



Society for Conservation
Biology Oceania
Brisbane 2016



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Society for Conservation Biology 4th Oceania Congress

Bridging Divides: Science meets action, water meets land

FINAL REPORT



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The Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Science (CBCS), University of Queensland co-hosted the Society for Conservation Biology Oceania (SCBO) Conference July 5-8, 2016 in Brisbane (<http://brisbane2016.scboceania.org/>). The meeting brought together the Oceania community of conservation professionals to address conservation challenges and present new findings, initiatives, methods, tools and opportunities in conservation science and practice. Scientists, students, managers, decision-makers, writers, and other conservation professionals participated in this event. We were able to offer a range of activities for all participants, including 2 days of training workshops, 3 days of oral presentations and 2 day of excursions. Pre-conference workshops and short courses were held at UQ July 4-5 and post-conference fieldtrips occurred July 9 and 10.

1. Organizing Committee

Meeting Partners

Co-hosted by Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Science (CBCS), University of Queensland

Chairs

Vanessa Adams (Co-Chair), University of Queensland
Hedley Grantham (Co-Chair), Wildlife Conservation Society
Hugh Possingham (Co-Chair), University of Queensland

Organization Committee Members

Vanessa Adams (Co-Chair), University of Queensland
Hedley Grantham (Co-Chair), Wildlife Conservation Society
Hugh Possingham (Co-Chair), University of Queensland
Alienor Chauvenet, University of Queensland
Carolyn Lundquist, NIWA
Fran Sheldon, Griffith University
Gwen Iacona, University of Queensland
James Watson, University of Queensland
Jennifer Firn, Queensland University of Technology
Jennifer McGowan, University of Queensland
Jutta Beher, University of Queensland
Maria Beger, University of Queensland
Monica Awasthy, Griffith University
Rebecca Weeks, James Cook University
Richard Kingsford, University of New South Wales
Sean Maxwell, University of Queensland



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Volunteers

Caitie Kuempel
Ofalia Ho
Kristi Foster
Justin McCann
Rachel Friedman
Hernan Caceres
Blake Alexander Simmons
Bart Cox
Charlotte Mills
Sofia Lopez
Toni Love
Simone Birrer
Sameer Punde
Ruben Venegas
Payal Bal
Jessie Wells
Jessie Cappadonna
Nyree Fea
Lucia Morales
Samantha Reynolds
Lachlan Francis
Stephanie Courtney Jones
Nancy Auerbach
Michael Lavery
Courtney Morgans
Harriet Achi
Luke McPhan

We thank the Local Organizing Committee, Volunteers for their tireless efforts and all of the SCB chapter members who attended the conference and helped support the SCB booth during the conference.



2. Scientific Program

The conference program spanned three days and included:

- 3 plenary addresses
- 5 speed symposiums
- 13 symposiums
- 7 open abstract speed sessions 11 open abstract full talk sessions
- 2 poster sessions
- an award session featuring a plenary from our Oceania DSA awardee
- an evening Q&A panel on the topic of developing Northern Australia with four notable speakers.

This resulted in a total of 376 presentations, including:

- 4 plenaries
- 198 full talks
- 124 speed talks; and
- 50 posters.

The Scientific Committee chose to take to unusual approaches that they found highly successful:

- a) blind abstract review to indicate only that the abstract was acceptable for presentation and overall relevance to the conference
- b) randomly assigned all accepted abstracts to presentation format.

This approach was well received by attendees who felt this equalized the process of assigning presentation types and gave each presentation type equal weighting in terms of merit. The choice of having a large number of speed sessions enabled more presentation slots to be available for attendees. The speed sessions received divided reviews in the post-conference survey, with respondents typically either loving the sessions and indicating how rewarding they were, or those that indicated they preferred full talk formats and found the short presentation type difficult to adapt to.

