



## CAUTHE Conference – Lincoln University 2013

David SIMMONS<sup>1</sup>, Emma STEWART<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Professor of Tourism/Director of Research Strategy and Development, Faculty of Environment Society and Design, Lincoln University, New Zealand*

<sup>2</sup>*Senior Lecturer in Tourism and Parks, Faculty of Environment Society and Design, Lincoln University, New Zealand*

The Council for Australasian University Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE) is an incorporated association, established in Sydney in 1992. In February 2013 Lincoln University was privileged to host the 23<sup>rd</sup> CAUTHE conference, the first CAUTHE conference to be hosted outside of Australia. The theme of the Lincoln conference was tourism and hospitality and global change. A total of 194 delegates attended the conference from 17 countries. There were 82 delegates from Australia, 76 from New Zealand, 14 from the UK, three each from Thailand, South Africa and Hong Kong, two each from Norway, Sweden and Switzerland and one each from the USA, Germany, France, Slovenia, Japan, Malta and Malaysia.

The significant and disruptive earthquakes centred on Christchurch that occurred post formal bidding and throughout the 18 months leading up to the conference meant the event was organised in three venues (the first significantly destroyed, and the second subsequently deemed unsafe). Consequently, the quakes forced a refocus on a 'campus based' event, which created a significant benefit. This was confirmed by the post-evaluation exercise. The earthquakes themselves, the role of tourism and tourists in risk and resilience and the engagement of the tourism sector in the city's recovery became a major conference theme. These themes were augmented by an outstanding keynote speech from Tim Hunter the CEO of the Regional Travel Organisation to open the conference, a series of research papers presented as part of the scientific programme and a special interest group on risk and resilience

and a conference tour of the CBD 'red zone'. The conference included two additional keynote addresses from Regina Scheyvens and John Urry, via video link.

In total, 72 Full Papers and 105 Working Papers were submitted for review, with 145 of these papers subsequently presented at CAUTHE 2013 (43 Full Papers and 102 Working Papers). The scientific committee was ably supported by a team of theme leaders and reviewers. The conference saw the trialling of a mid-career workshop initiated by CAUTHE fellows. This was well received and has been advocated as a bi-annual event. A successful PhD/Early Career workshop, themed around research methods was also well structured and well received. The Australasian team won the Great Debate; and the poster-based 'Ideas Factory' tried new ways to achieve greater interaction between presenters and the audience. Industry engagement was captured through an afternoon series of industry focussed workshops on issues related to water, the Chinese market and the digital age.

The conference enjoyed wide acclaim from participants and generated strong local and national media coverage. Both formal and informal commentary indicates this was at the top end of conference satisfaction within CAUTHE's 20 year history. Key elements for success were a campus based event - creating something of a 'village atmosphere', reasonable pricing, a well-balanced programme of strong keynotes, streamed papers, infusion of local culture, mix of social events and fieldtrips. This was all underpinned by a tight and well focussed

local organising committee and effective, efficient Professional Conference Organiser (Composition Ltd).

The tenacity of the CAUTHE executive and conference organisers in bringing the conference to Christchurch to both support recovery and understand better these aspects of tourism is acknowledged.