ISB News March 2011: from the President

Paul J. Beggs

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Excitement is building in the International Society of Biometeorology and beyond about the International Congress of Biometeorology just a few months away, 5–9 December, in Auckland, New Zealand. Importantly, the call for abstracts is now open. To submit your abstract please go to the Abstract submission page of the Congress web site: <http://www.icb2011.com/icb2011/index.cfm?p=abstracts2>. Abstract submission closes on Thursday 28 April 2011, 11.30 pm (NZT). There is also a new ICB2011 flyer available via the ICB2011 homepage, or directly at: <http://www.icb2011.com/icb2011/files/ICBFlyer.pdf>. In addition to this providing further information on the Congress for *IJB* readers, please feel free to send it to colleagues and display it for others to see.

The Congress theme is Climate and Society, and as I write this ISB News in my Macquarie University office in Sydney, Australia, on 20 January 2011, one overwhelming example of this theme fills my mind and that of many other people in Australia and abroad. This is, of course, the very widespread and devastating flooding of the eastern states of Australia, particularly Queensland to my north and Victoria to my south (though my own state of New South Wales, and Tasmania, have also been affected). This has resulted from, amongst other things, one of the strongest La Niña events on record, which has

contributed to extremely high rainfall in the region (Bureau of Meteorology 2011). The flooding has caused a number of deaths as well as enormous damage to, and destruction of, infrastructure and property. Only time will tell what the final economic cost will be, and indeed it is only over the coming months and years that the magnitude of the human health impact will become apparent, with the potential for further injuries, outbreaks of infectious disease and a potentially very significant mental health problem associated with this event. I think this event reminds us all once again that even developed countries such as Australia are very much vulnerable to significant climatic events.

Finally, to ISB members, membership renewals have been sent out by our Treasurer, Dr John Gaughan. If members have not received their membership renewal, then they should contact John (j.gaughan@uq.edu.au).

Reference

Bureau of Meteorology (2011) ENSO Wrap-Up: La Niña continues to dominate in the Pacific. Commonwealth of Australia, Bureau of Meteorology. <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/>. Issued 19 January 2011. Accessed 20 January 2011

P. J. Beggs (✉)
Department of Environment and Geography, Faculty of Science,
Macquarie University,
Sydney, Australia
e-mail: paul.beggs@mq.edu.au