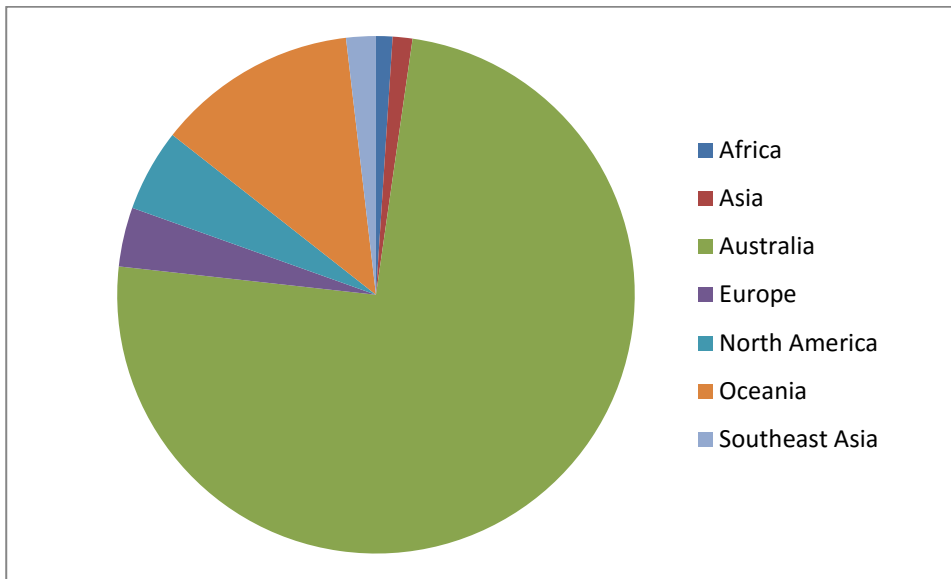


3. Congress in Numbers

a. Attendees

The conference was attended by 486 registrants from 27 countries. A break down by country and region is provided below.

Country	Number Delegates	Percentage total registrants
Australia	362	74.49%
Botswana	4	0.82%
Canada	1	0.21%
China	2	0.41%
Fiji	12	2.47%
France	4	0.82%
French Polynesia	1	0.21%
Germany	2	0.41%
India	1	0.21%
Indonesia	2	0.41%
Israel	2	0.41%
Maldives	1	0.21%
Nepal	1	0.21%
Netherlands	2	0.41%
New Caledonia	3	0.62%
New Zealand	36	7.41%
Papua New Guinea	6	1.23%
Philippines	1	0.21%
Solomon Islands	6	1.23%
South Africa	1	0.21%
South Korea	1	0.21%
Spain	1	0.21%
Switzerland	1	0.21%
Timor L'Este	1	0.21%
United Kingdom	6	1.23%
United States of America	24	4.94%
Vanuatu	2	0.41%
	486	100.00%



The diversity of the attendees was noted by many post-conference survey respondents as a positive of the conference. In particular the diversity of regions represented and topics discussed. However respondents did note that there was not a strong representation of practitioners or government attendees. A number of delegates from these sectors had originally registered but withdrew close to the date due to lack of funding to attend. Further efforts to support the travel of these sectors will be looked into for future conferences.

A sample quote from one survey respondent:

Thank you for such a professionally organised, inclusive conference. The integration of so many disciplines, topics and presenters is a strength of this Society. I'd like to see that built on to include more practitioners as I think SCB is well placed to be a leader in linking science and practice in Conservation.

b. Registration

The conference offered full and day registrations for members and non-members at full and student/developing country rates. Of the 486 attendees we had 490 registrations (4 day registrants attended multiple days):

Full Registrations

Registration type	Number
Regular non-member	136
Regular member	96
Student/developing member	143
Student/developing non-member	63
Total	438



Day registrations

Registration type	Number
Day - regular member	4
Day - regular non-member	34
Day - student/developing member	4
Day - student/developing non-member	10
Total	52

c. Travel Awards

We awarded a total of AUD \$70,000 in travel scholarships to allow students, scientists and practitioners to attend our conference. We are incredibly grateful to the Thomas Foundation, Queensland University of Technology, and Tourism and Events Queensland for their funding support. We received 130 applications for scholarships to the conference, many of high calibre, so it was quiet difficult to choose just 27 full awardees and 63 partial awardees. Our travel award recipients came from 19 different countries. The successful applicants were chosen based on the scientific merit of their work, their ability to be able to present their work and where they came from. We were keen to have representatives from as many countries in the region as possible, and limited scholarships for those outside the region, due to the expense in getting them to Australia. We also supported the travel of 10 SCB Chapter members through the support of the Chapters Committee (\$3000 USD) and matched SCB Oceania funds (\$3000 USD). In total this means 100 attendees received travel support across the various funding available.

d. Sponsors & Exhibitors

We were able to successfully fundraise \$114,000 in sponsorship and exhibition space for the conference. Of this \$70,000 was dedicated to support travel of student and early career researchers from the region. An important new donor was the Thomas Foundation. This sponsorship was made possible through Co-Chair Professor Possingham's existing relationship with the Foundation and their previous support of his Student Conferences for Conservation Science events.

Overall we believe the 2016 SCBO Brisbane conference was an enormous success thanks to the Committee's ability to fundraise substantial sponsorship for travel awards support. There was a strong focus, both in the conference and pre-conference events, on capacity building, in particular for students and practitioners from Pacific countries, to gain a greater knowledge of conservation tools and skills, with a view to building a network of conservation science professionals across the Oceania region, and to providing training in skills and tools for regional conservation scientists. The student training component held at UQ July 4-5 was a large contributor to the overall success and was widely attended by the travel awardees. Thomas Foundation support was critical to the success of the student workshops by supporting the travel of students from the poorer countries in the Oceania region. Their



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participation increased the diversity of thoughts and conservation approaches discussed at the workshops and brought vibrancy to the event that would have otherwise been absent.

