

"CARTOGRAPHY CROSSING AUSTRALIAN BORDERS"

Australia is an enormous landmass plus many islands with a total area of 7.7 million square kilometres.

It comprises five mainland States, one island State, and two Territories, each having their own Governments. As well a Commonwealth Government addresses national issues.

There is a cartographic agency within each State and Territory and a Commonwealth agency with specific national responsibilities. The Army and Navy arms of the Department of Defence also have cartographic functions.

Australia's size and the number of agencies provide a recipe for duplication of work, and varying cartographic standards over the country.

The Intergovernmental Committee on Surveying and Mapping (ICSM) coordinates cartography across Australia's geographical borders, political borders, civilian/defence borders and international borders. ICSM's initiatives avoid wasted effort and provide a consistent and modern approach to cartography for national development and defence.

ICSM was established by the Prime Minister in 1988. Prior to that time a similar body, the National Mapping Council (NMC), had coordinated cooperative Commonwealth and State mapping programs since 1945. The changing operational environment of the mid-1980s led to the cessation of the NMC and the formation of ICSM to cover both mapping and surveying issues as they related to government activities.

ICSM comprises the heads of Australia's Commonwealth, State, Territory, and Defence surveying and mapping agencies. New Zealand is also a member of ICSM and is represented by the Director-General of its equivalent agency. ICSM is an important forum for the exchange of information and ideas in the national interest and between the two countries.

The major achievements of ICSM, or its predecessor include:

- . Complete coverage of the country with unique series topographic maps;
- . The Australian Geodetic Datums of 1966 and 1984;
- . The Australian Height Datum;
- . Adoption of a geocentric datum for Australia in 1994;
- . National data models for GIS applications;
- . A national topographic metadata index;
- . A national gazetteer of geographical place names;
- . Cartographic standards and specifications;
- . Dynamic and evolving resolutions and agreements within ICSM.

This paper:

- . Expands on the achievements of ICSM;
- . Explains how ICSM datasets are the most fundamental in a national geographic data infrastructure;
- . Covers the history of cartography in Australia;
- . Outlines the moves to commercialisation by ICSM jurisdictions;
- . Presents ICSM as a model for other countries or regions with a number of cartographic agencies.