



APRU SCL Participants photo, 2019, Heather Tietz.

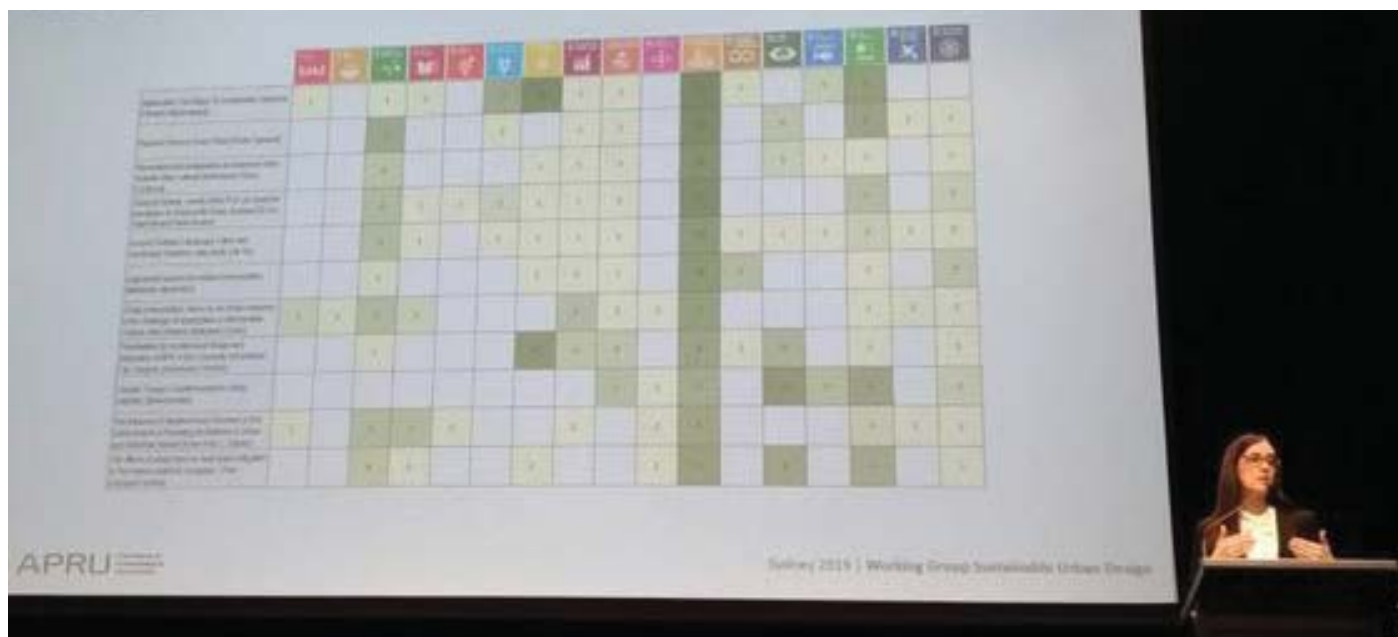
APRU Sustainable Cities and Landscapes Hub 2019 Conference Report

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

The third 2019 Association of Pacific Rim Universities – Sustainable Cities and Landscapes Conference was hosted by UNSW between August 29th and September 1st. The conference was organized by Professor Linda Corkery, Sara Padgett Kjaersgaard, and Catherine Evans, and supported by the UNSW International Affairs.

The conference retained its unique format, with delegates contributing to thematically organized working groups who collaborate throughout the conference to develop an agenda for ongoing research output. This year working groups advanced their research studies and agendas to identify specific actions including research papers, book chapters, and projects.

In response to feedback from the previous two conferences and further discussions within the SCL Hub Steering Committee, significant innovations to the conference were introduced in 2019. The main concerns were to ensure ongoing and optimal impact and engagement and to establish a platform for strategic direction for the SCL Hub. The changes for 2019 included a public opening event, a student design ideas competition, a strategic advocacy workshop, a planning session for the next two conferences and the introduction of a modest registration fee.



Mapping SDG's 2030 across the research papers presented in the Sustainable Urban Design Group. 2019, Paola Boarin.

Conference Highlights

- In 2019, seventy-eight participants from fourteen countries and twenty-four universities attended the APRU SCL conference.
- Nanjing University joined the APRU SCL network in 2019.
- A third of the conference participants were students and included PhD, Masters and undergraduate students.
- The working groups experienced approximately 60% new participation.
- Special sessions were scheduled to allow time to focus on hub-wide concerns, such as conference organisation and support, book production, and advocacy.
- The conference dinner cruise on Sydney Harbour was spectacular and relaxing evening.

