

# Asia Pacific Cities Summit & Young Professionals' Forum 7 to 10 July, 2019

Rebekah Ash



## Report purpose

This report aims for student reps to reflect upon and share their experience of participating in the *Young Professionals' Forum*, part of the 2019 Asia Pacific Cities Summit, with the wider UQ student rep community. In completing this report, you allow The University of Queensland to use the information contained therein for promotional or research purposes.

## Reflection and Lessons Learned

- **What were some of the highlights of your experience?** (*min. 150 words*)

The highlights of my experience were meeting a number of motivated young people who were apart of the Young Professionals Forum and the keynote speaker sessions. Throughout the conference, the workshops run as part of the Young Professionals' Forum allowed us to connect and get to know other delegates. This was fantastic because I was able to learn so much from the people I was surrounded by and now have connections in many industries over Brisbane. It also made the challenges proposed to us during the workshops enjoyable and engaging. The keynote sessions had a number of inspiring speakers who were thought provoking. They each brought a different perspective to the future of cities and stemmed thinking around solutions to our current obstacles. In particular, I enjoyed Peggy Liu who showed a part of China's sustainability planning and movements. Before Peggy's session, I was unaware of the significant steps China has taken to improve sustainability and livelihoods in their cities for the future. She also highlighted the need for education around food and agriculture from as early as kindergarten as well as a program she has set up as part of this initiative.

- **What were some of the key lessons you learned from your participation in this forum involving city / business leaders and young professionals from across the Asia Pacific region and beyond?** [e.g. This may include outlining some of the opportunities or challenges and how you overcame these obstacles] (*min. 150 words*)

Some of the key lessons I learnt came from the sub-sectors of the conference in relation to the mobility of cities and innovation of cities. The mobility of cities session highlighted the importance of smart cities through using digital IT to integrate various transport systems. Throughout this session, another important conversation was on the topic of the rise of active transport and hyper-mobility and hence a need for a focus on E-transport and more investment in technologies such as public scooters and bikes. In terms of innovation of cities, I learnt about how to create change in inflexible cities and organisations by looking at problems in two different ways. This involved a philosophy presented by Marc Randolph where he explained how challenges can be seen as a one-way or two-way door. In this situation, a one-way door refers to a problem where a risk taken for resolution or innovation is irreversible. On the other hand, in a two-way problem, there is a potential to rectify any issues that may arise from taking a risk. Overall, this really demonstrated the need to take risks for innovation and the capacity to take a risk in certain situations and how to evaluate whether the risk is justifiable.

- **How do you propose to share your experiences and learnings from the forum with your UQ student cohort as a student representative?** (*min. 150 words*)

I have been and will continue to share my experiences and learnings from the forum through various avenues. Firstly, professional social media platforms has been a great way to represent my experience throughout and after the conference. On top of this, through posting about the conference I have been able to highlight not only the interesting things we were able to do but also the conversations and discussions that took place. In addition to social media platforms, I will share my experiences and learnings through word of mouth with my colleagues. I find that living in a UQ halls of residence, sharing these experiences in meetings and with the surrounding students is a great way to spread my message from the forum. Finally, I will weave my experiences and learnings into group discussions during future lectures, presentations and group assignments as well as harnessing the club that I am on the executive committee to promote the forum and sponsorship of UQ.

## Employability

- **How did your participation in this forum enhance your employability?** [e.g. What skills were gained? How would you describe the advantages of attending this event in an interview or on a CV?] (*min. 150 words*)

This forum greatly enhanced my employability through networking, broadening my knowledge base and personal development. My attendance at the conference allowed me to interact with a wide demographic of people. This was fantastic because I now have contacts across many industries and workplaces. On top of this, engaging in networking over multiple days improved my confidence and ability to approach professionals and leaders both emerging and established. The forum touched base on many different topics and this allowed me to gain knowledge in areas that I have not had a chance to study during my university courses. The sub-themes of innovation, sustainability, mobility and livelihoods of cities has equipped me with ideas and thoughts that link back to my own area of study which will in the future help me to take a more transdisciplinary to my work and also answers in interviews. Throughout the forum I engaged in a number of problem-solving activities which required group input. This allowed me to develop my own skills in regard to group problem solving and collaboration.

