

From the President

Stan Dosso



Acoustics 2023 Sydney

I am writing this column shortly after returning home from the Acoustics 2023 Sydney meeting held December 4-8, 2023, in Sydney, New South Wales,

Australia. This was a joint meeting that comprised the 185th meeting of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) and the 2023 meeting of the Australian Acoustical Society (AAS) as well as the Western Pacific Acoustics Conference (WESPAC) and the Pacific Rim Underwater Acoustics Conference (PRUAC). This meeting represented a major event for the ASA, for acoustics in the Western Pacific in general, and was the culmination of years of planning and preparation on both sides of the Pacific. Hence, I thought I would devote this column to the Sydney meeting and to some future joint ASA meetings.

Acoustics 2023 Sydney was held at the state-of-the-art Sydney International Conference Centre (ICC), which provided first-rate facilities and a spectacular setting on Darling Harbour, within the larger Sydney Harbour, with the major conference hotels within a few minutes walk. The city of Sydney has done a wonderful job developing its harbors for public accessibility and enjoyment, and you can walk (I did) from the ICC along the waterfront past restaurants, shops, parks, skyscrapers, and working quays and under the famous Sydney Harbour Bridge to the iconic Sydney Opera House and Royal Botanic Gardens in about 45 minutes. Alternatively, Sydney ferries act as a city marine-bus system, efficiently and scenically connecting many points around Sydney Harbour and its islands (I took the ferry ride back from my walk). Sydney proved to be a fabulous locale for the meeting, as our Australian hosts had promised, and it didn't hurt that it was summer (in December) there!

The meeting itself consisted of about 1,150 presentations and 210 posters organized into 127 technical sessions, including 60 special sessions, plus 2 superb keynote talks: Andone Lavery from the United States on "Exploring the Ocean with Sound: Telltale Acoustic Signatures of a Changing Ocean," and Cath McMahon from Australia on "The Listening Brain's Response to Adversity." In

all, there was a total of about 1,420 attendees from 41 countries (summarized in **Table 1**). This represents the largest ASA meeting attendance since our joint meeting with the European Acoustical Association (EAA) in Boston in 2017, and although United States attendance was somewhat lower than at a typical domestic meeting, strong participation from Australia and other Pacific Rim countries made for a very successful international meeting. In particular, the conference provided an opportunity for Western Pacific acousticians who cannot easily travel to the United States to attend an ASA meeting closer to home, potentially leading to further engagement with the ASA in the future.

The meeting included a large exhibition with 50 participating companies who sponsored an opening night welcome reception. A buffet social featuring excellent local cuisine was also held on Wednesday evening. Conference technical tours were organized to the Australian Hearing Hub (see hearinghub.edu.au) and other world-class facilities, including Cochlear at Macquarie University (see cochlear.com/au/en/home) and the Sydney Opera House (see sydneyoperahouse.com). The musical JAM session was particularly noteworthy, with 200+ people filling the venue and an unplanned drop-in performance by David McKenzie, one of Australia's renowned Ten Tenors. Meeting trivia (provided by AAS President Jeff Parnell) included that \$10,000 worth of Barista Coffee, 5 kilograms of popcorn, and 20 liters of ice cream were served at refreshment breaks during the meeting.

The ASA supported the travel of about 160 participants to attend the meeting, including students and early-career acousticians from various ASA programs. This included the Down Under Funder, which raised \$1,000 travel grants for 100+ North American acoustics students based on contributions from the ASA technical committees (TCs) over the past few years.

TC reports on the Sydney meeting made to the ASA Technical Council at the conclusion of the meeting were overwhelmingly favorable in virtually all aspects and

Table 1. *Acoustics 2023 Sydney attendance by country*

Country	Attendees	Country	Attendees	Country	Attendees
Australia	512	Poland	7	Benin	1
United States	386	Indonesia	6	Brazil	1
China/Taiwan	119	Switzerland	5	Chile	1
South Korea	91	Austria	3	Ghana	1
Japan	86	Denmark	3	Iceland	1
Canada	35	Mexico	3	Iran	1
Germany	31	Sweden	3	Israel	1
New Zealand	29	Belgium	2	Moldovia	1
United Kingdom	25	Saudi Arabia	2	Peru	1
India	14	Spain	2	South Africa	1
Singapore	11	Sri Lanka	2	Thailand	1
France	9	Algeria	1	United Arab Emirates	1
Italy	8	Argentina	1	Viet Nam	1
Netherlands	8	Bangladesh	1		

reflect my own personal experience of excellent technical content, a well-organized conference, enjoyable social programs, and a memorable time in Australia.

Of course, planning and running a diverse international meeting such as this represents a huge undertaking. The idea of holding a joint meeting in Sydney was initiated in 2017 by Brian Ferguson of the AAS, who is also an ASA Fellow. To judge interest in such a meeting, Brian took the idea to each of the (then) 13 ASA TCs. Each TC held a vote and all but one approved the idea of a joint Sydney meeting, with one TC vote resulting in a tie. Given this strong support, ASA Executive Director Susan Fox asked Marcia Isakson to represent the ASA as cochair of the meeting and work with AAS Cochair Jeff Parnell. James Miller was recruited as the ASA technical cochair to work with the AAS counterpart Benjamin Halkon. WESPAC and PRUAC also joined as cohosts of the meeting, in keeping with the Pacific setting.

The joint meeting was originally planned for Fall 2021, but the COVID-19 pandemic intervened and forced the ASA and AAS to make the difficult (but correct) decision to postpone the meeting two years until 2023. Although there was some concern that this delay and postpandemic travel issues might negatively affect participation, this

turned out not to be the case, with the strong attendance mentioned above.

In addition to the cochairs and technical cochairs, ASA/AAS Treasurers Judy Dubno/John Wasserman and Student Reps Brijonnay Madrigal/Adrian Morris, together with Susan Fox and Elaine Moran of ASA headquarters, put in extraordinary efforts to bring the Acoustics 2023 Sydney joint meeting to successful fruition. Thanks very much to all!

Although the 2023 Fall ASA meeting represented our first joint meeting with the AAS, the ASA holds joint meetings with other acoustics societies and organizations on a fairly regular basis. For example, the ASA has held joint meetings with the EAA in Berlin (1999), Paris (2008), and Boston (2017) and plans to hold another joint meeting with the EAA in Spring 2027 at a European location to be determined soon. Likewise, the ASA has held joint meetings with the Acoustical Society of Japan (ASJ) in Honolulu (2006, 2016) and will hold another joint meeting with the ASJ December 1-5, 2025, again in Honolulu. The ASA has also held joint meetings with the International Congress on Acoustics (ICA) in Seattle (1998) and Montreal (2013) and will hold another joint meeting with the ICA May 19-23, 2025, in New

Orleans. Finally, the ASA has held joint meetings with the Canadian Acoustical Association (CAA) in Ottawa (1993), Vancouver (2005), Montreal (2013), and Victoria (2018), and we will hold our next meeting jointly with the CAA in Ottawa May 13-17, 2024. As a Canadian and member and past president of the CAA, I look forward to welcoming the ASA to Canada's national capital, which is truly beautiful in the spring.

In the big picture, periodic joint and/or international meetings provide opportunities for the ASA to more

broadly carry out its mission "to generate, disseminate, and promote the knowledge and practical applications of acoustics." Such meetings can expose ASA members to new ideas, approaches, and applications in acoustics in other countries; broaden our experience and perspective; and enhance collaborations and progress across the globe. Of course, these are mutual benefits, with all the participating countries/organizations profiting in a win-win process for acoustics.

As always, I welcome your feedback (sdosso@uvic.ca).

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