

National Conference in Adelaide South Australia Held at the National Wine Centre

The 2009 National Conference and Awards hosted by LASA were conducted at the International Wine Centre in Adelaide from October 15th to 17th with the theme of the Conference being "Our Changing Lifestyles ". Although the Conference was poorly attended by the industry, the delegates who did attend were treated to a diverse set of topics presented by enthusiastic, interesting world class speakers.

The opening address of the Conference was provided by Julian Burton (OAM). He commenced by outlining "the journey" through his life to date from bomb victim at Bali to his present entrepreneurial work with the Julian Burton Burns Trust. From these experiences he has the ability to inspire everyone on how to develop strategies and tools that could turn a situation into an opportunity rather than a struggle. His address demonstrated to all present how they could choose to feel powerful not powerless and to be in charge of their lives rather than be a victim.

The next speaker Dr Tim Moore spoke on "Carbon in Landscaping and Garden Design", this topic covered the low carbon economy, a subject that is highly topical for landscapers. He gave us all a reason to sit up and think about the environmental implications of our lifestyles by commenting on carbon emissions and the development strategies pursued by both business and government to cope with climate change. His humour made this dry and serious topic both entertaining and interesting.

After morning tea we were transported to another place by the keynote speaker, David Stevens from the UK. His address entitled "A Lifetime in Landscape" was an enthusiastic and vibrant portrayal of examples of his own and other landscape designs from all over the world. After listening to him it was clear to everyone in the audience why he was the winner of 11 Gold Medals at the Chelsea Flower Show and the author of 21 books, in addition he holds the chair of Garden Design at Middlesex University.

The "Value of a Garden for a sustainable future" was the title of the next address given by Sophie Thomson. Sophie demonstrated her extensive knowledge of plants gained from having been brought up in a family committed to horticulture. Sophie appears on a regular segment of ABC Gardening Australia and is rapidly becoming a prolific writer on garden matters. Using her South Australian experiences she outlined the importance of choosing the correct plant material in the context of our changing landscapes.

Any hope of dozing off after lunch was soon removed by Josh Byrne our next speaker an environmental scientist with a passion for sustainable gardening. His speech drew on his 10 years of experience as an environmental practitioner to enthral the audience with his ideas on the sustainable management of waste resources to optimise the capture and use of water. The commitment to his craft was contagious. We all agreed that it would be an ideal world if we could follow his principles in everything he does around his own home. Children would certainly have a better place to grow up in.

The final speaker was Adam Wright, the Sales Manager for the Beyond Today project at Hayborough located at Victor harbor on the south coast of SA, this project has been the recipient of 9 awards. He proudly described the sustainable housing project developed by his family business. He commenced by outlining the project's overall vision which involved environmental objectives as well ideas on the optimal mix of private dwellings and public parkland. His slides also demonstrated to the audience how environmental guidelines were formulated to ensure that all structures complied with best environmental practices such as ensuring that all housing was positioned to minimise energy loss via the maximisation of the natural benefits of the sun; by ensuring thermal mass in foundations and walls; by the use of solar power and natural ventilation and the use of low toxicity materials in all buildings. These guidelines and more were presented by Adam in such a way that it made us all feel that we would love to move there and enjoy the lifestyle of true sustainability .

In the evening a dinner was held at the National Wine Centre where the National Awards for Construction were presented to many aspiring landscapers. Saturday followed with a bus trip to the Barossa Valley. We visited the Jeffries Group composting centre followed by a couple of Wineries where we were able to showcase some of the wonderful secrets that South Australia has to offer the visitor. A stop at the Jacobs Creek Winery to view the award winning garden and a talk by Amanda Balmer who has been involved with this development. A weary crowd was transported back to Adelaide after having spent time getting to know some of our colleagues from interstate and sharing stories about our craft.

Beryl Bredon

Conference Coordinator