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# Asia Pacific Cities Summit & Young Professionals' Forum 7 to 10 July, 2019

Subin Moon



## Report purpose

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## Reflection and Lessons Learned

- **What were some of the highlights of your experience?** (*min. 150 words*)

Honestly, the Young Professional's forum of the 2019APCS were three days (four including orientation) of highlight after highlight. To outline a few, we were given the opportunity to hear and be inspired by Marc Randolph, the cofounder of Netflix and later we were honoured to have a Young Professional exclusive Q&A session which, as a serial Netflix binge-watcher was all too exciting. We were also given chances to rub shoulders and network with other great leaders of today and the innovators of tomorrow. I had a lovely chat with Andreas Weigend the former Chief Scientist of Amazon, exchanged details with the Mayor of Ichikawa who promised me a tour of his city when I head to Japan at the end of this year, and was shown a demo by an entrepreneur whose company utilised VR technology which brought business cards and still images to life when viewed through their app and this was just the beginning. I also got to meet and collaborate with many Young Professionals all from such diverse backgrounds but working together to provide solutions to future city problems. Last but not least, the food was also amazing and the events such as the Gala dinner were so much fun. I think we all made some unforgettable memories.

- **What were some of the key lessons you learned from your participation in this forum involving city / business leaders and young professionals from across the Asia Pacific region and beyond?** [e.g. This may include outlining some of the opportunities or challenges and how you overcame these obstacles] (*min. 150 words*)

One of the key lessons I learnt was that you are never too young to achieve something remarkable. At this forum I had the privilege of meeting many great young minds. For example, I met a young man who was a part of the Young Professionals' Forum who was only 25 but was already the CEO of two companies, had worked globally and most recently founded a non-profit organisation. I was also inspired listening to our youngest speaker at the APCS, a 13 year old who advocates environmental sustainability by giving speeches and making videos about the impact of plastic-use all over the world. It was really inspirational to see that if you are really passionate about something, it is more than possible to achieve it no matter how young.

A challenge I had to overcome was being able to articulate my ideas in the midst of other people's opinions. During the workshop, I initially had trouble presenting my ideas because everyone was so eager to present their own. Never have I seen a table full of young people who all want to present their ideas – I was more accustomed to few people who take the lead and if anything, the remainder usually requires prompting but this was not the case at the Young Professionals' Forum. However, I learned to bide my time and made sure that all my points were concise and organised so that communication is effective and efficient, while ensuring that other people also had the chance to express their views.

- **How do you propose to share your experiences and learnings from the forum with your UQ student cohort as a student representative?** (*min. 150 words*)

As a student representative, I plan to try and embody the professional conduct that I have learnt from observing the great leaders at this forum, the networking skills and actively try to create discussion about our society, our cities, their problems and their development. I hope that I can serve as an example of all that I have learnt and also an advocate for forward and broad thinking.

So many of my peers and many friends of mine have already asked me about the forum, and I have been telling them about issues we have been discussing, the amazing opportunities we have been given and many of them are intrigued and want to know more. Through such methods I believe I can instigate conversation and discussion, provoke their thoughts and hopefully get them to spread the word. I believe that getting one more person to think about these issues at hand brings us one step closer to a better future.



## Employability

- **How did your participation in this forum enhance your employability?** [e.g. What skills were gained? How would you describe the advantages of attending this event in an interview or on a CV?] (*min. 150 words*)

I believe participation in this forum gave me an outlook into professional conduct. I had a lot to learn from the way in which the Mayors and leaders of today as well as some more experienced Young Professionals conducted themselves, especially in networking.