Working Groups

In 2019, eleven working groups were convened at the conference. One of these is new group, focused on Food and Nutrition Security. Three working groups, Infrastructural Ecologies, Urban Biodiversity and Urban-Rural Linkages, united as one to strengthen the discussions and potential collaborations.

1. Sustainable urban design
2. Vulnerable communities
3. Food and Nutrition Security
4. Transitions in urban waterfronts
5. Landscape and human health
6. Urban Renewable Energy
7. Infrastructural Ecologies
8. Smart Cities
9. Urban Biodiversity
10. Water and Wastewater



Waverton Peninsula foreshore, excursion site for Transitions in Urban Waterfronts Working Group, 2019, Catherine Evans.

Six working group sessions were scheduled across the two days. Back-to-back scheduling of four of these allowed working groups to engage in tours to project sites of interest around Sydney and/or extended workshop sessions.

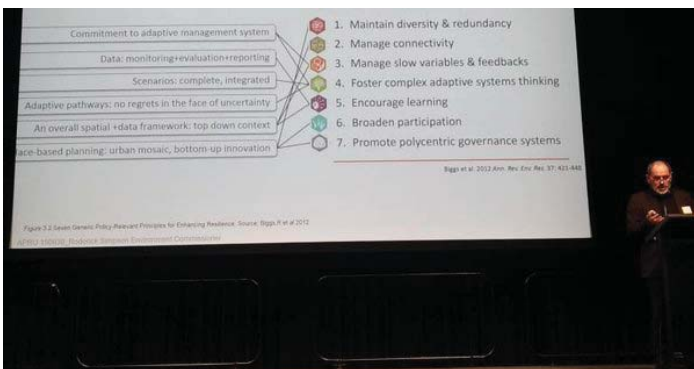


Urban-Rural linkages, Infrastructural Ecologies and Urban Biodiversity working group in action, 2019, Sara Padgett Kjaersgaard.

Plenary Sessions

The conference opened with a series of official welcomes from significant leaders, including Auntie Maxine Ryan who welcomed delegates to Country. These official welcomes were followed by two plenaries which introduced delegates to social, environmental and planning issues in Sydney. Emeritus Professor Heather Goodall spoke to Sydney’s transnational social and environmental history. Environment Commissioner for the Greater Sydney Commission Roderick Simpson spoke about current plans for conceptual reshaping of metropolitan Sydney into three cities, largely based on their distinctive landscape characteristics.

The subsequent three plenary sessions addressed opportunities for research partnership and engagement from three perspectives. Jacinta McCann, Global Design Advisor at AECOM, spoke about engaging with practice-based research. A panel moderated by Sara Padgett Kjaersgaard discussed Yuwaya Ngarra-li, a community-led partnership between the Dharriwaa Elders Group and various groups at UNSW. The final panel moderated by Catherine Evans featured university administrators, research managers and academics who discussed strategies for building international research links. In what has become a tradition for the SCL Hub, the final plenary session included an overview of the 2020 Conference and reports from the Steering Committee and Working Group leaders.



Plenary speaker Rod Simpson, Greater Sydney Commission. 2019, APRU SCL.

Great analysis from Rod Simpson from @gcsydney on relevance of socio-ecological systems and wicked problems thinking to change Sydney’s development futures.

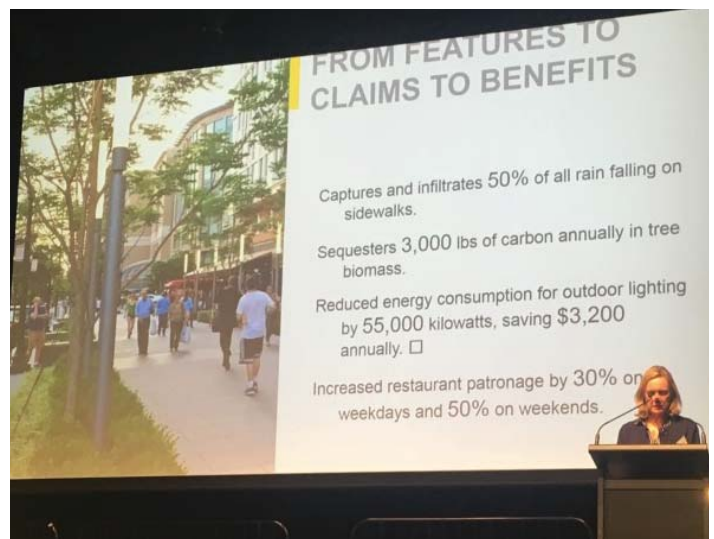
August 2019, Frederico Davila.



