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ART DECO TRUST INFORMATION SHEET 9

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THE ART DECO WORLD CONGRESSES

In February 1999, the Fifth World Congress on Art Deco was held in Napier, staged by the Art Deco Trust. This was the first time that the Congress had been held outside a major city.

BACKGROUND TO THE WORLD CONGRESSES

In the late 1980s, under the leadership of the late Barbara Baer Capitman, the idea of a World Congress on Art Deco was born and in January 1991, it was held in Miami Beach, the first area in the world to recognise and take steps to protect an Art Deco heritage district. Sadly, Capitman had died before her dream of a World Congress became a reality.

The Congress was inspired by Capitman's concerns about the future of Art Deco architecture world-wide saying

"Daily the threat of demolition endangers great Art Deco masterpieces. All over the world, preservationists are joining together, uniting to prevent destruction of their early 20th Century heritage before it's too late. In several countries, notably the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, interested people have been working for Art Deco preservation since the early 1980s. In other parts of the world like South Africa, South America and Indonesia, interest has followed and is increasing. As well as individual buildings, streets, suburbs, towns and cities rich in Art Deco have been identified."

The response to the first Congress was so enthusiastic that further Congresses were planned and have since become a reality.

1993 - Perth, Western Australia
1995 - Brighton, England
1997 - Los Angeles, California
2001 - Tulsa, Oklahoma
2003 - Cape Town, South Africa
2005 - New York, NY
2007 - Melbourne, Australia

in Napier, the Congress took the usual form of morning lectures, afternoon tours and evening socializing. Pre-Congress programmes were organized by other Art Deco societies in Sydney Melbourne and Auckland, and Post Congress programmes in Palmerston North, Wellington and Sydney.

The Tenth World Congress will be held in Montreal, Canada in 2009.

THE CONGRESS MISSION

The Mission of the First World Congress was - *To provide a scholarly forum for the worldwide exchange and promotion of ideas and information about Art Deco.*

The goals were:

1. To promote the understanding of Art Deco as a world-wide design movement.
2. To identify sites and monuments around the world.
3. To network preservation groups.
4. To promote the conservation and preservation of inventoried sites and monuments.
5. To utilise Art Deco as an opportunity for economic development through tourism.
6. To raise the level of public awareness of Art Deco.