In the beginning, I found it nerve-racking to approach new people, however as the days went on I saw myself improve and gain more confidence. As a dentistry student, I very rarely get the chance to meet people beyond my field and participate in the LinkedIn world of fields such as business, international relations or law. Making friends or acquaintances is something that came quite naturally to me and I thought "networking" would be much the same. Little did I know that it was a whole ball game. There were business cards involved, exchanging of contacts that were not personal Facebook accounts and initially I did not know how to communicate. However, observing fellow Young Professionals and other delegates of the 2019APCS I cannot say that I have perfected the skill, however I believe this opportunity has paved the way for me to hone the art of networking.

I also believe the few intensive days of discussion at the Youth Forum workshops and listening to the various speakers really broadened my views regarding the society in which we currently live in and the potential of the society yet to be built.

I would really recommend this experience to anyone, because no matter what field you are studying or working in, you are a part of this society and you can be a key player in making changes that will affect the way you and future generations.

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CRICOS Provider Number 00025B

# Asia Pacific Cities Summit & Young Professionals' Forum

7 to 10 July, 2019



## Report purpose

This report aims for student reps to reflect upon and share their experience of participating in the *Young Professionals' Forum*, part of the 2019 Asia Pacific Cities Summit, with the wider UQ student rep community. In completing this report, you allow The University of Queensland to use the information contained therein for promotional or research purposes.

## Reflection and Lessons Learned

- **What were some of the highlights of your experience?** (*min. 150 words*)

The 2019 Asia Pacific Cities Summit was one of the best-organised conferences I've attended throughout my career as a researcher, with some of the best line-ups of speakers representing leaders from politics, industry, academia and others. We got to hear from the likes of Marc Randolph (co-founder of Netflix), Andreas Weigend (former Chief Scientist of Amazon), Peggy Liu (chairperson of the Joint US China Collaboration on Clean Energy), Colin Tooze (director of public affairs at Uber), Arlian Ecker the plastic free boy, various Lord Mayors of Australian capital cities, and our very own vice-chancellor Peter Høj!

At the Young Professionals' Forum, we got to wrestle with some of the issues city leaders face every day. As a cohort, we examined challenges facing the innovation, mobility, liveability and sustainability of cities, and brainstormed ideas with future and emerging leaders from various disciplines.

We had some amazing food and entertainment throughout the forum. We saw the Australian Girls Choir sing and some fireworks displays at the Howard Smith Wharves with the magnificent Story Bridge as the backdrop during the opening ceremony welcome reception, enjoyed a surprise performance by the internationally-renowned The Three Waiters at the Mayors' and Young Professionals' dinner in the Brisbane City Hall, had live jazz performance at the Gala Dinner and even watched a performance by piano prodigy Samuel Choi for the closing ceremony.

Not to mention all the awesome volunteers too! They were a cohort of 135 professionals themselves that went through a stringent selection (there were more than 600 applicants), ranging from aviation students to university professors. They went through weeks of training under the guidance of Dr. Michelle Lee of the Royal Brisbane Institute of Technology (RBIT), and it is amazing to see the passion of these people serving the Brisbane city with honour.

- **What were some of the key lessons you learned from your participation in this forum involving city / business leaders and young professionals from across the Asia Pacific region**

**and beyond?** [e.g. This may include outlining some of the opportunities or challenges and how you overcame these obstacles] (*min. 150 words*)

This forum gave me a deeper insight into how cities operate, and how they do not just aim to be functional but also to provide a sense of pride and attachment to their inhabitants. It reminded me of the many services that city governments provide (more than often taken for granted) and revealed the difficulties encountered by various stakeholders to ensure that these services are of the best quality.

