



engage



the newsletter of the International Conference on Engaging Communities

Day 1: Sunday 14 August 2005

ICEC welcomes 1900 delegates to landmark conference

It is our great pleasure to welcome all delegates to Brisbane, Queensland for the International Conference on Engaging Communities (ICEC).

The conference is an initiative of the Queensland Government and the United Nations.

The government is delighted that the United Nations has acknowledged Queensland's strong commitment to community engagement by staging this international conference in Brisbane.

The Queensland Government fully supports the desire of the United Nations for people to have the right to actively participate in the democratic process.

During the next three days, around 1900 delegates from more than 30 countries will participate in this significant conference in a spirit of learning and engaging.

Delegates will hear from many of the leading authorities on community engagement, and will hopefully return home armed with fresh insights into new or improved methods to more effectively engage with their communities.



During this conference, over 100 sessions and 18 major panels will focus international interest on 12 key community engagement themes. There will also be seven parallel United Nations sessions and workshops, covering virtually every conceivable aspect of community engagement.

We wish to acknowledge the generous support of the conference partners and sponsors, whose support and assistance has made this future-changing event possible.

Enjoy the conference and again, welcome to Queensland – the Smart State.

Michael Hogan
Steering Committee Co-Chairman
Assistant Director-General
Department of Communities

Neil Doyle
Steering Committee Co-Chairman
General Manager,
Strategic Policy and Development
Department of Main Roads ■

Looking ahead

A rich line-up marks the opening of the International Conference on Engaging Communities.

Registrations commence at noon and formal proceedings start mid-afternoon with the official opening chaired by Linda Apelt, Director General, Queensland Department of Communities.

After Indigenous Elders welcome delegates to the country, four key United Nations and Queensland Government dignitaries will address delegates to set the tone and context for the conference.

This afternoon, delegates will enjoy a performance by the Wagga Dance company. A panel of world leaders will then put democracy under the spotlight in Democracy Plus, a global discussion facilitated by Australian journalist Maxine McKew.

A celebration of global cultures will follow in the Exhibition Hall, where delegates will be led by the Phoenix Fire Tribe (pictured above) to the accompaniment of drumming. The Fire Tribe will open the informal celebration with a compelling performance of fire juggling.

Enjoy your evening. In the morning the first full day of the conference commences with welcoming addresses, an Indigenous performance, and a keynote address by Mary Robinson, Executive Director, Realising Rights: Ethical Globalisation Initiative. ■



Peter Beattie, Premier and Treasurer of Queensland, welcomed international delegates to Brisbane for the International Conference on Engaging Communities. "This is the first conference of its type and it presents an unparalleled opportunity for community engagement and development practitioners to interact with leading international thinkers." ■



www.engagingcommunities2005.org



Queensland
Government

Finest moment for Brisbane says UN

The people of Queensland should be proud of the Engaging Communities conference being held in Brisbane, UN senior delegate Adil Khan said.

Mr Khan (right), from the Division of Public Administration and Development Management in the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, is based in New York and worked in Queensland.

"This indeed is one of the finest moments for Queensland. The people of Queensland, and indeed of Brisbane, ought to be very proud of this very noble initiative," he said.

"I have known Brisbane for quite sometime now and before I started my career in the UN in 1997 (first in Myanmar-Burma, then in Sri Lanka and now in New York), I spent a great deal of time in Brisbane, as a student and then as an academic. Eventually, I also became an Australian citizen."

He said he first became aware of community engagement policies in Queensland when he delivered a seminar in 2002 at University of Queensland on the deficits of democracy.

"It is against this backdrop that I, in my UQ seminar, argued for a case for citizen engagement in public policies. I was convinced that if policy processes are not right, its outcomes would also not be right."

Mr Khan said he subsequently issued an invitation to the Queensland Government to join with the United Nations and host a conference on community engagement after Queensland's community engagement programs were outlined at the UNDESA meeting in Brazil in 2003.

"We have come a long way since. More than 1900 participants from all over the world have by now registered to participate at the conference, underscoring the importance and the relevance of the topic."



