

## **Lunch – in Australia**

*George Werniuk*

Geologists and Australians like to think they have a reputation for consuming large volumes of beer, so it was like a meeting made in heaven at this year's International Luncheon held today at noon. The event had an Australasia theme with Australian beer and wine available to accompany hot dishes of fricasseed chicken in coconut sauce and sausages done Australian style. There was a variety of breads and salads to accompany the stand-up meal. To top it off the traditional Australian dessert of kiwi and pavlova was served for those with a sweet tooth.

The food was served buffet style at two large (no waiting in line) square eating areas in the centre of the room. To add to the atmosphere there were traditional drummers and didgeridoo players for the beginning of the event. Tropical flower arrangements were scattered throughout, giving one the impression of having just stepped off the plane in Cairns. The only thing missing were the barbies, probably due to the objection of the Toronto Fire Department.

Australians and geologists, being an informal lot, got to eat standing up while balancing their plates and favourite beverage. For those favouring a more formal style, there were high-legged tables so at least dinner plates could be placed on a solid surface while cutting food or gesturing with one hand to make a point between sips of beer or wine. These small tables had room for about four dinner plates or two dozen empty bottles of beer. The lights in the room were dimmed, creating an intimate atmosphere amongst the diners.

The food was tasty and the service was efficient making for a very pleasant atmosphere.

The event's lead sponsor was HSBC with help from the Government of South Australia, LGL, Schlumberger Water Services and Xtract Mining Consultants. These companies are active in the Australasia region while HSBC provides financial services around the world. The Royal Ontario Museum was also a sponsor and had a number of mineral samples on display from the region.

After the opening remarks, and during the meal, there were individual power point presentations by the sponsors. These were easy to see but subtle enough not to be a distraction. Thank you for a nice dining experience