training in forensic geology, international standardizations, competency, increased awareness of forensic geology within the police, reporting standards, accreditation and regulation of forensic geologists.

IUGS Council Meetings, Brisbane, Australia, August 2012

IUGS Council meetings were held on Sunday 5 August, at Brisbane International Conference Centre. IFG's chair (Laurance Donnelly) and vice-chair (Rob Fitzpatrick) were invited to attend and they provided IUGS committee members with an overview of the global status of forensic geology and IFG's activities and events. IUGS unanimously accepted the IFG proposals and commented on the excellent progress made by IFG in a relatively short time frame.