"The unique feature of this conference is that we have gathered together people of all shades, colour and background – academics, politicians, private sector, government officials and civil society organisations. Then we have people from various UN organisations, the World Bank and indeed, people of several nationalities, races and religions."

Advocacy and increased dialogue are the keys to improving the understanding of community engagement, Mr Khan said from New York last week.

"Community engagement is not easily understood, but in Brisbane we are making a start," he said.

"We have to be consistently promoting the concept through advocacy and dialoguing, through more seminars and workshops, through social mobilisation both within countries as well as internationally and through more research and training."

Mr Khan, the chief of the Socio-Economic Governance and Management Branch within the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, said the Brisbane conference paved the way for further developments in community engagement.

"This conference will give us some concrete suggestions as to where we go from here, but more importantly, build global partnerships and networks so that we carry on with the work we have initiated in Brisbane." ■

Community on DVD

Digital stories is a continuing exhibit of community engagement projects on DVD based around the conference themes during the conference.

Watch links being built, communities renewed and individuals empowered in these 19 stories showing in the VIP concourse on the Mezzanine level, from Monday at 10am:

1. Sunfest 2004
2. Community Consultation For An Even Better Great Walks
3. Community Renewal Making Places
4. Building 1 & 3
5. Linking People Outback
6. Below the Line
7. No Dole for Us
8. Profile of Young People in Brisbane 2005
9. The Queensland Housing Commission – Changing people's lives
10. Cunnamulla Crossroads
11. Backthenrightnowlateron
12. Breaking the Unemployment Cycle – WIN Television series 2004
13. Aim High – From little things Big things grow
14. Places for People – The Brisbane Place Project
15. Shine Project
16. Community Tree Planting DVD
17. I am me
18. Community Renewal Multi-Arts Multi-Skills
19. Stand with Us

The stories are looped on a DVD, with the total loop lasting for three hours and 20 minutes. Synopsis and producer details for each story can be found on the board dividing the lounge spaces.

Special screenings of individual stories will be shown on Monday and Wednesday at lunchtime. ■



Testing democracy

Democracy is under the spotlight in this evening's Democracy Plus panel when Australian journalist Maxine McKew guides invited international panellists through a debate on the state of the democratic process.



Taking part in this debate are national leaders from South Africa, Timor-Leste, the United States, Bangladesh, Australia and senior representatives from the United Nations.

Democracy panellists include The Honourable Ms Geraldine Fraser Moleketi, Minister of Public Service and Administration from the Republic of South Africa and Dr Jose Ramos Horta (below), now Foreign Minister in Timor-Leste.



They will join Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General on Economic Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Professor Rehman Sobhan, chair of the Centre for Policy Dialogue in Bangladesh and Mary Robinson, the President of Ireland from 1990 to 1997 and a former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Mary Robinson is now Executive Director of the Realising Rights: Ethical Globalisation Initiative.

From Australia, the Democracy First panellists include Queensland Premier and Treasurer, Peter Beattie, the Director of the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, Noel Pearson and Professor

Glynn Davis, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne.

The Democracy Plus panel will explore the challenges faced by democracies around the world and will be asked to explore a range of evolving scenarios during the debate.

It will set the scene for the four days of the conference. ■

Inside e-Democracy

Professor Stephen Coleman from the Oxford Internet Institute and Guido Bertucci (pictured) from the United Nations are panellists on e-Democracy.



The panel will introduce and explore the concept of 'The Connected Republic' developed by Cisco Systems. This will be followed by an appraisal, some cautionary notes and challenges about e-Democracy activities, including a comparative international perspective and what seems to work where. The session will conclude with an exploration of impacts, challenges and possible next steps for Australia.

Monday 4.30pm. *Session 31: Building Trust and engaging the citizen.* ■

Debating new government roles

There has been a resurgence of interest in recent years by governments to focus on terms such community development, community capacity building, and community resilience. Part of the debate has been to consider the roles government can and should play in preparing and supporting communities to more actively and capably deal with the issues, which face their particular community.

With Ministerial representation from a number of jurisdictions both Australian and internationally, this panel will provide an opportunity to examine different approaches to these issues and the challenges and opportunities in the current debate.

