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Preface

The 2000 International Symposium on Metal-Hydrogen Systems, Fundamentals and Applications (MH2000), was held at the beach side resort of Noosa Heads, Queensland, Australia on 1–6 October. The symposium was the seventh of a series following Stuttgart (1988), Banff (1990), Uppsala (1992), Fujiyoshida-shi (1994), Les Diablerets (1996) and Hangzhou (1998). The next meeting, MH2002, will be held in France in 2002. MH2000 was the first symposium in this series to be held in the southern hemisphere. It was also the first for which all the organization was conducted via a web site.

The symposium was well attended despite the considerable travelling distances for most participants. There were 219 participants from many countries across the world and there were 291 abstracts in the symposium programme.

The basic science of understanding metal-hydrogen systems has made considerable progress and the application to battery technology is impressive. For example, about a billion NiMH batteries are produced annually. Nevertheless, as shown by the papers at this symposium, there are still many interesting phenomena being studied and the search continues for better hydrogen absorbing alloys and improved battery electrodes.

Hydrogen storage materials have traditionally focussed on interstitial intermetallic hydrogen absorbers. A related topic of considerable current interest is hydrogen absorbing carbon nanofibres. Papers were encouraged on this controversial subject and they described theoretical attempts to understand the phenomena and experimental work to assess reported claims and to produce reliable and reproducible results. Another alternative to intermetallic hydride absorbers is catalysed alanates and a group of papers was devoted to this subject.

The pioneering electrochemical experiments of the 1970s have evolved to produce a mature technology today. The current explorations among new material types may bear equally important fruit in the years ahead. Such developments will only occur through a continuation of the fundamental research that characterises much of the work presented at this series of conferences.

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