Future cities need to commit to adaptability and evidence-based decision making supported by data monitoring in order to engage with multiple stakeholder’s needs.

Rod Simpson.

August 2019, Paola Boarin.



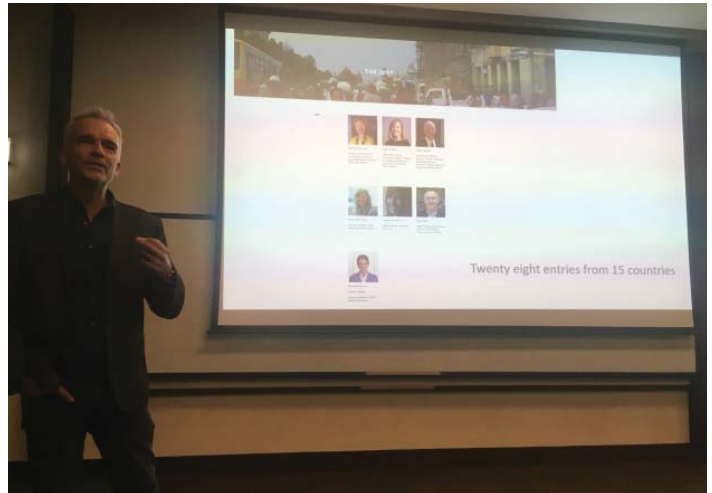
Plenary speaker Jacinta McCann, AECOM. 2019, APRU SCL.

Public Event

A public opening event, held on the evening before the opening session of the conference, featured Brett Moore, Chief, Shelter and Settlements, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as the guest speaker. Brett spoke about the opportunities for planners and designers to engage with the complex challenges refugees experience, particularly in relation to the concepts and delivery of urban development. Brett Moore's presentation was followed by a public cocktail reception.

Some remarkable statistics coming through from Brett Moore @Refugees. 75% refugees live in non-camp settings, 54% live in urban areas, 37,000 ppl forcibly displaced every day.

Brett Moore.
August 2019, APRU SCL. 



Professor David Sanderson announcing winners of student @UNHCR 'Out of Camps' competition. 2019, Sara Padgett Kjaersgaard.

Student Participation

One third of delegates in 2019 were students who engaged directly in the conference through participation in the working groups. We note that this reflects strong support from academic staff and their institutions. To encourage and sustain student engagement, a PhD Symposium will be introduced at 2020 APRU SCL Conference in Auckland.

Student engagement in this year's conference was also encouraged through the integration of a global student design ideas competition titled 'Cities and Refugees.' The competition was jointly hosted with the Rapid Urbanisation Grand Challenge at UNSW (Sydney), the Australian Red Cross, UNHCR, ARUP International Development, and APRU.

Twenty-eight entries were received from fifteen different economies. The three competition winners and three honourable mentions were announced at the public event following Brett Moore's presentation.

*The economic facts are clear,
the research shows hosting
refugees is an economic net
benefit.*

Brett Moore.
August 2019, APRU SCL. 

Publications

Significant progress was made for the Sustainable Cities and Landscapes Handbook to be published by Routledge and edited by SCL members Anne Taufen (University of Washington) and Yizhao Yang (University of Oregon). The scope of the book has expanded to eight sections with 6-8 chapters each. Publication is scheduled for 2021.

Strategic Advocacy Workshop

A half-day strategic advocacy workshop for the APRU SCL Hub’s Steering Committee was facilitated by Tim Arnold, CEO of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. A key outcome of the workshop is the establishment of an SCL Hub Advocacy Committee, which will meet quarterly with Adam DeHeer and Sara Padgett Kjaersgaard as co-chairs.



Strategic Advocacy Workshop, 2019, Sara Padgett Kjaersgaard.

Conference Planning Workshop

A meeting with representatives from the APRU Secretariat, the SCL Hub and conference organisers past, present and future provided an opportunity to review and discuss conference aims, logistics and support for the next two scheduled conferences. The workshop took place on Friday evening over a working dinner in the UNSW Staff Lounge. The discussion covered finances, conference structure, best approaches for student involvement and processes for working groups.

