

Chairman's Report
Max Kennedy
23 Mar 2011

“It was becoming apparent to me that to succeed one must master one's profession”

Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery, 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, India, 1909.

These wise words from Montgomery strike me as a truism, and for SCENZ-IChemE in New Zealand, 2010 has been about supporting chemical engineers to “master one's profession”.

The board has set up regional groups in Auckland, Waikato/Bay of Plenty, Taranaki, Manawatu/Southern North Island, and the South Island. Several of these regions had significant launch events including a visit by David Brown, the CEO of IChemE, to Wellington, a joint meeting with the Australian Pulp and Paper Industry Technical Association (APPITA) in Rotorua, meetings in Auckland and Hamilton, and a very successful launch in New Plymouth. The board values highly these regional activities. The regional groups are about networking and professional development - it's where our heart is. These activities have resulted in New Zealand having one of the fastest growth rates of members worldwide within IChemE, a notable achievement. In 2010 despite the tough financial times, membership increased 42.5%. Another important milestone for us was employing an executive officer (Monique Laurenson) and establishing offices ideally located within NZBio (the biotechnology trade organization) in downtown Wellington. Our relationship with NZBio should continue to grow. Drop in during office hours if you are in Wellington.

One of the most significant events of the year was the launch of the inaugural Kennedy-Wunsch lecture, our flagship lecture named in honour of two of NZ's most distinguished chemical engineers. There was considerable interest from members in naming the lecture. The lecture was named after Miles Kennedy a leading chemical engineering educator and Donald Wunsch a founding member of IChemE and a recognized figure in developing the lactose industry (by 1950 his company was the largest producer of lactose in the world due to demand for penicillin manufacture). The inaugural lecture was given by Miles Kennedy and titled “Early Days of Chemical Engineering in New Zealand”. This lecture, (well worth a read and available on our website) received a standing ovation. Who should give the lecture in 2011? Send your nominations into Monique Laurenson, our executive officer.

In terms of international presence, I took over the role of Chair of the Australian and New Zealand Federation of Chemical Engineers (ANZFChE) for 2009-2010. This role for 2011 has now been rotated to Engineers Australia. Board member Tim Dobbie represented SCENZ- IChemE in New Zealand and the Federation at the Asia Pacific Confederation of Chemical Engineers (APPCHE) meeting in Taiwan in 2010. New Zealand also has an interest in the World Chemical Engineering Council (WCEC). An international presence is important not only as SCENZ-IChemE in New Zealand being a good international citizen, but as a means of ensuring New Zealand input into significant chemical engineering events.

One very significant event coming up is the annual Chemeca conference, which is scheduled to be held in Wellington in September 2012. Considerable effort in 2010 has been devoted to planning this activity and no doubt more effort will be focused in this area in 2011 and 2012. We have secured our first major sponsor. This event will be a showcase for New Zealand chemical engineering capability. If you wish to sponsor the event to increase your visibility then contact us.

SCENZ-IChemE in New Zealand continues to work with other like-minded organizations within New Zealand, the most notable being the Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ). SCENZ-IChemE in New Zealand is committed to developing this relationship, and our support lead to IPENZ's membership of ANZChE.

This is my last meeting as Chair, having been in the role for two years. A few personal remarks are in order. Firstly, board members and other members who attended our last AGM in Christchurch in September on the eve of the first major earthquake, will not quickly forget the event. It saddened the board to see the impact this and the subsequent earthquake have had on Canterbury members. The board was very happy to offer support to our Canterbury members.

Thanks are also in order. Thanks to previous board member Brian Earl, a long time contributor to chemical engineering in New Zealand. Brian has provided the Board very wise counsel over a long involvement in SCENZ. Thanks also to Tony Harcourt, now retired who has provided dedicated service in the executive engine room and ensured things have run smoothly. This year Tim Dobbie and Adam Muldoon will step down from the Board. Thanks go to them and the other board members who have put in a lot of voluntary effort. Thanks to David Platts for his support during the year. David has gone the extra mile on many occasions. A special thanks to IChemE international, particularly Jan Althorp and David Brown, but not to forget the Australian office and our new executive officer Monique Laurenson who have been very supportive of the New Zealand branch.

All that remains is for me to recommend to members that if you get involved, SCENZ-IChemE in New Zealand is a powerful tool in "mastering one's profession".