

Ground Matters 2024

Australasian Student Architecture Congress Reflection



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2. General Reflection

The 2024 Australasian Student Architecture Congress (ASAC) was held in lutruwita/Tasmania. This biennial event is a rare opportunity for conscientious, likeminded architecture students to gather in a space that fosters their passion for the built environment.

The theme of the 2024 ASAC, Ground Matters, was inextricably linked to the challenges of heritage and sustainability in architectural practice. Its location was appropriate to the theme, with nearly 25% of Tasmania classed as Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage land (*Australian Government, 2024*).

And yet, underneath this wilderness is a dark history of the colonial invasion of Tasmanian ground. Tasmanian Indigenous history is indeed so dark that it was used as a case study in Ralph Lemkin's formulation of the concept of 'genocide' (Harman, 2018). In a contemporary context, Tasmania's delicate balance of a beautiful place with a bloodied history demands architecture that is both progressive and respectful of the past. As such, this congress provided invaluable insight into the modern perspective on architecture and design. It wrestled with the ideas of rightful land ownership, respect for Indigenous culture, and sustainable building practice.

Our roles as members of the reflection team pushed us to engage with other attendees. In doing so, we were exposed to dozens of perspectives from around Australasia, widening our appreciation for what architecture can mean, both

physically and spiritually. Ground Matters has not just furthered our architectural education but widened the scope of it. We are very excited for where this can take us in the 2026 ASAC held in Auckland.



Smoking Ceremony at the Opening Party (Credit: Jack McShane)

3. Activity Reflection

3.1: What was valuable about the activities you participated in?

The activities I participated in were valuable for multiple reasons. Firstly, the knowledge imparted by experienced architects expanded my understanding, challenged my beliefs, and inspired me to explore new areas within architecture I had not previously considered. The diversity of activities, ranging from the hands-on practical knowledge of making and materials to discussions on theoretical ideas and the re-use or removal of buildings for the sake of the land, was particularly enriching. These experiences inspired critical thought and taught valuable lessons. Additionally, I found immense value in activities that encouraged us to learn about our peers and understand their thoughts and beliefs. Engaging in discussions with others led to more significant outcomes than merely listening and processing information independently. Observing the workflow and thought processes of others, even seeing the differences in notetaking, provided valuable insights.

The opportunity to converse with architects and access buildings that are typically closed off was both inspiring and invaluable. Each activity's acknowledgment of the traditional owners was beautiful to see and something that should always be upheld. Participating in the smoking ceremony and the welcome to country was a privilege, and hearing the voice, ideas, and story of Uncle Rodney

Dillon was a highlight. It would have been wonderful to have more activities or workshops focused on the traditional owners of the land, although I understand the challenges involved in organising such events.

Additionally, the workshops provided a platform to explore various more specific aspects of architecture that are often limited in conventional educational settings. The activities were invaluable for the breadth and depth of knowledge they provided, diverse methods of engagement, and the opportunities for peer learning. The combination of practical and theoretical sessions, along with the diverse background of knowledge, made the experience full and enlightening. I left feeling more inspired and equipped to delve into new architectural territories, carrying with me a deeper appreciation for the idea "Ground Matters" and the value of community and collaboration in learning.

3.2: What made it valuable?

The organisation and structure of the activities made them particularly valuable. For example, lectures structured with time for students to discuss the ideas presented to them with the person they are next to, workshops with hands-on learning like in the rammed earth workshop working directly with the architect. The diversity in subjects and the varied backgrounds and experiences of the teachers enriched the learning

experience. Student participation in discussions and activities also added significant value, fostering a collaborative and engaging environment. The premise of Ground Matters was consistently carried through all activities, serving as an inspiring focal point for everyone involved.

The freedom inherent in the workshops and activities, unencumbered by profit motives or client demands, created an environment where the boundaries of architectural theory could be pushed. This allowed for the exploration of new directions and ideas that have the potential to bring about positive change within the industry and society at large. The variety in the structure, from hands-on practical sessions to theoretical discussions, ensured a well-rounded approach to learning.

