

## Conference Report – Louise Ratko

I had the privilege of attending Interspeech 2023, a prestigious international conference in the field of speech science, held in Dublin, Ireland. This marked my first post-COVID international conference and luckily, the years of anticipation helped me overcome the challenging 27 hours of flights and interchanges and associated jet lag (as many other Australasian based researchers will also be familiar with). The conference this year was massive, with over 2000 delegates attending, bringing together experts from various disciplines within speech science and technology.

Interspeech 2023 spanned four days and featured seven concurrent oral sessions, and four concurrent poster sessions, which, although overwhelming, meant there was always something interesting to attend! Thankfully, the availability of online proceedings allowed me to catch up on sessions I couldn't attend in person.

Collaboration between speech scientists and speech technologists was a focus of this conference, highlighted by the initial keynote talk given by Prof. Shrikanth Narayanan, the current ISCA medallist, whose prolific career has spanned both areas. On the third day, in lieu of a keynote there was a panel discussion "*Keynote Discussion Panel: End-to-end Models - Friend or Foe of Speech Research*" which was largely focused on discussing the benefits and challenge of collaboration between speech scientists and speech technologists.

I presented on the second day, giving my talk: "*Opening or closing? An electroglottographic analysis of voiceless coda consonants in Australian English*" which was well attended (especially by fellow ASSTA members) and resulted in some good discussions with various researchers after the session.

A personal highlight of the conference was Nicole Holliday's survey talk "*A sociolinguistic perspective on speech technology*" presented during the Sociophonetics stream on Wednesday, where she highlighted the pitfalls speech technologists may fall into if they fail to consider sociophonetics when designing and implementing speech technology.

I made sure to highlight the upcoming Interspeech 2026, which will be hosted by ASSTA and held in Sydney, Australia. I spruiked Australia's natural beauty, great weather and amazing speech science and technology community. This involved highlighting that Australia's wildlife isn't anywhere near as dangerous as suggested by international media!

The conference also offered several social events, including an opening reception and a memorable conference dinner within the Guinness Brewery. This included a warm welcome from Celtic drummers, a tour through the Brewery, many pints of Guinness and Irish folk singing and dancing!

Interspeech 2023 provided an excellent platform to connect with colleagues from around the world and to meet and engage with renowned researchers whose work I had previously only read. It helped me strengthen both my local and international connections in the field of speech science. I am grateful for the support from ASSTA, which made my attendance at this conference possible.