

**50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
INSTITUTION OF SURVEYORS AUSTRALIA
SATURDAY 25TH MAY 2002
OPENING ADDRESS AT THE SEMINAR
BY GARY NAIRN MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR EDEN-MONARO**

FIRST OF ALL THIS MORNING, WELCOME TO PARLIAMENT HOUSE. I'M PLEASED THAT THE INSTITUTION HAS CHOSEN TO HAVE THIS 50TH ANNIVERSARY SEMINAR AND DINNER TONIGHT HERE IN PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

IT'S THE PEOPLE'S HOUSE AND SHOULD BE USED. IT IS NOT EXCLUSIVELY FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND I'M ALWAYS DELIGHTED WHEN ORGANISATIONS UTILISE ITS FACILITIES. I THINK THEY ARE EXCELLENT AND IT IS A BUILDING THAT ALL AUSTRALIANS SHOULD BE VERY PROUD OF.

(GREETING SCHOOL CHILDREN STORY)

AS A SURVEYOR WITH 25 YEARS EXPERIENCE I'M PLEASED TO BE TAKING PART IN TODAY'S SEMINAR AND TONIGHT'S CELEBRATION DINNER, ALTHOUGH I WON'T BE ABLE TO BE HERE FOR ALL OF THE SEMINAR.

FIFTY YEARS IS A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT WHATEVER THE ORGANISATION. A GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY IN MARRIAGE IS HIGHLY CELEBRATED AND THE INSTITUTION IS PROBABLY NOT MUCH DIFFERENT TO A MARRIAGE. NOT A MONOGAMOUS ONE OBVIOUSLY BUT ONE WHERE AFFAIRS CAN TAKE PLACE QUITE APPROPRIATELY

BETWEEN THE VARIOUS DIVISIONS AT VARIOUS TIMES. AND THEY HAVE.

IN THE EDITORIAL IN THE AUSTRALIAN SURVEYOR TO MARK THE SILVER JUBILEE OF THE INSTITUTION IN 1977 IT WAS ACKNOWLEDGED THERE WAS NO FANFARE OF TRUMPETS IN 1952 WHEN THE INSTITUTION WAS FORMED. MEMBERS JUST FELT SATISFIED THAT THE PROFESSION WAS ENTERING A NEW ERA.

THE EDITORIAL SUGGESTED THAT “WE SHOULD PERHAPS BLOW SOFTLY ON THE TRUMPETS” IN CELEBRATING 25 YEARS GIVEN THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY AT THE TIME.

BUT QUITE RIGHTLY IT WAS VERY POSITIVE ABOUT THE FUTURE AND CONCLUDED BY SAYING:

“LET US LOOK TO THE NEXT 25 YEARS, TO OUR GOLDEN JUBILEE, AND KEEP THOSE TRUMPETS POLISHED UP.”

WELL IF THE ECONOMY IS THE TEST FOR TRUMPET BLOWING THEN I WOULD SAY WE CAN BLOW THEM LOUD AND LONG.

BUT I THINK YOU CAN BLOW THEM FOR MANY OTHER REASONS.

THE INSTITUTION AND THE PROFESSION HAVE UNDERGONE GREAT CHANGE IN ITS 50 YEARS AND CERTAINLY IN THE LAST 25 YEARS SINCE THE SILVER JUBILEE. AND WHILE CHANGE IS OFTEN FOUGHT IN SOME QUARTERS WE SHOULD NOT MISTAKE CHALLENGE FOR RESISTANCE.

I WILL SAY MORE ABOUT THE CAPACITY TO CHANGE AND RELATED MATTERS TONIGHT AT THE DINNER.

HOWEVER MAY I MENTION ONE CHANGE THAT HAS STARTED TO HAPPEN AND CONTINUES TO HAPPEN.

THROUGHOUT THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BY OUR FIRST PRESIDENT, J.G.GILLESPIE, IN 1955, HE REFERRED TO THE AUDIENCE AS GENTLEMEN.

EVEN IN 1969 THE THEN OUTGOING PRESIDENT, MAX BRAID, COMMENCED HIS ADDRESS, "GENTLEMEN".

BY 1974 HOWEVER THE OPENING WORDS OF PRESIDENT BARRIE VALENTINE WERE "LADIES AND GENTLEMEN". ALTHOUGH I SUSPECT THAT WAS BECAUSE A FEW WIVES OF SURVEYORS STRAYED INTO THE MEETING.

WOMEN IN SURVEYING HAS ALWAYS BEEN A HOT TOPIC AND THE MAGAZINE "THE SURVEYOR" BACK IN 1893 HAD AN ARTICLE UNDER THE HEADLINE – "WOMEN IN OUR RANKS? NO! NEVER!

BUT AS SOME MAY REMEMBER, THE FIRST FEMALE TO BE REGISTERED AS A LAND SURVEYOR IN AUSTRALIA WAS MYRA MACHIN ON THE 27TH SEPTEMBER 1976. HOWEVER WHILE STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN WOMEN ARE STILL A BIT THIN ON THE GROUND.

