

ISO/TC 275 IN SYDNEY

International Affairs Department

There are various kinds of international standards out there. You may be already familiar with a series of ISO 9000, which is quality management, ISO 14000, an environmental management system, etc. In sewage works, there are ISO/TC 224: Service activities relating to drinking water supply systems and wastewater systems - Quality criteria of the service and performance indicators, ISO/TC 251: Asset management, ISO/TC 282: Water reuse, etc.

ISO/TC 275 is for Sludge recovery, recycling, treatment, and disposal. TC, which stands for Technical Committee, develops standards. Some TC has a Subcommittee (SC) to discuss each theme and a Working Group (WG) under SC. TC 275 has WG instead of SC. When standards development has been completed, they are numbered, such as ISO 9000, and issued.

Here is the main issue. In November 2015, the third plenary meeting of ISO/TC 275 was held in Sydney, and a "Team Japan," including me, joined it. Japan Sewage Works Agency (JS) and Japan Sewage Treatment Plant Constructors Association (JSCA) work together as a national mirror committee. The board gathers opinions to submit a proposal to WG. Our operation aims to contribute global presence of sludge treatment technology in Japan. ISO/TC 275 was established in February 2013. The first plenary meeting was held in Paris; the second one was in Toronto. The third session in Sydney was the first opportunity in the Southern Hemisphere.

The plenary session lasted five days from November 9th in Standard Australia, Sydney. Day One was a workshop, and voluntary representatives presented the present conditions of sludge treatment in their countries. From Japan, a chair of the national mirror committee made a speech focusing on good examples of thermal processing technologies, including incineration and energy recovery, and resource (e.g., phosphorus) recovery technology. Sludge reduction technology looked new to countries or regions like Australia, Canada, and Israel, where the land application of sewage sludge was popular. After the presentation, representatives from large countries murmured, "Japan is such a unique country to bother reducing sludge by using energy."

During the other three days, officials joined half-day meetings of each WG. Many WGs made much progress and actively worked in this third session. Some WGs that had almost completed a framework of proposal shared description, and other little more improved WGs commented on a draft proposal or amended it. While members usually contact each other by e-mail, I felt face-to-face discussions significantly advanced our group works.

On Day Four and Day Five afternoon, each WG reported its achievement at a general meeting (Photo 1). Chairs from WGs talked using their conference notes on a screen. In our report, Japanese members laughed because the note described me as "Mrs." though I'm not married. In Japan, we learn "Mrs." is only used for a married woman at school. However, where our chair is from Italy, people use "Mrs." for women 18 years and over. I understand, and I just looked my age.

By the way, Sydney is a compact city, and you can visit many tourist attractions on foot. The city also has seven train lines we used during our stay. It takes less than 10 minutes from Central station, the nearest to our hotel, to Circular Quay Station, a stop from Standard Australia. The Central Station is the terminal station, and Circular Quay is a gateway connecting visitors to Sydney's major attractions, such as the Sydney Opera House and Harbor Bridge (Photo 2).

As Photo 3 shows, the trains have hand straps of unique shapes. They are challenging to hold and too high that I could not use them.

A one-week meeting finished successfully in that way. The next plenary session will be held in October or November 2016 in Vienna or Paris. JS will continue to deal with ISO operations for the global application of Japanese technologies.



Photo 1

Scene of a general meeting

Two gentlemen in front of people are a chair (sitting) and a secretary (standing) of TC 275.



Photo 2

A view from Circular Quay Station is nearest to Standard Australia. The left-back is Harbor Bridge, and the right-back is Opera House. In front, a ferry waits for casting off.



Photo 3

A hand strap (?) of a train



Photo 4

I am a collector of snapshots of local utility-hole covers.

I saw a little utility-hole cover in Sydney on the sidewalk during my stay, and I found this on the street. We can see "SEWER" on it, and the City of Sydney has adopted a separate sewerage system.