Making it possible for architects to gain CPD points for the conference day was a brilliant addition, creating opportunities for students to engage with working architects. This interaction was not only an exciting opportunity to network but also provided a platform for meaningful discussions on relevant topics. The ability to talk to professionals and learn about their career paths was inspirational and informative to my future decisions.

Additionally, the emphasis on cultural respect and acknowledgment of the traditional owners of the land added a profound layer of value to the activities. The smoking ceremony and the welcome to country were more than just ceremonial acts; they were

meaningful engagements that underscored the importance of understanding and respecting the cultural heritage of the land we are building on. Uncle Rodney Dillon's insights and stories were particularly impactful, offering a perspective that is often missing in mainstream architectural discourse.

Overall, the blend of diverse activities, freedom from commercial pressures, and the opportunity for professional engagement made the congress an exceptional learning experience. The acknowledgment of traditional owners and cultural activities further enriched the experience, emphasising the importance of cultural respect and understanding. The congress provided a holistic approach to architecture, inspiring participants to explore new ideas and fostering a sense of community and collaboration.

3.3: Do you think the workshops/activities were effective?

I believe the workshops and activities were highly effective in achieving their intended outcomes. Each activity felt purposeful, and I gained valuable insights from every session. None of the activities seemed like a waste of time, and it appeared that the desired objectives were consistently met. Conversations with peers confirmed this perspective, as they generally enjoyed the activities and workshops, reporting overall positive experiences.

The effectiveness of the workshops can be attributed to the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical application. For instance, the

rammed earth workshop not only taught us about the material and its uses but also allowed us to physically engage with the process, making the learning experience more comprehensive and memorable. This hands-on approach ensured that the concepts discussed were not just abstract ideas but tangible practices that we could understand and appreciate fully.

Towards the end of the week, some participants did mention feeling exhausted, but no one suggested that the activities should have been organised differently. Most attributed their tiredness to late nights and described it as a worthwhile exhaustion. The structure and content of the activities were well-designed to bring students together, creating numerous opportunities for meaningful discussions and collaboration. This sense of shared learning was one of the most valuable aspects of the experience.

In summary, the workshops and activities were highly effective in achieving their goals. They provided meaningful experiences, promoted

both individual and collective growth, and fostered a sense of community and collaboration focusing on the theme of the congress.

The congress' success in fostering an environment where ideas could be freely exchanged and explored encouraged creativity and innovation, allowing participants to think outside the box and consider new possibilities for the future of architecture. The combination of diverse activities, cultural engagements, and professional interactions created a rich tapestry of learning experiences that were both profound and inspiring.

Ultimately, the Ground Matters Student Congress was a resounding success. It provided a platform for students and professionals to come together, share knowledge, and explore new ideas in a collaborative and encouraging environment. The activities were not only valuable and effective but also transformative, leaving participants with a renewed sense of purpose and a deeper understanding of the importance of the ground we stand on.

4. Conference Reflection

4.1: Acknowledgment of Country

The Conference Day was held at The Hedberg, an impressive creative precinct of the University of Tasmania attached to the Theatre Royal. The Welcome to Country was conducted by Rodney Dillon, the former Chairperson of the Aboriginal Heritage Council. The acknowledgement of the muwinina people, the traditional custodians of the venue's location, occurred at the beginning of almost every conference held that day. This left a lasting impression on those in attendance and showed the universal awareness of Aboriginal heritage among practising architects. It was powerful to witness an Acknowledgement of Country within Australia's oldest working theatre, founded in 1837. The 187 years of the building's colonial history was put into stark perspective in acknowledgement of more than 40,000 years of Indigenous land custody.

4.2: Was the Conference Day too long?