All funded researchers were required to present either a poster or an oral presentation of their work. The quality of presentations was very high. They were also required to attend presentations and poster sessions. The later were held in conjunction with morning, lunch and afternoon breaks, enabling participants plenty of time to meet other conference attendees.



Travel scholarship awardee Hans Wendt from Fiji presenting his research in the SCB Oceania PCB Special Issue Symposium.



4. Positive Congress Outcomes

a. Minister opening and associated media

The Queensland Government Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection opened the conference and spoke about the importance of the Great Barrier Reef and the threats to the Reef. He spoke to the media after his welcoming regarding the Queensland Government's reef policies.

b. SCBO Contributed Sessions

SCB Oceania is working to build regular core conference content that our members can expect at our conferences. To this end, we hosted (for a second time) a student workshop on giving good presentations, Essential conference skills: how to give a great speed talk, which was attended by ~30 students and early career researchers. We also hosted our regular lunchtime workshop, How and why to start an SCB Chapter. Two new workshops this year were a SCB Chapter workshop to foster relationships and shared experiences between the Oceania region Chapters and a lunchtime workshop on how to build research relationships with practitioners. Details of these sessions are below. All were considered great successes and we will build on them for future core conference content.

Essential conference skills: how to give a great speed talk

Organisers: Rebecca Weeks, Stacy Jupiter, and Vanessa Adams, SCB Oceania.

Duration: Half day workshop

Many conferences and symposia are moving away from traditional presentation sessions towards alternative mechanisms for presenting research, with short formats (e.g. speed talks, Three Minute Thesis, Pecha Kucha, Ignite, 20×20) becoming increasingly prominent. Given the random allocation of presentation formats at SCBO 2016, we anticipate that many presenters will be giving a speed talk for the first time. This half-day workshop will cover essential skills for giving scientific oral presentations in general, with an emphasis on tips and tricks for giving an effective and entertaining speed talk. Workshop attendees will have the opportunity to practice their presentation and receive feedback from their peers and workshop tutors.

SCBO Chapters: broadening conservation at a grassroots level

Organiser: Monica Awasthy, Griffith University

One way to garner interest and participation in conservation at a grass roots level is through SCB local chapters. SCB-O chapters (Wellington, Sydney, Brisbane) are relatively new; each taking a unique approach to conservation engagement. This workshop will investigate approaches used by Oceania Chapters and highlight how chapters work within the four themes of SCB Oceania: conservation science, conservation management, policy and education. It will provide a forum for chapters to showcase their activities and engagement within their communities. The workshop will be divided into three sections: (1) case studies linking to an SCB Oceania theme from each chapter, (2) developing a chapter-lead capacity and engagement framework, and (3) chapter capacity building and future opportunities. Participants of the workshop should find this workshop useful in



providing specific ideas for solutions to common problems, fostering a network of Oceania and global Chapter leaders, and inspiring people in new directions. Workshop participants will:

- present chapter projects (successful & unsuccessful); review why/why not projects were successful
- examine the relationship between local community, conservation practitioners and researchers
- discuss how chapters can support and facilitate conservation solutions outside traditional models
- consider how participation in chapter outreach activities improves individual leadership, organizational and communication skills
- explore how scientists can apply their research to solve real-world problems
- develop an Oceania Chapter Framework (or guide) detailing how chapters work and their role in broadening conservation engagement
- discuss capacity building for chapters

How and why to start an SCB Chapter

Organiser: Monica Awasthy, Griffith University

This short lunchtime seminar will be an informative guiding presentation on how and why to form a new SCB Chapter. The presenters, Monica Awasthy and Rosalynn Anderson-Lederer, are both members of the SCBO board, international Chapters Committee and Oceania chapter leaders. We will draw from our own considerable experience at starting chapters and illustrate best practices and inspirational activities from Chapters all across the globe. Attendees will be able to ask questions about funding sources, jump-starting projects, and connections to SCB Global. Materials and guides for starting an SCB Chapter will be available.

