

# YPConnect10 - 19th and 20th April 2010

Michelle Ruske \*

In April I had the opportunity to attend this year's international planning conference and, more specifically, the newly introduced Young Planner's event, this year termed 'YP Connect 10'. Having just begun my undergraduate degree, this was an excellent opportunity to begin networking and gain a more detailed understanding of the various positions in which young Australasian planners are currently active. The event, which was a sub-set of the 'Planning Pathways to the Future' Conference, was dedicatedly organised by many people (including, notably, Clare Sargeant), who can be pleased with the success of this year's conference.

YP Connect 10 kicked off in fast-paced fashion with a 'planner-style' Amazing Race around the Central City of Christchurch. Groups of young planners were sent racing around the city to stand in fountains, create human statues, and perform other such shenanigans. This activity helped to familiarise visitors with the city centre of Christchurch, and some fabulous photos were taken in the process.

Many more young planners had arrived by evening and all present enjoyed a night riding the gondola, mingling with counterparts and getting to know one another.

The day of presentations began the following morning at the Christchurch Convention Centre. Charmaine Moldrich and Christine Platt were the first to speak.

Charmaine spoke on behalf of the Outdoor Media Association. Focusing her talk on the contribution that outdoor advertising is making to vibrant cities, Charmaine highlighted the history of outdoor advertising up to the current technological advancements in advertising around the globe, and closed by suggesting that legislation that will allow individual signs to be assessed on their merits and not against strict planning effects needs to be developed. Interestingly, it was remarked during the daily discussion that very few, if any, of the young planners in attendance had experienced any education in incorporating outdoor advertising effectively into urban planning. This represents a possible gap in Australasian planning education.

Christine, from the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP), began by providing some frightening statistics on the main issues that she feels face the globe today – namely rapid urbanisation, urbanisation of poverty and climate change. She listed six areas where CAP believes new planning can help to make a difference, such as reducing the vulnerability of cities to natural disasters and creating environmentally-friendly cities. For a more in-depth analysis of the Re-inventing Planning paper and the principles this sets out for New Urban Planning go to [www.commonwealth-planners.org](http://www.commonwealth-planners.org). Lastly, of great importance to Young Planners in Christine's presentation, was that the CAP is currently establishing a Young Planners network which they plan to launch in October 2010. So keep a close watch on this exciting

development.

The vibrant and colourful Mark Hadlow was the next speaker, who ensured that by the end of his speech all young planners were alert and ready for the day ahead.

Local planning legend Bob Batty was the next key note speaker, presenting the topic of 'Nothing is Constant in our Environment except Change (...or is it?)'. Highlighting that we still have 'architecture of power', Bob's presentation covered a history of planning. He finished by illustrating where he believes planning needs to go in the future.

Frank Boffa spoke on managing landscape change and landscape assessment. He used effective examples of Kaiwera Downs wind farm and Rodney Power Station to show how the landscape assessment process works.

After a break for lunch, Shaw Mead spoke to the young planners about the benefits of artificial sea reefs. This was an interesting presentation, in which he used various case studies that he has worked on to highlight the way artificial sea reefs are viable coastal protection solutions.

Greg Pollock, Director of Planning at Beca, spoke about planning and advancing one's planning career. As an undergraduate his advice was invaluable for the future and he highlighted key characteristics that he, along with others in the industry, deem to be necessary elements of a planner.

Ian Sinclair spoke of the importance and benefits of networking to further one's career and encouraged everyone present to start networking at the conference.

The conference finished off with an interactive workshop, debating whether the New Zealand or Australian planning system was better.

All in all, the 2010 Young Planners Conference was an enjoyable and valuable experience for all those present. For more details one can access the key note speaker's PowerPoint presentations at [http://www.planning.org.nz/Category?Action=View&Category\\_id=354](http://www.planning.org.nz/Category?Action=View&Category_id=354). I look forward to many more conferences to come and would strongly encourage other young planners to attend the 2011 'Winds of Change' conference in Wellington.

*\* Michelle Ruske is in her 1st year studying towards a Bachelor of Environmental Management and Planning.*