

APRU-SCL Virtual Conference and PhD Symposium 2020 – Report

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Funding and Registrations	2
Plenary, Keynote Presentations and Panel Discussions.....	3
Working Group Activities	4
PhD Symposium.....	6
Virtual Tours	6
Advocacy.....	8
Post-Conference Survey Results and Plans.....	9

Introduction

The APRU-SCL 2020 conference was hosted by the University of Auckland and organised by the Future Cities Research Hub at the School of Architecture and Planning. For the first time, a PhD Symposium was incorporated into the conference programme in order to allow young researchers to experience and be exposed to the valuable conversations of the APRU-SCL network.

The Conference Organising Committee comprised academics from the School of Architecture and Planning and the Future Cities Research Hub, i.e.: Associate Professor Paola Boarin (Conference Director), Emeritus Professor Errol Haarhoff, Associate Professor Manfredo Manfredini (Symposium Co-ordinator), Dr Mohsen Mohammadzadeh, and Dr Alessandro Premier (Symposium Coordinator). A technical and management team from the University's Events Services (Jan Vernon, Laura Brown, Edward Biermann and Christine McGonigal) and a team of technicians from the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries (Zane Egginton, Peter, Ross, Tracy Guo) contributed to the planning, preparation and delivery of the different conference components.

The conference was initially planned to be held in Auckland as a face-to-face event in early September 2020, but was then converted into a virtual conference, as the covid-pandemic hit globally, and moved to mid-December 2020 to allow for adequate preparation for the organising committee, for enough time to receive papers for the symposium and for enough time for working groups to recruit new members and working on preparatory activities. The shift from face-to-face to virtual not only required a new conceptualisation of the whole event, but also the

pioneering of a new virtual conference platform in order to enable attendees to participate in live panel discussions, set up one-on-one meetings with other attendees, participate in group networking and watch keynotes from presenters. This was the first experience with virtual conferences of this kind and size for the host organisation. In addition, the change in format also required the resubmission of funding applications to the UoA funding bodies.

All events were taking place during a time frame that enabled attendance from across the Pacific Rim. The summary of the event structure is as follows:

- Day 1 (14th Dec): PhD Symposium (1/2);
- Day 2 (15th Dec): PhD Symposium (2/2) + Opening Steering Committee + Advocacy + Opening Plenary & Keynote;
- Day 3 (16th Dec): Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Keynote & Panel + WG meeting;
- Day 4 (17th Dec): SDG in New Zealand and Across the Pacific Keynote & Panel + Virtual Tours + PhDs presentations;
- Day 5 (18th Dec): Closing Steering Committee + WGs Presentations + Closing Plenary

The full programme is provided as attachment to this document.

Funding and Registrations

The Conference Organising Committee is grateful to the organisations who contributed to the success of the event through providing the following funds:

- The Association of Pacific Rim Universities through the allocation of the annual Conference Fund;
- The University of Auckland through the Vice-Chancellor Strategic Development Fund;
- The Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries through the Conference and Creative Events Fund;
- The School of Architecture and Planning through the Performance-Based Research Fund.

The conference received 142 registrations and had a total of 152 attendees. 56 out of the 142 registrations (39.4%) were fully funded thanks to the funding awarded to support the event. Several categories of attendees received a fully funded registrations, with the goal of prioritising students and academics new to the APRU-SCL network.

These were:

- PhD students accepted in the Symposium (24);
- Early Career Academics and Postdocs (6);
- Academics from Developing Countries (6);
- Masters' students (4);
- Other academics new to the network who provided a substantial contribution to the conference and/or symposium (16).

Anyone paying a registration fee had access to the whole week of events (Conference and PhD Symposium), as well as digital Symposium Proceedings. Registrations cost were as follows:

- Delegates Registration (Academics, Early Career Academics, Postdocs, Professionals):
 - Early Birds Registration Fee: 185 NZ\$;

- Standard Registration Fee: 220 NZ\$;
- One Day Registration Fee: 99 NZ\$;
- PhD student (not accepted in the Symposium) and Masters' students Registration:
- Early Birds PhD and Masters' student Registration Fee: 100 NZ\$;
- Standard PhD and Masters' Student Registration Fee: 125 NZ\$.