How do we influence the public imagination to challenge the orthodoxies?

Linda Corkery.

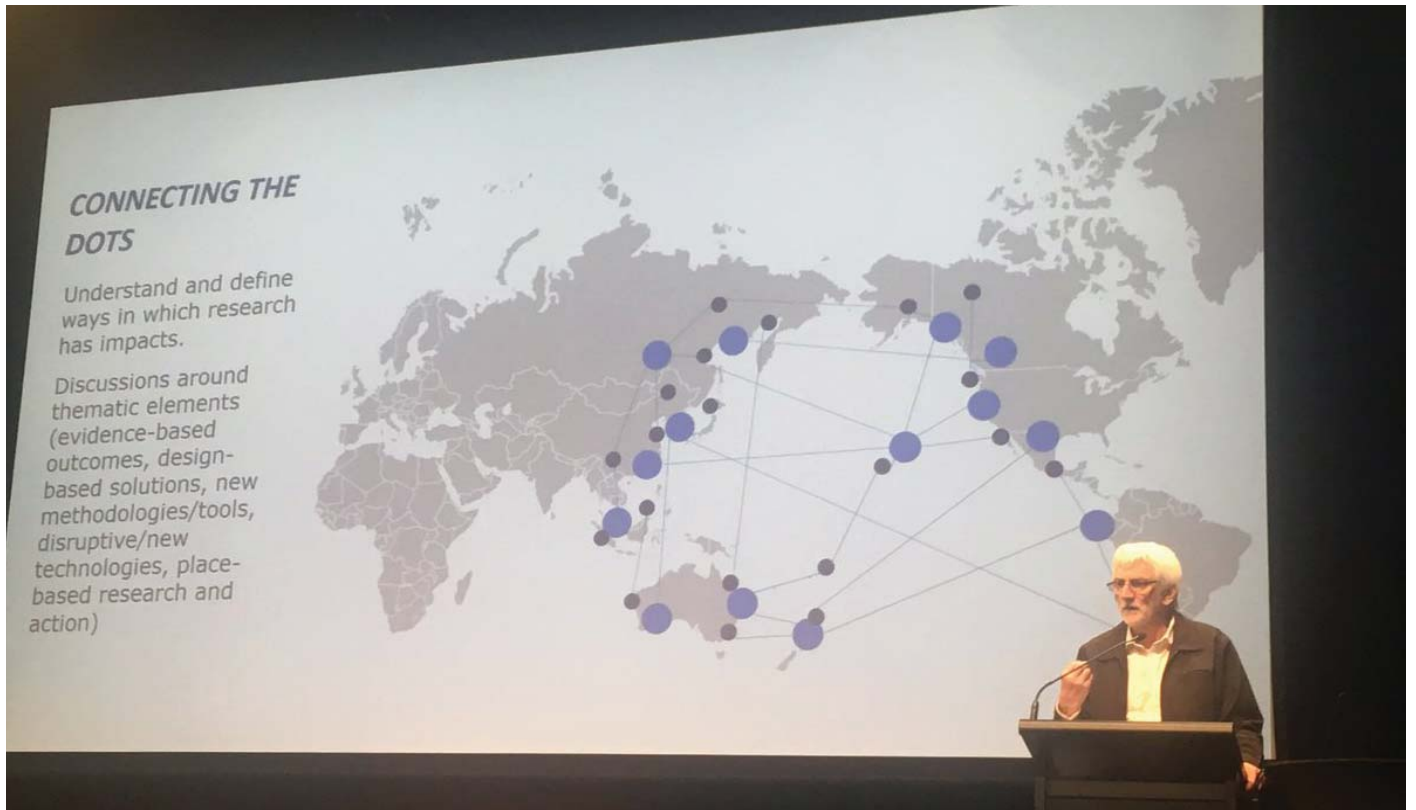
August 2019, APRU SCL.



Social Engagement

Social events included the public lecture and cocktail reception, walking tours of key examples of sustainable landscapes in Sydney and a Sydney Harbour Cruise for the Conference Dinner.

53 unique pieces of content were shared across various social media platforms which resulted in 344 individual levels of engagement with this content.



Errol Haarhoff, Connecting the Dots. 2019, APRU SCL.