Making effective connections between academia and conservation NGOs

Organiser: Rebecca Weeks, James Cook University

Many conservation scientists, and students in particular, seek opportunities to make their research relevant and useful to practitioner organisations, but are unsure how best to make those connections. Once a connection has been made, conducting collaborative research presents additional challenges, for example in the need to produce both academic outputs and real-world outcomes. This session will comprise a panel discussion with conservation scientists experienced in conducting research within an applied context. Facilitated questions to the panel will draw upon their extensive experience in managing collaboration between conservation practitioner organisations and researchers. For example:

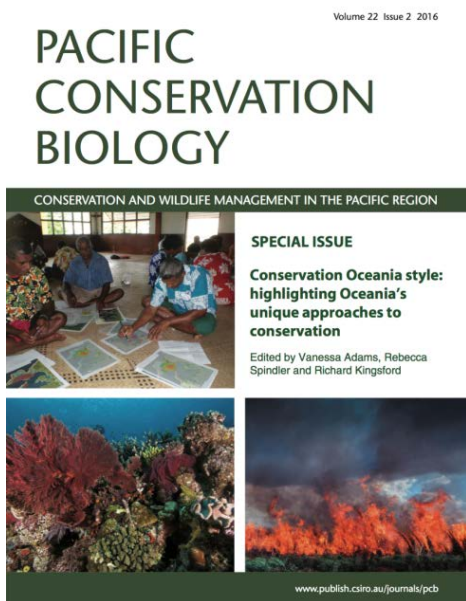
- How can scientists/students looking to engage with real-world conservation projects initiate that collaboration?
- What has been really effective in achieving both parties' objectives, and what didn't work so well?
- What are the benefits and challenges associated with tying your research into applied projects? and How can students position their work so that they are competitive for NGO jobs upon graduation?

There will then be time allocated for questions from the audience and general discussion.



c. PCB Special Issue

One of the ways in which SCB Oceania supports Pacific Conservation Biology is through organizing special issues timed with the Oceania conferences. This year's special issue was themed "Conservation Oceania Style". The Special Issue was available in hard copy at the CSIRO publishing booth and was accompanied by a symposium in which contributors spoke on their submissions.



Conservation Oceania Style

Oceania is a diverse region encompassing Australia, Melanesia, Micronesia, New Zealand and Polynesia, with six of the world's 39 hotspots of diversity but a poor record for extinctions from widespread threats to biodiversity. The region is also culturally diverse, containing close to a quarter of the world's languages and some of the oldest cultures. This makes the region a priority for immediate and sustained conservation action. In this [special issue](#) we provide local conservation solutions in Oceania to global problems, capturing the diversity of nations, cultures and environments. The issue is organised by the major threats faced in the region: habitat loss, over exploitation and invasive species. Case studies, framed as coupled problem–solutions, include examples from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific and contrast findings across regions and realms. There are successes and failures faced by conservation in this local region, and the analysis within this special issue offers

lessons for conservation globally.

d. Clearing policy statement

Prior to the conference SCB Oceania was approached by UQ researcher, Assoc Prof Martine Maron, about the possibility of releasing a scientific statement regarding clearing policies in Australia. SCB Oceania discussed this opportunity and agreed, by majority vote, to both endorse the statement as a section but to also put the statement to the conference delegates for endorsement. As a result, on Friday July 8, 2016, scientists from across the world, in conjunction with scientific societies and the delegates of the [Society for Conservation Biology Oceania Conference](#), called upon Australian governments and parliaments, especially those of Queensland and New South Wales, to take action. We called for the prevention of a return to the damaging past of high rates of woodland and forest destruction, in order to protect the unique biodiversity and marine environments of which Australia is sole custodian.

You can read the [Scientists' Declaration on Accelerating forest, woodland and grassland destruction in Australia here](#).



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At 09:33am on Friday 8th July a co-ordinated “[thunderclap](#)” echoed this call to more than 400,000 followers on social media.

“Australia is now a global hotspot for land clearing. I support a call for stronger laws to #ProtectHabitat! <http://thndr.me/x35NTr>”



Society for Conservation Biolo... EMBED </>

SUPPORTERS
248 of 100
248% of goal supported

SOCIAL REACH
406,023
People

TIME LEFT
Complete
Ends Jul 08, 9:33 AM AEST

e. Evening Q&A panel

We hosted a public forum on the evening of July 6th on the topic, Northern Australia – the new development frontier?. This forum was attended by ~250 people including conference delegates and members of the public. The forum was moderated by Paul Barclay from [ABC Radio National's Big Ideas](#) program and will air on ABC Radio National in the coming months. For more details on this panel see: <http://brisbane2016.scboceania.org/sessions/public-forum/>.



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5. Press & Social media

The conference received media coverage through the Ministers welcome and the [Scientists' Declaration on Accelerating forest, woodland and grassland destruction in Australia.](#) Furthermore, the public forum will be broadcast on ABC Radio National's Big Ideas program.



6. Toward Sustainable Congresses

The Society for Conservation Biology Oceania (SCBO) is committed to hosting sustainable events that minimize our environmental impact. We engaged in a number of activities to ensure that we achieve this goal.