As members of the reflection team, it was our responsibility to engage with other attendees to understand their experience of the congress. The overwhelming consensus was that the eight-hour Conference Day was too long. Attendees complained about the uncomfortable seating and the need for more breaks. However, a conversation with a fifth year UTAS student gave a different perspective. The student had attended the 2022 ASAC held in Brisbane and recalled how the conferences had been dispersed over the five days. According to the student, this had diminished the overall experience of

the congress, and cut into the time for practical workshops and excursions. While this may be true, the Conference Day certainly diminished the enthusiasm of the 2024 attendees. As such, future ASAC committees should mimic Ground Matters by holding the conferences on a single day but reduce the number of speakers so that it does not exceed five hours.



Upper-Level View of the Conference (Credit: Nuri Mohamad)

4.3: Was the venue appropriate?

The Hedberg was an appropriate choice of venue because of its suitable size and relevant history. The theatre contained more than enough seating, with optimal lighting and acoustics for the event. The several levels of seating ensured that each student had a clear sightline to the stage. The only flaw in this venue was the noisy floorboards on which students needed to walk to exit. Trips to the bathroom could not be made without disrupting the audience. One student even chose to remove their shoes so that they could leave the conference quietly.

However, the true relevance of the venue cannot be appreciated without considering its history. Designed by Liminal Studio and WOHA in 2013, The Hedberg is an extension to the oldest operating theatre in Australia, the Theatre Royal. The history of the venue, and what it signifies in the wider colonial history of Australia, could not be more relevant to the topics of Ground Matters. Furthermore, the architecture of the new development in how it respects the Theatre Royal was well appreciated by the cohort in attendance.

4.4: Were there enough breaks during the day?

To break up the Conference Day there was a 10-minute layover period between speakers. To keep to schedule, congress members discouraged the attendees from leaving the theatre room unless absolutely necessary. The only break in

which we were encouraged to leave was the hour-long lunch break in the middle of the day. This break gave us the opportunity to stretch our legs and eat before recommencing the conferences. However, many attendees found this lunch break to be almost too long, while complaining about the shortage of breaks throughout the day. This would suggest that future ASAC committees should cut the lunch break to half an hour, while dispersing smaller breaks throughout the day in which attendees can use the bathroom.

4.5: Did you like the chair discussions, or would you have preferred questions from the audience?

The chair discussions between speakers allowed them to discuss key concepts that arose from the conferences. It also created the opportunity for speakers to question or disagree with one another, encouraging debate between different opinions. This gave invaluable insight into the working methods of practising architects. It highlighted the differences between old and new schools of thought regarding Indigenous culture in contemporary architecture and respecting colonial heritage sites. While the conferences allowed speakers to present their ideas to the audience, the chair discussions demanded that they justify them.

At the culmination of the chair discussions, the microphone was passed to the students for questions. Predictably, the students were timid and took some convincing to step forward. However, once someone did,

more soon followed. Perhaps this could inform future congresses by having a member of the committee ask the first question. A major flaw in this Q&A system was that no student who wasn't seated on the ground floor could ask a question. This was because there was

no microphone on the upper level, and shouting felt inappropriate. Had a member of the committee sat on the upper level with a microphone, all students would have had the opportunity to ask questions.

5. Logistics

5.1: Were the venues appropriate for the activities?

For the congress they used the UTAS Centre of the Arts, on Hunter Street as the central location. This allowed for students to use the foyer area to sign-in to the congress and proceed to applying stamps made by the Ground Matters team, which people could apply to tote bags and t-shirts that they had brought. From the foyer space there was a larger area located further into the building that allowed for the majority of people attending the congress to be seated and to interact with others. This space was great for people to introduce themselves while being in a friendly and comfortable environment. Hunter Street also provided three areas used for guest speakers and other spaces used for the workshops. The classrooms used for workshops were comfortable when the participants had been divided into smaller groups. The main speaking hall was a comfortable space for a large audience. Some of the other speaking locations didn't seem as comfortable for everyone, with many standing or sitting on the floor and those sitting further back unable to hear the speaker well. A different choice of room or the addition of a microphone would have helped for the audience. Access to the workshop room downstairs fit well with the rammed earth workshop provided by *Collaboratorio*.

