



APSEA-SA Professional of the Year - Mark Deuter

Mark Deuter has an outstanding spatial career spanning 46 years, of which he will retire from at the end of this year. Mark has been a huge contributor to the spatial industry, particularly in the last 16 years while at Aerometrex. Mark has been Managing Director since 2011, which, under his direction has seen the organisation grow from 15 staff in 2005 to 115 staff currently. Mark was instrumental in listing Aerometrex on the Australian stock exchange, something that is rare for an Australian geospatial company.

The **judging panel** commended Mark on his significant contribution and noted that through his leadership he has created new business initiatives which have in turn led to employment opportunities and acknowledgement by his peers. They also noted he was a consistent and dedicated contributor across many areas, has demonstrated business savvy within a highly technical industry and is an exemplary leader.

Mark Deuter would like to share the following statement

"I am very pleased and honoured to accept this award. It is a significant and weighty matter to be judged as Professional of the Year when there are so many excellent people doing such good work in our industry.

I have had three careers in the geospatial industry and aerial surveying in particular over 45 years – roughly 15 years each.

Firstly with the Lands Department, Mapping Branch, where I learned the skills of cartography and photogrammetry, and studied part-time to get my Cartography Certificate and a Maths Science Degree. The skills I acquired at the Mapping Branch, and the mentoring I received from my excellent management team, have stood me in good stead throughout my entire career. I particularly would like to thank Gerald Edwards, Ken Edwards, Ron McLeod, the late Roly Gregory, Jeff Laubsch and Alan Wallace for their strong inputs into my career, whether by instruction or example.

I then spend 15 years working in airborne geophysics data processing with Pitt Research, firstly as a data processor, then General Manager and then Managing Director. John Pitt was another outstanding manager and motivator, it was my privilege to work with him, but sadly only for 11 months – as he passed away from cancer in 1993. And that was my introduction to management. An empty chair, contracts to complete and staff relying on me for their next pay check. No pressure! But we survived for a further 12 years thanks to the extraordinary efforts of our team and a robust record-keeping system. We survived a mineral exploration boom, then a bust – both extreme events - and eventually we sold out to our major client in 2005.

I returned to photogrammetry to join Aerometrex in 2005 as General Manager. Those that were at the SSSI event at Pavilion on the Park in February have heard the story – it has been a wild ride at times and again – a huge effort from a dedicated team to navigate through the various challenges and opportunities that we have faced. I am proud of what we have built at Aerometrex but many others in the company are also entitled to feel equally proud of what we have accomplished, because they have worked tirelessly to achieve it too. I do feel that my first two careers were really preparation for my time at Aerometrex, and it is so gratifying to leave something that will not only endure, but will continue to grow and build strength.

I often tell young people who are training for our industry that they could make more money being a lawyer or an accountant, but they wouldn't have nearly as much fun. I have enjoyed so many things about aerial survey – from aviation, operating huge cameras in light aircraft, the technical rigour of photogrammetry, coming to grips with LiDAR and direct geo-referencing technology, and blazing a trail with massive multi-ray matching implementation and reality modelling that has won us world-wide recognition. Mapping is a great blend of science, technology and art – it really offers a well-rounded and fascinating career path.

"There has never been a more exciting time to be involved in this technology". That phrase sounds a little trite and hackneyed now, but it may surprise you that I claim it as an original. I said it to Malcolm Turnbull at the Locate conference in Canberra in 2015, when he was Minister for Communications, touring the exhibit space and talking to the exhibitors. I saw his media adviser write it down in his notebook. A few months later Mr Turnbull was Prime Minister, and in his acceptance speech as Leader of the Liberal Party he said "There has never been a more exciting time to be an Australian." And then it was repeated ad infinitum and applied by nearly everyone in the country to convey their enthusiasm for their own pet project. But that is how I still feel. It is an exciting time. There has never been so much opportunity. There has never been so much demand for our services. Go forth and conquer! And enjoy every minute of it while you're doing it.

Thank you very much."