



From The President

Although the 10th International Rapeseed Congress is over, my computer and telephone continue to receive requests for information on workshops, conference papers and related information from the Congress. The Congress took many years in planning and utilised the assistance of many people in Australia, as well as quite a few from overseas. It was clearly worthwhile and has continued, in line with previous Congresses, to be the peak source of information on rapeseed research, development and utilisation. A total of 650 papers were presented as either oral papers or posters to an audience of around 700 delegates and accompanying persons.

This was different in many ways to previous Congresses, not the least of which was that this was the first meeting in the Southern Hemisphere. The proceedings were slightly different in that they were presented to delegates on CD-ROM disks. The simplicity of searching for topics on the disk was a big advantage together with the convenience of carrying home a CD rather than a library of books. Our exuberant banquet at Australia's Parliament House was an enjoyable experience for delegates. The Congress concluded with several specialty workshops. All seven workshops were well attended and minutes from some of these have been reproduced in this bulletin. The abstracts for the Rapeseed Congress are now available on the internet at <http://farrer.csu.edu.au/gcirc/> and the full papers will be loaded soon. It is hoped that future Congress proceedings will also be made available on the web for the benefit of the rapeseed community.

The topics of the Congress were many and varied covering plant breeding, biotechnology, chemistry and nutrition, quality, pathology and farming systems. There was a very strong influence of new innovations based on biotechnology and genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Clearly the relative advantages and disadvantages of GMOs will continue to dominate discussion at rapeseed meetings in the short term. The future direction for rapeseed will relate strongly to the acceptance of these new technologies. The GCIRC committee felt strongly about developing a policy on GMOs which reflects the feelings of the committee. At the AGM in Canberra, a sub committee was formed to develop that policy. Dr Phil Salisbury has been working with the other members and a draft report has now been distributed. A final document will be distributed soon to the GCIRC members.

The GCIRC will meet again in Posnan, Poland for the 2001 Technical Workshop.

An agenda has been developed for the 5th - 6th June and it looks to be a very interesting meeting with presentations from each of the five GCIRC committees and other topics. Posnan was my first International Rapeseed Congress in 1987 and I hope I will have the opportunity to attend several more.

Rod Mailer
President - GCIRC