The foyer space did feel very packed on the first day when people were

signing in, but as the week progressed this space became a great filtering and meeting location to head to further events. The Theatre Royal, part of The Hedberg, used on the conference day was the other main facility. This space had the waiting area outside the theatre that was used to provide food for breakfast and lunch. This area was small, which felt confined when eating food and drinks with not much area provided for seating. Once inside the main theatre hall, there were plenty of seats for the whole of the congress and it was quite comfortable for the amount of time we were seated for.

There was student parking at Hunter Street, but this was not conveyed to participants. Many were confused and asking about parking on the first day. The disabled participants were not informed about ways to access the building. They had to find the side entrance and lifts by themselves as it was not marked by the Ground Matters signs.

At The Hedberg, the accessible entrance was blocked by a Ground Matters sign which pointed up the stairs for the able-bodied attendees. Disabled participants had to figure out how to access the congress on their own.

As the congress was held in a week with very cold temperatures, the outdoor locations of the two pubs attended made it a very short experience for those who weren't

dressed for a freezing night outside. People didn't stay very long if they didn't have a seat inside the venue.

5.2: Were there days which felt too busy or not busy enough?

With the congress being five days, the first day wasn't very busy as it started at 1pm. People started arriving at 12pm, signed up and then started using the stamps provided to decorate totes or t-shirts with the Ground Matters logo. They then gathered in the next room to eat lunch. The time provided was 2 hours, and with not much happening this could be improved with an interactive feature or objects/flyers of what was occurring through the week. This time was used for people to socialise and meet with others, but we found that many people felt that it was too long, and people just began waiting for the next event to happen. This was followed with the first workshop, held in the middle of the building with a makeshift screen. The day concluded with the opening party and smoking ceremony at the Hobart Brewing Company. Overall, the first day of the congress could have been used to hold more workshops/activities to balance out the pace of the congress.

The second day was the longest and most intense day of the week as it started with breakfast at 8am and then continued to about 6pm with a break for lunch in-between. It continued with a cocktail party at the Deco Lounge to wrap up the day. This day felt cohesive as it was a day full of interesting talks and then discussions about topics that are relevant within the architecture

community. Each pair of speakers talked for an hour each, then had a discussion. There were complaints about the amount of time spent sitting without breaks. There were people who had to leave the auditorium for breaks as it was too uncomfortable for them. The third day was full of workshops that followed on from the talks the day before. This day had participants of the congress randomly divided into smaller groups and assigned to two workshops, one before and one after lunch. As one workshop went for the whole day, they learned about one single topic. This day was a manageable load for a day that wasn't too busy and had a variety of interesting workshops.

The fourth day of the congress had two split blocks; one in the morning and one in the afternoon with people randomly elected to attend one of three talks/building visits for each session. The last of the talks was by the International Architecture Chapter visitors. Unfortunately, they were given only 5 minutes each to explain their projects. This meant that they were rushed and went overtime. It would have been good to have integrated these people into the congress earlier in the week. The day concluded with a secret event/bush party making for a good way to relax after some full days that had manageable loads.

The final day was less busy as we did activities that the students had already nominated to do earlier in the week. Some started at 9am for the MONA excursion, but most building visits started at 10:30am. There was also the option to come up with your own activities for the day. There was a lot of spare time between activities.

The Pitch for the next congress was held in the afternoon in the atrium. There was no seating available, and we leaned on the balustrades on all three floors to see the presentations. This was not a good venue for the pitches as it was very hard to see and hear the presenters. There were a couple of hours between the end of the pitch and the final event which was to attend the Architecture Awards at MAC 02. This was a large open warehouse-like building, where the awards, dinner and dessert was held. There was also an after party if you wanted to attend. A very long day with large breaks between activities.

