

Report on ICIAM 2007 in Zurich

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There were 35 participants from Australia and New Zealand out of a total of 3200 registrations at ICIAM 2007 in Zurich, Switzerland from 16 to 20 July.

The organisation was first rate with the website and the program book co-ordinated by Ross Moore (Macquarie University), who was on secondment to the Congress Director, Professor Rolf Jeltsch. The book contained a listing of all the 3000 plus lectures, mini-symposia and posters in a form easy to follow. At one particular time during the week there were 71 parallel lectures, so it was no easy task for any participant to choose from the many interesting ones on offer. Even the principal invited speakers were scheduled in groups of three.

The lectures were held in 10 separate buildings on the campus of ETH Zurich, but the signs around the campus and the programme book containing maps made it easy to find the appropriate rooms. The weather was unusually hot for Zurich, and lack of air-conditioning in some lecture rooms made it uncomfortable at times.

Following Noel Barton's initiatives from Sydney 2003, there were a number of industry days and embedded meetings.

Four of the applied mathematics prizes were awarded to Heinz Engel (Austria), Joe Keller (USA), Felix Otto (Germany), Gil Strang (USA), while a fifth was shared by Ingrid Daubechies (USA) and Peter Deuffhard (Germany). The 50th Prandtl lecture was given by Tim Pedley (Cambridge) on the fluid mechanics of swimming micro-organisms in which reference was made to the original work in this field by Sir James Lighthill and John Blake (formerly an Adelaide graduate and Professor at Wollongong). There was also a special lecture on the Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler as 2007 marked the 300th anniversary of his birth. His contribution to many areas of mathematics was phenomenal, particularly as he was practically blind during the period of his greatest output.

A feature of the Congress was the free transport on the city's trams, buses and trains provided by the organisers for every participant for the whole week. Zurich was a great venue. The next ICIAM Congress is in Vancouver in 2011.

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