



The ACRA conference series is an annual conference of the Australian Robotics and Automation Association. I am delighted that this year, for the first time, the ACRA Conference was held in Auckland, New Zealand as the ***Australasian Conference on Robotics and Automation***. ACRA 2002 brought together researchers from both sides of the Tasman Sea in an informal setting to present and to discuss new and current work.

New Zealand has an active and growing community of robotics researchers in a wide variety of application areas, many complimentary to the Australian robotics scene. As an overview of the NZ robotics landscape, two guest speakers introduced robotics activities at the University of Waikato and at Massey University – the location of the conference.

Over 40 papers were accepted for oral and poster presentation at ACRA 2002; 28 of these were from Australian research groups and, with 18 papers, the conference attracted its fair share from New Zealand participants. With this amount of New Zealand support, I am convinced that future ACRA conferences will continue to enjoy a significant contribution from New Zealand. The combined conference will promote extended interaction between the various robotics groups in the two countries. For this reason, a name change for the ARAA to Australasian Robotics and Automation Association is now entirely appropriate.

ACRA 2002 continues last year's introduction of electronic publication of the *Proceedings* on CD-ROM and also offers a poster session in line with many international workshops and conferences. Both full written papers and posters were peer reviewed for technical and editorial content by a dedicated committee of referees. The papers were presented in 11 short sessions including two streams in the afternoon over two full days with an additional morning for lab tours at Auckland University and Industrial Research.

We thank all authors, reviewers and participants for their contributions.

***Werner Friedrich***

Chairman ACRA

Auckland, November 2002

on behalf of the Programme Committee.