5.3: Was the relative proximity of event locations appropriate?

Most events were held in a close proximity to each other depending on which events you were assigned to. Many days there was no location change until the party at the end of the day, such as the first day, which held the talks at the Centre of the Arts then a short walk around the building to the Hobart Brewing Company. Likewise, the next day was held at The Hedberg, which concluded with a 10-minute walk to the Deco Lounge. The third day was all at the Centre of the Arts location. However, the final days had changes in location that would be affected by what event people were allocated to. But overall, most of the events were in a proximity that was manageable for most people attending the congress.

The locations were suitable if you did not have any disability or were able to walk approximately a kilometre. You had to make your own way and find

parking if walking was not suitable. There was no group transport available to participants to and from activities unless organised by yourself. Reviewing this aspect there should be more consideration and transparency about parking and transport options that align with people with disabilities.

6. Communication

6.1: Was marketing of the event effective?

After review and discussion with a range of attendees the consensus is that the initial and most consistent marketing for the 2024 Australasian Student Architecture Congress Ground Matters was presented mainly via their Instagram page. The other Reflection Team members and I, as UTAS students, also had the benefit of being presented with more information regarding the event early, and to see elements of the planning close as students at the hosting university, meaning word of mouth was very specifically effective for us (our first insight of the congress was from a short presentation from Co-director Alastair).

Consistent among interstate students that I have spoken with, was a sense that the marketing was both very consistent in its imagery and messaging, and very effective in attracting students to the congress. Attendees reported that they had often heard about the event from either SONA or via other students in their courses, and several students said that they had become familiar with the visual language of the Ground Matters marketing; the colour palette, the font, the symbolic images, and the logo prior

to being cognisant of the event itself, or its connection to the biannual Australasian architecture student congress. Other attendees said that they found about the event via other social media, or from having followed the Instagram page, sometimes without realising, from the previous event (Occupy 2022).

6.2: Did you follow the Instagram closely?

My first exposure to the Instagram page was prior to the congress, when a fellow student alerted me to relevant information found on the page. As the Instagram page was a key part of both advertising for the event, and as a means of delivering information regarding the day-to-day program logistics, I had kept a close eye on the page prior to the congress and referred to it regularly during the event. At times it was often easier to use the stories on the Instagram page to gather information regarding each day (ie. lectures, workshops, tours), than it was at the various Information Points or at the Front Desk of the event.

From interstate students I have found that most attendees used the Instagram page as their main information point for the event, rather than face to face communication with organisers or the Ground Matters website. Some attendees reported that they found the Instagram much more effective in daily event specific communication and the congress whole.

Others reported that there was more information than previous Australasian Student Architecture events and said that the consistency in posts helped them plan for each day based on the potential activities.

The inclusion of the website link in the Instagram's page bio was another boon in finding valuable information regarding events, as well as times and locations, and several attendees reported that that was a common occurrence throughout the congress.

6.3: Was the program for the week effectively communicated?

Each day's program and events were clearly displayed in the foyer or at the information desk, and throughout the week organisers would work to direct attendees to where they needed to attend. As the same rooms were used for different activities as the congress ran, people were able to gain familiarity with the space and often were able to find their own ways as the program continued. Attendees reported some ambiguity surrounding the events of each day, and specifically *Day 4 Local Perspectives* and *The Final Day*,

in which attendees had the tour or workshop they were to attend made known to them via printed name lists located in the foyer. I had heard some reports of attendees missing workshops or tours due to poor instructions or miscommunicated information.

As mentioned in the previous sections, whether by design or not, the Instagram page and the link to the website became the most common means of accessing information, and therefore was the major portal for communication throughout the congress. A common complaint I heard from both interstate and Launceston based students was a lack of clarity in where lectures, workshops and tours were held. As someone who contributed to the Set-Up Team, and helped put some signage up for rooms I feel this might be a venue issue other than a planning and preparation issue, as only so much information can be clearly demonstrated via the website and Instagram page. Whilst these issues became exacerbated during the 'off - campus' tours, there was generally positive feedback regarding the communication delivery, and any minor issues seemed few and far between.