Waste

To reduce waste, we minimized all printed materials associated with SCBO 2016. Attendees can access our program online, by PDF (to be released prior to the conference) or with our conference app on their mobile phone (to be released prior to the conference). We have used all recycled materials and plant dyes for printing where possible. All conference attendees received a ceramic mug (kindly sponsored by the Rufford Foundation). Water coolers were available in the conference centre, and we encouraged participants to bring their own water bottle to refill.

Organic, Ethical and Sustainable Food

We have ensured that all catered food is sustainably sourced. We trialed one day of catered vegetarian food. In the future we may consider going fully vegetarian at our events. Tell us what you think.

During the conference, morning teas, lunches and evening events were catered by the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre:

The Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre is committed to sourcing 80% of produce from Queensland, environment permitting, and where possible from our local growers and suppliers within 100 km of the Centre. Our olive oil comes from Rathlogan Grove, a small olive grove in the foothills of Mt Barney and Mt Maroon only 80 km from the Centre. Our home grown beef and lamb come from Warwick and the famous farming region of the Darling Downs and South East Queensland Scenic Rim. We choose to use free range eggs and chickens from the Beaudesert area on the Mount Lindsay Highway, just 74 km from the city of Brisbane. BCEC offers an extensive range of organic, ethical and sustainable produce including fruit and vegetables, dairy products, meat, poultry, eggs and other specialty foods which are available on request and when in season.

Carbon and Biodiversity Donation

We partnered with The Queensland Trust of Nature for SCBO Brisbane 2016. **For every paid registration we donated \$5 to The Queensland Trust for Nature to support reforestation and Cassowary conservation on their property Lot 66 in the Wet Tropics.**

The [Queensland Trust of Nature](#) (QTFN) works with private land owners to protect threatened ecosystems and species habitats, while ensuring the ongoing sustainable use and enjoyment of natural areas. One of QTFN's current properties is Lot 66 which is significant biodiversity corridor containing 24.46 hectares of pristine rainforest in the Wet Tropics, allowing movement of wildlife between the Djiru National Park and the coast. QTFN is working on reforestation of this property to maintain and improve its biodiversity values. Mission beach is best known for the endangered Southern Cassowary (right). As few as 2000 cassowaries are estimated to remain in the wild across the World Heritage Wet Tropics and Cape York, with numbers declining rapidly in the last 40



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years. Lot 66 also provides habitat for the vulnerable common mist frog *Litoria rheocola* and Australian lacelid *Litoria dayi* and the vulnerable tapping green eyed frog *Litoria serrata*.

Donations provided through SCBO Brisbane 2016 will be used to maintain and improve the ecological condition of the area:

\$ 10 m can plant 1 square meter of cassowary food and habitat trees

\$ 20 can eradicate 10 square meters of weeds

\$ 30 allows for 1 patrol to trap and remove feral animals by a ranger

For more information on Cassowary conservation and reforestation in Australia, please see Queensland Trust for Nature's [webpage](#).





7. Conference policies

a. Anti-discrimination/harassment

The Society for Conservation Biology Oceania (SCBO) is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for its members to participate in Society activities that are free from all forms of unacceptable behaviour, discrimination and harassment.

Participants of SCBO activities should be aware of the [Code of Conduct for SCB Meetings](#), and the SCBO Anti-discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy and Grievance Resolution Procedure, which is available on our website: <http://scoceania.org/policies/anti-discrimination/>

Two trained Contact Officers will be present at SCBO2016, who will serve as the first point of contact for any conference participants who have concerns relating to diversity, discrimination, bullying or harassment. Any individual who has witnessed or believes they have been subject to unacceptable behaviour are encouraged to contact one of the SCBO Contact Officers by email, phone, or in person:

<p>Megan Evans SCBO Contact Officer (ACT Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework) Email: contactofficer@scoceania.org Ph: +61 418 984 248</p>	
<p>Mark Burgman SCBO Contact Officer (University of Melbourne Safer Community Program) Email: contactofficer@scoceania.org</p>	

b. Diversity

Just prior to the SCBO 2016 Brisbane conference, we released a [Draft Diversity Statement](#) and invited members to provide feedback on how SCB Oceania can uphold its commitment to diversity. During the conference we asked attendees to tweet using the [#SCBODiversity](#) hashtag and discussed the draft statement during a group session.



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8. Finances

Final profit of ~57K to be split between SCBO and UQ. See appendix 1 for full acquittals.



