

President's Report

50 up

Prepared by **Dave Moore. HFESNZ President**

A year of extremes, and also of change. And next year brings up the half century.

In 2014-15 we have had our most active year internationally and probably least active year domestically. This August we co-hosted the IEA Triennial Congress with the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society of Australia. 1300 abstracts were initially received, which translated into 800+ presentations, workshops and other attractions. We greeted just short of 1000 registered delegates over the five days. This was just the third IEA Congress to have been staged in the southern hemisphere, the other two being in Brazil in 2012, and Australia right back in 1987 near the time of NZES formation. It was considered a gamble to award the hosting of congress to the HFESA and the HFESNZ as it makes the most sense commercially to run these events close to the bulk of the delegates - in the EU or North America. The IEA mission of assisting the development of HF/E globally by moving the congress each time has to be balanced by pragmatism, and there was legitimate concern that potential delegates from the north would put off by the distance and cost of travel to Melbourne.

So all in all, we were lucky to get the Congress down here at all. It was therefore quite possibly a once in career opportunity for the locals in both our countries to participate in the major event in the international HF/E calendar. 161 from Australasia attended, far more than usual, and SE Asian delegates also turned out in far higher numbers.

Perhaps, almost inevitably for a Society with limited hours available, and all of these voluntary, the housework didn't get done as it normally would. The appointment of paid assistance to help catch up here should aid greatly, and should be considered a permanent feature in my view so that the committee use more of their available time in advancing the aims of the Society, and less in simply ticking over.

Next year is the 50th anniversary of the founding of ESANZ, the Ergonomics Society of Australia and New Zealand, and the 30th of the establishment of our own Society here in NZ. The world has changed a lot in some ways, but in others I would suggest, not at all. We may have internet, but the value and desirability of face to face meetings is as strong as ever. Perhaps more so.

We have new opportunities and responsibilities though, and our structure and processes should reflect that. For example, on the design side of our field we are seeing more interest in HFE from related professionals with roles involving Safety in Design. Designers and manufacturers are also being made more aware of their end users through Consumer law changes that ask for greater responsiveness to foreseeable misuse. The OHS landscape has changed dramatically of course, and our relationship with the Health and Safety Association of New Zealand (HASANZ) – which could well be a crucial one for many members, is currently in its delicately formative stage. The commitment from Mark Boocock with the predecessor OHSIG gave us a solid position, and I would hope to see no less of a leadership role for us within HASANZ.

The outgoing committee have taken a bold initiative in proposing a new set of rules that takes advantage of the changes, but also seeks to provide more of what we have always wanted and enjoyed. The Strategic Discussion document provides all the background thinking, and I urge you to take the time to read through, join in this discussion and actively help shape our transition.

Dave