

Opening Ceremony

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Image



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Lucilla Rona and Sam Finch

Monday, Opening Ceremony: the Mihi Whakatau and IIC President's Opening Remarks Live in Wellington



What a way to start the IIC Congress! Walking into the National Library of New Zealand, I was greeted by old friends, and new, in the Foyer. Gathering here was the start of a very special opening ceremony—the Mihi Whakatau—which is a form of welcome in Māori. The hosts guided us into the auditorium space where the Congress is taking place and performed the ceremony mostly in the Māori language. It was an incredible experience in person. For the more than 45 attendees joining us live online from places such as Australia, Canada, Croatia, England, India, Kenya, Peru, Sierra Leone and the United States of America (and those who will watch at a later time through the IIC Congress website), I'm sure the welcome was just as powerful as it was in person.



IIC President Julian Bickersteth then gave his opening remarks for the IIC 29th Biennial Congress to the more than 2,000 members registered around the world. Firstly he acknowledged the conference opening which was, as he said, “so inspiring and indeed heart-warming”. Maori culture is “a living breathing and inclusive force that is part of the fabric of New Zealand society” and this is the context in which we meet for this Congress.

By having a hybrid conference, the Congress is able to have a local focus but achieve a global reach which is very on point for the conference theme. IIC Congresses are typically defined by their location, but the IIC Wellington Congress is also defined by being the first hybrid congress which allows attendees to engage with the speakers and content in a variety of ways—in person, live online and later online viewing of all the sessions. These different forms of engagement provide endless ways to learn, interact and connect with each other across cultures, time zones and countries. Many of us are already using the website and chat function to connect with each other.

Change is now no longer periodic but constant, providing challenges but also opportunities for innovation and sustainability. This directly links to the theme of the Congress Conservation & Change: Response, Adaptation and Leadership. In a time that can be considered volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (known by the acronym VUCA), Julian looked to the current state of the world. Our attention was drawn to this week alone where, around the world, floods, droughts, heatwaves, energy and resource shortages have devastated countries, communities and individuals.

Julian puts to us as a profession to consider during the Congress: “How do we as a profession actively respond to the changes and challenges of this current world? How do we adapt? How do we lead?”

I truly feel this is a hybrid conference with challenges but amazing opportunities!

Julian finished his opening remarks by acknowledging the IIC Council Colleagues, various organisations that made this Congress possible, the sponsors, the financial support received, the organising committee, session chairs and Digital Engagement Volunteers.

The Opening Ceremony concluded with all in person attendees partaking in kai/food (coffee, tea and muffins) outside the Auditorium where myself and many others discussed the incredible opening ceremony we were part of.



AUTHORS

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IMAGE CAPTIONS

Entering the National Library of New Zealand to attend the Opening Ceremony. Image taken by Lucilla Ronai before the Opening.

A very special Opening Ceremony - the Mihi Whakatau which is a form of welcome in M?ori. Screen capture by Lucilla Ronai re-watching the recording.

In person attendees gathering after the Opening Ceremony to partake in kai/food together. Image taken by Lucilla Ronai after the Opening Ceremony.