Plenary, Keynote Presentations and Panel Discussions

The Conference Opening Plenary Session went online on Tuesday, 15th December NZ time at the University of Auckland Marae. Associate Professor Paola Boarin, as Conference Director, officially opened the conference. Michael Steedman, from the University of Auckland's office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Maori), welcomed attendees to the country and to Auckland in Te Reo Māori on behalf of the local Iwi and hapū. The Dean of the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries, Professor Diane Brand, and Professor Jennifer Dixon, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Engagement), then warmly welcomed the participants. Associate Professor Damon Salesa was the keynote speaker at the conference opening. Damon is a prizewinning scholar specializing in colonialism, empire, government, and race, with a particular interest in the Pacific Rim. Damon delivered his inspiring presentation on Political Economy and decolonization of Development in the Pacific Rim.

Day 3 of the conference on Wednesday 16th December NZ time was dedicated to the topic of "Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom". A group of Māori academics, including Professor Deidre Brown, Head of the School of Architecture and Planning, Lena Henry, Senior Lecturer at the University of Auckland, and Dr Rebecca Kiddle, Senior Lecturer at Victoria University of Wellington, warmly welcomed the participants and started the discussion and introduced the keynote speaker and panellists of the day. This was followed by a presentation by Dr Rhys Jones as keynote speaker. Dr Jones is a public health physician and a Senior Lecturer at Te Kupenga Hauora Māori (TKHM), University of Auckland. His inspiring presentation covered various issues aligned with indigenous knowledge and wisdom as the day's main theme. He argued that the historical neglect of the local indigenous knowledge in New Zealand has resulted in ethnic inequalities in health in general and indigenous health in health professional education. Following the keynote presentation, the program was followed by a webinar panel discussion in which panellists Daniel Glenn (7 Directions Architects/Planners Seattle), Dr Danièle Hromek (The University of Technology of Sydney), and Prof Davianna McGregor (University of Hawai'i), spoke about the native knowledge in shaping the environment in different socio-political contexts of the Pacific Rim. A pre-recorded message from Prof Michelle Thompson-Fawcett (University of Otago) was also offered during the panel discussion.

The fourth day of the conference on Thursday 17th December NZ Time focused on the UN SDGs and post-pandemic cities and landscapes. Bernhard Barth, UN-Habitat's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Human Settlements Officer, was the keynote speaker. He indicated the challenges and problems that cities in the Rim face, such as climate change, socio-spatial inequality, and housing affordability. He reviewed the UN programs and initiatives to support central and local governments in facing these challenges, mainly to attain UNSDGs in the post-

pandemic era. The presentation was followed by a panel discussion in which the academic and professional panellists shared their experience and perspectives in achieving UNSDGs and post-pandemic cities. The New Zealand-based panellists were Sean Audain, City Innovation Lead at the Wellington City Council, Chris Aitken, past CEO of Kāinga Ora (Housing New Zealand), and Andreas Wesener, Senior Lecturer at Lincoln University. They provided very insightful understandings of urban issues and challenges to meet the UNSDGs in the New Zealand context and the role of governments and institutions in addressing these challenges.



Working Group Activities

Eleven Working Groups participated in the 2020 conference. The WG leadership team and members, including PhD students, are included in the table below. Two new WGs were introduced at the conference, “Indigenous Knowledge and wisdom” and “Children, Youth and Environments”. The WG “Future Energy Landscapes” saw a change in the title and leadership team. The two WGs “Transitions in Urban Waterfronts” and “Urban-Rural Linkages” worked together in 2020.

