37th International Symposium on Macromolecules (MACRO '98), 13–17 July 1998, Gold Coast, Australia

This meeting was the IUPAC World Polymer Congress '98, and with 1 060 participants from 46 countries it had truly international representation. Three hundred sixty of the attendees were from Australia, and they made all participants very welcome.

Lecture rooms and poster areas based in the Conrad Jupiters Hotel, Gold Coast, Queensland were excellent, and the facilities were serviced efficiently. Accommodations were provided in the host hotel and in other hotels in the vicinity of the sea coast. As Gold Coast is a holiday area and the Congress was held in the off-season, convenient, excellent accommodations were plentiful and reasonably priced.

The opening ceremony was quite impressive with 46 national flags around the room. There were five plenary lectures, 540 contributed papers, 430 posters, and three workshops. Poster sessions and lectures were all well attended, discussions were lively, and the symposium was very active scientifically. Outstanding speakers included E. Rizzardo, CSIRO, Clayton South, Australia; W. J. Feast, University of Durham, England, UK; and A. R. Khokhlov, Moscow State University, Russia.

The social program was extremely well organized, with tours offered each day to the surrounding countryside. The welcoming evening and symposium banquet were outstanding. A memorial dinner for the late Professor J. H. O'Donnell, original founder and designer of the symposium, was a moving tribute.

Symposium Chairman Professor R. Gilbert and Organizing Committee Secretary Dr. P. Pomery are to be commended for presenting a Congress of the highest quality in terms of topics, speakers, and organization.

Professor Robert F. T. Stepto
University of Manchester
Vice President, IUPAC Macromolecular Division (IV)

18th Discussion Conference on Mechanical Behavior of Polymers, 20–23 July 1998, Prague, Czech Republic

This conference was the 56th meeting in the series of Prague Meetings on Macromolecules, organized by the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic under the auspices of the IUPAC Macromolecular Division.

The aim of the conference was to provide a forum for both academic and industrial experts in the mechanical behavior of solid polymers, both synthetic and natural. Special emphasis was placed on structural understanding of macroscopic mechanical behavior.

Conference topics included the following:

- interrelations between structural hierarchy and mechanical behavior
- analysis of strength and toughness for composition and blends
- effects of degradation on mechanical properties
- new experimental approaches, including online structural characterization in mechanical testing, acoustic emission, fractoemission, and related techniques

These topics were covered in 10 plenary (main) lectures, 19 special lectures, and 74 poster contributions. In addition, 2 panel discussions were organized on:

- mechanical behavior of high-performance polymers (discussion leader: A. Hiltner, USA), and
- strength and toughness of oriented polymer systems, composites, and blends (discussion leader: H. H. Kausch, Switzerland)

The program committee, with Dr. Miroslav Raab as Conference Chairman, organized a very interesting scientific program with many well-known speakers. Attendees included 127 participants from 24 countries and 88 guests from abroad.

The main lectures covered many aspects of morphology, mechanical properties, and micromechanical mechanisms of polymers. Principal speakers and topics included the following:

- E. Baer, A. Hiltner (USA)
  Hierarchical Structure and Mechanical Properties of Polymeric Materials
- E. G. Clutton, L. J. Rose, G. Capaccio (UK)
  Structural Features and Fracture Phenomena in Polyethylene
- G. K. Elyashevich (Russia)
  Deformation Behavior and Mechanical Properties of Hard Elastic and Porous Films of Polyethylene
- M. Matsuo (Japan)
  Gelation/Crystallization Mechanism of Crystalline Polymer Solutions and Morphology and Drawability of Resultant Films