Appendix 1. Final budget

EXPENSES

Venue hire and catering	\$ 153,005.84
Attendee gifts - mugs	\$ 3,326.40
Name Badges	\$ 1,087.69
Printed materials for attendees	\$ 815.17
Attendee transport (go-cards)	\$ 1,600.00
Artwork	\$ 500.00
Office supplies	\$ 1,163.48
Plenary speaker travel	\$ 2,159.02
Evening forum speaker travel	\$ 2,381.68
Entertainment	\$ 1,537.37
Field trip costs	\$ 2,538.37
Conservation donation	\$ 2,300.00
Travel awards	\$ 57,049.21
Total	\$ 229,464.23

INCOME

Booth space	\$ 2,000.00
Sponsorship	\$ 108,873.44
Registration income	\$ 175,300.73
Total	\$ 286,174.17

SURPLUS

	\$ 56,709.94
Revenue to SCBO	\$ 28,354.97
Revenue to UQ (CBCS)	\$ 28,354.97



Appendix 2. Post-congress survey report

SCB Oceania 2016 Conference Feedback Survey Results

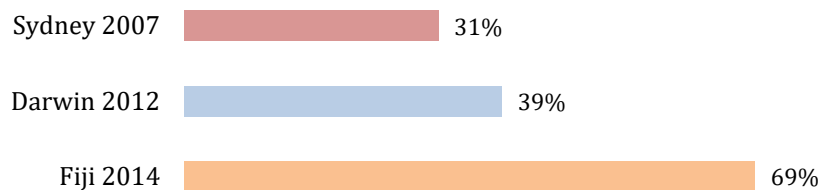
"I registered for the conference as a non-member; then got so much fired up and loved the spirit that I became a member during the conference..... Thanks for this great experience!"

The survey received 83 responses in the week following the conference.

Who attended the conference, and how did they find out about it?

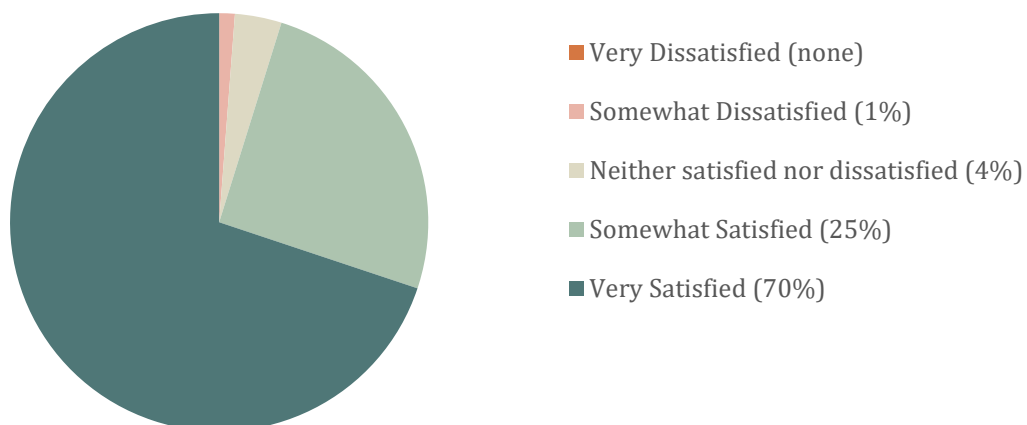
65% of respondents were members of the Society for Conservation Biology. Of these, 73% were already members, 28% ($n = 15$) joined SCB specifically to get a reduced registration rate at SCBO 2016. More than half of respondents (51%) found out about the conference through friends or colleagues; 33% found out via the SCBO website or mailing list, and 5% via social media. Other means of finding out about the conference included the ESA newsletter; internal mailing lists; invite to symposium; our GBR Forum in late 2015; and the Newsletter of the Australasian Wildlife Management Society. → **We should ensure that subsequent events and conferences are publicized via mailing lists of associated societies.**

Have you attended a previous SCB Oceania conference?



What did people hope to get out of the conference, and were their expectations met?

