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THE EDITOR'S CORNER

Building Bridges Down Under

The World Federation of Orthodontists knows how to pick its spots for a congress. These events, scheduled every five years, were originally held in conjunction with annual AAO meetings. The Sixth International Orthodontic Congress in 2005 was the first to move away from North America; for that session, the WFO chose Paris as a backdrop. This February, for the seventh IOC, the setting was Sydney, Australia. And despite rainy, muggy summer weather, that cosmopolitan Pacific Rim capital was a stunning location. Sydney's modern Convention & Exhibit Centre overlooks the charming Darling Harbour, crowded with docks, shops, and bistros. The city itself is full of museums, galleries, and cultural attractions, and the opportunity to dine on the Circular Quay with the Sydney Opera House on one side and the Harbour Bridge on the other is probably worth the airfare in itself.

As was the case in Paris, I didn't see many American orthodontists other than the invited speakers—and there were about 300 of those from all over the world, including Drs. Birte Melsen, S. Jay Bowman, Robert Boyd, and Jonathan Sandler from the JCO editorial board—nor were there many Europeans in attendance. But it would be overly optimistic to think that an IOC would ever draw equally from every continent. This year, the Australians naturally outnumbered delegates from other nations, followed by Asians and New Zealanders. In fact, this conference also served as the annual meeting of the Australian Society of Orthodontists and as the seventh meeting of the relatively new Asian Pacific Orthodontic Conference. Still, there were more than 4,000 delegates in all, from 87 countries—a respectable showing given the global economic situation and the remoteness of the location, if only about half that of the Paris IOC. The WFO President, Dr. Athanasios E. Athanasiou, told me that more than 400 of these registrations were made onsite, indicating a significant late surge.

The program topics were predictable for an orthodontic meeting, with appropriate attention given to such developing treatment methods as temporary anchorage de-

vices, aligners, distraction osteogenesis, and self-ligating brackets. An entire track was devoted to basic science, with sessions on periodontal disease, physiology, molecular biology, genetics, and tissue reaction replacement. Like the Paris conference, the Sydney IOC dedicated an entire day, called "The World Village", to meetings of the constituent organizations. Of particular note, however, were the efforts of Dr. Rick Olive and his organizing committee to incorporate the latest communication technology. Not only were the lectures delivered in state-of-the-art auditoriums, but the traditional "posterboard" presentations were entirely digital, available for viewing on big screens in the lobby. A webcast of all the lectures

was offered to the delegates at reasonable cost, enabling them to see whatever they missed, or to review portions of favorite lectures, on their home computers.

It's impossible to predict what new technologies will amaze us at the next IOC, to be held in September 2015 in London. Dr. Sandler will chair that meeting; he and his committee were busy in Sydney taking notes, evaluating speakers, and chatting with delegates. Dr. Athanasiou said he expects a turnout of more than 8,000 in London, similar to that of Paris. One thing should come as no surprise to anyone: the WFO has chosen a fabulous location.

DSV