

Welcome to the SuperDARN 2008 Proceedings.

The Annual SuperDARN Meetings are an essential part of the SuperDARN program. The Australian TIGER Consortium were honoured to host the 2008 Meeting in Newcastle from 2 - 6 June. The Centre for Space Physics at the University of Newcastle and the Space Physics Research group at La Trobe University worked together to continue the Meeting tradition. In June, 2007 at the excellent SuperDARN meeting in Japan, we mentioned that while many parts of Australia suffer drought conditions, Newcastle is fortunate to have plenty of water. We were certainly reminded of that during the meeting as water found its way into the conference venue. However, this did make for some fascinating photos of volleyball in the wet, and as our international visitors discovered, in Australia, BBQs are only cancelled on rare occasions.

These proceedings contain many images that remind us of what SuperDARN means. It is an international effort that extends the frontiers of knowledge in ionosphere physics and OTH radar technology and operations. However, it is more than that. SuperDARN meetings are noisy, vibrant affairs that bring friends and colleagues together to discuss science, developments in electronics, sport, travel, holiday activities and even how to raise children. Associations are formed that result in many fruitful research collaborations, sweetened by friendship and spiced by vigorous defense of opinion. This makes it difficult to say goodbye and this year, the SuperDARN community keenly feel the loss of Jean-Paul Villain. We devoted a special session to the work and memory of Jean-Paul's outstanding contribution to SuperDARN.

SuperDARN Meetings have grown to cover a wide variety of science and engineering topics. This year, the Data Analysis and New Techniques session was expanded. This indicates the interest and increasing willingness of researchers to explore and experiment with innovations in radar design and operation modes in addition to improving the quality of the radar data products. This is encouraging as ultimately, the quality of the science depends on the quality of the instrumental data.

The theme of achieving results from SuperDARN that perhaps were not totally anticipated was reinforced by the two invited speakers. Prof Iain Reid has developed the infrastructure and conducted research on the data from ionosphere and atmosphere radar systems. Recent developments in SuperDARN also allow thermosphere properties to be probed. In the increasingly competitive research funding environment many countries are presently experiencing, Prof Reid offered insights for increasing the diversity of radar research in order to improve funding opportunities. Dr Phil Wilkinson provided us with a broader view within the context of Space Weather and the present political focus in Climate. The World Data Centres are crucial to providing the comprehensive data required to even begin work on these challenging research areas. SuperDARN contributes to these centres.

The proceedings come in the usual format in that the material presented as Powerpoint or posters has been collected from each speaker. The proceedings CD also contains an important aspect of all SuperDARN meetings, images of the people in action.

Many people contributed to the success of the SuperDARN 2008 Workshop and I thank them for their efforts. In particular, I would like to specifically thank the Program Committee: John Devlin, Jim Whittington, Peter Dyson, Pasha Ponomarenko and Fred Menk. The web site was created and maintained by the experts at La Trobe University, specifically Joe Hura and Mark Gentile and thanks to Jim for overseeing and arranging this proceedings CD. Thanks to Pasha for the wet volleyball games and assisting with the Program (with Cheryl James). The BBQ was expertly organised by the University of Newcastle Physics Society students.

I look forward to seeing you all at SuperDARN 2009 in Corsica.



Colin Waters  
Organising Committee Chair  
SuperDARN 2008 Workshop