Working Group Title and Leaders	TOT Members	Funded Members	Funded PhD Students
Children, Youth and Environments WG Leaders: Kate Bishop & Linda Corkery	15	1	1
Food Nutrition Security WG Leader: Robert Dyball	7	3	1
Future Energy Landscapes WG Leaders: Alessandro Premier, Ali & Amir Ghaffarianhoseini	14	1	2
Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom WG Leaders: Lena Henry & Rebecca Kiddle	17	7	2
Landscape and Human Health WG Leaders: Chun-Yen Chang & Po-Ju Chang	13	1	2
Smart Cities WG Leaders: Mohsen Mohammadzadeh & Mohammed Ali Berawi	11	3	3
Sustainable Urban Design WG Leaders: Errol Haarhoff, Paola Boarin & Manfredino Manfredini	14	3	3
Transitions in Urban Waterfronts WG Leaders: Catherine Evans, Anne Taufen & Ken Yocom	7	1	1
Urban-Rural Linkages WG Leaders: Yizhao Yang & Sara Padgett Kjaersgaard	7	0	2

Vulnerable Resilient and Climate Justice Communities WG Leader: Chingwen Cheng	17	4	5
Water and Wastewater WG Leaders: Kory Russel	13	0	2

The Working Groups are core to the SCL, but unlike previous conferences, the virtual format for the 2020 Auckland conference did not permit easy interaction between members as had been the case at the three previous conferences. For this reason, a number of pre-conference zoom meetings were held with Working Group Leaders, and they were encouraged to organize two to three zoom meetings with their Group to establish and/or advance research programs in view of the conference. A key procedural action was appointing a member of the conference committee with the task of communicating with Working Group leaders, referring expressions of interest to them, and based on the advice received, to advise potential Working Group members of outcomes.

To the best of our knowledge, all Working Groups did meet prior to the conference, some 3-4 times, although some feedback arising from the post-conference survey suggests that some groups never met before the conference. The pre-conference meetings were of special value to the new Working Groups (Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom, and Children, Youth and Environments) and to the WG under new leadership (Future Energy Landscapes), but also served to induct new members of established WGs. One Working Group session was included in the conference program, with a feedback session from each of the Working Group Leader on the final day (Friday).

PhD candidates accepted to the PhD Symposium were assigned to Working Groups relevant to their research topics, and they joined in Working Groups discussion just prior to, and during the conference. Their joining of the Working Groups at a late stage was driven by the timing of the selection process to the PhD Symposium. In hindsight, it would be better to include them at an earlier date by starting the call for proposals for the Symposium much earlier. This was not possible this year due to the rapid shift from the face-to-face to online format. The inclusion of PhD students is seen to be an important way of refreshing and building membership, and keeping them engaged on a long term is strongly encouraged.

Also encouraged is the ongoing meetings of the Working Groups to develop their research programs throughout 2021 and in order to maintain momentum through to the 2022 Hawai'i conference. Also encouraged is to facilitate ongoing meetings between the Working Group leaders, and where appropriate, to identify and supporting any new Working Groups. This last point seems to be very important and timely as some WGs showed several signs of fatigue during the members' recruitment process. Also having a supported program of publications will provide incentives for ongoing Group activities, and the proposed APRU-SCL Webinars will provide one such an opportunity.



PhD Symposium

The Symposium took place on Monday 14 and Tuesday 15 December 2020 and was entirely held online. The Symposium provided PhD students with the opportunity to present their research work related to the topics of the APRU SCL Hub and aligned with the UN SDGs. A reflection on the implications of Covid-19 pandemic on their research had to be included in the 3,000 words paper.

The organising committee received 30 papers by the due date and 24 of them were accepted by the scientific committee after a double blind peer review process. Students came from 7 different countries, 11 different institutions across the Pacific Rim and from Europe and from different backgrounds. The Symposium Scientific Committee included 26 academics from the institutions affiliated with the APRU-SCL Hub and from Universities in New Zealand. The list of academics can be found at <https://www.apru-scl-2020.org/committees/>.

Accepted PhD students had the opportunity to attend the whole conference and to join a Working Group based on their research focus and interest. Students presented their research on Day 1 and worked in groups on Day 2, supported by four facilitators. The aim of the Day 2 activity was to discuss key cross-disciplinary sustainability challenges that emerged from their individual research, to contribute towards the establishment of a wider agenda on sustainable cities and landscapes that might inform the future activities of the APRU-SCL Hub.