7. Summary

7.1: Why did you decide to come?

I decided to attend the 2024 ASAC Australasian Student Architecture Congress in Lutruwita/Tasmania after hearing positive feedback from students who attended the 2021 Brisbane congress. They found it beneficial and inspiring, which motivated me to participate in this congress as well as it being in my home state which would allow me to gain more knowledge about the ground I live on. I wanted to gain insights into sustainability and effective building strategies the culturally support the urban development on the land we built on, as well as getting a chance to network with like-minded individuals in the field of architecture. The congress was highly insightful, highlighting the importance of linking nature and built forms, and the interaction between the ground and buildings which is an integral part of understanding culture. The speakers were engaging, and the topics were highly relevant to the future of sustainable architecture. Networking sessions allowed me to connect with other architecture students from across Australasia, and I learned the importance of incorporating sustainable practices into architectural designs for both environmental benefits and cost savings.

7.2: Did attending the congress supplement your university learning sufficiently?

Yes, the congress effectively enhanced my educational learning through several keynote speeches and panel discussions. The keynote speaker, Sarah Rees Lynn, a Palawa woman, and lead indigenous worker, shared her insights into ensuring indigenous perspectives are held and the built forms are designs better for both community and country, by “listening to our elders”. This has given me insights and strategies into how to approach indigenous knowledges and the incorporation of culture into our architectural work, which as a final year architecture student will greatly support my studies in ‘Sustainable Cultures’ next semester. The conference significantly broadened my understanding of sustainability and indigenous knowledge with the connection to land. I realised the importance of integrating sustainable practices as it helps preserve and promote indigenous traditions, values and lifestyles, ensuring their stories are not lost. The workshops and building tours I found were even more effective in supporting our educational learning as it allowed me to apply the theoretical knowledge gained from the conference day in a hands-on manner. These covered topics ranging from building material strategies such as sustainable rammed earth structures to bamboo structure making. The building tours, such as government house tour showcased colonial history into Tasmanian and the connection this

building has to land through both the natural environment and built forms.

7.3: Did you engage with all activities/events?

I actively engaged in most of the events and activities held throughout the five days of the congress. and I was particularly engaged during the rammed earth workshop learning about sustainable building material strategies and techniques. This gave me a chance to apply effective practical strategies to incorporate eco-friendly building materials such as using “ground” materials to create rammed earth structures and incorporate them into the built form and linking the ground materials and culture with buildings. This was supported by interacting with other students during the congress, which was equally enriching and encouraging, as we exchanged ideas and experiences we are creating and sharing sustainable thoughts with our future generations of architects.

7.4: What was one single best thing about the congress?

While it was difficult to gain consensus from the attendees on the best part of the congress, a consistent theme appeared between many of them. The congress consisted of a great variety of events from a multicultural collection of architects, all with different interests & backgrounds. Although so many of the individual talks & workshops differed substantially from one another, they were all tied together by the common theme of ‘Ground Matters’. These

events included lectures, keynotes, workshops & site visits, & although different students enjoyed certain events more than others, it appeared that this great variety was what the attendees appreciated.

The Ground Matters Student Congress had a structured program with a different collection of events held each day. There was always such a huge variety of topics & opinions that there was little room to be bored. These themes ranged from talks & workshops on rammed earth from Finnish Architects *Collaboratorio* to discussions on working with cultural & ecological sensitivities by Taylor & Hinds. This variety of topics & opinions led the event to be generally quite engaging & informative, & even if certain topics were of less interest to some students, the rest of the event would generally make up for it. The comprehensive variety within the bounds of the congress’ topic led to the event’s success, & therefore can be considered the best part of the congress.



