

AMOS Annual Conference 2012: Connections in the Climate System

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During a very wet four days in Sydney (typical of this year's summer weather in the city) 335 delegates gathered for the AMOS National Conference 2012 at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). The conference was held in the modern John Niland Scientia Building in the centre of the UNSW Kensington campus.

Professionals, students and enthusiasts with an interest in the atmosphere, ocean and climate came from across Australia and further afield to attend, making it the largest national AMOS conference yet. There were seven plenary talks, 172 oral presentations and 146 poster presentations over the course of three and a half days. The plenary talks at the start of each day were well attended and covered a variety of topics; these included palaeoclimate and remote sensing. The Uwe Radok award winner, Jan Zika, discussed his PhD work on a different perspective on ocean circulation (see a summary of this work on page 28). Lisa Alexander, winner of the 2011 Priestley Medal, spoke about the analysis of global temperature and precipitation extremes. Four of the plenary talks were delivered by scientists based outside of Australia, showing the progress that AMOS is making in attracting internationally renowned scientists to its conferences. As well as the plenaries, there were three parallel streams of presentations.

There were three general and 15 special sessions for delegates to attend, including sessions on fire weather, renewable energy and the hydroclimate of the Murray Darling Basin. These talks showed the breadth of work being undertaken in the Australian meteorological and oceanographic community. Poster sessions provided further opportunities for delegates to present their work and discuss it with their peers. Many stimulating discussions occurred during the morning and afternoon tea breaks and the conference ice-breaker event.

The conference dinner was held on the second night of the conference at Luna Park. With stunning views of Sydney Harbour, the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Opera House, the Crystal Ballroom at Luna Park provided an excellent setting. The rain obligingly held off for several hours, allowing pre-dinner drinks to be enjoyed outside next to the harbour. Many people took the opportunity to ride the famous ferris wheel before a delicious three course meal was served. Australian icon H. G. Nelson provided the entertainment with a fast-paced talk on his views on the climate change issue and his work as a presenter of the "Steaming Toad".

There was a student get-together on the third night of the conference. A BBQ had been the original plan but due to wet weather an indoor pizza and beer event was held instead. The students got to hear some light-hearted words of wisdom from outgoing and incoming AMOS Presidents Neville Nicholls and Blair Trewin and had the opportunity to get to know other students working in different parts of Australia.

On the same evening, the first AMOS Fellows dinner was held. The dinner was both a recognition of the contribution the Fellows have made to the Society and the science, and an informal chance to socialise and consider future directions for the Society.

A large number of the talks and posters at the conference were delivered by students and judges had the hard task of choosing the winners of the two student prizes. Adele Morrison from the Australian National University was awarded the prize for best student oral presentation for her talk on "Interplay between the zonal momentum balance and overturning in the Southern Ocean". The prize for best student poster presentation was awarded to Felicity Graham from the University of Tasmania for her poster titled "Application of the ENSO Unified Oscillator theory to an ocean-only model".

The convenor, Jason Evans, the conference program and local organising committees and a cohort of student volunteers put in a great deal of effort to make the conference a successful one. Our thanks go to Jason and his team as well as the sponsors—the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Climate System Science, the Bureau of Meteorology, the New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage, the Murray Darling Basin Authority and CSIRO.



Outgoing President Neville Nicholls and H.G. Nelson at the conference dinner. Image: Belinda Campbell.