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## **IAHR President Message 2012**

HydroLink

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# Dear Members,



**Prof. Roger A. Falconer**  
IAHR President  
Halcrow Professor  
Cardiff University UK

At the beginning of the New Year I would first like to send you my very best wishes for the coming year and I hope that the year ahead will be a peaceful, prosperous and healthy one for you and your family.

The past year has again seen troubled times across the world relating to water, with the following being two such examples:

- The earthquake off the Pacific coast of Tohoku, near Japan, was of magnitude 9.0. It was one of the most powerful earthquakes ever known to have hit Japan and one of the five most powerful earthquakes in the world since modern record keeping began in 1900. The earthquake triggered powerful tsunami waves which reached heights in excess of 40m and which in the Sendai area travelled up to 10km inland. In addition to loss of life and the destruction of over 200,000 homes, the tsunami caused a number of nuclear accidents, primarily the meltdown of three nuclear reactors at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant complex. Source: Wikipedia.
- Also at the beginning of 2011 a series of floods had hit Australia, primarily in the state of

Queensland including the capital city, Brisbane. The floods forced the evacuation of thousands of people from towns and cities, 35 people lost their lives and three quarters of the state of Queensland was declared a disaster zone. Source: Wikipedia. More recently we have seen massive floods in Thailand; the worst flooding in 50 years. The floods affected 9 million people, more than 360 people were killed and 100,000 have been made homeless. Disease is still rife in the flood waters and health-related issues associated with the floods continue. Source: International Rescue Committee.

These examples of tragic water related disasters that have occurred over the past year have highlighted to me that our Association is as relevant today as it was over 75 years ago when it was first formed. First and foremost one cannot fail to be impressed by how nations pull together when faced with such tragedies and how the Japanese and Australian people have so quickly rebuilt much of their infrastructure in both countries. Those of us who went to the IAHR World Congress in Brisbane could not fail to have been impressed by the way the city has been rebuilt so quickly after the flood disaster; The Congress organisation chaired by Hubert Chanson did a remarkable job in putting together such a successful IAHR Congress and with so many practitioners in attendance.

The other lesson that has come out of these water-related disasters for me is that IAHR must continue to diversify. In the first instance the tragedy of the meltdown of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant complex has shifted public opinion world-wide away from nuclear power and in many of those countries where tidal and wave power are readily available there has been a groundswell of public opinion to consider these resources more favourably. I am therefore delighted to see the growing activities of the Working Group on Marine Renewable Energy within IAHR and I look forward to the prospect of seeing this Group flourish in the future.

In the second instance, not only is it my view that we should have a Technical Committee which is specifically called 'Flood Risk Management' (or similar), with Flooding as a topic being more visible within the Association as one of our main themes, but I also believe that we need to be more involved in the increased health risks associated with flooding, and particularly epidemiology. Several years ago myself and several other IAHR members organised a successful 2-day workshop on Hydro-Epidemiology at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Environmental Hydraulics Symposium in Tempe, USA, 2007, including a number of epidemiologists and several IAHR members from all regions within the IAHR community. I believe it is timely for us to try and build on this workshop and establish links with an appropriate epidemiological learned society to develop a partnership in Hydro-Epidemiology (or similar) for the future.

In looking to the year ahead, and my term as President, I also believe that it is essential that we do all we can to attract more practitioners into IAHR. With a global recession and research funding in our respective countries becoming more competitive than ever, I believe that we are all going to be under increasing pressure to identify the 'impact' of our research if we are to attract funding from our funding agencies in each of our respective countries; in the UK 'impact' is now a key parameter for the likelihood of a grant being funded. In order for us to enhance the 'impact' of our research then we need to be engaging more than ever with stakeholders from industry, government departments, non-government agencies etc., and IAHR must enhance this opportunity for the future. Hence, we need to work together to attract more companies and public sector organisations into IAHR as Institute Members. My Council colleagues and I will be concentrating on this agenda over the next two years, but if you have any ideas on how you think we can make IAHR more attractive to the private or

*“The two recent examples of tragic water related disasters that have occurred over the past year have highlighted to me that our Association is as relevant today as it was over 75 years ago when it was first formed”*



public sector, then please contact the Executive Director or myself through the IAHR Secretariat.

Finally, I am delighted to report to you a number of developments that have taken place over the past year and I will briefly summarise them below, with more details obtainable from the Executive Director:

- A new online Association Management System (based on the iMIS software system) has been developed and should be “live” as you read this. This system will greatly improve our Association by enabling members to share information on their expertise, allow Committees and Working Groups to share knowledge and discuss activities, allow web access to information on jobs, etc., and allow members to access our large historic archive of Congress Proceedings.
- In parallel to this a new accounts system has now been put in place at Head Office which has greatly improved our invoicing and accounts handling.
- Two new monographs were published in 2011 entitled: (i) ‘Groundwater Management Practices’ by A. Findikakis and K. Sato, and (ii) ‘Guide to Physical Modelling and Experimentation Design Manual’ by E. Frostick et. al., with a further monograph due out shortly entitled:

‘Environmental Fluid Hydraulics’ by W. Rodi.

These are the first fruits of our agreement with Taylor and Francis to publish the IAHR Book Series – and I am grateful to Peter Davies who is Book Series Editor!

- A new Working Group on Oil Spill Modelling has been established, chaired by Prof. Poojitha Yapa, Clarkson University, New York, USA, with the vice chair being Dr. Khaled Al Banaa, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, Kuwait. The inaugural meeting of this new group was hosted by the Kuwait Oil Company in the offices of our Institute Member KISR in Kuwait in November. This meeting also served as the first activity of our IAHR MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Committee.
- Prof. Vladimir Nikora, University of Aberdeen, took over in September from Prof. Willi Hager as Editor of the Journal of Hydraulic Research and we are delighted that the Impact Factor of JHR has now passed the ‘1’ barrier.
- Efforts continue to make HydroLink a valuable member benefit, with more themed issues and thicker and quarterly issues to follow in 2012, together with a drive to link more future articles to ‘research impact’ and case studies from industry/Institute Members. I am particularly grateful to Prof. Michele Mossa for all his efforts

as the first Editor of HydroLink.

- Electronic balloting was introduced for the first time for the committee leadership elections for the Groundwater and Hydroinformatics Section Committees and I will be asking one of my Council colleagues to lead a Working Group to review the success of this new process.
- In September the first joint course was held with the World Meteorological Organization. The course was organised by Prof. Roberto Ranzi and was highly successful, leading to discussions with the WMO about opportunities for further collaboration in the future.

These are just some of the exciting changes and developments occurring within IAHR over the last year and I believe that there are many more exciting opportunities to come. However, I also believe there are some challenging times ahead for our Association; and members of the Executive Committee and myself are already exploring how we can work more closely in the future with other complementary organisations to address some of these challenges for the benefit of our community. In the meantime, I would like to conclude this message by again extending you my very best wishes for 2012.