**Bamboo Model Making Workshop
with Eleena Jamil (Credit: Blake
Barton)**

In the range of speakers which were present at the Ground Matters student congress, were some quite large names in the Architectural world of Australia & New Zealand. These included Kerstin Thompson, Christopher Kelly & Robert-Morris-Nunn, just to name a few. The great wealth of knowledge which these Architects have accumulated all varied quite substantially, due to their specific interests & motivations. It was extremely inspiring listening to the

ideas & knowledge which these speakers had to share, & certainly led to a comprehensive range of topics presented within the constraints of the event. This huge variety, paired with fact that the speakers were highly credible practitioners, led to an incredible learning experience.

In summary, the variety of knowledge shared by prominent architects from around Australia-Pacific made the event incredibly enjoyable. Different lectures & workshops appealed to different individuals, but this allowed the event to be comprehensive & therefore enjoyable. The Ground Matters team did an excellent job of arranging speakers for the event, who could share in-depth knowledge specific to the theme of the congress. The great variety displayed throughout the week was the single best thing which made the event great.



**Visit to Government House (Credit:
Blake Barton)**

7.5: Name two things you would improve/change for the next congress?

The entire event was a major success & thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who engaged. There is, however, always some room for improvement. I am sure that there would be a range of different opinions on what elements of the congress were successful & what could be improved, & some aspects which were enjoyed by some may have not been enjoyable for others. However, there were some resounding opinions which were generally shared by most students on areas which could be improved.

Unfortunately, the event commenced somewhat slowly & provided doubt as to whether the rest of the conference would be a success. After the initial tote-bag & t-shirt print making session concluded, a workshop was held by Dr Michael Mossman. According to the audience who sat near the front, the workshop was incredibly interesting, but unfortunately only a small portion of the audience were within audible range of the speakers. This was purely an issue with the venue, a detail which was overlooked during the planning of the event. Microphones or an acoustically superior space would have aided greatly in the execution of the workshop. Fortunately, the lectures on the following day were in a much more appropriate venue, which allowed it to be much more enjoyable.

Drinks at the Hobart Brewing Company & a smoking ceremony proceeded the workshop by Michael Mossman. Although the smoking

ceremony was interesting & appropriate, the 'free' drinks which preceded lasted much shorter than expected, meaning most of the attendees needed to pay themselves. Considering the following day had free drinks until 9pm, it would have been ideal if this same principle applied on the first day. This would have resulted in a much greater first impression of the event. Overall, the first day generally was taken as a slight let-down, raising doubt on the quality of the rest of the congress. Fortunately, the congress only got better from there, so the less-than-ideal turn-out of the first day was not a resounding memory for attendees.

The second possible improvement which was quite frequently mentioned had to do with the organisation the Conference Day. Commencing at an early 8:30am & ending later than scheduled at 5:30 in the afternoon, the day was by no means brief. It started out strong with a talk by *Collaboratorio* on the use of rammed earth in architecture, which most found to be incredibly engaging &

interesting. This quality continued throughout the day, but the engagement slowly dwindled as the day dragged on. Maybe it had something to do with the warm, dark environment, or just being seated all day, but either way, the numbers drastically dropped as the day progressed, especially in the afternoon. This indicated that the day could be improved by a change in scheduling. Some suggestions included splitting the Conference Day over two days, with the afternoons being occupied by site visits or workshops. Overall, the conference day was taken far more positively than the first day, but with an improved approach to the timetable, it would have been far more enjoyable.

Although these two points for improvement have been suggested, they did not greatly affect the event to a degree where it was unenjoyable. Rather, they are minor criticisms which, if resolved, would have made the congress just a little better than it already was. Overall, the event was incredible, & slight errors are always to be expected.

8. Delegations

Ronan Mosenthal: Chapter 2 & Chapter 4

JT Thomson: Chapter 6

Ciaran Morrison: Chapter 5

Michelle Park: Chapter 5

Michael Sanger: Chapter 3

Britany Slater: Chapter 7

Blake Barton: Chapter 7

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