Students presented their findings on Day 4 during the closing conference plenary, and received feedback from conference attendees.

Proceedings of the PhD Symposium as well as each student's paper are now published on the Figshare platform hosted by the University of Auckland (<https://auckland.figshare.com/apru-scl>). Each conference paper was attributed a DOI code and the whole conference proceeding was attributed an ISBN number and DOI code. In addition, conference proceedings have been published on Research Gate and will be published on the Future Cities Research Hub website to ensure greater visibility.



Virtual Tours

The original plan of the conference included excursions to distinctive and well-preserved native ecological “sanctuaries” of New Zealand’s volcanic land; a visit to Rotorua, the cultural capital of the indigenous Māori people; a trip to an outstanding open-air sculpture park on the shores of the largest NZ harbour, Gibbs Farm; and several

tours to relevant indigenous settlements, sustainable greenfield and brownfield developments in the Auckland region. With the switch to online mode, this experiential component was substituted with the three essential virtual tours in the Auckland region. The tours were delivered with a double guidance that included a series of videos a live panel discussion and a QA session in studio with the guides, three experts with in-depth and hands-on knowledge of the selected sites. The videos were prepared with the support of a team of the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries coordinated by Manfredo Manfredini and co-produced by Zane Egginton, Tracey Gao and Mairi Gunn. They included:

- **Tour to Wynyard Quarter, Auckland, guided by Emeritus Prof John Hunt, School of Architecture and Planning, University of Auckland.** Located on Auckland's prime waterfront, the Wynyard Quarter is the largest transformational commercial and residential development in central Auckland in the last decades. The quarter is prominently and strategically located on the waterfront to the west of the current CBD. The area, previously known as the Tank Farm, was used for bulk petro-chemical storage for most of the last century until its redevelopment commencement in 2004. Its plan for sustainable redevelopment was guided by four key objectives: implementing a sensitive refoundation of the brownfield area giving prominence to both the waterfront and a land-sea urban connections, creating a landscape network that preserves the collective memory of the place, develop a number of areas with a distinctive site-specific character and introduce a wide mix of uses that includes primary public functions. The mix, beyond the preservation of the marine industry, includes sets of major urban amenities and corporate offices, residential and mixes use buildings, catering facilities, and a system of distributed open spaces conceived by both renowned New Zealand and international design professionals.
- **Tour to Te Onekiritēa / Hobsonville Point, Auckland, guided by Emeritus Prof Errol Haarhoff, School of Architecture and Planning, University of Auckland.** Hobsonville Point is a masterplanned medium-density suburb located on the Waitemata Harbour in northwest periphery of Auckland. The 167 ha site is located on a previous military airfield, the development has been done through a public-private partnership with house construction commencing in 2009, now more than half-way towards completion in 2024. The driver of its conception, primarily aimed to address the Auckland's housing crisis, was the constitution of new integrated and sustainable urban communities, as well as setting a new benchmark for urban intensification with quality and accessible architecture and urbanism. Housing is integrated with a movement network prioritising pedestrians and public transport that has created streets and pathways as inclusive social spaces. This connects the community to a 5km walking and cycling walkway, two schools, a farmers' market, restaurants and cafes, parks of various sizes. The masterplan is structured around central spine that bisect the peninsula, with a perimeter green network that includes most of its waterfront, defines an urban structure that emphasises its distinctive ecologies, topography and historical presences. Hobsonville Point is connected to central Auckland by ferry, and the 30 minute ferry trip affords good views of the city from the harbour.

- **Tour to Ōtuataua Stonefields and Watercare Coastal Walkway, Mangere, Auckland, guided by David Veart, former NZ Historic Places Trust (Heritage New Zealand) and the Department of Conservation archaeologist.** Stonefields Historic Reserve is an internationally significant heritage landscape and an important natural, archaeological and historical area, which is a taonga (treasure) for Te Wai-o-Hua tangata whenua (indigenous people of the land). The human occupation of Stonefields and the surrounding areas is dated to the 12th century, making it one of the earliest in New Zealand. This 100-hectare area is a major remnant of Auckland's 8,000 hectares of volcanic stonefields. It is dominated by two small volcanic cones that erupted about 20,000 years ago and whose scoria rock and lava bombs are still evident throughout the reserve. Volcanic stones were initially used by Māori farmers to extend the growing season for tropical crops like taro and kumara, while later they were employed to build dry stone wall fences.



