

IRNOP XIV conference in Melbourne, Australia

By Jouko Vaskimo

jouko.vaskimo@aalto.fi

IRNOP (International Research Network on Organizing by Projects) XIV conference was held in Melbourne, Australia on December 9 ... 12, 2018. The conference, a biennial series started in Sweden in 1994, took place at the **Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University** Swanston Academic Building, and was organized by **Professor Dr Derek Walker**. The conference theme was *A skilled hand and cultivated mind*. RMIT University provided an excellent venue for the event, which the participants found appropriately informal and collegial, encouraging active exchange and networking. Please navigate to www.ironop2018.org for further information, including the papers and posters presented at the conference.



RMIT University Swanston Academic Building (photos courtesy Jouko Vaskimo)

The conference program included plenary sessions with state-of-the-art keynotes, and several parallel tracks with a total of over 80 keynote and paper presentations. The conference was attended by over 120 participants from more than 30 countries, and by some of the most renowned scholars in the field of project management. The conference was organized for faculty and students from universities from all over the world having an interest in projects, temporary organizations, project organizing and project-based organizations. In addition to the official program, the conference offered a social program of dinners and receptions, and a doctoral workshop for PhD students.

The conference was sponsored by **Project Management Institute (PMI)**, **International Project Management Association (IPMA)** and **Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University**.

The conference participants were warmly welcomed by **Professor Dr Ron Wakefield**, Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor, International and Dean of the School of Property, Construction and Project Management. In his welcome, Professor Wakefield stated that the RMIT University acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the University stands, and that the University respectfully recognises Elders both past and present.

The conference was opened by Professor Dr Derek Walker, who was very happy to welcome the conference participants to Melbourne, and to the RMIT University. Professor Walker was pleased to see such a group of internationally renowned project management scholars and researchers at the RMIT, and to become a member of the league of leading project management researchers who have organized the leading global conference on the subject.



Professor Dr Walker opening the conference

Subsequent to the four-day event Professor Walker was very happy with the way that the conference progressed. He thanked the participants, the presenters, the keynote speakers, and the RMIT University organizing committee – especially the volunteers who made the conference possible. He concluded: “This has been an excellent opportunity to host IRNOP 2018 and to have so many friends and colleagues attending the conference and to benefit from their insights and knowledge.” Professor Walker can be contacted at Derek.Walker@rmit.edu.au .

The fourth **IRNOP Doctoral Workshop**, in which doctoral candidates presented their research to an audience of peers and senior international scholars in a friendly and constructive atmosphere, took place the day before the main conference. On the same day, a welcome reception was organized at the Pearson & Murphy's RMIT cafe to welcome the conference participants.

The first conference day proceeded, subsequent to the welcome by Professor Dr Wakefield and opening by Professor Dr Walker, with a keynote by **Professor Dr Stewart Clegg** titled *Power relations and temporality in megaprojects*. Using the case of the Sydney Opera House project as one of his examples, Professor Dr Clegg focused on the connection between power relations and temporality – especially in projects of extraordinary size.



Professor Dr Stewart Clegg delivering his keynote presentation

The first conference day proceeded with three parallel tracks: *PM competencies & skills*, *PM practice* and *Public Private partnerships*. After a lunch break the parallel tracks were *PM practice*, *Leadership and teams* and *PM dynamics*. Finally, the late afternoon tracks *Value and benefits*, *Governance* and *PM dynamic* concluded the official business of the first conference day.

At the end of the first conference day, the editors of three major project management journals stepped up and presented publication requirements, explained publication policies and answered journal-related questions from the audience. The three journals and the people representing them were *International Journal of Project Management*, represented by Chief Editor **Professor Dr Martina Hüemann**, *Project Management*

Journal, represented by Chief Editor **Professor Dr Ralf Müller**, and *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, represented by the previous Chief Editor Professor Dr Derek Walker.



Professor Dr Derek Walker, Professor Dr Martina Hüemann, Professor Dr Ralf Müller

The second conference day started with a keynote by **Mr Michael Kalinowski** – Project Director of the Melbourne Metro enhancement project – titled *Metro tunnel project – tunnels and stations design and implementation*. Mr Kalinowski explained how the multi-billion dollar Melbourne Metro project was being designed and implemented, and how communication with project stakeholders was being taken care of.



Mr Michael Kalinowski taking questions from the audience at the end of his keynote presentation

The second conference day proceeded with three parallel tracks: *Value and benefits realisation*, *Collaboration* and *PM competencies & skills*. After lunch break the parallel tracks were *Megaprojects*, *Leadership and teams* and *Innovation*. Finally, the late afternoon tracks were *Megaprojects*, *Projectification* and *Governance*.

The second conference day was concluded with a panel discussion on the future of project management research and practice with **Professor Dr Jonas Söderlund** facilitating, and **Professor Dr Fredrik Tell**, **Professor Dr Joana Geraldi** and **Professor Dr Lynn Crawford** participating in the panel.



Professor Dr Jonas Söderlund facilitating, and Professor Dr Fredrik Tell, Professor Dr Joana Geraldi and Professor Dr Lynn Crawford participating in the panel

The second conference day way concluded with the IRNOP Conference Dinner, sponsored by PMI and IPMA, at the Jim Stynes Room of the Melbourne Cricket Ground.