Some of the key lessons I learnt included:

- Principles that underpin successful innovative start-ups
- Aspects to consider during town planning and urban development
- Realisation that factors improving the efficacy and efficiency of cities does not translate into a love for the city by its people
- Insights on decision making that will have broadscale and/or multi-generational impact

Perhaps the most unexpected gain from the conference was watching the Master of Ceremony, Toby Travanner, host the event and chair forum panels. That sure helped me prepare for being the MC at my friend's wedding later this year!

- **How do you propose to share your experiences and learnings from the forum with your UQ student cohort as a student representative?** (*min. 150 words*)

First and foremost, I will be bringing the perspectives gained through this forum into my future conversations, both official discussions or casual chats. I hope I will be able to integrate a more comprehensive point of view when serving on the various committees and student representative roles, offering constructive ideas whenever possible.

I will continue to emphasise the value of networking with my peers, in every opportunity available prompt them to do so, creating the platforms for them, or even to help initiate the conversation if they lack the courage and confidence approaching strangers. I will also share the contacts I met at the conference with friends who may need the connection.

Last but not least, I will actively encourage my cohort to participate in 2021APCS (Denpasar, Bali) and/or 2023APCS (Brisbane, Australia), regardless as a Young Professionals' Forum delegate, a full delegate, or even as a volunteer! I will aim to garner traction by sharing about the exciting stories and amazing people that I experienced and encountered over the course of the conference. I will also share the photos that I took

## Employability

- **How did your participation in this forum enhance your employability?** [e.g. What skills were gained? How would you describe the advantages of attending this event in an interview or on a CV?] (*min. 150 words*)

The fact that I participated in the 2019APCS in itself is already a plus point on my CV, as it is a prestigious event with over 20 years of history and well-attended by key leaders of society. I've gained skills on how to discuss an issue with an audience from a wide range of disciplines, putting forward ideas in a manner that is relevant and relatable to them. I've learned how to condense complex concepts and solutions by synthesising them into understandable statements, which can then be quickly pitched and delivered within short time windows such as a brief conversation. I became more confident in starting and maintaining conversations with professionals with different specialties, helping them to see how my work is important and valuable to them, while also gaining a more comprehensive perspective of how inter-disciplinary collaborations can help with the growth and development of cities and nations. Finally, I've developed a few business ideas from the various discussions I had, which I am interested to pursue in the future.

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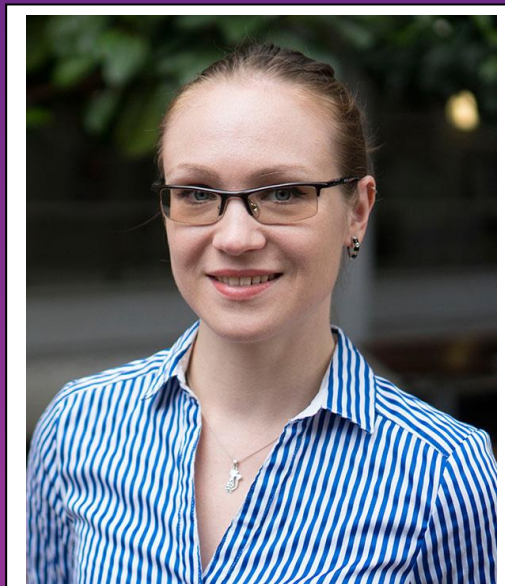
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# Asia Pacific Cities Summit & Young Professionals' Forum 7 to 10 July, 2019

Maria Golubovskaya



## Report purpose

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## Reflection and Lessons Learned

- **What were some of the highlights of your experience?** (min. 150 words)

