



**Frontiers of
Planning**

**ISOCARP
Congress
2013**

**BRISBANE
Australia
1-4 October**

PRESS RELEASE

The 2013 World Congress of the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) was co-hosted with the City of Brisbane, a leading city in the Asia Pacific Region, and the Planning Institute of Australia. The exciting and fast-paced 49th Congress took place from October 1 to 4 and attracted about 200 experts from 45 countries. On the first day of the Congress keynote addresses were given by Vanessa Watson, who provided spirited comments on *African Cities for Sale - Smart, Eco or just Profitable?* and Amos Brandeis, who gave thoughtful comments on *Planning for people and with them - Practical lessons from global experience*. The first day also included a general introduction of the congress themes by General Rapporteur Jeffrey Featherstone and his team followed by a presentation by the Young Planning Professionals of several exciting design concepts for Brisbane and its waterfront. ISOCARP Vice President Piotr Lorens provided oversight for the YPP work. This was followed by technical tours of vibrant Brisbane and the surrounding region, some by foot, some by bicycle, and others by bus.

The second day showcased state-of-the-art planning systems from around the world and was jointly sponsored by PIA and ISOCARP. Leading global experts gave thought-provoking presentations on four themes: *Contemporary Australian and International Planning Showcase; Planning for Natural Hazards; Urban Design; and Urban Futures*. A concluding panel led by ISOCARP President Milica Bajic-Brkovic offered an interactive discussion and debate on planning systems - similarities and differences, local or universal, and lessons to be learned.

The third and fourth days were devoted to the congress theme: *What is effective planning practice at the global frontiers, whether planning for the local community, or mature metro or mega city, or vast urbanizing region?* The congress offered five concurrent tracks of papers that covered five topics set forth in the Call for Papers:

- *Migration as the new face of change*
- *Valuing what already exists*
- *Community and Stakeholder Engagement*
- *International Planners Exchange*
- *Forum on Planning Education: Are we doing it right?*

More than 100 speakers gave excellent presentations covering an outstanding array of papers. Many of the papers were peer-reviewed by ISOCARP and these papers were recognized in the congress program as having achieved this status.

The five tracks were overseen by a ten-member congress team. Papers in the first track addressed the issue of migration and how seismic demographic changes have created new urban challenges. This track was co-chaired by Amos Brandeis of Israel and Njeri Cerere from Kenya. Track 2 papers described how planners are increasingly being called upon manage change while protecting what is valuable, valued, culturally precious and essential to life. It was co-chaired by Silja Tillner of Austria and Belinda Yuen from Singapore. Papers in the third track addressed the complicated question of whether we are fully

engaging the important stakeholders in our communities through effective engagement techniques and programs. This track was co-chaired by Warren Batts of Australia and Pietro Elisei of Italy/Romania.

Track 4 papers comprised the International Planners Exchange, which addressed multiple topics of city and regional planning and included best practice cases, planning methods and strategies. This track was co-chaired by Agatino Rizzo of New Zealand, Stanley Yip from Hong Kong in China, and Sinisa Trkulja of Serbia. Finally, Track 5 covered planning education and sought to determine whether planning education and certification programs needed to be retooled. It was co-chaired by Saskia Spijkerman of The Netherlands and Griet Geerinck from Belgium.

At the closing plenary session the General Rapporteur and Congress Team presented their findings, which accompany this press release in PowerPoint format. As noted by GR Featherstone, the congress topics were timely; the presentations were excellent; sessions were well attended and congress participants were engaged; and the interactive sessions were popular. It was clear from the presentations that urban issues are becoming more challenging and that planning matters a great deal!

Congress team members outlined their findings according to three categories: What are the challenges? What did we learn? What's needed in the future? Just a few main points are noted. In Track 1 it was highlighted that migration is a global trend that affects all of us and a totally interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach is needed to address it. In Track 2 we learned that it is important to find a balance between conservation and construction, to seek reasonable remodeling methods, and to create a dynamic environment full of human temperament. Track 3 authors stressed the importance of public engagement at the forefront of planning and outlined numerous tools, both in-person and digital to facilitate successful community engagement processes. In Track 4 we learned many lessons, including the critical importance for cities to become more resilient to change and uncertainty. Finally, in Track 5 authors stressed the need to bridge theory and practice by implementing experimental learning and involving multiple stakeholders in better defining the planning discipline.

The 50th ISOCARP Congress will be held in Gdynia, Poland, from 23-26 September 2014.

Jeffrey Featherstone
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Knowledge for better Cities

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