



**2nd WORLD URBAN PARKS CONGRESS
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA 2016
REPORT**

**Dr Digby Whyte, CEO, World Urban Parks
September 2016**

The second World Urban Parks congress was held at the President Hotel, Cape Town, in partnership with the Institute of Environment and Recreation Management of South Africa and their annual convention. It involved over 175 participants (34 from overseas) and 60 presenters, plus technical tour leaders. World Urban Parks (WUP) members comprised 26 from overseas and 18 from South Africa with 20 presenting.



Congress organisation involved the IERM Executive Committee and Secretariat with the WUP-IERM planning team comprising Prof Willie Nel (President IERM), Jean Venter (CEO IERM), Charlene Wightman (Conference Coordinator IERM), Emanuel Trueb (Vice Chair WUP) and Dr Digby Whyte (CEO WUP). The Congress was supported by the City of Cape Town (Chantal Michaels, Director City Parks) and the University of South Africa (Prof Willy Nel, Chair Environmental Sciences).

The Congress was structured with presentations on 26 and 27 September with a Gala Dinner on the night of 27 September, and technical tours, hosted by the City of Cape Town on 28 September. Six conference presenters flew on to Johannesburg on 29 September to deliver their presentations again at an International Colloquium at the University of South Africa for professionals unable to travel to the Congress.

The full PowerPoint presentations are available [here](#) as PDFs, with mainly WUP member presentations outlined briefly in this report.

On the night of 25 September, prior to the congress, IERM and WUP directors met over dinner at the Cape Town waterfront. WUP leaders attending the congress included Chair, Gil Penalosa; directors Anne Charlton and Prof Willie Nel; immediate past directors Emanuel Trueb and Daniel Boulens; Co-Chair of the Large Urban Parks Standing Committee, Dr Richard Murray; Co-Chairs of the Advocacy and Events Working Group, Chris Hardman and Henrik Waldenstrom; the Executive Director of the Eppley Institute and World Parks Academy Steve Wolter, and WUP CEO Dr Digby Whyte.

The Congress was opened by Prof Willie Nel, President IERM, Gil Penalosa, Chair WUP, and a City of Cape Town Counsellor on behalf of the Mayor.



Gil Penalosa (WUP and 8-80 Cities, Canada) presented the morning keynote on Urban Parks creating vibrant and healthy cities for all (pictured). This included the 8-80 Cities concept of creating safe accessible communities for 8 and 80 year old citizens, equitable access for low income groups, adequate parkland and walking-biking circulation in the face of population growth, and adding 'spice' to parks so they are well used.

Ten morning sessions included the impact of community advocacy and development pressure on social landscape by Michelle Reid (Calgary Parks, Canada), revitalisation of Queanbeyan CBD through careful design of streetscapes and greenspace by Tim Geyer (Queanbeyan Parks, Australia) pictured, Canadian parks for all by Anne Charlton (Calgary Parks, Canada) pictured, and Mofolo Park, Soweto, a community needs assessment approach, by Desiree Ibouanga (University of South Africa).



Afternoon sessions included large urban parks – past, present, and future, and their value to cities (pictured), by Dr Richard Murray (Ekoparken Association, Sweden) and Henrik Waldenstrom (WWF, Sweden), Social and health benefits of parks (pictured) by Emmanuel Maphorogo (Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo, South Africa); and purchasing playgrounds as a total service, including maintenance, (pictured) by Pekka Engblom (Helsinki Parks, Finland).





The final session was transforming 200 of the Republic of Tatarstan's parks and riverfront by Natalia Fishman (Tatarstan Institute for Social and Urban Development, Russia) pictured. For a short video extract click [here](#).



A planned pre-congress meeting of WUP members (pictured) was integrated into the late afternoon with Gil Penalosa and Dr Digby Whyte outlining the new WUP portfolios of Advocacy, Membership, Alliances and Governance and associated new committees and activities.



In the evening the IERM held a welcome cocktail evening.

On 27 September the morning keynote was on the making of the London national park city, by Judy Ling Wong (Chair of the Black Environment Network and an LNPC steering committee member, UK). This included five film clips <http://www.nationalparkcity.london/videos> promoting the concept of recognising the national park qualities of London’s combined public and private green and blue space for social cohesion, health, equity and education. The concept has the support of the London Mayor and over 100 municipal councillors to date.