Respondents' overall satisfaction with SCBO 2016



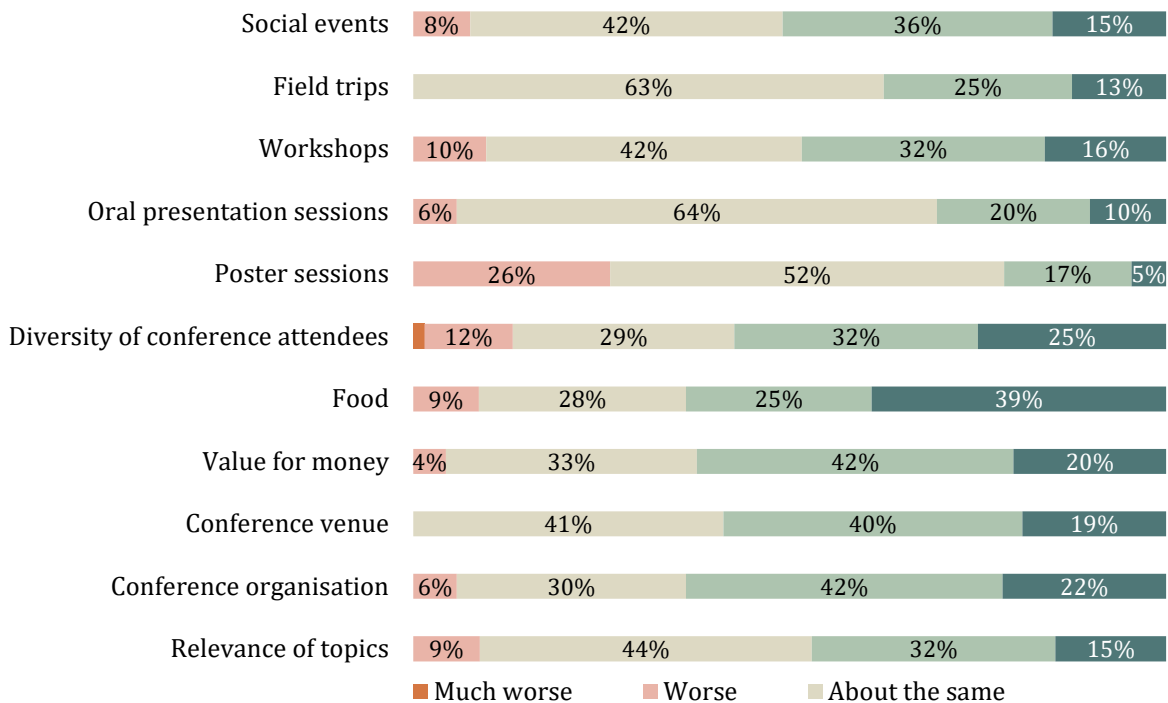
Respondent's overall satisfaction with SCBO 2016 was very high. Yay!

SCBO 2016 attendees also commonly attended the International Congress for Conservation Biology (23%) and Ecological Society of Australia conference (22%). The International Coral Reef Symposium,



International Marine Conservation Congress, Association of Tropical Biology Conference and Australian Coral Reef Society meeting were also attended by a few (4-6%) respondents. In general, SCBO 2016 compares very favourably to other conferences that respondents had attended. **There may however be room for improvement in poster sessions, and the diversity of attendees.** Comments (see later) provided suggestions that posters should be hung for the full duration of the conference, that they needed a less cramped layout and food provided during sessions. Comments regarding diversity are divided however, with most thinking that the conference did have a diversity of themes, topics and presenters, but a vocal minority demanding more.

How did SCBO 2016 compare to other conferences?

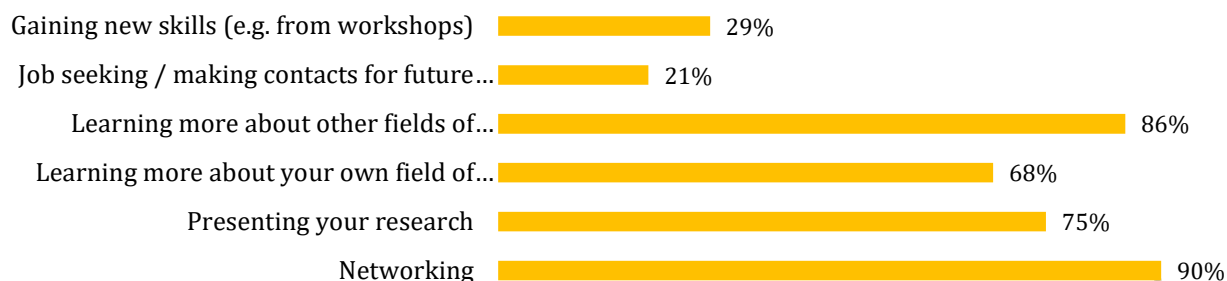


“SCB international and AMSA are my comparisons and this was better on all accounts”

Most people came to SCBO 2016 for networking (90% of respondents), learning more about other fields of research (86%) and to present their research (75%). Aside from gaining new skills by attending workshops and making contacts for future employment, other cited reasons include: making contacts for future studies / collaboration / project partnerships; learning more about SCB and the Chapters; learning about practical action which could be taken as a result of various research; and to get an update on conservation matters in Australia.



