

Report for RNSA on “**Operations Research in Australia; The Experts Speak!**”

The conference, **Operations Research in Australia; The Experts Speak!**, 7- 8 July, 2008 was in collaboration with DSTO, the Research Network for a Secure Australia (RNSA) and the Canberra Chapter of the Australian Operations Research Society (ASOR). Prof John Baird, the Rector of UNSW@ADFA welcomed the 40 strong attendees followed by an opening speech from Dr Len Sciacca, Chief Operating Officer, DSTO.

The structure of the conference was to invite a range of OR professionals from different backgrounds to give their perspectives on what OR is, what it can do and where it should be heading.

Four renown OR academics flew in from all parts of Australia. Outstanding DSTO presentations were given by renowned scientists from the Land Operations Division and the Joint Operations Division. The audience were given a terrific opportunity to hear from government with two featured talks given by Dr. Richard Davis, Office of National Security, Prime Minister & Cabinet Department on “Challenges for OR in the national security domain” and Russell Hay & Paul Trushell, Geoscience Australia and Attorney General Department on “CIPMA: A computational tool to support government & business decision making”.

Prof Natashia Boland from the University of Newcastle added to the day one programme with her presentation on “Progress and challenges in linear programming, integer programming and their applications”. This was followed by “Effective computational models for constrained path problems” from Prof Lou Cacetta from Curtin University. The much deserved lunch break at the Academy’s Officers Mess was followed by Monash’s Prof Amrik Sohal presentation on “Applying Operations Research to Designing and Managing Supply Chains”. From DSTO, Dr. Jeremy Manton stressed “The need for OR in organisations”, while Prof. Neville Curtis gave a reality check with his talk on “Operations Research at the front end”. These hour long presentations commenced with an introduction to their specialist area, discussing advanced concepts, challenges and open problems in their area. A 10 minute interactive question time concluded the presentations.

Day two of the Conference again saw some more thought provoking topics and attendees were particularly regaled by Prof Mosche Sniedovich from Melbourne University with his presentation, “Responsible decision-making in the face of severe uncertainty”. From DSTO, Drs Bruce Fairlie and Paul Whitebread presented the use of “Defence OR in the air domain” and “OR for command and control analysis” respectively.

As with the previous conference, the OR event was rounded off with a conference dinner on Day One. The venue, again at Old Parliament House, gave the attendees the opportunity to further discuss OR applications and chat informally with the practitioners and their counterparts. The Conferences were deemed a success with much positive feedback from all.