*This event significantly exceeded my expectations! It all started with our orientation session when we were reminded of the importance of finding our own voice, our own identity. And who could have guessed that we would be doing it through... singing! exercises. Such a simple strategy set the tone for the rest of this event – a tone of thinking outside of the box, being open-minded and creative. I had the privilege to join conversations about innovation, mobility, liveability and sustainability of cities and network with key influencers of cities from the Asia-Pacific region. The event was very enriching and well balanced – with many points of listening and absorbing information, which allowed reflection, but then also brainstorming and presenting back the ideas, which could contribute to the conversation. I applaud to my fellow young professionals (all 170 of them) who made this experience so enjoyable and rewarding. Working together, it reminded me how powerful and empowering a group of vibrant, bright and curious young talents could be, when their energies are synergised and put towards solving problems (even the most challenging ones!). I was also impressed with the seamless flow of the whole event. It was very well organised and to my surprise, quite a few of my own students were volunteering at this event (which made me very proud!).*

- **What were some of the key lessons you learned from your participation in this forum involving city / business leaders and young professionals from across the Asia Pacific region and beyond?** [e.g. This may include outlining some of the opportunities or challenges and how you overcame these obstacles] (min. 150 words)

*Lessons can take various shapes and forms. From a knowledge perspective, the two standout keynote speakers were Marc Randolph (the co-founder of Netflix) and Andreas Weigend (the former chief scientist of Amazon). Both made a significant imprint on the audience, and me personally. Among many thought-provoking insights and take-aways, a few powerful quotes particularly stuck with me: “the idea does not have to be big, original or even good – it’s about trying lots of bad ideas” and “Do not start with the idea – look first at the pain, or problem!”.*

*In terms of my attitude, it’s easy to be pessimistic and even cynical when we start looking closely into the mobility, liveability, sustainability (in particular) and innovation of the cities. However, this event was a great reminder and a showcase that with challenges come opportunities. And staying optimistic ☺ is critical to enable any change! In fact, Brisbane in particular, has a lot to be proud of in terms of the ongoing and planned city initiatives towards more prosperous and sustainable future.*

*I also gained a feeling of empowerment to help overcome some of the challenges. At first, I was a bit intimidated and sceptical of my ability to effectively network with all the Lord Mayors, Councillors and other government representatives. However, to my great surprise, I felt very comfortable throughout the whole event and they all made it easy and enjoyable – and were very humble and approachable. Although admittedly, I might have accidentally touched on a few rather sensitive topics, but it’s only practice that makes perfect. (And of course, I can always play my “I’m Russian” card if needed).*

- **How do you propose to share your experiences and learnings from the forum with your UQ student cohort as a student representative?** (min. 150 words)

*This forum has reinforced and reminded me about the importance of individual responsibility in shaping our own behaviours and behaviours of others in response to the grand challenges and problems facing our present and nearest future. In fact, it was a 13 year old boy, also known as a ‘Plastic free boy’, who reminded us all about the power of each individual and their actions and the great impact and ripple effect these may have (he became an internet sensation with his movie on plastic pollution and influenced over 100,000 school kids). So, living his legacy, it’s important to share the insights and ideas which we gain in the events like this one and use various networks available to us (at the University and outside), as well as the power of social media, and proactively reach out to as many people as possible. Holding roundtables, talking at lunches, spreading the word and encouraging awareness and care amongst others whenever and wherever possible – but it all ultimately starts with us each taking action.*

## Employability

- **How did your participation in this forum enhance your employability?** [e.g. What skills were gained? How would you describe the advantages of attending this event in an interview or on a CV?] (min. 150 words)

*In today's society with rapidly growing awareness as well as competition, employability can be challenging. Thus, building the individual profile and creating our own portfolio which speaks to who we are, and what are our interests and strengths is certainly invaluable. I personally, want to differentiate myself from others in a way that portrays multiple facets of my persona, including my skills, my talents, my passions, my hobbies and my interests. Attending this event, and broadening the connections and networks, has certainly added to my capacity to reach out to more people. But also, it allows us to realise that our future is not on paper. Rather, we must take proactive steps towards furthering knowledge and proactively engaging in important conversations. I feel that I am truly part of the conversation and I want to contribute!. Many of us are ambitious and want to try to change the world to be a better place, so this was one of many available opportunities which I felt like brought me a step closer to this dream.*

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