Monday 2.10pm. *Session 16: Engaged Government: Building Strong Communities.* ■

The engagement university

The role and function of contemporary universities is a question central to current higher education policy discussions and directions. It is also a question explicitly raised by the practices and strategies of community engagement.

This panel will draw out the key issues and processes of "engaged universities" and their relationship with research, policy and practice in various communities – from establishment to reconstruction.

Monday 4.30pm. *Session 30: The Engagement University: Universities in New Times.* ■

New engagement systems

There is wide-spread support across international development agencies, governments and civil society for enhancing government-civil society engagement although reasons for such support vary.

The purpose of this panel discussion is to provide an overview of the political, social and administrative implications of the government-civil society engagement agenda, which will set the scene for the various sessions to follow. Presenters will refer to current examples and draw attention to dilemmas inherent in the engagement agenda as systems and practice are transferred globally.

Monday 10.40am. *Session SO1 Engaged Governance: Concepts and Issues.* ■

Exploring Brisbane's history

Brisbane's history spans the early 1800s, when the city was a penal colony, to World War II when many city streets were lined with bomb shelters, to modern-day Brisbane.

Strap on comfortable walking shoes and discover the history of Brisbane.

1. Victoria Bridge

From the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, walk over the Victoria Bridge to the Conrad Treasury Casino. On this spot on January 1st 1901, Lord Lamington officially declared Australia a Federation.

2. Queen Street

Continue into the Queen Street Mall. On the left hand side is the site of Brisbane's first convict prison. Hundreds of men were flogged here, or died by hanging in a large archway.

3. MacArthur Museum

At the end of the Queen Street Mall, on the corner of Edward Street, the MacArthur Museum is on Level 8. During World War II, it was the Allied Forces' headquarters in the South-West Pacific. Open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays from 10am to 3pm.

4. St Stephen's Cathedral

From Edward Street, head south to Elizabeth Street and turn left. On the right is St Stephen's Cathedral (circa 1874) and Pugin Chapel (circa 1850). Augustus Pugin, renowned English architect, who designed London's Houses of Parliament, designed this chapel. Inside there is a shrine to Mary McKillop – Australia's first saint.

5. City Gardens Tea Room

Turn right at Creek Street, then right into Charlotte Street, then left into Edward Street and head towards the Botanic Gardens. Tucked in a corner is the City Gardens Tea Room (circa 1908),

originally built for the gardens' curator and his family.

6. Old Government House

Walk through the Queensland University of Technology to Old Government House (circa 1862). Until 1909, it was home to Brisbane's early governors. One popular governor and his wife, Lord and Lady Lamington lived here in the early 1900s, and were famous for the creation of the lamington cake.

7. Parliament House

Continue along George Street to Parliament House (circa 1868). The building's stunning French Renaissance design was the winning entry in a national competition.

8. Brisbane City Hall

Walk along George Street until Adelaide Street, turn right and continue to City Hall (circa 1930), which is regarded as one of Brisbane's most beautiful buildings. Travel up the clock tower lift for a great view. ■



Delegates travel from far and wide



Afghanistan	Myanmar
Australia	Nepal
Bangladesh	New Zealand
Brazil	Nigeria
China-Taipei	Pakistan
Cambodia	Papua New Guinea
Canada	Philippines
Cook Islands	Romania
Czech Republic	Samoa
Ethiopia	Singapore
Fiji	Solomon Islands
Fiji Islands	South Africa
Ghana	South Korea
India	Sri Lanka
Indonesia	Taiwan R.O.C.
Iran	Tajikistan
Italy	Thailand
Japan	Timor Leste
Kazakhstan	Trinidad & Tobago
Kenya	Turkmenistan
Kingdom of Cambodia	United Kingdom
Kiribati	USA
Kyrgyz Republic	Uzbekistan
Laos	Vietnam
	Zambia

Looking for directions

Volunteers wearing red vests are on hand during the conference.

The conference organisers have engaged them to direct delegates to find their destinations.

They will be positioned around the venue and will be more than happy to assist. ■



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