View of the Melbourne Cricket Ground from the Jim Stynes Room

The third conference day started with a keynote by Professor Dr Jonas Söderlund titled *Advancing theory and debate in project studies*. Professor Söderlund provided an analysis of the current state of project studies, and encouraged researchers to take steps with theory generation and debate.



Professor Dr Jonas Söderlund delivering his keynote presentation

The third conference day proceeded again with three parallel tracks: *Collaboration*, *Risk* and *Organisational learning / knowledge management*. After refreshment the tracks were *Sustainability*, *Risk* and *Organisational learning / knowledge management*.

After the lunch break the conference closing plenary commenced with the presentation of the best conference paper awards. The award for the best conference paper by an *Early Career Research Lead Author* was presented to **PhD candidate Dicle Kortantamer** for her paper titled *Sharing delivery leadership in major transformation project portfolios: Illustrations from the UN central government*. The award for the best conference paper by *Established Career Researchers* was presented to **Professor Dr Kirsi Aaltonen** and **Professor Dr Virpi Turkulainen** for their paper titled *Collaborative space and emerging socialization tensions*.



Professor Dr Kirsi Aaltonen (on the left) and PhD candidate Dicle Kortantamer (on the right)

In his final remarks Professor Dr Walker thanked sincerely all IRNOP XIV organizers and participants, reminded the conference papers will be published at the conference website at www.ironop2018.org, handed the responsibility for organizing the next IRNOP conference – IRNOP XV – to the **Uppsala University**, and formally closed down the IRNOP XIV conference. Professor **Dr Fredrik Tell** (right) invited the entire IRNOP family to gather at the Uppsala University for IRNOP XV on June 14 ... 17, 2020.





IRNOP, the International Research Network on Organizing by Projects, was founded in 1993 as a loosely coupled network of researchers and has developed from there, adding researchers in countries all over the world. The IRNOP network connects scholars with a background in business, economics, engineering and other fields, with a common interest in projects, project organizations and temporary systems. The IRNOP Project Research Conference gathers scholars who have a research interest in projects from all over the world to a conference every second year (in 2006 a decision was made to schedule the IRNOP Project Research Conferences to odd years). IRNOP Project Research Conference has been organized fourteen times:

- IRNOP I in Lycksele, Sweden in 1994: *Temporary organizations and project management*
- IRNOP II in Paris, France in 1996: *Aspects of society and business organized as projects*
- IRNOP III in Calgary, Canada in 1998: *The nature and role of projects in the next 20 years: Research issues and problems*
- IRNOP IV in Sydney, Australia in 2000: *Paradoxes of Project Collaboration in the Global Economy: Interdependence, Complexity and Ambiguity*
- IRNOP V in Rotterdam, The Netherlands in 2002
- IRNOP VI in Turku, Finland in 2004: *Project business*
- IRNOP VII in Xi'an, China in 2006
- IRNOP VIII in Brighton, UK in 2007: *Projects in Innovation, Innovation in Projects*
- IRNOP IX in Berlin, Germany in 2009: *Organizing by Projects*
- IRNOP X in Montreal, Canada in 2011: *The Expanding Domain of Project Research*
- IRNOP XI in Oslo, Norway in 2013: *Innovative approaches in project management research*
- IRNOP XII in London, UK in 2015: *The Power of Projects*
- IRNOP XIII in Boston, Massachusetts in 2017: *The Modern Project: Mindsets, Toolsets, and Theoretical Frameworks*
- IRNOP XIV in Melbourne, Australia, in 2018: *A skilled hand and cultivated mind*

For further information please navigate to www.ironop.org .



RMIT
UNIVERSITY

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University is an Australian public research university located in Melbourne. Founded by Francis Ormond in 1887, RMIT began as a night school offering classes in art, science, and technology, in response to the industrial revolution in Australia. RMIT was a private college for more than a hundred years before merging with the **Phillip Institute of Technology** to become a public university in 1992. RMIT has an enrolment of approximately 87000 higher and vocational education students, making it the largest dual-sector education provider in Australia. With an annual revenue of approximately 1300 million AUD, RMIT it is also one of the wealthiest universities in Australia. It is a five-star university by Quacquarelli Symonds, and 17th globally for art and design subjects in the QS World University Rankings, making it the top art and design university in Australia. For further information please navigate to www.rmit.edu.au .

About the Author



Jouko Vaskimo

Author



Jouko Vaskimo is an International Correspondent and Senior Contributing Editor for **PM World** in Finland. Jouko graduated M.Sc. (Tech.) from Helsinki University of Technology in 1992, and D.Sc. (Tech.) from Aalto University in 2016. He has held several project management related positions with increasing levels for responsibility. Jouko holds a number of professional certificates in the field of project management, such as the IPMA Level C (Project Manager), IPMA Level B (Senior Project Manager), PMP, PRINCE2 Foundation, and PRINCE2 Practitioner. Jouko is also a Certified Scrum Master and SAFe Agilist. Jouko is a member of the Project Management Association Finland, a founding member of PMI Finland Chapter, and the immediate past chairman of the Finnish IPMA Certification Body operating IPMA certification in Finland. Since October 2007, he has been heading the Finnish delegation to ISO/TC 258. Jouko resides in Espoo, Finland and can be best contacted at jouko.vaskimo@aalto.fi . For more information please navigate to www.linkedin.com/in/jouko-vaskimo-6285b51 .