GIVEN THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE PROFESSION THAT WILL CERTAINLY CHANGE IN THE YEARS TO COME.

HOWEVER IT WOULD BE NO BRAVE PREDICTION TO FORESEE A FEMALE SURVEYOR GENERAL AS IT APPEARS YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A SURVEYOR TO BE THE SURVEYOR GENERAL. BUT PERHAPS I WON'T GO THERE.

THE WAY IN WHICH THE PROFESSION HAS EMBRACED TECHNOLOGY CHANGE IS PARTICULARLY SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF.

I WAS FORTUNATE THROUGHOUT MY SURVEYING CAREER TO HAVE ALWAYS WORKED IN PROGRESSIVE BUSINESSES THAT EMBRACED NEW TECHNOLOGY.

ONE HIGHLIGHT WAS THE EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR NUCLEAR RESEARCH (OR CERN AS IT IS KNOWN) ON THE BORDER OF FRANCE AND SWITZERLAND WHERE I WORKED FOR ABOUT 18 MONTHS. IT WAS THE REAL BIRTH PLACE OF THE INTERNET. DON'T LET THOSE AMERICANS AT M.I.T. TELL YOU OTHERWISE. THE INTERNET DID START AT CERN. THAT HAPPENED A FEW YEARS AFTER I LEFT BUT IT WAS NO SURPRISE THAT IT CAME OUT OF THAT ORGANISATION. SURVEYORS PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE AT CERN AND WERE GIVEN THE APPROPRIATE RECOGNITION AND INVOLVEMENT IN ALL THAT OCCURRED. THE PHYSICISTS UNDERSTOOD THEIR RESULTS DEPENDED UPON THE WORK OF THE SURVEYORS.

SURVEY EQUIPMENT WASN'T CAPABLE OF MEASURING TO THE ACCURACY REQUIRED SO WE HAD TO FIND A WAY TO IMPROVE THE ACCURACY. THAT WAS WHERE I LEARNT THE WORD INNOVATION.

IN MY OWN BUSINESS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EARL JAMES, WHO IS HERE TODAY AND INCIDENTALLY WAS AUSTRALIA'S FIRST AND SO FAR ONLY PRESIDENT OF FIG, WE HAD THE PHILOSOPHY THAT WE WOULD STAY AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION BY INVESTING IN NEW TECHNOLOGY. I FOUND WE WERE ALWAYS AHEAD OF OUR CLIENTS AS WELL.

(ARCHITECT AND DIGITAL DATA STORY)

WE WERE NOT UNUSUAL AS FAR AS THE SURVEYING PROFESSION WAS CONCERNED.

I'VE MAINTAINED THAT PHILOSOPHY IN THE POSITION THAT I NOW HOLD. BEING ON THE MARGIN I'M ON REQUIRES ALL THE INNOVATION AND SMART THINKING I CAN MUSTER.

MAYBE THAT WAS OF SOME ASSISTANCE TO ME WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER WAS DECIDING WHO SHOULD BE APPOINTED TO CHAIR THE FIRST HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND INNOVATION. A ROLE I COMMENCED JUST RECENTLY.

THE FORMATION OF SUCH A COMMITTEE WAS A GREAT STEP FORWARD FOR THE PARLIAMENT AND I SEE IT AS CONTRIBUTING SUBSTANTIALLY TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S "BACKING AUSTRALIA'S ABILITY" STATEMENT AND THE ACTION AGENDA ON SPATIAL INFORMATION.

SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ARE THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIA'S WEALTH CREATION. WE ARE AND CAN CONTINUE TO BE WORLD LEADERS IN THESE FIELDS.

THE SURVEYING PROFESSION IS A VITAL PART OF IT. NOT ONLY IN THE ENABLING SCIENCES BUT ALSO IN THE HUMANITIES.

THE ROLE OF SPATIAL INFORMATION IS ESCALATING EXPONENTIALLY ACROSS OUR SOCIETY. THE QUALITY OF THAT INFORMATION IS PARAMOUNT. SURVEYORS ARE BEST QUALIFIED TO CONTROL THAT QUALITY.

IT ALLOWS YOU INTO MARKETS YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE DREAMED OF ONLY A FEW YEARS AGO.

GOVERNMENTS ARE NOW RECOGNISING THIS AND ARE THEREFORE MORE INTERESTED IN THE WORK SURVEYORS NOW DO, IN A SIMILAR FASHION THAT THEY WERE WHEN SURVEYORS WERE EXPLORING PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN LANDS.

YOUR SEMINAR TODAY IS MUCH ABOUT LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE. I ENCOURAGE YOU NOT TO BE SHY ABOUT THIS. GET IN THEIR BOOTS AND ALL. IT IS AN EXCITING TIME TO BE IN YOUR INDUSTRY SO MAKE THE MOST OF IT.

I'M PLEASED TO OPEN THIS HISTORIC SEMINAR MARKING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INSTITUTION OF SURVEYORS AUSTRALIA. AND IN DOING SO ENCOURAGE YOU ALL TO BLOW YOUR TRUMPET LOUD AND LONG.

THANK YOU.