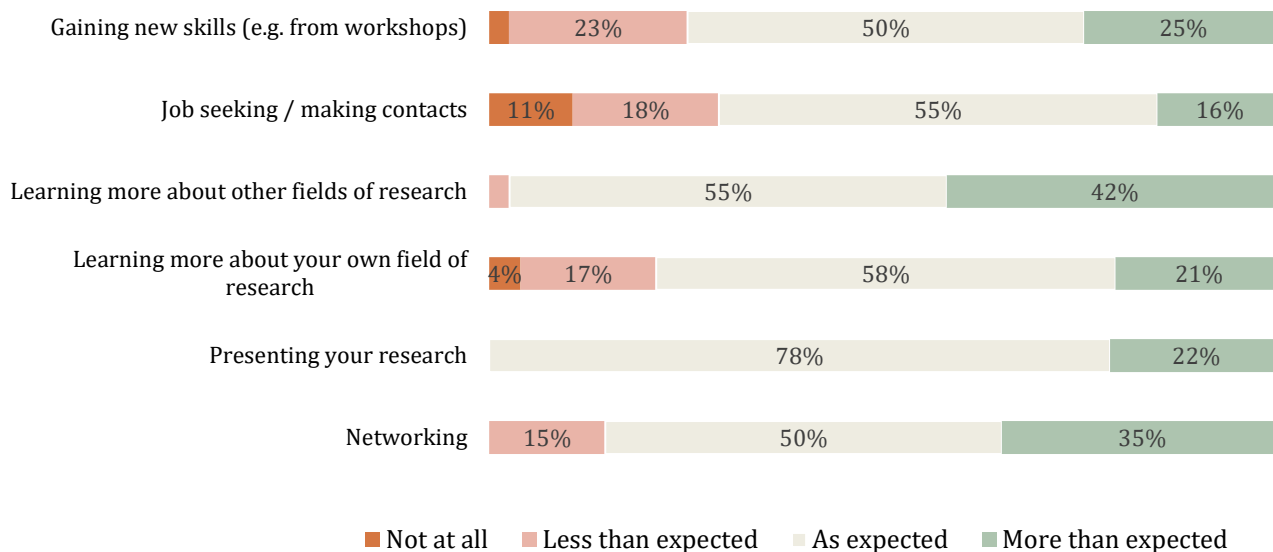
What did you hope to achieve by attending SCBO 2016?



For most objectives for attending the conference, respondents' expectations were met or exceeded. Notably however, although only 21% of respondents attended the conference in order to find a job or make contacts for future employment, a reasonable proportion of these were dissatisfied.

"I was hoping to attend a student mixer to meet other students and scientists to increase my job prospects"

How well did this conference meet your expectations?



Will respondents return, and bring their friends?

More than half of respondents (56%) said they were "very likely" to recommend future SCBO conferences to their colleagues / students / friends. Only 2% said that they would not be likely to recommend future SCBO conferences... they did not say why.

"already did to a NGO - I got very inspired by the Society"
"will definitely recommend to fellow NRM practitioners"



Respondents had lots of positive things to say about all aspects of the conference. Stand-out positives were the plenary speakers, the small size and friendly atmosphere of the conference, the functionality of the venue, the food, and, on balance, the diversity of topics and presenters.

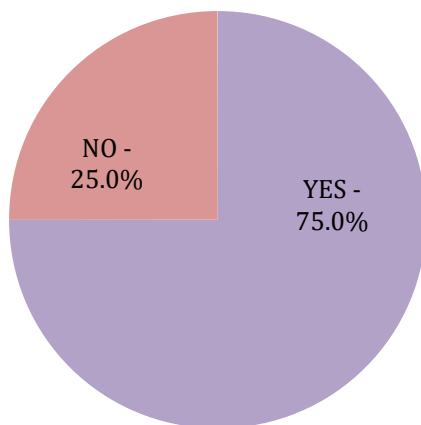
“The diversity of presentations was excellent - it covered many aspects of conservation science. The applied nature of the talks set it apart from many other conferences, ensuring that the research is truly relevant to the action of conservation.”

“More NRM practitioners present, and more presentations by them would be good. They are the other side of conservation biology on the ground, and I think their perspective on what is happening on the ground, and barriers to application would be a valuable adjunct to the research aspect.”

The balance of talks between different time lengths, and speed talks in particular was most contentious. Some people loved them, some hate them. Though most were happy with the diversity of the conference, a minority were vocal about ways this could and should be improved. Some respondents failed to find the abstract book, and many could have used more information about sustainability issues, as they were not fully informed. → **This information is clearly important to delegates and needs to be better highlighted in communications.**

The random allocation of presentation formats elicited a lot of comments on both sides. In general, there was strong support for the idea.

Did you like the random format allocation for presentations (i.e. speed, oral, or poster)?



“Please do this every time!! It's much fairer”

“Some talks were overlong and repetitive, others had too much things stuffed into 5 mins. Not all people can do well with all presentation formats, maybe better to let them ask for a specific format?”

“Great to have it mixed up & transparent”

“It can be hard to justify to your university funding body that you are going all the way for a speed talk or poster”

“I appreciated the random allocation that meant equal presentation opportunities were available to students, but found some 5 min talks left me wanting to hear a fuller account”