

# President's Column

Another year is fast approaching its end; one wonders where the time has gone! Our industry remains as busy as ever with cost pressures and skills shortages particularly impacting major construction and engineering works and, regardless of who wins the Australian federal election, the likelihood of major investments in infrastructure works from the next government.

With all of this professional activity, I really appreciate the efforts of our Centre Committees and Chairs in creating the capability for CIOB Australasia to be relevant and offer effective programs to its members, spread from Auckland to Perth. The major thrust of my Presidency has been to create a dynamic and effective federal structure focused on the Centres, so that CIOB Australasia can be equally effective for the different construction industries throughout our region.

Grand ideas are fine but they would be impossible to implement without the support of our volunteers at each of the Centres. I would encourage each and every CIOB Australasia member to get in touch with your local Centre and offer them your support and encouragement. Our aim is to customise and deliver locally the type of events appreciated and needed by the membership and colleagues there. To an increasing extent, the type and number of CIOB Australasia events offered in each of the Centres will be influenced by how well they are supported by the local membership.

This focus on the Centres has been supported by a gradual evolution in the structure of our Regional management team. Jodie Richards-McCabe our Branch Administrator, has taken on the role of Events Coordinator, working with each



of the Centre Committees to deliver a steady stream of events (we are targeting 4 per Centre for 2008 with a few extras in locations such as Newcastle and Christchurch, outside the primary locations). This teamwork between Jodie and the Centre Committees is delivering real benefits to members and the industry and is a model we hope to expand.

Subject to final budgetary approvals, we are planning to engage a second Branch Administration Assistant in 2008, to focus exclusively on supporting and processing membership applications. Once this post is filled, we should be able to leverage from the greater interest created by events and the increasing effectiveness of our Centre Committees, to accelerate membership growth through 2008.

One of the business planning requirements that all CIOB Branches and Regions are required to undertake is to define a set of KPIs to measure their 'performance'. Our Regional Manager, Liz Thomas and I believe at this stage of CIOB Australasia's development, that membership growth is the key measure of success and should be the key KPI and focus for 2008.

Having mentioned budgets and planning, we are awaiting approvals from CIOB HQ at Englemere, for our business plan and budget for 2008 together with the final draft of our new constitution. The budgets and business plans will be approved in the next couple of weeks and the new Constitution should be available for consideration by all members early in 2008. One important point to note is that the 2008 budget will still be in deficit and we appreciate the support of CIOB International as we continue to develop our Region. The challenge facing our new president and committees following the 2008 AGM in May 2008, will be to drive CIOB Australasia membership from the benchmark level of 500 towards the 1000 level needed to make us financially self supporting.

In closing, may I firstly acknowledge the support of our professional management team, Regional Council officers and Centre Committees throughout 2007, with a special thank you to our Newsletter Editor, Gerald di Corpo. May I also take this opportunity to wish you, your colleagues and your families a happy peaceful Christmas and every success in 2008.

**Patrick Weaver**  
President, CIOB Australasia

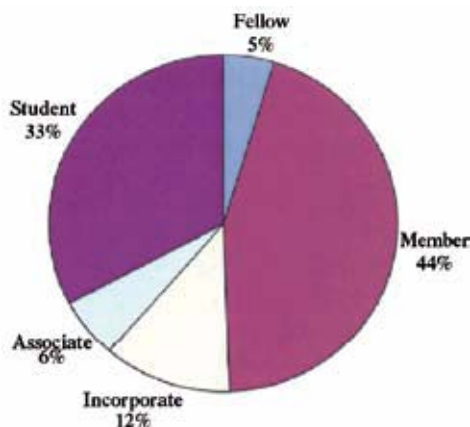
## CIOB Membership Growth in Our Region

Total membership in Australasia, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, has grown by more than eight per cent over the past year and now totals 4,850, as at the beginning of September 2007.

The pie chart shows the proportions of membership, from Fellows, to Students.

The highest annual growth was in Singapore at over seventeen per cent, followed by Malaysia, nearly sixteen percent and Australasia at fourteen per cent.

We look forward to continued growth in this dynamic part of the construction world.



## 1 Equals 2 .... When Nothing Equals Something

At 90 years of age Leonid Hurwicz, together with Eric Maskin and Roger Myerson won this year's Nobel Prize in economics. The Economist magazine describes Mr Hurwicz's theories as having "deployed some very elegant mathematics".

Beginners' algebra some decades ago included:

$$(a + b) \times (a - b) = a^2 + ab - ba - b^2, \text{ which may be written } a^2 + (ab - ab) - b^2, \text{ and so: } (a + b) \times (a - b) = a^2 - b^2.$$

Much school-day pleasure was had in the further development:

If  $a = b$ , then  $a^2 - a^2 = (a + a) \times (a - a)$ . This may be written:  $a \times (a - a) = (a + a) \times (a - a)$ .

If we cancel  $(a - a)$  on both sides of the equation,  $a \times (a - a) = (a + a) \times (a - a)$

Then  $a = (a + a)$  and, if  $a = 1$ , then  $1 = 2$ .

In spite of the very basic algebra in this conundrum, few people are able to explain it quickly when asked. See the sequel to this on page 9, but before doing so give it some serious consideration.

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