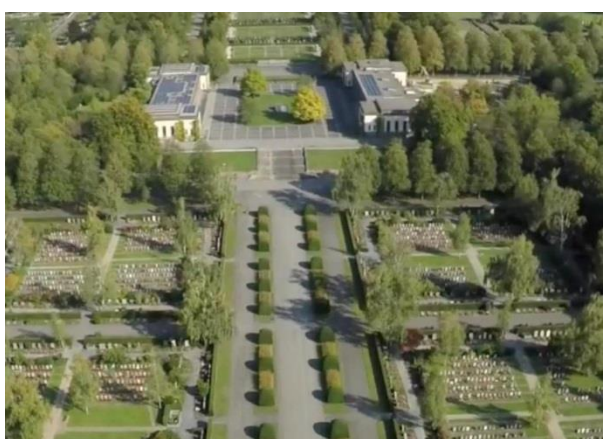
The second address was on the development and future of WUP by Dr Digby Whyte (WUP, Australia) with structure pictured.

Portfolios	VC Advocacy Neil McCarthy	VC Membership Torgeir Sørensen	VC Alliances Elisabeth Fournier	VC Governance Dr David Cochrane
Committees	Large Urban Parks Knowledge & Standards <i>Green Infrastructure</i> <i>Children & Nature</i> <i>Aging & Parks</i> <i>Healthy Parks Healthy People</i>	Membership	Alliances World Parks Academy	Finance & Audit
Regions		Europe Region Asia-Pacific Region Americas Region <i>Africa-Middle East Region</i>		
Working Groups	Good Practices Advocacy & Events Knowledge & Research Operational Standards Benchmarking Applied Research Think Tank	Marketing & Communications Awards Panel <i>LivCom Awards?</i> World Congress Regional Congresses World Parks Week	MOUs – IFLA, Academy <i>Sponsorship?</i> <i>Green Flag?</i>	<i>Policy</i>
Themes	Rethinking Parks, Climate Change etc.			

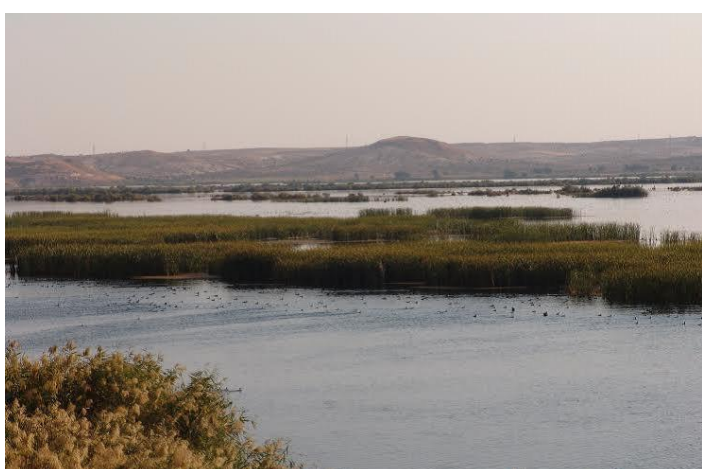
This was followed by a World Parks Academy workshop with all congress delegates, led by Steve Wolter (Eppley Institute, USA), on Contemporary Park Issues in South Africa. Here tables of participants (pictured) identified key contemporary park issues and potential solutions with added input from international participants.



Later morning sessions included the city of Lyon’s experience in the management of public green spaces since 2001 by Daniel Boulens (Lyon Green Space, France) pictured, transforming cemeteries into parks in Switzerland (pictured) by Emanuel Trueb (Basel Parks, Switzerland), land availability assessment for cemetery expansion in Johannesburg by Cebolenkosi Mhlongo (Johannesburg Parks and Zoo, South Africa); and Crystal Lagoons urban lifestyle revolution (pictured) by Alistair Sinclair (Crystal Lagoons, Chile).



In the afternoon sessions Steve Wolter presented on adapting to climate change and building urban resilience, Dr Banu Gokcek (Gaziantep Parks, Turkey) pictured, presented on the rehabilitation of the Baynespruit River ecology and water quality; and Theo Bernhardt (Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo) presented on the harvesting of *Boophone Distica* from Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve for traditional medicine.



The close of the conference presentations comprised an overview by Chris Hardman, Justin Vaughn and Libby Jude (Parks Victoria, Australia) and draft 'Congress Declarations' and 11 '[Cape Town Commitments](#)',

tested with participants, which reflected key principles and outcomes emerging over the congress, later distributed as a press release.

During the Congress, World Urban Parks committed to strongly advocating the importance protecting and developing urban parks, and to provide tools and support to members to assist with problems we face as a sector and the opportunities for innovation. Delegates were inspired to apply the key learnings from the Congress into their practice, ensuring strong engagement with citizens and equitable access to open space.