Advocacy

In 2019 the APRU SCL took part in its first, strategic advocacy session. The aim of this session was to build a greater understanding of what capabilities the current SCL Steering Committee and working Group leaders had for Advocacy, and the possible networks the SCL Hub could leverage off to develop new strategies. The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the planned roll-out of key messages for the hub in 2020. However, the pandemic also provided an opportunity to reflect on the potential of advocacy during this period of disruption.

The online format of the 2020 conference hosted by the University of Auckland allowed for an increase in participation numbers and a broadening of the participant base to include a large segment of PhD students. Advocacy co-chairs Sara Padgett Kjaersgaard (UNSW Sydney) and Adam DeHeer (Leapfrog Design) identified an opportunity to survey the conference participants and determine if the feedback we received in 2020 was similar or different to what the workshop yielded in 2019.

The 34 respondents to the survey affirmed that, even in its infancy stage (four-years), the APRU SCL Hub does have a voice. However what our key messages are for the 2021-2022 period were not clearly explained. There was an overwhelming desire to affect changes in policy and behaviours through the dissemination of knowledge within the hub. In reference to resources to support our advocacy work, both an improved sustainable financial model and the development of digital storytelling and narrative content were identified as important mechanisms

to continue to move our advocacy work forward. Importantly, people and ecosystems impacted by social and environmental injustice stood out as the main priority for the Hubs' advocacy work.



Post-Conference Survey Results and Plans

A post-conference survey was offered to registered participants (142) at the end of the event week and was kept open until 30th January 2021. The survey explored several areas of the Conference and PhD Symposium organisation and delivery and 57 people responded to the survey (40.1%). 47.4% of respondents were PhDs involved in the Symposium, while the remaining 52.5 were academics involved in the Working Groups. Nine out of the eleven WGs were represented in the survey (the two not represented were “Food and Nutrition Security” and “Water and Wastewater”).

The PhD Symposium received an overwhelmingly positive feedback from the students who mostly valued the opportunities to share their views and ideas with their peers from across the Pacific Rim and learn about different practices and perspectives, the feedback received from the reviewers and the moderators as well as the group roundtables where students were grouped by topics. PhD students enjoyed the conversations that happened within the WGs they were allocated into, especially during the pre-conference preparatory meetings. Students also highlighted the need of more time for conversations and roundtables.

Feedback from all conference attendees (including PhD students) demonstrated a high level of appreciation towards the new topic on Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom introduced at the 2020 conference and the related opening plenary presentation as well as the keynote and panellists on the Wednesday. Very positive comments were also given in regard to the overall presentations, the efficient conference organisation, the virtual conference platform and the live support available to attendees at any time during and beyond the conference. On the other side, attendees missed the face-to-face interaction that is typical of the APRU-SCL annual conference and the virtual social events/platforms were not very well attended overall. Just over 11% of respondents stated they never met prior to the conference to work on preparatory activities, while 16.7% met once, 55.6% met twice and 16.7% met three times or more ahead of the event. This was in general enough time to achieve relevant results within WGs by 50% of respondents, while the other 50% said they would have welcomed more time (44.4%) or that the time available was definitely not enough (5.6%). Overall, the Conference and PhD Symposium were well received by attendees. If given the opportunity, 91.7% of respondents would like to

continue/advance the conversations/work with the members of their WG in 2021 and 75% would be interested in joining the APRU-SCL Conference in Hawai'i in person in 2022.

After the event, the Conference Organising Team has worked to publish the proceedings from the Symposium (see [PhD Symposium](#) section). Virtual tours will be made available on the Future Cities Research Hub website. The team is also working on preparing a book proposal presenting and discussing the outcomes of the WGs and an expanded contribution from the PhD student who received the best paper award. More information will be circulated soon.