The evening Gala Dinner included a presentation by WUP CEO Dr Digby Whyte on the WUP Distinguished Individual Award nominees:

- Maria Boey Yuet Mei, Singapore
- Elisabeth Fournier, France
- Andrew Smith, Australia
- Peter Stünzi, Switzerland
- Neil McCarthy, Australia

The award was won by Neil McCarthy (pictured) for key involvement in the creation of international parks organisations and a career as a parks executive in Australia.



WORLD URBAN PARKS
DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUAL AWARD
NOMINATIONS CLOSE 15 August 2016

Neil McCarthy
CEO NE Catchment Management Authority
General Manager Parks, Parks Victoria
Vice Chair Advocacy World Urban Parks
President Elect Ipra
Founding Chair Parks Forum
Co-Founder IUPGSA
Co-creator Healthy Parks Healthy People
Australia

The dinner also featured Steve Wolter presenting the first Certified Parks Professional (CPP) certificate to an African candidate Emmanuel Maphorogo and Prof Willie Nel and Steve Wolter announcing the planned World Parks Academy and IERM CPP-South Africa professional certification.



The evening finished with African drummers, dinner and dancing.

28 September technical tours

- Company's Garden (pictured), a historic botanic-type garden started by the Dutch East India Company in 1652 that included a large vegetable garden and a pear tree planted in 1652
- Cape Town Stadium (pictured), with seating for 55,000 for sporting and concert events
- Green Point Park (pictured) that included elaborate playgrounds with security and a biodiversity showcase garden featuring 300 different indigenous plants, trees, shrubs, bulbs and groundcover species
- Nantes Park, a 17 hectare community park that included a small interpretation centre focussed on the local fight against apartheid (pictured).



- Gugulethu and Mandela Smart Parks (pictured) that are high quality parks that respond to the recreational needs of under-served communities and that promote partnerships
- Westridge Gardens, Khayelitsha Wetlands, and Valhalla Family Recreation Centre.



International Colloquium, Johannesburg

29 September saw the University of South Africa Department of Environmental Science, coordinated by Department Chair Prof Willie Nel, host a day-long International colloquium on 'People and Greenspace – A celebration of Diversity' at their Johannesburg campus. This shared six of the key Congress presentations with 85 professionals who were not able to attend the Congress.

The Colloquium was opened by Prof. Melanie Nicholau, Director of the School of Ecological and Human Sustainability and the presentations were:



Urban Parks Creating Vibrant and Healthy Cities for All by Gil Penalosa;

The Making of London National Park City by Judy Ling Wong (pictured);

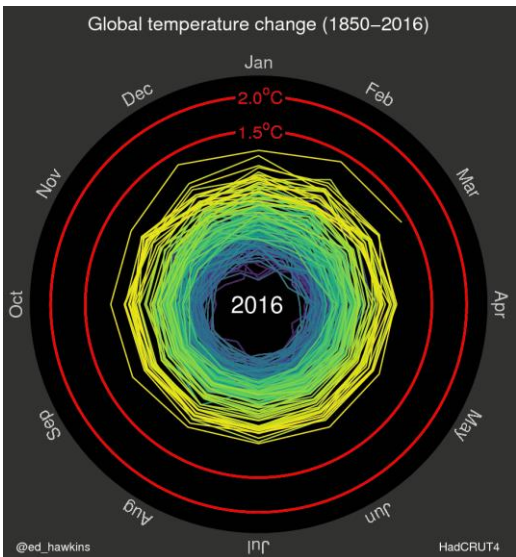
World Urban Parks Development and Future by Dr Digby Whyte;

National Policy on Sport, Leisure, Environment and Health – Key Cultural Commonalities, by Prof Lynn Jamieson (Chair Indiana University Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism Studies);

The Role of Urban Parks in Resiliency Related to Climate Change by Steve Wolter (pictured); and

Rethinking the Urban Parks Industry Curriculum Process – Institutions are Abstractions, People are the Fabric by Prof Richard Hendrick of UNISA.

Following the Colloquium speakers were hosted by Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo and UNISA on technical tours of Ekurhuleni City (O.R. Tambo Cultural Precinct and Environment Centre, pictured) and Soweto parks (Orlando West pictured).



And over the weekend, delegates embarked on field trips to explore Nelson Mandela Square (pictured), the 2.15-million-year-old Australopithecus Africanus 'Mrs Ples' cave discovery site at Sterkfontein (pictured) and the Walter Sisulu National Botanic Garden (pictured).

